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AND

BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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# THE TWO-THIRDS CLUB

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

"Now here you are, a working woman," began Lucia.

Dot squirmed impatient shoulders. "Oh, dear, Lutie! Can't one have a job without being"—her voice dropped to solemn caricature—"a working woman?"

Lucia understood big, strong feelings, but not little peevish ones. "I like to be a working woman," she explained seriously. "I am glad that my lot was cast in with producers. If you were not always hoping that you would be mistaken for a fine lady, Dot, you would be a bigger person." Lucia spoke with the serene finality of Judgment Day, and she looked like Lucretia Mott. Dot, of feeble clay, but honest about it, always rose well to these hard truths that Lucia handed out.

"I know it," she said with a sigh. "You are worth nine of me. But I am always hoping that, if I go on exposing myself to you, I will catch something." Then, seeing a double meaning, she laughed all over her merry face. "I do catch something, all right," she murmured for her own pleasure.

Lucia looked thoughtfully at her friend's laughter, her prettiness, the grace with which she wore her clothes, the candor and good humor of her spirit under attack. "If I had your charm, your power of making yourself liked," she said slowly, a little sadly, "I could change my generation. Women are such fools! There is Maude Andrews, earning her own living by the sweat of her brains; and she told me that last month her cab bill was \$23. I think she was proud of it. Oh!" The supreme disgust of that final exclamation made Dot look guilty.

"But when your gown is light and delicate—" she began.

"Don't have it light and delicate—not till you have at least begun to provide for your own old age. That is what I started to talk about. Dot, before there were Liberty Bonds and Thrift Stamps, what did you put by a year?"

Dot tried to think. "Well, I did buy a bond once," she brought out brightly. "But I wanted furniture, so I had to sell it." She looked about her pleasant room with loving satisfaction. "This furniture is worth a good deal more to me than \$22.50 a year. Oh, there is no comparison!"

Lucia was as inexorable as fate. "You are nearly thirty," she said. "You have a good position now, but publishers have been known to fail, and the war will inevitably shut down some of them. In ten or fifteen years you will be worth less, not more; youth counts, with you. If you don't marry, there will be at most twenty-five years more of dwindling employment, then none. How are you going to live?"

"Oh, Lucia!" It was a laughing wail, and Dot covered her ears. "Don't! Of course I shall marry."

"Whom?"

"Well, I don't know, exactly; but I meet a good many men, first and last."

"Do they often ask you?"

Dot considered, a look of growing surprise in her face. "Why, no, they don't; but I always

supposed they would if they were really encouraged."

"They wouldn't," was the firm answer. "This is not a marrying age. At least you can't safely count on it, if you are fastidious. Save \$20,000 and still you will have only \$1,000 a year for your old age. You spend a great deal more than that."

Dot started to her feet. "I am so glad you came in, Lutie dear," she said with a vicious smile. "I hope you will come often. You are so cheery. If you mean to stay any longer, I am going out myself—to spend every cent I've got."

Lucia looked up at her sorrowfully, making no motion to rise. "Yes, that is just what I do—antagonize—drive people in the wrong direction," she said, so patiently that Dot's wrath fell away. "I say exactly what I mean, and for some reason you can't do it that way. You can't go straight at things with most people. And I haven't the tact and grace to do anything else. And yet I care so— Oh, Dot, help me!" she cried suddenly, her hand closing on her friend's wrist. "Help me!" There was passion in the cry, and Dot drew up a chair beside her, sobered and wondering.

"All right—I'll help," she said. "What—how?"

A strong hope lit Lucia's fine face. "Oh, if you will, if you will!" she said rapidly. "You can influence people, Dot; they want to do what you do. When you buy bonds, your friends buy bonds; and when you have parties and new clothes—your friends do it, too. You send a wave of action about you in every direction."

"They are such little parties," Dot murmured. "Oh, you have done well—for you!" Lucia admitted. Dot winced, then laughed, but Lucia had gone on, not noticing. "But if you would organize your life on a war basis, you could do three times as much. You buy a Liberty Bond as a sort of happy accident—the way you catch a train, when you do. You never realize that a new loan is coming every few months, and that you have got to be preparing for it every day of the year. And it's fun, Dot!" She was trying to put it in Dot's terms, fearing that her own were too austere, and her smile was rather touching. "Thrift is really an amusing game, once you begin to be a good player. Especially when everyone is ready to play it with you. Organize!"

"All right," said Dot. "How do you do it?"

"Suppose your salary were two-thirds what it is; you would be living and giving to war needs, and buying bonds. You would have it all arranged on that scale. Very well; cut your salary down in your mind by one-third in your way of living, your vacations, your clothes, never for a moment remember that you have more than two-thirds. Say to yourself always, 'My salary is so-and-so.' You won't give any less, you know. You are kind—you will always give. You will simply change your ideas about what you personally have to have. Get the fine-lady bacillus out of your system. Be frankly one of the working women. Then, some day, you won't have to be one any longer, for what you began in patriotism you will continue in common sense,



and that third of your salary, well invested, will put decency and dignity into your old age. Oh, Dot, can't you see it?"

Dot saw something; her eyes were blinking into laughter. "I might live in two-thirds of my apartment and sublet the other room," she suggested.

"Why not!"

"And use two-thirds of the lights," Dot went on, "and have two-thirds as much food and raiment, and telephone a third less—I'll start a Two-thirds Club. Lutie, I think it will be larks!"

Lucia, for once, had the wisdom to let it go as larks. For she knew that while some did what was right and necessary spontaneously, without extraneous reasons, others had to be lured in by games; and the sole point now was that the thing should be done.

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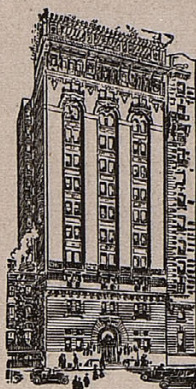


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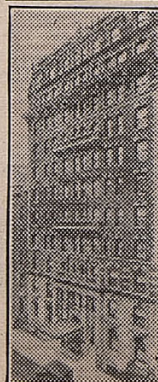
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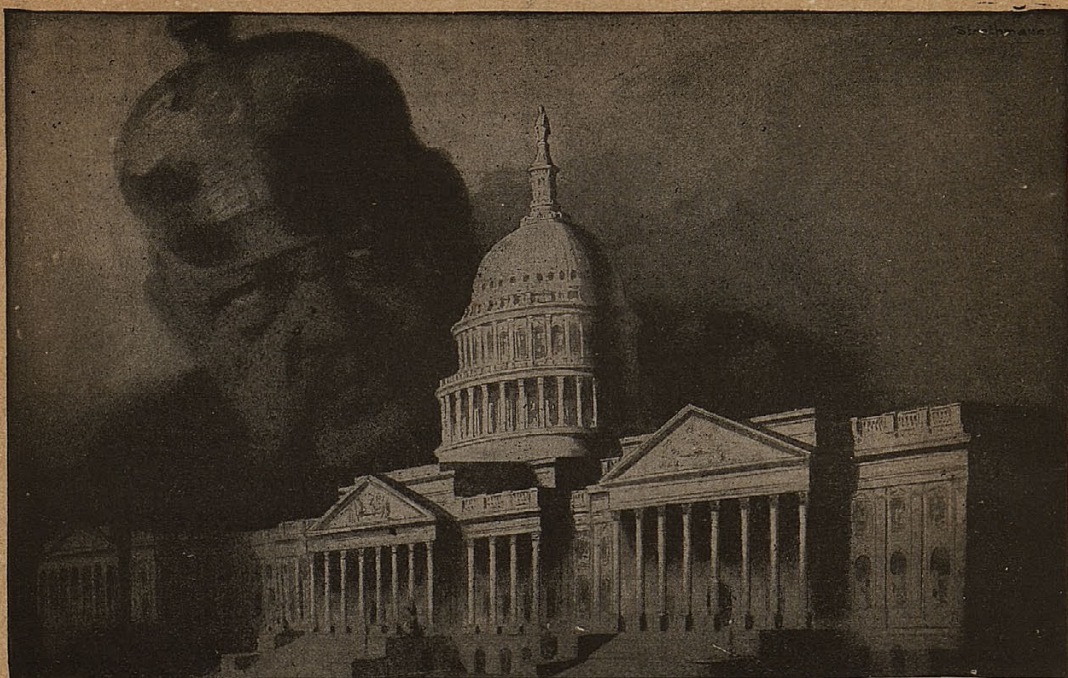
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Back of the American idea suddenly has arisen the black menace of the opposing Prussian idea. Under it the people are not the Government. Under it the people live and prosper, or sacrifice and die, by the grace of "Me und Gott."

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The billions of dollars we are gathering here at home for military purposes have no taint of militarism on a single coin.

Germany began her war with no plans for elaborate taxation of her people; the Junkers expected to saddle the cost of the war upon quickly conquered nations. Not so does a free people make war! From the start we have gone down into our own pockets for every cent we expend; we have never thought of taking; we have thought only of spending our blood and our treasure to protect our ideal of free national life.

The menace of Hindenburg makes no American tremble. But it makes us grit our teeth and either fight or give! What the Government (which is the people) wants to borrow, we, the people, as individuals will lend.

The menace of Hindenburg shall cease to exist in the world even as a shadow; and we shall return to our individual pursuits under the protection of our national ideal successfully defended; and, please God, other nations, as the result of this struggle, shall join us and our already free Allies in the enjoyment of our blood-bought and blood-held freedom.

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# *The* SMART SET

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## VIOLETTA

By Elsie McCormick

VIOLETTA stretched out lazily and buried her dainty little nose in the cushion before the fire, quite disregarding the fact that she was crushing the pretty bow at her neck. Violetta was feeling somewhat out of sorts. That morning, just before going out, her mistress had told her that she was an insufferable little beast, and that she had a good mind to lock her up in the kitchen.

Though it would be stretching the point somewhat to say that Violetta understood it all, there is no doubt that she caught the disapproval in her mistress' voice. Violetta was not used to being scolded.

Outside she heard the meowing of the neighbor's Angora. Violetta detested the fluffy animal, but her mistress, for some strange reason, had forbidden her

to chase it out when it came over into their yard. Now that there was nobody in the house, Violetta could chase it as much as she pleased. She half-rose from the cushion, but the warmth of the room was so tempting that she lay down again with a petulant little shake.

Then, suddenly, a step sounded on the walk outside. Violetta's pert head went up, a light of recognition dawning in her soft brown eyes. It was her master, home two hours earlier than usual. With a glad little sound, Violetta scampered out into the hallway, capering gracefully as the key turned in the lock.

As for her master, he was simply tickled to death. He considered Violetta the prettiest French maid his wife had had since Antoinette.





# WHOMSOEVER CLARICE SMILES UPON

By John Hamilton

## I

WHEN John married Clarice I envied him. Clarice was entrancingly blonde with long slanting eyes and dimpled cheeks and a slim waist. She had slender shoulders that I longed to encircle with my arms, and full red lips that I craved to kiss. . . .

Clarice smiled at me.

## II

AFTER the divorce, Clarice married me. When Clarice became angry she would tear at me with her pointed finger-nails and call me whatever was vile. Clarice was untidy in her boudoir. Clarice flirted openly with other

men. John looked prosperous and happy. I envied John. . . .

Clarice smiled at John.

## III

AFTER the divorce, Clarice remarried John. I forget her violent temper, her disorderliness and her fickleness. I remembered her saucy dimples and the gleam of her white teeth as she dug them into my arm and her slim ankles and her kisses . . . I envied John.

## IV

I envy John. The other day John died. . . .

Clarice has smiled at me. . . .



# MAGIC

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

YOU were busy with innumerable things—

Color of leaf and stone; you watched the way  
Noon minted gold, and how the shadows lay  
Along the hilltops, brushing lacy wings.

You said: It is just like drinking yellow wine  
In a clear goblet. I can feel the sun

Mount to my brain, and all this beauty run  
Like keen flame through me, aching-sweet and fine. . . .

An eagle drew across the dazzling page  
Of blue remoteness his invisible arc.

And you were thinking, perhaps, how birds were wise  
Before we came to claim our heritage. . . .

You turned to me—but all the world grew dark,  
And I could only look into your eyes.



# THE WRONGED MAN

By G. Vere Tyler

## CHAPTER I

THE broad brass bed, with its elaborate furnishings, stood in the glow from a pink lamp shade.

A young woman lay in the bed ill. It was plain to see that she was small of stature. Her face, lovely in the extreme, was unnaturally pale. Her eyes were closed. Her black hair spread over the pinkish white pillow as though flung there in a moment of agony or exhaustion.

A man was bending over her, staring at her forehead. He seemed never to have actually seen it before, and the beauty of its sculptured lines surprised him. She looked suddenly different to him, like a flower that had at last pushed its way out of tangled grass. The fringe of lashes on her cheeks and the fine pencilled brows were the only touches of shadow. She was exquisite thus. The eyelids, in the moment so perfectly screening the luminous eyes, were like golden wax.

Suddenly the man started. Over the tranquil face that had so unexpectedly hypnotized him he saw an expression of suffering that was like a veil. Already both cheeks and eyes were slightly sunken, and the chin, usually so round, had become pointed. The woman opened her eyes and caught his look of horror.

"You are afraid?" she whispered.

"Afraid of what?"

"Death!"

"You sent for me, Juanita?"

"Yes, I have something to—"

"You had better not talk!"

"I *must* talk! I am dying and there is something for you to know." She

looked squarely at him with her now glowing eyes. "It is a confession, something that I think ought—"

"Juanita!" He lowered his face to hers.

She laid a feeble hand on his breast. "Wait," she said, "wait!"

For the first time her voice betrayed excitement. Her eyes closed suddenly and he noticed her labored breathing. Presently they opened again as though to emit a flame. The flame passed into his own.

It was not the first time that this had happened. She had stirred him to the depths by it before. It was that flame-look that had caused him, a year ago, to marry her.

"Marcus!"

"Yes, Juanita?"

"You have never known me, the real me, and before I go I think you should."

"You must not fatigue yourself."

"Why? A few hours more or less don't matter. Sit down. I *want* to talk to you!"

Her words, a bit petulant, a bit wearied, were a command. He drew up a chair. His manner was constrained, anxious. His eyes hurried to hers.

"What is it you wish to tell me, Juanita?"

There had been little affection between these two, no endearing words, only his passion for her, and he never knew whether or not she responded to it—never once thought or cared to know. He had married her for his own sake, not hers. He saw women like that—as purchases and possessions. He knew that Juanita knew she was a



purchase. She had a clever way of talking at times, said cutting things that left him no doubts.

"First," she answered him, "I want you to know that I am not afraid to die. Not that I don't fully realize all the horror of death, especially when I'm so young, but for another reason. I've always been afraid to live!"

"Why," he bent a little in her direction, "have you been afraid to live?"

"Because I knew some day the real me would trip me up. I have always lived a double life, even as a child. What was open, above board, what the world saw, was only acting. You won't be surprised then when I tell you that the baby wasn't yours. It is dead now and I am dying—and you ought to know."

She had a coughing spell and the nurse entered quickly.

"You had better go," the nurse whispered over her shoulder. "She *would* send for you, but it was very bad for her."

He rose and walked over to the door. Juanita was still coughing. He waited until the spell was over and she was lying quiet, with her eyes closed just as when he had entered.

The nurse fled past him on the way for brandy. He stopped her in the hall. "Is there any hope of her life?"

"Barely a chance, Mr. Schuyler, but we are doing our best!"

He turned and walked aimlessly in the direction of the stairway. At the head of it he paused and stood looking down the broad red carpeted steps. Then he turned and walked to the door of his own bedroom, opened it and entered. There he stood looking about him. Presently he walked over to the centre table, took up a cigar, lit it and then stood with it in his hand as if he had forgotten it. It went out. A little later it dropped to the floor. He undressed himself quite mechanically, and when his pajamas were all properly buttoned and tied, got into bed.

As if his mind had suddenly ceased to act, he fell into a profound sleep.

## CHAPTER II

At two o'clock he was awakened by a knock.

Arousing himself, he went over, opened the door and faced the doctor.

"What is it?" he asked. "Is she dead?"

The doctor clapped him on the shoulder. "Dead!" he exclaimed. "A miraculous change for the better! The fever is gone, her pulse is good! With no setbacks, there's a good chance for her to get well!"

"Get well?" repeated Marcus, half dazed.

"Yes!" The doctor laughed as though Juanita had decided to live on account of him. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you, but I couldn't leave without bringing you the good news! And now, get back to bed; you're as white as a sheet. I don't want another patient on my hands. Good-night!"

"Good-night," said Marcus.

When he heard the front door close and the sound of the doctor's car moving off, he walked over and touched a button that flooded the room in brilliant light. His pajamas were of purple silk and the doctor had spoken the truth: his stern set face was whiter than any sheet, it had the hue of marble. He looked like a statue of Hercules in a purple light.

It was a difficult problem. He faced it as one faces some strange abnormality. He wondered if just such a situation had ever occurred before. He sat before it, sat before Juanita's confession, as a physician before some strange and hitherto unheard of ailment.

It pleased him to go back to the first time he ever saw Juanita. She was disporting with insolent grace in the chorus at the Winter Garden. On that night he was beside a conventional woman of old New York, and some months before he had asked her to be his wife. Up to that hour he had been a slave to business and the conventions of such society as he knew. Women had figured in his life as automata to be con-



sidered and ignored. It had, his manner of regarding them, in its way, deadened his sense of honor, respect, concerning women, while it had in no way encroached upon his respect for himself. The reason—Marcus was turned forty-one—he had asked Geraldine Condit to marry him was that the death of his mother had left a vacancy in the house that must be filled. He selected a woman to fill that vacancy as he engaged a chambermaid to make the beds.

And then he went to the theater and saw Juanita.

For some reason, perhaps her own, he found it curiously difficult to meet her. . . . He was a whole month at the effort.

### CHAPTER III

WHEN he did meet her a surprise awaited him. Juanita belonged, by inheritance, to a prominent if somewhat dingy New England family, and was clever and even brilliant to a degree. Her reason for being where he had found her embodied a philosophy of worldly wisdom that rather staggered him. Before leaving home, she told him, she had been surfeited by her observation of Massachusetts virtue at close range, and had come to the conclusion that it was a bore. She preferred, she said, danger to boredom.

By way of making herself entertaining she had then outlined to him the life that she might have lived at home, and contrasted it at length with her present life. One was perfectly safe and uneventful; the other was eventful and full of danger. Danger, Juanita said was—and Juanita laughed—exciting, if nothing more.

"Danger of what?" asked Marcus.

"Why," replied Juanita simply, "of men like you!"

"How would you like," Marcus had then asked, "to be my wife?"

"Not at all," was her reply, "it would put me out of the danger zone."

"Nevertheless," said Marcus, "you are going to be my wife."

"But *why*?" asked Juanita.

"Because I want you."

Three months later she accepted him.

"There's excitement," she told him, "in selling yourself, even to a husband."

For a short while she found excitement, the kind she sought, in the situation itself—herself as a gorgeous slave, the splendor of her environment, the opportunity to spend money, ride in her own car, clothe herself like a princess, be waited on by a French maid. She even found excitement in Marcus' passion for her, in charming and fascinating him, playing with a serious, deadly-in-earnest, cultured man of heavy emotions. She found excitement in her ability to look on at herself in the midst of all this.

And then one day it all palled on her and Juanita dreamed of a new excitement.

It planned itself, her new excitement, probably to a great extent unconsciously to Juanita, in the form of revenge. There had been moments when her delicate organization, mental and physical, had revolted against Marcus—when all that he had to offer in exchange for herself, suddenly, without her volition, became an insult to her, an insult to be avenged.

Juanita was tired, tired of his supremacy and power to command her, tired of her submerged personality. Instead of being a slave she suddenly dreamed of being the mistress of one. For the first time, perhaps, in her life, her eyes roamed mysteriously in crowded places, theaters, hotels, thoroughfares, at teas and receptions, among men. She thought a good deal and resentfully of all she was called upon to do to please Marcus, and then she began to dream of some one to please *her*.

She went, during this period, a good deal to the opera, falling into the music as into perfumed waves; she visited art galleries, standing enrapt before grotesquely posed humanity and ravishing landscapes. She drank when alone, after having arranged certain lights to



please her fancy. Flowers occupied much of her attention. There was nothing unplanned or accidental in anything she did. She was entirely conscious of her efforts; she felt instinctively that they were tending to new sensations, a new excitement. She decided that the real excitements of life were born of intrigue, dissembling, planning. It occurred to her one day, occurred to her through the accumulation of slow intention, that the greatest excitement she could ever know would be to deceive Marcus.

It must be said for Juanita that her mind acted charmingly at this time, that it flashed thoughts like a swiftly thrust sword in sunlight. Her existence, contemplating these new fields of endeavor, was, in spite of Marcus and a growing distaste for him, now that the novelty of her servility was over, an entrancing one. It was so entrancing that Juanita at times found herself in a panic fear of consequences.

#### CHAPTER IV

It seemed to Marcus, as he sat pondering upon Juanita and the astounding situation in which he found himself, found himself through her, that a greater fool than himself had never existed on the earth before. Confronted by the results of his folly, it seemed to him that were he to burst into the harsh and thoroughly discordant laughter of an actor-manager it would be about the most appropriate thing to the occasion.

But Marcus was not a laughing man. He was a serious man, the man exactly, in fact, that Juanita considered him. Except for generations of clean linen he would have been in every sense a coarse man. That, however, it was impossible for him, at any rate in deportment, to be. Nevertheless, mentally he was coarse.

"What else," was his final rather platitudinous conclusion, "could I expect when I married an ordinary chorus-girl?"

But Marcus was checked here. Juan-

ita was not an ordinary chorus girl. She was a girl every bit as well bred as himself. There seemed to Marcus for the moment very little to say about it. One thing was sure, that according to the correct woman he had thrown over for Juanita, and what certainly would have been the verdict, had she lived, of his mother, he had got his deserts. But since the deserts were still on his hands, considering all things, Juanita was not to be so easily dismissed.

What, in fact, was to be done with her? Punished, of course! But how? How was it possible to punish Juanita without, at the same time, punishing himself? Severely correct, insistent as to the proprieties of life, life's deportment, he saw himself through the very punishment he as yet so nebulously planned to inflict upon Juanita, a mark for others to inflict punishment upon.

There were his mother's two unmarried sisters, prim and untouched by hair dyes; an uncle on his father's side, who boasted the most correct establishment in the seventies, an establishment from which Irish serving-women crept in and out surreptitiously through the basement door, while an English footman stood in the hall receiving sneering glances at intervals from the more active butler; there was, skipping over many more lesser lights, the woman he had abandoned for Juanita, and there was—Marcus rose to his feet at this point with a feeling that his hair was standing up—his club.

"If you put it over, old chap, it's all right." "Think you're wise, Marcus, eh!" "Dangerous experiment, old man." He remembered such phrases. His conclusion, with the vision before him of these confreres at the club, was that he was, certainly had been as far as Juanita was concerned, an ass. Having come to this conclusion, and having donned a bathrobe, he lighted another cigar and smoked it to the end.

By that time he had decided to leave home in the morning, and remain away for six weeks, thereby giving Juanita time to get on her feet to face him, and whatever disposition of her he decided



to make. Just how to dispose of her and save himself was a problem that still remained unsolved. He had not yet arrived at considering her from the standpoint of herself. If Juanita had been, as she had frankly confessed, a purchased wife, she had served him well and without protest. She had even gone with him one Sunday morning to church. To the world she had enabled him to present a model wife. In secret she had enabled him to be himself.

Marcus was not a man given over to a valuation of human relations. A man was a man. That was his one and only clear idea of humanity. A man was a man. Those few words swept aside, as far as women were concerned, all things except outward deportment. For the first time, through Juanita, through the position in which she had put him, he saw woman as an entity to be considered. He saw them—it took effort, for Marcus' mind had only run glibly in certain grooves—the two of them, in their relative positions as man and wife. This surprising sight, this view, caused him for the first time in his life to experience contempt for himself. It was not contempt born of regret, but of humiliation. He had been outwitted and done, and such a thing had never before happened. Not only was he outwitted and done, but the one who had contrived this had him—no matter where he had her, where, as far as he was concerned, she had put herself—in a trap. To punish Juanita would make him a laughing stock.

Daylight found him still seated beside the table that contained the ashes of smoked cigars.

At seven o'clock he rang for his servant.

"Elkins," he said, "during the time that this house is a hospital I want to be out of it. Pack for a six weeks' trip."

At ten-thirty, without having bidden good-bye to his wife, he was on a train bound for the top of a high mountain that he knew. He nursed a glowering intention to kill everything on four legs or with wings that came his way. And

he was bent upon melodramatic revenges, too, upon strange women.

To his surprise, Juanita had somehow robbed him of the power to carry out his second intention. Attractive women who passed him on the train, or, for that matter, out of it, only filled him with thoughts that burned in his brain uncomfortably.

## CHAPTER V

IF Marcus was dumbfounded by the news of Juanita's returning health, the almost certainty of her living, what must this same news, that came so convincingly through her own feelings, have been to Juanita?

The full meaning of it, a revelation of the entire situation, came to her on the first morning that she sat up in bed and enjoyed quite thoroughly, to the infinite delight of her nurse, her toast and tea.

Toast and tea had ever, and especially, as in this case, if a soft-boiled egg was added, been associated in Juanita's mind with a return to health. It was always on her return to health, an infrequent happening, for she was perfectly constructed physically, that she indulged in this simple diet. If she took an egg it must be *au beurre noir*; she invariably drank the strongest coffee that a percolator could percolate, and if she asked for toast at all it must be French toast, well buttered and richly fried. Nothing that was not highly colored, or highly flavored, appealed to Juanita, and it may have been this very thing, her side tracking the ordinary, that had brought her into a condition that the most hardened of life's voyagers could never once have failed to admit was highly colored enough.

Juanita was not yet strong, not at all sufficiently strong to, as Marcus had done, grapple with the situation. So with a way she had of putting away from her things the future demanded her to face, to indulge the present, presenting no demands at all, she lay back in her pillows, stimulated into bodily comfort by her breakfast, and calmly



took in the charm of her environment, now doubly agreeable through her return to the physically normal.

She had only to glance about her to see that a perfect day was in full evidence. The upholstering of the furniture of her room leaned exclusively to yellow, which color responded charmingly to bright sunlight. Juanita ordered her yellow damask curtains parted, and her shades, yellow shades, raised. Forgetting, for a moment, Marcus and all that his presence in the world on this beautiful day meant to her, she found herself revelling in a gold-drenched atmosphere as radiant as a cloud-bereft sun could make it.

There was a moment—a good deal of her had disappeared—when Juanita felt herself very small, a little atom, was how she mentally expressed it. With her mind on the austere old frame house in which she was born, and lived before she came to New York, she wondered how she had managed to become the central figure of so much splendor. It encouraged her to fancy that having managed it she might almost dare to manage anything, even Marcus. There was one conclusion she came to: she was not going to surrender—and she waved one hand feebly—without putting up a brave fight.

She began, regarding him as an antagonist, to study him. He was a powerful man, but like all powerful men he had his weak spots. Just how far such a man, in spite of his weak spots, would go in his sudden indignation, sudden violent resentment, she—and Juanita closed her eyes with a slight shiver—could not quite make out.

So very uncertain was she as to how far he would go—she had seen him beat a dog unmercifully once, and he always rode with spurs—that for a while her mind became quite confused, so confused that it refused to act at all. It was, as it were, clouded over. Excitement, excitement born out of a situation from which she had found it necessary to extricate herself, had produced this mental chaos temporarily before, and so

closely had Juanita analysed herself, her varying emotions under given conditions in the past, that it did not especially alarm her. It would pass. As a clear spring muddled by the turning of a stick in its bed cleared itself and bubbled on, so would her mind clear and bubble on.

She lay quite still a while, with her eyes closed, waiting for this to happen.

"I must not be afraid," she said finally, speaking her words aloud, slowly and deliberately. "I must not be afraid," she repeated, "either of the situation—never mind its being an extreme one—or of Marcus!"

She buoyed herself a while on her determination not to be afraid, knowing perfectly all the time that she was very much afraid.

"But," she suddenly asked herself, "of what?"

The answer came. Of losing the comforts of a splendid environment—and her reputation. "Well," thought Juanita, "without a reputation, a splendid environment is not necessary. As a matter of fact, people who fling off a reputation feel pretty free and have a very good time!"

But what troubled Juanita, as she came to this conclusion, was that she knew she had by no means exhausted the present situation, which included not only her deference to an undamaged reputation, but also very comfortable and caressing wealth. And she looked about her, marking the value, after all, of being in just such a place as this, with a fine bed and very costly yellow furniture shining resplendently in an unusually brilliant sunlight.

The nurse entered with her medicine and pleasant things to say about the weather.

"If I can only see it," thought Juanita when she found herself alone again, "as a play with me in the leading rôle, a play that must turn out happily, why, I should think it might," and Juanita reverted to stage vernacular, "go over."



## CHAPTER VI

ON the morning that ushered in the fourth week of Juanita's convalescence she was greatly disappointed to see that a heavy snowstorm was in the air.

It was a peculiar snowstorm, inasmuch as it was entirely in the air, the flakes refusing the offer of material substances, such as sidewalks, roofs and other things, by simply expiring when they touched them.

Juanita was, as a rule, delighted at the arrival of a snowstorm, but it happened that on this particular day she had decided to go out, be motored somewhere. She was as yet practically a prisoner, in the hands of nurses, and she feared there would be no end of discussion as to the advisability of the venture.

For a while, in a pale blue morning gown, she sat at her window watching the storm. The morning and afternoon passed, but not her intention to sally forth. At five o'clock, in spite of the fact that the clouds had become more serious, inasmuch as they were now showering down snowflakes of a more durable quality, she ordered her car, put on an ermine wrap with a turban to match, and had herself borne to a brownstone-front house in the fifties that had been converted into studio apartments.

Inside Juanita paused. The climb to the top, her destination, rather appalled her. She decided upon a slow, easy ascent with a pause on each landing.

There was nothing suggestive of the poverty of artists in this building. No poor artists, in fact, lived here. Instead there were men who had arrived financially as well as artistically, and rich poseurs who used art as an excuse for clipping the cords of conventions, rich frauds who paid obscure artists to do their work for them. These nameless dreamers mounted to their doom upon velvet-carpeted stairs, and saw their painted countenances, to be veiled inside the doors, reflected in handsome mirrors.

It was all familiar to Juanita. Her

feet had trod the rich velvet of these carpeted stairs before, and she had seen her own matchless face in the mirrors that cast back their reflections, by day as well as by night, through the aid of electric lights shining through milky-blue globes.

As Juanita had sought the chorus life as an experience, she had upon one eventful day—it proved very eventful indeed—offered herself incognito, at first, for the sake of that excitement recognized by her as a necessity, a supreme one not to be denied—why should it be, Juanita demanded of herself?—as model to an artist well known to her by name.

As was usual with her, she had lived out in her mind her career as an artist's model before she applied for the position, and she had concluded that if there was excitement in anything it would be in serving this remarkable man of brilliant mind and somewhat greenish reputation. Juanita, during her short life in the chorus, had heard of the revels in this studio.

She found the artist outwardly simple to a degree, as much of a surprise as she had been to Marcus. She was not long, however, in discovering that his simplicity was a perfected art, his naturalness merely cultivated artificiality. He was poet as well as artist, a dreamer but a shrewd one. Pushed to the wall, he might have proved a bounder, but he was too clever to be pushed to the wall. He brushed aside combat as with a light feather. When indoors, he left his throat bare, and sometimes wore gold sandals.

His habitation, his studio, was charming in every way, possessed, in fact, all that such a mind as his might be expected to present as to environment. His colors blended like those of a rainbow and he managed lights as the heavens manage the sun, moon and stars through clouds. . . . His draperies were his clouds.

To Juanita he was the exact opposite of Marcus, a relief from Marcus, and as such was quickly recognized and appreciated.



When he learned who she was, he accepted her as both model and friend. He arranged all things to please her. Today he greeted her eagerly.

"Juanita!" he exclaimed, "you!"

One of the conditions of their acquaintance was that if she suddenly disappeared he was to make no inquiries, molest her in no way, and as he was as intellectually beyond emotional abandonment as Juanita herself, he had found it simple enough to obey. Juanita had been and gone! He accepted it. Here, at the end of six months, she suddenly returned. He accepted that.

"You are pale," he said, leading her forward.

"Yes," her lids fluttered, "the steps!" She controlled her fluttering lids and smiled. "I'm something of an invalid."

"Sit down, Juanita!" He peered at her solicitously as he seated her in a thickly upholstered armchair.

She was glad to close her eyes and rest her head against the back of the chair.

He moved off and returned with a glass of sherry.

"Have you been so ill?"

"I've performed a wonderful feat," she said, after swallowing the wine quickly. "I've brought a human being into the world!"

"Ah!" He drew a chair up with the charmingly eager manner familiar to her and seated himself directly in front of her.

"That is a wonderful feat!" he exclaimed.

"And yet," said Juanita, "one so very casually accepted!"

"Juanita accepts nothing casually. Therein lies her charm. Do you know, dear girl, I've actually missed you!"

It was characteristic of him to dismiss serious considerations in just this manner, and Juanita had not contemplated his taking her news any differently. She had gone to him with no idea whatever of shouldering upon him any responsibility.

"I doubt it," she said.

"Why?"

"Both you and I are too self-absorbed for that."

"Then you have not missed me?"

"I live in the moment, Paul! An experience with me is an experience while it lasts. I lived for several months in the excitement of life on the stage. From the day I left I rarely thought of it. It was the same with you!"

"And do you accept motherhood, Juanita, with the same indifference?"

"It was too short-lived an experience for me to say."

"Short-lived?" His eyes started slightly.

"When you have heard what I have to tell you you will understand that it was a great relief to me. I now regard it all as a wonder, a mysterious achievement which hardly concerned me. Really," she added with an airy lifting of her hand, "nothing should be taken too seriously except—"

"Except what, Juanita?"

"The loss of one's comfort—a position once attained."

"I quite agree with you!"

"I am in danger of just that very thing."

"What?"

"Losing my comforts and the position I have got through my marriage."

"How is that?"

Juanita was becoming enigmatical and he again noted her extreme pallor.

"Wait a moment!" he exclaimed.

There are beings who cannot be said to walk; they move or leap about. He was one of these. She knew why he had left her. He would return bearing his bronze tray with glasses on it.

"Conversation without drinks," he had once said to her, "is like love without kisses."

Wine, incense, pale colorings, the skylight through which they saw the stars and clouds, or shut out the heavens with those intense blue shades—Juanita thought him remarkable beneath his blue dome. And his pictures, all those pale, poetic pictures, inoffensive impressions that stirred strangely, one scarcely knew why, except that in nearly all his



own rather wondrous face, himself, stood boldly or vaguely outlined!

There was no escaping him in his own domain. He was a dancer; he looked at you from the depths of a forest; he plied the oars of a boat; he made love to an elfish maiden; he kneeled at the feet of an old woman. . . . He was everywhere, in every pose.

While he was absent Juanita lay back in the low chair with her eyes for the better part upon the skylight where the snow lay thick. Occasionally she shifted an oblique glance to a nearby window, where the snowflakes, lazy and soft, like an army of slaughtered moths, tumbled earthward. It was beautiful, the snowy doom, the snowflakes falling and the violet tints of the studio fading into gray. When he reappeared he paused to touch into flame a violet bulb. The white doom responded and there was light enough.

"How calm and beautiful it all is here!" she said after a silence, as he filled her glass. "And this wine sparkling in this glass! What a joy," she exclaimed, "to know how to live!"

"And to know how to love!" he whispered.

She thought a moment.

"People who love do not live well," she answered quietly. "They grow stupid. It is those like you and me, who understand self-exploitation without love, the value of accessories, of a color, a flavor, a kiss withheld, who know life. But I must not fall into a dream with you, Paul! Through dreaming with you," and she half laughed, "disaster has befallen me!"

"Disaster?"

"There is a great possibility of its becoming one."

"Tell me, Juanita!"

"I fear I became, through weakness, of course, insane for a moment. That is, I was a victim of conscience." She broke off. "You will hear a very interesting story, Paul!"

"Stories of conscience are not interesting, Juanita!"

"As a rule, no."

For a while they sat in silence, with the purple light in the distance shining like a star.

"What is the interesting story of conscience?" he smiled at her finally.

"I made—don't be too amazed!—a deathbed confession to Marcus! I told him that the baby was not his!"

She prevented his speaking. "That is my present position there in the house. He is away. When he returns I am to be disposed of, I suppose, as he sees fit!"

"Juanita!"

She lifted a jewelled hand. "That is, in spite of its foundation on conscience, an interesting story, isn't it?"

"But, dear girl, what will you do?"

She took an upright position, and he thought how beautiful she was in her nest of pure ermine, quite luminously so, in fact.

"I shall fight," she said, "with myself as my weapon! Some day I may want to leave. The fever—the thing that brought me to the stage and brought me to you—may overtake me, prove too strong. I don't know about that; I am uncertain; worthless perhaps, except as an *édition de luxe* of humanity. As that, for the present, I want to pose and, of course, this *édition de luxe* must be properly housed, placed. I'm going to fight to overcome an impossible situation that in a moment of weakness I blundered into."

"You're a brave girl, Juanita!" And he lightly clapped his hands.

"What I came to tell you is that—for I can't, of course, be *sure* of victory—no matter what you hear, you must have no fear about yourself. In this case I believe the woman should be the protector of the man. It was I who intruded upon you. The whole situation, Paul, as far as you are concerned, is a dead incident."

"You are a sweet child!" he exclaimed, and she knew that he felt no responsibility, could feel none. She smiled upon him as one smiles upon a vanishing day.

"I am very far from being a sweet child," she said. "I take what I want



out of life, fully conscious that the price may be lurking somewhere. I have the courage for that! That is about all!"

"You are a strange being, Juanita."

"I am the result of generations of decaying culture and disdainful deportment. I am a perfectly natural product, indifferent, irresponsible, and I accept myself understandingly."

"You are like my work, Juanita, all technique, all color, no soul."

"Or like you!" She stood up. "I am on the eve of a great battle, Paul, a battle to take place in a drawing-room. I mean to fight to win! If I lose, I will see what lies in being an outcast!"

She turned, gathered the ermine wrap about her and left.

He could think of her, crowned in her turban only as a snow image that had melted from his presence. He listened keenly for the faint sound of the closing of the outside door. When, after what seemed to him a long while, he heard it, he experienced a sense of relief. He knew that Juanita had gone out of his life and the full meaning of himself as a dead incident rather wearied him. He marveled that he could be that, and at her indifference, her courage, her detachment—marveled more at his memories of her than her intrusion had disturbed, but that were now, on the instant, back in his mind like old, faded prints in a deserted house.

There was intense loneliness in his memories, with a kind of sad yearning. He recalled that on several occasions, auspicious occasions, he had read to her Browning's "The Faultless Painter." But his reading had failed of purpose. Her mission was not a soul mission. What then? She had used the word spiritual. Was it that? He hardly knew. She was intangible.

And yet how wonderful, he thought, as he emptied the remaining contents of the bottle into his glass and lifted it as to her, how ruthless, detached, living upon fine emotions as an orchid upon air! He was pleased as he thought thus. Juanita was a human orchid, del-

icate, exquisite, fine, almost too ethereal to be human, as the orchid was too ethereal to be a flower. She was beyond those emotions that made any call upon her. She had never suggested that he had awakened love in her; she told him, in fact, quite plainly that she scorned an idea whose devotees became slaves, victims of themselves and others. Motherhood had been greeted by her simply as a mysterious accomplishment of nature through her, and she had not by any insinuation suggested that he was at all associated in her mind with the event.

He seated himself, placed the emptied glass on the floor beside his chair, and feeling a bit strange, a bit drowsy, fixed his eyes on the window through which Juanita had watched the leisurely descending snowflakes. It was now only a black square. It fascinated him to observe the change in the window, that all its magic effects had been swallowed up in the night.

With Juanita's departure forever out of his life—and he felt it was that—he likened himself to that window with all his magic effects swallowed up in a kind of soul darkness. If Juanita had loved him! He smiled. Juanita could not love him. From the beginning to the end he had served her spiritually, as Marcus, the big husband had served her materially.

## CHAPTER VII

MARCUS was a precise man. At the end of six weeks he returned.

On entering the drawing-room he discovered Juanita lying on a blue velvet couch in a yellow kimono embroidered in flowers.

The sight of her thus lounging in the drawing-room in a negligée, looking like a geisha, gave him a sense of the house disorganized. He seemed on his very arrival to breathe deterioration. A sensuous decay had dared penetrate the portals of a home that had hitherto existed correctly, healthily, a veritable shrine of virtue.

She was pale, this exotic he had in-



roduced here, pale and delicate-looking, but it was plain to see she was practically recovered.

She was reading a novel bound in yellow, and appeared to him, in the circumstances, extremely luxurious and insolent. The sight of her thus, the sight of her daring to appear natural, her own indifferent self, infuriated him.

Before her eyes could meet his he turned sharply, as sharply as Marcus ever turned, and went down the hall, a hall furnished and decorated with all the splendor of an ancient palace, to the library. Here he stood inside the door with a slightly alarmed manner, making discreet observation, as though even in the precincts of the one place he claimed exclusively flippancy may have intruded. Nothing was changed, however. Everything seemed simply to have fallen asleep.

It was a handsome room—as were all the rooms of this correct home—a bit solemn, certainly massive, as befit the habits of a somewhat solid, and certainly massive, man. It seemed to Marcus that the room awoke, that everything in it awoke, cautiously, and stared condescendingly at him, the wronged husband. He had a feeling that inanimate objects, so long given over to deferential service to his exclusive comfort, might suddenly laugh in his face. This was an extraordinary mental flight born of unnatural tension, for Marcus was not an imaginative man.

He walked over defiantly and raised a shade, admitting a flood of sunlight. As he turned to seat himself he faced Juanita on the inside of the open door.

Having forced a momentary gaze into his eyes, she closed the door and came forward.

He took his seat at his desk, a broad, tablelike affair of heavily carved mahogany, and Juanita took a step that placed her directly opposite him. . . . They faced each other across the table.

Since Marcus last saw her in her present position, discussing with him her preference for a red car over the prescribed gray of his choice, she was changed. She had always been beauti-

ful, but for the first time she was lovely. Motherhood had, in spite of her defilement of its sacredness, stamped her thus. Except for the over-full bosom, sharply noted by him, she looked girlishly pathetic. There was, now that she no longer flaunted the yellow-back novel—Marcus saw it as flaunted—a certain weariness, languor, as though her strength was being taxed, as though it cost her strength to sustain herself. She had, in fact, the helpless look of all young mothers, was acutely feminine through it, easily an object of appeal. Marcus caught sight of this look and was for the moment baffled by it. But this passed and he saw Juanita the victim of herself, caught in a trap. Just as he had felt that the furniture wanted to laugh in his face, he now wanted to laugh in hers. Denied this relief, an inward rage began to burn him. If motherhood had made of her in appearance an appeal, her lack of chastity had made her an affront. She was standing there, consciously or unconsciously, a self-erected target to be shot at. At any rate, he so regarded her. In his sight Juanita had committed a crime that not only stirred him to revolt, but that quivered the ashes of his ancestors.

Suddenly his lips curled. Her frailty was purely physical. Her sin had not even humbled her. Her manner was unruffled. She looked boldly at him; she wore a gay costume.

He fixed upon her a penetrating glance that she accepted, a bit charmed by the dramatic situation, a bit charmed by Marcus himself, so big, so lustily masculine, this being who in a moment of weakness she had undone, as, in all probability, she had undone herself. His eyes were, or so it seemed to her, those usually calm brown eyes so steadily fixed upon her, luminously evil. He was much paler than she had ever seen him, and this emphasized the bluish tint the lower part of his face took on after shaving. It was thought of the coarse beard, never completely effaced, that had, after a day's growth, caused her pain through one of Marcus' uncouth—to her certainly rude—kisses, that



gave her, as the thought of pain will, courage to speak.

"I've come," she said, "to know what you intend to do with me!"

He detected a sneer in her voice, a sneer out of bitter recollections, and his staring eyes marveled. They questioned her.

"You were bold enough to select me," she took up against the silence, "in the face of your own judgment and that of others. Are you going to be bold enough to abide by your own choice?"

"I am not."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes."

"In coming to that decision aren't you losing sight too much of the individual?"

"The individual?" asked Marcus blankly.

"Yes, of me; my value to you; what you married me for?"

She was standing her ground with soldier-like calm. Juanita, however, was not calm. The game was in his hands, the decision as to what her future was to be. Her attitude was what she had decided upon. She was going to play herself as her trump card. She was not exactly at home in her rôle. She was used to command through more subtle means. She had won Marcus by very subtle means. There was no time now for subtle means. She had to fight openly, in her own opinion, vulgarly. There came over her for the moment a certain sense of revolt, disgust, a desire to give up, surrender, walk out of the room, and out of the house. . . . She even wondered what she would do first.

A vision of Paul came up and of his studio, of other men, and other studios, of the passions and fatigues of men, of change, adventure, struggle, of gradually going down—of a garret, maybe—the end.

As opposed to this she saw the man seated in front of her, the man who kept her standing in his presence, the man who was holding her not through himself, but through what he stood for, and had. She saw distinctly two paths

for her to tread. In either path she chose she would be a chattel, a conquered thing. A chill passed over her, followed by a glimpse, so indistinct she could not define it, of something different. She felt a momentary acute longing for this something, something that was like Paul's environment, his habitation, himself, but was not there. As she looked at Marcus seated like an evil statue, she wished that he could supply it. What? She did not know, and felt the inclination of hysterical laughter at the idea. All that Marcus had to give was what she had sold herself to him for, the chance to be wealthy, to live in luxury and pose as respectable.

She stood respectfully before this, stood quite a while looking at Marcus, who represented these things, these things with herself as the price of them. He was like a graven image seated there so arrogantly, calm and unmoved, seated there with the power to pronounce judgment on her, become the judge to pronounce sentence upon her—state what her future was to be. She recalled him when he was not this graven image, not this haughty judge about to pronounce a sentence, but a man given over to himself at her expense.

It encouraged her to go on with the battle with herself as a weapon. His position was strong. Was he capable of being as strong as his position?

"Marcus," she suddenly asked, "what's the meaning of for better or for worse?"

"The words have no meaning."

"They were merely, then, put in to decorate the marriage service?"

"They probably were put in by an enthusiast. No man takes a woman as his wife for better or for worse."

"No?"

"He believes in his power to make the better prevail."

"Isn't that something of a gamble?"

"You have proven to me that it is."

"Is it," and she glanced at a chair on the other side of the table, "permissible for me to take a seat at this court of justice?"

She walked over and took the seat.



There was a slight pause until she rather exclaimed, bending forward slightly: "Do you know that what I am is the result of you?"

"No."

"That I was a good girl when you married me?"

"I don't even know that."

"Do you doubt it?"

"I do."

The blood mounted, and she sat quite a while, feeling that a flame was being fanned to her face.

Finally she said, for the first time nervously, "You must let me talk, explain the situation as it appears to you!"

"The situation as it is," corrected Marcus.

"Yes, as it is. I married you, allowed you to purchase me—"

"You would oblige me by cutting short any discussion of that. It may interest you, but it doesn't interest me in the least."

"I will," she flashed. "I will speak of *you*! When I met you I had not the faintest idea of what selling myself to you as a wife would mean. I faced the situation in my imagination, not once as it actually turned out to be! I've suffered horribly by your insults."

Marcus stood up. "Insults?" he inquired icily.

"Yes, the insults of your very nature!"

She was on her feet, facing him, but suddenly dropped back to her seat. He, also, took his seat, looking away from her. For some reason his size began to affect him. He felt grotesquely large. He was afraid to look at her, she seemed at the moment—the moment that was the outcome of her words—grotesquely small. This quickly passed and he was quite natural again, natural, stoical and vindictive. He was waiting to dispose of Juanita! That he allowed her to talk was due to politeness, a habit of deportment too fixed to be overthrown, a habit he could not escape.

"You wore on me terribly," he heard her saying, "I sought relief through my imagination, in imaginary situations. It

was almost like provoking hallucinations. For days at a time I would live in the belief that I was a slave. I went back to ancient days—to the block, went through it all, myself as the slave, and you as the highest bidder. I've actually felt the chains on my wrist. Often when you came to me, in my mind, I stood before you thus. It aided me. I was not really I. You were not really you! Once I fancied that you were Nero and that some torture awaited me as soon as you should leave me, my death perhaps at your command. Once I fancied myself an octoroon with you as master with a whip in your hand, and the right to command me. And during all these months of mental and physical torture you never once noted these things. You saw only yourself."

He made no reply to this and she burst forth:

"Disgusted with both you and myself, can't you understand that I sought relief from us both? I was tired of amusing you, being ignored by you, and yet at your beck and call! In my own eyes you had made a worthless thing of me, a being with no self-respect. It is as that, a being without self-respect, I am offering myself today. You didn't marry me for any especial wifely virtues I might have to offer you. An incident occurred that, after all, you are responsible for. Why can't you forget it? Let us go on living on the low basis you established for us! I am willing to go on taking you for what you are. Why can't you take me for what I am? I don't respect you, so why should you respect me?"

"You are actually demanding," asked Marcus, "to live under my roof as my wife without my respect?"

She stood up, her breast heaving slightly. "I've never had it!" she exclaimed.

To be fair to Marcus, he was rather taken off his feet by this. It was certainly news to him!

Juanita saw his surprise, that she had, for the moment, met him, and before he could recover himself she deliberately flashed into his eyes that well-remem-



bered searchlight glance that penetrated to his centres.

It angered Marcus, angered and dismayed him. With a movement to escape her, escape contact perhaps of the gay kimono, he swept by her and out of the room.

For a moment a feeling of loneliness went through Juanita, the loneliness of an antagonist robbed of his opponent. She looked about her bewildered. Marcus had shown strength. She laughed, wanted to applaud him, applaud him that he was at last assuming a rôle that made him interesting.

She felt excited. . . . Tears sprang to her eyes. She passed her hand across her cheek where his beard had so often torn at the delicate skin, and across her lips where his kisses had caused pain. A rather wicked gleam shot into her eyes. She had decided to wage a new battle, if, for nothing else, the battle itself. She was, since the contest was undecided—the effect of her glance told her that—going to fight Marcus in a way that made her feel wicked and rather ashamed.

### CHAPTER VIII

IN the evening she dressed herself resplendently for dinner.

The costume of her selection was one that on former occasions had invited ardent glances from Marcus.

It was of diaphanous shining silver, and with it she always wore a scarlet rose over her left ear. . . . She had not forgotten the rose this evening.

Seated alone at the large dining table—for Marcus did not arrive for dinner—Juanita could see herself very plainly in the mirror opposite her, a very broad mirror that rested on a marble shelf and reached well up to the ceiling.

Juanita had often seen Marcus' back reflected in this mirror. It seemed to her as she sat there with her elbows on the table peering at herself, that she represented a small image of evil. Her mind swept back to the large, still, tree-covered yard of her childhood and she wondered at her development into this

little image of evil. It rather fascinated her, though, what she had done with her life, for herself. It was really, after all, in spite of Marcus, Marcus who had proven the means to an end, quite wonderful. She had only to hold on, that was all, hold on by forcing Marcus to let go—let go of certain ideas that stood in her way.

It seemed impossible to Juanita that she could, by a word from him, be swept out of it all, this very room, in fact, with its silver and cut-glass and highly decorated china, shining and exciting her. She wanted to laugh at the very idea, but was suddenly alarmed by the other side of the picture—that Marcus *would* sweep her out, and with the dinner only half served she rushed out of the room, hurried up the stairs to her own.

This room represented *her*. She could think better here, recover from her disappointment at not being able to open fire on Marcus at dinner.

It was quite two hours later that she, as if in obedience to a sudden thought, rang for her maid and changed the shining silver costume for a velvet kimono. The red rose remained in her hair, and Juanita felt in this costume even better equipped for her battle, that eternal battle of the sexes, that she was a part of, but had no broad conception of.

Her room was not only furnished in yellow, but all the lights were reflected through amber-colored globes. In the golden reflection, costumed as she was with her hair down and the red rose gleaming, she was what she felt herself—sufficiently enticing to have hopes of the evening as hers. She knew that she was radiantly beautiful, knew the value of radiant beauty, and that Marcus was only acting the part of strength. She fully believed her antagonist assailable and was playing herself, as she had decided she would, as her trump card.

For a while she moved about restlessly, tossing sofa pillows to make them breathe forth their perfumes, and bringing to their aid the spray of dainty atomizers. Once she laughed; once the tears sprang to her eyes. Juanita in



her rôle of the little warrior was strangely excited, eager. . . . Marcus would sit in his chair and she would spring like a kitten to his lap.

Juanita had many thoughts, many little plans that kept her mind busy, very busy indeed.

She grew tired at last, or seemed to. The rose fell to the floor and she seated herself in a big armchair, drew her feet up under her, placed her elbow on the arm and with her face in her hand peered intently at the open doorway.

It was twelve o'clock when she heard Marcus enter, and like a dog who hears his master's step, her eyes flashed and she listened.

To reach his own room he must pass her open door. Juanita's heart was beating somewhat wildly, but her position was unchanged.

Marcus, attracted by the open door, saw her thus forcing upon him her personality, a personality that had from the beginning stamped her as his, and that was now being emphasized through the sensuous glow of an atmosphere drugged in mingled perfumes. . . . This room and these perfumes were well known to Marcus.

He paused, ran his fingers through his hair, and walked more rapidly than usual to his room.

Juanita started and then felt faint. She was not strong and had been toying rather violently with her emotions.

She leaped to her feet, stood breathless a moment, felt herself being swept out of it all, strangely out of the life of Marcus, and burst into tears.

## CHAPTER IX

WHEN Marcus reached his room a vision of Juanita remained in his mind; the perfume she had, and he knew this, forced upon him, lingered in his nostrils. He was unable to think clearly, felt himself losing ground.

He tried to picture himself housed with Juanita on the lines she had outlined, tried to lower himself, as one is temporarily lowered through pronounced inclination, to that level. It

revolted him, for to be fair to Marcus, he had never dreamed of holding himself otherwise than a wholly correct, self-respecting, irreproachable individual, and this brought him, with a swing, face to face with himself in a divorce court. That, himself offering opportunities for sensational—the Schuyler name alone would do that—headlines in the newspapers, in addition to facing judges and curious persons as a wronged husband—it gripped Marcus every time he saw himself as a wronged husband—proved even more than trying. It proved so trying, in fact, that Marcus, who was Marcus without being Aurelius, suddenly felt himself consumed by a violent and for that matter, too, unexpected rage. And what was stranger still—strange things were happening in rapid succession, in itself a novel experience, to Marcus—this sudden and unexpected rage ended in a fierce desire to hold Juanita in his arms.

He started, as he had so often done before, to seek her, a figure of fire enveloped in the golden glow of her boudoir, when equally as suddenly the thought of her repelled him. He took a rather soldier-like position in the centre of his spacious, high-ceilinged room and remained there, struggling for precise reasoning, in vain, perhaps, until interrupted by his servant, who appeared with pajamas, bathrobe and other things such as slippers, for Marcus' comfort for the night.

Being trained to obey the silent command of servants, Marcus went to bed.

In the morning, as was quite natural, he decided upon exactly the same plan his grandfather, great-grandfather, for that matter, might, most surely would, have adopted.

Just as he had left home to get possession of himself through slaughtering things that walked on four legs, or flew by the aid of wings, he sent for the minister.

In considering this step Marcus sincerely regretted the death of a former minister, old Mr. Winthrop, who had preached in the same pulpit sixty years, and died finally of extreme old age.



Had this minister, old Mr. Winthrop, been alive, Marcus felt sure he would have been tremendously aided in putting the thumb-screws on Juanita—even the burning, red-hot irons might have been, although, of course, not seriously considered, referred to. A woman like Juanita old Mr. Winthrop would no doubt have said, although it might not be feasible, should be burned—Mr. Winthrop might have added with a pious gesture—at the stake.

Marcus would have known just how to meet Mr. Winthrop, just how to look, act—Marcus paid high for church privileges—conduct himself even to the tone of his voice. . . . Marcus rehearsed just how he would have waved Mr. Winthrop to his seat.

In doing this he was really giving himself time to decide, come to some kind of conclusion, as to how to meet the new pastor, Mr. Wingfield Montague.

This Mr. Montague, as different from old Mr. Winthrop as an ocean in storm is different from a sandy beach, had rather, on first sight, terrified Marcus. It seemed to him as he slipped into the chancel on the eventful day of his appearing in Mr. Winthrop's place, that he might, instead of expounding the sacred gospel, blow a bugle that would in some miraculous manner cause the roof of the church to fall in on the members. It seemed that with one sweeping glance Mr. Montague had cursed his parishioners rather than blessed them. Marcus had for some reason felt an especial curse directed at himself, and remembered perfectly that he had wondered whether Mr. Montague had been informed as to his having married a girl out of the chorus.

This thought so absorbed Marcus that he had missed the Collect and found himself all on a sudden wondering if it had been omitted. This Mr. Montague, this six-foot-two giant, who had the temerity to carry his gold curls and blue eyes through life with him, certainly as far as he had gone, which was somewhere in the thirties, seemed a man capable of anything different, ex-

traneous, Marcus almost thought outrageous, since he rode, toggled like a society man, horseback every morning in the park, and had even been seen doing the same thing on one or two occasions Sunday afternoon. Marcus had seen him himself in the mornings when he, also, often rode his own horse Blanco, and had heard the other discussed at the club. . . . There could be no doubt about it.

Still, having been brought on from Idaho, where he was making some kind of an oratorical stir that had reached as far as New York, to fill Mr. Winthrop's place—Marcus often noticed that strange things happened in this life—he was the minister in charge, and as such he, Marcus, being in need of a minister, was the one to be called in.

"A doctor for your body," Marcus' father was wont to say, "a minister for your soul, and leave the rest to God."

It had always seemed to Marcus that these words contained the whole wisdom of life. You put things on the doctor, minister, and God, thereby relieving yourself of all responsibility. In Marcus' eye the doctor, minister and God formed a strong trio.

Juanita, already agitated over the consideration of the day before, which had left her if not stranded, suspended, was standing at the window when Mr. Montague's car drove up.

This gentleman was, of course, since Juanita had been to the church, known to her by sight, had been frequently spoken of in the home on account of Marcus having said very often, over and over, in fact, that some time they must invite Mr. Montague to dinner.

At the sight of this gentleman, an even larger man than Marcus, Juanita felt a slight tremor pass over her. These two large men were no doubt on the eve of a discussion about her, a discussion as to her fate.

She turned from the window and rather blankly faced the room. She liked Mr. Montague. On one occasion, while he was speaking, he had lifted her from her seat to her feet and held her there breathless. It caused her—



for Juanita had her own innate delicacy as to her private affairs, as well as Marcus—a twinge that she was to be, her character, held up for inspection, that she was to be discussed with Mr. Montague. She was, however, not especially overcome by this, any dramatic situation outweighing in Juanita's opinion almost any other consideration, and fell to wondering whether Mr. Montague would turn the tide for or against her. She rather felt that he might prove himself, from certain things she had heard him say, an ally, and would have liked very much before he reached Marcus to have given him a glimpse of herself in the very lovely costume she was wearing. . . . It was quite a part of Juanita to revert to herself as a trump card worth playing.

In the meantime, while Juanita was thus holding converse with herself, Marcus was greeting the minister in the drawing-room.

The greeting over, one savoring of a death in the house, Marcus asked his guest if he would mind following him to the library.

Mr. Montague did not in the least mind the library—in fact, he answered with a manner indicating “or the roof” if Marcus felt inclined for that place. Mr. Montague plainly seemed to say that place mattered to him not at all, but that he was almost eagerly interested in what he had been called in to hear—be a part of.

Inside the library Marcus—after all, Mr. Montague, in spite of an, and especially at this moment, appearance wholly to the contrary, was the minister—waved Mr. Montague to a seat, a large maroon leather armchair, with pretty much the same manner, same deference, he would have observed had Mr. Montague really been Mr. Winthrop.

“I suppose,” said Marcus after a brief pause, after getting up to close the door that Mr. Montague had left open when following him in, “you may have heard, Mr. Montague, that my wife was a former chorus girl.”

“No,” said Mr. Montague, “I have

never heard that. How is Mrs. Schuyler?”

Marcus ignored the inquiry.

“Naturally,” he went on, “both the members of my family, and my friends at large—my intimate friends, of course—warned me against such a marriage.”

“There is a prejudice, I believe,” answered Mr. Montague as he eyed Marcus rather closely.

He was a strikingly handsome man, this Mr. Montague, the kind of type made famous by the great depicter of charming men, poor Ouida. It was his peculiarly blond handsomeness, and his wholly unclerical manner of carrying it off, that Marcus had from the very beginning resented as not befitting a clergyman—all clergymen should closely resemble old Mr. Winthrop—and resented in the present moment even more strenuously. Marcus would have preferred that Mr. Montague be much plainer, more politely distant, far less eagerly interested. He was more used to that kind of men. How much easier it would have been for Marcus if old Mr. Winthrop were seated in the chair now occupied by the virile, rather glorious-looking Mr. Montague.

“I have a very remarkable story to tell you, Mr. Montague,” he burst forth finally, “an embarrassing story, too.”

“I am used to remarkable and embarrassing stories, Mr. Schuyler. Any man who lives in close touch with humanity invariably hears them. Life itself is remarkable and often embarrassing. Haven't you found it so?”

“I can't say that I have,” answered Marcus. “We have lived in this house, my family has, over a hundred years, and the life in it has never appeared remarkable or embarrassing until—”

“You introduced into it,” laughed Mr. Montague, “the little chorus girl!”

“The situation is a serious one, Mr. Montague.”

“I don't doubt it!”

“An impossible one!”

“That I do doubt. I have found very few impossible situations that could not be straightened out into very possible ones—that is if one wants to! What's



the impossible situation, Mr. Schuyler?"

Mr. Montague was looking Marcus straight in the eye.

"A little less than two months ago my wife gave birth to a child."

"Yes."

"She was very ill."

"Yes."

"In fact, for a short period her life was despaired of."

"Yes."

"She herself was convinced that she was dying—that she was on her death bed."

"Yes?"

"She made, what she supposed to be, a death-bed confession."

"To the effect?"

Marcus could not have had a more ardent listener than Mr. Montague. His expression was alert, his eyes beautifully bright. Nevertheless, the interest, the ardent attention of his listener, did not aid Marcus. He was embarrassed by it. It made his task difficult. But Marcus at heart was not a coward, only a man crippled by conventions, so he came out with it bravely, bravely for him indeed.

"She confessed to me that I was not the father of her child!"

In spite of himself Mr. Montague's eyes betrayed his surprise.

"And then recovered?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, she is today practically well."

For the first time Mr. Montague saw a betraying flash in Marcus' eye.

"I must say," said Mr. Montague, "that it is a remarkable story, a remarkable situation. May I smoke?"

Marcus waved a polite answer.

When Mr. Montague had lighted his cigar to his satisfaction he said: "And you have sent for me, I take it, to ask my advice?"

"I have!"

Mr. Montague puffed away a moment at his cigar and then fixed his eyes outside the window as if in deep thought.

"It's a curious thing," he said to Marcus a moment later, "how quickly the mind acts."

Marcus, with that habit of his of being unsympathetic, did not reply to this.

Mr. Montague, used to just such men as Marcus among his congregation, was in no way affected by it. He was quite used to this, as well as other, practical tricks of such men, to hold their own and maintain a profound dignity.

So he answered: "In the short time that I had my eye on that window, Mr. Schuyler, I went over your entire situation, went back, too, from the present moment to the hundred years that your family has occupied this—I won't say house—mansion. It is that!"

Marcus was still silent. In the business world these silences of his forced people to the point.

"I am ready," and Mr. Montague smiled, "with my advice, which is— By the way! What about Mrs. Schuyler since her recovery—how have things been between you?"

"When the doctor told me she would get well, I went away and only returned yesterday."

"Have you talked with her?"

"I have."

"To any purpose?"

"No."

"What is her attitude?"

"I should say," said Marcus, "more remarkable even than her confession. I would call her defiant."

"There must be," said Mr. Montague thoughtfully, "a reason or she couldn't be."

Marcus was again silent.

"I've heard some remarkable stories in my time out West around the mining camps and the like, Mr. Schuyler," Mr. Montague took up after a silence of his own, "but it does seem to me that this will go down in my mental notebook as one of the most remarkable of my life. My advice, though, is—"

He paused, looking with that way of his hard at Marcus.

"What?" inquired Marcus.

"Shoulder the situation! Be a man and bear the consequences of your own act!"

"My own act?"

"Your marriage to a chorus girl."



"That is quite impossible!" said Marcus, rising, and reseating himself.

"There are two things that, if properly considered, will make it possible. Self-effacement and duty to the woman you purchased illicitly!"

"Illicitly!" inquired Marcus. "What do you mean by that?"

"The fact that your wife has dared assume a defiant attitude towards you, when her position is so purely a defenseless one, proves to me that there was nothing sacred about your marriage, that she has grounds for resentment. I believe she has. You no doubt used the church to sanction your dalliance with this young woman, and you shouldn't insult the church that gave you the chance by—I may speak plainly, Mr. Schuyler?—airing your dirty linen! You married her, now keep her! I know a man out in Idaho, a far stronger and better man—for his character has been tested—than you, who has forgiven his wife five separate infidelities."

"I wouldn't call such a being a man," said Marcus coldly.

"No," answered Mr. Montague fervently, "he isn't—he's a god! There are some beings on this earth who get beyond being men! Shall I tell you what my opinion of the ordinary man is, Mr. Schuyler? They aren't fit to kiss the feet of the worst woman that hangs around a mining camp. I've looked on at the life of both! I'll warrant that your wife, in spite of her misstep, is a ten times better woman than you are a man—that she's just as worthy of being your wife as you are of being her husband!"

"What do you know about me, Mr. Montague?" Marcus' anger had risen.

"I know you picked a mistress out of a chorus."

"I made her my wife!"

"That's just what I'm complaining of! You got the church of Christ to stand by you, see you through! In my opinion you got your deserts!"

"If you were not a minister, Mr. Montague, I would say you were most insulting!"

"I'm not speaking to you as a minis-

ter! I'm speaking to you as a man, as man to man, and you've got a perfect right to resent anything I say on those terms. You sent for me for advice. I'm going to give it my own way, you can rest assured of that! And I can help you. But the only way I can help you is to show you yourself. For instance: Every thought you ever had concerning your wife from the first time your eyes fell on her in the chorus line was a discreditable one! Name of God, man, why can't you go on? Why renege? Why fly the track? Let me tell you, indiscretion or not, she's plenty good for you! That isn't the thing, though, to argue with you! Your inheritance has made it difficult for you to see things in that light. I'll put it this way: She fooled you in secret; don't let her make a fool of you in public."

"What do you mean?" asked Marcus with a scowl, for Mr. Montague had touched the sore.

Mr. Montague knew he had; knew his man.

"Don't let her make you the laughing stock of your circle, Mr. Schuyler, your club, for instance, and—"

Mr. Montague laid his cigar down and stood up. "You've got that woman's—never mind what she's done!—life in your hands. In reality you are asking me what to do with it? My answer is: whatever in Hell she is, remain her protector!"

Marcus indulged one of his silences. He was not so conventional now as—which is not too surprising—angry.

Mr. Montague, entirely conscious of this, was not daunted by it. He had faced much more dangerous ire than that of Marcus, which was protected by an unflinching deference to deportment. In his own library he would hardly strike, either verbally or physically. Marcus respected the home and guest within it at any cost, more especially if that guest followed the profession of spiritual adviser. He contented himself by eyeing Mr. Montague cynically.

"I would say," said that gentleman, making a kind of pulpit desk of Marcus'



table by laying a hand on it, "that in talking to you Mrs. Schuyler made a desperate attempt to, in spite of you, hold on to her present position. That being the case it would be reprehensible in you to turn her out of it for the multitude to stone. Why don't you forgive her, obtain her eternal gratitude, and teach her to love you? You're a very handsome, attractive man, Mr. Schuyler, but I believe up to the present time, while you've been getting a good deal out of matrimony, she's gotten precious little! Otherwise she wouldn't have betrayed you. Have you ever thought about *her* life, what being your wife meant to *her*? It's all very well to uphold matrimony as a sacred institution by which a man has unlimited rights over the acts of another individual. But I think the woman's happiness in marriage is of as much importance as her honor. I'd teach my wife to love me!"

"And," asked Marcus frigidly, "ignore her infidelity?"

"Exactly, just as you would—may already, for all I know—ignore your own."

"That is very remarkable reasoning, Mr. Montague."

"It's the reasoning, Mr. Schuyler, of Jesus Christ. It's the reasoning I've appointed myself to preach! Shall I tell you why I'm a minister? For some reason I became fascinated with Christ. His life took a strong hold on me. I wanted to expound it. I am trying to expound it to you. I am telling you exactly what I think, what I believe He, the Great Understander of human frailty, would have me tell you. Think it over, will you? There are times when it's better to forget than to remember. You have my advice. Will you take it?"

"It's out of the question!" exploded Marcus.

"Why? Are you too good a man to forgive? Is that it? If so, let me tell you I don't give a damn about good men; masculine morality isn't worth a damn anyway, but I do believe in strong men, and I think you've got a pretty

good foundation to make of yourself a strong man. At present you're a pretty weak one, or you wouldn't be asking me for advice. A man must wrestle with his own soul, or wrestle to give his soul a chance! Do that! It's a big thing! Take a week, anyway, to think it over! Let me come back here one week from today! What do you say?"

"Week?" echoed Marcus blankly.

"Yes, and during that time do nothing."

"I don't just see," said Marcus vaguely, "to what end?"

"Just to see what will happen—happen to you I mean by the end of the week. A doctor calling in might tell you to abstain a week from meat. I'm your spiritual doctor. Abstain for a week from a decision. Will you?" Mr. Montague put out his hand. "I am speaking to you as a friend. But if you kick that little chorus girl out, send her on her way to Hell, you're not in my opinion worthy the friendship of any man. Why should you be surprised by what she did? Why should you resent it? Good-day, Mr. Schuyler."

Marcus found himself alone.

## CHAPTER X

FOR a full hour he stood, as Mr. Montague to whom—an astounding oversight for Marcus—he had not said good-bye, thought he would.

At the end of that time he seated himself in his desk chair and remained there. During the past half hour Marcus had become a thoughtful man. Mr. Montague had made of himself a kind of mirror reflecting Marcus, and some of the reflections had rather staggered him.

Were they correct reflections? Was he really—and this had nothing to do with his final disposition of Juanita; he was as vague as to that as before Mr. Montague's visit—the immoral blackguard that the minister had portrayed?

He coupled this portrayal with some



of the things Juanita herself had said, while his eyes peered hard at the glass doors of a bookcase opposite his desk. It was as though these two had compared notes and Marcus found himself tremendously wrought up. He even dimly associated the minister—Marcus was really tremendously wrought up—in his mind with Juanita. The monstrousness of this idea almost alarmed him. He wondered if, along with all the other things he had been hearing of himself, it might not be added that he was insane.

Introspection had not been a part of Marcus' make up before. He found it not only astounding, the things one was able to dig up as to oneself, but disconcerting. He became distressingly uncomfortable, and all on a sudden he remembered that Juanita was the cause, the element of disturbance, and the fact, considering the relative importance of Juanita—Juanita and the Schuyler family—dumfounded him. His anger, positive and fierce, against her returned, and, as before, as on the night before, it ended in a burning desire to be in her presence.

This passed like the hot breath from a furnace one has walked quickly by, and he again concentrated upon himself.

To do Marcus full justice, the picture Mr. Montague had drawn of him was the surprise of his life, for not once had Marcus ever conceived of himself as any other than a perfectly correct gentleman, whether in or out of matrimony, and it had never occurred to him that his dealings with Juanita, or, for that matter, with the sacred institutions of matrimony, had been other than those befitting a correct gentleman, in fact, a Schuyler. He had been attracted to Juanita and had asked her, a polite procedure on his part, to be his wife, with the result that Juanita had accused him of being a brute, and the minister had declared him immoral.

It is perfectly natural that Marcus was astounded. It could not, in fact, have possibly been otherwise. Thus astounded at himself, and alone with himself, after a terrible thrashing, he

was, perhaps he was, an object of pathos.

He got up, left the house, lunched nervously at the club, and, as though drawn there by his own misery and perplexity, returned home, and, of course, to the library. Here he remained beside a window overlooking a small plot of ground where stood an old tree and some leafless rose bushes until dinner was announced.

If he had hoped to find Juanita at table he was disappointed. He was called upon to dine alone, and the very fact that he was thus called upon—Juanita's absence—thrust the whole situation of himself and Juanita rather cruelly upon him. He faced life with Juanita out of it, and there came over him—due probably to his prolonged absence from her—that low ebb-tide of self when self-respect, the consideration of conditions at all, seemed a hollow mockery in the face of inclination.

This, also recalling, as he quickly did, all Mr. Montague had said, embarrassed Marcus. Just as he had fled Juanita to battle with himself, he now fled Mr. Montague to grapple with the man Mr. Montague had introduced him to as himself. In other words, he decided to spend the week of indecision Mr. Montague had recommended in his mountain lodge as before.

In the morning a great surprise greeted him. A magnificent dog arrived as a gift from Mr. Montague. The dog, a splendid Russian wolfhound, shaggy and white as snow, wore a handsome collar. Attached to it was a card containing these words:

*"I am sending you a true and tried friend. Learn to love something. Begin on a dog."*

The first tears that Marcus ever remembered to have known filled his eyes as he laid his hand on the head of the beautiful animal.

At noon, this time unaccompanied by a servant, Marcus and the dog were on their way to the hunting lodge.



## CHAPTER XI

MARCUS wrote a note, a rather constrained and awkward note—for he was not used to dealing with impulsive friendliness—to Mr. Montague, and got a letter from him, quite a lengthy letter, saying that the plan of going to the country alone was a ripping one, and that he really believed it would prove the most eventful week of his life. He had an idea, he explained, that Marcus would find that he had been carrying about with him all these years, without knowing it, a very much neglected and starved soul. He advised Marcus to dig for it.

That was the last news that Marcus received from the outside world. He cooked for himself and Mario—Mr. Montague had mentioned in his letter that that was the dog's name—and when not engaged in that occupation the two took walks, or he kept the wood fire going, and sat in deep thought with the dog at his feet.

Marcus did not exactly know whether he was learning to love the dog, but he could not doubt that the dog was learning to love him. It was a strange, new sensation to be followed about, to be appealed to for recognition by burning looks from steadfast eyes, to have his hands licked, and to be so familiarly dealt with as to have a chin laid on his knee.

And all this with no thought of reward or compensation.

Marcus had paid for what he had. He had, it seemed a bit strange to him, his eyes would flash suddenly, paid for Juanita. Suppose, and this was Marcus' first soul awakening, she had been given, presented to him by God as this beautiful animal had been presented to him by Mr. Montague!

It seemed rather stupid to Marcus, this reasoning about the dog, and Juanita, not exactly right, fair to either, but he wasn't able to rid himself of the idea.

. . . It clung.

At the end of the week he had arrived at a conclusion as to Juanita.

He had done a great deal of thinking,

so much thinking, in fact, that there were moments when he seemed to have been up there in the hunting lodge with Mario a hundred years.

He felt strange, unnatural, as though, at times, he were some cumbersome piece of machinery that was being wound up to begin active service. It almost seemed to him that he could feel the different parts of his brain awake as from a long sleep.

And then suddenly—Marcus supposed it must be his soul that Mr. Montague had spoken of, told him he had to dig for—there came over him an intense longing to see Juanita, see her differently from what he had, and tell her he had forgiven her.

Marcus had never known so strong a desire before; he knew this because he felt illumined by it. The whole place was illumined. He got up and walked about in such agitation that the dog barked. Mario knew something important, very exciting, too, was in the air. He was even more convinced of it when the two sallied forth for the three-mile walk to the village, where there was a telegraph station. He would run ahead quite a distance, stand and bark, and then run back to Marcus and trot on knowingly by his side.

It was a cold, clear, beautiful morning, with ominous slate-colored clouds making the heavens callously tragic. The slate-colored clouds were full of snow. They had only to meet, merge into one, and Marcus felt sure there would be a heavy fall before night.

It did not deter him, however, after the bracing walk through an atmosphere clear, dazzlingly clear as a crystal, and nippingly cold, from sending the telegram to Juanita.

After asking her to come at once, he added he would wait in the telegraph office for her answer.

It came at the end of two hours.

Juanita's reply was that she would motor up the next day.

As Marcus stepped out he gave his attention to the clouds. They were becoming unfriendly, advancing towards



one another rapidly with, as it were, pronounced and deadly intention.

When he and Mario reached home the entire heavens were overcast. All was sullen there. . . . They stood in a gray world.

## CHAPTER XII

JUANITA arrived at sundown.

It had snowed hard all day until about an hour before, when suddenly the flakes ceased to fall, the heavens grew pale, and when the sun began to set the entire west assumed a shade of flaming gold. This gold was reflected on the white ground most dazzlingly, and the top of Marcus' lodge was also gleaming.

Marcus was standing in the doorway, sombre-looking still, it is true, but developed through a week of introspection and, in the end, high thinking, into a remarkably handsome man.

Mario was by his side and ran ahead of him, not too politely, to greet Juanita. He did this by quite a number of loud, sharp barks, an effort, no doubt, to declare to her that he was fully aware that she was the contemplated event that had caused his new, and by now highly valued, master his excitement of the day before.

## CHAPTER XIII

It was a strange environment, that is for her, to which Marcus had invited Juanita; and as she stepped indoors, a fur-covered little animal, she was alertly conscious of this.

It was not an ordinary habitation, this one set up here on the top of a high and desolate, one might say deserted, mountain. Marcus had left the planning of it in the hands of an architect, and it had been furnished, with not a suggestion from Marcus himself, by a person whose business it was to create suitable environment for people of wealth not blessed with temperamental tendencies, people who did not express themselves through their environment.

The place consisted of the very large,

rather low-ceilinged, living-room with kitchenette dining-room off, and an attic for servants' quarters. The wood-work, much in evidence and that included beams, was dark and highly polished, resembling the shining striped or mottled skins of reptiles. These polished surfaces, which somehow seemed to smoulder, as if ready to burst at any moment into flame,—these, as well as brasses, mirrors in ebony frames, skins and other objects for Marcus' welfare, were reflecting the fire-flames on Juanita's entrance.

"It is a black jewel set in a bed of pearls," thought Juanita—who was, as soulless people can be, imaginative.

Marcus' only boast, the only human boast Juanita had ever heard him make, was that his fifteen years as a huntsman had made of him, if nothing else, a good cook. Knowing the place to be well stocked with everything on earth, including a supply of wines, and that people came daily with game and steaks and other things, she rather looked forward to this repast—Marcus as cook and the handsome Russian chauffeur as waiter—as something, well, at any rate, novel. She saw Marcus through what he had, what he had to offer, as she ever had, and his reception had told her quite plainly that there was hope for the future.

She was almost sure of victory, and gave herself up to a comfortable sadness that isolation, physical fatigue, and a certain memory of Paul, Paul on the day she went to him for the last time—was it for the last time, thought Juanita a bit too hurriedly?—that the deep snow, lying so still and silent, in such a profound sleep outside, brought up.

Juanita was yet to learn that on the basis of his new-found soul Marcus was to make upon her an impossible, what she most surely would deem impossible, demand.

## CHAPTER XIV

MARCUS as chef and host, with the handsome Russian chauffeur as waiter, proved all, and more, than Juanita, ex-



acting as she was as to her entertainment, could desire.

When it was all over, and they were back in the living-room, Juanita, quite as still as Mario lying asleep on one of the rugs, listened to the story of a wronged man who saw himself in the wrong, a man who wanted to forgive and be forgiven.

Confronting not the Marcus he had always considered himself, a man practically above and beyond reproach, but the strange new man, without conscience, without honor even, who Mr. Montague had told him was himself, this had stirred Marcus, now that the time had come for him to speak, to an exaggerated sense of his own unworthiness. In proportion as he saw his own faults, Juanita's dwindled. They became, recalling Mr. Montague, his.

He told his story in the dull glow of wholly passive surroundings in a dull and almost passive way, held himself, his voice, manner, bearing, all in check, until he came to the demand upon Juanita that she was to find impossible.

The impossible demand, the request, was that she remain with him in this mountain lodge for six months, remain with him solely as his companion, while he tried to reach her soul and teach her to love him, love him for himself and not for what he had to offer as a part of himself.

They were seated in low leather arm-chairs in front of the fire, burned down, yet still giving forth a splendid warmth, with the glow of one crimson lamp, far away at their backs. Between this light and the fire, a pale moonlight flame lay on the floor, and as Juanita sat in silence she was conscious of the scene, that it penetrated and influenced her as the confession of Marcus had in no way done.

She had come here because the invitation was unique, suggestive, because a drama seemed in the air, a drama with her as successful star. Juanita was blessed—or shall we say cursed?—with an intelligence that forbade her deceiving herself. She knew, as she had always known, that the value of life, to

her, lay in situations, emotions out of contrivance, and not out of spiritual development. To remain in this place, even with the knowledge that her future was safe, remain here as the price of that knowledge, was beyond her. It would, she felt,—and that marked intelligence of hers worked quickly—queer her with Marcus. He would become aware that she had no soul for him to reach, no love, such as he sought, to give. There were far more interesting things, according to Juanita, than souls and their by-products, after all intangible, and he would become, as he sped on, aware of all this, her limitations, and so the fiasco.

It was characteristic of Juanita to be bold. She decided upon boldness, to be bold without being exactly certain as to where this boldness would lead her, or land her. She hoped it would land her—and that quickly—in her own yellow room at home, with Célestine at her beck and call, with either slippers or gowns in her hands, comfortably, splendidly so, in fact, in the centre of a great city with all its possibilities for adventure—danger.

In her heart Juanita still clung to her idea that it was danger that made life exciting. She became convinced of this one day when she took a long and very perilous automobile ride on a dangerous road. "To live," as she then said, "feeling that any moment may be your last, to gasp in fear, is living." The solitude of these safe mountains, with nothing to fear at all, not even Marcus, and with a dog to bark off the suggestion of any intruder, did not—even though she had confessed herself a sinner—appeal to Juanita.

She had no intention of allowing Marcus to overestimate her and thereby become, before the six months could possibly be over, disappointed in her. What she wanted of Marcus was to take her for what she was, stood for, take her on the grounds he had taken her. For that, considering the comforts involved, she was willing to pay the price—the old price.

"Marcus," she said finally, "what you



have been telling me, all that you have told me, is very fine. I know that, not through any especial feelings that it has provoked, but because I know the world's standards of what being fine is. But that kind of thing, the fact that you have been noble, and have forgiven what, to you, was an unpardonable offense—of course, from the world's standards, those that you have lived by, it was that—doesn't appeal to me. If I remained up here with you in this desolate place for six months, since I really don't believe I have any soul for you to reach, or soul love to give, I believe it would separate us entirely. I am quite frank when I tell you this. I would rather, and you must not be shocked at this, be in your life on the old terms than on the new!"

She paused and as Marcus did not reply she fixed her eyes on his profile a bit curiously. It surprised her, the charm of it, how handsome it had become. It was almost sensitive. Why couldn't he be like Paul, bring wine in to lift them, they two, up there alone, into an evening of spiritual revels? It was only big people, thought Juanita, big, serious people like Marcus, who found that they had souls to stand between them and ethereal pleasures.

She decided to reveal herself to Marcus, tell him exactly what she was, and all he could ever expect of her, depending upon herself as she was, as she was this moment in this beautiful isolate spot, and also his memories of her.

"Marcus," she took up quietly, "in accepting your forgiveness, I repeat, all I have to offer you is myself."

"I want more than that, Juanita."

"But if there is no more?"

"There would be if," Marcus again associated her in his mind with Mario—the dog had learned to love him—"you could learn to love me. As I have told you, I am convinced that your fault is on my shoulders. I want you to lift that burden from me. I have learned so much during the past week that I want to teach to you. I have sat in the quietude of this place evenings just as you and I are sitting now, shocked as

I recalled my past with you, my selfishness, my brutality, all the things you spoke to me of first, and that I have spoken of tonight."

"And that is the difference between us," said Juanita calmly. "I have never been shocked by myself, never could be. Any experience with me is an experience, something to be ignored when over and forgotten. Things do not make an impression on me, any lasting impression. I was impressed by my experience with you in the beginning, but it was too strong an experience for me; it wore on me. I want the elusive, the intangible, that which has no real meaning, no substance, and," Juanita paused, "I want excitement. That's why I told you once I was afraid of life, my irresponsibility and love of excitement may lead me anywhere, that is—and this is very important, Marcus—except outside good taste."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Marcus, whose eyes had not left the fire.

He felt a tired man, a bit wearied, as one who chases a butterfly that continues to escape. He felt irritated out of proportion to the occasion, what had happened, without knowing that Juanita had dragged, was dragging, at the wings he had been growing, and through the aid of which he had soared to heights.

"What do you mean by that?" he repeated.

Juanita thought before answering.

"That with me," she finally said, "dissembling is a passion. All my life I have been a dissembler and without the opportunity to continue as one I would droop like an unwatered flower. The reason I tell you that I would never do anything in bad taste is that the physical delicacy of me, out of inheritance, early training, would forbid that. That is why you offended—"

"I beg of you not to speak of me. I am more interested, since we are arranging our future, that you speak of yourself."

He sounded with these words very much like the Marcus of old, and she



burst forth: "I couldn't stay here—I really couldn't!"

"What about your being a dissembler?" asked Marcus.

"What is on the surface," Juanita answered, falling back to her calm, "doesn't interest me. I like to plan and contrive secret experiences, imaginary situations, like those I told you of when I was a slave and you were Nero. You remember."

"Yes."

"My first recollection in being punished for just such a thing was when I was seven years old. I remained out and went home and described a party I had been to, told what the other children wore, what was served for supper, all the details, and there had been no party. I hid all the evening in a stable to go home and tell about that party. And—"

"Yes?" inquired Marcus.

"This passion grew with my years until—"

Juanita paused, glanced at Marcus, looked about her excitedly, and then leaped into a supreme lie.

"Until?" asked Marcus, glancing at her.

"Until I lied to you on what I supposed was my deathbed."

"Lied?" exclaimed Marcus, turning in his chair to face her.

"Yes, every single thing I said to you that night was invention, fabrication, the ruling passion strong in death!"

In the future, when Juanita looked back, as she often did on this moment, she liked to wonder what impelled her, what had led her on.

Was she attempting by a supreme lie to re-establish herself in Marcus' opinion? Was she affording him the opportunity to be re-established in his own opinion? Was she really under the spell of an absolutely grand environment, what was outside, nature itself, and the soul influence that Marcus had spoken of, spoken of as to himself? Was she, for the moment, reaching up to the nobility of his plane, trying to save Marcus from her smallness and so save him for himself, for his new ad-

venture into the heroic, take the stain off it for him, or was she again, once more, dabbling in her own nature, her passion for self-satisfaction? She never knew.

But whatever the belief of either, it was a brilliant stroke, for there are times when to establish doubt is more praiseworthy than to shoulder either a damaging truth or a damaging lie.

Marcus had made no reply, neither by word or movement. He sat perfectly still in the big chair, his hands hanging limp over the arms of it, his eyes on the fire.

"Marcus," she rather burst forth finally, "regard me as an incident in your life, a not too important one. I will surely become that. You are growing. I am not. I have reached the limit of what I am ever to be. I am probably at my best today. I have a remarkable brain, but I am not interested in developing it as you are developing your soul. I prefer—I've always thought of myself in this way—to be just what I am, developed by conditions and not by any effort on my part. Take me for what I am! I'm not so particular about your putting me on a pedestal. I would like you to deal gently with me. Fine china—I am that—cannot be roughly handled, or it will break under a touch, you know that. I very nearly broke, and it was not because I was offended, but because you didn't know—I am applying it to your treatment of me—fine china when you saw it. I resented that. I was a cup to you, that was all, and you never noticed the delicacy of it. I was lost upon you! My vanity suffered, my delicacy suffered. Perhaps I am wholly unmoral. I don't know. I don't care."

Marcus indulged another of his silences and she went on.

"Instead of lying about deceiving you I may even deceive you—I don't know, none of us does, what we may or may not do, but one thing I do know is that I shall never do anything openly to offend either you or the world. Whatever I do will be secret, subtle, something for me, without the approval or disapproval



of others, something fragile. Even that will not be on any high ground, not at all, but simply because I was born fragile. I am the outcome of delicacy. You are grim, Marcus!"

"Yes, Juanita."

"I want to tell you something. It took what happened to you through me to make you find out that you had a soul." Was she clever again? That came up. . . . She did not know.

He turned to flash a glance at her.

"It is just because I can see into things, such a thing as that, that I find life so interesting. Because of me, strange as it may seem to you, your whole life is to be on a different plane!" Juanita believed now she *was* clever, felt herself so, and revelled in the excitement this kind of cleverness afforded her. Color stole to her smooth, satin-like cheeks and burned them.

"Marcus!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Juanita."

"Some day you will love with that soul part of you that has had its birth through me. She will be an entirely different woman from me, oh, entirely different! I seem to see her, large, fair, with beautiful eyes. The moment you meet her you will adore her, and what I want to say to you is when that happens you are not to give me a thought!"

Juanita again wondered if she was clever, merely being clever, or if she had been drawn into those finer sensations that Marcus had discovered up here, and wanted to pass on to her. Again she didn't know. How *was* she to know? She looked at Marcus, studied him. *Could* she spend those six months up here? Spring would come—it was March now—and summer—flowers—Juanita's mind was traveling fast. Had Marcus believed her? Had he believed the lie she had told him? Or had he—Marcus might, he, also, had his inheritance—accepted it as the polite thing, offered her what she had demanded of him, the *noblesse oblige*, of taking her word?

For a long while Juanita sat in silence, occasionally glancing quickly at

Marcus, and then away from him to think.

Juanita was thinking, thinking about her next step. She wanted things settled, comfortable. She wished again that Marcus was like Paul, that he would leave her silently and come back with wine for them to sip, and by its aid be drifted into imaginary realms. She wished he could take her hand and look at it as though some wonder lay in its contour, as Paul had. Juanita forgot for a moment her surroundings, was out of them entirely, with her eyes fixed on her hand that Paul had once placed on a dark-blue velvet cushion that he had put on her knees, just to show her, he said, how beautiful a beautiful human hand was, when lying still upon velvet.

Her eyes had drifted to a mirror in which she could see herself faintly outlined. She saw this faintly outlined figure in Paul's surroundings, saw them back of her in the mirror. With a nervous turn of her eyes she came back to the present and Marcus, sitting as though he had fallen asleep. But Juanita knew that Marcus was not asleep. She could feel that he was wildly, intensely awake. He seemed helpless to her, helpless and filled with sorrow. Or was he merely thinking of the lie she had told him? Was he sitting there accepting it? If so, he was pathetic, and yet—she was afraid of him.

A thought came to her as she noted again how markedly handsome Marcus had become. It might be the environment, the particular place that suited him, or that she was away from all other men. Still, she was tremendously impressed by it, that, and that he was so calm, had grown so calm and thoughtful. There was a wonderful appeal to Juanita in this; not that Marcus had found his soul, she still contended that that did not interest her, but that he had found the power to be **negative** in her presence, **negative** and **calm**.

She regarded him from his head to his feet as though he were some half-recumbent statue that had become her



possession, some statue that would come to life if only she had the temerity to touch it. She wanted to touch him, lay her hand on his shoulder, if only to see him start. She was still afraid, though, like a little kitten that has been brushed from a chair several times with a pocket-handkerchief, but that is waiting a chance to jump back.

She wanted to do something to break the spell of things. It was all too constrained. She was very tired, awfully tired, she thought, all day traveling in the snow. . . . If only she could lay her head on Marcus' still, quiet shoulder and just fall asleep, both of them. . . .

She got up very softly, like one fearing to awaken a sleeper, and very cau-

tiously took a step that placed her in front of him.

Still he made no move, but Juanita could feel his eyes burning through her in their effort to remain upon the fire she had shut off from them.

At last he raised his head slowly and fixed those eyes, strangely tortured they seemed to her, in hers.

She answered the look by kneeling in his lap, the position that had been in her mind, and laying her very tired little head on his shoulder.

Her arms stole around his neck, but Marcus' arms remained taut, his hands hanging near the floor.

Mario awoke, came over, and looked inquiringly at the two.



## THE SHORT WAY WITH DISSENTERS

By Arthur Carter

HE glared at her in a blind rage.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed hoarsely, "what do you take me for? Do you imagine that I am Croesus? If I attempted to gratify all your absurd whims, I'd be bankrupt in five minutes. I forbid you to order that hat. Do you understand? *I forbid you!*"

She looked at him with amazed surmise, and quietly walked out. As she opened the door she pointed back to a slip of paper on the table.

"The bill," she murmured icily.



WHEAT begins as grass and ends as noodles. A woman begins as a fairy and ends as a detective.



LOVE is a cat which scratches, even when one only plays with it.



BELIEVE, and you will be happy. Doubt, and you will be safe.



# THE HUSBAND INSPIRER

By Thyra Samter Winslow

## I

CORINNA WOODMAN was born and lived for a time in Desmont, Oklahoma. Desmont is one of a hundred dust-covered, gray towns which dot the Southwest at frequent intervals. They are all alike. There is a business backbone through the center of them with a Central or a Grand Hotel on it, one office building which boasts five stories, one "department store" whose buyer goes to New York or Chicago twice a year, and a scattering of one and two-storied shops. Out from the backbone run the residential streets, even layers of square, prosperous two-storied houses with fenced yards containing green swings, atrocious flat things called bungalows and the humbler cottages of the poor.

Corinna lived in one of the humbler cottages of Desmont. But, because she had bright gold hair, too-blue eyes, dimples, a knowledge of the value of compliments and an ability to giggle, she was accepted as a member of the so-called Younger Set of Desmont, composed of the usual sons and daughters of the town's leading merchants and professional men. It was led, in this instance, by Alma Glover, daughter of President Glover of the First National Bank. Alma was blonde, too, but it was a dull bloneness, and, alas, her eyelashes were white. She was inclined to fatness and, if Alma had not been so prominent in the community, she might have been referred to as dumpy. Corinna was jealous of Alma, but as the daughter of a bookkeeper at the Acme Feed and Supply Store should have been grateful for a mere glance

from the eyes of Alma, neither Corinna nor Alma was aware of the jealousy.

Corinna was graduated from High School with the others of "the crowd," and, though her humble position called for and received no honors, she got her diploma with the rest, looking much better in the dress which she and Mrs. Woodman made at home with the help of Miss Norrison (a dollar fifty a day) than did Alma in the "creation" which the New York Store ordered for her direct from Chicago.

After graduation Corinna settled down to enjoy the "society" offered at Desmont, the dances at the cheap little Country Club, the theater parties to the third-rate road shows which occasionally presented themselves, the dinners and teas. Corinna didn't do anything useful, of course. Girls lost caste if they worked in Desmont, though they could teach school and still be socially acceptable. But Corinna had neither the brains nor the desire for teaching. She liked being idle.

Two years of small-town "society," during which Corinna had her share of the town's masculine attentions, and then Lester White came to Desmont. Lester came with the new local branch of an Eastern oil corporation. Oil had been discovered near Desmont some time before. Lester was a Harvard graduate. He had glossy black hair and was six feet tall. He was a civil engineer. He spoke with a Boston accent. Any of these attributes, separately, would have made an impression in Desmont, where every new man was an immediate object of interest. All of them made him irresistible.

Graham Fredericks, whose father



was in the oil business, brought Lester to a Country Club dance. Someone else would have brought him if Graham hadn't. Two days after Lester arrived in town every girl in "the crowd" was self-consciously aware of him, putting on her smartest clothes when she went downtown, walking by the Grand Hotel with head up, eyes down, so that, if the New Man saw her he'd see how charming and demure and modest she was and beg for an introduction. In a little town, where the cream of the home-town boys migrates to the city as soon as it grows up and where a new man is nearly unknown, the arrival of a Lester White is almost a miracle. Probably every girl in town gave a prayer of thanks for his presence, followed by a prayer a bit more personal.

Lester White was a small-town boy himself, though his town happened to be East instead of Southwest. His accent had been carefully cultivated. His salary was small and this was his first opportunity, after two years of trying to get a foothold. The girls in Desmont didn't know about these things. They wouldn't have cared if they had.

Lester met all the girls the same evening, so the race started without a handicap. After looking them all over, he unhesitatingly chose Corinna. You wouldn't have blamed him. Her blonde hair was copied after an arrangement she had seen on an actress in a magazine picture. She wore a fluffy home-made evening frock, and her blue eyes were very attractive at night. Her mouth was the soft, very red kind that grows hard later on and she had a saucy profile. Lester hadn't expected to find girls like that in Desmont.

The other girls weren't surprised at Lester's choice. Corinna usually attracted the visiting young men, the commercial travelers who were presentable enough to bring to the Country Club, the guests of the town boys. Alma would have liked Lester, but he didn't notice her, and Alma was "going with" Paul Jackson, then, and Paul, though a bit heavy and dull, wasn't to be sneered at.

Lester started rushing Corinna, that is, as much as anyone can rush a girl in Desmont. He became a member of the Country Club and took Corinna to all of the affairs and to the theater and to dances. He called on Sunday and a couple of times during the week. He sent East for candy.

If Lester was surprised at the humbleness of the Woodman home—old man Woodman in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a pipe and reading the paper, Ma Woodman, in an ill-fitting wrapper, usually busy at mending or cooking, and Roy Woodman, uncouth, ill-mannered—he said nothing about it. Corinna was a jolly girl. She could play the piano and sing. She danced well. She didn't expect too much from a fellow and was mighty grateful when you gave her small presents. There were other members of the Desmont Younger Set who came from humble homes, so no one wondered about Corinna. She had always been popular.

So, pretty soon, "the crowd" got to speaking about Corinna and Lester, as if their going together were a settled thing. For a year they were together a great deal. They were never engaged. It was just on the distant side of that. In small towns, "going together" nearly always leads gradually into an engagement, into showers for the bride-to-be, a trousseau, a stag dinner for the bridegroom and then the wedding, with six of the bride's best girl friends, all dressed alike, walking up the aisle of the bride's church. Then the couple settles down in a shiny new house, sized according to circumstances, and joins the Young Married Set and enters on a new stratum of existence.

Of course Corinna looked forward to all of this. She was quite proud of the way she had managed things for herself—she had always sneered a bit at the home-town boys and she hated poverty. She was really fond of Lester White, as fond as she could be of anyone. He answered all of her dreams of romance, he thrilled her, he fed her vanity.

Lester got a raise his second year in Desmont. He was made assistant man-



ager of the local branch, with hints that there might be other raises in the future and that he ought to, well, settle down.

With the idea of being a substantial man of business, Lester started seeing things with a different vision. Corinna sank into her place as a pretty but rather bold little thing of no particular family. And, as Corinna sank, Alma Glover rose. For the Glovers lived in Desmond's most impressive home, a square red brick house with big porches all around it. Alma and the two younger Glover girls, now entering Desmond's social whirl, had things nearly their own way. Alma's waist may not have been as trim nor her mouth as red nor her repartée as saucy as Corinna's, but even in Desmond there are more important things.

Lester started calling at the Glover home instead of the Woodman cottage. Mrs. Glover, with three marriageable daughters on her hands, and all a-flutter over the responsibility, was glad to find that Lester was beginning to appreciate Alma's charms, for Paul had gone to St. Louis and Alma had no serious admirers. Mrs. Glover was a large woman with a playful manner and, at the Country Club, where she often chaperoned the dances, she had intimated that Lester's attentions to her daughter would not be unwelcome.

## II

CORINNA couldn't quite understand, at first, as Lester's affections waned. She was rather a simple girl. When Lester neglected to call and even to take her to dances, and the candy from New York—Page & Shaw and Maillard's and other brands hitherto unknown in Desmond—went to Alma, Corinna began to see, only too well, how things were. At first she went to rather great lengths to hold Lester. She was skillful with men, so she did get him back for a little while. But, as Lester's future didn't demand Corinna in it at all, he finally quit calling.

Corinna tried to make the best of it in rather pitiful attempts at gaiety,

SS.—Oct.—3

picking out less desirable young men of "the crowd" on whom to lavish her smiles and giggles. But even small-town boys are peculiar and those who a year ago would have been delighted at Corinna's favor now waved it coolly aside. Lester had thrown her down. They didn't want left-overs.

Alma and Lester announced their engagement in August, a very warm August even for Oklahoma. Then the Glovers went to a Wisconsin summer resort and Lester went North to spend his vacation with them. Mrs. Woodman wasn't very well and summer resorts were out of the question for the Woodman family, anyhow, so Corinna spent the time cooking, which she detested.

In September the Glovers returned. Alma had bought her trousseau in Chicago and already was flaunting a brilliant plaid coat, forerunner of splendors still to come. The wedding was in October. Of course Corinna was invited. She was even asked to "assist" at some of the many receptions and parties given for Alma. She wasn't asked to be one of the wedding party. Alma chose more the socially fit for that pleasant task. She spoke to Corinna as friendly as ever, but it was understood that Lester had regarded her as a pastime, that he'd cared for Alma all along and hadn't dared approach her.

The wedding was a very pretty one. Alma went to the altar on the arm of her father, who had stopped drinking that day until after the ceremony as a special concession—a slight but steady intoxication did not interfere with banking success in Desmond—and was followed by her sister Lucile as maid of honor and her sister Mary and five others of Desmond's fairest daughters, all in pale pink, as bridesmaids. The bridegroom had the usual ushers and a friend from the East, "another Harvard graduate," as best man. Following the wedding, there was a reception at the Glover home, and the Desmond *Daily News* gave a whole column to the affair, beginning: "The most important event in this season's social life



took place yesterday when Miss Alma Elizabeth Glover, the eldest daughter . . ." and ended with: "After an Eastern honeymoon trip, the happy young couple will be at home in a beautiful new bungalow on Maple Place, the gift of the bride's father."

After the wedding, Corinna was quite definitely left out of things. It came about casually. It was so easy to leave her out, no family, no hold on anyone, only admitted into the crowd through chance in the beginning.

### III

CORINNA thought her heart was broken. She was even more certain about the injury to her feelings. If she hadn't had quite so much pride she probably would have taken up with the cheaper crowd, those who attended the weekly dances at Berman's Hall. But, having gone with "real society," as it is found in Desmont, she wouldn't accept a substitute. She moped for a while and even forgot to take care of her fingernails. She was forgotten in Desmont as if she had become invisible. She might have continued that way, always.

Then, suddenly, without telling anyone, Corinna got married. She was quite surprised about it herself. She married Eddie Stayler, who clerked in the Acme Feed and Supply Store.

Eddie was a nondescript youth who had come from an even smaller town than Desmont at the death of his parents. He was all alone. He had indefinite brown hair, already starting to recede from his forehead at twenty-four, kind, light-brown eyes and a diffident manner. Corinna had nodded to him when she went into the Acme, as she did occasionally, to get money from her father. He was not only not in "the crowd," he was not in any crowd. He lived in a rented room and ate around at indifferent boarding-places. Evenings, he read or attended cheap shows or played pool with stray acquaintances. Corinna had always regarded him as impersonally as she did the bags of grain that stood, open, around the store.

But one day she talked to him. It was right after Alma's marriage and talking to anyone helped Corinna to forget herself. She found Eddie was a nice, gentle boy who didn't know life had played tricks on her, but regarded her as a very beautiful person, quite above his place in the world.

So, quite suddenly, Corinna decided to marry him. She knew, definitely, that she could never marry any of Desmont's more desirable young men. She hated the cheap crowd and the occasional commercial travelers. There was no money to spend on summer resorts, where more prosperous girls conduct their regulation man-hunt. Any really desirable new man who came to Desmont, now might call on her or take her places, but he'd soon be made to understand by others of "the crowd" that Corinna was outside the line as a matrimonial possibility. It never occurred to her that she might make a career for herself, though there was nothing she could have done, in all likelihood, if she had thought of it. Corinna hated work of any kind.

So Corinna married Eddie Stayler. She hardly bothered to tell Eddie about it. She had gone with boys since she was sixteen and knew so many things about managing them that it was quite like kidnapping to flatter the gentle Eddie into calling, then into taking her to the places of amusement that he could afford and that were open to them—they couldn't go to the Country Club—and she wouldn't consider Berman's, and finally into a proposal. Eddie liked her. It couldn't have been called anything more definite. But he was quite overcome by her blonde hair and flashing blue eyes and masterful manner. Before he knew it he was being married by a strange minister in the Woodman parlor with only the Woodman family in attendance.

There was no wedding reception, no honeymoon. The Desmont *Daily News* gave three lines to the marriage and the young couple settled down in Corinna's room of the Woodman cottage, and Mrs. Woodman and Corinna, who took



turns at the cooking, added an extra plate at meal-times.

For six months Corinna lived in a kind of lethargy. She moped at home. At least, though, she was married! She felt that that proved something definite—she hadn't needed Lester White, after all. She knew Alma and Lester were back in Desmont. She read of the housewarming party they gave, of the reception at the Glovers' for them, of other affairs. She saw Lester on the street and crossed to the other side so as to avoid speaking to him or cutting him. No one paid any attention to her. If she had lacked the "something" that caused her to lead her husband onward to Success, Corinna's future and Eddie's future would have trailed off, graying, into a continuation of the sort of life her parents lived, as, indeed, she was living now, with never an example or lesson for other wives.

#### IV

ONE day Corinna stopped in at the Paris Millinery Shop to look at straw sailors. It was June and her only hat was shabby. Just as she was deciding on one at four dollars Alma came in, accompanied by two other girls of the Younger Married Set.

They all nodded to Corinna indifferently, and giggled over little intimate jokes, as they started trying on hats.

Corinna saw Alma considering two attractive hats, one, a black picture hat with a big plume—they were wearing plumes then—the other a bonnet with tiny pink rosebuds.

Corinna knew they would both look better on her. Hardly knowing that she did it, she reached out for them. One was twenty, the other seventeen dollars. She tried them both on. Alma was trying to decide on one of them and asked, giggling, for the other girls to give their opinions.

Corinna smiled more pertly than she had smiled for eight months, since Alma's wedding, and said:

"Please don't set your heart on these,

Alma. I've just decided to take both," and nodded to the saleswoman.

The clerk was new in Desmont. She didn't know her patrons' standing. Everyone in Desmont had charge accounts. She took Corinna's name and address and promised to send both hats.

"I hope you aren't hurt, my being such a pig," said Corinna and smiled at Alma. "You see, we're going away for a week-end visit and I just had to have them. You know how husbands are about wanting to show off new wives."

Alma smiled back, rather dazed. She had heard that Corinna had married a poor clerk, whom nobody knew. Well, maybe he had money. She had nothing against Corinna. Hadn't she married the man Corinna wanted? Corinna wasn't living as if she'd married money. Well, if Corinna wanted to buy those hats . . . they were beauties and she'd wanted both of them, but, maybe it was just as well. They were awfully expensive and Lester probably wouldn't have liked her getting one.

Out on the street again, Corinna took little breaths of surprise. It was the most astonishing thing that had ever happened to her—except losing Lester. She had had to do it! Let Alma see her buy a four-dollar sailor and tell Lester about it and smile over it together? Never! How would the hats get paid for? Thirty-seven dollars! She'd have to keep them. All Desmont, the part that counted, would find out and laugh, if she sent them back. Well, she was married to Eddie and he'd have to pay for them. Six months—and she was still living with her people and Eddie was getting far less than the price of these hats for a whole week's work. Eddie'd simply have to do something about it.

She told Eddie about the hats that night. Not the exact circumstances, of course, but that she just had to have something nice, things to wear. And he—he'd have to pay for them. She was entitled to pretty things. She was pretty and young. Of course he couldn't pay for them if he stayed at the Acme. He'd have to find something else then.



She didn't know what else. She'd be glad if he did start hunting. Of course jobs were hard to get. But he was twenty-five now and it was time he was starting to do things. She wanted some sort of a life. If he thought she'd be satisfied with things going on this way, he was mistaken.

She cried herself to sleep. Eddie didn't sleep at all, so he looked rather pale the next day.

Two days later Corinna bought a new summer frock at the New York Store. She bought Eddie a tie and then made him take her to the Musical Festival at Electric Park, which they had decided not to attend because the tickets were two dollars apiece.

"I've got to go," said Corinna. "You married me and I've simply got to have things. I can't get along any longer this way—with nothing. I don't know how you'll get the money. I don't know anything about business. Other men get it. There's no reason why *you* can't."

Corinna was quite the prettiest girl at the Park. She wore the bonnet and the new frock and they were both very becoming. She wished Eddie were better looking, more style, but that couldn't be helped, of course. He had such country manners. She'd have to teach him better before she introduced him to people. She nodded, rather distantly, to all of her old friends.

That night a little wrinkle appeared between Eddie's eyes. It gave him an appearance of thoughtfulness and was quite becoming, so perhaps it was just as well that it never went away.

## V

FOR two weeks Eddie kept his position at the feed store. At noon he hunted for something else to do. He didn't find anything. Then one day the proprietor of the Acme heard that Eddie was trying to get another job, so assisted him by taking the old job away. Jobless, Eddie went home to his wife and handed her his week's salary.

Perhaps Corinna knew that if she

really wanted to help her husband succeed she should not give way to sentiment or sympathy. She didn't. She had a mild case of hysteria and later showed Eddie some new shoes she had bought because everyone in town had white shoes but she.

Next day Eddie got a position in a real estate office. It was the sort of position that is always open to anyone in a small town. If you sold lots in a new "addition" you got a commission. If you didn't, you didn't. As you were supposed to be on the street, selling, you didn't take up much office space. Eddie didn't understand the system very well, but it certainly sounded fine. Why, selling one lot would pay all of Corinna's debts and allow him to pay his share of the expense of the Woodman home for several weeks.

Eddie didn't know any people in Desmont who wanted to buy real estate, but he remembered a man on a farm near Brightwood, the town he'd come from, who was always wanting to "move to town." The next day Eddie went out to the farm and sold two lots, of a hundred feet each, in Lakeview Addition, before he found out that selling real estate was difficult.

When Eddie told Corinna she kissed him on both cheeks. When he got his check they'd pay half of the debts—they were really awfully small and selling two lots meant so much money—and they'd run up to Kansas City and get some new clothes. Eddie didn't know about that. He tried to reason. But Corinna had never been to Kansas City and that was where Desmont "society folk" who couldn't afford a trip to Chicago always went.

They stayed a week in Kansas City. Corinna got an early fall suit and two more hats and an evening dress and some little things she'd always wanted. She bought a dress for her mother and a suit, hat and cane for Eddie. They came back with a dollar and forty cents left of the commission money and the local debts unpaid.

Eddie didn't sell many more lots for a week or two. Corinna was quite put



out about it and said so. Eddie tried to sell to everyone in Desmont, but possibly fifty of Desmont's unemployed youths had already tried to sell those lots there. It wasn't that the property was undesirable, for it was high and attractive and not expensive. But few people in Desmont were planning to move and those who were planning and had money preferred the Hawthorne Addition, for it was more stylish, or had their eyes on lots in the built-up part of town. Edgewater Addition was owned by a New York company. They had spent no money in advertising or beautifying their property. They had bought it for its supposed oil possibilities and when it failed to show any signs of oil it became "Edgewater Addition, desirable residential property," instead.

Three weeks passed and Eddie sold no more real estate. Corinna, who had seen signs of prosperity, became crosser and more pouty all the time. She intimated to Eddie, who didn't know differently, that she had had a lot of chances and had thrown herself away on him. She pointed out to him her prosperous friends, whom, before her marriage she had associated with, and showed him that, because she was so poor and had married an unknown man, she couldn't go with her friends at all.

Eddie had a good brain. It just hadn't worked before. Under Corinna's petty tyrannies, the machinery started, slowly, to revolve. If one farmer wanted land, why didn't another? Only a few lots had been sold in Edgewater Addition, and there wasn't a house or a bungalow there, just empty lots and "For Sale" signs. If there was only a bungalow there, all finished, just for show! Corinna was starting to fuss about the Woodman home, saying she wouldn't stay here another month. If the company would build a bungalow for him and let him pay for it gradually . . .

He approached the local manager, who was impressed with Eddie's first sale. Eddie didn't know how he did it but he persuaded Phipps to have a five-

room bungalow built, which Eddie was to occupy and to pay for out of his commissions, when he made them. A second and perhaps a third bungalow were to be built for future buyers.

As soon as the ground for the bungalow was broken, Corinna stopped old friends to tell them about it. Yes, indeed, her husband was assistant manager of the Edgewater Improvement Company and they were hoping the bungalow would soon be ready. Land there was, well, rather expensive, but there were so many natural advantages. Yes, the bungalow would be rather a good one. Edward, Mr. Stayler, you know, had people in the East who were, well, rather indirectly back of the company. Oh, yes, Mr. Stayler came of a well-known family, yes, he really had a great future.

Eddie started, systematically, to sell real estate in the country. His very simplicity, his earnestness, attracted the farmers. Many of them were about ready to "move to town" and Desmont was important in the vicinity, or they had young people who insisted they couldn't stay on the farm. Eddie sold a good many lots at Edgewater.

Corinna was pleased with him. If she was severe with him about the way he pronounced words or sat down or tied his tie, it was for his own good, of course. Wasn't she helping him?

Lester and Alma had an automobile, a small car which Mr. Glover had given them a few months before. It quite took Eddie's breath away, when he got home after a week's trip and had failed to sell any lots at all, to find that he was nearly the possessor of a five-passenger car, an expensive one at that time, and that it only needed his signature to complete the transaction. He tried to argue with Corinna—they owed a number of small debts around town, Corinna's wardrobe had increased rather alarmingly—but Corinna had her heart set on it and he hated scenes. After all, the events of the last few months had quite upset him. If he could sell some lots he could sell more. If having a car would keep Corinna



from fussing at him—well . . . There were a few lines around his mouth, now, not very deep ones, as yet.

## VI

WHEN the bungalow was finished and furnished in shiny red mahogany and Corinna owned the best-looking automobile in Desmont—she was the first woman to drive and was quite proud when she sprained her wrist cranking; it was before the day of self-starters—she commenced her social campaign. She knew Desmont too well to take the simple method of having a party and inviting old friends. She was still left out of things. Eddie was poorly groomed, unknown. They didn't have any money and they did have debts. Giving a party would just cause smiles and wouldn't get her anywhere.

So Corinna began being nice to girls she had hardly noticed before—Corinna had never been a great one to go with girls. Substantial girls who had prominent fathers found that Corinna would meet them downtown and insist on taking them for a drive and then to the little new bungalow for "tea." So, before long, she was asked, carelessly, to come to the sewing club, of which she had once been a member, a large, not exclusive organization. A good first step, anyhow.

When Corinna's turn came to entertain the club she quite bowled Desmont over. The maid who served—she had insisted on a maid when she moved into the bungalow, she hated to wash dishes or dust—wore a black dress, white cap and apron, the first cap and apron ever seen in Desmont off the stage. It caused a lot of talk. It was two weeks before Alma could have caps and aprons sent in from Chicago—the New York Store hadn't thought it necessary to keep a supply of them.

The next winter Corinna and Eddie were definitely admitted as members of the Young Married Set. Several others of "the crowd" had married and Corinna had managed to fit in so well that they saw no reason why they had

to do without her. Eddie had improved, too, and as he was a prosperous young business man there was no reason to exclude him.

Eddie wore his first evening clothes that year, not with a great deal of grace, but evening clothes were "full dress" in Desmont and not many of the young men were quite at home in them. Eddie's hair was receding a bit more and the wrinkles between his eyes were a little deeper, but he was still a gentle, unassuming young fellow, who seemed slightly dazed as to what life was all about.

Corinna's expenses increased after the portals of Desmont "Society" opened to her. Alma was not an ideal hostess, but she and Lester entertained a great deal and spent quite a bit of the Glover money doing it. Corinna felt that each entertainment of theirs had to be followed and outdistanced by one of her own. They were still dancing cotillions and Corinna's favors came from Chicago and were the finest and most expensive Desmont had ever seen.

Corinna felt that Lester was laughing at her. When she saw him, graceful, careless, sarcastic, usually the leader of the cotillion figures, she couldn't help comparing him to Eddie, self-conscious, ill at ease, silent: Eddie didn't seem able to learn social graces. Corinna no longer loved Lester. She knew that. But she knew, too, that she'd never be satisfied until she had established to him and to herself her superiority. And comparing her family with the Glover family and Eddie with Lester, this was no easy task. It was not a battle of culture or mental development. Those did not count in Desmont. It was mostly of effect, of "standing," of money. Corinna determined to do what she could.

To Lester and Alma, Corinna now was quite friendly. She danced with Lester and always with the satisfaction that she was lighter and slimmer and fairer than Alma. Alma came to Corinna's parties and giggled at the same jokes she did. But there must be some-



thing more than their friendly tolerance, their attitude, that, considering things, Corinna had done rather well, after all.

Eddie's real-estate sales fell off, although he scoured the country around Desmont pretty thoroughly for clients. He had sold more lots in Edgewater Addition than even the promoters had hoped for. The addition was full of ugly, new bungalows. Now few other people cared to buy. And, as he worried about making money, his household expenses increased. Corinna became more extravagant. It was her way of showing her friends how well Eddie was doing. The upkeep of the automobile, the maid, the man who took care of the car and the garden, Corinna's clothes, the numerous teas, luncheons and dinners all took money. When Eddie counted up his expenses, he could hardly believe that, a few years before, a salary of eighteen a week at the Acme had satisfied him, kept him free from debts.

Corinna was dissatisfied with the home her parents lived in. It didn't look well, she said. Roy was finishing the local high school and must go away to college. Somewhere, there had to be more money.

One night, after they returned home from a dance at the Country Club, Eddie tried to reason with Corinna, to induce her to cut down expenses. He had been away from home for six days but had not made a sale and he was worrying a little more than usual. Corinna had had a fine time at the dance. Several out-of-town men had been there and she had been unusually popular and she knew that Lester had noticed it. She had sparred with him and had been able to give him only one dance. Alma, she saw, was beginning to sit out a dance, now and then, as so many married women did in Desmont.

"Honest, dear," said Eddie, gently, as he took off his suit and hung it up carefully on a hanger, "I want you to have a good time. But things aren't looking up and people won't buy real

estate and I just don't seem to—" he straggled off, unable to justify himself.

Corinna glanced at herself in the mirror, her gold hair slightly disarrayed, her shoulders very white above her pink gown, her blue eyes very round.

"Eddie," she said, as she smiled at her reflection, "you make me quite tired, really. You're always spoiling my fun with business talks. Other men don't whine to their wives. I'm tired of it. Look at all I've done for you—got you into society, given you ambition. Why, when you married me you were satisfied at the Acme, on twenty a week. It seems perfectly ridiculous. It seems to me you ought to be able to get ahead. I'm not extravagant. I want a great deal more in every way than I get and I don't complain. I'm sick and tired of this house. Everyone I know is moving. The—the Whites are going to build a big house in the Fall. This little bungalow is a sight. I want to go to Chicago or some place and get good furniture—this we have is in terrible taste—and have a real house to live in. This would be fine for the folks. Mamma likes it a great deal and could do all the work herself, if we sent Charlie in to take care of the yard. And I'm so careful about money, about clothes and things. I never have nearly enough. If you can't sell real estate, why don't you find something you *can* do? You ought to be able to make money some way. Other men do. I—I want diamonds and things other women have. I'm—I'm too good to waste this way on Desmont." She smiled at herself in the glass again.

Eddie lay awake all that night. The next morning he had a talk with Phipps, and asked for a bigger commission and a straight salary. The result was an argument, a slight misunderstanding which grew. Two weeks later, Eddie was without a job again. That week the Whites bought a lot at the corner of Heliotrope Street and Maple Place, the most fashionable streets in town, and announced that they



would start building immediately. Alma expected a baby and the cottage they had started housekeeping in would be too small.

Eddie wandered around, head down, almost afraid to speak to acquaintances. He was fond of Corinna. It never even occurred to him that he could force her to change her mode of living or that he could leave her. He felt himself a failure. Here he was, a married man, a home to maintain—and no position.

## VII

Eddie had heard of a new oil company that had recently entered the local field, a rival to the one in which Lester White was employed. He read in the *News* that morning that the Eastern managers were in town looking things over. He went to the business offices and asked to see them. It happened that they were idle for a few minutes and granted him an interview. Perhaps it was Eddie's meekness, maybe they saw some real talent underneath. They talked to him and found he was able to carry a mass of detail without losing sight of the bigger points.

He told them about selling real estate to the farm people. They suggested riding out to Edgewater Addition and looking at it. At the Addition, Eddie pointed out what he had done, the lots he had sold. He showed them his own bungalow, explained about it being the first. They stopped the car and Eddie went in and got Corinna. Corinna was just going to a luncheon and had on one of her prettiest frocks, crisp and fresh looking. She looked quite the pretty wife of a prosperous small-town business man. She chatted with them for a minute or two. The men had not decided on their local representative. Before they left town, two days later, Eddie had the job.

Eddie hardly knew what had happened to him. Corinna took all the credit to herself. Hadn't she told him to get something else? She felt that she had impressed the managers a great deal, though she had been only one

pleasant detail in a satisfactory picture.

Somehow, Eddie took hold of the job better than anyone, even himself, had thought him capable of doing. He was able to grasp things quickly and he didn't forget, after he really understood a thing. He found he was able to get on well with his employees, the first he had ever had. He exacted thorough, sincere work and he did not talk unnecessarily about anything. He was gentle and silent. Those traits later earned for him a reputation for inscrutability, for character, judgment, for leadership.

As Eddie succeeded in his new position, Corinna's ambitions rose. Alma's baby came in September and two months later the White family moved into their new home. Corinna didn't want babies. She was afraid of the physical pain, afraid of losing her figure and her looks. Besides, she got along very nicely without any and never did like children. What a bother they'd be! How could she get ahead, with babies to worry about? Alma didn't go to many places of amusement for a while and Corinna noticed with great satisfaction that it was she whom Lester's eyes sought, when he entered a room. She'd show Lester lots of things.

Eddie went to New York on business. Of course Corinna went with him. It was her first trip East. They stayed at one of the larger hotels and Corinna, familiar through the fashion magazine with the more spectacular shops, bought exquisite and becoming frocks at big prices. It was the thing to do, she told Eddie. They had a position to maintain in Desmont.

While in New York, Corinna talked with a well-known firm of architects and interior decorators about building and furnishing a home for her. No one in Desmont had ever had a decorator. Some of the more ambitious ones had bought furniture, a set or an odd piece or some draperies, in Chicago or New York, but no decorator, save a pale young Desmont boy of artistic ambitions, had ever been in Desmont.



A few weeks after Eddie and Corinna returned home, one of the architects came down to Desmond with the plans and helped pick out a suitable location for the new house. The architect and Corinna chose a hill overlooking Desmond, which had been considered too far out for residential purposes. A few weeks later the house was under way.

Eddie was aghast at the expenditure. Corinna explained, as patiently as she could, that they could not keep on living in Edgewater any longer. The neighborhood was cheap—Eddie had sold lots to such curious people. The house was too small, they simply couldn't entertain in a five-room bungalow. Then, too, when Eddie had "owned" Edgewater, it was all right, that explained things, but now everyone knew he was no longer with the company and it made a difference. They could give the bungalow to the folks. How shabby the little Woodman cottage was getting and how badly that street had run down since she lived on it.

Six months later, the Staylers moved into their new home. It was in Elizabethan style and really in quite excellent taste. Corinna needed her own car, too, for the garage was big enough for three cars and they had only the old rattle-trap, which looked awfully cheap and wasn't even good enough for Eddie to use for business, if he'd had any pride about it.

Eddie had had a raise in salary, so Charlie made way for a trained gardener and chauffeur and inside the house there was an additional maid.

Then, just as Corinna sat down to enjoy her triumphs, the White family, Lester and Alma and Lester, Jr., moved to New York! Lester's firm had transferred him there. The *Desmont Daily News* said "to accept a position offering great advancement," and Alma more than agreed with the *News*. They sold their new house. Corinna had learned from her architect that it was

English cottage." They were entertained with a series of farewell parties. Corinna and Eddie gave one of them, and they left with half of Desmond at the train to tell them good-bye.

Desmont was a farce after that. With Alma away, Corinna easily obtained and kept social leadership, but what did it all amount to? Lester had counted a great deal. The indifferent look had vanished some time ago and there had been a sort of a veiled fight between them. It had made life worth while. Now Corinna felt again that utter vacancy she had felt after Lester's engagement, when she had sunk into nothingness. And now, just when Eddie was getting a good start!

Eddie was perfectly content with Desmond. He was still pretty badly in debt, but it seemed to him now that he had always been in debt. But, men of substance, in Desmond, listened to his opinions, when he gave them, which was not frequently. He knew his employers liked him. He worked hard, because of the need of money, which always grew greater, and because he was beginning to like the fight for its own sake.

And now Corinna hated Desmond. Eddie didn't understand it. It never occurred to him that she could become dissatisfied with it if there was money enough. Eddie knew that Lester and Corinna had once "gone together" but he understood that Corinna had been bored with Lester and had "thrown him over." He had seen them together and could see that they didn't care for each other. So of course Lester White had nothing to do with Corinna's change of feeling.

Now Corinna could say nothing bad enough about Desmond. It bored her. Everyone in it, individually and in groups, bored her. She laughed at the most respected citizens, thought their little set a joke, giggled at the clothes, the manners of the citizens. She called those not in her set "the peasantry," with a sneer. Her clothes became a bit



more expensive, a trifle bizarre. The chauffeur wore a uniform, the first, of course, in Desmont. Corinna didn't care for social welfare or any of the arts. So she gave parties and bought new clothes, took little trips to near-by cities and became more and more disagreeable and dissatisfied.

"I hate this town," she said one day. "You're as good a man as Lester White. He went to New York. And yet you stay on here. I'm being wasted in this place. If I hadn't married you I might have married a New York man and left here long ago. I hate it here. Why don't you get your firm to put you in their Eastern office? You certainly deserve it. I'll die if I have to stand it here another year."

Led on by her nagging, Eddie wrote to New York. He fully expected to get fired. But the local office had prospered under him and the firm needed a good new man in New York. They liked "new Western blood." So, they wired him to come on and offered a substantial increase in salary.

Corinna was in an ecstasy of joy. She kissed and hugged Eddie until he blushed. He was sincerely pleased at her happiness. She gave her father the first kiss she'd given him in four years, and told Roy that now he could finish at an Eastern university and spend his vacation with her.

Corinna didn't sell the new house. She felt it was too correct and good-looking to waste on an outsider. With one maid and a man, her parents could keep it up and have it in the family. They'd leave the new car for them, too. Surely she could do that for her parents. Corinna wanted to leave the memory of her glory in Desmont. She knew that if her parents kept the house, which was always pointed out, first, to visitors, Desmont would remember her. They sold the bungalow and the old car.

In New York, Corinna and Eddie took a suite at the Ritz. Corinna liked the name of it, and things about it she'd read in magazines. Later, when she found where to live, they took an apartment in the East Eighties.

### VIII

CORINNA phoned to Alma a few days after she got to New York. Alma had rented, furnished, a hideously over-decorated apartment on Central Park West. The Whites had made a few friends, college friends of Lester's, whom they had looked up, after getting to town, business acquaintances, Alma awaited another addition to her family and was not going out much, so Lester welcomed Corinna and Eddie with real joy.

It was fun, then, in New York. Lester and Alma unconsciously looked to Corinna for leadership. Corinna was clever enough to make the most of Lester's friends. But Lester's salary was not as large as Corinna had been led to suppose and he was trying to save, so to her it seemed as if the Whites were living in extreme poverty. They had only two servants, a maid and a nurse for the baby. Alma was not a good manager and she was growing quite stout.

After the second baby came, Alma was not at all well and couldn't go out much. So Lester accompanied the Staylers on their visits to the theater and the opera. Corinna bought a very new, smart car. Her own apartment was well managed. Her blue eyes were growing sharper these days. She was learning how to do things the correct way.

Eddie got along very nicely in business, though a bit slowly, Corinna thought. He still demurred at so many of her expenditures and she did have a hard time getting the things she wanted, needed, in fact. When she rented a new apartment and had it decorated by a still smarter firm of decorators than those who had done the Desmont house, he grew almost angry. His position was not equal to things like that, it seemed. Corinna cried then. After all of the sacrificing she had done, when she was first married, to help Eddie succeed—at least she should be able to have a few of the things she wanted, now—



Eddie's firm was absorbed by a great oil merger, about that time. It seemed that Eddie had distinct executive ability, so he went with the new firm at a nice increase in salary. He was glad of it. He was getting badly in debt, again, and he had hoped to start saving. His shoulders were quite round now and he was almost bald. But he was still silent and gentle. "If you only had a little 'get up,' a little 'pep'" Corinna told him, "you'd get ahead. How do you think these millionaires got their start? They were all country boys like you. We haven't a country house or a town house or anything, don't own a thing but this one little car and some furniture and only three pieces of that are genuine antiques. When I think of all the things other women have—"

Lester, it seemed, didn't get along so well in New York. Alma didn't like it, either. She was lonesome for Desmont, where she was a person of importance. She spoke of it to Corinna. Didn't it seem to Corinna, now, that it was better to be a big frog in a little puddle? Corinna couldn't agree. She had other things to think of, just then.

Lester's firm told him they would gladly send him back to Desmont as manager of the local company. He'd been only assistant before, so it was really in the nature of a promotion. Alma was glad of it. Her father's bank had been under some sort of cloud, and Mr. Glover had felt it best to withdraw while there was still opportunity and devote more time to drinking, so things weren't as bright as they had been. Alma felt that if she and Lester were back in Desmont things would improve. The two babies could have more room, a more normal life, too. She felt that New York was no place to raise babies.

When Lester and Alma left New York, Corinna was surprised to find how little their leaving affected her. She had met some new people who were proving rather interesting. She had met them through friends of Lester's and business acquaintances of Eddie's. It seemed as if Eddie were

always busy, even in the evenings. So these new friends were kind enough to include Corinna in their merrymaking. They went to the theater and to the roof-gardens, afterwards. In the afternoon there was dancing in the cafés,—this was two years ago,—and Corinna had a gay winter. It took money, of course, for she entertained at dinners, and learned to like bridge, and clothes were getting more expensive all the time. She told Eddie that if he were like other men, more ambitious, he wouldn't have to work so many hours, but could make more money and take things easier.

A year later they bought a country place on Long Island. Corinna felt that she simply couldn't stand rented homes a minute longer. Besides, there had to be some place where she could entertain her friends properly in return for the hospitalities she received.

## IX

CORINNA met Channing Debross that year. Channing was about five years younger than Corinna, but neither of them seemed to mind it. Channing was an architect, in fact he was with the firm who designed the Long Island house and he was dreadfully artistic and ambitious. He hated to work. Corinna couldn't blame him. So he spent whole days under the trees at Witchmere, talking over his plans. He had wonderful blond hair, thick and inclined to wave a little. Corinna told him that it was funny, because he was the first blond man she had ever liked. Usually, one likes opposites, you know. She had preferred dark men. As Eddie was quite bald, Channing couldn't decide what color his hair had been. But then, Eddie was so busy, Channing really didn't have a chance to see him very often. Channing was a dear boy, Corinna thought. He knew so many of the right things; he had so much personality and charm. She saw him frequently in the months that followed.

Eddie told Corinna, one day, that he had to take a business trip to Okla-



homa. His firm was establishing some offices in some of the small Oklahoma and Texas towns that were good oil centers—they had bought up a lot of land—and reorganizing some of the existing offices. Corinna might like to go, too. He knew how she hated travelling, dirty travelling at that, but he was going to Desmont and she'd often said, during the past years, that she'd like to go there again for a short visit.

Corinna thought of Lester. She had not thought of him for quite a while. Here would be a chance, a real chance, for triumph. She told Eddie she'd be glad to go to keep him company. It seemed too horrible that he couldn't borrow a private car, but on account of the railroad conditions—

Corinna added a few things to her already complete wardrobe; they'd decided that three trunks would have to do. She'd take Mitchell along, for she'd be helpless without a maid and Mitchell knew all about her clothes and how to brush her hair, it was coming out just a little and had to be treated with tonic, not a bleach, really, just something that brought the lights out. Corinna decided that she'd go right on to Desmont, with just Mitchell, and Eddie could arrange to come there a few days later and make the trip home with her.

Her father and mother—Roy was in France—met her at the train in the car she'd ordered for them a year before. She was sorry to see that prosperity didn't agree with her parents. Her mother was entirely too fat, and her father showed unmistakable signs of drinking. Why was it that nearly all masculine citizens of small towns in prohibition states started drinking rather hard at fifty? She was glad she had taken Eddie away from there.

The old house was rather nice. How quaint and small it was. How primitive to have liked Elizabethan things! Still, it was done far better than anything else in Desmont. How small Desmont looked and worn and ugly! Surely she hadn't cared—about this place—about what these people thought!

But Lester, of course—he had been the one. She put off seeing him. She was glad she was out when he and Alma called.

Corinna saw Lester at the dance given for her at the Country Club in the new ballroom. She wore white and was glad she was still young enough for it, and some pearls Eddie had given her on her birthday—though he hadn't known about it until he saw them nor realized what the gift had meant until he got the bill. When she saw Lester, the same empty feeling came to her that had come to her on the two previous occasions. Was—this the person who had caused all of the strivings? Why, Lester was uninteresting, plain. His features were sharp and drawn—perhaps it was the alkali in Oklahoma—and his hair was getting thin. She never noticed, before, how sallow he was. Now that she thought of it, Eddie was more cosmopolitan looking than Lester; Eddie, little and gentle and bald and usually forgotten entirely.

She danced with Lester three times. He didn't know any of the new steps. She felt almost sorry for him.

Still, when she looked at Alma, she thought they were pretty well mated. Alma had grown even stouter and her hair was dingy and arranged in a horrible stringy fashion. Her dress was a shade of pink she should never have worn, nor anyone else for that matter. There were three babies—they'd been pointed out to Corinna on the street—a fat little boy, two indefinite, stupid-faced younger girls.

During the dance, Eddie came in, unexpectedly. He'd finished with the other towns sooner than he expected. They could leave the next day, if she liked, when he finished in Desmont.

"I've just to appoint a man here, a local manager, you know. And I know all these boys. It won't take long."

Corinna smiled fondly at Eddie. She hadn't realized how nice he was. His wrinkles, especially between his eyes were pretty deep, but in spite of his



gentleness and his pale eyes there was something she rather liked about him—

Suddenly a thought came to Corinna and she smiled again. She told Eddie about it.

"They say, you know, that his firm isn't doing much here. If you ask Lester White, I'm sure he'd be glad to change. He knows the business, too. You wouldn't have to break him in. And we know his people and that he's reliable."

Eddie nodded. He came back in a little while, between dances, to tell Corinna that Lester had accepted. "Now, we can get away from here anytime you say."

"The sooner the better," said Corinna. "Of course I'm glad to see everyone. But this town—stifling! How do they stand it? Let's take the morning train out—if there is a morning train."

She danced again with Lester. And, at her feet, she and the other knew, lay Desmond. The man who had turned

her down for a richer, more prominent girl was dancing with her, and, as he looked at her, Corinna knew that she need not feel grieved because he had "spurned" her. They walked out on the porch, after the dance.

"Corinna," Lester said, very low, "I wonder if you know how much I've thought of you, missed you. You seem so wonderful, like out of a different world, honestly. All my life, it seems to me, I've been thinking of you, Corinna. To think that one time—oh, Corinna, what a fool I've been. I wonder—if—if you care a little about me—" He put out his hand.

Corinna felt his hand tremble. He was quite sincere. The fight had gone out of his eyes. There was only admiration there, now.

Then, quite gently, Corinna pushed Lester's hand away and smiled.

"You are a nice boy," she said, "and I shall always be quite fond of you." And she led the way onto the dance floor.



## THE FALL OF THE YEAR

By Muna Lee

THE blackbird flies before the cold,  
The painted grosbeaks go;  
Not any tanager is so bold  
As to brave the snow.

There's a stormy look about the skies,  
There's trouble in the west,—  
And love, who's old and very wise,  
Love flies off with the rest.



WOMAN is at once the serpent, the apple and the cholera morbus.



# UNE NUIT BLANCHE

By Bernice Carter

WITH slippers on her feet and flowers in her hair, she stole out very quietly, and closed the front door behind her.

If only Mother wouldn't wake until she got away!

It was so hot in the house, and she knew the nicest place to go. . . . Of course it wasn't as nice as the country, where there were real stone walls, and running water, and tall green weeds were growing. . . .

But it looked so cool that afternoon, and when two doves flew down from somewhere, and fluttered in the water, it had seemed quite real. . . . If only those officers in the corner had finished their lemon and soda . . . she wouldn't like them to see her like this in her nightgown. . . . And she hoped that man in the gray suit with the cornflowers in his buttonhole was gone . . . he had looked so gloomy, he frightened her . . . and the Head Waiter had watched him . . . maybe he was a spy or something. . . .

She doesn't remember how she got downtown, but once in Forty-sixth Street it was easy. Cabs were still drawn up at the curb, and people came and went . . . but she pulled her cape up closer around her and went brazenly

by them. . . . Somehow she managed to get by the door, and through the lobby, then she threaded her way very carefully among the deserted chairs and tables in the darkened dining-room, and presently she found the place. . . .

Moonlight sifting in through the skylight made it seem all queer and blue, and from somewhere outside three twinkling lights were reflected like little silver stair steps in the water. . . . Two doves ruffled their wings above her, and cooed to each other, and she seemed to hear music . . . a quaint little, faint little strain from "Pelleas and Melisande." . . .

She pulled off her slippers and put them carefully on the table where she had had a cocktail in the afternoon, and then . . . Oh, lovely, wonderful bliss . . . she was paddling in cool, clear water. . . .

At the breakfast table in the morning her Mother said:

"Blanche dear, I hope you had a nice night. I was worried about you in my sleep. I kept dreaming that I went to your room and couldn't find you. . . . And the clock on your table kept ticking — 'In-the-Jap-a-nese-gar-den-at-the-Ritz.'"



LOVE begins as the selfishness of two persons jointly. It ends as the selfishness of two persons separately.



# SHANGHAIED

By Ben Hecht

**I**T was on this park bench that he had sat a summer night five years ago and with all the shrewdness and prophecy at his command decided that life without Helen would be a senseless, a miserable and unlovely thing. He sat now and looked at the elaborate mystery of trees in the night and lanes that hid themselves behind the lilac bushes along the broken edge of the lagoon. Here and there on a distant bench, striping the moonlight with its lathes, sat solitaires like himself, their figures folded into vague semblances of the figure 4. There were couples, too, men and women sitting close together, their embraces hidden by the dark, and each imagining that life without the other would be a senseless, a miserable and an unlovely thing.

Bennett smiled disparagingly at nothing in particular unless it was his thoughts or the world perhaps.

"Five years ago I fancied I couldn't live without her. And now I no longer love her and I doubt if she actually loves me. I haven't loved her for the last three years. I doubt, hang it, whether I ever loved her at all. And yet, good lord, I sat on this same silly bench five years ago, determined to kill myself if she didn't give me the radiant privilege of living with her for the rest of my life."

Ah, the dolorous irony of life! Each day a mockery of yesterday's dreams!

Bennett lighted his pipe with the theatrical calm of a philosopher in the throes of inferior tragedy. "The snows of yesteryear" motif, though a theme somewhat old was yet worthy of sapient speculation. Indeed, what else was there in life worthy the meditation of

a philosopher? The roseate lies that had bloomed in the depths of his heart, the passionate masquerade that had tricked the processes of his reason, the delicate guillotine of the years that changed men into cadavers and all things into memories—a bit hackneyed to be sure, such contemplations, a trifle rococo for the mental operations of one whose name had become a synonym for vast and profound unfoldings of the spirit. Yes, sorrow had a way of intruding its platitudes, where only genius trod. There was no escaping the wan pathos of the fact that five years ago he had—

He had allowed his pipe to go out.

Undoubtedly the thing wasn't drawing well. The habit of truth, so necessary to a philosopher, informed him, however, that the pipe was drawing as well as it ever had. Why not confront the fact of the matter? The thing had gone out for the sheerly natural reason that he had forgotten to smoke it after lighting it. The little pyramid of flame held his eye as he rekindled the tobacco with another match.

For a moment he studied with an impersonal air the trembling of his hand and arm. Yes, he was a bit nervous. The thoughts that he had been thinking had come so naturally to him that he had, for the instant, overlooked their overwhelming revolutionary character. It had just dawned on him that he was thinking of separating from Helen. Strange he should be able to think about it for almost a half hour so coolly and calmly and then suddenly feel that the idea had entered his mind for the first time only an instant ago. Was he, as a matter of fact, actually thinking this thing, actually deciding to do what he



was thinking of doing, or merely playing with the thought of it, boasting piquantly to himself?

With a gentle flourish of his hand Bennett endeavored to extinguish the match in his fingers and raising his eyebrows he blew at the flame slowly and solicitously. He remained puffing enigmatically upon his pipe—enigmatically in the manner of a man sparring with himself for time to face the truth. Well, he might as well stand up and walk about a bit. It was somewhat chilly. Bennett smiled. He passed his long hand over his lean face. Why these insane subterfuges? He loathed walking and it was a splendid night for doing just what he was doing—sitting quite motionless on a park bench. Sitting quite motionless and thinking this thing out to the end, once and for all. He raised his eyes and stared at the sweep of darkness above him. As he stared his thought drifted again into the past with the gentle persistence of a man who prefers the idle caress of sorrows to the more strenuous attentions of logic and decisions.

Yes, if someone had told him five years ago as he sat in this very place that there would come a time while he was still young and possessed of his health that he would look upon Helen as the most boring and unnecessary asset in his life, he would have snorted as at the vaporings of a darkened mind. Was he then still young? Thirty-five. The whole nub of the situation lay in the fact that he no longer loved this particular person whom he had once loved and . . . *selah!* Oh, most obvious of all retrospections—he had observed her once through the obfuscating mists of desire. She had appeared to him then. . . . But why go over it, why harry himself with such useless prying into tombs?

Gently his thought again escaped his will, and busied itself dolorously with the contemplation of things of the past.

How deceived he had been first of all in her mind, in her character! Well, he had learned to some bitterness that bobbed hair does not necessarily argue

a lengthened spiritual reach. What a radical little spitfire he had in his insane blindness fancied her! A little cherubic head bristling with frantic notions of life. A passionate seraph stuttering gloriously of revolt. My, yes. Revolting against this and against that, jumping up and down on the bourgeoisie; the poor, intellectually trampled to death bourgeoisie.

"Life is something bigger than all this . . . all this snatching greedily at trifles. Life is a . . . a dancing star, a glorious pageant. Oh, it's so tragic to see men and women piling themselves with conventions until there is nothing left for them but to stagger through . . . stumble through with their eyes to the ground. Life is an adventure of the emotions. . . ."

And so it is, so it is. He smiled suddenly at this verbatim echo of the past. Life was, perhaps, all that she had in her ignorance proclaimed it to be. It had, at any event, greater possibilities than spending the rest of one's days virtually closeted with a fussy, ill-mannered, irritating little shrew. Again Bennett's thought extricated itself from the present and floated into memories. She had undoubtedly had talent—the precocious and incomplete talent of the intellectual woman. Her painting had not been so bad at first. At least it had been better than the meaningless daubs which littered the house now.

The sound of someone walking down the graveled path which led by his bench caused Bennett to raise his eyes. A man and woman were approaching, arm and arm, heads inclined together. With a tolerant smile Bennett watched them pass. As they disappeared in the dark he was off again on elaborate theorizings of the sex instinct—the fantastic rigamarole of phrase and sigh and self-deception that accompanied the simple function of mating.

What a deceit the whole of it! What a merciless ruse of nature! Thus they had walked, he and Helen, thus embraced with heads thus inclined. And they had come to the edge of the lagoon and remained spellbound before the



dark and languid water. And they had solemnly taken each other by the hand and with an asinine profundity called upon a mysterious thing they referred to as God to witness then and there the union of their souls and their lives. No blithering priest to mumble words at them, no asthmatic organ to gurgle its Mendelssohn benediction, no half-witted friends to pelt them with rice and shoes. Just a fine, simple communion of radical souls, a frank and natural mating of spirits attuned. That had been their wedding.

Bennett thumped the ashes out of his pipe and laughed softly. His thought had suddenly slid out of the warm and enervating ruts of memory. He arose and shook down his trousers. He wasn't married. Delightful and indisputable fact. Holding hands over the lagoon on a summer night and panting some gibberish about souls and the higher life, fine and noble as it had appeared, did not in the sordid eyes of the law constitute matrimony.

With decided steps Bennett made his way out of the park. Why the pother and the doubt about it? He had mated with Helen as man to woman and not, in her own words, as one social unit with another. He was, by the terms of their own curious ceremony, free to depart when his finely attuned spirit cracked a bit under the strain. Well and good. He would depart. The finely attuned blamed foolishness had cracked. And if she saw fit to make a fuss, as she undoubtedly would, he would lead her solemnly down to the lagoon and holding her firmly by the hand call upon the selfsame Deity who had witnessed their union to witness now its severance. And finis! The thing would be accomplished in a logically idiotic manner.

In the manner of a true philosopher he had considered everything but the obvious in seeking a way out of his dilemma. The street was quiet and empty. Eight blocks to his home, but he would walk them, as much as he loathed walking. There was come to him an exultation. He desired to in-

dulge it. The thought of being freed from the senseless chatter of the woman even now awaiting him, of being rid of her persistent demands and shrewish cajolings had about it a magical quality. It transformed for him every color of his future. Life was an adventure of the emotions—when lived properly. Egad, he would feel like a new man, like a creature reborn.

Already he felt an influx of vigor. His body seemed mysteriously straightened, his thought virulently alive. There was no mistaking it—the creature was a blanket on his mind, a darkness to his eye, a weight upon every sensitive fiber in him. They had had their happiness. They had exhausted for each other all each had to give. Why prolong the anti-climax into the insufferable monotony of a lifelong partnership? He wasn't, after all, an ordinary man. He had his work, his genius. Good Lord, if she couldn't see the common sense of the thing he'd drag her down to the lagoon and mumble the gibberish of five years ago and do the thinking for both of them. It would, undoubtedly, make a woman of her and give her a chance. Not that there was anything in her. But it would give her her chance to pose again as the lofty-minded radical, to parade once more her institutional chatter about free womanhood and fine living.

There was a light in the window. Bennett crossed the street and approached it firmly. She would listen politely enough. She would think the whole matter merely another argument. Well, it wouldn't take her long to wake up to the facts. He would be blunt. There was no use in wasting either rhetoric or epigram. The thing called for fine clean cuts.

He entered the room and observed with an ironical smile that she was reading thoughtfully and slowly "The Theory of the Leisure Class."

She raised her eyes as he walked in silence to a large chair opposite her. Her face, under the lamplight, was firm and youthful. Her black hair, bobbed beneath her ears, added, as always, a



roguish air to her appearance. Smiling back at her, Bennett went slowly about the business of refilling and lighting his pipe.

"Have a nice walk?" she asked at length. "You were gone long enough."

Yes, the slave had exceeded his furlough—an hour each evening.

"No, I didn't walk much. I went down to the park and sat around a bit."

"You might have done your sitting around here with me."

So he might. Exquisite privilege. He smiled at her again and then—clearing his throat portentously, requested:

"Put the book aside, please. I've something rather important to talk about."

She hesitated and then, with the air of one preparing for elaborate argument, slowly inserted a book mark between the pages and placed the book on the window seat.

"What is it, George?"

He hesitated an instant.

"Before I begin," he said, "I want you to promise that you'll wait till I'm all through before you say anything. I want you to understand that I'm not arguing but simply stating certain facts, certain things that are as inevitable as . . . as doom."

She looked at him fixedly. He returned her stare without wavering.

"Do you promise?"

"Yes."

Did she know already? A curious mildness had come into her voice.

"Very well, Helen. I've decided that you and I have come to the end of our rope. I mean, that all things considered, the best thing we can do is to separate. I've been thinking of it for six months—if not longer. Our lives have degenerated into a monotonous exchange of unimportant trifles. We bore each other. Our intimacy has lost its charm. In short, we no longer care for each other. I couldn't say this sort of thing to any woman but you. That is, I mean, *you* will be able to understand, if you don't understand already and haven't understood for the

last year. When we mar—when we came together it was with the high purpose of living a . . . an exalted companionship. I don't have to point out to you that our companionship in the last two years has been neither high nor exalted. Do I?"

He paused, somewhat taken back by her continued silence.

She had sunk into her chair and was staring at him with head lowered and eyes raised.

"Are you agreed, Helen? Do you see what I mean? It's hard, I know. But things change. Everything changes. What we had today we have not tomorrow. I mean, our love that once seemed so . . . so eternal was, like everything else in life, fleeting. If we would be true to that love . . . true to the fine things in ourselves, we must part. If only not to mar further that which has been. . . ."

He paused again, somewhat bewildered. Try as he might, he couldn't keep the gloat out of his voice. And he had no desire to gloat. He wished to be fair and decent. He stammered for a moment. There was a way of putting the thing calmly and sanely without resorting to this empty sounding rhetoric.

"Helen," he demanded, "what . . . what do you think? Anything I might add would be only repetition. Had I felt that you loved as you once did, that it was still the same for you I would never have spoken. But I've seen the change in you. A change as complete as that in me."

His hands were trembling insanely as they rested on his legs. Bewildered by her unbroken silence he plunged on desperately.

"Habit—that's all there is left between us. The habit of being together, of seeing each other, touching each other, depending upon each other. Is that something worthy? Is that on a par with your ideals? Tell me."

He arose from his chair and walked over and stood beside her. Her eyes did not follow him. They remained staring at where he had sat.



"Helen," he said softly, "come. I'm serious about this. It's for both our good. Don't you see? There's nothing to hinder us, you know. We've tried . . . and we've failed."

Why drag that in—the trying and failing? It had a dangerous ring to it. He bit his lip.

"Come," he commanded again, this time with an increased tenderness. "Tell me. Am I right?"

He became silent and waited. She would begin now. He had tricked her. He had lured her away, used her and now wanted to throw her aside like an old glove. That was her reward for trusting him, marrying him upon his honor rather than submitting to the artifices of convention.

In his mind as he waited whirled her arguments—the inevitable arguments of womankind. He smiled firmly. At least she would see herself as she actually was in these words. She would see herself for the ordinary, stupid and conventional parasite that was her soul.

"Come, Helen, I'm waiting."

The woman beside him arose slowly to her feet. Her face had become drawn. It looked almost old and curiously beautiful in the lamplight.

"It's hard, Helen, I know. But . . . it's for the best. We mustn't falter because of . . . of . . ."

She interrupted him with a gesture.

Placing a hand on his shoulder, she raised her eyes and stared into his face. Her eyes were luminous with tears.

"Don't," she said.

Dropping her hand from his shoulder she walked slowly out of the room toward their bedroom.

"Don't what?"

Bennett turned and pursued her with the question.

"Do you mean you don't want me to leave, Helen? Wait. Listen a moment. Don't you understand? If you mean that, say so, and we'll . . . we'll talk it over. . . ."

He was addressing an empty room. An irritation seized him.

"If that's all you have to say," he cried angrily, "why, the matter is closed. There's only one thing for us. And that's ending it. Each going his way. Do you hear?"

He waited for several minutes. No sound came from the adjoining room. Perhaps she was weeping. He strained his ears for a sound of it. Silence. A coldness passed through him. He remembered suddenly that his razor blades were in the room. She might . . . might do something.

"Helen," he called.

He walked quickly after her. The bedroom was dark. Thrown across the bed, he could make out her figure. He approached and touched her on the shoulder.

"Please, Helen, we've got to settle this. No hysterics. You're too big a woman to have hysterics . . . on such an occasion."

He tugged firmly at the shoulder.

A wan voice answered him.

"What do you want of me? Go way."

He sat down carefully on the bed.

"Not like this, Helen. If you'll only listen."

"I've listened. Please. Don't repeat it."

He hesitated. A strange bewilderment had overtaken his thought. He desired to know what she thought. It would be impossible to leave without knowing this.

"Are you agreed," he stammered. "If so . . . come. We'll go down to . . . to the lagoon and, and . . ."

He stopped. She was crying. With her face buried in the coverlet she had started sobbing, her body shaking, her fingers clutching wildly at the spread.

Why the devil had he mentioned the lagoon! It had undoubtedly set her off. It was at the lagoon they had stood a summer night five years ago, holding each other by the hand, vowing to the silence and the dark. . . .

"Helen, please! Don't cry. You'll only make it worse. . . ."

His hand patted her shoulder timid-



ly. A heart-broken little sentence drifted from the depths of the bed.

"I've been such a fool, oh, such a fool!"

"No, you haven't. You've been . . . been splendid. It's only something we can't help—either of us. It's the way things work out. Beyond our control. Beyond our vision. Come, now, don't cry. We'll talk about it."

"Such a fool. Oh, God!"

"What do you mean, Helen?"

The increased sounds of her sobbing were his only answer. He sat in the dark of the room waiting. Within him something mysterious, something inexplicable welled slowly to the surface. It passed into his throat, into his eyes, warming his body and confusing his thought.

"Helen," he murmured. "Don't think that. We loved each other . . . once."

Yes, they had loved once. Once she had been for him everything that was desirable. To see her walking in the street was to behold all the beauty of life. To feel her arms upon him was to know all the happiness of the world. What transports, what exultations! They were still in the room, come now to stare with wan eyes at him. Their memories were still keen in his heart. Dead things that had, nevertheless, souls.

His hand slipped under her shoulder.

"Helen," he whispered.

Tears stopped him. An odd, unexpected grief had come over him. Tears moistened his face. At the feeling of them the last bit of his reserve dissolved. Tears fell upon his hand, his tears. He leaned over and caressed the soft hair of the woman's head. He pressed his tear-wetted cheek against her temple. They remained weeping together for several moments. Then a hand crept into his. Her voice, broken and far away, murmured:

"Don't cry, George. It . . . it can't be helped. If your . . . your love is dead. . . ."

The hand in his slipped gently, weak-

ly out of his grasp. He felt a violent laceration as its finger tips fell from his palm.

"It was so beautiful . . . so wonderful. But go, please . . . I can't stand this. . . ."

His hand, creeping over her face, stopped her.

Everything was gone, broken. This the miserable end of their romance. Lying in the dark, derelicts, two creatures defeated by the immutable turns of fate. This the horrible finale to their years together. . . . His arms suddenly encircled her.

"Good-bye . . . dearest. If it will help . . . you. . . . Good-bye."

"No!"

He held her wildly to him. A rush of memory was upon him. Little gestures of her, little long forgotten sentences, the tone of her voice in the days of the past, the laugh of her, the incidents of their home, intimate trifles—these crowded into his heart, ached in his thought. He embraced her more desperately, feeling dimly that he was bringing back to him things that had almost escaped him. A thousand memories of her were in his arms. He kissed her and felt upon his lips the rekindled warmth of the summer night at the lagoon, of nights that had followed and all things that had been.

"Helen," he murmured, "I can't. I was wrong."

He flung himself from her and lay alone on the bed sobbing, his shoulders dancing in the darkness.

## II

It was late morning when he awoke. A sense of adventure at once fell upon him. He turned his eyes and beheld Helen, fully dressed, sitting beside the window staring out upon the bright street.

He noticed that her face was white and that a melancholy was in her eyes. Hearing him awake, she looked at him, a faint smile curving her lips. At the sight of her an enervation overpowered



him. The memories of the night raced through his thought. She loved him—wildly, foolishly. He returned her smile with an effort at genial well being.

She shook her head.

"You look foolish, smiling like that," she said wearily.

He beckoned her to the bed. He took her hand and raising it to his lips, kissed it.

"Don't, George. I'm afraid. I couldn't sleep. I've been sitting there—thinking. After all . . . perhaps you're right. It isn't fair to you."

She turned her eyes full and clouded with tears upon him. He sat up gayly, and with a hilarious note in his voice, cried,

"Make way. The philosopher rises for his bath."

"I'm afraid, George."

Bennett contemplated her with an amusement in his eyes.

"Silly," he cried. "After all our remarkable discussion . . . last night."

"I know, but . . . you'll feel that way again when you're tired and overworked as you were and . . . and . . . Oh, George, it can never be the same."

"Bah," exclaimed the mysteriously elate philosopher. "I've been thinking, too—massive, simple thoughts. Come, I've an announcement to make."

He was out of bed and fumbling in the closet for a dressing gown.

"This," he cried, reappearing, "is our wedding day, coming, as it should in all philosophically regulated homes, close upon the honeymoon."

He laughed at the sally. Helen contemplated him intently.

"Don't look as if you were frightened out of your wits, lady."

And sinking with melodramatic mockery to his knee he extended his arm, one hand over his pajama coat pocket, and cried:

"Will you be mine, fair one? I cannot live without you!"

"George, don't be silly. It isn't nice."

He arose and with a sudden serious humility placed his hands on her shoulders and added:

"I mean it."

### III

It was evening when they returned. They entered the house walking slowly. A number of sallies were on Bennett's lips. But the occasion seemed to have acquired suddenly a preposterous solemnity. A few minutes later they were seated as they had been the night before when he had started to . . .

Bennett sighed. Helen looked up, her face flushed, her eyes sparkling.

"Wouldn't you like to take your walk, George? Now that we're stupidly married you needn't forego all the joys of unconventionality."

"Oh, no, I'd rather stay here. With you," he added somewhat hurriedly.

"Don't be silly, George. Go for your walk."

He arose with alacrity. He wanted to be alone, to think. He had been thinking most of the day, but somehow the process had been unsatisfactory. He stooped over and kissed his wife.

"I'll be back soon," he said.

She laughed.

"You're funny," she cried. "Why, there'll be no living with you now that you're a respectably married man."

He thought as he passed out of the house that there was a vaguely unnatural note in her laugh. He walked on down the familiar stretch of street toward the park.

"A bit of a gloat," he murmured to himself.

He entered the park, searching out the bench he had occupied the night before. For long moments he sat staring vacantly at the sweep of darkness overhead. Bits of the ceremony recurred to him, the fat, red-faced judge, the vastly amused clerk. He frowned. The idiots! Why do people laugh at weddings? His eyes returned to the graveled path. A man and woman were walking arm in arm down the stretch toward the lagoon. He stared after them in a curious melancholy daze. As they vanished he jumped to his feet, an exclamation on his lips—

"Heavens—it's time I was returning home!"



# PYRAMUS AND THISBE, TRISTAN AND ISOLDE, HERO AND LEANDER, *ET AL.*

By Betting Calvert

**H**E had asked to be alone with her for a little. . . .

Everyone knew now that he loved her—something they had never known as long as she was alive.

There she lay stretched out on a white velvet couch, with her little hands folded, and flowers in her hair. His glance went quickly along to her feet. . . . those little tripping feet, now so sedately still in their white satin slippers.

He turned away . . . he knew that *that* was not his Wonderful Girl. She was in some bright and happy place among the stars. It was her room . . . the sense of her presence it gave him, that he wanted.

He went slowly around the room touching things . . . a little lacquered jewel box, a string of Japanese beads, a ball of bright yellow wool . . . the silver frame that had once held his photograph, but was empty now—and then a little crystal perfume flask. . . .

Everything in the room was charming but this flask spoke to him. . . .

He could see her impudently looking at him over her shoulder as she tipped it up to the place he loved best. . . .

He remembered that last night . . . why had they quarreled—why had he left her like that? It seemed silly now

. . . a little petty misunderstanding. His mind left it quickly and flew to the wonderful moments. . . .

Suddenly weakened, he sat down in a chair by the window, and buried his face in his hands. . . .

Presently there was a rustling sound in the room, like the folding of wings. . . .

*She* stirred and climbed down off the white velvet bier. He could hear her coming—her little white feet tripped over the rug—she had forgotten how to walk on earth. . . .

She came and knelt down beside him.

He knew she couldn't be there . . . she was dead—they were going to bury her tomorrow morning. . . . She couldn't be there, but he heard her breathing and felt her body against his knee.

He took his hands down . . . Oh, so slowly—and opened his eyes.

There she was. She seemed insufferably radiant and beautiful, like stars laughing in Heaven, her hair was pale gold, and she smelt of frankincense and myrrh. . . .

But her voice was very gentle and human:

"If I had known you loved me like this, I wouldn't have died," she said.



**A** WOMAN'S life lasts from the day that she falls in love to the day that some one falls in love with her daughter.



# THE STRANGE CASE OF CHALONER

By William Hamilton Osborne

## I

IT was Captain Bellamy—late of the Foreign Legion—who first directed my attention to the man.

"There he goes now," he cried, gripping my arm in his excitement, "the living exponent of—of what we were talking about."

As we had talked about everything under the sun, it was a little difficult to get Bellamy's meaning. But I realized the importance of the thing by the strength of his grip and the insistence of his manner.

"The very man," he went on, "the one and only Chaloner."

"The little chap with the bald head," I ventured.

Bellamy spluttered.

"Curses, no!" he cried.

"Not the big one with the sixty-inch waist."

"No," cried Bellamy, "the man with the iron grey hair. That's Chaloner."

"Oh," I returned, "the actor-looking fellow. I get you now."

"Actor is right," smiled Bellamy, satisfied, now that my gaze rested upon the exponent of something or other that we had been discussing; "Chaloner is an actor—a good one. He's a lawyer—a Philadelphia lawyer. Watch him. Handsome devil, eh? Size him up—what do you make of him, eh?"

It was Ladies' Night at the Barristers' Club in 44th Street. Dreary enough, too, if it hadn't been for Bellamy to listen to. Bellamy was the same old Bellamy, except—he'd lost his left leg somewhere on the Somme.

"What do you make of Chaloner, eh?" persisted Bellamy.

It was too easy. The man with the iron grey hair and the clear-cut features was surrounded on all sides by the fair sex. Besieged by a bevy of pretty girls. Getting away with it, too.

"What do you make of him," insisted Bellamy, "besides his being a good lawyer, and a good actor and such. What else?"

"A great ladies' man," I ventured, sure of my ground.

Bellamy shook his head.

"A woman's man—a great woman's man," he corrected, "that's Chaloner. Women, real women—they all fall for a man like him. He's a great orator—a great jury man, is Chaloner. Gets away with it. Same reasons. Audiences are feminine—all audiences are feminine. All juries are feminine. I mean men audiences—men juries. Individually they're masculine. Collectively, feminine. They take to a handsome fellow just like a woman. Magnetism! Chaloner's got it. Gad, he needs it. He's the one and only Chaloner—the living exponent of . . ."

"What *were* we talking about?" I mused.

And then I remembered.

I think I said awhile back that Bellamy had lost a leg on the western front. Poor chap, for him the war was over. At times he forgot they were still fighting over there. He was looking forward—always groping, like a man feeling his way through the dark. He watched for something—the millennium, I think. The great reconstruction period, he called it. He had it all doped out, especially for us here in this country. Everything was going to be on the level after the war. Not social-



ism, not that. Just good laws, decent people, brotherly sentiments. The greatest good to the greatest number—without the greatest number being number one. The sloughing off of the thousand and one petty little things that now and then had made life so mean for so many people.

Bellamy's whole thoughts were wrapped up in it all. After the war there'd be something new—some new order of events that would even make people forget that they'd lost legs, arms, eyes. Everything was to be right—nothing wrong. Arcadia—Altruria.

And tonight, just before he'd gripped my arm, he'd been going on about the terrific need of a National Divorce Law.

Seeing so many women about—talking to so many lawyers here in the Barristers' had evidently brought the subject to his mind. Bellamy's a lawyer. I'm not. He's very intense, Bellamy is. When he starts in on his subject, the thing he talks about is the only thing in the world just at that moment. He'd wound himself up on the divorce evil—not the moral side, but the legal side of it. Tangled estates, children's rights tied up, alimony, new marriages, conflicting laws—everything higgledy-piggledy.

And his theme seemed so important that, listening, I had begun to think that perhaps Wilson could get Wilhelm to agree on some international divorce law and thus win the war. That's the way one felt, listening to Bellamy.

"There's Chaloner, now," went on Bellamy, like a lecturer putting a new slide into the lantern, "the one and only. . . ."

He'd repeated that one and only several times.

"Why one and only?" I demanded, "what's unique about him? There are hundreds of men of his type scattered over New York, let alone Philadelphia. Why one and only?"

"Not hundreds like him—not *tens* like him," snapped Bellamy. "He's the one and only—he's unique. *He's the only man in America who's got two legal wives.*"

"Come again," I smiled.

"Get it hard," returned Bellamy. "The only man in this country with two legal wives—and, if you will have it, two sets of legitimate children."

"Two *living* wives?"

"Two living legal wives!" returned Bellamy.

"He's—not a Mormon," I faltered.

"That wouldn't help him," said Bellamy. "Bigamy and polygamy are barred in this country. Morally you can be a Mormon—legally you can't. Chaloner's not a Mormon. He's a Presbyterian."

## II

I SMILED incredulously. But I looked at Chaloner with added interest. Of course I felt Bellamy was talking enigma—the thing couldn't be as bald as he was stating it.

"If there's anything in this world that ought to get us a National Divorce Law," said Bellamy, "it's the case of Chaloner. The woman on the left," he went on, "is one of his wives."

She was a pretty woman—younger than he. Attractive. Wifely and motherly. Clear-eyed, good complexion, good figure. Fine enough for any man. Once and once only she looked our way and bowed to Bellamy. And then I saw the deep trouble that shone from those brown eyes of hers. Trouble—and wistfulness—and hope.

She glanced back at her husband Chaloner, and her smile was as winsome as a young girl's. But it was pathetic, just the same.

"Chaloner," I remarked, "knows how to pick women."

"Ah," said Bellamy, "this was the other way around. This woman picked him. She was infatuated with him—is yet. She closed in on him with all her dazzling beauty—she was a wonderful girl—and took him by storm. She's always been head over heels in love with him. She was Amy Worthing, old Judge Worthing's daughter. She's a thoroughbred, that girl. Chil-



dren—beauties, too. Three of 'em. They look like Chaloner."

"The lady on the right," I smiled, "is, I suppose, wife No. 2."

Bellamy shook his head.

"This is Amy Chaloner, wife No. 1, of New York," he said. "Wife No. 2 belongs in Philadelphia. She stays there. She was an actress, Edith Carter. Maybe you've heard of her. Chaloner married her some five years ago. Edith Chaloner of Philadelphia, wife number two."

"How did he get her?" I wondered.

"Ah," returned Bellamy, "easy! This time it was his infatuation. Saw the girl. Fell—couldn't help it. Love at first sight—love at second sight—love all the time. I'm not so sure she cares so much for him. But she married him—couldn't resist him at the start. He took her by storm just as Amy in New York had taken him by storm. So Edith Carter became wife number two. They have a little girl—looks like Edith—apple of his eye. You see how Fate's tangled all these people up."

"That," I returned, incredulously, "is just what I do *not* see."

### III

BELLAMY made himself more comfortable.

"An abstract principle doesn't always get to a layman," he conceded, "but a concrete case is apt to be dramatic. I'll tell you all about it. I must repeat. Here in New York this Chaloner was a young lawyer with a good money-making practice. Also he had inherited a considerable estate. That made it easier, perhaps, for the subsequent operations—and it enabled him, and still enables him to maintain his respectability, and his—er—separate establishments. It's all simple. He lived in New York, and he met Amy Worthing, who lived in New York, and Amy made violent love to him, and he married her and settled down into a young, happy, married life. All well and good—ideal husband, ideal wife, ideal family.

"One fatal night he took Amy, wife and mother, to see a Broadway musical comedy. There was something about one of the girls in the cast that caught his fancy—he couldn't keep his eyes from her. She wasn't any great shakes in that show—not a star at all. Just one of the rank and file. But she got him! Next night Chaloner, so the story goes, went to the theatre alone. The third night, somehow, he got acquainted with the girl. She was a very pretty young lady, with a good education and a clean record. She lived in Philadelphia. When Chaloner ran across her she was just about discouraged with her stage career. She felt that she had failed. She hadn't—she'd succeeded. For her stage career had led Chaloner straight to her.

"Chaloner took her home to Philadelphia. She was straight as a die, that girl. She fell in love with him, so she said, and she'd marry him when he was free. She thought nothing of the prospect of his being divorced from his first wife—the stage reeks with divorce. Chaloner's infatuation was intense. He wouldn't be satisfied until she was his—and the longer he had to wait the worse he got. He hovered about the girl all the while—spent week ends in Philadelphia—absented himself from his home in New York, until his wife Amy over there, and her good father, Judge Worthing, began to smell a rat. Amy didn't do anything, but Judge Worthing did. Chaloner, meanwhile as a blind, had opened a law office in Philadelphia, and will you believe it—the first day he hung out his shingle there, Edith Carter brought him some business—divorce business it was, involving one of her stage friends.

"Well, he ran two law offices in the two cities, but that didn't fool Judge Worthing. He hired his very best sleuth, and rounded up Chaloner. Then the next time Chaloner came home here in New York, the Judge tackled him. Amy couldn't."

"Any evidence?" I queried.

Bellamy smiled.

"Not a scintilla," he returned, "up-



on which to base a New York divorce. Chaloner was square enough with the facts. He told the Judge and Amy the whole story. He was infatuated with the girl and couldn't keep away from her. And the thing had been going on for a long while. But—they must remember this—there was nothing against the girl, and there wasn't any chance of there being anything against the girl.

"However, Chaloner, far from being on the defensive, started an offensive drive. He asked Amy and the Judge to start a divorce suit on Amy's behalf. He'd provide alimony, and he wouldn't defend the suit. And they could make up some pretext on which to base a decree. Well, even Judge Worthing wouldn't stand for a raw proposition like that—and Amy didn't want a divorce. She wanted Chaloner. So, no thoroughfare.

"Well, here's where Fate favored Chaloner. You know how people do here in the East, when they want to get a divorce and haven't much of any grounds. They go to the Pacific Coast and get it. Why? Search me. Somebody booms a town out there by getting some rich woman to come out and start proceedings against her husband. Then everybody flocks to the celebrated divorce state to be fleeced. That's because they don't know the law. Chaloner was lucky. He had already established a sort of residence in Philadelphia—opened his office there, was actually doing business there. And as a matter of fact he was spending more time in Philadelphia than he was in New York. He had to—Edith Carter was there.

"Don't get to blaming Chaloner while I tell you his story. Chaloner is human. He couldn't help himself—something about Edith Carter had taken a grip on him and wouldn't let him rest. Well, he looked up the Philadelphia divorce act—had to do it anyway, for these friends of Edith's, and found—*what?* Found that Pennsylvania—right here, next door to New York—found that Pennsylvania is the happy

hunting ground for divorces. If you want to get a divorce go to Pennsylvania. If your wife looks crooked at you you can get a divorce in Pennsylvania—or you could, anyway, at the time Chaloner started in. Well, he started in! Amy, you remember, declined to get a divorce. So he started one against Amy, on any old ground at all. He got a servant or two to testify—they swore to a lot of quarrels, and plenty of temper on Amy's part. What not—it was all after the discovery about Edith. And Amy was a woman scorned—hell holds nothing like it, and all that sort of thing, you understand. Maybe she threw something at him. At any rate, he started suit.

"Amy was devil bent, they say, to go to Pennsylvania and stop it. But old Judge Worthing wouldn't stand for it. He knew what he was about—and yet he didn't know what he was about. He wouldn't let Amy fight it, because, if she did fight it the Pennsylvania Court would get jurisdiction over her—and if she didn't, it wouldn't."

"I don't get that," I interrupted.

"Neither do members of the House of Representatives, nor of the Senate—nor does anybody else," wearily continued Bellamy, "it's a thing that people understand and marvel at when you explain it to them, but nobody actually believes. Everybody, you know, believes a divorce decree is simply a divorce decree, and lets it go at that. Now, listen. I think I can make this so plain that even you can get this through your head."

"For this favor many thanks," I smiled, "I'll see what I can do."

"Now, listen, son," said Bellamy, "a law suit is a lawsuit, isn't it? Now then, suppose a man in Philadelphia had a claim against you, and he started suit against you in Philadelphia, how could he get judgment against you?"

"He'd have to serve me with a summons," I conceded.

"Evidently you've been served with one," he smiled. "All right. You're here in New York. He's started suit



in Philadelphia. How can he get service on you in an ordinary case."

"He can't," I faltered, guessing at the right answer, "unless I go to Philadelphia—or somewhere in the state of Pennsylvania."

"Right," returned Bellamy, "and the reason is that no man can be deprived of life, or liberty, or property, or rights of any kind, without due process of law. The court in Pennsylvania can't take snap judgment against you. It's got to get its finger on you first. You're entitled to your day in court. That's the ordinary case. And that applies to all the states. This is getting dry, I fear. . . ."

"Great Scott," I gasped, "don't stop now. . . ."

"Now," went on Bellamy, "listen to this. While in the ordinary case, the law requires that personal service of process must be made within the confines of the state, yet every state of the Union has got a neat little system of jurisprudence that applies to divorce cases, and others, but *particularly* to divorce cases. Every state has a method by which personal service of process within the state is not necessary—if your party resides out of the state you can get out an order of publication, publish a notice of it in the local papers, serve or mail a copy by registered mail to the defendant husband or wife in the other state. This order gives the defendant, we'll say, two months to answer the complaint. Now, perceive that here there is no service of process within the confines of the state. The court never puts its hand upon the defendant husband or wife. It merely publishes a notice directed to him or her.

"That is the course that Chaloner followed in his suit against Amy—a procedure old as the hill. A procedure that obtains in every state. Amy got the newspaper clipping, she received the papers by registered mail. She wept; she tore her hair. She packed her bag to start for Philadelphia and hire a lawyer. Old Judge Worthing, as I have said, stopped her. For he knew that

if she went into Pennsylvania, she might be personally served with process there. He knew that if she employed a Philadelphia lawyer that lawyer would enter an appearance for her. He knew that if she fought the case, she would submit herself to the judgment of that court. In other words, in any event she would place herself under the Pennsylvania jurisdiction. This, Judge Worthing determined, should not be the case."

"Why?" I queried, still as puzzled as before.

"Because," said Bellamy, "he was not only her father. He was her counsel. He didn't purpose having Chaloner get a divorce from Amy. It was his intention, if there were any divorce to be had, that Amy should get it, *not* Chaloner. Alimony and support for the children meant dollars and cents to Judge Worthing, and although Chaloner was mighty fine and liberal with his money, the Judge intended to nail him, for Amy's sake, and nail him hard! And I'm willing to say he started out the right way to do it.

"Amy didn't go to Philadelphia, and she didn't submit herself to the courts of the state of Pennsylvania, and Chaloner got his divorce—a divorce, you perceive, based upon service which was not personal service of process within the state. He got his first decree and he got his final decree—and then he married Edith Carter.

"I get that," I admitted. "Then he was divorced from Amy. . . ."

"By the Pennsylvania court," agreed Bellamy.

"And," I went on, "therefore she was no longer his wife. . . ."

"In Pennsylvania," interposed Bellamy, "she *wasn't*. . . ."

"And he married Edith Carter."

"In Pennsylvania," remarked Bellamy.

"And she became his lawful wife."

"In Pennsylvania," placidly added Bellamy.

"Why nag on me all the time," I



complained, "by persistently tagging on this Pennsylvania addendum?"

"Because," returned Bellamy, "it's vital. You'll soon see why. Now give me your conclusion. Who was Chaloner's legal wife?"

"The Philadelphia girl," I said.

"All right," went on Bellamy, "you are right, in Pennsylvania. Why are you right? Because, following the legal procedure in Pennsylvania, Chaloner, observing all the Pennsylvania forms, had obtained a decree of divorce from Amy. The Pennsylvania court recognized its own decrees. But there's trouble somewhere."

"Where?"

"In New York, for instance. And New York is only for instance. We'll take New York because Amy lived here and still lives here. New York steadfastly declines to recognize that decree."

"Why?"

"New York declines to recognize any decree of any other state that is not based upon personal service of process within the confines of that state, or where the defendant has not submitted to the jurisdiction by appearing in the suit personally, or by attorney, or by litigating the matter. Do you get that?"

I began to smell a rat, as they say in the books.

"I think I do," I said faintly. "They deny that the other state ever got jurisdiction over this woman, who was a citizen of New York state."

"Exactly," smiled Bellamy, patting me on the shoulder in approval. "She has been deprived of her rights without due process of law. New York will not recognize the divorce decree of another state where that decree is obtained only after service of process pursuant to an order of publication. There's nothing unusual in that attitude. There are other states that follow her example—several others."

"Look here," I said.

I picked up an evening paper. It was a New York paper. Tucked away in one corner of it were three or four no-

tices of publication in as many divorce suits. I had read them often. I showed them to Bellamy.

"New York," I said, "grants divorces based upon service by an order of publication."

Bellamy's eyes shone with delight.

"Of course," he howled, "of course New York does."

"Doesn't New York recognize her own divorce decrees?" I persisted.

"Of course New York does."

"Even those granted only where service is pursuant to an order of publication?"

"Of course New York does." Bellamy became quite uproarious. "*But New York won't recognize Pennsylvania's decrees granted under similar circumstances.* Not by a jugful! Nor will many other states. They all have the same methods of service—they all swear by those methods—they recognize those methods, when used within their own borders, as the finest things in the world. But they decline to recognize those methods when adopted by any other state. It's a muddle, eh? Puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer? I should say! That's why we've got to have a National Divorce Commission, son."

"But let's get back to Chaloner. Down in Philadelphia, you'll remember that he's got his decree of divorce and he's married Edith Carter. That's where we left off. Now about Amy."

"What did she do?" I asked.

"She got mad as the devil. Chaloner was now actually living with his Philadelphia wife. That hit Amy hard. She couldn't stand a thing like that. Chaloner was her man, don't forget that—not anybody else's. So, now, she let Judge Worthing do his worst."

"What could Judge Worthing do?" I queried.

"Everything—now," said Bellamy, smiling. "Here's where he shone. Get the situation! Amy lived in New York. Down in Philadelphia Chaloner was living with Edith. In Philadelphia, Edith was his wife. But New York



would have none of it. New York said Chaloner never was divorced, because the Pennsylvania courts never had jurisdiction over Amy. Therefore his divorce was no good. Therefore, he wasn't divorced. Therefore, Amy was still his wife. Therefore, she could bring suit against him in New York for a divorce. . . ."

"On what grounds?"

"On the simple, easy, statutory ground that he was living with a lady not his wife. You get that? Judge Worthing brought the suit, proved the facts—they were easily established, and obtained his first decree. This is known as the interlocutory decree. This decree does not divorce the parties. It merely establishes that they are entitled to a divorce and that the plaintiff, Amy in this case, could get a final decree a few months later by making application—if nothing happened in the meantime to defeat her rights. So Judge Worthing got this first decree. And this first decree, by its set terms, completely nullified and bowled over the Pennsylvania decree—that is, nullified it in New York."

"Why not in Pennsylvania?"

"Because," said Bellamy patiently, "the New York courts don't happen to have jurisdiction over Pennsylvania!"

"Was Chaloner," I asked, "personally served with process in New York in Amy's suit?"

"Bless you, yes," said Bellamy. "He had a law office here. They served him. He defended the suit, set up the Pennsylvania decree, and had it knocked flat. Oh, yes, they got jurisdiction of him all right—here in New York. That's a mere detail. But the interlocutory decree in New York declaring the Pennsylvania decree to be void is just so much waste paper in Pennsylvania. You get that? So would the final decree be. However, we've got this Pennsylvania decree regularly knocked on the head in New York, and we've got Amy's grounds for divorce sustained, and we've got her entitled to a final decree in a few months."

"And then?"

Bellamy grinned professionally.

"The final decree," he went on, "was never entered."

"There was some cause for its not being entered?" I queried.

"Much," he answered.

"Son," he then proceeded, "this is a story of real human beings and attractive human beings. I started out by telling you that Amy was infatuated with this man Chaloner. She was blindly, unreasonably in love with him. She believed that at heart he was in love with her. She considered this Edith Carter business only a passing fancy. She had all her life before her—all her life and Chaloner's. And in New York she was his legal wife. . . ."

"Oh, yes," I interposed, "I see that now. She was his legal wife. And the Carter girl no longer was his wife."

"Not so fast," said Bellamy, "let me go on. Amy loved this Chaloner to distraction. They had these wonderful children. She went to see him—she got down on her knees to him—she made all the pleas there were to make—duty, his duty, among others. And she was his wife. New York said she was his wife. Well, son, Chaloner is a complex personage like the rest of us. He went back to his New York home. He lived with Amy—part of the time. That being so, no final decree could be entered. How could it be, when the parties had come together again—were living together? But the old interlocutory decree is still on record—and anyway, decree or no decree, New York doesn't recognize Chaloner's Philadelphia divorce. In New York, Amy is Chaloner's lawful wife. Why shouldn't he live with her?"

"Then the Carter girl is out of it?"

"Not at all," vigorously protested Bellamy. "Bless us, son. Didn't I tell you that Chaloner is human, and furthermore, that he's hopelessly infatuated with Edith, his Philadelphia wife—"

"But that divorce of his was declared no good," I protested.



"In New York it was," he returned. "In New York he's still married to Amy. But, bless you, Pennsylvania recognizes that decree that Chaloner obtained. The divorce decree obtained by him in Pennsylvania being valid in Pennsylvania, he was free in Pennsylvania, and his marriage to Edith there was valid. And he's infatuated with Edith, his Pennsylvania wife. So in New York he lives with Amy, his New York wife. She, poor girl, never mentions the Philadelphia situation. She believes that time will cure his infatuation. She wants Chaloner, and she wants him among those present when somebody asks for the father of his children. And he acquiesces. He's content."

"What has Edith, of Philadelphia, got to say?" I queried.

"She asks no questions—perhaps she doesn't care. She's proud of him, and she has a deep respect for her position as his wife. She is content to shut her eyes. She's not infatuated, like he is—not infatuated as Amy is, you see. So she's content. But she sticks to Pennsylvania. She rarely comes to New York, or goes anywhere else outside of her home state."

"Why?"

"Because," sighed Bellamy, weary with explanation, "in Pennsylvania she is Chaloner's wife. In New York she isn't. In Pennsylvania her little girl is Chaloner's legitimate heir. Elsewhere she isn't. For the same reasons Amy never ventures into Pennsylvania. She can go anywhere else with impunity. But the instant she crosses the border into Pennsylvania her status changes and remains changed until she gets out of Pennsylvania again. Her children would be worse than nobodies inside of Pennsylvania. That's the strange case of Chaloner. Haven't I told you that he is unique. Perhaps the only man in the country with two legal wives at one and the same time."

I thought about it.

"All right," I said at length, "that's because both these women are complai-

sant. Either one of them could start suit for divorce tomorrow."

"They can, but they don't," said Bellamy. "I've explained why. So long as they don't, he's a man with two legal wives. Legal, mind you. No frumpery about it. Lawful wives. Get it hard!"

"But," I still protested, "why doesn't the law step in and put a stop to it?"

"Ah," smiled Bellamy, "now you do the talking, son. Tell me: *How* is the law going to stop it?"

"He's committed bigamy, hasn't he?" I demanded.

"If he's committed bigamy," returned Bellamy, "the crime was in contracting the second marriage—in going through the ceremony with Edith Carter."

"Right," I said, doing the talking, "right! And New York can arrest him for that."

"Think," returned Bellamy. "Criminal law man. How can New York arrest him for an act committed in Pennsylvania? Or if it arrests him by mistake, how can it try him for an act committed in Pennsylvania? It can't. Even you know that."

"Well, then," I said, "it can turn him over to Pennsylvania and let Pennsylvania try him."

"For bigamy?" smiled Bellamy. "Nix on that. Under the laws of Pennsylvania? Why, he hasn't committed any crime in Pennsylvania. His marriage with Edith in Philadelphia took place only after he was freed by a Pennsylvania court."

"But he's living with two women," I spluttered, "two women that he claims to be his wives. They can't both be his wives."

"They are," returned Bellamy, positively. "Put it up to old Judge Worthing if you want to. He'll tell you that they are."

"There are laws," I went on. "He can be arrested for living either with one of them or with the other."

"Put it to the test," said Bellamy. "It's crime you're talking about. A



man must be tried in the state where the crime is committed. The crime you mention—that is, living either with Amy or with Edith, is committed in one of two states. He can't be indicted in New York for living with Amy. Hang it, she's his wife. He can't be indicted in Pennsylvania for living with Edith. Hang it, she's his wife."

"Hang the state law!" I exclaimed. "There ought to be a Federal law, then, that would reach the situation."

"That," grinned Bellamy, seeing now that the thing had got under my thick hide, "that is what I've been howling about for the last fifteen years. After the war is over the strange case of Chaloner ought to get us what we need — a National Divorce Law, son."

## IV

THAT elongated conversation took place some months ago. I was reminded of it yesterday when I saw a death notice in a New York paper. It was the death notice of Chaloner. He had dropped suddenly, with apoplexy, in the State House in Trenton, New Jersey, about half-way between his respective homes. There was nothing unusual about the death notice. But at its end it carried this one line:

*Notice of funeral hereafter.*

I showed it to Bellamy.

I looked at Bellamy and he looked at me.

We could appreciate the difficulty there might be in determining just where the funeral of Chaloner should be held. Also, by whom his property would be enjoyed.



## LOVE

By Kirah Markham

LOVE, take my hand,  
 I cannot see the way.  
 Behind me where I stand  
 Lies yesterday.  
 Before me where I stray  
 Stretches an unknown land.  
 I cannot see the way,  
 Love, take my hand.

Love, be my eyes for me,  
 Mine are so blind.  
 I would go trustingly  
 With humankind.  
 I fain would seek to bind  
 Wounds that my heart can see.  
 But oh my eyes are blind.  
 Love, be my eyes for me!





# THE SOCIALIST

By Patrick Kearney

**D**URING his first year in college he joined a fraternity. He enjoyed the life immensely for a while, until one day a commoner with a red shirt and horny hands struck up an acquaintance during a Philosophy lecture.

When he went to the fraternity house that evening he asked: "Is it fair that we should have all the joys of refined social intercourse, while men with red shirts who chew tobacco are debarred? Why is this?"

No one was sober enough to think of any reason, so he left the fraternity and joined a Commons Club.

"Fair play," he cried. "They, like me, should have rights. They are only trying to live, and we are equal!"

Negroes were not admitted to the Commons Club. One day he met a bright young black studying Theology. He wondered why this man should be refused admittance. When the answer was given he left the Commons Club and began writing articles on "The Negro—A Man and a Brother."

"Fair play" was again his cry.

In his third college year he took a course in Zoölogy, and discovered that man was not so far removed from the ape as he had thought.

"Only superficial differences," he mused. "We are both mammals, after all. Why should apes be kept in cages while I am permitted to roam at large?"

So he started a society for the Liberation of the Simidæ.

Later in the Zoölogy course he discovered that, since rabbits were mammals like himself, it was cruel to use them for dissection purposes. He became an anti-vivisectionist and a vegetarian. Because the professor in charge of dissection could not see his point, he dropped the course and took up Biology.

In the Biology course he probed more deeply into the evolution of living organisms, and discovered that all forms of life were more or less connected, differing only in point of development. This interested him greatly, and in the evenings when little roaches ran about his room he refrained from killing them.

"They are a lower organism, that is all," he said. "Why should I live and they die? Fair play!"

At this time he contracted smallpox. Studying his disease, he learned that it was caused by the attempt of certain organisms, name unknown, to obtain a livelihood in his recesses.

"This is fair enough," he said. "They, like me, are only trying to live. Fair play!"

He died as he had lived, a beautiful Christian character, and the city in which he was born erected a great monument to him as a vigorous and sincere combatant for universal justice.





# RENUNCIATION

By Djuna Barnes

SKIRL PAVET leaned forward, resting his head against the back of the pew; he wanted to look up but he dared not.

His prayer had been said long ago before he had slid to his knees; now he kept his head bowed not to be in the way of other people's prayers.

He fumbled in the dark for his hymn book and could not find it. He contented himself by feeling of the sole of his boot where a hole was coming.

The dim church and the odor of incense seemed to him to be quite wonderful, a sort of darkened sachet for pain. Here one shook out the garments of sin and if they could not be cleansed at least they could be perfumed. He'd heard that chorus girls did something like this—used cologne water when they hadn't time for the next curtain.

The high ceiling looked like an inverted mould to Skirl, a place where formless, terrible and ugly things were made beautiful. He crossed himself thinking about this and his trouble, looking around a little furtively with his yellow eyes set in pale firm wrinkles, like new flowers.

He could see the altar far away at the end of his supplication, its two incense burners sending up slow thin threads of scented smoke on either side of the scarlet figure of the priest.

Skirl Pavet looked into this distance, thinking how much this altar resembled a dressing-table—a dressing table for the soul—and that scarlet priest like a lovely red autumn leaf blown up against that polished thing of wood, with its great open Bible. He moved like a leaf too, here, there, as if he were

trying to play a song and couldn't find the tune.

He raised his face toward the picture of the Virgin. He liked her look of dawning innocence. There was the figure on the cross, that too was beautiful, like a splendid pathetic fruit—some super-effort of nature—yet somehow too sorrowful to pluck.

The sun beating upon the stained glass of the windows threw colored lights face down upon the floor, and this was like sunlight in a forest. Everything seemed like a forest to Skirl, a great dense wood; a place where everything was in bloom—sorrow was in bloom, and repentance and hope and virtue and sin.

He thought how sweet a thing sin was. It was so fine and strong and universal. All the bowed heads with their moving mouths were impelled by sin. Sin rushed by his neck in two fine acrid streams. It was like the odor of a tanning factory where leather is made. He moved his lips also now, but only because he was troubled into nervousness about the gap left by a tooth that had loosened that morning.

He saw figures moving about; people were leaving, some of them came out of their pews on one leg, bent on it and went away quickly. He smiled a little and got up also. Two men and a woman were dipping their hands in the holy water and, waiting until they were within the shadow of the pillar, they crossed themselves.

He dipped in his own thick hand and touched himself four times, looking about slowly at the frightened people; he splashed himself comfortably, as a



bird bathes in a public puddle, throwing up myriad drops of water.

He was not ashamed, and he dried his short fingers as he descended the steps.

He remembered, now that he was in the sunlight, that he had been praying for strength, for a terrible kind of enduring strength, a fulfillment of a possible power that might have been his had he wished it, long ago.

His acknowledgment that sin was beautiful and strong was only another way of saying farewell intelligently and gratefully to what he had been, toward what he had done, giving way to what he must now do, must now be, with a sort of superb charm, a subtle and philosophic bow.

Skirl Pavet was returning after twenty-five years of absence to his wife and to his home. He pictured to himself the old house, the familiar street, the former acquaintances. Most of those people who had known him would have forgotten his name by now, even his nickname, even his pet name. They would fumble in obscure and forgotten corners for it, searching his face for a clue to the peculiarity that had given him names of any kind. He was returning with a sharp desire and a sharp dread. He knew how many windows there were to the kitchen, but he could not remember just how his wife's hands felt.

He looked away into the tall intricacies of New York's roofs. He thought back to a day when the first robin called him from the city and the quick hard life of competition. He dreamed slowly as he turned downtown.

Strange, that he, a Pole, should be here. He looked at the sky through sudden tears. Strange too that he should be setting his face toward home and those things that had broken him, driving him like a leaf in a forest, shaken loose from its branch, stumbling in among the trunks of alien trees, beating its way toward the open, finding the fields at last, only, to creep among strong growing green things, to flutter

helplessly over full round stretches of earth, slowly dying, becoming brittle, growing brown and melancholy and still more agile, till finally—

Strange that he, Skirl Pavet, whose lips had touched every holy image in Poland, had spread themselves on many an ikon's glass, had settled about many a cross, should come to this at last. To this dry renouncing of all his youth's sap and its sweetness, of all his wander-love, of his freedom. How wonderful it had been. What throats the Finnish girls had, what hands the English!

He stumbled over an unevenness in the pavement, and turned looking into the face of the crowd. Dark faces and pale, some stupid, some gay. An officer passed swinging his cane, jangling the little spur-chains that passed under his boots.

Skirl dropped his hands at his sides swinging them slowly; he always did this when he was perplexed, it gave him a feeling of such hopelessness that something would have to happen to him, something would have to come to relieve him of this awful stupidity, this idle dreaming weariness.

He thought of Polly, his wife, a middle-sized woman, with stout knees and full lips too colorless and amiable. He remembered that her nose set in well at the corners, and he reflected that this type always grow stout. She had always been a good natured woman, but mundane, jocose.

She was the daughter of a western hotel keeper. He went back over his first meeting with her. She was a favorite in the family and would have been quite spoiled, had she been quick, apprehensive or sharp. As it was she smiled at those who petted her, flourishing under kindness like a kitten, and like a kitten missed it not at all when it ceased. He had gone out there because he had heard of the opportunities the West afforded; he had come back empty-handed with this buxom, fresh-faced Polly—daughter of a hotel-keeper. She soon fell into the old busi-



ness, opened a restaurant in the early Thirties, near Seventh avenue, and from that time he began to grow restless.

That was long ago. He thought of it now, moving his nose in quick successive shivers of savory memories, closing his eyes, trying to recall the pattern in the carpet one had to cross before they came to the table. Two crouching dragons, a square and two crouching dragons reversed—was that it, or had he made a mistake about the whole design. He puzzled his mind about the way she used her English; she had strange tricks with little words, a manner with her lips; he could not recall what words, what manner.

She used to sit at a long table with their oldest patrons, stout, middle-aged, stupid men. Some were dry goods merchants, some were tailors, one was a banker, another a broker.

Later when the lunch crowd had gone, the cooks and the waiters would sit at another long table in the rear, in white caps and aprons, talking slowly, softly about the making of butter sauce, of tripe *sauté*.

He smiled suddenly recalling the name of the chef, Bradley, that was a strange name. He had no teeth and his ample jowl swung in great satisfied rhythms, while a small moustache rose and fell on the sunken upper lip.

And there was Sammie, who always peered into the syrup and milk jugs, sighing and shaking his head at the manner in which they both emptied, hurrying with his food, moving his body, his arms never still, in a passion to be at the remainder of the meal before it should be lost in the stomachs that surrounded him.

Skirl had called this sordid, dirty. He had always loved the country, the open fields, the smell of spring, like the breath of a dear one after months of dreary death. The sense of buds breaking and the early rains that took liberties with the newly-sown flower beds, chasing small particles of loam into hurrying rivulets, making an effort to drag something back with them into

the bowels of the earth. The sound of animals running through bramble and swamp, the crackling of little hoofs in the twigs, and the odor of new calves with moist hair. And this had been the argument he had used against her, excusing himself for going away, to have his fill of life, love, the earth.

He had a child of his own, but he had forgotten that too, laid it aside, put it back in his memory to bring out when it should please him, with the tranquillity of one who takes what he desires, never quite relinquishing what he does not, holding it to make it serve in time of need. Polly had brought it up to its fourth year with comfortable and hearty slaps on its plump, glowing cheeks, with many an apprehensive face as she picked it up, fondling it, pinching it on either side of its little wet mouth, squealing at it, becoming intoxicated with the excitement and energy of mothers who like their own; kissing its tiny white teeth, and finally, standing hands on hips, would watch it as it crawled away saying: "Isn't he a beggar?" making those animal noises that save the child from too early terror of civilization.

He had pretended to be jealous of the fat comfortable men with whom Polly sat, cracking nuts, laughing, though he knew well enough that it was part of the business of a restaurant keeper to be amiable with the guests. But somehow he didn't like the way she got their histories out of them. This he really resented. He felt that he was the only person that Polly should know all about, that where other men bought their clothes, met their brides or took their sorrows, were things about which Polly should not be curious. He resented the way these well-fed gentlemen would move back from the table, puffing out their cheeks, snapping bands from cigars, sprawling as if to say "This is an excellent place to dine, but a better place to rest."

He resented their comfortable sighs, their after-dinner circular movement of the closed mouth, their persistent heavy smoking. He hated their laughter, he



hated their satisfaction with the city, the dirty streets, their tiring, dull trades. This wasn't life. He felt then that they had been swamping him, drawing in on him, killing him with gross layers of flesh, moving over and around him like a boat full of restlessly dying fish.

And because of these things, he had prayed for strength, strength to keep away from all he loved, strength to go back to all that hurt and smothered him, to renounce all, that he might end his days at last with this woman who had always been kindly, stupid, amused. To leave those others who were young and bright and who understood.

There was Ollie, tall splendid Ollie with her strange large eyes and her way of saying, "You'll not forget me, my little man."

She had been the one real passion of his life, he thought, but he had not stayed long with her. There were others, sweet women, warm, gentle creatures—all but one who had slapped his face one night in Java.

He didn't mind now, he was glad that his face would tingle with any memory, such things were seasoning to that great seasonless mass that is a man before he has loved.

He knew that he had not always been happy, perhaps he would admit that to Polly when he returned, she might be glad to know that there were times when he had missed her, had even compared her with others. He liked admitting things to Polly, she always looked cheerful and nodded, seeming to say, "That's right, keep alive."

That was the strange thing about Polly, she never resented, never rebuked, did not even seem to think what he did strange: a sort of philosophy that had its culminating belief in just that "Keep alive,"—sensing that any way people kept alive was a sort of excuse in itself.

This was a lower way of looking at it, perhaps, but it had often comforted him. Even in those days when lying awake in the four-posted bed of yellow

wood, in the garret whose roofs nearly touched his head, he had decided that he wanted no other shelter than the sky.

How he felt again the soft blankets of that bed against his unshaven chin, the cool edge of the sharp sheets that he could never bear against his throat, a feeling as if he were going to be strangled, beheaded!

He had written to Polly after these twenty-five years of absence and she had written him to come. Would she really be glad to see him? It must be that, for she had no real curiosity, no comparative valuation, no desire to put one and one together to make up the whole of the fabric of life, portions, edges were enough for her. She had no other reason than just that, to let him return when he wanted to.

And suddenly there came over him a hot flush because he knew how good she was, had always been.

And the boy he would be far along in the twenties, grown up. Yet he could not visualize him. He held his hand up in the air on a level with his shoulder. People stopped, turned around, smiled. He colored and lowered it. There was where his boy would stand. Of course the people could not know what he was thinking. It was just a gesture that he had to make to feel in some way the passage of time.

He must be good to him now, must devote the rest of his life to him and to her. No more turning aside, no more running after nature, no more appreciation of lovely throats, hands, faces.

He knew how weak he was, what his passions were, great overwhelming passions, and Ollie lived here, very near his own house—and he had cared—

Well, that was the reason why he had prayed—prayed for strength to keep him straight, for wisdom to shut his eyes on everything but the inner self, on everything but those things of home that were his.

He was a Pole and he loved his God, and he recalled again the picture of the Virgin and the image of Christ taking



that downward course of all things that sorrow-tears, flesh and he thought of all the holy images in other countries that had become stained with the mark of his great caressing mouth.

He was very tired, he did not know that he could be so tired. He had walked these few blocks so many times in the past, and they had not tired him, and he remembered that he had been tired when he knelt to pray.

And then he was in their street, at their door, turning the knob, walking in, and he seemed to have been away only yesterday, and the geranium flowering in the pots were those he had planted there a sun before, and the table full of stout gentlemen were those he had hated but a dawn away. And there was Polly, rising, scattering crumbs, smiling, a little stouter, gay, mundane, jocose.

And the table at the far end was surrounded by a pack of white-capped, white-aproned cooks and waiters. Only Bradley was not there, someone with a small and narrow chin had the place of honor, and no one jumped up to look into the syrup and milk pitchers.

He asked questions hurriedly to keep from losing all of his past at once, for what he had been but yesterday seemed suddenly to be less than a dream. And less than a mist were the splendid days he had spent with Ollie in Huntington, a little town through whose streets gray-faced clerks hurried, gathering at lunch time about the low ivy-covered stone wall that skirted the cemetery. Birds were in the grass then and there the lovers dodged the eyes of acquaintances behind the decaying symbol on some old stone, that had expressed a person's love for a person long gone.

And she, Ollie had thrown back her naked arms into the grass behind her head talking of a new gingham gown, of the colored post cards that were being sold to the country side, little pic-

tures of the mill, of the church, of the library—well—

He asked about old acquaintances too and Polly answered him smiling whimsically, telling of her life; how the son of one of their customers had taken a commission and was already at sea, and how Tessie had taken ill and passed away in the Fall.

\* \* \*

FINALLY he sat on the edge of his bed. Coming back had been so easy, he remembered now how her hand felt. The way she twisted her mouth, he had always known somehow, was toward the left, and her western accent was quite a thing of his life.

And the boy?

The boy was married.

He hadn't thought of that.

He fumbled in his pocket for his pipe, found it and looking around at the old rafters and the four-posted bed, sighed. Polly was stouter, much, and yet only by a double chin was she strange to him.

He closed his eyes. He had prayed for strength—Polly was getting his slippers, and an inertia seemed to leave him powerless to get them for himself. Then he reached for them hurriedly.

"And Ollie?"

"Her granddaughter was christened last June."

He looked away into the street from the dirty little oblong pane.

"Let me put them on, you can't bend so easily as once, Skirl."

"I prayed today—down on my knees—" still he reached out a stockinged foot. He was almost nodding, he laughed a little, contentedly.

But later, turning his face to the wall, crossing himself with one finger, his eyes shed tears. He could hear Polly talking downstairs to the help, clattering with the pans, but he was tired and he dozed.





# SCORN

By June Gibson

## I

HE said: "Your eyes are the shade of the *Campanula rotundifolia*; your grace is the grace of morning fog rising from the river; your breath is the fragrance of honey-laden azalea blossoms."

His hand wandered across her shoulders and he kissed her on the mouth.

She said: "I will have none of you. You are super-versed in the ways of women."

## II

HE went into the wilds where he saw no women.

He came to her and bowed humbly at her feet.

He said: "For years I have seen no women, spoken to no women, touched no women. I am as unversed in the ways of women as a hermit of Mesopotamia. I come to you without guile."

She said: "I will have none of you. In the ways of women you are like a bumpkin."



# CONFESSION

By David Morton

THERE have been times—this that you never knew—

When I have kept, unuttered, in my heart,

A strange, cold dread that clings and clings to you:

Not to your soul immortal, not that part

That lingers, somehow, and eludes the grave,

A chill and naked comfort after death;

In this, the great find solace, and the brave

Have faith that goes beyond the fickle breath;

But I am not of these; a needy fear

Wants every intimate gesture that it knew:

Lift of your head, sound of your breathing near,

That way you turn your shoulder,—these are You,

O briefest Sweet, how should your soul replace

That warm, bronze line that melts above your face?



CONSCIENCE is the ghost of a maiden aunt.



# THE INSPIRATION OF CLEON FITCHARD

By Charles Divine

CLEON looked out of his attic window at the treetops in the park. He pursed his lips reflectively and stabbed his pencil at the manuscript in front of him. Then he turned to the bottle of beer at his elbow, drank of it, and thumbed his rhyming dictionary. And with this preparation he bent over his paper again and completed that particular stanza.

He had read somewhere that Lord Byron was wont to write his poems with a rhyming dictionary in one hand and a glass of gin in the other—and had been moderately successful. Cleon got him a second-hand rhyming dictionary at a dingy Sixth Avenue bookshop, but he couldn't afford the gin. So he compromised on beer. The results this morning appeared to gratify him. He jumped up from his chair, recited the last stanza of his love poem, and left the concluding line ringing on the air of the garret room: "And her lips are moulded of dew and fire—"

"What's that you was sayin'?"

Abruptly he turned toward the questioner. He had forgotten that Mrs. Kelly was there, with her dust-rag and apron and conversational eagerness.

"Nothing, Mrs. Kelly," he flung at her. "Nothing at all!"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Fritchard, I thought you was addressin' me." She flicked her dust-rag, hurt.

Cleon had made arrangements that no one was to be permitted to enter his "studio" except Mrs. Kelly, the "cleaning woman," and Mrs. Van Dossiter. He had packed off all the unconventional young things and other blondes

who used to come and lie on his sofa pillows and smoke his cigarettes and listen to his poetry.

All this because Mrs. Van Dossiter had entered his life. Mrs. Van Dossiter was rich. She had come into many big business interests, which others managed for her. She was on the verge of forty and a divorce.

Moreover, Mrs. Van Dossiter was thrilled. She found Cleon unusual. She had never been loved by a poet before. She had always lived "uptown."

Thus it was that Cleon's day was divided into two distinct parts. Part I, the morning and early afternoon, when he wrote his poems undisturbed, except for Mrs. Kelly's garrulous sweeping and dusting. Part II, beginning at 4 p. m., when Mrs. Van Dossiter came in her limousine and stayed to a candle-lit tea or else dragged him off in her Packard twin six to Long Vue or some other tea-house up the Hudson.

## II

THE line describing his new love as possessing "lips moulded of dew and fire" was written of Mrs. Van Dossiter. The whole poem was so full of a great surge of passion that Cleon paced up and down the room, as full of its beauty as the poem was of its heat.

"You oughta put it on ice, sir!"

"What's that?" he demanded, wheeling on Mrs. Kelly.

"That bottle of beer. It don't look appetizin'."

"Don't interrupt me!" he commanded, and Mrs. Kelly, after a few more wrathful flourishes of her dust-rag,



gathered her skirts and appliances about her and departed.

Promptly at four Mrs. Van Dossiter's limousine drew up in front of the faded house, and Mrs. Van Dossiter got out. One couldn't say that she alighted, for that verb should be reserved for the action of a younger and more sprightly woman.

Five minutes later Mrs. Van Dossiter was ensconced among the sofa pillows where the casual blondes used to sit. She was happy. It meant a great deal to her, the love of Cleon Fitchard. And Mrs. Van Dossiter meant even more than love to Cleon. She would have to, at her age and with her figure. (Besides, Cleon himself had passed the pink flush of youth. He had passed it without ever displaying any of the attributes of an Apollo. And he suspected that the casual blondes liked his cigarettes more than they liked his poetry.)

Mrs. Van Dossiter listened to Cleon's newest poem. She liked it. When he told her that she was his inspiration, she was pleased to acknowledge it. She went further, and outlined to him the great desire of her heart: to be his constant inspiration, to make him reach, through her love and companionship, epic heights of dizzy prominence.

"I'll send this to *Pegasus*," he said, naming a magazine that was noted for publishing the best verse of the day and the most expensive.

"The *Pegasus*!" she cried. "Oh, have you ever had poems in there?"

He saw that the thought of his work in *Pegasus* brought her a tingle of excitement. He would have liked to let the tingling go on gathering momentum.

He paused a moment, and then, evidently having decided to tell the truth, replied:

"No. I have tried, but they have rejected my poems."

She let out a petulant protest.

"Oh! . . . But they won't dare reject this one. Send it to them, by all means. Remember who inspired it!" She sought a coquettish pose among the cushions and pressed his hand.

### III

CLEON sent the poem to *Pegasus*. It was accepted!

The event called for a celebration. Cleon sped the news to Mrs. Van Dossiter by telephone, and they met. He told her—and believed it—that she was a successful inspiration. She exulted over it. They stayed on at the Hudson River inn for dinner, and discussed his future—which was her future, too. . . .

There were other poems, other acceptances by *Pegasus* and other commemorating dinners. The cheques from *Pegasus* were ample and sweet, and a personal letter from Mr. Darlington Dean, the editor, held out the promise of an unending market for the poetical works of Cleon Fitchard. He felt that fame was clutching at his coat-tails. But he began to feel that there was another clutching hand, growing more and more insistent, and a little irksome—the hand of Mrs. Van Dossiter.

The cheques he was receiving from the magazine, together with newspaper money, made Cleon more independent than he had ever been before. Things came to such a pass that he even paid his rent. Then revolt stirred.

He began to feel that he no longer needed Mrs. Van Dossiter's inspiration. He began to feel he had flown beyond her. He began to feel that he no longer needed her limousine in which to take the air after a hard day's work with the pen. He could now afford a ride up Fifth Avenue on top of a 'bus. He began to feel he no longer needed Mrs. Van Dossiter's dinners. He could now afford to buy his own meals at a cheap little restaurant near Washington Square, and sometimes three times a day! He began to feel as if he would like to be freed of Mrs. Van Dossiter's cloying amours. He could now afford to have the penniless blondes smoking his cigarettes on the sofa pillows.

This was what success did to Cleon.

Mrs. Van Dossiter sensed it. She told him of it. She told him of it violently, with her robust bosom heaving and her heavy earrings dancing a vexed



accompaniment: all that he meant to her, all that she meant to him. His inspiration! Hadn't he admitted it himself? Hadn't he acclaimed it hundreds of times! Mrs. Van Dossiter wasn't used to being thrown aside like that. She had never *been* thrown aside. The divorce she was getting was *her* divorce, not *his*. It meant freedom for her, and that nothing would then stand between her and Cleon; and—this she didn't tell him—she would have a real live poet for a life partner.

In rebuttal Cleon tried to make much of the value of frankness. At great length he told her that it was good for both of them to have this heart-to-heart talk, but that he had reached a point where his soul demanded a period of solitude. (Cleon had been withholding talk of his soul for just such an emergency.) He said that he thought it would be salutary for them not to see each other for a time. Love was such a difficult thing to appraise, and to exercise one's self greatly over its resurgent manifestations was to lose perspective entirely. Thus Cleon attempted to bewilder her. One must simply wait and watch, he said. . . .

Mrs. Van Dossiter left the interview in a huff. She hoped his old poetry would go to pieces!

Strangely enough, it did. That very day Cleon wrote a poem on freedom, the emancipation of the heart, the striking off of spiritual shackles; and the poem was rejected by *Pegasus*—his first rejection in weeks.

There was another rejection a few days later. Others followed in sickening succession.

Mrs. Van Dossiter came to call, coolly and calmly, and inquired how his work was going. Oh, so-so! But she knew better. She got him to admit that his poems no longer found favour with the editor who had once written him personal letters of praise. She behaved with marvelous poise, which excited his admiration, and before she left she remarked, with great self-possession:

"Perhaps, my dear Cleon, you will

realize in time that there was more to my inspiration than you suspected. But that is for you to find out. Bye-bye, Cleon! I'm off to tea at Tarrytown."

The door banged. There were footsteps on the stairs. Outside the window the Packard twin six was purring. It slipped tranquilly through the park, carrying Mrs. Van Dossiter to those delightful haunts upon which Cleon had turned his back. And he was as hungry as the most ravenous tea-hound in the world! . . .

Cleon, who had always been fond of experiments, found this one going against him. His poetry, as Mrs. Van Dossiter had spitefully hoped, was indeed going to pieces. It worried him and made him doubt himself again. Repeated doses of the rhyming dictionary and the beer failed to rally him. Rejection slips from *Pegasus* came in every mail.

The last straw that broke the rebellious spirit of Cleon was the rejection of "Little Moon Without a Lover," a poem on which he had built great hopes.

After that he packed off the vagabond blondes again and called Mrs. Van Dossiter back. She came triumphant, with a fine show of courage and forgiveness.

They swore eternal love, hand in hand, and lip to lip.

"You were such an obstinate darling!" she cooed happily.

"Yes," sighed Cleon, resigned, "but now I have seen the light."

#### IV

THE next manuscript which Cleon sent to *Pegasus* reached the critical eyes of the editor, Darlington Dean, as he was in conference with his associate, Mr. Ross. At the same time the door opened before the onrush of a person of importance, who was admitted to the office with great ceremony.

The editor leaped to his feet.

"Ah, Mrs. Van Dossiter! So glad to see you. May I introduce Mr. Ross to you?"



The associate editor was impressed.

"It is a pleasure to know the owner of *Pegasus*," he said. "Your visits to this office are so few that I had despaired of ever meeting you."

Mrs. Van Dossiter smiled.

"I believe in letting those in charge of my various interests run them as they see fit," she replied. "I haven't interfered much, have I, Mr. Dean?"

"Very little. Refreshingly so! Ex-

cept for your recent disapproval of the poems of Cleon Fitchard."

"That's what I came to see you about, Mr. Dean. I regret that I ordered you not to print any more of his poems. I now rescind that order. I shall not let my personal likes and dislikes hamper your work. On the contrary, I wish you would print all of Mr. Fitchard's work submitted from now on. I can see its beauty, don't you know. I think he has—er—ah—a great future!"



## OLD FRIENDS ARE THE BEST

By T. F. Mitchell

**H**ER first husband swore volubly in three languages and drank nothing but green Chartreuse.

Her second husband became sentimental when drunk, and embarrassingly confidential.

Her third burned his bills behind him.

Her fourth was positively fascinating—to other women.

Her fifth had occasional lucid intervals.

Her sixth husband swore volubly in three languages and drank nothing but green Chartreuse.



**W**HEN you see a dashing young officer with a frumpy young woman on his arm, remember that he probably had the girl before the uniform.



**S**OME women believe in not marrying until they are twenty-five; others believe in not being twenty-five until they are married.



**H**ALF the time a woman is unhappy because she is not sure she will be happy the other half.



**S**OME men are husbands merely because some women disliked to be called old maids.



# THE BOSS

By John C. Cavendish

RUDY was a long man, composed angularly. No clothes ever conformed to the sharp, unexpected corners of his shoulders, his elbows, his knobby knees, so his habit inevitably flapped about him like a slack sail. He had a somewhat melancholy face, featured by a large, undetermined mouth, a nose with a purple tendency, small eyes, incongruously and feebly fierce, a brief altitude of brow cut with premature wrinkles. His hair was straight, black and always too long so that in back it curled up over his collar, sparsely, like thin, discouraged grass. He was still a young man.

In the daytime he earned his living assisting in the purchase of oils in a compounding house. In the evening he went to the moving pictures, or he occupied himself in his room, dolorously twanging a mandolin, until the boarder next door rapped on the wall with a shoe, whereat he laid away his instrument and went to bed. Yet he was not a person devoid of dreams.

His room was decorated with pictures of motion picture actresses and he frequently imagined himself with a woman of his own. He thought nothing could be better than to become the head of a family. His sense of authority swelled with the notion. He fancied himself ruling his household with an inflexible and patriarchal firmness. These thoughts made him impatient to find a girl who would marry him.

One evening as he turned away from staring into a show-window he collided with a young woman coming out of the shop door. The accident was his own fault, for he had been very abstracted. He heard the girl make a sharp, angry

exclamation. He took off his hat and endeavored to apologize.

"Please excuse me, Miss," he said, "I didn't see you."

"You might look where you are going," she answered.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I was looking into this window."

The girl had not yet turned her face up to him; she was bending over, vigorously smoothing out her dress. He saw that she had plump, white hands, a white throat, and pretty yellow hair. He waited in front of her, wondering what he ought to do. At last she raised her head and met his eyes.

They looked at each other a moment and finally the girl began to smile. He smiled in return; she dropped her eyes and giggled a little. He felt greatly relieved.

"This is a funny way to meet each other," he said.

"Oh! So we've met each other, have we?"

"Well, I *want* to know you," he said.

She made no reply to this. He looked at her a moment, appraisingly. Her stature was less than his, but she was formed compactly; he liked her plumpness. He saw that she had brown eyes, contrasting pleasantly with her brown hair, a full red mouth, and smooth, white cheeks. He spoke to her again.

"Lord!" he exclaimed. "I was surprised when I bumped into you. Honestly, I didn't see you at all!"

Now she was in an excellent humor.

"Well, I won't hate you," she said. "I'll forgive you!"

Rudy was elated. No such good fortune had been a part of his expectancy. With a manifestation of assurance, sur-



prising to some aloof and critical entity in his brain, he took the girl by the arm and walked off with her.

They were instantly intimate. He told her his name, explained his occupation, briefly adumbrated his family history, said that he was fond of music and played a little himself; asked her which she liked the better, popular or classic music? She reciprocated with her own confidences. Her name, she said, was Beatrice; she lived with her married sister; she liked music and would love to hear him play his mandolin; her preference was not rag-time, but good, classical pieces. When they reached her home, Rudy was entirely at ease and comfortably soothed with the sense of having known her for a long time.

She took him into a small apartment and there he met her sister and brother-in-law. These two were occupying a brief, cubical sitting room when Beatrice and her acquaintance appeared. They greeted Rudy cordially, the brother-in-law spoke to him of the weather, the sister appraised him with shrewd, quick glances, and then both unobtrusively retired. The girl looked at him and smiled significantly. She crossed the room to the sofa and sat down. Rudy followed, and seated himself at her side.

He let his hand touch hers. She responded by an instant pressure of her closing fingers. He put his arm about her and she leaned toward him; he felt her blonde hair against his cheek, singularly exquisite, soft, tantalizing, he thought. He was wholly and highly delighted. He put his arm up until his hand touched her cheek, astonishingly smooth, like the surface of a fresh leaf. He pushed her face around toward his own and then, hesitating a second, he kissed her lips. He observed, with delight, that she closed her eyes. He was very happy.

## II

HE went away from her later, the guest of many fancies. The appeal of

her smooth cheeks, her yielding lips, her xanthous hair he merged into the wish of possession. There were delights he longed to own. He wanted them in his keeping, the guardianship and monopoly of them. He saw with infinitely more directness now the admirable vision of married life. Above even its strange delights he perceived his dignity in that position. He would be inevitably considerate, unfailingly kind, but firm. In the small kingdom of his family he would make the necessary decisions with a careful vision. He went off to sleep with intimate portraits from the future projected luminously into his mind; in the final one, before he lost consciousness, he was seated at the head of a long table, carving a roast, while his wife and four or five or six children waited quietly, with desirous discipline, to be served.

The same evening Beatrice sat in front of her small mirror smoothing out her hair, running a comb through the long fustic strands with slow, regular sweeps of her bare arm, as if in unconscious rhythm with her thoughts. The lids were narrowed a little over her brown eyes, but the expression of calculation that this gave to her face was mingled also with a hesitant elation hovering in a smile that was no more than a shadow on her lips. With a sureness of insight that was a part both of her training and her heritage, she understood the quality of this man from whom she had just parted. She knew that if she managed him, she could marry him.

She had had her moments of romantic dreaming; she had conceived at other times the lover of her heart's desire. But the glints from that engaging tinsel did not blind her an instant from the aspect of more serious business. She was long tired of going to work every day. She knew she would be glad to exchange that necessity for an assured position as a married woman—with a romantic sacrifice at worst no more than a vague and not wholly unpleasant melancholy. This fellow Rudy



was obviously steady; he was docile, manageable, plastic; she could shape him to her wishes; with him she could secure a living with the lines of control in her own hands. At the conclusion of her thinking a resolution overspread her features, obliterating the other emotions that had found their expression there. She gave her hair a final stroke, and stood up to turn out the light.

Two evenings later Rudy presented himself for the second time. On this occasion his sartorial aspect had changed; he'd made an evident effort at personal decoration. He wore a suit of small black and white checks, a flamboyant yellow necktie with green flowers scattered over it, a pair of tan shoes with large, shiny knobs on the toes; even his hair was cut.

Beatrice was not pleased with his outfit. She knew well enough that he would never put on such outrageous neckwear after they were married; she had visions then of adapting the cut of his clothes, in a measure, at least, to the contours of his person; yet she was very gracious to him.

She received him with an instant sympathy, an air of intimacy, a caressing, backward tilt of her head as she smiled at him. She clung to his arm as they walked along the street, let him touch her hand while they sat in the theater, smiled and laughed at all he had to say. When he brought her home she put her arms about him and kissed him warmly. He went back to his room with the reminiscence of her lips tingling on his mouth.

He spent as many evenings with her as she would allow him. On Sunday they usually went away together for the whole day. Once they visited the sea shore, but their favorite rendezvous was a little creek, not far from the city, where canoes could be rented cheaply. Rudy learned to paddle after a few ineffectual trials. He found a real delight in the soft glide through silent, resilient water, with shadow-speckled sunlight thrown over the glamorous girl in front

of him, like a diaphanous and precious mantle. There was a certain quiet stretch he favored greatly, where long branches hung down romantically and touched the water, brooding, suggestive and tender. Here he liked to drop his paddle in the bottom of the canoe, whilst he cautiously edged himself toward Beatrice, until he could secure her hands and kiss her. He determined that this place should be the setting for his avowal; he longed to ask her to marry him, but that was a valorous hazard for which he had not quite the courage.

Beatrice waited impatiently for his declaration. She understood his timidities, and so she made herself graciously receptive to his love making. She thought this tepid and second-rate, but her manner was always romantic and yielding. She fondled him and kissed him; she let him muss her hair with his caresses; she kept her mouth at a smile. Sometimes she knew that his lips struggled with the words she wanted to hear, but his courage ebbed before they were spoken, and her impatience increased. She determined at last to prompt him boldly.

### III

ONE evening she invited him to take supper with her at home. During the meal he chatted with her sister and her brother-in-law; he felt at ease, and a domesticity like a warm cloak was thrown over his spirits. After supper the sister and her husband retired quickly to their own room. Beatrice took Rudy into the parlor.

"Don't you want to go anywhere?" he asked her.

"No; I'm tired. Let's sit down here a while," she answered.

They seated themselves on the sofa. He secured one of her hands, over which he passed his fingers, back and forth, soothed by the soft texture of it. Beatrice looked down at the floor. A lighted lamp threw a gilt sheen over the whirls of her yellow hair.



"We've known each other a long time, now," she said.

"Yes," Rudy agreed.

"I often think of the queer way we met each other."

"So do I. It was lucky!"

She said nothing for a second, as if pondering his remark.

"I wonder if it was?" she questioned, finally.

"Why, aren't you—?"

"Oh, I don't mean that I wasn't pleased for us to know each other. But was it just luck? Don't you think these things are sort of—arranged? Suppose we were intended to meet each other?"

She raised her head and looked into his face. Her eyes were partly closed; the lashes curving over them darkened their brown; their expression was remote and mystical. A scarcely expressed and ghostly smile trembled at the corners of her lips. Her head was tilted back a little and the light shone on her white, smooth throat.

"It would be nice to believe that, wouldn't it?" said Rudy.

"Well," she asked. "What do you believe then? Isn't there some intention?"

She leaned toward him a little tensely.

"Why *do* you come to see me?" she asked.

"I—I—"

He faltered badly with answering her sudden question. She opened her eyes, staring at him, frowning.

"Don't you know!"

He took both her hands and drew her close to him, although she made a slight resistance and the tenseness of her body did not yield nor flex to his caress.

"Because—because you're dear to me," he said, clumsily.

As if the sudden wearer of another mask, the frown on her face was gone, her features relaxed into a fluent softness, and like silk bars her lashes drooped over her eyes. She closed her fingers tightly against his retaining hands.

"Do you mean that you want to marry me?" she whispered.

For a second the room was silent, but in that space Beatrice experienced a conquering emotion that gave to her cheeks a physical and discerned warmth, that sent into her perceptions a thrilling assurance and an exultant confidence. She was certain of the words he was about to say; she forgot his shortcomings in her moment of success.

He heard her question and an immense embarrassment, like a palpable burden, was lifted from his spirits. He saw the way opened to him miraculously. He felt her body yield to his embrace; he was conscious of the ardent returning pressure of her fingers.

"Will you marry me?" he asked her.

Suddenly she kissed him straight on the lips and stood up instantly, releasing herself from his retaining hands with a lithe and unexpected swiftness.

"Alice!" she called out.

Her sister came into the room.

"We're engaged to be married," said Beatrice.

The sister gave a small exclamation of pleasure and approached Rudy. He stood up. She kissed him.

"I've got a new brother now," she said.

The brother-in-law appeared. He shook Rudy's hand. He spoke in a humorous strain of married life. The women laughed. The eyes of both threw back the diffused glow of the lamp in scintillant glints of quick fire; they were strangely alert; an unaccountable elation seemed to move in their persons.

Rudy struggled to be happy, yet he was curiously bewildered. These were, in some fantastic way, not his moments; he was important to them, but only with the importance of a necessary pawn. His rôle was other than he had imagined it; there were unfathomable intentions and impulses in the air not in consonance with the patriarchal and dignified simplicity of his own. He was relieved when the sister and broth-



er-in-law were gone again, and Beatrice whispered to him that she would rather he went early this evening. She kissed him at the door with a notable tenderness; he went away with increased assurance.

#### IV

By the time he reached home his ordinary outlook, his normal viewpoint, was restored to him. He laid plans for his married conduct, his beneficent household commandship, like a general outlining a battle. During the weeks that intervened before the ceremony he had the opportunity to mature his most cherished ideas and his more precious concepts. When the day came he was compact with a sense of his own grasp on the destiny of a family. Even his obvious subordination to the bride in the actual business of being married did not greatly shake him. When the final words were pronounced he kissed Beatrice almost as a protector and a father; he felt infinitely moved by his responsibility. They went away together for a honeymoon at the seashore, with conventional bits of confetti clinging here and there to their clothes.

At once Beatrice developed some unexpected qualities. She demonstrated a practical bent, an ability at management, that Rudy had not suspected. It was she who bargained with the room-clerk at the hotel, securing accommodations better than those he was about to accept. In the beginning this aptitude did not displease him, for it offered, he believed, a more ready co-operation with his plans.

When they returned to the city the business of furnishing a small flat was the first thing to occupy their minds. To this purpose Rudy brought a set of thoroughly thought-out notions. The chief points of his programme were a parlor set in mahogany finish, with a player-piano purchased on time, oak furniture in the dining-room, that of a maple aspect in their bedroom. But

they finally purchased a number of gilt chairs for the parlor and the player-piano became a Victrola with records, the mahogany finish went over to the dining-room, and the bedroom became white. The changes were suggested by Beatrice.

"But don't you think—?" Rudy had begun to object.

She put her arms about him and kissed him. She ran her fingers through his hair.

"Don't be a silly boy," she said. "You do what I say. You won't be sorry."

But one of the most difficult renunciations for Rudy, in those early married days, was the abandonment of his mandolin. He was immensely surprised when Beatrice objected to it. It seemed, at first, that her objection was irrational and arbitrary; he refused to stop his playing. He was even proof against her cajolery, exercised with the potent weapon of her caresses. It was then that she brought against him a sudden new armament that disconcerted him into surrender.

"Don't you see that that everlasting twanging annoys me!" she cried.

"Well—" Rudy began to argue.

He saw her brown eyes narrow and glaze with a determined hardness. He went on with his expostulation. She made no return, no word; she was silent, as if speech were no longer possible to her. Her silence at length impressed itself upon him. He made an effort to get some reply from her; his aim became less to prove the righteousness of his own case than to bring back simply her normal loquacity. At last he was astonished, appalled, even overwhelmed: she would not speak to him! He put away the mandolin. He laid it in the darkness of a closet shelf, where its shiny surface caught the pale glints of outer lights whenever he chanced to open the door, and sent the reflected beams into his eyes, like a reproach.

He knew well enough, at last, that things were not going with him as they should. He seemed unable, through some subtle and even unfathomable op-



position, to grasp that beneficent mastery, that patriarchal and desiderate control, which had been at the soul of his early planning. When moments of his old assurance returned to him—usually at night when the house was quiet in a sleeping city—his desire seemed around the corner only, an easy obtaining, securable by his own assertion. Again and again he determined on firmness, but each determination was weakened by some special new distraction. He had been married a year now, and he had the disquieting sense of drifting, of even being carried on a current that coursed to goals not in his wishes like a ship that had slipped her anchor.

Beatrice was not unhappy during this year. She had expected little of Rudy as a lover, and although he had fulfilled no more than her meagre anticipation, other interests served to make her living zestful. She found things to combat in her husband, many follies to overcome, nor could all her purposes be achieved by the same means. The variations necessary to her strategy gave her amusement. Yet her interest spent itself at last upon the subtleties as on a game too often played. She tired of being alone with Rudy. As the hour of his nightly return approached an annoyance disturbed her serenity. It occurred to her, like an inspiration, that she was forgetting the rest of the world. She determined to make new acquaintances.

So Rudy's frail content was shaken by fresh phenomena that was presently revealed. An inexplicable and purposeless gregariousness entered into their living. Here and there Beatrice economized and the accumulations were spent in dining out in restaurants. The turn of events surprised him and he acquiesced in them without a protest.

Nor were their evenings at home any longer the quiet intimacy of a pair. Friends seemed to spring up about them like mushrooms. The Victrola came into active service; a dozen dance records appeared in their collections—the

rugs were rolled back, the gilt chairs pushed against the wall, and people with whom he was not at ease danced there in his parlor.

Of these things he began to think bitterly. He reflected upon them as he went to work in the morning, or when he returned in the evening, and sometimes even during the hours when he was paid to give his thoughts to other matters; he sat in the street car unheeding of his morning paper, scowling at the passing streets, disturbed, disappointed, saturnine, and in a measure indignant, as one who has been deprived of a fortune, fully planned and quite deserved, by the special, personal act of a malevolent Destiny. He knew there was gathering in him the force for a vociferous outcry.

His distaste for these people that invaded his quiet, the sanctuary of his domesticity, merged eventually into a fervid dislike of a certain woman, who was more and more his wife's companion. She was now an intimate of their household and none but her first name, Anna, was ever used there. She was an intriguing presence, a disruptive agent, a schemer of things unwished. She brought men to the house with whom Rudy had nothing in common, as he had nothing in common with her. He hated to hear her laugh, to see her tuck up the loose strands of her red hair, to listen to the noisy clatter of her tongue. It was she who brought the man Hemmingway to their flat.

He came with a half a dozen others. They played cards, danced at close quarters, and sat around destructively on the edge of the chairs drinking claret punch that was served out of a big bowl. From the beginning Beatrice was conscious that he was looking at her. Whenever she glanced in his direction she found his eyes meeting her own, with no wavering at her discovery of this scrutiny. At last she danced with him and he talked to her in a low voice as they moved around the room.

"I'm glad I'm able to speak to you," he said.



"What do you mean?"

"I've been watching you."

"I know you have. Why?"

"You interest me."

"Oh! You don't know anything about me!"

"That makes me want to."

They deftly avoided a collision with another couple. He whirled her in a sudden circle, bringing her clinging close to him.

"I want to talk to you," he said.

"When will you take dinner with me?"

She looked up into his face. It was a countenance of ardent potentialities. His dark eyes met her gaze with a fine assurance. She felt a consciousness of his arms that found expression in a thrill; she was aware of the touch of him acutely. In instinctive comparison she thought of Rudy and the glamour of this man that Rudy wholly lacked. He was looking into her eyes, waiting for her to answer him. The sound of the music stopped abruptly and the phonograph needle made a harsh scratching as it moved aimlessly in the empty grooves. She whispered to him in haste, before she left his arms.

"Call me on the telephone," she said.

## V

RUDY became aware of this fellow after he had come to their flat the second or third time. He noticed then his special attentiveness to Beatrice. He appraised the man more acutely and developed an active dislike. It angered him at once to watch the supple smile that Hemmingway could bring to his lips, to hear the low, intimate murmur of his voice as he spoke to Beatrice, to watch the gesturing of his white hands. His animosity for Anna faded into this animosity for a new object. He felt the day when he would reckon these matters with his wife, the day of his inflexible assertion, coming nearer, nearer. He went about with his lips compressed, gathering determination.

But he did not know, for quite a period, that Hemmingway was seeing his

wife outside their home. That discovery was an accident. He saw them come out of a restaurant together. They were intent with each other and passed him; he was unobserved. The man leaned forward and spoke down close to Beatrice's ear in a hateful and maddening intimacy.

Rudy stopped on the sidewalk and glared after him melodramatically. This he saw at noon-time; he went back to his work inflamed, aroused, mightily determined. He knew now that he would not let another evening pass; he would express himself at once. The time came to leave his work. He went out still resolved. But a faintness oppressed him as he approached the corner where it was necessary to take the street car. He paused there irresolutely. Then a relieving idea entered his mind and he walked away briskly.

"I'll not go home to dinner," he thought. "I'll make her uneasy. I'll let her know beforehand that something is wrong. That's better than speaking out of a calm sky."

He ate alone in a little cheap restaurant. The food he ate he scarcely tasted. He was wondering how he would express himself, how to begin, just what and how much to say. He paid his check and walked out of the place unsatisfied.

He moved down the street staring at the pavement. He jostled people whom he failed to see. Stopping at the corner, he looked all about him, somewhat wildly, almost as if he were hunted. Within a few feet of him a bar-room was lit up and men passed in and out. Very desperately, unprecedently, Rudy went in for stimulation. He ordered whiskey.

He drank the little glass poured out and dropped a ringing silver coin on the counter for another. He swallowed this and felt a glow suffusing to his blood from a vague interior center. A spark of courage animated him. He called for more whiskey.

A warmth, pleasant, strengthening,



assuring, was capturing his senses. He began to see clearly the counts of his indictment, his charges and his demands. He would assert his case elaborately, with each grievance expressed without restraint, and then exact a promise from her unconditionally. This Anna must be cut absolutely. This Hemmingway must never be seen in their flat again. They would drop all these people that had nothing to do with the proper kind of a household. There would be no more card playing. There would be no more dancing. . . .

Rudy observed a tall man with whiskers standing near him. He stared at the fellow grimly. He pounded one fist on the bar.

"I've got a mandolin," he said. "It's in a c-closet. I'm going' to take it out and play it, by God!"

He left the bar-room and hunted for his street car.

As he sat in the car no ebbing reduced his determination. But a certain softening entered his mood, a roseate suggestion influenced his thoughts. Old dreams, like ghosts newly corporate, moved in his fancy. He would achieve still that patriarchal presidency; he would be firm, yet wise, unyielding, yet

gentle. The conductor helped him off at his street.

He had some difficulty with the door in his corridor. Inside, he reached out for the rack to hang up his hat, but the hall was dark and it dropped short of the hook; he heard it fall resiliently on the floor, but he passed on to the dining-room unmindful. A light was burning there. He saw no one as he looked about him.

He dropped into a chair at the table. His hand closed over a sheet of paper. He held it up, staring at it a moment. Something was written on it; he couldn't quite see; that didn't matter.

"Hello!" he yelled.

No one answered.

"Betty!" he called. "D'you hear me? Come here! I'm home, waitin' to say something to you. I'm the boss; do you hear me? Yes, *the Boss!* D'y'hear that? Where the devil are you? The Boss!"

The room was empty; sardonically, malevolently, madly, it echoed back the word he yelled with his fine delight. He said it again, he called it at his topmost voice, whilst his hand crumpled the note she had written him telling of her departure with Hemmingway.



## CHANGE

By Sara Teasdale

REMEMBER me as I was then;  
 Turn from me now, but always see  
 The frail and shadowy girl who stood  
 At midnight by the flowering tree,  
 With eyes that love had made as bright,  
 As the shaken stars of the summer night.

Turn from me now, but always hear  
 The muted laughter in the dew  
 Of that one year of youth we had,  
 The only youth we ever knew—  
 Turn from me now, or you will see  
 What other years have done to me.



# THE RENAISSANCE\*

By Arthur, Count Gobineau

I

SAVONAROLA

1.

[*They are about to hang Girolamo Savonarola and his two fellow Dominicans. The scaffold has been erected in the Palazzo at Florence and an inclined bridge leads up from the street. A crowd has begun to gather. In it are a number of children, and some of them are sharpening sticks with knives. A babble of eager voices. The show is soon to begin.*]

A CITIZEN:

We have a good hour to wait, believe me. I know our governor's way. They don't trouble themselves in the least to gratify us. Oh, that we were still under the ægis of Lorenzo the Magnificent or his illustrious house!

SECOND CITIZEN:

I think we shall have to come back to that some day.

FIRST WOMAN:

Oh, what a pretty child! Is he yours, Monna Teresa?

SECOND WOMAN:

Yes, my dear. He's my eldest.

FIRST WOMAN:

Kiss me, cherub! Look at his lovely black hair! What are you doing there with your pretty playmates?

THE CHILD:

We are giving our sticks a good sharp point.

SECOND CITIZEN:

And what for, little monkey?

THE CHILD:

To prick Fra Girolamo's feet and legs when he comes past on the bridge. We shall stand underneath, and zing! zing! (*Laughter.*)

FIRST WOMAN:

Little mischiefs, indeed! Little mischiefs! Come and let me kiss you, darling! Isn't he a pretty child?

FIRST CITIZEN:

Happy the state where childhood learns early to share in public sentiment!

2.

[*On the scaffold. Fra Girolamo, Fra Silvestre, Fra Buonvicini, also Fra Niccolino, confessor to Fra Girolamo.*]

FRA NICCOLINI:

(*To Fra Girolamo.*) I could not venture to speak of resignation to you, Father, who have prayed so much for this unhappy people!

FRA GIROLAMO:

Give me your blessings!

BUONVICINI:

May I suffer far more for the glory of God! Why not burn us before

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hanging us? It would be carrying out the letter of our sentence.

FRA GIROLAMO:

My friend, my son, forget not that we have nothing to do save what is the will of Him Who is in the heavens!

FRA SILVESTRE:

I will address this misguided mob!

FRA GIROLAMO:

No, Silvestre, if you love me, not a syllable! . . . Poor Florence! . . . Poor Italy! . . . I would have given so much to save them! . . . Why do they make us wait like this?

A CAPTAIN:

It's that brute of a Bishop of Vaison, who, instead of coming to degrade you, as he is charged to do, goes on chatting with the commissaries!

3.

[*The crowd before the stake and the gibbets—Populace, monks, citizens, women, children.*]

A MAN:

He was roundly tortured, the villain!

A WOMAN:

What did they do to him?

A MAN:

He received the strappado more than six times. That's tough—what? He's broken in every limb. (*Laughter.*)

A CHILD:

Well done!

A MERCHANT:

You little rascal, they ought to do the same to you for having broken the mirrors in my shop a fortnight ago.

THE CHILD:

Oh, I was told to break them, and so I broke them!

AN OLD WOMAN:

The child's right! We've all been befooled by this brute, who condemned

us to fast from one year's end to another!

AN ARTISAN:

What fools we were! . . . Ah, he's climbing up the ladder! There he is at the top! . . . Aren't they going to burn him alive?

A GIRL:

I hope they are. Tell me, signor soldier, isn't he to be burnt?

THE SOLDIER:

He'll be hanged first, my pretty lass.

THE GIRL:

Oh, what a pity! I've come such a long way to see the sight! Thank you, signor soldier.

THE SOLDIER:

At your service, my beauty. You can come forward a bit, if you wish. Put yourself in front of me, there! . . . You'll be more comfortable.

THE GIRL:

Quite true—come along, Mariana! No, please don't take hold of my waist like that! . . . Who are those two other men who are going up?

A LOCKSMITH:

What, you don't recognize them? I never missed a single one of their sermons, I assure you, during the time I was deceived! It is Fra Silvestre and Fra Buonvicini!

THE GIRL:

How pale they are!

A BUTCHER:

Ah, that's because they've been tortured also—serve them right!

THE GIRL:

I implore you, signor soldier, let me go! . . . Tell me, rather, who are those two signors gesticulating on the stage.

THE SOLDIER:

They are the commissaries, my queen! . . . Their names are— My



word, I've forgotten their names! I'd much rather you told me where you live!

AN OLD LADY:

(*With a dog in her arms.*) Is it true that Fra Girolamo was tortured with the pincers?

A CITIZEN:

There is every reason to suppose so. At the same time, it may also be that I am mistaken, and leading you astray, which, as you can believe, I should be very sorry to do.

THE OLD LADY:

I am much obliged to you for your kindness. (*The dog barks at the citizen.*) Be quiet, my pet. Pardon him, messer; it's because he doesn't know you.

THE CITIZEN:

That kind of quadruped usually does behave in that way. I am not offended, madam.

[*He moves off.*]

4.

[*On the scaffold. The three condemned men, the Bishop of Vaison, Dominican monks, executioners.*]

THE BISHOP:

Fra Sebastiano, strip this man of the holy habit of your Order! . . . Take off everything! Leave him only his shirt! Is it done? Good! . . . And now, Savonarola, I sever you from the Church militant and the Church triumphant!

SAVONAROLA:

That last act is beyond your power!

THE BISHOP:

Have his accomplices been stripped?

FRA SEBASTIANO:

Yes, Monsignor, here they are in their shirts, like him.

THE BISHOP:

He shall see them executed. Hangmen, to your work!

FRA SILVESTRE:

*In manus tuas, Domine.*

[*He is hanged.*]

BUNVICINI:

My turn, is it not? Farewell, Fra Girolamo!

SAVONAROLA:

Farewell for a moment, you mean.

[*Bunvicini is hanged.*]

5.

[*In the square.*]

A CITIZEN:

(*To his wife.*) It was rather a fine ceremony—imposing, even! But I think it's going to rain. . . . Let's go home.

THE WIFE:

Yes, my love, let's go home. I'm afraid I might catch cold.

6.

[*Two citizens, near a chapel, are telling their beads, their caps under their arms.*]

FIRST CITIZEN:

*Et benedictus fructus ventris tui.* . . . That doesn't prevent the rascal's having gone off without paying for the three dinners he owes me, and may the plague seize me if he'll ever pay! . . . *Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Domine.* . . .

SECOND CITIZEN:

*Qui es in celis, sanctificetur!* . . . I told you so fifty times! How stupid of you to give credit to students! Look here, Ser Guglielmo, did I tell you so or did I not? . . . *Nomen tuum, adveniat regnum!* . . . Deuce take them, the students! . . . If they were to pay they would not longer be students!

A CAVALIER:

(*To an old woman.*) See, dear Lorenzina, here is the note!



AN OLD WOMAN:

I tell you once more, it's very difficult! She rebuffed me and threatened to let her mother know!

CAVALIER:

Here's another sequin!

OLD WOMAN:

I'll try to convince her . . . but only because of my great affection for you. If I make you a sign, stand behind her; you can speak to her then as much as you like.

CAVALIER:

May heaven inspire you, or I shall lose my wager.

[*The Sanctus begins.*]

TWO MENDICANTS:

(*Crying at the top of their voices.*)  
For the crusade! For the crusade!  
Give for the crusade! Deliver the Holy Tomb! For the crusade! Lords and ladies, take pity on the poor Christians slaughtered every day by the savage Turks! For the crusade!

[*Three evil-faced boys near a pillar.*]

FIRST BOY:

Is it that gentleman yonder?

SECOND BOY:

That one with the sunburnt complexion and the little black mustache?

THIRD BOY:

Yes . . . and the black doublet.

SECOND BOY:

A ruff round his neck, his right hand in a torn glove . . . the other ungloved?

THIRD BOY:

The very man.

SECOND BOY:

He's big enough to knock me down if he turns around. I will throw my stiletto at ten paces and then decamp.

FIRST BOY:

If he pursues you, we'll make a feint of passing quickly and we'll down him.

SECOND BOY:

Is that sure?

FIRST BOY:

When we tell, you dolt! Don't miss! Strike the hip, crossways! It's only a matter of a five-inch knife-thrust. We are paid in advance.

SECOND BOY:

Wait a moment till I've lit a candle to St. Nicholas.

FIRST BOY:

Be quick and come back. . . . We shall follow the gallant in the lane behind the church. You'll be hiding in the angle of the wall.

SECOND BOY:

Have no fear—I am certain of my aim. He'll keep to his bed for a fortnight.

[*The organ plays—a rocket explodes.*]

THE CROWD:

Ah! great heavens! all is lost! The French are slaughtering us! Holy Madonna, all is lost!

VOICES IN THE CROWD:

No! no! no! Fear nothing! It's only urchins amusing themselves! Jesus! my purse is stolen! Will you leave go of my cloak?

A WOMAN:

(*Kneeling in a corner.*) I thank Thee, God! My poor brother, my poor brother! He won't die! Thou hast not willed it so! Thou dost give him back to me, I owe him to Thee! All the days of my life I will pray to Thee! I cannot repay my debt to Thee! How I love Thee and see Thee in Thy unexampled goodness! My God, never forget me! Guard my poor brother whom Thou has restored to me!

[*She weeps.*]

A NOTARY:

(*To his wife.*) Haven't you had enough of your devotions? If we don't go at once we shall be stifled by the



crowd. Let us get to the door, come!  
Make haste!

WIFE:

I am tucking up my skirts so as not  
to be jostled.

NOTARY:

Say, rather, that you are trying to  
make yourself noticed! Do you think,  
Monna Pomponia, that I don't know  
these tricks? Do you think you can  
hoodwink me?

WIFE:

Who dreams of hoodwinking you?  
Let me just say one more *Ave*.

NOTARY:

You can say it as you go along.  
What are you doing now?

WIFE:

I am going to take some holy water,  
if I can, but there is a great crowd  
round it.

A CAVALIER:

Will you permit me, madam, to offer  
you some?

THE LADY:

Most willingly, signor. . . . (*Very  
low.*) Come at two o'clock. . . . He  
will be gone out for the day. Come!

THE CAVALIER:

Where?

THE WIFE:

In the lower room. . . . Go away,  
he's turning round!

NOTARY:

Come! Shall we be finished today  
or tomorrow? Who is that gentleman  
who gave you holy water?

WIFE:

I don't know; I have never seen him  
before.

LACKEYS:

(*Pushing back the crowd.*) Room!  
room! room! for her Grace the Duch-  
ess!

[*Everyone goes out.*]

## II

### WAR

[*A road in a hollow near the French  
camp. A peasant's house burning;  
the owner is lying on the ground,  
weeping; on a stone are seated Jean  
de Bonneau, archer of M. de Ter-  
rides' company, and Jacques Lamy,  
another archer, eating bread and on-  
ions. From time to time they take a  
draught of wine from their gourds.*]

LAMY:

(*To the peasant.*) How old was  
your wife?

PEASANT:

(*Weeping.*) Nearly twenty-two.

DE BONNEAU:

Was she pretty? Come! don't groan!  
You're like a calf. The long and short  
of it is, they have killed her. What  
of it?

PEASANT:

(*Wringing his hands.*) Ah, my  
God! my God!

LAMY:

We are rough fellows, we Gascons.  
Eat a bit. . . . Here!

PEASANT:

No! . . . no! Ah, my God!

LAMY:

Don't you see, my good man, that  
what's done is done! . . . That's war.  
The soldier, too, must have his fun.

PEASANT:

My wife! . . . My poor wife! . . .

LAMY:

It would be better if you set about  
putting out the fire of your hovel. . . .  
Everything will be burnt!

PEASANT:

It's all one to me.

DE BONNEAU:

He's savage. Well, good day. Con-



sole yourself. Are you coming, Jacques?

LAMY:

(*To the peasant.*) Here, my lad, I leave you the rest of the bread and two onions. . . . When your heart bids you, eat! There's no doubt he is a savage.

[*The peasant sobs; the soldiers go off singing at the top of their voices*]:  
*Chatillon, Bourdillon, Bonneval,*  
*Hold the Royal house in thrall!*

### III

MICHAEL ANGELO

[*The Pope's room. Present: The Pope (Julius II), cardinals, bishops, chamberlains, and officers of the Swiss and Italian Guards. The Pope is seated in an armchair, and has in his hands a stick which he raps upon the ground to emphasize his discourse.*]

JULIUS II:

Ah! how happy I am! The Bolognese are brought back to reason! Let them try to kick once more, and the needle will enter their flesh a little more deeply! Henceforth, they belong to the Church. Let them try not to forget that. You will convey them my words. . . . Now, call in Michael Angelo Buonarrotti. . . . Ah, here you are! . . . At last! . . . It is well! . . . Had I not threatened to go and look for you myself at Florence, you would not have come back.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Most Holy Father, I thought that you had no need of me.

JULIUS II:

Oh, you thought so? . . . I should be glad to know what gave you that idea. Explain yourself freely, without any fear. I fancy you are not afraid of me.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

I am afraid of you, Holy Father, but the truth is the truth.

JULIUS II:

Oh, you are afraid of me? Well, act as if it were of no consequence. Whatever put it into your head to fly from Rome, when you know quite well that I wished you to stay there?

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Holy Father, while I was working at the same time at the Sistine frescoes and at your statues, and when I had just finished the Moses of which your Holiness seemed to approve . . .

JULIUS II:

Oh, I seemed to you to approve of your Moses? . . . I seemed to you. . . . Ah, I seemed to you. . . . But go on . . . never mind!

MICHAEL ANGELO:

I asked for marbles; I got them. It was necessary to pay the sailors, and while they were landing the blocks at Ripa, I came to ask your Holiness for the money required.

JULIUS II:

I was busy with my affairs in the Romagna! They are settled, and I shall not let go of what I hold. All the world must know that; the least that can be expected is that the interests of the Church should come before. . . . But, no—never mind, again! Explain yourself.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Holy Father, you are angry; I prefer to say nothing.

JULIUS II:

It is somewhat strange that when I order you to speak, you make me repeat myself twice.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Well, then, since I am compelled, I will say that you did not receive me. I paid for your marbles out of my own pocket, and I had but little money.



JULIUS II:

Am I responsible for your foolish extravagance, sir?

MICHAEL ANGELO:

I drink water and eat bread. My clothes are not worth ten crowns. You take me for your Raphael.

JULIUS II:

I take you for . . . No matter! No matter! . . . Go on!

MICHAEL ANGELO:

I returned even three times. At the third, a lackey insolently told me that I might as well be patient, seeing that he had the order never to admit me. When he was asked if he knew to whom he was speaking, he answered: I know very well; but I obey His Holiness.

JULIUS II:

And then, what did you answer? Let me see! Some repartee must have come to your tongue! You are not as patient as . . . But . . . no! Well, what did you answer?

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Well, I answered . . .

JULIUS II:

You answered: "When the Pope has need of me, he will know that I have gone elsewhere?"

MICHAEL ANGELO:

That is true.

JULIUS II:

Oh, it is true? Go on.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

I have nothing to add. You know the circumstances as well as I do. I at once sold my furniture to the Jews and left for Florence.

JULIUS II:

Well, and what did I do then? For, so far as I know, I am not accustomed to put up with disrespect. I must have done something.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Since you drive me to it—this is what you did. You sent me five couriers, one after another, ordering me to return without delay under penalty of disgrace; but I am not minded to be treated as a man of so little worth. I begged you to look for another sculptor.

JULIUS II:

It is true that he pushed audacity so far as to send me a message in these very terms. But continue.

MICHAEL ANGELO:

Messer Piero Soderini notified me that the Signiory had received three briefs ordering me to return to Rome under pain of excommunication. Hence I had to go—I went, and here I am.

JULIUS II:

So that you did not come back of your own free will? And some gossips go telling everywhere, into the bargain, that you wanted to kill me by throwing rafters on my head from the top of your scaffolding on the Sistine, where I had entered in spite of you! I ask you now what prince is so soft, so easygoing, so stupid that he will suffer such outrages?

[*A moment's silence.*]

A BISHOP:

Holy Father, your Holiness will deign to take pity on this poor man. He knows not what he is doing. Such people have little understanding and are entirely ignorant outside their art.

JULIUS II:

(*Rising in fury.*) Tactless fool! Pedant! Idiot! Why do you permit yourself to insult my artist? Did I insult him, eh? Let this wretch, this ass, this blockhead, go home! And you, Michael Angelo, come here—come nearer—come! On your knees . . . Here is my blessing . . . Be not vexed, my son, go and work. I will give you all the money I can. Make me many beautiful things! You



are indeed a creative god. Go, my son—never think again of me. You are the glory of the Pope and of Italy.  
*[Michael Angelo rises, crosses himself, bows and goes out.]*

A CHAMBERLAIN:

The Venetian Ambassadors have come back for the third time since this morning. They entreat your Holiness to receive them.

JULIUS II:

They are bold! Do they not know that I refused?

CHAMBERLAIN:

They had express orders, Holy Father!

JULIUS II:

These Venetians! Italians but not of Italy, Christians against their will! They wished to wrest the Romagna from me and forced me in spite of myself to join hands with the French! Behold them now, reduced to the last extremity; what do they want now?

A VENETIAN CARDINAL:

*(Aside to the Pope.)* Holy Father, the Ambassadors are charged with every possible submission. These are the points which you demanded and which they grant: public penitence for having offended you, abandonment of the benefices depending on the State. . . . We cede you Ferrara, and the right of sailing in the Adriatic without having to pay tolls.

JULIUS II:

*(Aside.)* These are good dispositions. Bring in your deputies. If we can come to an understanding, not only shall I give up the alliance with the French, but you will help me to rid Italy of them.

CARDINAL:

Yes, Holy Father.

JULIUS II:

Let the Ambassadors come to find me tonight. I refuse to receive them in public. It is not yet time.



## ONE POINT IN COMMON

By John F. Lord

HE prided himself on being different.

He wore a fur coat in August and a bathing suit in February.

He always ate pie with a spoon.

He cried excessively whenever he visited a musical comedy.

His laughter at funerals was uncontrolled.

He never quarreled with his cook.

He married his wife because other people hated her.

In the last instance, though, he lost some of his individuality. After a while he couldn't help hating her himself.



SADNESS is the lot of women who have suffered and of men who have dreamed.



# A BIT OF ROMANCE

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

## I

YOU who have been entranced by the sudden side-wise glances of strange and beautiful women can scarcely realize how Arthur Reid envied you. That is, he envied you once. Now—

He is short, plump, and always carefully dressed. His clothes are correct, and he wears them well. He is extremely careful of his appearance, not to the extent of being fussy, but neatness is a virtue he always prized.

Arthur had never had a flirtation. Women did not seem to know that he existed. He could occupy a chair in the lobby of a Broadway hotel for hours and not a single artless glance would be directed his way. When he visited the theater he would not be able to make the acquaintance of the lady who occupied the seat next to his. In a cabaret strange and attractive women never asked him to share their tables, and incidentally, pay for what they consumed. Briefly, he did not appeal to the kind or class of women who make casual acquaintances. And he was eternally looking for just such an invitation.

Arthur was continually hoping that a bold-eyed coryphee would come up to him on the street, and ask him to take her to dinner. He had made a few tentative overtures. His selections had been unfortunate.

## II

As he entered the subway train at the Grand Central Station he glanced care-

lessly around the car. He knew, from sad past experience, that the man in the checked suit who had entered just before him would be chatting with the prettiest girl in the car before they had reached Seventy-second Street. If he dared smile at the same girl she would begin to read her novel. With a sigh of regret Arthur stared straight in front of him.

Dismally he considered what was before him. A friend had asked him to escort his great-aunt to a musicale, and he had no illusions about the evening. He knew that if the aunt had been young and pretty his friend would have taken her to the theater himself.

Wrapped in these morose reflections, he journeyed uptown. At Seventy-second Street there was a vacant seat and he was about to take it when he saw a woman coming through the opened door of the car. Arthur arose with alacrity.

She was tall, with striking eyes, and a scarlet curve for a mouth. She was his ideal woman personified, and Arthur stared at her flagrantly. Subconsciously he noticed that a man was with her, but the fact remained stagnant in his brain. At last with an effort he tore his eyes away from her. Tightly he closed them, for they seemed eager to return to this woman who was so completely the type he most admired.

With his eyes closed he waited until the car should start. Then she would have no chance to escape his eyes until Ninety-sixth Street, and he did not want her to go. If he stared too ob-



viciously she might change her seat, but once the car had started she would remain where she was until the next station. There were no other vacant seats in the car.

Soon the train started, and he felt a gentle pressure on his foot.

This puzzled him for a moment. He *thought* the woman with the glorious eyes was touching his foot with her own. Again he felt this gentle pressure. He opened his eyes to see if his conjecture was correct.

She was looking up at him with a half-smile, as though waiting until he should respond to her signal. His heart began to pump furiously, and his throat felt dry, as if caked with talcum powder. He floated in a rose-colored cloud of perfume, drinking nectar, and eating ambrosia. He was overwhelmed. He saw himself at last as a roguish man-about-town captivating beautiful women. Boldly he fixed his eyes upon her face, and was rewarded with another smile.

Arthur instantly became self-conscious. He felt that everyone in the car knew of the flirtation and was watching him. Perhaps they were chuckling to themselves.

He looked around quickly. Everyone seemed unaware. Her husband was immersed in his newspaper, and apparently no one else in the car was at all interested. Relieved, his mind at rest, Arthur smiled frankly.

She spoke to her husband.

For one frantic second Arthur debated the possibility of reaching the door, felling the subway guard, manipulating the handle of the door and leaping out into the subway. Then he regained his self-control.

In response to her request her husband had given her a part of the newspaper. Arthur breathed a sigh of relief. His suspicions had been without foundation.

She extracted a silver pencil from her vanity case. With a sly, knowing glance to him, she clearly wrote the name of a telephone exchange and a

number upon the corner of the paper. She showed him the edge of the paper.

"For you." Her lips moved, but no sounds came from between them. He understood and nodded.

She tore off the edge of the paper and crumpled it into a small ball. He nodded again, to show he understood, and she dropped the paper on the floor by his right foot. Arthur covered the paper with his foot.

### III

He dare not look down, but he comforted himself with the feel of the ball of paper under the sole of his shoe. He intended to leave the train at Ninety-sixth Street, the next stop. Naturally he could not reach over and pick the paper up from the floor. This would arouse the curiosity of the people about him, and he knew he must be as wary as she had been.

He thought of stumbling as he started out of the car and picking up the paper, but this would bring the eyes of the curious upon him. He thought of kicking the ball of paper before him, but this was risky, perhaps it would fall between the car and the platform. He pondered the matter again.

He felt he must act quickly, for the train was slowing up for the next station. The solution suddenly came to him. He would take off a glove and accidentally drop it on the floor. Then, when he retrieved the glove, he would at the same time pick up the paper which bore her telephone number.

He removed his glove, and it slipped from his hand. It did not fall as he intended it should. Instead of falling on the floor it dropped in her lap. Arthur became confused, and grabbed the glove, murmuring his apologies. Then, as the train came to a stop, he stooped ingloriously, snatched the bit of paper, and leaped from the car.

Once on the platform his mind became busy. With the crumpled bit of



paper in his pocket he planned his next move. He would be discreet and cautious, so that no suspicions would be aroused. The best time to 'phone her would be about eleven in the morning.

He would make an engagement for lunch and. . . . The future became filled with dreams of romance, of the joy of the unexpected, of long delightful conversations with this beautiful woman. . . .

## IV

ARTHUR decided to enter the 'phone number in his notebook. It would be the first entry of this kind. The others were uninteresting business memoranda. He thrust his hand into his pocket and extracted the bit of paper. He unfolded it. . . .

He had picked up the wrong bit of paper! It was the wrapper of a piece of chewing gum!



## A MESSAGE

By Morris Gilbert

FANCY this and fancy that,  
And fancy if you will  
A luckless rogue a-jingling bells  
On God's old granite hill—

I know a magic spell I'd make to spirit you into a happy maze,  
For man must be dreaming when he's alive and a dream is a sign at a grey  
cross-ways,

So I'll pin a blushing brassy moon on a polished ebony cloud for you,  
And bid the morning stars to sing melodiously aloud for you—

Joy I'll send you in sun-drowned showers heralding peace that a dawn  
has won,

And hope will be dew in the heart of a rose, as dear as a sprinkled benison—

So come blow hot and come blow cold,  
And hot and cold together—  
A wind goes marching down time's lane—  
'Tis guided by a feather!



CONVERSATION on the part of two women is the lull between their  
hostile thoughts.



THE most congenial exercise for a woman is running up bills.





# WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK

By Patience Trask

WHEN I presented my lover to my husband I did not blanch with fear. . . . I said to my husband: "This is Jack."

When I took him before my mother I did not lower my eyes in shame. . . . I said: "This is Jack. He is fond of his mother, is good to animals and likes flowers."

Before my best friend I was confident. . . . I said to her as I touched him with my long, slender hands: "This is Jack. You are very beautiful, but he is mine."

I did not dread the derision of my

servants. . . . I said: "This is Mr. Jack. Serve and he will be kind."

As I placed my child's hand in his I did not flinch. . . . I said: "This is Jack. He knows many merry games."

\* \* \*

Helpless men driven to shambles, a child at its first encounter with death, a woman passing into motherhood, a criminal being led to the gallows, the irrational delirium of a drunkard. . . .

Nothing can describe my torture as I presented him to the man who was once my lover. . . .



# THE TREAD OF PAN

By Harold Crawford Stearns

IF you find a daffodil  
Bobbing in the sun,  
If you see a silver rill  
Faster, faster run.

If you hear sweet echoing  
At the break o' day,  
You will know Pan's frolicking  
Not so far away!



**A**LIMONY is the payment a man makes on his liberty bond.



# THE MAN OF GOD

By William Drayham

## I

IT was when he sat alone at night in his room above the grocery store, as now, that he felt the call most keenly. He would spring to his feet and wave his arms and mutter to himself. For the moment he would get a vision of himself standing that way before a multitude, waving his arms and crying aloud the word of God. The multitude would be weeping. He would cry to them how he had sinned, how low and vile he had fallen, and how he had finally seen the light and followed it to peace and joy. This was his dream each night as he sat alone in the room above his grocery store.

For six years it had grown on him. During the day while he was wrapping up loaves of bread and bundles of lettuce his thought was forever dwelling upon this vision. He would look at the women in their kimonos and shawls who were waddling about his little grocery store, and his eyes would begin to glow fiercely. Once when a small crowd of them were jostling each other about on the other side of the counter he had almost forgotten himself. He was going to jump up on the counter and wave his arms and cry out to them to repent, to follow him who had come up from the depths by the grace of God's word. The barking of a dog that had scampered into the store had awakened him.

Now as he sat in his room looking out of the window at the dark, desolate street below and the fringe of decrepit cottages which stretched into the distance, he was mindful of the call. There

was sin in the world, sin in these ragged looking little homes, and sin in the hearts of men. He would go forth and drive it out. He would rise up before a multitude of sinners and wave his arms and cry out the message of salvation. There would be something about him none could resist. God had sent this thing to him. He felt it burning in the depths of him, an urge, a power. He would walk among the homes in the street and talk to the women who came to his grocery store. He would tell them how he had risen, how there was chance for all to rise with him.

"I was a greater sinner than any of ye. And I saw the light. See ye the light."

And because of the thing in him the women would see. Then he would go into other streets. Then he would assemble multitudes about him, passing from one city to another, up and down the world. It would be simple. None could resist the thing in him. Alone in his room this thing swelled and ached in his soul like some measureless strength. God had put it there.

Ed Holversen rested his head in the palms of his hands and sighed. He was forty years old. He had owned the grocery store since he was a boy. Like himself the store had seemed to grow smaller. The women who had once been young and clear eyed when they came to buy things from him had all become shapeless and sharp tongued. He sat for a long time thinking of this. Then he began to think of multitudes. He would never rise up before them and cry out the word of God. He would go on planning and pretending.



But he was shiftless and worthless.

Ed Holversen regarded the floor of his room intently. Always at this point in his meditations there came to him the despairing knowledge that his mission was an impossible thing. How could he, Ed Holversen, rise up and call upon the multitude to follow him out of the depths when he had never known the depths? His thought, as he stared at the floor, grew clear and keen. He had never committed any sins. He had lived honestly and virtuously. He had known neither women nor aught vicious. And yet he was continually talking to himself about redeeming the multitudes by showing them his own redemption. He was a fool. It was impossible to go out where the multitudes were, and say he had been a grocer all his life and done nothing wrong, and then expect them to break down and weep and acclaim the Light. What Light had he to show them?

Ed Holversen wondered at himself. How did it come that in the moments of his exultation, when the call gripped him strongest, he was always imagining himself a great sinner, feeling himself a man who had passed through crimes untold and hideous and been saved? He lighted the gas jet in his room and undressed. He lay awake for a long time wondering. God had made his lot difficult. He had given him this power and somehow denied him the use of it.

## II

ONE day several weeks later, Ed Holversen heard a woman talking in the doorway of his store. She was talking about a man named Nick Nolan who was the husband of her neighbor. Nick Nolan was dead. At least everybody thought he was dead. He had left a note with his wife saying that he was going to jump into the river. And it was good riddance.

As he listened a curious scheme came into the thought of Ed Holversen. He had heard of Nick Nolan before. The police from the station two blocks away were continually hunting for him. And

he had seen him several times. A short, slightly bald-headed man was Nick Nolan, who stooped a bit when he walked and who looked at you with a frown.

The scheme that formed itself in Ed Holversen's thought left him trembling long after the women and their talk had gone from the doorway of his store.

"The Lord has sent this to me," the little grocer started repeating to himself. "That's why Nick Nolan jumped in the river. Praised be the Lord!"

Ed Holversen closed his store early that day and sought his room eagerly. His eagerness caused him to walk up and down the room. When it grew dark he was still doing this, walking up and down, waving his arms about and muttering to himself. He was saying:

"I'll take Nick Nolan's place and his name. I'll be Nick Nolan. Oh, what a sinner he was! And God showed him the light and he came out of the depths."

Turning toward the opened window of his room, the little grocer cried softly into the dark, desolate street:

"I was vile. I was low and wicked. I went with evil women. I consorted with evil men. I was dishonest and vicious. There was nothing I did not do. I committed crimes against man and God. And then I saw the Light. Now behold me. I walk beside Him. . . ."

Ed Holversen the little grocer had become Nick Nolan. As he talked aloud strange emotions came into his heart, and thoughts equally strange appeared in his brain. He had felt these things vaguely before. But now they were somehow become real. After an hour the little grocer suddenly threw himself to his knees. An anguish was upon him.

"Oh, God, forgive me my sins!" he cried, raising his head. He remained trembling and mumbling. Then swept again by this curious anguish, an emotion terrible and sweet, he cried again:

"Oh, God, I have sinned, I have sinned. My soul is black. I have



robbed men and wronged women and shed precious blood. Show me thy Light. Lead me out of the ways of evil!"

Ed Holversen on his knees in his room began to weep. His body shook. After moments he arose, still shaking. But the tumult in him had quieted somewhat. A sweet peace was entering into his thought. God had forgiven him. God, in His infinite mercy, had redeemed him from evil. He murmured a prayer of thanksgiving. He suddenly began to wave his arms.

"I shall spread Thy Light!" he cried out. "The Light which hath saved me. People shall look upon me and listen to the story of my sins and their redemption and do even as I did, seek Thy glory."

Ed Holversen undressed eagerly. He threw himself on the bed. Tears began to come from his eyes again. But they were tears of joys. He was no longer Ed Holversen, the pathetic little grocer. In the innermost recesses of his thought and feeling he was a man named Nick Nolan, a miserably sin-burdened creature who had seen the Light and who was going forth before the multitudes from city to city, up and down the world, acclaiming the power and wonder of God, driving wickedness from the hearts of men even as he had driven it from his own heart.

### III

THE weeks which followed the curious conversion of the little grocer found him remarkably active. Twice he presented himself before the devout little crowds of men and women who attended the meetings of the Garden Mission in Van Buren street. He talked to them haltingly at first, but each time as they were beginning to lose interest in his broken words a sudden strength would come into his soul. He would throw himself on his knees, thrust his arms frantically above his head and in a high, clear, startling voice sing out:

"He saved me. He reached into the

depths and pulled me out. Me, Nick Nolan, the worst man in Chicago. My soul was black with crime. Ask the police if they know Nick Nolan. And He saved me. He can save you. Come, ye sinners. Come! The Glory awaits you. I know the ways of evil. I have tasted all its fruits. Hallelujah! Come with me! Hallelujah!"

The sight of the trembling little man kneeling on the platform and the ring of his voice sent a strange thrill through the little crowd each time. His words were like the sound of the beating of a drum or of a bugle calling. They lifted the people in the Garden Mission to their feet, crying out: "Amen! Amen! Hallelujah! The sinner is saved!"

Once the little grocer presented himself before a much larger crowd in Dan's Mission in South State street. Here were assembled frowsy-faced derelicts come for a cup of coffee after the prayer meeting—hard-faced women, the riff-raff that clung to the scene of Saturnalias long legislated out of existence. The sight of this audience inspired the little grocer. Strange to his task before he had been able only to use a small part of the urge and power that burned in him. Now facing this new gathering, he felt suddenly able to shed upon them the entire light of his soul.

The people in the audience listened carelessly at first. Then they began to listen more closely. A curious little man was throwing himself about on the platform, singing his words, waving his arms. This strange little creature began to talk of sin. But to their surprise, it was not their sin he talked about. It was his own. They listened with the air of connoisseurs. The confessions from the little active man on the platform became bolder. Step by step he traced the life of a vagabond and a criminal. He had led girls out of the ways of virtue and sold them into the slave markets of vice. He had robbed from boys and old women. He had stricken down men as they were hurrying home and taken their money from them.



"Ask the police who Nick Nolan is. They'll tell ye."

And then as the narrative of sin and vice had brought a hush upon the audience the little man threw himself to his knees. Once more, as before the Garden Mission, his arms shot up and the high, clear, startling song of his voice sailed like bugles notes through the crowded room.

"And He reached into the depths after me. He saved me. . . ."

His talk finished, the little grocer did not sit down and drink a cup of coffee like those about him. He stepped from the platform and began moving among the men and women who looked at him curiously. His eyes were glowing fiercely. He spoke to them standing beside them. There was a curious dignity about his figure.

The Rev. Arthur J. Hendershot, a man of fervor, stood in the back of Dan's Mission and watched the little grocer keenly. The narrative from the platform had thrilled him more than any service or sermon he had ever in his life listened to. The Rev. Mr. Hendershot was one of the most active clergymen in the city. His activity took many turns. Tall, thin, with sharp, angular features and a bird-like head, the worthy man bestirred himself as a member of reform committees, as a leader in ward politics, as a prohibition orator. He was not one of those ecclesiastic theorists who lampoon some generality in the name of vice and who each Sunday treat their congregations to glittering, though meaningless, Biblical tirades. The Rev. Mr. Hendershot had mingled with leaders of the city. He knew the ways of its politicians, its grafters, its betrayers. He knew the faces and the manners of the men who fatten upon the spoils of vice.

"I'd like to talk with you, Nolan," he said as the little grocer stood near him addressing quietly a hard-faced woman. From his eyes tears were streaming.

A half hour later Ed Holversen and the Rev. Mr. Hendershot were walk-

ing down the deserted side of Michigan avenue. The Rev. Mr. Hildershot was talking earnestly.

"I heard you tonight," he said. "I want to thank you first. We ministers of the Gospel cannot reach the people you reached tonight. We are not one of them. They recognize us as something apart from their lives. But you are different. They recognize in your words the sound of their own inner voices. You have a wonderful future before you, Nolan, in the service of God."

When they had come to Twelfth street they turned back again. The Rev. Mr. Hendershot had his work in the First Ward, comprising the leading iniquitous precincts of Chicago. It was against the viceroys of evil who had their headquarters in this ward that he carried his most violent assaults. It was the dream of his life to clean up this section of the city, which, since the city's birth, had been the nation's example in the matters of sin and debauchery. When they had reached Peck Court the Rev. Mr. Hendershot and Nolan had come to an agreement. Nolan was to call at the parsonage at 10 o'clock the next morning.

Returning to his room above the grocery store, Ed Holversen found himself unable to sleep. A strange joy throbbed through his body. He knew what the minister wanted. He, Nick Nolan, for he no longer thought of himself in his own name, was to lead a revival in the First Ward under the auspices of the strongest religious leaders in the city. Each night he would rise up before the multitudes even as he had done in Dan's Mission. None could resist him.

As he lay sleepless in his bed he felt the measureless strength that swelled his soul. A strange little thought crept into the head of Ed Holversen. He closed his eyes and lay trembling in the dark. He dared hardly to breathe. For it had come to him suddenly that he had been appointed by God to redeem the world in His name.



## IV

THE meeting at the Rev. Mr. Hendershot's parsonage was attended by six ministers and Nick Nolan. Plans were laid. Enthusiasm ran high. It was decided to announce the revival at once. A month of preparation would be necessary. Each of the ministers was appointed chairman of a committee on preparations. Each delivered a short, impromptu address. The Rev. Mr. Hendershot himself was entrusted with the publicity part of the program.

The meeting was the first of many others. The little grocer attended them all. The ministers had increased from six to twelve. They sat around looking furtively at the new evangelist. He had a way of interrupting their debates, of leaping abruptly from his chair and, his body galvanized as if by some divine force, his voice ringing as it did always from the platforms, crying out:

"What's the use of talking? What's the use of figuring out about things? Let me tell you what I got. All of us is with sin. But it has been my lot to be with more sin than most men. I have slept in the gutters and squandered my substance in riotous living, in sinful dissipation. I have blasphemed and committed crimes against God and my fella men. I ain't been trained in any school but the school of sin, and I come straight from that school to you. And I come to give away the Big Joke the Devil plays upon men. I want to go out into the world carrying the word of God. I got something in me. Something calling me. It called me out of the depths. It's still calling me. At night I lay awake crying like a baby. I been a thief, a murderer, a blasphemer, a ruiner of girls and a safe blower. I have prowled the alleys at dark with a gun and murder in my heart. But now, hallelujah! I've seen the Light!"

There was more than words to these exhortations of the little grocer. His manner and the solemn, feverish ring of his voice were a large part of the effect produced by them. When the

committee chairmen assembled to inspect the various pamphlets, posters, folders and literature of a general sort that the Rev. Mr. Hendershot had devised and was prepared to launch upon the city Nick Nolan pointed out that the language used was in places too feeble.

"Don't respect me, miserable sinner that I am," he cried. The result was a revision of these literatures, a revision which painted in violent terms the character of the evangelist. His staggering list of crimes, his police record, his success as a sinner in general were given to the world in glaring type. "A Message from the Depths" was the tenor of the announcements, and Nick Nolan, become more forceful, more impetuous in his words and manner, urged that his sins be blazoned forth.

"I ruint a little girl and drove her to throw herself in the river. Put that in," he cried. "I'm black, blacker than night. My heart is burning for my sins. I ain't ashamed of them. They're my weapons now. I stole a pocketbook from a orphan onct. And I can remember cheating a poor widow lady out of her fortune in a fake real estate deal. Put that all in, gentlemen."

During the course of these conferences the attitudes of the twelve clergymen now in charge of the revival, to open the last day of May, underwent a peculiar process. From regarding Nick as a human being like themselves who had been called by God to spread the Word, they achieved for him an emotion verging on awe. His sins, innumerable as the winds, black as hell itself, excited and terrified them. But at the same time the unquestionable zeal of the man, his incontrovertible faith, and his primitive rugged power endowed him with the proportions of some later-day saint.

Working elbow to elbow with this man who had tasted of all the iniquities, who had lived, lusted, sinned and rioted and who now stood forth to blazon the Word of God, they became more and more conscious of some miracle beyond



their humble brains to fathom. They were all earnest and sincere workers in the faith. Each of them had been trained in the ways of theology and religious effort and each had during a calm and well-spent life endeavored to the best of his power to sow good where wickedness walked. But now had come a breath as out of a new, fresh world, the breath of the spirit which had stormed and carried the evil heart of Nick Nolan.

Springing to his feet during one of their meetings, the Rev. Henry Moulton, one of the twelve, had cried out:

"You're going to bring new life into the world. You're destined for it. Your sinning was merely a preparation for the work which you were chosen to do."

Tears had come into the eyes of the little grocer.

"God forgive me," he whispered hoarsely. "I been a scoundrel and a skunk."

With the churches of that part of the city organized at length and the press taking curious cognizance, the revival, as the day approached, promised to surpass the expectations of the clergymen in charge. The scene of the efforts of the evangelist was to be the Coliseum, a structure which would hold eight thousand persons. And there had been fifteen thousand reservations made for the first night. The fight against the liquor and the vice interests in the First Ward, always a spectacular business, had promised to reach some strange climax in this revival.

## V

Two nights before the opening Nick Nolan was waiting in the library of the Rev. Mr. Hendershot's parsonage. He had closed his little grocery store and taken a room in one of the cheaper Loop hotels. The parsonage was deserted. The Rev. Mr. Hendershot was busy with the final preparations. As he sat staring dreamily out of the window at the spring upon the city, the little grocer heard the door of the room

open. He turned and saw a woman, tall, angular, white-faced. It was Jane, the domestic who kept the parsonage in order for the Rev. Mr. Hendershot. The little grocer smiled at her in a far-away manner. She approached him, her eyes fastened unwaveringly upon his face, and sank to her knees at his feet.

"We ain't ever alone enough," she murmured. "Give me your blessing."

The little grocer extended his hand over the straggled hair.

"A poor, miserable sinner blesses you," he said.

The woman began to weep. Her round, vacant eyes raised themselves to the little grocer's face.

"You're so wonderful," she cried in a high-pitched voice. Her mouth opened and she remained staring at him. She rose to her feet and moved slowly and solemnly away. The little grocer, when she had passed out of the room, murmured to himself:

"Poor lamb. She has sinned, too."

\* \* \*

It was dusk when the Rev. Mr. Hendershot, accompanied by four other clerics, arrived at the parsonage. They were in a state of excitement and exhaustion. They found Nolan waiting for them. They seated themselves wearily and in strained, happy voices went over the details of their task. The four weeks had been difficult. But they had done their part. They had paved the way for Nick Nolan and they turned now toward him with the eyes of privates who look expectantly toward the chief.

But a curious silence had befallen the little grocer. He sat in the room like a man dreaming. A far-away peaceful smile was upon his face. They were sitting thus when the doorbell rang. A moment later Jane, the domestic, opened the library door and announced the arrival of three visitors.

"Two men and a woman to see ye, doctor," she said.

Her voice was somewhat flurried. Her round, vacant eyes sought the face of the little grocer. The three visit-



ors announced by Jane followed her words into the room.

"Rev. Hendershot!" the larger of the two men exclaimed.

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot arose.

"We're from the City Police Department," resumed the large man. He was dressed in plain clothes.

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot for the moment grew confused. Instinctively he sensed some final desperate ruse on the part of the liquor and the vice interests.

"What is it?" he asked finally.

"My name's McGuire," said the spokesman. "We understand you've got a man named Nick Nolan here who's going to start a revival. We're looking for him."

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot stared about the room, his eyes encountering the questioning eyes of his friends. They alighted finally upon the little grocer.

"There is some mistake," he spoke at last. "Mr. Nolan is right here."

He pointed toward the evangelist.

The woman who stood between the two men from the police department shuffled forward. She was an old creature, bent and shabbily dressed. Her face was lined and grey in color. She walked now toward the little grocer. The light from the single table lamp in the room fell dimly upon his features.

"That Nick Nolan!" cried the old woman in a piping voice.

McGuire at the same time was saying, "We've been looking for Nolan for a week. He's wanted for a job on the West side. If that's him."

He stepped forward after the old woman.

"That Nick Nolan!" repeated the old woman in the same startling tone. "Say, what you handing me?"

McGuire and his partner had approached the side of the little grocer, who had risen to his feet. He was standing trembling before them.

McGuire stared at him for an instant and then laughed.

"No, that's not Nick," he said.

The old woman was not to be denied.

"I knowed it wasn't my Nick as was carryin' on like this," she cried. "That's Ed Holversen, the grocery store man. I knowed him for twenty years, don't I, Ed. He's been having the grocery store there for more'n twenty years, don't you Ed? I told you fellas it wasn't my Nick, see?"

McGuire turned toward his partner.

"I guess the old woman's right. I didn't think it was Nick myself. Who'd you say this was, Mrs. Nolan?"

"Ed Holversen," she screamed, her wonder gradually having its way with her voice. "Say, and he's been posin' as Nick. What d'ye know about that. I'll bet old Nick'll be madder than hornets. Seein' his name around on the fences as a evangelist!"

The old woman broke into peals of insane laughter. The two men from the police department turned toward the silent clerics. They were all on their feet.

"I guess this guy's an impostor all right," said McGuire. "But that's your business, not ours."

They laid hands on the old woman, still laughing, and moved out of the room.

As the door closed upon the trio the Rev. Mr. Hendershot recovered his senses.

"Nolan," he cried, "what is this all about?"

His heart, as he asked the question, was cold as were the hearts of the others in the room. Ed Holversen, the little grocer, swayed uncertainly on his feet. His thoughts had become tangled.

"I don't know," he said, "except—except that the Lord has found me out."

"You aren't Nolan," cried the Rev. Mr. Moulton abruptly.

There was a rush of clerics toward the figure of his evangelist. They seized him by his arms and hands.

"The Lord has found me out," muttered the little grocer. "Because I wasn't worthy of Him."

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot was shaking the little grocer violently. In his



excitement his eyes were blazing and his mouth, opened, was unable to form words.

"She said you were a grocer," he blurted forth finally.

"Me," said Holversen, "yes, I'm Ed Holversen."

He loosened an arm from the grip of the Rev. Mr. Westcoff and passed a hand dazedly over his head.

"Yes, I guess I'm Ed Holversen," he muttered dreamily.

A silence fell.

"The revival will have to be stopped," cried the Rev. Mr. Moulton abruptly.

The little grocer suddenly came to life.

"Please gentlemen," he spoke. "You ain't going to throw me out—just because of this. I ain't worthy, perhaps. But my heart was burning with the call of God—"

"Silence, you blasphemer," shouted one of the clergy.

"I ain't a blasphemer," the little grocer answered, his voice breaking. A liquid, tearful note had come into his speech. "I ain't ever done anything wrong in my life. I ain't ever done a thing. But I wanted to spread the Word. I'm a good man. So help me God. And I got the call."

The Rev. Mrs. Hendershot groaned. Disgust and nausea were in his soul. Death would have been a delicious respite from the emotions which surged in him.

"We are face to face with a terrible issue," he spoke solemnly. "The revival cannot continue. This man is an impostor . . . A grocer."

His voice broke on the final word.

Ed Holversen experienced a panic. The stern, condemning figures of the men before him filled him with terror. What had he done? He groped with his hands and staggered forward toward the Rev. Mr. Hendershot. He tried to speak but his words died.

"You came to us," the minister continued, his finger pointing wrathfully at the swaying figure of the evangelist, "in good faith. And you lied. You

lied like a scoundrel. We have disgraced ourselves through listening to you. Do you realize what this means? Our enemies will discover what an impostor you are. And then—"

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot ceased talking. He moved toward a chair and sank into it. His hands covered his face. A sob came from him. His life's work ruined in a single night. He, the leader of the city's fight for decency, changed into a ludicrous figure, a figure that could never hope again to recover its power. Overcome by such realizations the Rev. Mr. Hendershot wept. The others in the room remained solemnly and silently on their feet.

"I been a sinner," broke out Ed Holversen suddenly.

The word was a final sting to the grieving clergyman in the chair. He sprang to his feet, his body shaking with wrath.

"You a sinner," he bellowed forth. "You . . . You liar! You scoundrel! You little cheap pettyfogging grocer! Get out of here. Oh, why is this brought upon us, this blow? You a sinner!"

The Rev. Mr. Hendershot laughed hysterically. His outstretched arm indicated the door. Ed Holversen taken back /by the outburst moved slowly toward it.

There was wild and desperate excitement throughout the twelve parishes during the ensuing eight hours. Word sped from center to center that Nick Nolan, the famous evangelist, had been stricken suddenly ill and rushed to a hospital and that the revival would therefor be postponed indefinitely. It was dawn when the twelve clergymen, hollow-eyed and drawn-faced, ceased their labors.

For the twenty-fifth time the Rev. Mr. Hendershot sighed and muttered:

"To think that we believed him! What a pack of imbeciles we are. To think that we fancied him a—a—sinner!"

And for the twenty-fifth time the



Rev. Mr. Moulton, mopping his brow made answer:

"A grocer—a common grocer . . .!"

## VI

IN his room above the grocery store Ed Holversen sat looking out of the window at the dark and desolate street. He had reopened his business. There had been talk for several weeks, talk inspired by the incoherent gossip of Mrs. Nolan. But this had finally stopped.

The little grocer, staring out of the window, sighed. He began to murmur to himself. Then standing up he began to walk and wave his arms about. The call which had once gripped at the heart of Ed Holversen had again returned. It brought the old gleam into his eyes. He began again to mutter to himself, and to stretch out his arms toward the dark street below. As he stood thus, muttering and swaying in the dark room, a woman opened the door. She was tall and angular. Her mouth hung slightly open. She wiped her hands on her apron and came forward.

The little grocer turned and saw her.

"Jane," he whispered. "I'm going out in the world. I got the call in me—"

The face of the woman lighted. Approaching him she sank to her knees before him.

"Give me your blessing," she murmured, her eyes raised to him and shining in the dark.

Ed Holversen looked down at his

wife. He had married her two weeks ago. She had clung to him through his disgrace after leaving the parsonage. She had followed him, giving up her position as domestic for the Rev. Mr. Hendershot. She lived with him now above the grocery store, sharing his days and nights.

As he stared into the uplifted face of the woman on her knees a wave of triumph surged through the little grocer. The room in which he stood seemed to grow larger. The memories which sometimes darkened his heart, memories of what might have been, vanished? He was standing as he had often stood in this room at night, before his multitude.

"I been a sinner," he wailed suddenly. "I was in the depths. And I saw the Light. Oh, God, I give You my thanks for taking me out of the depths. Bless this poor sinner at my feet. Bless all these sinners . . . Hallelujah!"

Flinging his arm above his head the little grocer finished with a shout. The woman kneeling before him listened with violent eagerness, trembling under his words. She felt herself in the presence of a saint. When he had finished she raised her voice, a quavering old woman's voice.

"Amen. Save him! Hallelujah, amen!" she cried.

Tears of gratitude came suddenly into Ed Holversen's eyes. Looking down again at the woman kneeling before him, a triumph swelled his soul. In some manner, he felt, his dreams had come true.



WHEREVER two women are, there is an indignation meeting. And wherever three women are, there is a conspiracy.





# IDYL IN TWO SCENES

By Mary Newcomb

## I

HE was fifty, getting a bit weary of club existence. He wanted someone to pet him. He wanted someone to talk baby-talk to him. Someone to adore him. Someone to be ever at his side. An exclusive beauty-show. Also he wanted sons. He wanted a little daughter. Little counterparts of himself, dependent upon him for go-carts and rocking horses. Also peppermints, which he would always carry in his pockets. He wanted to be King in a household of his own.

So he started out on a still hunt. He spared no expense. Sometimes he changed his gardenia three times a day. He was utterly reckless. At last he found her, his little-slave-and-mother-to-be. He was tongue-tied with happiness, so he couldn't tell her his dreams. Time enough later. He proposed immediately, that his sons and his little daughter might know him as young as possible! His day was come! He gave thanks. He was completely enraptured!

## II

SHE was twenty, a bit wearied of

playing nurse-maid to her three brothers and her four little sisters. She looked like a regular squab, but she was a New Woman. She knew how much she could give the world, could she but escape from household duties. They were menial tasks. She wanted to be queen in a household of her own. She wanted to express herself, as she knew she could. She wanted to be president of clubs and particularly to join the motor corps. She didn't believe in children. She belonged to a society which had decided that there were enough children in the world already. In fact, she had founded that society. She would have preferred to carve out her own career. But she didn't have the cash.

So she started out on a still hunt. Nothing under fifty interested her. They met. She discovered that he had a cough. She asked if it was serious. She didn't mean it the way he took it, but there was no time to tell him of her dreams. Time enough later. She accepted immediately, that she might start her career while yet so young. Her day had come! She gave thanks. She was completely enraptured!



HAPPINESS is only for those who are either too ignorant or too wise to take life seriously.





# THE LOVERS

By L. M. Hussey

ON a white table placed next the window, a fragrant of thinly beaten gold-leaf, glass enclosed, fluttered curiously. He stood looking down at the apparatus, comprehending fully the mysterious activity of the purplish metallic film. Yet, for the moment, its movements did not wholly engross him. He glanced out of the window; the afternoon sun shone on his face; he watched his wife as she walked through the garden. She came toward the house and when she saw him at the window, she smiled at him. Her head was thrown back and the topmost coils of her hair were glamorous with sunlight. He smiled, returning her smile.

She disappeared under the line of the porch. In a few seconds he heard the sound of her footsteps ascending the stairs. For a moment, as he had watched her, the expression of his face had been almost touchingly naïve; his pleasure in the sight of her was apparent. Now he frowned a little; a look of concentration came into his face, depriving it of its boyish naïveté, and he shook his shoulders slightly as if disburdening them of some light but annoying encumbrance. He bent over the table, his palms pressed down upon the smooth top, peering intently at the frail sheet of fluttering metal.

She came into the room quietly and he did not hear her. Just inside the doorway she stopped and looked at him. He was alone; his young assistant had gone for the afternoon. His profile was presented to her, luminously outlined in the bright light. Her eyes fastened upon his face, provoked by the concentration of his features. She

studied him as an enigma, a little annoyed. After a moment her mood softened. She approached him quietly.

He was watching the gold-leaf electroscope intently, oblivious to her nearness. As from a slate she had been sponged from his mind, that was now written over only with the concerns of his scientific absorption. He started when she touched him; he turned his face to her swiftly; for a second there was no recognition in his eyes.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

Her fingers lingered on his shoulder caressingly and a small, provocative smile curved on her lips.

The appreciation of her came back into his senses like a warm breath, vaguely scented. He had not yet lost his half-formed wonder at the intimacy of living with her—a wonder that took its shadowy embodiment from her sheer femininity and his naïf inexperience of women. He looked at her smooth face curving with allure into the gracile lines of her neck and sloping shoulders. He put out his hand and touched her cheek. At once she circled him with her arms and kissed him.

As if defensively, he remembered her question.

"Look at this," he said. He turned his eyes to the table. "Matter is absolutely breaking down there. Part of it is going into simpler forms—part of it into nothing at all! Just like a candle being snuffed out! Every time a disintegrating particle comes into contact with the gold-leaf, it trembles."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "Radium again! Really, Harry, it's not half so interesting as I imagined it might be. I always thought the stuff made a



bright light in the dark. I think Mr. Harry Millington is more interesting than all the expensive radium in the world. Aren't you going to quit this afternoon? I want you!"

"It's not radium this time," he persisted. "Only mercury. That's radioactive, too—isn't it curious? Everything is probably radioactive—and disintegrating. I believe I'm close to finding out how to control the disintegration."

She looked at him a second somewhat mockingly and questioned him like an adult probing the humorous and aimless fancies of a child.

"And Harry, dearest, what good will that do?"

"Well . . . if you mean practical good . . ."

He paused and looked at her, detached and thoughtful.

"It would solve all the power problems forever," he went on. "It would give us the almost inconceivable use of intra-atomic energy. There would—"

She had put her two hands on his shoulders and was laughing at him. The tinkling noise of her laughter was resonated from the bare walls of the room. For just a second a surge of indignation sent a surge of warmth to his cheeks; he had merged her individuality into the wider identity of an audience; he was making his exposition to her impersonally, as to one of the scientific bodies that listened to him with silence and respect. Her laughter broke in upon his sentence like a grave discourtesy.

His anger passed when he looked at her. He yielded himself to the charm of her mysterious loveliness. In the laboratory she stood apart and incongruous, the beautiful opposed to the useful, the emotional set against the rational. The gleam of glass and shining metal surrounded her and the sensual persuasiveness of her allure asserted itself among these precise and delicate instruments of his labours with a flamboyance that was almost contemptuous.

As Millington looked at the glow of

her flushed, warm cheeks, the backward tilt of her head, the glamorous net of her copper hair, a sense of helplessness troubled him, an apprehension of irrationality, a perception of unfathomed and fantastic forces. For a moment, his nature, trained to the desire of understanding and precision, opposed itself rebelliously to the adventurous unreason of his senses. And then he put his arm about her and they walked out of the room together.

Her desire, it seemed, was to re-establish constantly the setting of their first days together. Before their marriage they had met in the mountains in the early spring. She now approximated those scenes by driving him in their car through the country roads until they came to a thick woods. Here she stopped the machine and disclosed a supper packed up in several pasteboard boxes. They sat on a fallen log and spread out sandwiches and thin slices of cake in front of them. The sun fell back of the trees, leaving an orange reminiscence to fade out in the sky; the woods grew black and purple; her face was luminously pallid, a pale oval of chatoyant ivory that came close to him and laid the touch of cool skin against his cheek.

As on all such occasions, the panorama of his entire intimacy with her passed before his eyes. They had not yet known each other a year; they had been married only a few months. Nevertheless, the space of their acquaintance seemed to cover a period of time long and ardent—and in an increasing measure, exhausting. He noticed that now; he noticed an inability to sustain his fervour as in the earlier months of knowing her. Each kiss she gave him seemed to take subtly away from him some measure of his eagerness. With the chromatic glamour of her person she could still draw his mind out of the white, clean passion of his scientific enthusiasm, but the periods of his abstraction grew less long. Even this evening, while they sat silently, close to each other, his acute percep-



tion of her mystery dimmed, and he thought of other things.

She spoke to him softly, in her low, resonant voice.

"What are you thinking about?"

His eyes were raised to the stars, his expression as remote as them. He did not answer her.

"Tell me!"

He turned to her quickly, realizing that she was questioning him.

"A little problem," he murmured. "I was. . . ."

She drew away from him swiftly; her eyes seemed very big in the dusk oval of her face.

"You weren't thinking about me at all!"

She waited a moment, as if hopeful of some denial, but he said nothing. Then she arose suddenly and an agitated swirl of air, scented with her perfume, blew for an instant against his face.

"Come, we'll go home!" she exclaimed.

Her anger was obvious in her voice. He stood up also, and attempted to secure her hand. She turned half around abruptly and walked with long steps toward the car.

"Lilla, what is the matter?"

"I'm going home!"

"Tell me what's the matter?"

She said no more to him but got into the car. He climbed in beside her; she switched on the headlights and two shafts of white, searching light passed out into the dusk; the car started with a furious clatter of the engine. She drove with her eyes straight in front of her, her chin pointed, her profile sharp, her hair pressed down and back by the wind.

Her thorough anger with the man at her side was not unmingled with scorn. The increasing evidence of his inability to sustain their emotional communion lessened his stature in her eyes. More and more he lost the fervour of their early weeks together; more and more he turned from the glow of their passion to futilities, to incomprehensible and foolish aims, to the pursuit of the

obscure and meaningless. She turned her face a little and caught a blurred image of his pale profile near her. A faint sense of mystery, a slight uneasiness, as in the presence of the unknown, stirred her. She did not fully comprehend him.

He was angry and irritated; he was out of sympathy with her irrationality. Every now and then her arm pressed against him as she manipulated the wheel. There was an inseparableness in her nearness that dismayed him. Like a disordered landscape revealed by a lightning flash, their relation was suddenly illuminated in his mind. He saw the difference of their hopes, their incommensurable spirits, set against the sardonic background of their sworn oneness.

Then the clearness of his perception failed; his mind faltered in its grasp of these things; his eyes wandered out to the road. Other thoughts came to him. In a moment he had forgotten her and he gave himself up almost voluptuously to the ascetic passion of the purely intellectual.

He was almost startled when he found that the car had stopped. He jumped out quickly and waited for his wife to follow him. She sat motionless for a moment, and then put her foot on the running board. He held out his hand to her. She stepped down to the grass; he still retained her hand; they faced each other. In a moment he had his arms about her and was kissing her. She responded with the warm pressure of her lips.

A strand of hair touched his cheek like an exquisite and subtle caress. All the tingling pleasure of the touch of her was in his senses.

## II

THE next afternoon Lilla stood in the doorway of the laboratory, staring in. Millington had gone to the city to purchase materials and the large room was occupied only by his assistant. The latter was unaware of her scrutiny. He sat on a high stool, his back to her,



facing a chemical balance in a glass case. The sliding door was raised and he deftly withdrew small platinum weights from a red weight-box and conveyed them to the right-hand scale pan of the balance, twisting the arrestment knob of the instrument at each addition.

Lilla watched the short movements of his arms with a faint frown. His activity was incomprehensible to her; he was directed by her husband and he reflected Millington's inscrutable and irritating aims. Her eyes passed from him to wander over the rest of the room.

Everywhere was the glint of glass-ware, the polished surface of shining wood, the high-lights reflected from brass and steel. To the fantastic and meaningless contours of these objects, Lilla felt a vibrant animosity; they assumed the personification of mute but malignly intentioned enemies. These were the shapes that opposed her and increasingly they drew Millington out of her presence. Her fingers tensed at her sides. A fury to destroy made her face hard. She desired to go into the room, throw this glass and wood and metal to the floor, trample and smash. She took a step forward and the young man at the balance case turned and saw her.

He stood up, smiling with evident embarrassment. He was younger than Millington; his face had less aloofness and detachment.

He looked at Lilla, waiting for her to speak.

She said nothing and he flushed a little.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Millington?" he asked.

"No, nothing. I was just looking in."

He smiled again and fumbled with the edges of his white coat. He did not know what to say to her; her presence made him vaguely uneasy. He looked at her copper hair, heaped up profusely on her head like a pile of heated metal drawn out into numberless glowing threads. He withdrew his

eyes swiftly, for he did not wish her to perceive his admiration. She spoke to him again.

"What are you doing?"

He half turned to the balance.

"I was—"

"Don't tell me!"

Her voice interrupted him quickly, almost passionately.

"You don't like these things, do you, Mrs. Millington?"

She looked at him a moment, a distant expression in her eyes, as if she only half perceived him.

"I . . . hate them . . ." she said, deliberately.

He took a step toward her, an eager gesture. He experienced an intense sense of pleasure. He was receiving her confidence; she was talking to him intimately! He dared to look at her face for a full second, with his eyes widened. He was glad that Millington was not in the laboratory and he could indulge therefore the pleasant feeling he had in being alone with her.

His admiration was apparent to her and she understood his emotions. At other times she had observed this admiration when she talked with him, penetrating with ease his efforts at concealment. He had somewhat amused her. Now, for the first time, she found a vague pleasure and a vague excitement in knowing that she pleased him. He ministered also to her slipping assurance, to the confidence she required in her charm. As he talked to her she examined him with interest. A blurred, indefinite idea that he might prove useful took shape in her mind. He was more intimate and gracious to him than she had ever been before.

Millington returned before nightfall, but she failed in an effort to secure him for herself. He went to work immediately and did not retire until late at night. Lilla spent the evening alone out of doors. She sat on some cushions near a tall hedge, almost motionless. A few leaves were beginning to fall and they lay about her curled and crisp. Occasionally she took one in her hand and crumpled it to powder. The stir of



many crickets was in the air. She stared into the shadows like a dim, silent watcher waiting for news in the night. Silently she made schemes in her head.

Inasmuch as she comprehended nothing of her husband's work, she did not understand that he had entered upon a very engrossing and perhaps culminating phase of his immediate investigation. Within a few days he seemed to have withdrawn himself from her utterly. For several weeks she struggled to secure him, to charm him, to arouse him to her fascination. She practiced stratagems upon him like an opposing general; she utilized the instrument of her anger; he was oblivious. She summoned all the conscious weapons of her allure; she sought to please him with caresses; he was indifferent. He grew mysterious to her, and the more desirable.

One morning she besieged him boldly and suffered her most apparent rebuff. She went into the laboratory several hours before luncheon. She found him working with his assistant, the two side by side. She had made herself very appealing; her face was flushed subtly, her eyes mobile in their expressions, her hair almost luminously lustrous. She stepped across the room and stood near the table at which the two men laboured, watching them ingenuously, like a child. They finished connecting together a chain of apparatus, and then she spoke.

"Done, Harry?" she asked.

He turned a moment, glancing at her only.

"Hello," he said.

"Mr. Davidson can work it out for himself, now," she said. "You must come with me this morning!"

She put her hand on his arm, looked straight into his eyes, smiled at him.

Millington stared at her, frowning. He saw her smiling lips, her reddened cheeks, her expectant eyes. They all were at once remote and immensely trivial to him. The inconsequence of her wishes angered him. He restrained a sudden impulse to shake her vio-

lently, shake understanding into her. He took her hand from his sleeve.

"Lilla," he said, "you mustn't come in here in the morning."

He turned away from her and bent over the table.

Her eyes remained on his white coat, his stooping shoulders, his brown, closely trimmed hair. The assistant walked quietly to the other end of the room. Now Millington seemed oblivious that she stood near. She watched his moving hand and caught glimpses of his intent profile. There was almost an insanity in his concentration, a madness in his obsession. He played endlessly and endlessly with little shapes of glass, little grotesqueries in metal. He wrote cabalistically, meaninglessly, into a little notebook. He preferred these things to the glow of her lips, to the caressing circle of her arms!

She stared a moment longer and then walked out of the room.

### III

THROUGH the distorting, refractive mist of her baffled emotions, she endeavored to analyze her position. The best she achieved was a tantalizing mystery. A curious little memory from her childhood came back to her like a symbol. She remembered a gold coin that had been given to her on her eighth birthday. The colour of the metal, the shape and size of the coin, the lustrous woman's head upon it, had fascinated her. She carried it about with her for days, clinked it on stones, played with it at the side of an artificial lake in the garden. One day it rolled over the stones and dropped down into the clear water. She peered in, and under the slight ripples blown up by the wind, she saw the golden money, enlarged, its contours shifting and remote. She was afraid to tell of her loss. Each day she stared in at the coin. She could see it; it was there, but she could not reach it. She could recall the pleasant weighty feel of it in her small hands: Its nearness, yet



its impossibility of attainment, tormented her for weeks, until she confided in the gardener and he fished the disk of metal out of the water and gave it back into her keeping.

As if under a separating and impassable depth, she saw her early relations with Millington. Like something lost and precious they lay within sight, but distorted and unattainable. It seemed to her that if she could once more secure her desire within her grasp, she would hold it fast forever, with never another losing. For several days she was held inactive by reminiscences. Then a measure of her assurance returned to her and she resolved on a plan. Her first step was to take Davidson, the assistant, out driving with her.

He was quite astonished at her invitation. She made it openly, in the presence of Millington. After a moment of embarrassed hesitation, the young man agreed. Lilla observed that her husband showed no surprise at this unusual maneuver. They had little to say to each other on their first drive. Lilla drove the car fast and savagely; Davidson did not understand her, did not comprehend her motive; he was troubled with a shyness in her presence that approximated fear.

She made it a habit to be seen with him for a certain time each day. At meals she smiled at him with a saccharine graciousness. She consulted him, in odd corners, over trivial concerns, but she made her voice low, intimate, almost conspiratorial. When she saw him initially in the morning she greeted him with effusion. Sometimes, when she knew that Millington was in the laboratory, she came in and watched him silently. Yet Millington said nothing, showed no annoyance, was oblivious.

Several weeks went over and the chromatic autumn days were definitely established. By this time the assistant had rid himself of a measure of his embarrassment. He wondered less at his happiness and accepted the pleasure of these new circumstances as a

gift of good fortune. His emotions expanded, like a flower, opening. It was at length difficult for him to restrain his spoken admiration when Lilla was alone with him. When he dropped his eyes to her hands their gracile whiteness filled him with a wish to seize them, cover them over with kisses, feel the smooth touch of them. He told himself that he loved her and at night-time he made speeches for her, inventing a hundred declarations, considering her response in a hundred moods. Sometimes he forgot all about Millington.

When he was with her an actual declaration increasingly troubled his lips, threatening to break their silence. This happened at last in a moment when he was alone with her in the laboratory.

Lilla came in cool and white, walking with a consciousness of her exuberant charm. She expected to find Millington there, but he had gone out of the room for a moment and only the assistant stood among the inimical appliances Lilla despised.

She smiled at him; he suddenly spoke to her.

"I can't go on in this way," he said. "You must know that I love you!"

She was not surprised. She stood looking at him with a mood that was curiously speculative. Certainly she felt no response, yet it was evident to her that she stirred him profoundly. It was not unpleasant to know that he loved her. She wondered just what she would say to him now. And then she caught the sound of Millington's approaching footsteps.

Before he came through the door she experienced a sudden understanding of his attitude toward Davidson and herself—his blind indifference. All her maneuvering had been futile. It was useless to go on as she had been going. She heard his step at the door and in an instant despairing determination to impress him, arouse him, make him see and feel, she moved swiftly to Davidson's side, put her arms about him, and pressed her lips upon



his astonished face. She knew that her husband had stopped in the doorway and was looking at them.

In a second she drew away, turning her face toward Millington and simulating an immense surprise. Bright spots of red glowed in her cheeks; she drew in her breath rapidly. Bewildered, white-faced, the assistant stood near her, saying nothing.

After another moment Lilla turned to him and spoke in a tense, quick whisper.

"Leave me now, please!"

At once he obeyed her. He walked toward the door and Millington let him pass, ignored him.

Then Millington moved slowly across the room and stood by one of the white tables. He absently picked up a little glass picnometer and turned it back and forth in his fingers.

Lilla took a step toward him.

"Aren't you going to do anything?" she asked.

"What do you mean?"

"He kissed me!"

Before speaking he rested his eyes upon her face as if he found an enigma there.

"Lilla," he said, "why are you lying to me?"

She found no words to say to him. He waited a moment and then went on:

"I don't know what you want of me, nor what end you're seeking. It seems to me there's a certain reasonable relation for you and me. One thing is sure, whatever you want to do, I can't let you intrude on my work here. I'm at a point where I must give all my thoughts to the investigation I'm making. Can't you see that?"

She looked at his pale, intent face, out of which passed his hateful words. The note of reasonableness, his attempt to argue with her, filled her with a swift, burning anger as if each of his quiet syllables had concealed a bitter insult. He leaned back upon the table upon which was placed a connected line of abstruse and delicate apparatus. The gleam of it was behind him, maddening her.

He continued to look at her, but never for a second did he understand her. Vaguely, empirically, he knew what she desired: she wanted to take him away from that which seemed of most importance to him. The passionate, consuming desire of him, the jealousy of all his moments that were not given over to her ministry, he never an instant sensed. She had grown childish and intolerably trivial to him. Her puerile irrationality aroused his impatience and created an impulse to take her by the shoulders and shake her like a stubborn child.

She could tolerate the gleaming instruments at his back no longer. She lunged toward him madly. She whirled him aside like a leaf in the vortex of a wind. She grasped the white table and turned it up on end; glass and metal slid to the hard floor, twisting, smashing. The sound caressed her ears and a ferine satisfaction surged in her senses. The abominable shapes of other glass, other metal, were all about her. She ran toward the next table. Before she reached it he seized her, both wrists secured in his tight fingers. He twisted her around until, panting, a strand of her copper hair fallen down over her cheek like a sinister banner, she faced him.

Only a few inches apart they stared at each other. But between them there was the illimitable, the tragic and ironic distance of their immense difference, their fantastic incompatibility.

He held her a second whilst a growing sense of what she had done aroused his anger like a black, gathering storm. Her's was the trivial and futile carried to madness. She was the malicious child gone insane. He dropped her wrists and clutched her shoulders tightly; he shook her back and forth; his anger flared the more and his fingers slipped to her white, strained throat.

Suddenly he knew that he was mad himself, and he tore away his hands; the woman dropped to the floor, tragically inert. He bent over her



quickly, turned up her face, stared at her with wide, alarmed eyes. He put his hand on her breast: she was not breathing.

## IV

At last he stood up. There was nothing he could do for her. Opposing thoughts jangled in his mind like a mad cacophony. He endeavoured to collect into a reasonable, coherent chain all that had happened. The ordered method of his scientific thought failed him. About him the laboratory was quiet; save for the pitiful little heap of broken glass on the floor everything was in place as usual. Those few splintered fragments could never have brought about this catastrophic moment! An infernal and fantastic accident had befallen him. The futility he had felt in her seemed to have passed

to himself. Forces implacable and unseen had opposed him; he was their trivial and defeated antagonist.

Slowly he walked out of the room. A great necessity, apprehended without words, drew him on. He passed from the house. He walked a mile or more across the fields, crunching the red and yellow fallen leaves under his unheeding feet. After a time he saw the river, laid over with gold sunlight, bending in toward him. He approached the tall bank.

A child was playing near him. The stream below moved by smoothly, majestically, in silence. With his arms at his sides he stepped over and dropped down into the flowing water. It closed over him like a symbol, remorselessly.

The child ran back from the bank, calling in a frightened voice to someone in a distant field.



## THEN AND NOW

By Kenneth Tirowen

I NEVER knew how strong life was  
Till love passed by my gate;  
I never knew the wrong life does  
Till love walked in—too late.



WOMAN was the last thing that God made. The product shows both His experience and His fatigue.



AFTER all, the wicked are less terrible than the foolish. The wicked sometimes take a day off.



A MAN never knows beforehand what a woman will do. Neither does a woman.



# TIERNAN

By Mifflin Crane

## I

OCCASIONALLY I suffer from a moral sickness and then, because I produce nothing and do nothing, my life troubles me deeply in its special uselessness. I forget that usefulness is only another of the complex and ilimitable illusions of the living; I am deprived of my philosophic calm; I spend my days morosely, often in lonely wandering through the streets. Usually something happens at last to divert me and presently the hypochondria is gone and I am cured.

Razius, the neurologist, has probed into my condition with a certain fantastic thoroughness. By adroit and persistent suggestion he has made me admit to neuroses that certainly surprised me. He blankets my condition under the very inclusive term *neurasthenia*, but hints more specifically that I am probably somewhat *paretic*. He finds a diminished blood-pressure, diminished *hæmoglobin* and red cells, slight *phagocytosis*, and a marked increase in the number of white blood corpuscles. He discovers in me a manifest *agoraphobia*. He sits in my rooms, gravely drinking my whiskey mixed with a trifle of seltzer, and makes out a bad case. I believe the man is a little deranged: an enthusiast.

Two years ago my hypochondria was especially severe. I went out one morning, several hours after midnight, to try the effect of the silent streets and the calm of a sleeping city. The ghosts of noises were still abroad, stirring the night with reminiscences of the day, as if they kept watch whilst their corpo-

rate sounds were in repose. I went down into that quarter of the city where the streets become more narrow, and unexpected alleys cut in like sinister interlopers among the thoroughfares.

I was walking with my eyes bent on the pavement, but nevertheless so unregardful that I nearly fell over a man who lay prostrate there, with a woman tugging at his arms in an endeavor to lift him up.

I drew back, only half shaken out of my absorption, and blinking my eyes as if I had just been wakened out of a deep sleep. The woman dropped his hands, and still crouching she looked up into my face with a snarling grimace.

"Where do you think you're going?" she demanded.

"Excuse me," I said. "I was thinking of other things. I really didn't see—"

"You must be blind then. Why don't you wear a sign and carry a tin cup for pennies?"

I looked curiously at the fellow stretched out on the pavement. His hat was pushed over his eyes; no part of his face save the point of his chin was visible. His hands lay negligently on the grey cement. I noticed then that these were small and the fingers long and slender. Under his coat there was no perceptible rise and fall of his chest. I bent down and took one of his wrists between my fingers. The pulse was still beating.

"If I can help you . . . ?" I suggested.

She stood up a moment and scrutinized me.



The light was not good in the place where I found these two; I could not clearly distinguish her features. She wore a large hat with a red feather that further shaded her face. She was not a tall woman, but her smallness made no suggestion of frailty; there was a manifest virility in the compact set of her shoulders and the firm outlines of her hips. She seemed to decide at last that if I were not wholly harmless, I could at least be managed, for she consented to my assistance.

"Help me lift him," she said.

We each took one of his hands and pulled him up to a sitting posture. Then we secured him under the armpits and dragged him to his feet. He was entirely a dead weight—he might have been without life, so far as he had any use of his legs. But luckily he was not a heavy fellow, and the woman did her share of sustaining him. She began to drag him down the street and I kept step with her, the man between us, inanimate, like a bundle of stuffed clothes.

"How did he get so drunk?" I asked her.

She gave my question no spoken attention. Together we pulled the flexed, limp figure along the pavement, never exchanging a sentence. The woman seemed wholly assured of my untiring assistance; she vouchsafed no word of our destination, her purpose, the time we might consume. She moved steadily ahead, her face bent a little to the ground. Whenever we passed under a street light I regarded her profile eagerly and caught up shifting images of her that I provisionally made into a composite picture, dim, and inextricably mixed with the dusk and distorting quality of the night. On her part, she never looked at me.

She had the sort of face that can express not subtle, but intense emotions. Her eyebrows were arched and not very mobile, but their potentiality for fierce contraction was manifest. The eyes were blue—the clear, hard blue of an exceptionally transparent sky. Her

nose, a little flared at the nostrils, had a cockney tilt that gave her not a saucy, but a wholly aggressive air. She had well shaped lips and a strongly carved chin.

With the comatose fellow between us, I think we made a labored progress that left four or five city blocks behind us. Finally, as we came abreast one of the dim and somewhat fearful alleys, the woman wheeled abruptly.

"In here," she said.

I had a second of suspicion, a brief hesitation, that expressed itself in a momentary lagging of one foot, passing without her notice. The alley seemed to swallow us in darkness like some cavernous maw. I saw very little and my most acute sense, for the time, was that of smell. Close, unidentifiable odors were in the air; conglomerate smells full of tantalizing suggestions; the effluvium of decaying wood, reminiscences of food cooked hours before, the acrid suggestion of mud and stale water. The woman found a gate and we pushed our helpless charge through the black square of the opening.

We crossed a short yard paved with cement. Two or three times I stumbled against wooden boxes. Once I raised a jangling dissonance from an overturned tin pail, and somewhere in the alley a dog yelped, as in protest.

We dragged the drunken man through a door that opened inward, on a level with the yard, and within the building the darkness was a further degree intensified. We seemed to pass through several rooms and a short corridor, turning into a final room that marked the end of our labors.

"Hold him up a minute," the woman said. "I'll make a light."

She left me to sustain him.

After a second a match flared and she put the little flame to a lamp. The thing sputtered, shot up a dull, sinister spark to the ceiling, and settled then into an uneven, but steady illumination. Almost immediately a pungent odor of kerosene saturated the air.

The lamp sat on a bureau of dark



wood, stained, spotted and scratched. A bed was pushed close to the bureau and a bundle of mussed clothing hung over the back of it. I saw a chair out in the center of the room and under its legs was a whiskey bottle, empty, the cork out, lying on its side like a derelict. The woman came over to me and we pulled our charge to the bed, into which we tumbled him like a sack. His hat dropped off and rolled across the room to the opposite wall. His head fell back and his mouth opened; his breathing was now perceptible. I stood at the bedside, looking down at his face.

This first adequate scrutiny surprised me greatly. I had expected a countenance in consonance with that of his companion. Whereas, his face, despite the alcoholic stupor, was plainly not of her sort. The lips, even in their lax immobility, were sensitively curved; the eyebrows were pencilled finely; there was a good brow. Altogether the face was not especially marked by dissipation, discounting the temporary effect of his immediate debauch. My sense of interest took a marked increase; my sense of wonder expanded perceptibly. With a question on my face, I turned to the woman.

She was bending over the mirror in the bureau. She had taken off the hat with the red feather and now she touched her hands to her hair, pushing in the disarranged strands. Her fingers seemed to do this brutally, as if they were out of consonance with the delicacy and deftness of their task. For a moment her hair startled me in its amazing luxuriance. The color of it, an indeterminate brown, was not beautiful, yet the profuseness, the strange abandoned exuberance of it, produced an effect of magnificence. I stood there by the bed, staring at these abounding coils of hair, spelled for an instant as if I had seen the Medusa. I was in this posture when I heard another person come into the room.

Before I turned to look at him the sudden sound of his footfall startled me. It came without warning, and

with a tigerish quickness. I drew my startled eyes away from the woman playing her incongruous fingers over the many strands of her hair, and saw a man standing just inside the door.

He was not a big person, but I was certain at once of an unusual and animal strength in the cat-like posture of his body. He leaned a little forward, like a feral beast set to spring. But it was his face that inevitably fascinated me. This was a countenance wholly brutal, predatory in its every lineament, uncivilized, remorseless. The eyes were small and deeply set under the sinister ridge of his narrow brow; the nose was slightly flattened, cheek-bones large with the skin stretched over them tautly, the chin heavy and immobile. I suddenly recognized a type unalterably criminal, insurgent, untamable in the instincts that had been determined by malign arrangements in the plasmic chromosomes, from the germ-cell fixed forever. He looked at me, at the man on the bed, at the woman near the bureau, merging a scrutiny of us all into an instant of time. The woman dropped one hand, the other rested at the nape of her neck, her body was twisted around, and she stared at him steadily.

He was the first to speak. By some curious divination or instinct, he seemed to measure me as virtually harmless and negligible, in the same manner as the woman had done before. He indicated me with a quick movement of his head.

"Who's this one?" he asked.

"I found the kid paralyzed," she answered. "He came along and helped me get him here."

The fellow at the door began a smile that was no more than a grimace and a threat. His shoulders a little hunched, as if reluctant to give over that posture of readiness for a feline leap, he covered a pace or two toward the bed.

In that instant, and wholly without my awareness of her purpose, the woman ran the intervening space between the bureau and the bed, flinging herself against me like a projectile. I



was violently whirled away from my position near the insensible one we had dragged in from the pavement, and the woman, occupying the spot I had held a moment before seemed to wait there, expectant of some onslaught. Now her countenance was contorted, the immobile brows drawn down and constricted, the hard blue of her eyes nearly concealed by the narrowed lids, her lips compressed and small.

"Don't come near here!" she cried out.

With one foot forward the man paused.

"Don't try it!" she warned again.

He stared at her, brutal, terrifying. She returned his glare indomitably. Perceptibly he lost his determination; she dominated him. His shoulders flexed and dropped down.

"Get me something to eat," he growled.

She waited a moment, watching him like a cat, defensive, wary, immensely resolute. At last she spoke again.

"Go out then!" she commanded.

He grinned at her sardonically, threateningly, and turned to the door. After a second she followed him. The two disappeared into the black corridor. I realized suddenly how quiet the room was. Only an uncertain wheezing sound, like the escape of steam from a defective pipe, troubled the air. I was puzzled a moment to understand it. Then I restrained a nervous impulse to laugh; the noise came from the more pronounced respiration of the drunken man on the bed.

I looked down at him again. He was oblivious still to all that passed around him. It seemed to me, on the instant, that my part in this drama was played. Yet for some singular impulse, perhaps from my curiosity only, and my hope that I might learn more of him, I took out a card from my pocket and wrote down my address in the corner of it. I leaned over the bed and slipped the pasteboard into his coat. He lay without movement, breathing noisily.

I then walked to the door, and meet-

ing no one, made my way, miraculously, I thought, out through the corridor charged with reasty smells, out of the dark and threatening house.

## II

A WEEK later he telephoned to me. He told me he had found my card in his coat; he had been told that someone had helped him that night. Could it be I? I confessed to my part in the episode. He hesitated—he would like to see me. I was curious to see him, too. He said he would come to me in the evening.

I have a room with a piano in it; I keep my books there also. I waited for him there. For a time I took down books and turned over their pages, glancing through the false and beautiful things men have made from words. Then I went to the piano and played, after the manner I can, intermingling a jangle of themes in a grotesque improvisation. He found me at the keyboard when he was ushered in.

I recognized him of course. He naturally had no remembrance of me.

"You are Mr. Burton?" he asked.

We shook hands.

"My name is Tiernan," he said.

"Mr. Tiernan . . ." I murmured.

He laughed a little nervously.

"After a fashion," he said. "You know me?"

We stood looking at each other, a certain embarrassment between us. He was now conscious and sentient and somehow it was strange for me to divorce him from the collapsed and insensate organism supported helplessly in my arms a week before. Finally I asked him to sit down and pushed my cigar case over to him. He seated himself, took a cigar and nodded to me in thanks.

"I don't know just why I came here tonight," he said.

"I'm glad you did."

"Perhaps it's because I felt you to be the sort of man I'm supposed to be. I—I want somebody to talk to. . . ."



His voice trailed off like an unresolved chord. The man was obviously a little nervous, a little out of his own command. He looked about the room, running his eye along the shelves of books.

"Books and books here!" he murmured.

He stood up and approached the long rows of printed volumes. He peered at the titles but removed none of the books from their shelves.

"I once read some philosophy myself," he said. "Here's Kant. He runs wild, certainly, in his proposition that certain of the laws of physics are *a priori* recognitions. For example: the proposition that matter is permanent is simply an empirical deduction—and lately proven false, too."

He returned to his chair.

"And Hegel—what does he attempt but the grotesque clothing of all history in the ready-cut garments of an unproven theory? Or Fichte and Hume? Opposed and unanswerable!"

He looked at me with almost a pleading in his countenance. He was manifestly actuated by a wish to make himself known to me in a certain new personality. He seemed not so much ashamed of the conditions under which I had first seen him as afraid that I would misinterpret him from them. I sensed his psychologic impulse. The man scarcely knew me as an individual and could naturally have very little concern about my opinion of him. It was a justification to himself that he sought; through the medium of me he labored to see himself in the light he favored, to re-establish a shaken personal esteem, or some inner conception of honor, or, perhaps, only a way of looking at the world. He leaned forward in his chair with that expression of appeal in his face.

"I didn't come here to talk to you about books!" he exclaimed.

I let a second pass before I spoke to him.

"I wonder," I began, "do I understand you? You've passed through

some sort of an experience that has shaken you up, disturbed your sense of values, loosened your grip on what you regard as your philosophy of life, perhaps. You want to re-establish your values and make, no doubt, some transvaluations."

I stopped, and although he made me no direct reply, he seemed by his manner to grant my surmises. He sat quietly in his chair, smoking the cigar I had given him. His glance was abstracted and I let my eyes pass over his face, appraising each feature. At last he spoke to me, his words passing to my ear through a little gray haze of tobacco smoke.

"I'm going to be married this week," he said. "Will you—would you have dinner with us tomorrow? I'd—very much like you to meet her."

Only an instant did this statement seem irrelevant and incongruous. After that I felt certain that it had a logical connection with all that had gone before, although just the links that bound this announcement to the words I had last said, and the things he had spoken, were not evident to me. However, I did not question him.

"If you think it will help you," I said, "I'll be glad to."

"Yes," he murmured, quietly, thoughtfully, "I'm sure it will."

A moment after my consent he stood up unexpectedly and told me he was going. Somewhat obscurely he said that if I wanted his confidence, if I had the patience to wait for it, I could do him a service by letting him explain himself.

"I can't quite find the suitable expression this evening," he remarked. "No doubt after you've met her, it will be easier for me. I've—I've been subject to curious impulses. . . ."

I took him to the door, and he left me with a cordial handshake. He walked off briskly and I returned to my library to smoke another cigar. I wondered what woman he intended to meet. It didn't seem possible that he referred to the one with whom I had first dis-



covered him. But I put the question over until it might be revealed, and went to bed.

### III

I WAITED for him next day in the lobby of a hotel. At last I saw him approaching me with a girl on his arm. I had never seen her before. I stood up and Tiernan introduced me. The girl smiled a little diffidently and gave me her hand for a second. We went together into the dining room.

Tiernan's companion presented no especial problem to me. She was a pretty little creature, with a certain appealing sweetness of unsophistication about her, like a fresh flower. She was obviously fond of Tiernan and watched his face eagerly when he spoke. I knew at once that she was ignorant of that intricate and unexplained course of his life that had eventuated in my discovery of him. Nevertheless there was an atmosphere of confidence and understanding between the two. I felt that they had known each other a long time.

For the most part our conversation was quite casual. Only as we were eating our ices did the young man confide an intimacy.

"We've decided that there's no use for any further delay," he said. "Blanche and I will be married tomorrow."

In the expectancy that his words aroused, I saw her cheeks redden a little. Tiernan looked straight into my eyes, with just a faint belligerency I thought. I returned his look steadily.

"I want to give you both my most hearty good wishes," I said quietly.

Then he asked me to be present at the ceremony. I consented. So the next day I saw them married in the girl's home. I met her mother and father and two or three other people whose names even no longer remain in my memory. Then Tiernan and his wife left the city for a trip to Florida.

After he returned he came to see me.

I saw him a number of times; he endeavored to explain to me why I had found him after the hour of midnight, drunk and insensible on the city pavement, with that strange and ferine woman guarding him like a dragon.

### IV

A HUMAN personality cannot be explained in terms of a single coherent thread, a homogeneity of impulses and desires. It is, rather, an imperfectly twisted complex of differing and frequently antagonistic strands; it is the focal point of unnumbered hereditary rays that go back, some of them, to sources in vastly antique and even simian ancestors. I kept the scientific truth of this in mind in endeavoring to understand the vagaries of Tiernan.

He tells me that he recognized a certain instinct toward the untamed, the savage, the insurgent, while he was still a little boy. Essentially, he was a tame enough character then, as now. Only occasionally did this indubitably hereditary urge toward the barbaric manifest itself, like a sudden crystallization when, during the period of its persistence, it swayed him utterly.

A reminiscence from his childhood, related to me one evening, seems typical. He lived then in a small suburb, considerably outside the city. During one summer a camp of gypsies pitched their brown tents near the town. Little Tiernan was terrifyingly warned by his mother not to go near this encampment. She represented the demoniac character of the gypsies, she impressed upon him the extravagant tortures he might expect if he fell into their hands.

He was a sensitive and imaginative child. He believed her literally of course, and embroidered her doctrine with special furies of his own devising. For days he was horribly afraid; in his sleep nightmarish visions oppressed him. And then, quite suddenly, he wanted to visit the gypsy camp! Their barbaric doings, in which he fully believed, drew him to them with a dia-



bolic attraction. One afternoon he went shyly and palpitantly out of the town. He climbed a rail fence and approached the mysterious tents. He went in among them exalted, enthused, but unafraid. Swart men, with black, inky eyes hailed him and the strange, thrilling babble of an incomprehensible tongue beat about his ears. A thin gypsy boy at last took his arm and led him from the field and pushed him out to the road.

"Go home," he said.

Little Tiernan obeyed, and later his fear of the gypsies returned and he never went near the camp again during the remainder of their stay.

Incidents of this order he multiplied to me in the showing of his psychology. He grew up into an adult essentially thoughtful, reserved, a little diffident, somewhat inactive, but with occasional impulses, unescapable when they were upon him, toward the sinister, the mysterious, the feral. It is not necessary to consider these impulses unusual. They are, indeed, the natural heritage of human beings in general. But their working out in Tiernan's case is certainly striking.

Shortly after he came to live in the city he met the girl who became his wife. She aroused him by her immediate charm, by the seeming frailty of her innocence. They became frequent companions and lovers at last. She promised to marry him.

Five or six months before I met him he had returned from several months spent with Blanche and her family at their cottage in the mountains. He came back to the city infinitely moved by his period of communion with her sunlight freshness. And inexplicably, suddenly, infernally, he was possessed with a desire for the very antithesis of her that carried him away like a sinister and irresistible undertow. He went out at once and walked to that part of the city in which I first discovered him.

For a time he wandered about the streets aimlessly. At last he stopped before the lights of a disreputable café

and after staring at the windows a moment, went in. On the first floor he found a barroom, vaporous with acrid tobacco smoke. He passed this and went upstairs, where he discovered a room full of men and women seated at little tables and at one of them he saw a woman, alone.

She looked at him as he came in and his eyes appraised her in a comprehensive instant. He saw the cold, blue clearness of her eyes, the vital contour of her arms and shoulders, the great knot of her hair coiled at the nape of her neck. Without hesitation he crossed over and sat down opposite her.

"What do you want?" she instantly asked.

"I want to know you," he said.

She stared at him a moment, faintly scowling.

"I never saw you before," she said.

"Who are you?"

"And I never saw you before," he replied. "What difference does that make?"

Again she scrutinized him.

"I don't suppose it makes any difference," she finally answered. With this remark she extended her hand to him; he took it, and she gripped his fingers with a quick, hard pressure.

He ordered something to drink.

"Where do you come from?" she asked him.

"Here in the city."

"What do you want to know me for?"

"I don't know. I saw you and I wanted to know you."

She studied his face a moment before she spoke again.

"It seems to me you're rather a queer one," she said.

They sat at the table an hour or more, talking and drinking. Tiernan was oblivious to the others about him; the savage glamour of this woman before him possessed his senses like the nearness of a Lorelei. He wanted to seize her and overwhelm the fending defense of her quick, strong arms and force kisses on her unwilling lips. He



wanted to shake the untamed profusion of her hair from its bonds and see the long coils fall over her shoulders and about her face in a stormy profusion whilst he buried his hands in the tossed and gleaming masses. He had no memory of what they talked about that first evening.

At last the woman stood up and told him that she could stay no longer.

"I must take you home," he said.

She laughed at him.

"You can't do that!"

"I'm going to!"

"You're *not* going to! You can walk a square or two with me if you like."

He made no further protest, but walked out with her. On the street she took his arm, pressing close to him as they moved ahead slowly. But at last she stopped, and told him to go. He asked her when he would meet her again. She set another evening, and with an overwhelming reluctance he left her.

An hour or two later he made the sardonic discovery that she had deftly removed a careless handful of bills from his coat pocket.

He knew then that he would never meet her again in the café. But a perverse hope brought him there many succeeding nights, and as each person entered the room he turned his eyes to them with consuming eagerness, always to be disappointed. The futility of this watching was finally manifest and he turned his search to the streets, through which he prowled in the night, looking into forbidding alleys, examining dusk areas and the dark rectangles of opened doors, like a medieval spirit, damned to haunt these places. At last, strangely enough, perhaps, he was successful.

He saw her one evening shortly before midnight come out of a shop and walk rapidly away. Although she was half a square distant, he recognized her. At once he followed her, but did not attempt to catch her and speak to her on the street. Almost intuitively he recognized the futility of that, for she

would be certain to ignore him, to pretend she had never seen him before, and finally to escape with never another chance to find her.

So, back of her, fifty yards or more behind her, he kept step, pace by pace, with an evident throb at his pulses and a faint, cacophonous singing in his ears, like the mumble and mutter in a seashell. He followed her when she turned into the black grim alley, where not sight, but only smells accosted the senses.

He was behind her, strangely and almost cunningly quiet, when she went through the gate and into the house, and when she lighted the lamp in her room she found him standing there looking at her.

She did not know why he had come; she thought, no doubt, remembering the theft, that her precious liberty was in danger. She made no outcry, but drew in only a sharp, hard breath, like the rasp of a gust of wind blown through the crevice of a stone wall. Then she sprang at him, tigerish, determined, undaunted. She fought to throw him aside and run out by the door. For an instant it seemed that she might escape him, for her rush had found him unexpected, unprepared. But in a moment he exulted in the struggle with her and he forced her back a step at a time into the dim room, and at last he held her hands to her sides and fixed them there as if they were bound by merciless and ineluctible cords, while he bent his lips over her backward-tilted face and kissed her. She grew flexed in his arms, as if the fury of his caresses drew the life from her.

In this way Tiernan began his strange and untamed amour with her. He forgot Blanche and made excuses to her palpably false. He spent every moment she would allow him with the woman he had found in the café. They spoke of no future, but existed only in the flaming ardor of the passing moments. Tiernan knew there was no future and a sense of ultimate disaster, like a doom forewarned by a consulted



oracle, lived unceasingly in his apprehensions.

One evening they sat in a restaurant together finishing their supper. As he lighted a cigar the woman leaned toward him suddenly, her elbows on the table, her tense face pushed forward.

"You can't see me after to-night," she said.

He made her no reply, but looked at her as if her words had stricken thought and feeling from his being.

"I never told you I had a man, did I? Tomorrow he comes out of the Pen. I tell you, he's not tame. You can't see me any more. He's heard about you—something. He'll do for us both if he finds us together after he gets out."

Something like this Tiernan had expected. He went away from the woman that night unresistant, with no protest, so completely had he known, as by portent, the end of their intimacy. But the next night he lurked about the place in which she lived to catch a glimpse of her, and finally he saw her come out of the house with a man pushing her along by the arm.

He did not reveal himself to the pair. He went away with the intention of going home. On his way he passed the café where he had found her first. He went into the barroom and began to drink.

Later, after midnight, the woman found him on the pavement, senseless, and I helped her to drag him to her room.

## V

TIERNAN and Blanche were married over a year and at first I saw them frequently, particularly during the first month or two, when Tiernan came to my home and talked with me in my study. Afterward we drifted apart, as people often do, and I heard nothing of Tiernan for several months.

Then a curious case got into the newspapers: an accident (it was thought) in which four people were destroyed in

what must have been an instant of time.

On a road, a little outside the city, two splintered, twisted automobiles were discovered, manifestly the derelicts of a head-on collision. The driver of the smaller car, and a woman who had evidently been in the car with him, were thrown out to the side of the road. The driver of the larger car was crushed under the wheel and a woman who had been seated beside him was flung half over the crumpled hood. In the pocket of the man under the wheel was discovered a package of documents that identified Tiernan. His wife was recognized by her parents. No one but myself knew who the other two were, but the car they had been driving was found to be the property of a city doctor, from whom it had been stolen a few days before.

I knew, as if I had been on the spot to witness it, the tragic sudden thing that had happened. Driving with his wife along the road, and doubtless charmed as always by the alluring innocence she never lost, he had sighted the other two coming toward him. The recognition must have been instant.

Consider, then, how the surge of his barbaric impulses came back upon Tiernan in a fatal madness. In his untamed fury at the sight of this woman sitting beside the man who had meant his deprivation, he pressed down his foot upon the accelerator button of his car, and gripping the wheel like an ascetic bent upon a mad self-immolation, with a red blindness over his eyes, with an utter forgetfulness of all save those dark inheritances that mastered him, he pointed the pulsing, vibrant metal straight to the impact and a quick destruction.

I do not pretend that I wholly understand Tiernan, or his destiny. There are no adequate philosophies to explain an individual life. Philosophies are inflexible; they are figured in the elementary expression of unsupple constants, whereas life is plastic, a variable in an unknown and higher mathematic.



# IDENTITY

By Harriet U. Andrews

A MAN of Benares desired to understand Karma and remember past lives. He went to the Yogi Rhadamahari for instruction and the Yogi counseled him to sit on the ground with his legs buried in an ant heap and meditate, fasting.

The man obeyed. He fasted many days in juxtaposition with his brothers, the ants, and his mind soared above all earthly things. The eyes of his soul saw clearly and the substance of all true knowledge was made manifest to him.

A succession of past Karmas stretched

behind him as a road over which he had traveled, and he saw that he was the reincarnation of Baba Ullah, the great Leader. When he awoke from his meditations his carnal mind remembered and rejoiced.

After many days, all the disciples of the Yogi Rhadamahari gathered together for instruction and discourse, and they told what they had gained in knowledge. And forty-one of them announced that they were the reincarnation of Baba Ullah, the great Leader, whose coming again to earth the Baba had foretold.



# SEPULTURE

By Clark Ashton Smith

DEEP in my heart, as in the hollow stone  
And silence of some olden sepulchre,  
Thy silver beauty lies, and shall not stir—  
Forgotten, incorruptible, alone:  
Though altars darken, and a wind be blown  
From starless seas on beacon-fires that were—  
Within thy tomb, with oils of balm and myrrh,  
Forever burn the onyx lamps unknown.

And though the bleak, Novembrall gardens yield  
Rose-dust and ivy-leaf, nor any flow'r  
Be found through vermeil forest or wan field—  
Still, still, the asphodel and lotos lie  
Around thy bed, and hour by silent hour  
Exhale immortal fragrance like a sigh.





# WHIM OF THE GODS

By Cora Bennett Stephenson

WHEN he paid her her third month's wages, Dr. Hansell told Anita that she was the best cook in St. Thomas. This pleased her. It is true she never thought of herself as a cook. But she had to keep her job. She wanted to help her brother pay for their mother's tombstone. And she was thinking about getting married.

She forgot about the doctor's dinner party she had on hand for that night when she stood one afternoon under the scant shade of a pandanus tree neglecting to open her parasol, absorbed in an entertainment given by the children of the Model School. She could not bring herself to leave the playground until the last child had disappeared in the building where the prizes were to be distributed. She followed that last little girl up to the very doors of the Model School.

But she was not interested in any little girl. Her heart had gone out weeks ago to the boy that headed the line. He was sturdy and straight-limbed. He looked Anita squarely in the eyes every time he passed her. He could play the *guitarro*. And this afternoon when he shot the apple off the head of a very small boy in a play they were giving—Anita being neither a parent nor a patron was not near enough to hear a single word—the mere sight of him filled her with an anguish of longing.

She must have a baby boy of her own.

Anita was twenty-one. She had only her brother, who had recently undertaken to provide for himself by hiring out as a *cochero*. The day she was but

four years old, they laid him in her arms, a screaming copper-colored infant newly born. For two years she carried him in her arms. After that she carried him in her heart. But lately, the more she loved her brother, the more she wanted a child of her own.

Her son must be like the little boy at the head of the line. He must go to the Model School and get the highest marks. She saw herself in the years to come, dressed in white, sitting in a rocking-chair under the canvas pavillion stretched on the playground for the comfort of parents and patrons, fanning herself as she swayed back and forth, just as the mother of that little boy was doing. Anita had taken pains to find out about the mother of that little boy and where they lived. She knew that he would be exhibited in his street and showered with sweets after the entertainment was over. He would be allowed to wear his white shoes and stockings until he went to sleep.

Anita's brother had not had even a calico slip until he was seven. He must have been sixteen before he had shoes on his feet. Anita had decided that the day he was born, her son should wear an embroidered white dress lined with pink silk. He should have shoes the hour he could walk. Anita hated the sight of bare feet. She understood the sacrificial reverence of that Mary who bathed her Master's feet with perfume and dried them in her hair.

It remained now for Anita to make up her mind to marry Amado. Amado was doubtless a scholar. He had graduated with honors at the Model School. Every week he wrote her a beautiful letter from Santo Domingo. She had



not laid eyes on him for a year, but the last communication assured her that he would see her very soon. He was coming to St. Thomas to take tickets at The Cine of The Three Flags.

Of the men that wanted to marry her she preferred Amado as the father of her son. She liked the way his arms hung from his shoulders, the way he walked and the way he smiled, showing his small white teeth when he talked to her. She had never seen Amado barefooted. Amado's eyes were blue. His father had been a sailor off a great ship, Amado told her. Anita was keenly disappointed when he said, in answer to her inquiry whether the ship had come from the United States, that his mother had remarked on an occasion that the sailor could not speak English. Anita was glad that St. Thomas was to belong to the United States. Things would go better with them, after that. Doubtless her son would be able to buy her a tombstone the day she was buried.

The clock in the tower of the Model School struck six. Anita's vision faded into a sky of rose-gold and green-blue. She recalled the fact that at seven she was to serve a dinner for the doctor to fifteen people. Ignoring the invitation of the curving driveway shaded by bamboo trees, she hurried across the coarse tropic grass to the cement arch that marked the formal entrance to the campus. It was hung luxuriantly with a bougainvillea vine throwing a blue blur of shade across the scorching roadway.

In that shadow stood Amado.

Anita, seeing him, as she stepped under the arch a few paces away, blushed. Wave after wave of scarlet broke and paled under the soft tan of her skin. Amado reached for her parasol as she tried to pass him with a nod. He was dressed from head to heels in spotless white. He was curled and perfumed. Anita saw his red lips and olive cheeks grow a sudden gray for love of her.

"I do not wish you to walk up the

road with me," she told him, stepping out of the path.

"But tonight! I shall come tonight, Anita?"

Her narrow nostrils widened and her lips moved but no sound came.

"I shall kill myself if I do not see you tonight!" he pleaded in the passionate hyperbole to which he had accustomed her.

Anita waited. But her eyes fell and she prodded the crushed coral of the footpath with the polished tip of her parasol.

"I wish to tell you," he urged, "that I shall myself, perhaps very soon, become the owner of The Cine of the Three Flags. If you will be my bride we shall have a house on the Esplanade with mirrors and chairs!"

Anita raised her chin and opened her parasol.

"Perhaps I shall be interested. But I cannot be bothered in the kitchen while Dr. Hansell is entertaining the professors. You must not come until the guests have gone and likewise the two chatterboxes that I left to chill the salad and freeze the ice cream."

With a fine show of indifference she passed out of the shade of the bougainvillea. Safe from those blue eyes of Amado that she feared would read her heart too soon, her knees trembled and her breath came short. But she was happy. She felt like smiling.

Suddenly, out from behind her darted the little boy that headed the line in the Model School, to disappear again for half a moment among the vehicles that stood in three lines on the road waiting for the motor cars of the officials of Charlotte Amalia to pass out of the campus. Anita watched the child find his way between two automobiles, dive under a pair of restless oxen, and at the nod of an obliging chauffeur scramble over the hood of an autotruck to the other side of the road.

"That kid ain't afraid o' nothin'!" the chauffeur said, as he spat, to the man seated beside him.



"Of course not!" Anita heard herself answer.

And straightway the vision of her son became clearer. He was not to be afraid of anything. The incident, however, recalled a remark her brother had made the first time he saw Amado. He said that Amado had the face of a man who is afraid. When his sister asked him what it was Amado feared, the boy sulked and said he did not know, but that the fear was there in the face for any one to see.

After that it happened that her brother and Amado became great friends. It made her smile to remember that he had been jealous of Amado. She wondered how he knew that she preferred Amado.

She had given Amado less encouragement than the others. She had never walked with him. She had allowed him to talk to her only if he stood outside the kitchen window and the door were closed. Once she had accepted from him a couple of mangoes that he had from his uncle's farm. Once she had permitted him to kiss her.

She had to wait in passing to her own side of the road for an over-burdened ox-team to pass. Before she was aware that she was looking at anything she found herself smiling at Teburcio, who lolled across the load of boxes piled high on his cart.

Teburcio's sleepy eyes grew suddenly wide-awake when he saw Anita smiling at him. He snatched his scarlet tam from his curls and ducked his head—like a pelican, it seemed to Anita. She blushed from annoyance and looked the other way. She shivered with disgust. Teburcio was one of the men who, though they received no encouragement, persisted in their efforts to force gifts on her which she would not receive. As much as the carefully groomed Amado attracted her, she was shocked by this bare-footed giant sprawling over the boxes, his steel-tipped goad in his heavy hand, in open defiance of the law.

## II

THE silence imposed by Anita on the two women she had called in to help her cook and serve the dinner gave her an opportunity to plan how to conduct her business with Amado, while she seasoned the soup and made the sauces.

The suggestion that Amado might some day be a rich man had been lost on her. She was not wanting a house anywhere. She had never considered the desirability of mirrors and chairs. She had, in fact, never thought of Amado as providing for her or as having any part in the care of the child. The little boy that headed the line in the Model School was the son of a laundress. His hair was always beautifully combed. He wore to school a white linen suit, bought ready-made at the Bazaar. His mother washed and ironed that suit every night after the child went to bed. The laundress had to find food and housing for two and earned less than Anita.

Anita struggled with an instinct and a vague ideal. She had dreamed since she was a little girl of the hero that she would eventually marry. It required courage—even on this day when she was to be betrothed to him—to face the fact that, after all, the hero was—just Amado. She tried to think of something that she would have changed about Amado. She could not.

Because she found herself unable to make known the secret cravings of her heart to her brother, it was difficult to tell him that she thought of getting married very soon. She and her brother were very close to each other, but she had no assurance that he would understand that up there in the great cross of stars which rose every spring in the southern sky she could see at times very plainly the Holy Infant and that He smiled to her. Her brother might count it a sin. She knew it was no sin.

She took from the cupboard that she kept locked in the kitchen a cruet of cordial and a handful of cigarettes which she arranged on the coffee tray.



After she had given the tray to the waitress she stood staring at the things on the shelf of the cupboard which she had already forgotten; bottles of liqueurs, boxes of cigarettes, a flashlight and a small pistol with a mother-of-pearl handle.

Anita went to the kitchen door. The Holy Infant stood there again in his cross of stars, with the smile—but not the same smile. It seemed to Anita that He was pleading to be lifted down. She decided to arrange with Amado to-night to have the marriage celebrated as soon as the wedding dress could be made. Tomorrow would bring in the month of the Virgin, and an especial blessing rested on brides wedded in May. She changed her apron and went to wait in the room where the guests had left their motor coats and veils.

When she was setting the toilet table to rights a bit of cocoanut shell flew in through the window and struck her on the hand. She blushed, smiled and backed to the window. There was a rustle of leaves in the jasmine bush outside, just below her.

"I will meet you in the kitchen directly the lights in the sala go out," she said, very distinctly over her shoulder.

She found courage to turn just in time to see a blurred figure disappear in the banana hedge that ran along the sides and back of the house. It was too dark for her to detect that the person was bare-footed.

### III

WHEN she opened the kitchen door after the helpers and guests had gone it was Teburcio that leaped up the steps—Teburcio, bare-footed, his scarlet tam hanging over one side of his head.

"Adorable Anita!" he shouted joyously, seizing her by the shoulders.

Anita slowly backed to the opposite wall, bracing herself against the shelf of the open cupboard.

"You annoy me," she said coldly, her eyes averted to hide the fear in them.

Teburcio grinned.

"Adorable! You appear to regard me as the dust in the road. You decoy me with your smile. You invite me to visit you when the lights in the sala are out. And now you seek to entertain me by playing the coquette. I do not wish to be entertained."

"You annoy me!" Anita exclaimed between her pale lips, writhing in his grasp.

Teburcio drew his breath sharply and shook his tam from his head. Wrenching one hand free, Anita's wrist struck the pistol that lay on the shelf behind her. Her supple fingers closed over it. Teburcio, smiling indulgently as he snatched the weapon from her, threw it behind him. It fell in the narrow space between the door and the banana hedge.

A second after it had dropped on the sandy earth the great leaves parted cautiously and Anita recognized a manicured hand.

Then she saw a dear face—oval, perfect and—ashen at this moment, perhaps by some trick of the electric light swinging from a cord attached to the kitchen ceiling. The panic in her eyes gave place to relief and relief to joy. She was saved from the beast, Teburcio.

Amado had come.

Seeing only her smile, Teburcio, not aware even of the existence of the prospective owner of The Cine of The Three Flags, bound her arms to her waist with his great hands.

"I will not leave you," he boasted. "I will not leave you until you are made my bride!"

"Now!" Anita breathed to Amado, whom she could see by pressing her face between Teburcio's body and left arm.

Amado shuddered and drew back from the pistol toward which he had stooped as if to take it up.

"Quickly!" she called again in a strangled voice.

"Not until by a priest of God thou hast been given to me," chanted Teburcio, believing that Anita spoke to him.



The creature in the banana hedge stood wretchedly irresolute, his delicate hands trembling.

"Amado—Amado"—the girl moaned, and was forthwith caught up by Teburcio, who covered her hair with kisses.

"Amada—Amada"—he murmured.

Anita made no resistance. At the instant of Teburcio's lifting her off her feet, her house of dreams fell about her. Amado, with one terrified glance in her direction, turned and fled, the banana shoots closing behind him with the deliberate intent of straightening themselves. Anita's head dropped limply on Teburcio's shoulder. A sudden vision of herself floating dead on the lagoon overcame her. Her small body settled a dead weight on Teburcio's bosom.

"Thou has worn silken shoes," sang her lover, caressing her hair with his cheek, "but thy naked feet will sting in the hot sands to walk in my foot-prints! Thou hast lain soft, but thou wilt not net thee a hammock to swing beside mine! Thou hast cooked with the brazen vessels of the Americans, but thou wilt squat bare-bodied over the pit to roast the young pig for our meal! Often have I hunger, but thou that hast chosen poverty for love of me will find it sweet! Thou hast, for thy coquetry, caused me to spend many months in my wooing, but God will accept as penance thy birth-pangs for my strong sons!"

His song ended, Teburcio, snatching his tam from the floor, opened the door to the balcony running around the patio at the instant that Hansell laid his hand on the latch.

"What does this mean?" the white man demanded, flashing a light.

"*Con su permisión*," Teburcio answered promptly, slipping Anita easily to the floor, where he supported her with his arm, a hand being used to cover Anita's face, perhaps to shield her eyes from the glare of the electric torch Hansell carried, "I carry my bride off through your best door to marry her."

"Nonsense!" Hansell dropped the flashlight into the pocket on the left side of his dressing gown. "Your priest is asleep. He is an old man and you will not disturb him. If you should, he would not marry you to-night."

"I remain by the side of my bride until the marriage is sanctified," announced Teburcio.

"We are not going to have any trouble, you and I, Teburcio! But you'll have to leave the house now and call for Anita in the morning." Hansell tightened the knot in the cord of his dressing gown and dropped his hand into the deep pocket on the right side. "That is," he went on, "If Anita wants to marry you. Anita, do you want to marry this man?"

Teburcio's hand dropped from before Anita's face. She nodded, her head hanging.

"She does not wish me to leave her until she is a married woman," Teburcio announced proudly.

Something relaxed the severity of the white man's face. He drew his hand out of his right pocket, empty.

"Anita has had a hard day," he said, as if a little less sure of himself. "You wouldn't make her sit up all night."

With a sweep of his powerful arms Teburcio caught Anita up against his bosom, as if she were a little child.

"I will carry her to her room. She shall sleep and I will watch at her door. I have made a vow to Our Lady that I will not leave her until she is a married woman. When the sun appears above the lagoon she will open her door. She will be dressed for the marriage. She will go to confession and make her communion early. After mass she will be made my wife."

#### IV

At daybreak Anita stepped across the threshold of her room, where Teburcio had watched wide-eyed all night. He sprang to his feet and surveyed her critically from her pink satin slippers to the charming hat of silver lace deco-



rated with a blue chiffon rose. The bar of rhinestones that fastened the delicate crêpe blouse over Anita's bosom slanted at the proper angle, but there was everything of respect and submission in her bearing.

Without roughness, Teburcio lifted the little hat of silver lace from her head. He twisted it with his fingers, crushed it to a ball of tinsel in his palm and threw it for a toy to the gold fishes that flashed about in the pool of the fountain under the royal palm tree in the patio.

"Have you with your finery no proper mantilla?" he inquired severely.

Suddenly ashamed of the toilet she had taken such pains to make, Anita shook her head, her eyes seeking the

ground, scarlet spotting the clear pallor of the skin about her ears and neck.

Teburcio drew from the pocket of his dusty canvas trousers a handkerchief of Guadeloupe. It was checkered with crossed bands of orange, vermillion and green. It was stained with coffee and red wine. He folded it three times and fastened it with a brass pin that he took from his red tam, to Anita's hair. Holding his hand palm upward out to her, she laid her slender, dark fingers in it, and thus they passed out of the house and down the coral road gleaming white in the saffron dawn where other figures strolled meditatively, all going in the same direction, on their way to mass.



## HYMN OF HATE

By Frank Forrest

**I** HATE squiffy women. They laugh at such absurd things and their hair is continually falling down. They stagger out of restaurants making fools of themselves and bringing disgrace on the noblest sex in creation. They are jeered at by suave loafers who follow them and are arrested by snickering policemen. I abhor squiffy women. They are so hard to get into taxi-cabs.



**A** WOMAN usually suspects direct flattery. But she never doubts dispraise of some other woman.



**P**ARADISE is a place in which one may trust everything, including the complexions of women and the oaths of men.



**W**IT is the capacity for penetrating things without becoming entangled in them.





# LA RÉCOMPENSE

By Charles Dornier

DANS la nuit froide et brillante, Serge Péetrovitch se hâte, et, non moins vite, en lui se pressent des pensées, des images, des souvenirs. Les hautes maisons grillées enserrant la rue lui évoquent des préaux lointains de prisons où se replia et mûrit précocement sa jeunesse.

Ses pas qui martèlent le pavé gelé font lever et sonner dans sa mémoire des phrases de brochures, de journaux et de tribune. Il y a un mois seulement, par une soirée semblable, là-bas, à Paris, au sortir d'une réunion de farouches compagnons, il revenait avec son amie, dans la solitude éclairée des boulevards. Le visage de Sonia, pâle comme cette lune de janvier, so tournait vers le sien, et la chère voix promettait, dans la chambrette prochaine des Gobelins, viatique d'amour récompensant la mission de mort stoiquement acceptée, le don suprême de son corps vierge. Et depuis cette nuit, la première et la dernière, qui résumait si bien pour lui sa destinée de brève et tragique volupté. Serge, dont les jours étaient sacrifiés à la cause, sentait mieux, pour lui et les autres, le prix de la vie, et doutait parfois de la clarté de sa voix, de la vertu de ses principes, de la bonté de son but.

Il avait passé la frontière, au prix de quelles ruses et de quels dangers! Des amis, depuis huit jours, le cachaient à Moscou. Il sortait à peine quelques heures, la nuit.

Demain, à onze heures, heureusement, tout serait fini! Les deux bombes confiées tout à l'heure, dans chacune de ses poches, sous le manteau, battaient mollement son flanc. Il en tâta doucement le cône froid, écailleux, de pomme de pin. Il en jetterait une

sous les pieds des chevaux, l'autre sous le coffre de la voiture. Il laisserait tomber avant, brusquement, la pèlerine dont les pans eussent gêné l'adresse et la force de son bras...

Une association bizarre lui montra, au même instant, entre les toits, la bande du ciel criblée d'étoiles, un dolman bleu rayé de boutons d'or, une masse sombre trouée de feu.

La lumière rouge d'une enseigne tombait sur le trottoir en coulée élargie de sang... Quel était donc cet ouvrier, tout à l'heure, face ardente et ravagée d'apôtre, qui revendiquait si éloquemment les droits du peuple à la beauté plus encore qu'au bien-être? Comme l'éloquence de ces prolétaires s'illustre naturellement de formes passionnées, colorées, et de formules fortes! Peut-être cette vie de misère est-elle le terreau nécessaire d'où jaillit le talent riche et droit d'un Gorki!...

Vrai! comme l'air est doux à respirer aux lèvres qui demain se fermeront pour toujours! Que la ville endormie est belle à contempler aux yeux demain clos à jamais! Que cette cloche qui sonne l'heure et ne tintera point à ses funérailles vibre purement dans l'oreille! Ces fils de télégraphe, que givre le gel, porteront demain aux confins de l'univers, aux rois, aux hommes, aux ennemis, aux frères, à Sonia, avec son nom le récit de son attentat! Hélas! combien faudra-t-il de ces lueurs tonnantes pour éclairer ce peuple aveugle, éveiller cette race de sourds! "Tiens! en voilà un qui rentre bien tard, comme moi!"

Une silhouette haute et large, emmitouffée de fourrures, avec des bottes qui sonnent haut et luisent de reflets



durs, jaillit d'un carrefour et s'engage devant lui dans la rue Krasnoïa, obscure et boueuse. Une canne à poignée brillante joue à sa main droite. Quelque aristocrate jouisseur qui sort d'une débauche avec quelque maîtresse secrète! Il suit la gauche des maisons et l'on ne voit plus de lui, sur le bord de la chaussée, que son ombre coupée et fuyante. Mais voici que, derrière cette ombre, deux autres, plus courtes, glissent. Serge presse, en l'étouffant, son pas. Les ombres soudain n'en font qu'une, nouée, monstrueuse, convulsive.

"A moi!" clame une voix sourde, et Serge, tirant son revolver, se précipite et voit le monsieur aux fourrures qui se débat, à demi-étranglé, entre-deux voyous hirsutes. Les malandrins, au bruit de sa course, lâchent leur proie, et devant l'arme qui brille au poing du jeune homme, replongent dans l'ombre, au ras des maisons, s'évanouissent.

L'homme, le manteau arraché, découvrant des décorations, souffle bruyamment, et à mots entrecoupés, remercie: "Sans vous, c'en était fait de moi!... Par notre petit père le Tzar, je veux assurer ta fortune. Le comte Koratoff ne manque ni de pouvoir, ni de gratitude. Qui es-tu? Que fais-tu? Où vas-tu?"

Serge recule dans l'ombre, épouvanté. Par sot dévouement, il s'est jeté dans le piège! Se nommer, c'est dénoncer son but, trahir sa loi, ses amis, son devoir! Emu, il jette cette réponse:

"Que vous importe! Je ne vous ai pas secouru pour de l'argent, une faveur, une place! Je ne savais pas, en vous sauvant, si vous étiez un prince ou un moujick!"

Mais l'autre s'obstine, le prend par le bras: "Non, ne te défends pas! tu es un brave, et je veux te prouver ma reconnaissance. Allons! ton nom, l'ami!"—"A quoi bon? Laisse-moi!"

Mais le comte, retombant déjà dans l'ivresse que l'émoi ?? l'attaque avait un instant dissipée, avec un doux rire bête, maintient Serge d'une poigne solide, et s'écrie: "Non, none je ne te lâche pas comme ça! Le poste de police au bout de la rue. Je t'y mène, et là, je saurai bien ton identité!" Et trouvant sa plaisanterie fine, il répète, plus hilare: "Au poste, allons! ouste, et plus vite que ça!"

Serge, s'affole. Il se voit déjà arrêté, découvert, fusillé stupidement, honteusement, inutilement. "C'est toi qui l'auras voulu! murmure-t-il. Toi gratitude sera ta perte, non la mienne!"

Docile, il se laisse mener, mais obliquant peu à peu dans l'ombre, doucement il remonte de sa droite libre son revolver jusqu'à la poitrine du comte, il lui lâche son coup de feu, et tandis que l'homme, foudroyé, s'écroule, il s'enfuit hagard, dans la nuit, tenant dans ses deux poches, fruits de son crime, les deux bombes de salut, de vengeance et de gloire, cependant qu'au ciel la lune lui sourit, comme le pâle visage de Sonia.



**A** WOMAN hates to see her husband stared at. She is jealous of her prerogative.



**T**HE women who fear God nevertheless do not forget to keep their powder dry.





# DURING THE OVERTURE

By George Jean Nathan

THE notion that a dramatic critic may most easily attract attention to himself and cut his way to celebrity by expressing opinions directly the opposite of those held by the overwhelming majority is ridiculous. The reverse, indeed, is true. The late William Winter was in his lifetime, and remains after his death, the most conspicuous figure in American dramatic criticism; and he never once in all his career said or wrote one single thing about the theater that 999 out of every 1,000 Americans did not themselves stoutly believe. The theory that Shaw achieved notoriety as a critic by standing counter to the general is the theory of those alone who either have never read his criticisms, or have read them carelessly. In his entire critical incumbency, Shaw never expressed an opinion that was not fully concurred in by the great majority of his public. The only difference between Winter and Shaw—the only essential difference, that is—is that Winter became famous by expressing the mob opinion in terms of the mob and that Shaw became famous by expressing the mob opinion in terms of the few. But, at bottom, the opinions of both were and are the opinions of the multitude.

If Winter was absurdly full of such adjectives as "detestable" and "indecent" when a Pinero sex play crossed his eye, so was Shaw—as you may find for yourself by turning, for example, to his Vol. I, pg. 44. If Winter was enchanted by mere empty mob mush, so too was Shaw—as you may find for yourself by turning, for example, to his Vol. I, this time to pg. 70. And if Winter believed that morals were a

part of art, so also did Shaw—as you may find for yourself by turning, for example, to his Vol. II., pg. 449. The technique and æsthetic of Winter, in the exposition of these typical mob attitudes, were the technique and æsthetic of Dr. Parkhurst; the technique and æsthetic of Shaw, in the exposition of what were intrinsically the same mob attitudes, were the technique and æsthetic of Gaby Deslys. But, foxy showmen both, their materials, however diametrically opposed the manner of their merchandising, were fundamentally the same, and fundamentally of like mob echo quality.

In short, the surest way for a dramatic critic to remain in oblivion is to do exactly that which the theorists prescribe to the contrary, *viz.*, contradict the opinions of the majority. Some excellent critics, fellows of sound sense and searching theatrical philosophy, have died thus the death of public inattention. Who of you, for example, has ever heard of Dr. Louis Allard, sometime of Harvard College, of E. Fordham-Spence of *The Westminster Gazette*, of Judge Parry and his "Judgments in Vacation," of acute Theodore Lessing, of C. E. Vaughan, Gustav Rickelt, Maximilian Harden as Ibsen critic, Joscha Savitz, or D. E. Oliver?

## II

ONCE a year, my friend Mencken jerks back his sleeves, tears open his collar, jams on his specs, bites off half a Cremo delicioso, jumps upon his typewriter and fries a philippic of some four or five thousand words arguing that all actors are numskulls. Each



year he offers new testimony in support of his contention and each year, with plutonic eloquence, he proves his case. But what of it? To argue that all actors—or, at least, most actors—are numskulls and to prove it is of a piece with arguing, and proving, that all fat men perspire. To find fault with an actor for being a numskull is to find fault with a philosopher for being intelligent. Numskullery is one of the essential attributes of the actor; without it, he is an incompetent in his profession, a fellow ill-equipped for his life's work, a soul doomed to ignominious failure. Imagine an intelligent man—a man like Lincoln or Gladstone, say—rouging his lips and cheeks, blackening his bald spot, beading his eyelashes, dressing himself up like the top of an old-fashioned mantelpiece and, thus arrayed, swelling proudly at the handclapping of a houseful of yokels when with a tin sword he stands at the top of a papier-maché stairway in a J. Stanley Weyman opus and, yelling "For the glory of La Belle France!!" at the top of his lungs, chases three nervous college-boy supers back into the wings...

What is often mistaken for intelligence in an actor is merely a talent for not reading incorrectly the work of the dramatist. But it actually requires no more authentic intrinsic intelligence to play, say, the King in Shakespeare's "Lear" than it requires to play the oboe in Beethoven's Op. 87. Application it does require, yes—and, with application, a good pair of lungs, a clear speaking voice, a copy of a pronouncing dictionary, a presence at least approximating that of Gimbel Brothers' chief floor-walker, and a measure of experience in testing these things out upon a brilliantly illuminated platform. But intelligence? Hardly . . . The eight most effective actors on our American stage graduated to that stage from the respective professions of shoe clerk, valet, dog trainer, dry goods salesman, circus acrobatic clown, clothing-store sidewalk puller-in, race-track tout and haberdasher's clerk.

## III

THE theory of the so-called New Scenery falls to pieces once one takes a sharp eye to it. The sponsors of the neo-cheesecloth movement maintain that the best way to fix the attention of the audience upon the play itself is to subordinate the scenery, and that the best way, in turn, to subordinate the scenery is to simplify it to the furthest degree compatible with beauty. The fallacy lies in believing that stark simplicity may not be quite as distracting as overburdened elaboration. Compare the effect upon the attention of a bleak, empty stretch of gray sea and the same stretch of sea dotted with myriad gulls and ships of all descriptions. Which diverts one hypnotically the more; which the more greatly cultivates insensibility and inattention to whatever is passing before one in one's immediate environment?

## IV

NOTHING is so immediately inimical to the powers of imagination as colossal grandeur or stupendous tragedy. Imagination is not the sudden flower of great emotions born of great adventures and wondrous spectacles, but the meditative flower of what is intrinsically rather trivial. No man ever imagined a great poem while his eyes swept the vast magnificences of a Grand Canyon or the Inn Valley from a Hungerberg at Innsbruck. But more than one man has imagined a fine poem, and has written a fine poem, while his ardent eyes swept the pulchritude of some dubious Helen or while along a country roadway his gaze fell upon a violet. Thus, a great and dazzling canvas of war—such a war as that now raging in the world—blinds imagination rather than stimulates it. Itself greater than imagination, it dwarfs imagination into nothingness. Years must elapse, and perspective intervene, before it may give birth to a great novel, a great poem, a great drama.

Nowhere is this seeming paradox



exhibited more sharply than in the theater. One peace-time mother's grief gives theme-being to a Synge's rare imagination in terms of a "Riders to the Sea." A hundred thousand war-time mothers' grief gives theme-being to nothing save tin-pot melodrama like "An American Ace," "Seven Days' Leave," "Three Faces East" and "The Man Who Stayed at Home." From the comparatively trivial springs a work of imaginative beauty; from the colossal springs a mere clattering of hollow coconut shells, firing off of cap pistols and bombarding of papier-maché gunboats. A man writes a fine play about the last will and testament of a yokel (Pinero's "Thunderbolt"); another man writes a fine play about a fellow with a big nose (Rostand's "Cyrano"); still another writes a fine play about a woman with a mean disposition (Strindberg's "Father")—but a great war that shakes the world and rends its soul moves the man who beholds it and is shaken by it to the composition of the rankest kind of pot-boiler.

## V

Not long ago one of our theatrical managers whom in these pages I have at times sapiently instructed in the conduct of his business, approached me and said: "Tell me now, if *you* were a theatrical manager, what would be the first play *you'd* produce?" And, for the life of me, I'll be doggoned if I could tell him.

I wonder how many other very critical persons like myself, if they were absolutely honest and didn't try to bluff, would have found themselves in the same boat?

## VI

CAUGHT in a sudden rainstorm on the Atlantic City boardwalk several weeks ago, I stepped quickly and hence dry into a convenient motion picture emporium. The title of the *lusso* showing at the moment was, "The Bride's Awakening." As I took a

chair, the screen vouchsafed a young man in the act of inviting the heroine to accompany him that evening to Mrs. Van Something's party in her house on the Avenue. The heroine, whom Mrs. Van Something had never had the pleasure of meeting, accepted. On the way to the party the young man suddenly felt in his pocket and exclaimed, "We must go back for the invitation! I forgot to bring it along!"

I was drenched to the skin.

## VII

PROBABLY nowhere else do the popular playmakers of Broadway reveal their imaginative shortcomings so clearly as in the employment of what is known colloquially as hokum. In particular, comedy hokum. This species of hokum, or positively provocative comic antic, these playmakers scarcely ever embellish, scarcely ever elaborate, scarcely ever trick out in fresh gauds or overhaul. Year in and year out, and (though still largely sure-fire) become drably stereotyped and threadbare, this jazbo of tripping over the door-mat, throwing an imaginary object into the wings and having the stagehand thereupon strike a gong, etc., is promulgated in all the glory of its venerable whiskers. The rubber-stamp hokum of the *guignol* who gets his hand stuck in the decanter, who under the guise of cameraderie gives his companion a staggering whack across the shoulder blades, who emphasizing a point stamps on his confrère's toe, who bends himself in at the middle as if anticipating a boot from the rear, who peeking into a window painted on the back-drop winks over his shoulder at the audience as if he were spectator of saucy didoes transpiring within—these playmakers provide season after season. And yet more novel hokum, and doubtless by virtue of its comparative freshness more telling hokum, were easily improvised. For example, the droll mule who moves aside his finger-bowl and dips his fingers grandly in the demi-tasse. For example, the gab-



by Polonius who, just as he has worked up to full eloquence, drops his *pince-nez* in the soup. For example, the vengeful hanswurst who very very slowly lifts up his foot in order to bring it down hard on his neighbor's great toe, suddenly with a seraphic grin lets it fly and, while still grinning, feels it descend with an awful crack on his own. For example, the *vir borealis* who lifts the telephone receiver off the hook and, without calling a number, enters forthwith into the midst of a very intimate conversation. . . .

## VIII

ONE of the droll delusions of our American dramatic critics is that the French farce writer is without a peer in the form of exercise known as skating on thin ice. The truth of the matter, of course, is that it is not the French farce writer that is without a peer in the enterprise, but rather the French language. And particularly the French language in the department of its daring phrase, simile and metaphor. Skating on thin ice requires no mental nor inventive dexterity or balance when the medium of expression is already automatically suited to the maneuver. And yet, even with this immense advantage, the French farce writer often reveals himself a clumsy fellow in the handling of delicate situations. The American Hopwood, working in a stiff and flinty language, has nonetheless skated over thin ice more gracefully than such French farceurs as de Bassan, Hennequin, Basset, Jean Martet, and the jocosé Giafféri and Jean d'Aguzan. Bracco, the Italian, has at his best glided over thin ice more adroitly than Feydeau, the excellent Frenchman, at his best. Schnitzler and Bahr, the Austrians, working in one of the baldest of languages, have equalled, if not actually excelled, the best modern French skaters at their own game. And even such inferior craftsmen as the German Adolf Paul, in a language balder still, since unlike the Viennese it is untouched by French breezes, have in

such pieces as "Blue Vapours" (to translate literally) turned the trick with high prettiness. To anyone acquainted with the ready-made subtleties of colloquial French, the enormous initial advantage enjoyed by the French writer over the writers in other languages must be apparent. Let an American like Hopwood write in French and a Frenchman like Coolus write in English, and we should soon enough see which fellow was the more expert skater!

## IX

WHY should the mention of an onion infallibly provoke laughter in a popular theater audience? Because the onion has a grave bouquet? Hardly, since the jimson-weed (*Diplotaxis muralis*), which has a far graver, provokes not the slightest laughter. Because the onion makes tears come to the eye? Impossible, since smelling salts, which distil tears twofold, brew not even a faint snicker. Because the onion, when eaten, imparts to the breath a flooring sachet? No, since *Torreya nucifera* food-oil, which imparts even more mortal zephyrs, extracts nary a weak chuckle. Because onion is a word of comic sound? Scarcely, since union, which makes no one laugh, is a word of equally comic sound. Well then, simply because an onion is an onion? Again impossible, since a scallion, which is equally an onion, doesn't elicit so much as a giggle.

Why then?

## X

DRAMA: A theatrical composition which treats of a variable number of characters at that point in their lives when they have all just bought themselves new clothes.

## XI

WHEN the Viennese smiles and becomes sentimental in reminiscence, he thinks of his early mistresses. When the American smiles and becomes sentimental in reminiscence, he thinks of



his early boyhood. Both, when they happen to be writing men, convert their respective and vastly diverse rosemaries into intriguing literatures. The Schnitzlers and Bahrs of Vienna with their lost girls on the one side; the Twains and Tarkingtons of America with their lost boyhoods on the other. In Austria, the Molnars and Földes; in America, the Shutes and Pecks. And there as here, and in both cases, the louder the laughter the more unmistakable the feeling that back of it and beneath it is the author's wistful tear. All of which leads us to one of the most genuinely droll scenes the American stage has revealed in several years: the scene between the Williams youngster and Schofield *père* in the last act of Tarkington's "Penrod." I doubt that Tarkington has ever written anything better than this brief episode. It is vividly real; it carries every man who hears it just a bit sadly back over the years; it is excellent and authentic comedy. But somehow the rest of the story, lifted out of the book onto the stage, has lost all its charm. Mr. Edward E. Rose is assuredly the last man in the theater to have been entrusted with the dramatizing job. If Mr. Tarkington could not have spared the time himself, his producers might with greater wisdom have chosen Frederic Ballard, who wrote "Young America."

There is a good play in "Penrod," but all that Mr. Rose has contrived to extract from the book is a good scene.

## XII

WHAT passes for sharp observation on the part of even the best of our comic playwrights is actually most often a mere apprehension of some trivial and entirely negligible phenomenon the novelty of which the critics mistake for genuine perception. Thus, were I, turned showmaker, to remark in a play that it always looks like rain through a screen, or that the most uncomfortable thing in the world is trying to eat dinner without a napkin, or that there is always something that

sounds drunk about a hansom cab late at night, or that there are probably not two persons in the whole United States who know Little Eva's last name—I should be swallowed as a playwright with a more or less acute eye to the idiosyncracies of the world. Of such perfectly simple things—a dozen of which occur to the veriest blockhead every hour—is the so-called "observation" of our playmakers composed. Thus, Mr. Avery Hopwood, the best writer of farce we possess, has achieved, in all his farces from beginning to end, little more authentic observation of, and comment on, contemporary life, persons, institutions and manners than is contained in his "Fair and Warmer" line to the effect that however late one gets to "Siegfried" there is always one more act. Thus, Miss Margaret Mayo, in all her otherwise capable work, from first to last has vouchsafed an eye that has observed little save that a fire at night seems always to be just around the corner. All the farce writers we have—and we have some good ones—have in all their farces combined presented less genuine sharp observation of life and less genuine sharp criticism of that life than is contained in a single cartoon of John T. McCutcheon, W. E. Hill or H. T. Webster.

## XIII

A NUMBER of New York artists of the school whose art consists in making magazine covers exhibiting Red Cross nurses poking their heads archly through paper hoops and flappers showing enough of their stockings so the second rights to the cover design may be sold to the Onyx Hosiery Company, their sense of æsthetics considerably chafed, have lately banded themselves together and protested against the flashing billboards and coloured signs that, to their minds, outrageously deface the city.

What we actually need is not fewer of these flashing billboards and coloured signs, but more. With their smears of



brilliant colour, their gay reds and blues and purples and greens, these billboards and signs lend to the gray monotone of the city its one flash of impudence and wayward loveliness, as a lavender flower touches off the black crêpe of a widow, as a fresh gay ribbon on the bedraggled dress of a little tenement child lights up the squalid urchin group dancing around a gutter hurdy-gurdy. To the treeless and flowerless city, these boards are the trees and these signs are the flowers... Mr. Belasco's bright billboard posters of "Polly with a Past" console the eye for many a cheerless architectural atrocity, many a filthy brown Subway hole and many a sedentary owl lunch cart to the left and right of them.

## XIV

IF I were a plagiarist, one of my first enterprises would be to steal Meyer-Förster's charming play "Old Heidelberg," transfer the scene to an American university town, change Kathi into one of the similarly lovely little Kathis that such a town always knows and Karl, or whatever his name is, into some agreeable young Astor whose family traditions insisted upon a wealthy and fashionable alliance—and make a tidy fortune.

I offer the suggestion, without fee, to our international Broadway kleptomaniacs.

## XV

THE theater, for all the whoops and hopes of its academic whiffers, is actually the last place in the world for the exposition of ideas. The so-called drama of ideas—using the word idea in its strictest sense—is as much an anomaly as California chianti or a vegetarian cannibal. Imagine even the tremendous genius of a Shakespeare deducing out of the Darwinian theory (granting Shakespeare had himself evolved the idea) a sober play that wouldn't drive an audience half-crazy. Imagine Hauptmann a Newton, de Curel a Haeckel, Dunsany a Thomas

Hobbs—and then imagine sitting through their dramatic stage conclusions. The drama of ideas must be—in fact, is—merely a drama of inklings. It must be, by its intrinsic soul, even in its highest forms less a substantial projector of such ideas as Vernon Wollaston's on the variation of species, Lange's on the emotions, Durkheim's on the division of labour or Tarde's on anti-naturalism than an amiable juggler of such easy speculations and second-hand quasi-philosophies as Andreyev's on the burden of religion, as Dunsany's on fate, as Brieux's on heredity and Galsworthy's on social economics. One genuine idea, expounded soberly and soundly without the hocus-pocus of stage tinsels, would suffice to jam the nearest barroom to the doors fifteen minutes after the rise of the first curtain.

## XVI

FROM one of the new season's dramas, called "The Winning of Ma" and designated in the billing as "a wholesome and happy play," I extract this slice of dialogue:

"It's just as much us poor folks' place to treat the rich right as 'tis the other way," asserts Pa Flickinger. "Don't it help as much toward good feelin' between man and man for me to go a little out'n my way to give the boss a pleasant 'good mornin'' as it does for the boss always to have to make the first break? The boss has got money; but that's no sign he don't need what money can't buy—and that's *good will*."

"Tain't worryin' the boss or any other big bug whether you spoke to 'em or not," answers Ma.

"That ain't the p'int," disagrees Pa. "'Cause you're poor don't give you no right to be uncivil, and I don't begrudge the boss his automobile, neither—he's *earned* it."

"Then why don't you have one yourself?" sarcastically inquires Ma.

"No," says Pa, "I ain't and I ain't liable to. I've earned bread and butter and a home, but I ain't never earned what the boss has."

"Why ain't you?" demands Ma. "You've always worked like a slave."

"I'll tell you why," answers Pa. "The boss has more brains than I have, and I ain't ashamed to say so, and what's more'n that, his brains are developed. They was put through a course of sprouts when that boy was young. He hadn't a cent more than I



had when we was kids. But the boss, he was different."

"Well, anyhow," sighs Ma, "I dunno as society's worth the tug you have to make to keep up with it."

If this is the sort of "wholesome" and "happy" stuff our theatrical public cherishes, and if this is the sort of "wholesome" and "happy" stuff out of which the managerial caterers to that public feel they can make money, why do the latter stop half-way, as in the above instance? Why don't they go the whole hog—and make twice as much money? The thing might very easily be done. Why not shoot the wholesomeness and happiness up a notch or two; why not inject the hooch with a syringe of bigger bore? For example:

"It's just as much us poor folks' place to treat the rich right as 'tis the other way," asserts Pa Flickinger. "Wouldn't it help as much toward good feelin' between man and man for me to go a little out'n my way and once in a while give the boss weekly wages as it does for the boss always to have to pay me? The boss has got money; but that's no sign he don't need *more* money."

"Taint worrying' the boss or any other big bug whether you treat 'em liberal or not," answers Ma.

"That ain't the p'int," disagrees Pa. "Cause you're poor don't give you no right to be miserly, and I don't begrudge the boss his automobile neither—he deserves it. In fact, I bought it for him myself out'n my own savin'gs."

"Why didn't you buy it for *yourself*," sarcastically inquires Ma.

"No," says Pa, "I didn't buy it for myself and I ain't liable to buy one for myself. I've earned bread and butter and a home for myself—and I'm awful happy—but if I thought the boss'd have to walk to the office or ride in a crowded subway train, I'd be terrible miserable, 'cause I want him to ride in a automobile all comfortable-like so when he comes into the office and I offer him his weekly envelope instead of his always offering me mine, he'll feel *double* happy about it."

Etc.

Etc.

## XVII

THE Messrs. Roland West's and Carlyle Moore's melodrama, "The Unknown Purple," in the acute criticism of Mr. John D. Williams, does objectively what Dunsany does subjectively. Revealing one of the best melodrama

tricks seen in many a season—one of those old *Black Cat* fictional devices whereby a man is able at will to make himself invisible—it tells literally for the eye a story that, were it Dunsany's, would be told figuratively for the imagination. Crudest of the crude, this story—a revamping of the *conte de Monte Cristo*—is yet metamorphosed into a stage show that surpasses in ingenuity the majority of Grand Guignol melopieces through the employment of the peculiarly intriguing bit of legerdemain referred to. Verily, there is a vast melodramatic treasury in the fairy tales, a treasury full of excellent stage tricks and amusing *escamoterie*. And to think the only thing our supposedly shrewd commercial playmakers have ever dredged out of these fairy tales is the old Cinderella hokum!

## XVIII

"FRIENDLY ENEMIES," by the Messrs. Shipman and Hoffman. See paragraph IV.

## XIX

"ALLEGIANCE," by the Troubetzkys. See paragraph XVIII.

## XX

"MOTHER'S LIBERTY BOND," by Parker Fisher. See Paragraph XIX, *fortississimo*.

## XXI

"THE BLUE PEARL," an unacknowledged adaptation by Anne Crawford Flexner of a play produced in Vienna in 1912. The original, as I recall it, was by Armin Friedmann and Paul Frank and was called "The Blue Crocodile."

## XXII

"KEEP HER SMILING," by John Hunter Booth: No. 1 in the season's crop of plays made from *Saturday Evening Post* stories.

## XXIII

"SHE WALKED IN HER SLEEP," by Mark Swan. A good farce idea spoiled by the inability to write farce.



## SUITE ÉLÉGIAQUE

By H. L. Mencken

### I.

AS I embroider these lines upon vellum, in the dog days of a singularly hot and thirsty August, the Rum Demon seems to be tottering in our fair republic, and before they get into type he may be as dead as free silver, polygamy or soap-box Socialism. I am not, indeed, an optimist in this department, and so the hopeful burling that goes on in the kaifs does not impress me. One hears, in pop-eyed whispers, of various last-ditch salvations and ameliorations. The California wine-growers are doing this or that behind the door; the brewers are to be put on rations, but not further molested; the White House, with its awful club, is to step in at the last moment and save light wines and beers. As I say, I take no stock in such forlorn consolations. They are all, at bottom, illusory. The Californians, if they are wise, will cashier their lobbyists and save their money. The brewers, if they are not idiots, will immediately prepare to turn their brewhouses into nail factories, insane asylums and moving-picture theatres. And the White House, if it would retain its window panes, tin roof and Brussels carpets, will not monkey with this buzz-saw. For the Anointed of God are on the march, armed with the traditional pitchforks and horsewhips and with the fire of a transcendental passion in their eyes, and they will not stop, beloved, until they accomplish their consecrated purpose, let the chips fall where they may. In six months or nine months, or at most in a year, regardless of whatever reprieves and

truces may be patched up meanwhile, you and I, when we would ingest the immemorial beverages of Christian men, must do it out of surreptitious jugs and in the privacy of our bathrooms, garages and family tombs. I have enough laid up to last until—but I had better shut down before I say too much; for the moment the dry millennium dawns the land will swarm with snouters and informers, and I surely don't want them to unearth my hoard. Go thou and do likewise. See to your locks and chain-bolts, and get a small-pox sign to hang upon the door. Hire a confirmed diabetic to mount guard. Fill every third bottle with nitroglycerine, that heaven may swiftly welcome any righteous scoundrel who horns in.

An air of absolute confidence marks the current tracts and bulls of the prohibitionist boob-prodders, and it is well justified by their prospects. On the floor of Congress they no longer rant and blubber; with victory in their hands they can afford to be generous, and even patronizing. And in their literature they begin to show that fine mellowness which always appears in a man who holds four aces and knows that the police will presently raid the place. I open a late volume, "Why Prohibition?" by the Rev. Dr. Charles Stelzle (*Doran*), a gifted Presbyterian expert in rectitude, and find him actually so far gone in magnanimity that he defends the saloon-keepers against the charge that they are "low-browed brutes," credits the brewers and distillers with having "some of the best brains in the business world," and even acknowledges that he knows "some



mighty fine people who drink beer and cocktails." Five years ago, or even three years ago, such confessions would have got the rev. gentleman into a lot of trouble and perhaps brought him to unfrocking and a life of shame. The fight was then in full blast, and the devout were carrying it on with the utmost *Schrecklichkeit* and biting in all the clinches. To have admitted any decency in a bartender, at that time, would have seemed to them as gross a *faux pas* as spitting into the eye of a bishop. But now, with the long battle nearing its end and victory so near that it singes the hair, they are in a dulcet and loamy mood, and ready to shake hands over the coffin of John Barley-corn. Let them soften and ferment a bit more, and some of the more sentimental of them will begin to talk of compensating the liquor dealers for their ruined property—a measure which aroused them to such moral indignation, not forty months ago, that the man who broached it was at once accused of belonging to the Sein Finn.

Well, it has been a rough and entertaining fight, and conducted, on the dry side, with the utmost skill. Personally, I lament the issue, for a certain amount of dilute ethyl alcohol is necessary to my ease and happiness and I like to have it handy; but all the same I can't help admiring the superb technique of the rabble-rousers who have heated up the yokelry to prohibition. For many years the battle languished. Now and then a state went dry, but always it went wet again a few years later. Those were the placid days of parlor meetings, white-ribbon rallies, pledge-signings, lectures by converted drunkards and other such Sunday-schoolish proceedings. The thing was scarcely even a nuisance; it tended steadily to descend to the level of a joke. The prohibitionist vote for President hung around a quarter of a million; it seemed impossible to pull it up to a formidable figure, despite the best effort of ten thousand orators, lay and clerical, male and female, fresh and pickled. Then, of a sudden, came the Anti-Saloon

League and—sis! boom! ah! Then came audacity, progress, the shedding of blood. Then came the beginning of that vast backwoods hysteria which now threatens to engulf all of us. And why the change? Simply, it seems to me, because the prohibition movement, at its center, ceased to be ecstatic and became intelligent—because it ceased to be a mere spouting of enthusiasts and became a campaign carried on by resolute, hard-headed and unemotional men—because, in brief, the forlorn idiots who wholeheartedly believed in prohibition were thrust aside and their places were taken by professional manipulators and mob-masters who understood practical politics and the ways and means of arousing the great masses of the plain people, and who had behind them a war fund big enough to pay the freight.

What this war fund has amounted to, first and last, it is impossible to find out with accuracy, for the Anti-Saloon League does not open its books to the sinful, but if it has come to less than \$50,000,000 then I am a very bad guesser indeed. It has sufficed, whatever its size, to organize every county in the United States, to maintain a powerful lobby at Washington and at every state capital, and to attract to the service of the league, by large salaries in hard cash, a corps of clever and determined commanders, all of them expert in political intrigue. Some of these commanders are lawyers by training, some are ecclesiastics of extraordinary vigor and intelligence, and some are professional politicians. But all are shrewd, all are good at their trade, else they would not hold their jobs two weeks, for behind them are men who demand results and who have the money to pay for them. The theory that the pious proletariat provides the sinews of war is moonshine; the pennies of the pious proletariat scarcely cover the cost of collecting them. The actual funds, in every state, come from a few rich men—some of them old fellows who have turned to moral endeavor on retiring from business; others



young men of the type of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The United States swarms with just such backers of the uplift. They get their fun, not by trying to hoard up all the bad art in the world, like the late Pierpont Morgan; or by staggering Broadway, like Harry Thaw; or by buying their way into office, like the late Senator Clark; or by building libraries, like Andrew Carnegie; but by financing schemes for making the world virtuous by force. One finds them behind all the Comstock societies, and all the Lord's Day Alliances, and all the Men and Religion Forward movements, and all the Law and Order leagues, and all the other moral sporting clubs, large and small. They are the financiers of chemical purity, the treasurers of the Methodist millennium. The will-to-power, bubbling in them as in less pious men, urges them to combat sin in the manner of John D. combatting an independent oil company—that is, by the sheer power of money, by rough force, by the method of knocking down and dragging out. A very typical specimen is William F. Cochran, to whom the Rev. Dr. Stelzle dedicates his book. This Cochran is a young man with a large inherited fortune and a strong desire to get some entertainment out of it. Having no taste for bad paintings, or for setting up libraries, or for founding *New Republics*, or for saving chorus girls from toil, or for yachting, or for politics, he devotes himself to backing uplifters. Stelzle, I daresay, has got some of the money; he says frankly, indeed, that Cochran's "friendship and generosity" have "made possible" his "work of research." But the Anti-Saloon League has got a great deal more—enough, I venture, to have kept fifty head of chorus girls in luxury since the dawn of the Christian era.

Well, every man to his own poison. There are worse ways of spending money, and, in particular, there are ways that yield less sport. This Cochran and his fellows, whatever their failings, have at least bashed in some heads and heard some caressing yells.

Moreover, I fancy that they have enjoyed a good many cynical laughs. For one thing, they have proved how easy it is to alarm a politician, and what a paltry scoundrel he is in his heart. And for another thing, they have proved how easy it is to shake up and inflame the boobs, if only their congenital hatred of superior and happier men be discreetly played upon. The whole success of the prohibitionist cause rests upon these two discoveries. As Dr. Stelzle himself admits, it is only in the backwoods that it is actually believed in by a majority of voters; the city folks are overwhelmingly against, and so are the minority of more civilized muzhiks. But by playing on the emotionability and credulity of the masses of yokels the Anti-Saloon League manipulators have got a firm hold upon the county politicians, and through the county politicians they have nailed down the state legislatures, and through the state legislatures they will fasten prohibition upon the whole nation.

Under the process lies an obvious and immovable fact—that the average aspirant to a seat in a state legislature is a man with no more settled convictions and no more self-respect than the ordinary house-dog. His one and only object in life is to get and hold a job, and to this end he will sacrifice any conceivable idea or ideal, jump through any hoop, turn any flip-flop, and roll over any number of times. This naïf fellow, helped into office by Anti-Saloon League aid, becomes the dry statesman now so familiar, both at the state capitals and in Congress—the affecting bumbler for "our boys" and "the home" in legislative halls, the professional weeper and sobber of the cause. He is the job-chaser who has seen the new light of sanctity—who has discovered, to wit, that the support of the Anti-Saloon League, lavishly financed by the Cochrans, helps him in his business, as its extraordinarily malignant and effective opposition hinders him. He is what they call out in China a rice-convert—that is, a convert for



reasons not purely theological, and often not openly mentionable. Principles, to him, are mere devices for catching votes, and in that enterprise one principle is as good as another.

But why does the Anti-Saloon League have dealings with such swine? Why, if it is so powerful, doesn't it elect whole tickets of its own men—men who honestly believe in prohibition, and perhaps yearn for jobs too? The answer is quite simple; it is often impossible. That is to say, there is seldom enough genuine prohibition sentiment in any community, even the most bucolic, to elect a candidate pledged to prohibition without the support of some one or other of the regular parties, and the only way to get this support is to make a deal with a party candidate. This is what is habitually done. The prohibitionists haven't enough votes to beat both parties, but they often have enough to beat one by combining with the other, and so the way is clear for them. What they do is simply to feel out the regular candidates, find the one who is most eager for votes, "convert" him to prohibition, throw their support to him, elect him, and then hold him to his "conversion." What his course may be in other matters doesn't interest them. He may carry on his regular political business as he pleases, and they will not interfere. They ask no patronage of him. They hold him to no account for his general honesty. They don't pester him with projects of other reforms. All they ask is that he deliver his vote as agreed upon when prohibition itself is on the mat.

But how are such rascals to be held to their pledges? What is to prevent them selling out to the liquor men, who commonly have plenty of money and are not slow to spend it? The answer is again simple—the jobholder not only thinks about his job today, but also about his job tomorrow. That is to say, he wants to be re-elected and re-elected *ad infinitum*—and he knows that the Anti-Saloon League can turn him out, nine times out of ten, quite as

easily as it turned him in. In the early days there were a good many treasons. In the South, in particular, dry legislature after dry legislature sold out to the liquor lobby. An assemblyman would be elected with the aid of the prohibitionists, make a few maudlin speeches against the curse of drink, and then, at the last minute, vote wet for some thin and specious reason. But that sort of thing, of late, has become very hazardous. The league has learned how to punish. The politician who thus betrays it after it has delivered its support to him is pursued relentlessly and with all arms. The dry press-agents see to it that every farmer in his bailiwick hears of his rascality. Terrible tales about him are whispered in the cross-roads Sunday-schools. He is held up to universal obloquy and ignominy. Pious mothers use his name to frighten children. He finds himself the county Lieut. Becker, Capt. Boy-Ed, Harry Thaw and Oscar Wilde. A few such salutary examples and the other occupants of the mourners' bench stay put. Not infrequently, indeed, the recreant job-chaser, tasting the steel, steps up, confesses and promises to sin no more. I emit no theories. The thing has happened often, and more than once under my very nose. Moreover, I have been told by an eminent Anti-Saloon League wire-puller that such survivors of the league death-house make the most useful janissaries—that they are even much more satisfactory than honest prohibitionists, who are full of ideas of their own and often interfere with the official plan of campaign.

Thus, by playing the two great parties against each other and with no more than a minority of votes actually behind them, the whoopers for well water have gradually worked their way to tremendous power in state after state. That minority of votes, in some regions, tends to convert itself gradually into a majority—particularly where the grass is long, the work is hard, the recreations are few, and the life of a man is but imperfectly differentiated from that of an ox or an



ass. The peasant, indeed, is a forlorn and unhappy man, and so he is always ready to see villainy in the man whose life is easier. The city man is such a fellow. He doesn't have to work as hard as a farmer, and he has a good many more pleasures. One of these pleasures is that of frequenting the bar-rooms of his vicinage, with their cool and hospitable depths, their seductive spigots, their shiny cut glass, their polite and immaculate bartenders, their soporific scent of mint, cloves, *Blutwurst*, pickles, box cheese, vermouth, olives, potato salad, malt liquor, gin, Scotch and rum. The yokel, if he would drink, must do it alone and from a heavy jug, or in the back room of some comfortless doggerly. Hence he envies the city man, and out of that envy, by a process familiar to all first-year students of psychology, arises moral indignation. He hates the cockney, indeed, as a Socialist hates John D. Rockefeller, and for the same reason. He is indignant that a just God should permit such scoundrels to go unscourged, and eager to put down the outrage. Thus it is easy to arouse him to enthusiasm for prohibition.

Once aroused, even feebly, he musters enough votes to enable the prohibitionist leaders to hold a club over the candidates of the two great parties, and what follows is as I have described it. The whole campaign lies in the country districts; the Anti-Saloon League has never made any appreciable progress in the big cities; at every trial of strength there it has been badly worsted. Even when whole states have gone dry with a bang their cities have almost always voted wet. But so long as the peasantry can be kept at a high enough temperature the dissent of city folk may be disregarded. In all save a very small minority of states the county districts control the legislatures, and it is by their votes, against the protests of the cities, that the federal prohibition amendment is being ratified by legislature after legislature. That it will eventually obtain the necessary thirty-six ratifications I haven't the slightest

doubt. I am convinced, indeed, that it will obtain at least forty, and maybe even forty-five. The only States that show plain signs of holding out to the end are Massachusetts and New Jersey. Even New York is apt to be forced into line by the rustic vote, and at no very distant date. My counsel is thus renewed: Lay in enough jugs to preserve your health until the war is over, and the ships are once more running to Europe. There are countries over there that will never yield. Norway has already gone dry, and so has Russia, and Denmark, England and even France may some day follow suit. But Holland will remain wet, I venture, until the last gasp of this sinful old world, and so will Italy, and so will Spain.

## II.

I AM reading no novels this month and so have nothing to report in that department. Among the serious books the most important and interesting is "Santo Domingo," by Otto Schoenrich (*Macmillan*), a truly exhaustive work and by the one American undoubtedly competent to write it. Judge Schoenrich went to Porto Rico almost immediately after leaving college, became a federal judge there at the extraordinary age of 25, was sent to Santo Domingo with the Hollander commission and thereafter spent ten years serving Uncle Sam in all parts of upper Latin-America. He helped to draft the present code of Cuban laws, was president of the Nicaragua Mixed Claims Commission, and performed odd jobs of the same sort, all of them important and all of them capitably done, in various other nursling republics. From the start the great possibilities of Santo Domingo seem to have interested him, and in the intervals of his official duties he managed to make several extensive trips through the whole country, covering even the wild region along the Haitian border. Moreover, he became well acquainted with all the chief politicians, land-owners and business men



of the republic, and acquired a thorough knowledge of its resources. The result is a book that quite disposes of the subject. Almost every conceivable question about Santo Domingo and the Dominicans is answered, and withal the story is told pleasantly and without any heavy piling up of dull statistics. It appears at a time when the West Indian question is temporarily as dead as Maeterlinck, futurism or paper-bag cookery, but after the war the revolutionists down there will probably take to their old tricks again and once more grab the front pages. The book is of permanent value, and its numerous illustrations contribute to that value no little.

Several Bolshevikian tomes follow, among them "The Abolition of Inheritance," by Harlan Eugene Read (*Macmillan*) and "Not Guilty," by Robert Blatchford (*Boni-Liveright*). The former is written lyrically, almost hymnologically; the author argues against the transmission of large properties by will with all the tin-pan gusto of an evangelist arguing against draw poker. In brief, it is a very bad piece of writing, even for an uplifter—so bad, indeed, that it prejudices me against its case, despite my natural tendency to believe evil of the rich. But it well indicates the sort of legislation that we may expect to see brought forward after the current hostilities are over, and all the utopians and peruna-mongers emerge from their caves again, and the ancient business of re-enacting the law of natural selection with moral amendments is resumed in all its branches. I shall defeat this projected confiscation of estates as I shall defeat prohibition. That is to say, I shall disperse my substance in gay living while I am yet on my legs, and so leave nothing for my heirs and assigns save a profound regret, the works of Bulwer Lytton, and, in the words of Clayton Hamilton, "a sound as of birds singing."

The Blatchford book is vastly better written than Read's, but at bottom it is just as hollow. In matter it is a plea

for the under dog, on the ground that heredity and environment have made him what he is. Well, admitting the fact, what are we to do about it? Change his heredity? It is too late—and if we try to begin with his children and grandchildren he will raise formidable objections. Improve his environment? It is being done—and largely in vain. The simple fact is that there must always be under dogs so long as there are any dogs at all, and that nothing human volition can achieve will ever be better for them than throwing them a few bones. Christianity was launched as a scheme of uplifting them. Has it succeeded? Science was to do it. Has it done so? Socialism was to perform the trick. Turn to Russia for the result. What Dr. Blatchford and all other such sentimentalists constantly overlook is that the under dog is by no means a mere victim of external injustice. Part of his under-doggishness, perhaps nine-tenths, is congenital and inalienable. He can no more throw it off than the can change the shape of his ears. His soul is intrinsically inferior, subordinate, lacking in capacity and resolution. Even the passion for liberty, theoretically universal among men, is not there. This passion, in fact, is not really universal at all, but rather rare. Few men are genuine libertarians. The great majority of them must follow some one, obey some one, grovel before some one, and if it is not a pope or a czar, it is a labor leader, or a ward boss, or a Billy Sunday, or a Trotsky, or a grand exalted archon of the Imperial and Ineffable Sanhedrin of the Maccabees.

But let us have done with the Bolshevik. Of the four books on the fine arts now before me two are by Prof. Dr. Archibald Henderson, of the University of North Carolina. One is a cheap reprint of his colossal volume on George Bernard Shaw (*Boni-Liveright*) and the other is a new edition of his revision of "Interpreters of Life and the Modern Spirit," by title "European Dramatists," with a chapter on August Strindberg added (*Stewart-*



*Kidd*): Dr. Henderson is a critic who gives good measure; his books are fat and full of facts. Moreover his critical judgments are usually very safe and discreet, and though he frequents an academic grove he avoids the moral pishposh that characterizes most of his learned colleagues. The other two books are "The Art of Aubrey Beardsley" in the Modern Library (*Boni-Liveright*), a reprint of Arthur Symonds' essay with three or four score reproductions of Beardsley's drawings, and "Visits to Walt Whitman in 1890-91," by J. Johnson and J. W. Wallace (*Arens*). The last-named, to me at least, is heavy going—a meticulous account of unimportant conversations, nearly thirty years old.

### III

ANOTHER reprint is "In the Midst of Life," a collection of stories by Ambrose Bierce (*Boni-Liveright*). I am informed that it is the first of a series planned to extend to five or six volumes and to include all the writings of Bierce that seem worth preserving. His Complete Works, in twelve volumes, are far too garrulous and unconsidered. Preparing them for the press in his last days he heaved in a great deal of stuff that was stupid and unreadable—forgotten newspaper editorials, epigrams upon nobodies long since dead, ancient wheezes, half-baked sketches, all the trivial lumber of a busy journalist's clipping drawer. The result was that the twelve volumes, instead of improving his celebrity, as his friends counted upon them doing, actually revived the doctrine that he was a dull fellow and much overestimated.

The truth about Bierce, I believe, is that he was a good deal damaged by the excessive praises of his partisans, some of whom gravely ranked him with the great masters of English prose and put him in the first place among American writers. A careful study of his writing shows that he ill deserved that gigantic encomium. He wrote skillfully, clearly, nicely, but always a bit

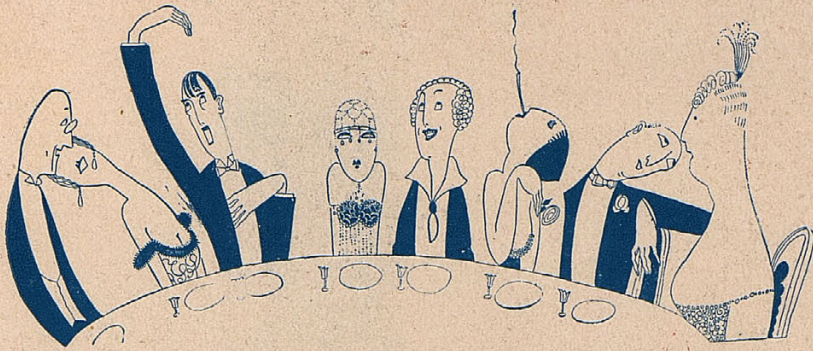
tightly, always somewhat like an unusually talented college professor. The full savor of English is not in his prose. One misses the true gusto of the language, the native wildness, the gipsy quality. I can find no music in his style. Put beside that of Thackeray it is hard and artificial. Put beside that of Macaulay or Huxley or even Stevenson, it is cold and paltry. A purist of the most extravagant sort, he carried his prejudice against a vulgar looseness of expression so far that his writing, more than once, came to indistinguishable from an exercise in "correct English," and so the life oozed out of it and it grew stiff and disagreeable.

Nor was he the great story teller that his admirers have sought to make him out. In the present volume some of his very best work in fiction is undoubtedly presented, and yet a re-reading of it leaves one cold. All he could achieve was a surprising anecdote, and very often the surprise was banal enough—a Federal soldier shooting his Confederate father, an officer accused of cowardice throwing away his life in some fantastic act of heroism. No genuine play of character is in these stories. The men they set before us, with precious few exceptions, are mere lay figures. They are moved about to make the plot, to prepare the surprise, to shock the uncritical reader; one learns nothing from them or of them; they remain almost marionettes at the end. And this even in the best of the stories, capital thrillers though they may be. In the worst one finds naught save a somewhat childish ingenuity, a feeble talent for raising the hair, melodrama reduced to scenarios.

But was Bierce, then, a false alarm? Nay, turn first to his epigrams, and particularly to "The Devil's Dictionary." There you will find the most brilliant stuff, first and last, that America has ever produced. There you will find the true masterpiece of the one genuine wit that These States have ever seen. There you will wallow in Bierce, and, wallowing, lament that he ever tried to be an Edgar Allan Poe.



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