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AN ILLUSTRATED
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H. H. H.

AN EASTER ANTHEM

COLLIER'S WEEKLY

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THE EDITOR COLLIER'S WEEKLY NEW YORK CITY

ROBERT J. COLLIER, EDITOR

NEW YORK APRIL NINTH 1898

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ENGLAND'S newspapers are quite dismal over the outlook in the far East, although the worst seems to be that Great Britain has lost her power to dictate terms to all rivals in China. It was plain to observers elsewhere, so probably in England also, that the Siberian Railway would make it impossible for a fleet alone, no matter how powerful, to dominate Chinese waters; and that Russia could move more troops to the Chinese border by land than Great Britain or any other European power would think of sending so far by water. Russia's official announcement of the occupation of Port Arthur and Tientsin is as mild in tone as a published notice of a town meeting, and it promises freedom and hospitality to the ships of all nations, yet even this does not satisfy a people who have had their own way in the Western Pacific ever since Chinese ports were first opened. The change of conditions is mortifying indeed, but it is also permanent, so the British government has set the people a good example by recognizing and accepting it, instead of going to war over it. There is enough else in the East to fight over, if public opinion really demands gore; for France, with far less excuse than Russia, demands a slice of Chinese territory from portions of the empire where British trade interests are a hundred times greater than they ever could have been on the peninsula occupied by Russia, and France, having become suddenly friendly toward Germany, really needs some one to fight or at least to threaten.

BEFORE the American people be empowered to make and maintain a canal across the continent, through Nicaragua or any other country, they should be compelled to prove their ability by putting their existing waterways in good condition and keeping them so. The valleys of the Ohio and its tributaries were well populated fifty years ago, but neither State nor nation has controlled these streams so that they shall be useful in the dry season and harmless during freshets, so this spring's reports of overflows, drowned animals, houses destroyed and lives lost are quite as deplorable as those of other years; the newspapers would be full of the heart-rending details were not the war-scare crowding all other subjects out of print. The floods of the Ohio Valley have occurred within twenty-four hours, by rail, of more than one-half of the population, yet soon the Nicaragua Canal Commission will report and a lot of Congressmen will endeavor to commit the nation to making and controlling a great ship canal through a foreign land several thousand miles away.

FOR LOYALTY AND HONOR

HOWEVER successful the event of President McKinley's efforts to avert war with Spain, however long the issue of intervention be delayed, the people of the United States are doomed to a period of uncertainty and disquietude.

The United States first directed the world's attention to the barbarities of Spanish rule in Cuba; the world replied, in effect, that our Monroe Doctrine, so energetically invoked in the case of Venezuela, relieved the Powers of responsibility. Logically, we could not do other than acquiesce, and upon the shoulders of our government was laid the unhappy burden. Not lightly, indeed, did we accept the unpleasant task, nor precipitately embark upon a course of action. The conservative policy of Mr. Cleveland was taken up by Mr. McKinley, and every step was one of deliberate import. Even so temperate a course seemed, because of Spanish susceptibility and distrust, fraught with considerable danger. The more so as popular sympathy, in the United States, was manifestly enlisted on the insurgents' side. Scheme after

scheme was branched, and the solution seemed equally remote when, with the advent of the Sagasta Cabinet, autonomy, confessedly a last resource, was granted. Once more, our government held off, awaiting results. Once again, Spain's efforts to pacify the insurgents proved futile. The condition of the islanders grew worse, day by day, disaffection gained apace, starvation numbered new victims. Public opinion, in America, could hardly be held in check, and, when the news of the *Maine's* destruction startled the world, it seemed as if a spark would set war ablaze. That spark, fortunately, has not been forthcoming. But while the situation continues grave, and as long as war looms large on the horizon, it may be well for us to consider our duties as citizens in such a crisis.

Whether international disagreements are settled by peace or war, a government's burdens and its measure of success are determined largely by the attitude of the mass of its people. No wisdom and energy on the part of the President and Cabinet can overcome the mischief that may be done by impressionable citizens and by Congressmen who obey the dictates of excitable constituencies. The first and easiest way to stand by the government, therefore, is to maintain an attitude of confidence in the men in authority at Washington. No individual not in official life knows the Cuban case so well in all its bearings and has seen so much of the evidence as the President and his advisers, so no one need feel called upon to offer counsel, either individually or through "resolutions" of committees or other bodies.

Neither can the army or navy profit by unasked advice. It is the business of military and naval officers to study offensive and defensive plans of campaign against all countries with which their nation may fall to blows; any one who imagines that since the Civil War ended our army has thought only of fighting Indians and our navy has been cruising solely for pleasure is deplorably ignorant of the most highly educated and industrious class of officials in the public service. Before a cloud arose on the Cuban horizon every ship of our navy had its designated station in time of war and every artillery officer of the army had taken a long, systematic, post-graduate course of instruction in harbor defense. Until recently the army and navy have been richer in methods than in means, but recent Congressional patriotism has done much to atone for past Congressional inattention; money is in hand for everything procurable that is also available, and no one doubts that additional money will be granted if required.

Nor need any citizen, in the event of war, waste any time in wondering whether it is his duty to enlist. If one man were selected from every fifty Americans between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years the result would be an army of about a quarter of a million men—more than we would need to defend our coasts and meanwhile help the insurgents to sweep Spain out of Cuba. More than can be needed will be glad to volunteer; there is always too large a proportion of men who rejoice in the prospect of fighting with some one, so there will be no demand or excuse for men with families, business or other responsibilities to hurry into uniform and away to the front.

But there are duties quite as honorable and exacting as shooting and being shot. In time of war, or of assuring peace by preparing for war, a government's most numerous and virulent enemies are within its own borders. Among them are the men who protest against the increase of taxes that military outlay compels. War, even to the victor, is shockingly costly; the fifty million dollars appropriated several weeks ago will be but a mere beginning of the expense, if war is to come. Cheerfulness under increased taxation is the rarest of patriotic qualities.

Worse than the men who scheme to evade war taxes are they who make of war an opportunity to prey upon the people. A contract to furnish military or naval supplies is not proof-positive of a desire to steal, but in all civilized lands, in war-time, army and navy contracts have been the favored means of gigantic swindles to which many civilians have consented, on the strange theory that a government, like a corporation, has no soul, yet has money of its own, and is therefore fair game for any one. In past days competent soldiers of all grades in all nations have had reason to prefer contractors to the enemy as persons deserving to be shot, and human nature has made no notable change for the better in recent years.

It will be bad citizenship to lessen business efforts, lock up money and sell securities because of a war-scare or even in case of war itself. Most businesses improve in war-time in the United States, for demand for manufactured goods and food products increases, new industries are created by military requirements, the demand for labor and the wages of workmen improve, railway business becomes larger and money circulates more freely. Indeed, the probabilities of improvement of business is one of the arguments in favor of war, more's the pity. Any exuberance of courage which the patriotic civilian may possess can be profitably exerted in combating the possessor's business alarms and those of his acquaintances.

In brief, the duties of the civilian in time of danger are quite as great and exacting as those of the soldier, and to fulfill them is to manifest a high quality of loyalty and a keen sense of national honor.



AN EASTER MEANING

STRANGE as it may seem, the full sense of Christian feast days may be often best appreciated from the purely secular, or even pagan, viewpoint. They seem, indeed, these feast-days, to have struck deep roots in Nature, so that the very seasons in their round confess them.

Christmas, rich as it is in spiritual significance to the Christian, carries to breasts even of the unprofessing an echo of its joy. Winter winds romp merriment, winter snows spread shining innocence the wide world over. The young year, a clear-cheeked monarch, mounts his untarnished throne. Frolic Nature is a child with Christ.

As with Christmas so with Easter. Poets upon whose fine ardor Religion has laid too often a chastening hand celebrate now with strains of unalloyed delight the implicit burden of the Spring. Choristers, though they know it not, and though no choir may range them, they, together with Nature, hymn Christ born and risen. And it is this impulse of Nature, voiced by her poets, that hides alternately and discloses, the deepest Easter meaning.

Has any of us borne sweeter witness than the poet to the sovereignty of Spring? Has any Easter anthem, rolling down cathedral aisles, a fitter music in it than the Christ-carols of the thousand-throated wood? What prayer of ours is comparable in purity to the breathed fragrance of flowers whom Spring has disinterred? Are these symbols spent upon us then in vain? And shall we find in our own lives no answering resurrection?

Resurrection it is that stirs in the poet's heart. The dead songs, long silent, wake at Easter in wondering music. Resurrection dowers the bird, too, with last year's notes, teaching him, here and there, an added trill of triumph. Resurrection, in the garden, calls the flowers from sleep.

Easter's message to us, too, is resurrection. Resurrection presupposes death. Therein it is we fall short of Easter gladness. We have no "dead selves" to arise transfigured from the tomb of renunciation. We never die, we seldom renounce. The birds, unanimous in spring-time song, are unanimous in winter silence. The flowers, furling their thousand banners at winter's word, flaunt them gayly once more in the face of spring. We learn no equal lesson. The same prayers, disused or defiled with perfunctory usage, serve our worship from year to year. The same unrefreshed ideals, battered after how many passages of disillusion, sit on the same time-worn pedestals in the inner temple of our lives. We need the frequent and friendly touch of death to purge and clarify, to reject and elect for resurrection. Without death resurrection is not. Those boundaries and thresholds of the year which Nature crosses with such reverent feet we blindly and irreligiously overpass. Our spirits answer Nature with no Christmas birth, no Lenten crucifixion, no Easter resurrection. In the glitter of vestment and the cloud of incense we miss our Christmas and Easter meanings.

THE REFLECTION

BY ALICE MEYNELL



HE figure and the shadow have a companion, a third, a visiting creature who leaps from the mirror to the stream, is scattered and shattered by a ripple, turned to the most inventive burlesque by the minute distortions of a Neapolitan mirror, and restored to decorous precision and robbed of all its separate character and spirit by the perfect plate-glass of a London toilet-table.

It has not been said, apparently, that even the man who sold his shadow forfeited his reflection. And the reflection would be a far more dangerous thing to have astray and at large, more compromising. For if a reflection has and obeys any laws at all, they are not easy to find. Artists will tell you how you may do almost anything else by rule, but a reflection must be done by sight. It will insist upon having its painter out of doors, and upon putting him to the touch. A boat's wake on a smooth water will be so played with by its reflection as to disappoint conjecture and to delight the eye, which is a summary way of teaching the painter simplicity and vigilance. Its design is baffling at once and inevitable, and it does not show you why. The reflection is a flash, but its production is intricate. It cares not to be understood, but is quick to be seen. A child who has "done" a sum right, and holds the total, is not more innocent of the reasons of the way he and the figures have gone together than a landscape painter, who has captured a reflection, is ignorant of the reasons of that manifestation. The broken and sprinkled image of an ear, lasting for a moment, is as difficult a sign as the constellation, designed and composed, by intricate laws of stellar perspective, out of alien stars. But the one show is brief, and the other certainly does give the studious centuries a chance. It is the prettiest trick of reflection, this fracture and dismemberment, to be so smoothly repaired when the wave is still. A shred of the image of a flying wing of a sail is carried far upon

another wing—the wing of the ripple, flight to flight. The water distributes it, mingles it, turn by turn, with shreds and patches, curves and ribbons, of the reflected sky; tosses it far and catches it to the utmost. The image, so interrupted, goes wide, and all the interruptions are reflections of the sky.

We have not so many distinctions and definitions in our language that we can well be careless of those we have. Yet Wordsworth did much to confuse a very simple matter, with his "swan and shadow." There are turbid waters, indeed, upon which the swan casts a shadow, and a shadow full of the charm of slow rivers in fertile soil—rivers that carry the soil in their fruitful waters; but the shadow does not show the swan as floating double. Not such softly troubled waters were those of St. Mary's Lake. Wordsworth's swan was not shadowed, but reflected. And shadow and reflection are much unlike. The one plays no pranks, or plays them with a daily regularity, drawing the caricature that amused Cowper—drawing it so unfailingly at morning and evening, whenever the sun is out, that it is no small wonder it should amuse any man of Cowper's age and experience, at least to that degree. The shadow is faithful in movement, and at tether it is steady enough to make a sundial; whereas the reflection, when it is nature's own doing and not the upholsterer's, is subtle and sensitive, tremulous and fugitive, shy and mobile on water.

Nevertheless, Wordsworth must be forgiven his "shadow"; for he has made amends to the reflection by the loveliest line that ever described one:

"It trembled, but it never passed away."

This was in long, still weather. But let a wind come by, and the image is dispersible. No flock of wild birds is wilder, though this flock hovers within recall, and when the alarm is past closes and folds into its place again. A volley of broadest images flies deep and wide, but is gathered back to so much calm that the little town covering the island of the lake of Orta has the chance-growing grass on its high church belfry mirrored below. But the reflection and the thing reflected are not altogether alike. To complain of Wordsworth again, the swan does not float double. You never see water, however brilliant and pure, that gives back tone for tone. The reflection is always a little dimmer, and sensibly darker. In this it approaches the landscape of the mind's eye, though it has not quite the deepened sun of dreams.

Lovely as are the village, the high field in flower, the forest reflected in Como, in Avon, and in the Thames, all these waters—long rivers and broad seas—reflect nothing more wonderfully than a sail, except only the sun itself. A white sail at sea is more full of sun than any wind could fill it. The wind does but curve it to the utmost of its form, but the sun transforms it, so that it goes on the water a shining light. And that light the soft wave softly gives back.

It gives back a greater light—the cloud's. When there is bright cloudshine after a storm, or toward evening of a varied, electric day, the calm sea, seen from a height of coast, is a vision of the sky. Or see the waters under heavens that are blue to the east and golden to the west, and every separate ripple has also its eastern color and its western. Or on a common gray day, a Channel day, there is something generous and great in the universal grasp the mobile waters have taken of the light. It is shattered to bits, it is flung wide, it is intricate with fine shadows.

The earth, finally, and her innumerable waters, and man and his innumerable windows, have for their heart of reflection the image of the sun himself. While that image burns within every stream, within every sea, within every lake, within every pool and pond of this world, the earth seems to multiply the very center of life. She goes carrying suns. It is dazzling to think of that cargo, that treasury, those guests and sojourners, those strangers within her gates, who are but one and yet are so renewed and multiplied. Of all the mental visions of the earth this is the most brilliant. Suns lurk throughout her daylight; suns in her deep places; separate, single, and fervent. All the coolness of the summer contains these suns; they are the heart in the breast of waters. They lie in the ice of the North, round and still in the equatorial ocean, and broken into sparkles and spray by quicker seas. They are caught in the fjords. The tides swing them up the coast and out again.

The towns, moreover, light themselves with suns. A thousand replies to the sunset shine in the windows of the streets. Into a room looking to the west, the sunrise comes from windows across the street—a second-hand sunshine, but sweet enough to soften all the light and bright enough to cast tender shadows; it is a charming secondary sunshine with a look somewhat as though it shone through water, through shallow waves on a beach. The room has spirit from the moment those visiting rays gain ingress; and they do but come from windows that see the east. This is the best use that glass fulfills; and many an ugly guillotine sash, filled with cheap glass, and divided by black bars, has, by reflection, an ardent center of sun. The mere windows of towns reflect the authentic sun, while even the great moon's reflection is a manifest translation, an edition of the sun. The common mirrors of our own world carry his fire, dimmed but not altered.





MARJORIE IN THE SPRING

I said: This is the spring, Marjorie!
 But she never heard.
 I said: Here is the forest, Marjorie!
 But she never heard.
 I called: Come, to the storied,
 How fine they stand!
 But she never came.

I said: Where art thou, Marjorie?
 Dost thou not hear,
 O lie-a-bed, O sleepy-head,
 That spring is here?
 Come in your gown of gold & green
 To meet the King!

Three springs in vain to Marjorie this song I sing:
 But she never came, & she never heard,
 And she never will come,
 For Marjorie is dead - yes, dead is Marjorie,
 Yes, dead is she, & dumb.

Richard Le Gallienne





STUDY FOR THE FIGURE OF SAINT GABRIEL
BY JOHN LA FARGE FOR THE CHURCH OF THE
PAULIST FATHERS.

OUR NOTE-BOOK

BY EDGAR SALTUS



WILHELM I. is about to enter Valhalla. To do so it has been necessary for him to be well known, to be dead, and to have been dead ten years. All of which he has successfully accomplished. The Valhalla into which he is to enter is not that of Odin. To be received there the guest, were he jarl or were he king, must have preliminarily died in battle. That the old Kaiser omitted to do. The Valhalla to which he goes is not in the Eddas, it is in Ratisbon. It is his statue that goes there, not his ghost. This Valhalla is the modern Temple of Fame. But recently created—its originator was the Bavarian Ludwig—already it is the home of an inordinate number of mediocrities. In view of which there is no reason why we should not have one here. It would be packed in no time. Moreover, it might serve advantageously as an annex to the Academy which Mr. Warner recently planned. The immortals could pass from one to the other. But not back again. That would be too much of a good thing. There must be no nonsense, no return checks. Hosannas at the exit would suffice. Coincidentally there is no reason, either, why we should not have the real article. In time of war prepare for heroes. That is what Odin did. In his palace every day they had the delight of cutting each other to pieces, of drinking mead from curved horns and of being served by rapturous maidens. It would be hard to do as well by them as that. But at least, and in spite of the local debt limit which prevents our having a Library, we might have a Hall, some splendid corridor through which the coming generations could stroll and gaze at figures really great.

THE REVIVAL OF THE INQUISITION

Senator Thurston in his recent speech on Cuba expressed with considerable vehemence his horror of Spain. In the address of Senator Gallinger, which preceded it, as well as in the address of Senator Proctor, there was less vehemence, perhaps, but the horror was as marked. To these gentlemen it seemed abominable that Spain should be allowed to act as she has. But when has she not? The butchery which has been going on in Cuba is but a continuation of a practice, not immemorial perhaps, but sufficiently historic. It lacks the pomp of the auto-da-fé, it lacks, too, the smoke of the fagot. Otherwise it is the same thing, the extermination of those whose views differ from her own, the policy of the Inquisition. The birth of that institution occurred in Provence. It originated in the heresy known as that of the Albigenses. The Duke of Burgundy set out to destroy it. The problem arose how the heretics were to be distinguished from the orthodox. The Duke solved it in a minute. Deciding that God would know His own, he killed everybody. The simplicity of the proceeding appealed to Spain. There were a number of Jews there. There were also a number of Moors. Of both perhaps a million. They were not wanted. Torquemada, Ferdinand V. aiding, saw to it that they went. Under penalty of excommunication, it was forbidden to supply them with anything, to give them even bread. At first they were permitted to leave the country provided they left their possessions behind. The majority of those not starved to death were, Llorente says, garrotados y quemados, strangled and burned. The oven at Cordova is legendary. The condemned marched up in files. The people sat about and applauded them die. It was a festival, a function like the bullfight, one in which the crowd delighted. The utility of it being proved, it was maintained. Presently it was exported. Wherever Spain appeared so did the Inquisition. She established it in Mexico, in Peru, all through South America, and in the Philippines. Abolished sixty or seventy years ago, it took Weyler to revive it. The garrote and the fagot have been lost on the way, but the methods which Senator Thurston denounced are otherwise as effective.

THE VAGABOND AFAR

Professor Perrine's comet, which a fortnight ago was a hundred million miles away, and which at the time was decreasing the distance at the rate of a degree per diem, has been lightly assumed to be identical with the one which, occurring coincidentally with Caesar's death, was regarded as his soul on its journey to Olympus. But that comet, which since then has reappeared three times, is not yet due. Nor can it be the comet, technically known as Halley's, which in the middle of the fifteenth century flamed like a scimitar over Constantinople and threw Christendom into fits. Nor can it be the monster which in 1843 swooped suddenly into view, glowered like a dragon, lashed the stars, threatened the earth, and vanished. Nor can it be that prodigious sailer of the skies known as Donati's, which in 1858 shook out a pennant that flaunted fifty million miles in length. Nor can it be that striated serpent which three years later squirmed between the paws of the Great Bear and hissed at the sun. Nor is it that butterfly which in 1881 floated through the dawns of June. This comet is presumably a vagabond. But it is a comet all the same; and, vagabond or not, it will be a pity if it does not come nearer. Yet if it should, it might get disgusted at the spectacle which we present and retire. In that case who shall blame it?

A PORTENT OF WAR

Maupertuis, one of the pets that Frederick the Great kept in his menagerie of thinkers, maintained that comets are inhabited. After all, why not? Yet if so, are not their inhabitants to be envied? Fancy the delight of journeying not over the world, but over the universe, of junketing through the Milky Way, of passing from one system into another, and of exploring the uplands and wonder-plains of space. Maupertuis was an astronomer. He measured the earth. He was president of the Berlin Academy. He ought to have known what he was talking about. The idea exasperated Voltaire. He abused him to Frederick. Maupertuis abused Voltaire. "They take me for a sewer," said the fat monarch. Voltaire, however, was not to be hushed. He lampooned Maupertuis till mortification morbus set in and carried the poor devil off. Those were the good old days. But if comets are not inhabited, the excellence of their influence is undisputed. The wines of comet years are the wines to drink, though not the wines to pay for. Then, too, the alarm which they used to create has vanished with them. Buffon declared that the earth was a fragment struck from the sun by the shock of one of their onslaughts. The statement did not help matters. Anteriorly, Paré, describing the bleeding comet which appeared in his day,

says that so horrible was it and such terror did it engender that many fell sick and others died. Kepler said there are more of them in the sky than there are fish in the ocean. Arago must have seen and counted them all. He announced that they number 17,500,000. Even so, not merely are they beneficial, they are harmless. It is estimated that the weight of a comet a million leagues long could be borne by an infant in arms. A century ago one was seen to approach and envelop Jupiter. The latter did not mind in the least. In the circumstances, it will be regrettable if Professor Perrine's friend should have business elsewhere. A nice fat comet with a bushy tail is not only a fine sight, since astronomy began it has been a portent of war.

THE SPAIN OF THE EAST

Lord Salisbury is reported to be ill, and so, too, is England. The one is suffering from influenza and the other from China. The circumstance is curious in view of the fact that it is from the latter that the former came. The Chinese are the Spanish of the Orient. The attention which they pay to matters sanitary would enjoy an ample playground on the head of a pin. It has been their custom to throw refuse, dead children, and rotten food over their city walls. The Jerusalemites, it may be remembered, used to do pretty much the same thing, with the difference that they kept bonfires constantly burning. Their pet spot for this purpose was called Goggotha. That, however, is a detail. The point is that ten years ago the great banks on the Yang-tse-Kiang were sundered. In the floods that ensued the filth of ages was gathered by the current and churned into a poisonous scum. When the waters subsided the scum subsisted. From where it lay the action of the elements, after pulverizing it, drew it up in imperceptible clouds. The latter floated over the world, oozing, under certain atmospheric conditions, their toxic properties on earth. It has been assumed that the Black Death of the Middle Ages originated in the same place and in the same way. When Lord Salisbury feels better, and England does too, the sanitation of the Spain of the East will be in order.

THE CASE OF DRUCE versus BENTINCK

James Payn, who died a fortnight ago, and who for a number of years conducted a chronicle of men and things in the "London Illustrated News," succeeded in achieving the impossible. He made his ink flow more torrentially than Miss Braddon's. He was the author of a hundred novels and a thousand crimes. One of the earliest, published three decades ago, was called "Lost Sir Massingbird." It was the story of a most audacious baronet who, after various villainesses, vanished in a paragraph and reappeared as a skeleton in the trunk of a tree. It was a good story, but it might have been better. For that there is an excuse. The late Mr. Payn, in common with all other writers of fiction, labored under a malediction. Readers refuse to permit a novelist to deal with anything but the probable. The refusal is unrighteous. It is worse, it is stupid. The surprises of life transcend those of logic. The probable is always the imaginary. It is the improbable that occurs. The now celebrated case of Druce vs. Bentinck is one in point. If the allegations of the plaintiff are proven, and even if they are not, where is the shilling shocker that they don't knock into a cocked hat? The audaciousness and various villainies of the "Lost Sir Massingbird" become nursery pranks beside the grand masquerade of the last Duke of Portland. What is a skeleton in the trunk of a tree beside a coffin with old iron in it? Sir Massingbird contented himself with disappearing. He had to. The exigencies of fiction demanded that he should. Unhandicapped by any such nonsense, the Duke of Portland not merely disappeared, he disappeared into a tradesman, had himself die and be buried, and, reappearing, frightened his shopfolk to death. A story such as that has three charms, it combines the dramatic, the devilish, and the delicious. Extravagantly improbable, there is for that reason every presumption of its truth. It is a pity that Mr. Payn is not here to handle it. It would be just the thing for his Note-Book in the "Illustrated News."

THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

Mr. Whistler is, I hear, annoyed at the publication of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." This gentleman, it is reported, says that he threw it off several years ago, incidentally reciting it to the present lessee. Everything is possible, it may be true. But in that case how odd it is that Mr. Whistler has never appeared as a poet before. On his value as a prose-writer opinions vary. Verse, of course, is less difficult. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" may not be precisely that which I think I have seen somewhere described as first-chop, but it is the work of a trained writer. As an artist Mr. Whistler is impeccable. As a wit he is unique. But in his receipts for making enemies the stylist is not revealed. In the circumstances it is curious that when he threw off this little thing he did not stick it feather-fashion in his cap. So far as I am qualified to judge, Mr. Whistler's literature is like his art, impressionistic. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" is impressionistic in spots, but there is realism in it, too; there is drama as well—the drama of those "who live more lives than one," and who "more deaths than one must die." Mr. Whistler has not prepared us for anything such as that. He has shown that his pen can be very merry. He has not shown that it can be profound. He has shown that it can be agile, but not that it can be graphic. The verse which follows has not been manufactured, it has been lived:

"We have little care for prison fare,
For that which chills and kills outright
Is that every stone one lifts by day
Becomes one's heart at night."

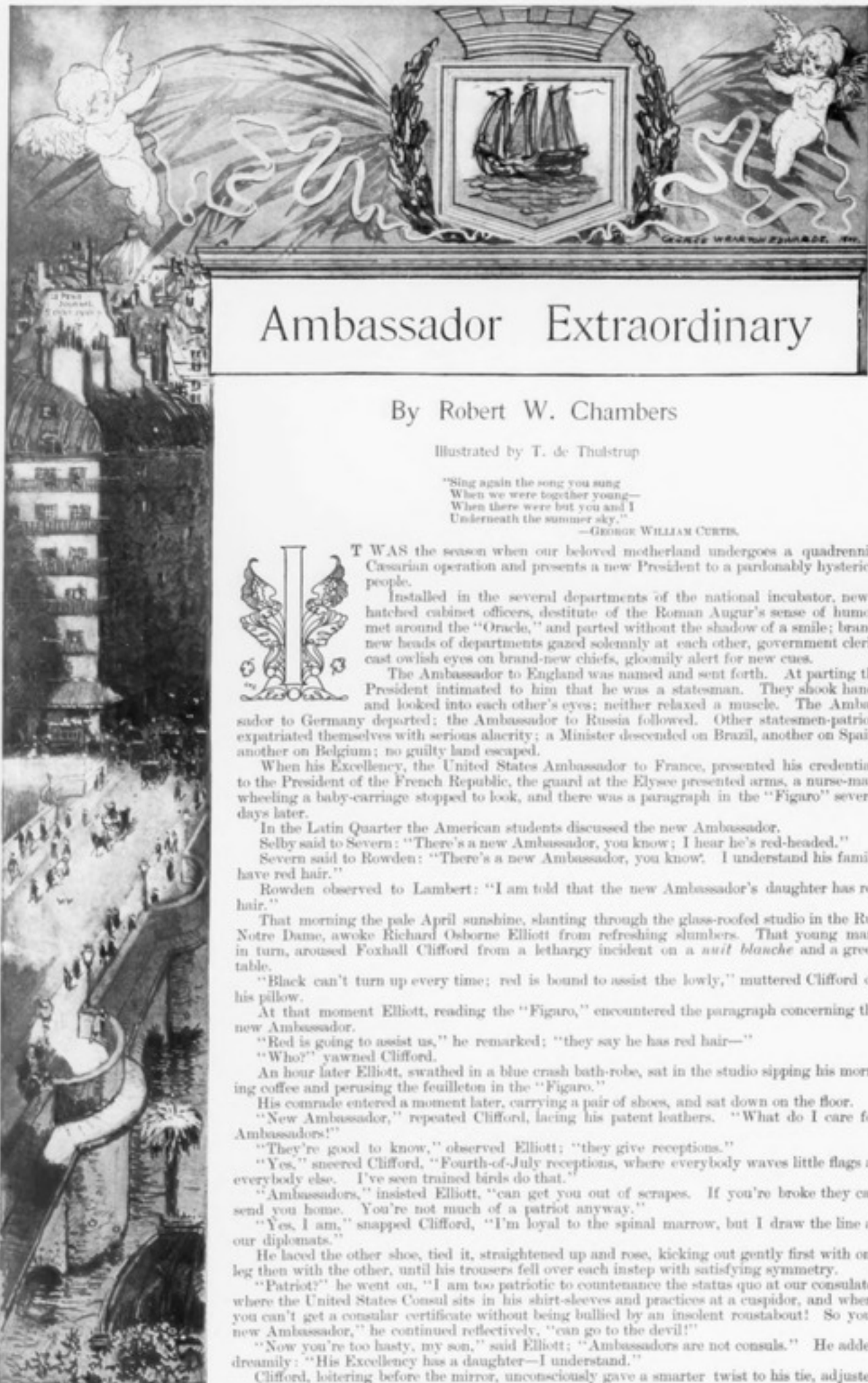
Mr. Whistler is far too debonair to produce anything of that kind. Then, also, the central idea that "all men kill the thing they love," which, though it looks like paradox, more closely resembles truth, is, in its nature, less caressing than the fancies with which hitherto he has charmed. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" may be a poor thing, yet, even otherwise, by a gentleman as rich as Mr. Whistler it ought not to be missed.

LEST DEATH FORGET

Mr. F. G. Kenyon has a charming occupation. It is the resuscitation of the dead. A trifle over a year ago the British Museum acquired from a Cairo dealer a bundle of papyrus. It consisted in about two hundred scraps. The latter were turned over to Mr. Kenyon, who pieced them together. The result was first the recovery of Aristotle's sketch of the Athenian Constitution, second, a scene from the Mimes of Herondas, and recently twenty poems of Bacchylides. Anything of Aristotle's is of value. Whether the others were worth the trouble is a matter of taste. There are bores who survive for no other reason than that Death has forgotten them; and, however Herondas may be regarded, Bacchylides belongs to that lot. These fragments belong to the dust-bins of literature. Chance pulled them out. Time will put them back.



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Ambassador Extraordinary

By Robert W. Chambers

Illustrated by T. de Thulstrup

"Sing again the song you sung
When we were together young—
When there were but you and I
Underneath the summer sky."

—GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.



IT WAS the season when our beloved motherland undergoes a quadrennial Caesarian operation and presents a new President to a pardonably hysterical people.

Installed in the several departments of the national incubator, newly hatched cabinet officers, destitute of the Roman Augur's sense of humor, met around the "Oracle," and parted without the shadow of a smile; brand-new heads of departments gazed solemnly at each other, government clerks cast owl eyes on brand-new chiefs, gloomily alert for new cues.

The Ambassador to England was named and sent forth. At parting the President intimated to him that he was a statesman. They shook hands and looked into each other's eyes; neither relaxed a muscle. The Ambassador to Germany departed; the Ambassador to Russia followed. Other statesmen-patriots expatriated themselves with serious alacrity; a Minister descended on Brazil, another on Spain, another on Belgium; no guilty land escaped.

When his Excellency, the United States Ambassador to France, presented his credentials to the President of the French Republic, the guard at the Elysee presented arms, a nurse-maid wheeling a baby-carriage stopped to look, and there was a paragraph in the "Figaro" several days later.

In the Latin Quarter the American students discussed the new Ambassador. Selby said to Severn: "There's a new Ambassador, you know; I hear he's red-headed." Severn said to Rowden: "There's a new Ambassador, you know. I understand his family have red hair."

Rowden observed to Lambert: "I am told that the new Ambassador's daughter has red hair."

That morning the pale April sunshine, slanting through the glass-roofed studio in the Rue Notre Dame, awoke Richard Osborne Elliott from refreshing slumbers. That young man, in turn, aroused Foxhall Clifford from a lethargy incident on a *nuil blanche* and a green table.

"Black can't turn up every time; red is bound to assist the lowly," muttered Clifford on his pillow.

At that moment Elliott, reading the "Figaro," encountered the paragraph concerning the new Ambassador.

"Red is going to assist us," he remarked; "they say he has red hair—"

"Who?" yawned Clifford.

An hour later Elliott, swathed in a blue crash bath-robe, sat in the studio sipping his morning coffee and perusing the feuilleton in the "Figaro."

His comrade entered a moment later, carrying a pair of shoes, and sat down on the floor.

"New Ambassador," repeated Clifford, lacing his patent leathers. "What do I care for Ambassadors?"

"They're good to know," observed Elliott; "they give receptions."

"Yes," sneered Clifford, "Fourth-of-July receptions, where everybody waves little flags at everybody else. I've seen trained birds do that."

"Ambassadors," insisted Elliott, "can get you out of scrapes. If you're broke they can send you home. You're not much of a patriot anyway."

"Yes, I am," snapped Clifford, "I'm loyal to the spinal marrow, but I draw the line at our diplomats."

He laced the other shoe, tied it, straightened up and rose, kicking out gently first with one leg then with the other, until his trousers fell over each instep with satisfying symmetry.

"Patriot?" he went on, "I am too patriotic to countenance the status quo at our consulate, where the United States Consul sits in his shirt-sleeves and practices at a cuspidor, and where you can't get a consular certificate without being bullied by an insolent roustabout! So your new Ambassador," he continued reflectively, "can go to the devil!"

"Now you're too hasty, my son," said Elliott; "Ambassadors are not consuls." He added dreamily: "His Excellency has a daughter—I understand."

Clifford, loitering before the mirror, unconsciously gave a smarter twist to his tie, adjusted



AS THE AMBASSADOR TROTTED ABOUT, MAULING THE LAWN . . . A YOUNG LADY APPEARED

From "Ambassador Extraordinary"—the opposite page

his hair with precision, and buttoned the snowy waistcoat in silence. When he was ready, gloved, hatted, and faultlessly groomed, he selected a modest white blossom from a pot of fragrant pinks on the window and drew it through the lapel of his morning coat.

"Going to see Jacquette?" asked Elliott, pouring out more coffee.

"No," replied Clifford. He hummed a bar of a wedding march, strolled to the great glass window, mused a moment, sighed, whistled softly, and sighed again. There was a cock-sparrow out in the garden, hopping around, chirping and trailing his dusty wings through the gravel. A lady sparrow pecked him at intervals. The innocent courtship of the little things stirred Clifford with amorous wistfulness. He flattened his nose against the window glass and watched them, gently humming the while in an undertone:

The fox and the bear,
The squirrel and the hare,
The ducky-bird up in the tree,
The roly-poly rabbits,
So amusing in their habits,
They all have a mate but me,
but me!

Elliott listened scornfully. He knew the symptoms. "Why the deuce," said Clifford, twisting suddenly around, "why the deuce should I go to school and paint cheap Italian models on a day like this?"

"You haven't been to the atelier in a week," said Elliott morosely. "Oh, I know what you're going to say! You're going to tell me that spring starts the bird of sentiment—"

"No, I'm not," retorted Clifford.

"You are! And you're going to tell me that you've seen the most wonderful girl in the Luxembourg, who must be some foreign countess—? Don't I know! Haven't I heard it a thousand times? And hasn't the countess always turned up with you at some cheap restaurant—"

Clifford sat down on a stool and pointed his cane toward the floor. Squinting along it at a spot of sunlight on the velvety Eastern rug, he listened in silence to Elliott's reproaches until they ceased.

"Have you finished?" he asked.

Elliott girded up his bath-robe and moved off.

"Because," continued Clifford, "I have a proposition to make."

"Make it then," said Elliott, scowling.

"Then sit down."

Elliott squatted Turk fashion on a divan, saying bitterly: "Last week you swore you were going to work hard; you moaned and protested that you had been wasting your time. Now go on with your proposition; but I'll not be a party to any new infatuation, let me tell you."

Clifford began to walk up and down the studio, gloved hands clasped behind his back, head thoughtfully bent as far as his collar permitted. As he walked he twiddled his cane and whistled the wedding march with enthusiasm.

"Well?" inquired Elliott sarcastically. "What's your proposition?"

Clifford came up to him and stood a moment in silence. Then he said: "Elliott, suppose we get married to twins?"

"Married!" howled Elliott in angry astonishment.

"Irretrievably," continued Clifford gently. "Suppose we go into the thing thoroughly. Suppose we become respectable?"

"I am," broke out Elliott, but the other held up five expostulating gloved fingers.

"In a way—yes, in a way. But do you know what I think? I think no man is absolutely and hopelessly respectable unless he has a wife! Elliott, a wife—a little wife!"

"You make me ill," replied Elliott, rising from the divan. "And let me inform you I don't want a wife. I'm well enough as I am, if anybody should ask you. Let go of my bath-robe; I'm going to paint."

"Think," urged Clifford. "Think of being really and legally married; think of the joyful anguish; no more suppers, no more Buller, no more tring! la! la!"

He removed his silk hat, skipped playfully, and pretended to kick it.

"But," he continued, with sudden soberness, "a wife—a little wife is recompense for all pleasure—"

"Antidote, you mean."

"No, I don't! Joy is born from the nuptial blessing. I want to wed and I want to wed right away."

"Who? What?"

"A lovely spirituelle, delicate vision—unworldly and—er—passably provided for—"

"By you?"

"Partly by me, partly by an adoring father: a fine silvery-haired old patrician, borne down by the weighty cares of his millions. Do you know any of that kind, Elliott?"

"I know some silvery-haired patricians tottering under the weight of millions—yes."

"With daughters?"

"Never asked 'em."

"What about the new Ambassador? You said his daughter—"

Elliott turned his head sharply, then laughed.

"Oh, he's tottering under millions, but his hair is red, and I think that hers—"

"You annoy me," said Clifford, and left the studio. He paused in the garden, sniffed at the lilacs, eyes raised in pious contemplation of the firmament.

"Nevertheless," he said to himself, "red hair or silver hair—I'm not bigoted on the silver question. And," he added with sprightly humor, "it's 16 to 1 I call on his Excellency before the week is out."

II

His Excellency the United States Ambassador was a sheep-faced old gentleman who became hopelessly mixed up in some railroads and escaped with impaired health and most of the stock. Wheat hit him hard a year later, and oil nearly ended him, but he became entangled in trolley wires and put them underground to save future annoyance to his legs. This naturally set him on his feet again; and he went to Washington, where there is honor among financiers, and where they practice statesmanship as she is taught. When his wife died and his daughter Amyce began to go to school, his future Excellency bobbed up and down in Congress with the caprice and abruptness of a bottled imp. The see-saw continued year after year; sometimes he had a bill passed, sometimes he blocked a bill; now and then he got other people's money, now and then other people got his money; but it evened up in the end like dominoes—if you play long enough.

Then came the new administration, the stampede for office. Before his future Excellency made up his own mind fate shoved him into the front rank, and he asked for the French mission and the odds were against him. The President weighed him—the scales of the mint are exquisitely adjusted—and, separating the dross from the pure metal, the mind from the material, the President found him available for the diplomatic mission and told him he might have it. So he took it and went.

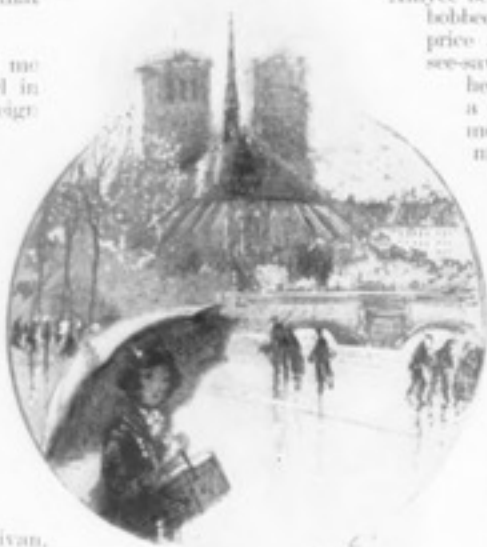
His Excellency's income permitted him to keep up his establishment in the Rue de Stax. Two neat attaches, military and naval, played croquet with him; his first secretary read Ollendorf to him, his daughter played hostess on National holidays, and Massenet every morning from ten to twelve. From three to four she swung in a hammock in the garden, and read Henry James.

It was at that hour and under those circumstances that Clifford first met Amyce. He was permitting his Excellency to beat him at croquet. He sat on the butt-end of his mallet, watching his Excellency pattering about from wicket to wicket, adjusting the balls with a chuckle, stooping to peer through wickets, calculating angles and split-shots.

His Excellency's heavy sheep-like face, with its silvery tuft of side-whiskers, was ruddy and minutely shaved. Always scrupulously dressed, he had the air of having been neatly attired by a doll's costumer, then varnished. There was something about the old gentleman that recalled the irresponsible inertia of a manikin—something, when he moved, that resembled the automatic trot of a marionette. He left an impression of not being responsible for either his clothes or his movements, but mutely referred you to his maker for guarantees that both were O.K. His hair was the glossy white that red hair frequently changes to; his eyes were pale hazel, lumbent and vitreous as the eyes of a middle-aged sheep. His upper lip, also, looked as though it were intended for cropping short grass.

He had taken to Clifford at once; he introduced him to the naval attaché and to the military attaché, to the First, Second and Third Secretaries of the Embassy. He did this partly because Clifford came armed with three good letters of introduction, partly because the United Service began to fight shy of the croquet-ground and a substitute was necessary.

He did not, however, present him to his daughter; in fact Clifford had never even caught a glimpse of her, although on two occasions he had been bidden to dine at the Embassy. Stanley of the cavalry, the military attaché, had been pumped by Clifford without result. All he learned was that the young lady sometimes dined by herself.



However, that afternoon in early May, as Clifford sat glum and impatient on his mallet, and the Ambassador trotted about manning the lawn and chuckling, a young lady suddenly appeared under the trees by the hammock, glanced nonchalantly at his Excellency, languidly surveyed Clifford, and then, placing a hammock pillow where it would do the most good, sat down in the hammock herself. It was gracefully done; she appeared to dissolve among a cloud of delicate draperies; her head indented the feather cushion; one small patent-leather toe glistened in the sunlight.

"She is red-haired," was Clifford's first thought; the next was: "She is a beauty! Oh, my conscience!"

She was. Her eyes were those great tender gray eyes that must have been forgotten when Saint Anthony was tortured; her skin was snow and roses. But her hair, her splendid glistening hair, heavy as red gold!—dazzling as sunlight on floss-silk!

"It's your shot," said his Excellency for the third time.

The Ambassador won the game; he proposed another, and Clifford assented with a sickly smile. Inwardly he swore that he should be presented, willy-nilly, even though he had to drag his Excellency to the hammock.

"Confound him," he thought, "have rumors of my reputation in the Quarter penetrated my country's Embassy?"

They had not; yet it was exactly because Clifford was an artist and inhabited the Latin Quarter that the Ambassador avoided taking him to the bosom of his family. Vague and dreadful stories had been afloat in the Embassy concerning the Quarter and they who dwelt therein. His Excellency had read "Trilby" too. This may have weighed with him; he had that distrust of art and artists prevalent among Anglo-Saxons. He also had the Anglo-Saxon desire to explore the Quarter for himself one day, if all was true as rumor had it. Therefore Clifford was doubly welcome, for his croquet and for what the future promised when his Excellency needed a discreet guide to the veiled mysteries of the Rive Gauche. So, on the whole, Clifford was a good man to amuse him, but not at all the kind of man to amuse Amyce.

But Fate, busy, as usual, with other people's business, began to meddle with the hammock cords where Amyce swung serenely reading Henry James.

Amyce rose just in time; there came a rapid unraveling of cords, and the collapsed hammock fell with a flop.

Flushed at the nearness of undignified disaster, Amyce shook out her fluffy skirts, Henry James tightly clasped in one hand, and looked appealingly at his Excellency.

The Ambassador started to rehang the hammock; Clifford said: "Permit me—"

"Not at all," returned the Ambassador; but that was where he collided with Fate.

Amyce smiled and looked relieved; Clifford rehung the hammock; Amyce thanked him.

Then there was a pause, during which both looked expectantly at his Excellency.

The Ambassador sullenly did his duty and took Clifford back to the lawn and beat him five games of croquet. But even this triumph was wet-blanketed, for Amyce, holding Henry James to her chin, came out to the lawn to "watch papa" and encourage "papa," and condole with Clifford for his bad fortune. Only he knew how good that fortune had been, and, perhaps, she suspected it.

Amyce suggested tea on the lawn; his Excellency began to object, but Fate was there and took another fall out of his Excellency, for Amyce had already ordered it, and a servant appeared with tables and trays on the porch.

The Ambassador cropped thin slices of bread-and-butter; Amyce poured tea; Clifford, in a daze of love, saw everything through pink haze. From this dream he was abruptly roused by the advent of Captain Stanley of the cavalry. He saw Amyce feed the brute with tea; he heard her laugh softly when the captain told some imbecile story or imitated Count Fantozzi. He measured the captain, he accorded him six feet two, a pair of superb legs, and a cavalry mustache.

"Granted him curls and spades," thought Clifford, "I'll beat him yet. I know I can."

He was an honest youth, with no more vanity than you or I.

III

IN the Quarter Clifford's attitude became unbearable. Rumors were afloat that he had outgrown the Quarter and its simple but lurid pleasures; that he had put away childish things; that he consorted exclusively with the glittering great. When garden-parties were given at the English Embassy, Clifford's

name figured among the guests—and the Quarter read it in the "Figaro" and chafed.

Elliott, incredulous at first, observed the absence of Clifford from all Quarter rites with astonishment and grief. The studio grew lonelier and lonelier. Elliott sulked and drank cocktails and brooded.

"See here," he blurted out one day, "how long are you going to keep this up?"

"What?" replied Clifford, airily placing violets in his button-hole.

"This confounded pose of yours—this tolerating the Quarter—this Embassy nonsense!"

"I prefer it to Bullier," said Clifford—"or," he added maliciously, "to the 'Bal à l'Hôtel-de-Ville.'"

Then he put on his gloves, humming reflectively:

*"Des chapeaux nœud et des chapeaux rond!
Dame! c'est pas à la petit hère!—eu!
Tous ces yeux là
Il's ont piqué ça
A la Belle Jardinière!—eu!"*

Elliott arose in fury:

"Very well," he said, "go and eat thin bread-and-butter and talk to fat Austrian princesses!—go and learn hucarrat from that yellow mummy, Fantozzi!—go and play imbecile croquet games with his Excellency and marry his daughter and live in the Parc Monceaux! But you'll regret it!—oh, yes, you'll be sorry. And you'll think of the Luxembourg and of Jacquette and the old studio, and you'll hear a nursery full of babies squawling, and you'll see Fantozzi leering at your wife and—"

Clifford smiled indulgently, looking around with gently-raised eyebrows.

"I won't be back to dinner," he said amiably.

"Where are you going—dressed like that!" burst out Elliott with new violence.

"Going to shoot pigeons in the Bois with Count Routier—and his Excellency."

They stood for a while in silence. Presently Elliott arose, went over to his manikin, and began to dress it; the manikin, at present, was doing duty as a French fireman for Elliott's great picture, "Saved!"

He mechanically placed the brass pot-helmet on the manikin's papier-mâché head, twisted the neck viciously, straightened out a sawdust stuffed arm, placed a rope in the hand and closed the jointed fingers. Then he heaved out his easel, opened his color-box, and clattered the brushes ostentatiously.

Clifford watched him.

Elliott set his palette rainbow fashion, touched the canvas with the tip of his third finger, rolled a badger brush in rose-doree, and began to "glaze."

"Don't glaze yet," said Clifford.

"Why?" snapped Elliott without turning.

"Because you make the flames too pink."

"What do you know about flames or pictures or glazing?" said Elliott bitterly. "Go and shoot pigeons and get married."

Clifford went out haughtily; yet there was an unaccustomed pang in his breast. He suddenly realized how utterly "out of it" he was; he began to comprehend that he was afloat on the Rubicon in a very leaky boat. There was nothing to warrant his hopes of Amyce except a superb self-confidence. He saw he was alienating the Quarter; he noticed it now, as he walked, when Selby passed with a constrained smile, when Lambert bowed to him with unaccustomed rigidity, when, as he crossed the Luxembourg, Jacquette, passing with Marianne Dupois, averted her pretty eyes.

"Can't have my cake and eat it too," he mused; "might as well make up my mind to the joys of exile."

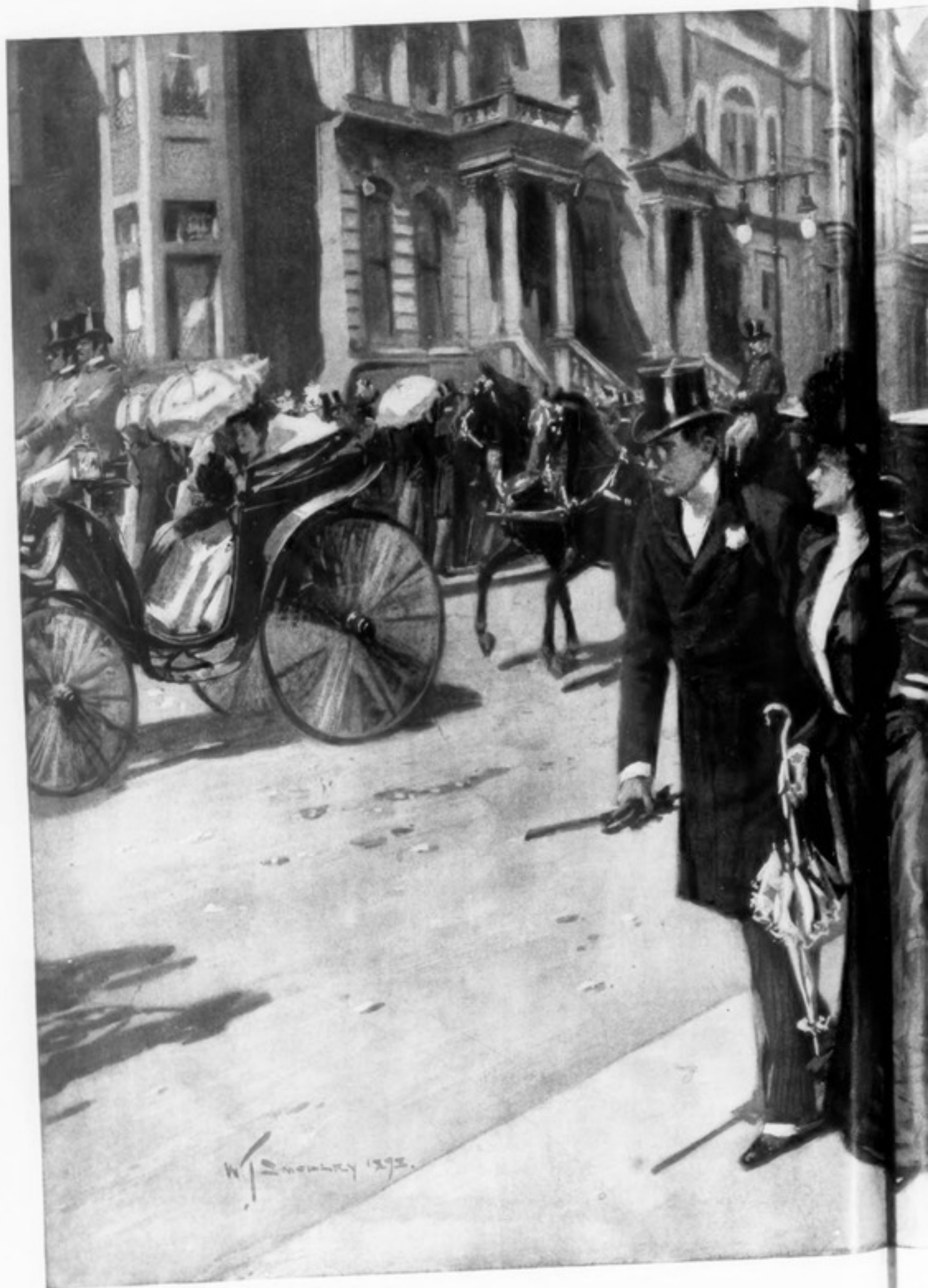
He knew that an announcement of his engagement would be followed by excommunication from the Quarter as he had known it. He had intended, in the event of betrothal, to confine his Quarter visits to Elliott and Selby and Rowden, but the prospect of involuntary exclusion had small attraction for him. He thought of Jacquette; the odor of violets from a street flower-stand recalled her.

He was in a bad humor when he reached the Tir aux Pigeons. Before he entered he saw Captain Stanley laughing on the lawn with Amyce. That, and the apparition of Fantozzi, completed his irritation and his score at the trips was ridiculous.

"You play croquet better," observed his Excellency, at his elbow.

That was the last straw, and Clifford forced a smile and went across the lawn to fight the good fight with Stanley and Fantozzi.





William J. Snedley, 1892.



A SPRING MORNING ON UPPER FIFTH AVENUE

"What was your score?" asked Amyce, looking up at him from the shade of her white parasol.

He was compelled to confess it.

Fantozi, interrupted in the recount of recent personal experience with an electric tramcar, raised his eyebrows superciliously.

"Pooh!" said Captain Stanley, "everybody gets out of form at times."

Clifford looked gratefully at his generous rival; Amyce also raised her eyes to the well-knit military figure. Generosity is sometimes its own reward—sometimes it even receives perquisites.

Fantozi continued his dramatic recital of the discourteous tramcar.

"I would come in a tram électrique—Mademoiselle—behold me on the corner street!—the tram approach!—I nod my head!—he do not hear me!"

"Couldn't hear you nod your head?" inquired Stanley sympathetically.

"Wonder his brains didn't rattle," muttered Clifford to himself.

"I nod! I nod!" repeated Fantozi with mercurial passion; "I permit myself to make observation to stop! Cease! arrest ze tram! He regard me insolent! the tram vanishes itself! I am left there on the corner street! The miserable he laugh!"

"Are you sure you called to the motorman to stop?" asked Stanley gravely.

"Parbleu! I did say stop! I said it! I did hear myself say it!"

"Then," observed Amyce seriously, "the guilt of the railroad company is established. Mr. Clifford, who is shooting?" She raised her lorgnettes. "Oh, Count Routier! Do you know I am not pleased to see little birds shot? Captain Stanley, it is your turn next. Have you no pity for those poor pigeons?"

"Monsieur Clifford had," said Count Fantozi.

Amyce frowned a little; Fantozi, prepared to laugh at his own wit, winced at the silence.

"Well," said Stanley, "I must go and perform. Shall I miss every bird—is it your pleasure?" he added, looking at Amyce.

Amyce smiled; her face was an enigma.

"Do as you please; I wish you good luck in any event," she said.

Fantozi pretended to shudder for the pigeon victims; Stanley walked thoughtfully across the lawn; Clifford, on fire with mixed emotions of jealousy and love, pretended to be absorbed in the shooting. He glanced indifferently at the gayly dressed groups on the green, recognized some people and bowed, returned the salutes of other people who recognized him, and finally sat down on a campstool near Amyce.

Others were joining the group; a lieutenant of hussars, in sky-blue and silver, a brilliant-eyed diplomatic group from Brazil, one or two tall Englishmen, scrubbed pink, and finally his Excellency the United States Ambassador.

Clifford loathed them all; yet, Amyce was very kind to him. While Captain Stanley stood shooting, she scarcely glanced at the traps, and when that sober-faced young cavalier sauntered back and confessed he had killed every bird, she scarcely raised her eyebrows. Was it displeasure?

"It is but a sport brutal," whispered Fantozi close behind her.

"Like your bullfights," said Clifford seriously. He and Stanley were quits. It was war with Fantozi.

The Spanish attaché with the Italian name glared blankly at Clifford, who returned his glance wickedly.

"Croquet is better sport," bleated his Excellency, accepting a glass of champagne and a thin slice of bread-and-butter.

Clifford's turn came again at the traps; he missed right and left. He heard Fantozi laugh. When he came back Amyce had gone away with his Excellency and Captain Stanley. However, Fantozi was there, and Clifford succeeded in picking a quarrel with him and followed it with a smile and the slightest touch on the Count's shirt-front.

Fantozi turned a delicate green, then crimson. Then he went away to the clubhouse and called for a cab, and drove to his Embassy at a speed that interested pedestrians along the Champs Elysee.

Clifford withdrew a little later to the Cafe Anglais, where he sullenly brooded and dined too freely. About nine o'clock, he went to see Stanley; at half-past ten a handsome young Spaniard called to pay his respects and bring courteous greetings from Fantozi.

Clifford left the Spaniard and Stanley deeply interested in each other's society, and took a cab to the United States Embassy, where, as an artist, he was to oversee the decorative preparations for next evening's garden-party. His Excellency had requested it; Amyce appeared pleasantly cordial; so Clifford went to direct the hanging of lanterns and gayly colored scarfs and, incidentally, to propose marriage to his Excellency's only daughter.

His Excellency was smoking a cigar on the lawn as Clifford

entered, mentally thanking all the saints that it was too late to play croquet. Servants moved through the shrubbery; a few lanterns threw an orange light among the chestnut branches.

His Excellency was in good humor; he pattered about, as though driven by improved mechanism; he chuckled at times that irritating chuckle incident to victory at croquet.

"We'll have electric lights next week," he said; "ever play croquet by moonlight?"

"There is no moon to-night," said Clifford, subduing his wrath with a pained smile.

"I know it," sighed his Excellency.

Presently the Ambassador exhibited a desire to interfere with Clifford's directions to the servants; he insisted on mounting a ladder and fussing with a string of crimson lanterns. The First, Second, and Third Secretaries of the Embassy were summoned to steady the ladder; Clifford saw an opportunity and seized it.

Amyce, who had been standing on the porch, observed Clifford's advance with mixed sentiments.

"Are all the lanterns hung?" she asked.

"No," said Clifford, "his Excellency has proposed modifications."

"Man proposes—" began Amyce gayly, then stopped.

The silence was startling.

Presently Amyce picked a rose from the vine at her elbow.

"Is it mine?" asked Clifford.

"Yours? I—I don't know."

She held it a moment, then he took it.

"And the giver?" he whispered.

"I—I don't know," said Amyce.

"Then," said Clifford, "I shall take her—as I took the rose;" and he moved toward her up the steps.

At that moment Fate, who had been listening as usual, somewhere among the shadows, took a hand in the proceedings; there was a crunch of footsteps on the gravel walk, the dim glimmer of a cigar, and Captain Stanley entered the house, bowing pleasantly to Amyce and casting a look at Clifford that meant, "Follow me."

Before Clifford could move, Amyce passed him with a pale smile and crossed the lawn toward the lantern-hangers.

His emotions were indescribable; he damned Stanley, then, buoyed with the intoxicating thought that Amyce had not refused him, he went into the house and found Stanley waiting in the smoking-room.

"Well," said Clifford ungraciously.

Stanley looked a little surprised, but said: "I'm sorry you are in this mess, old fellow. Fantozi naturally wants a shot at you."

An unpleasant sensation passed through Clifford; Fantozi and his shot were repulsive at the moment.

"When?" asked Clifford.

"To-morrow at sunrise. I've notified Bull."

Clifford grew angry. "Then he can have his shot," he said savagely, and sat down for a conference, interrupted about eleven o'clock by his Excellency.

The Ambassador was in no mood for bed. Perhaps something in the lighted lanterns had roused the long-smoldering spark of revelry, dormant in every masculine bosom. Being an Anglo-Saxon, he knew of no lighter gaiety than heavy drinking. He began to tell stories—quite pointless tales—and he would not let Clifford go, and he spoke vaguely of wonderful brands of whisky past and whisky to come. He sat there, his limpid hazel eyes meeker than any lambkin's—a carefully dressed lay-figure, irresponsible to God and man, and for whom nobody was responsible except his constructor.

About midnight he became entirely automatic; his eyes seemed to plead for somebody to wind him up and set him going again.

"When he gets this way he has a tendency to wander," whispered Stanley; "I usually lock him in his room; if I didn't he'd be all over town—like an escaped toy."

Clifford went out on the porch; Stanley followed.

"At sunrise," said Clifford soberly. "Will you call for me in a carriage?"

"At sunrise," replied Stanley, offering his hand.

Then Clifford went away, and Stanley, lingering to watch him to the gate, walked slowly back to the smoking-room.

To his horror his Excellency had disappeared. The west porch door swung wide open.

"He'll be all over Paris!" groaned Stanley, smiting his head with both hands.

IV

CLIFFORD did not go back to the studio; he took a long drive in a cab to steady his nerves. He alternately thought of Amyce, of Fantozi, of his Excellency's incoherent stories, of Elliott and the studio—and, perhaps, of Jacquette. Two hours before dawn he found himself standing in front of Sylvain's, and, wondering why he had wandered there, he went in and upstairs. The long glittering room reeked with cigar smoke; voices rose harshly from the disordered tables; a piano tinkled faintly on the floor above. He looked at his watch; it lacked half an hour of the



appointed time when he was to meet Stanley with the carriage at the studio. He turned toward the portal impatiently; somebody entered as he opened the leather doors; he looked up, and met his Excellency face to face.

His Excellency began a mechanical trot into the room; Clifford involuntarily detained him, and the Ambassador stopped obediently as though somebody had arrested his running-geer. He examined Clifford with wild vitreous eyes, as though he had never before seen him. He was perfectly docile, perfectly contented to be started again in any new direction. He needed a few repairs and revarnishing; Clifford saw that at once. It would never do to send his Excellency home with such a hat and collar and tie; the personnel at the Embassy must never see his Excellency in such disorder.

"Come," said Clifford gently. There was a cab at the door; he stowed his Excellency away in one corner and followed, ordering the caddy to hasten to the studio in the Rue Notre Dame. There was not much time to lose when they reached the studio. Clifford attempted to adorn his Excellency with clean linen, but found that it might take some hours, as the machinery had run down and the Ambassador evinced an unmistakable inclination to slumber. He seated his Excellency in an armchair, and hurriedly changed his own evening dress for morning clothes. Then he went up to Elliott's bedroom, but that young man's bed was untenanted and undisturbed. The Ambassador slept peacefully in the studio; after a moment's thought, Clifford scribbled a note:

"DEAR ELLIOTT.—When you come in please give this gentleman clean linen and a new hat and brush his clothes and send him to the United States Embassy p. d. q. Yours, CLIFFORD."

As he finished he heard carriage wheels in the street outside and he thrust the note into his Excellency's hat-band, jammed the hat on the slumbering diplomat's head, and hurried out to the street, where Stanley and Bull were waiting in the dim gray of the coming dawn.

"Not had coffee?" exclaimed Bull; "nonsense, it's traditional! Might as well have salad without dressing as pistols without coffee."

"We'll take it at St. Cloud," said Stanley. "Are you ready, old fellow?"

The carriage door slammed, the wheels rattled faster and faster.

"By the way," said Clifford, "his Excellency paid me a visit this morning. I'll see he gets home in good shape."

"Thank Heavens!" cried Stanley; "I've been hunting him all night!"

A moment later he looked earnestly at Clifford. "Is your hand steady?"

"Yes," said Clifford pleasantly.

"You'd better shoot closer than you did at the pigeons," suggested Bull.

"Why? Is Fantozzi a good shot?"

"Rotten," said Stanley.

"He's the more to be feared then," observed Bull cynically.

"Why, you know," confessed Clifford with a frank smile, "I feel certain that I'm not going to be hit. I was nervous last night, but not on that account." And he smiled confidently, thinking of Amyes.

"But," insisted Bull, "are you going to hit your man?"

"Perhaps. What bosh it all is anyway," laughed Clifford.

V

It was not yet sunrise when Elliott, entering the studio with Selby, lighted the gas and started to prepare for bed. They had had a protracted conference with Lambert and Rowden concerning Clifford's case. They had wept over his degeneracy, they had deplored his abandonment of the Quarter and all its works. Toward midnight Selby became poetic and recited "Just for a handful of silver he left us." Rowden denounced the aristocracy of the Rive Droite that had poured honeyed words into Clifford's ear and weaned him from the Quarter. It was a solemn rite, a species of wake over the memory of the Clifford they had once known.

"He never comes home now," said Elliott with emotion, as dawn broke through the smoky candlelight. "Come on, Selby; you can sleep in his bed."

They drank once more to the memory of that Clifford whom they had known—that gay, careless, fickle friend so dear to all and who cost them all so dear. Then Elliott and Selby said good-by and went back to the studio in the Rue Notre Dame. As Elliott turned up the gas, Selby encountered the owl-like eyes of his Excellency, blinking, limpid, vacant.

"What's that?" he said nervously. Then when he saw the evening dress, the disordered tie, the hat, he approached the Ambassador with anger in his eye. Elliott started to speak, but Selby stopped him with a gesture. Presently he reached up, slipped the note from his Excellency's hat-band, opened it, and read it in silence, then passed it to Elliott without a word.

"May I ask, sir, who you are?" said Elliott furiously. His Excellency bleated and waited, for somebody to set him in motion, with placid confidence. Elliott turned scarlet. This, then, was one of those villains who had lured Clifford from the fold!

—This wicked old creature, apparently paralyzed by depravity, planted in an armchair! His ruffled hat accused him! His crumpled tie, coyly peeping from behind one ear, convicted him!

"Call a cab," said Elliott thickly.

His Excellency betrayed no emotion; his round eyes followed Elliott's movements with trustful tranquillity. When Selby returned, saying the cab was there, Elliott assisted the Ambassador to his feet; but what was his surprise and indignation to see that his Excellency was entirely capable of movement. For, once set in motion, the Ambassador began trotting all about the room with perfect solemnity and apparently with keen satisfaction.

"I beg your pardon," said Elliott angrily, "your cab is waiting." He might as well have talked to the statues in the Louvre. Then he lost his self-control, and, taking his Excellency by one sleeve, he led him to the armchair and seated him.

"Aged man," he said, "are you not ashamed! You have dragged my comrade into your depraved society! You've taken him away from the Latin Quarter, you've stuffed his head full of marriage nonsense, of ambition, of desire for wealth and position. How dare you come here and ask for a hat and a collar!"

"Do you intend to ruin Clifford at baccarat?" demanded Selby.

"Or marry him to anybody?" added Elliott hoarsely.

"Who are you?" cried Selby; "are you a corrupt diplomat? or are you merely a wicked old man on a spree?"

"He can't wear that hat; it won't stay on," observed Elliott. Selby took a woman's bonnet from the manikin, placed it on his Excellency's head and tied the strings under his chin. Elliott threw Clifford's covert-coat over his Excellency's shoulders.

"That bonnet will keep him from catching cold," he said; "it may teach him a lesson too, when his wife sees it."

His Excellency, unmoved, serene, surveyed Elliott from under his bonnet.

"Come," said Selby coldly, and they set the Ambassador in motion again, out the door, along the garden to the street where the cab stood. The caddy stared a little, but Elliott said grimly: "Take him to the United States Embassy with Mr. Clifford's compliments. And leave word that he can keep the bonnet for future use."

About that time, several miles away in the forest of St. Cloud, Clifford was taking careful aim at Fantozzi's anatomy, and Fantozzi was returning the attention. A moment later two insignificant reports broke the silence; both men, very pale, stood motionless; two tiny shreds of smoke floated upward through the tender foliage above.

Captain Stanley turned to Fantozzi's second, then conferred for a moment, then Stanley turned away to avoid a smile and went hastily up to Clifford.

"He says he doesn't want another shot; he says honor is satisfied. Look out, I believe he's preparing to embrace you!"

In vain Clifford attempted to shun the fervid reconciliation, in vain he dodged Fantozzi's tears and hugs. Fantozzi would not leave him, not he! Although Clifford escaped a kiss aimed at his cheek.

There were compliments from seconds, from the surgeon, from the principals. Undismayed, Stanley tackled the process-verbal. Bull locked up his instruments, the carriages were summoned by handkerchief signal; the duel was at an end. Gayly they drove back to breakfast—a red-hot Spanish breakfast at Fantozzi's apartments. They toasted each other, they toasted the two nations, Spain and the United States.

Stanley, obliged to report at his Embassy, excused himself and promised to return. The breakfast continued; Fantozzi played exquisite Spanish airs on the guitar between courses; his handsome attache accompanied him on the piano.

Bull, tactless to the backbone, sang "Cuba Libre," but nobody cared and everybody laughed. Afternoon came; they still breakfasted. Fantozzi insisted on a bout with the foils; Clifford accepted; they broke a handsome vase and some saucers.

About four o'clock, while Bull was singing "Cuba Libre" for the eleventh time by special request, Stanley entered, glanced gravely around, and motioned Clifford to come outside. Clifford went, closing the door behind him, troubled by the stony solemnity of Stanley's visage. "What's up?" he inquired.

"This," said Stanley, with inscrutable eyes. "His Excellency was sent home in a cab this morning wearing a woman's bonnet and your covert-coat!"

"What!" gasped Clifford.

"Also with your compliments and a request that his Excellency keep the bonnet for future use."

Cold sweat broke out on Clifford's brow.

"It's Elliott!" he moaned. "It's Elliott's work! O Heaven, he didn't know what he was doing!" Stanley was silent.

"I'll go to the Embassy," cried Clifford. "I'll go now."

"Better not," said Stanley kindly. There was a pause.

"Does—does she know?" faltered Clifford.

"Yes," said Stanley.

"And—and she—she believed I did it!"



"No—I told her you were incapable of such a thing. But she is perhaps a little prejudiced—that is—I mean—you understand I found her much distressed."

Clifford raised his eyes, searching the handsome young face before him. Something in that face made his heart turn to water.

"Stanley!" he blurted out, "it isn't you, is it, she has promised?"

"Yes," said Stanley slowly.

Clifford went and leaned over the banisters. After a long time he straightened up, mopped his brow with his handkerchief, smiled, and came up to Stanley holding out his hand.

"Before I take it I want to say that this incident had nothing to do with it," said Stanley. "I proposed and was accepted at the pigeon match."

Clifford was staggered for a moment; then he recovered and held out his hand again.

"She is one in a million," he said cordially, thinking to himself, "and the rest of the millions are just like her, O Lord! Just like her!"

Stanley grasped his hand; they stood looking at each other with kindly eyes. Fantozzi's voice came through the closed door.

"Espanne! Espanne! Bravo! Toro!"

Somewhere in there Bull still chanted "Cuba Libre!" Presently they bowed to each other, shook hands again, and parted.

"My compliments to his Excellency and to Miss Amyce," said Clifford. Then he went in and took leave of Fantozzi and the others despite their united protests. An hour later he entered the studio, fell upon Elliott and beat him madly. They fought like schoolboys until tired; perspiring and breathless, they retreated to separate sofas and panted.

"Confound you!" gasped Elliott, "what do you mean by it?"

"I mean that I forgive you," said Clifford grimly. "Go to the devil!"

They smiled at each other across the studio.

"Was that the Ambassador, then?" asked Elliott.

"It was—Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary."

"He isn't red-headed," protested Elliott—"your Ambassador Extraordinary."

"Nevertheless," said Clifford, "he is a most extraordinary Ambassador. Where shall we dine?"

"In the Quarter?"

"In the Quarter."

"With me?"

"With you."

"And Colette and Jacquette?"

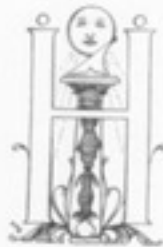
"And Colette and Jacquette."

Elliott, choking with emotion, nodded, and picked up a ruffled silk hat from the floor.

"His Excellency's," said Clifford softly, and hung it over an easel.

"POOR LITTLE PIERRE"

By EDGAR FAWCETT



OW MARVELOUS are the mysteries of time and death and life, how measureless their ironies, too! . . . This strange history of Pierre Lafontaine, lately told me by a friend, is evidence in point. . . . He was a very sickly little boy. People used to say, "Pauvre petit! it won't be long before his troubles are over!" . . . And it was not. . . .

At twelve he became a slim, wiry lad, with the endurance of a camel and the appetite of an elephant. He never grew stout, and his pallor abode with the incessant effect in his contracted face of a viewless finger being pressed into either sallow cheek. His parents were well-known people, with a moderately good domain in Normandy, but both of them had died before Pierre finished his preparatory education. At the beginning of his college career he was the possessor of an annual ninety thousand francs; yet in college he studied so hard, during his second year, that a prostrating illness overtook him, and for a whole week, out of sheer nervous exhaustion, he would faint away five and six times in four-and-twenty hours. The doctors shook their heads; one day, while lying terribly exhausted, he said to a particular practitioner for whom he had conceived what he looked upon as a kind of moribund fondness: "How long can I last?" . . . "You have no organic ill, Monsieur Lafontaine," crawled the somewhat embarrassed reply. "But . . ."

Lafontaine cleft the silence with a low moan. "But I may pop off any minute from general collapse. That's what you mean, I suppose." And the sick man gave a dismal tug to his pillow, and lapsed into sleep.

A week later he was quite well again, and the lustiest cheerer at one of the most significant games of football held for a good while. He was graduated high, and for a year spent most of the time at his country house, whose picturesque interior, somewhat decayed by time, he notably improved. Afterward he went to Paris, and rented a rather good hotel there in what was then called the Avenue Josephine. Owing to his respected family name, conceded talent and unquestioned wealth, he was made much of. Personally, he was thin and pale and almost dwarfish in stature. But he had a neat though slightly cynic wit; his flawless old Norman descent helped him; and in spite of occasional faint sensations and odd seizures that made him feel as if the heart had stopped beating in his breast, he nevertheless kept himself up with an extraordinary vigor. Once, however, at a tea-drinking given by Madame de Florentine, in her beautiful home on the Avenue Gabriel, he suddenly lost consciousness, producing a great scare among the guests and the rapid summoning of a physician. This event caused him to be called forever afterward in Parisian society, "Poor little Pierre"; and as the famed Dr. Delasarte, then the favorite medical adviser of European royalty, foolishly let fall the statement that Lafontaine was troubled by a cardiac malady which at any moment might call him to another world, all sorts of whispered sympathetic comments kept following him wherever he went. It was moreover a subject of actual bets, *pro and con*, as to whether Mademoiselle Juliette, daughter of the Marquis de Florentin, would accept him or no. Very handsome was Juliette, but people used to say of her that it was too generous and Junonian a beauty—that it expressed too large a superabundance of pure animal health.

As it turned out, "poor little Pierre" won his way with the superb Juliette. The wedding was a grand one; it took place in Paris, at the church of the *Madeleine*, and some of the most prominent nabobs came to it. But "poor little Pierre" was wedded during a severe attack of pleurisy, suffering tortures. At the reception, which crowded the *salons* of the Marquis de Florentin, he was unable to appear. Radiant beneath her back-thrown veil, young Madame Lafontaine received congratulations. That night her husband's illness turned into pneumonia, and for many days afterward his life was despaired of. When strong enough for the journey he went with his bride to their country home, white as linen and looking like a peripatetic skeleton. But again he rallied. Juliette was his constant nurse. During the next year she gave birth to a sturdy little boy. During the next she gave birth to another. Two days afterward, without the faintest premonition of any such calamity, she suddenly died.

This event so horrified her husband that he became insane. For nearly four years he was the inmate of an asylum. Then recovery set in. When he next looked upon his children they were both well past their babyhood, and soon became to him an immense comfort and delight.

Time went on. Pierre Lafontaine was never strong, and always ailing. Before his eldest son came of age he had two more wretched illnesses. Jules was a somewhat willful lad, and at five-and-twenty married much beneath him. Jean, on the other hand, married, in his twenty-seventh year, the daughter of a nobleman, and a rich girl at that, besides being one fair to see. Lafontaine was very liberal with his elder son, who recompensed him only with ingratitude. This, the fond father persisted in believing, was due to his wife, who seemed to grow more vulgar with each new grandchild that she brought into the world. There are some women whom motherhood affects in just this retrogressive way, and Agathe, always having lacked refinement, was one of them. "I believe it is she who keeps you forever draining my purse," Pierre sorrowfully said, more than once. When he was about three-and-sixty both sons found their allowances curtailed, for "poor little Pierre" had married again.

Each son was enraged, but Jules more so than his brother. This new Madame Lafontaine, a benevolent yet somewhat gossipful lady, had stoutly disapproved his marriage. A quarrel of rather fierce kind took place between his father and Jules. Lafontaine, who deeply loved both his children, was urged by his new wife to speak and act with great harshness. Jules, who of late had been living in Lyons, returned thither, filled with wrath. Then a strangely unforeseen thing happened. In less than a fortnight after this he wrote to his father: "You have cast me off, or at least threatened to do so unless I will pay homage to the stepmother who was my savage foe before she married you. As you may have heard, this new disease, which they call by the odd name of diphtheria, is ravaging our town. Pierre, my first-born, whom you always declared that you dearly loved, is at death's door with it. So is my wife, and I fear that with the rest of my household seizure at any moment may occur."

Lafontaine flung the letter on the floor, and buried his face in both hands. His wife, intrinsically good despite certain outward faults, proffered him the warmest sympathy. She would go with him to Lyons; every shadow of resentment against Jules should be forgotten.

Her husband took with her, next day, the Lyons train. And now the curious tragedy of his life caught a dusky tinge. The disease was literally raging in the town, and all physicians, hitherto unacquainted with it, were powerless to treat it in scientific way. They did their best, but their best was piteously vague. Madame Lafontaine, in the kindest way, threw both arms about Jules when she and her husband entered the house where his son and wife lay stricken. She sat up all night with both. But the calamities of plagues are no less inexorable than spectacular. The boy and his mother were both dead by dawn. A few hours later Madame Lafontaine herself was assailed. She died, in much agony, two days later, and, before another week had passed, Jules and his other children had perished as well. In the anguish of awful loneliness, Lafontaine wrote to his other son, Jean: "Do not come here. I hope, before long, to have you join me. When I reach home I will send for you and Pauline."

They afterward went to him, in the beautiful old domain. He was then quite an elderly man, though he looked seventy. "You are heir to all my property, now," he told Jean, "and in a little while you will come to your own."

Jean shuddered while he bent and kissed his father's livid cheek. "It is all horrible, unspeakable," he murmured. "You complained this afternoon of that pain in your heart—the old pain. To-morrow you must see Dr. Jundean."—"Perhaps . . . perhaps," replied Pierre. He feared a physician. He dreaded lest one might come and cure him, for he so wanted to die.

That night Jean's wife said to him: "I mean nothing irreverent, dear, but do you not think . . . ?" "Think what?" exclaimed Jean, turning upon her almost wrathfully, though their mutual love had long been the envy of their married friends.

"Oh, nothing," said Pauline, with a meek little start. "I only meant that your father seems very weak and ill (what wonder?) and that there are certain legal transactions . . ."

"Oh, never mind . . . get," returned Jean. He did not mean what he added, but with a swift, virtuous laugh he thus went on: "Poor father has always been a good deal of an invalid. The sorrow, too, that he has been forced to bear is prodigious. . . . Nevertheless, he may bury both you and me."

"Many a true word," etc., runs the old adage. Jean, at an advanced age, died of a lingering consumption. His father, absolutely ghostlike in appearance, spent many days of many months at his bedside. When he finally breathed his last it was Pierre's waxen and trembling fingers that closed his eyes. Pauline, several years before, had perished from an acute attack of heart-trouble.

"I am alone, now," said Pierre, with a vast weariness of soul. "We talk of life's brevity. What of its terrible uncertainty? How frightful is the sarcasm of my still living on! It seems to me that I cannot die. The infantile, the young, the middle-aged, even the old, have left me. I cannot die . . . it is awful past words!" Then he laughed to himself a sardonic laugh. "Poor little Pierre," as I suppose they still call me, has got to go on living. That is, unless . . ."

Here he stopped short, and shook his head. "No, not that."

At eighty-five his brain was quite sound, and on mild days he would take frequent walks about his grounds. . . . At ninety-five he was still mentally clear, but almost all his power of movement had gone. Latterly his life had been very lonely; he had not a single friend living nor a single acquaintance. He looked like a tiny figure cut out of ivory; he reminded you of the pale things you see in Florence, done by Cellini or Giovanni da Bologna, with long, slim hands of miraculous craftsmanship. For hours he would lie on a lounge wearing what was indeed a "skull-cap" (of black velvet) on his totally hairless scalp. At such times he would whisper, in a sort of drowse, names, names, names, of his dead kindred and friends. Once, toward evening, he bade a young *abbé*, who acted as both his nurse and companion, transcribe for him these lines—or what, in his own language, might be called their equivalent:

*"I have been walking with shadows,
All day long,
Shadows and shadows and shadows,
Throng upon throng.*

*Faces long-fled have beamed to me;
Eyes long-dead have gleamed to me;
Veils have been cast from the shrouded past,
And its delicate glories have streamed to me!"*

He had never been known to write or compose any verse before. This stanza, therefore, struck the young *abbé* as an extremely strange event. "At last, I think," he said to the attendant physician, "our 'poor little Pierre' will have his way, and be permitted to die."

The physician smiled and nodded. Before another year, though, both he and the *abbé* had died, and "poor little Pierre" still lived.

Not till the beginning of his ninety-eighth year did his summons come, and then with startling suddenness. A servant, on entering his room, one morning in spring, found him dead. The man at once rushed for the *curé* (who lived but a stone-throw off) after alarming the household.

When the *curé* had pushed his way through the little crowd that now surrounded the bed, a cry left his lips. "Ah, what a look!" he sighed, bending down over the shriveled and colorless face.

"Does Monsieur le *Curé* mean," ventured somebody near him, "a look of pain?"

"No, no! Of gratitude—infinite gratitude! Something that says, while saying it with silence: 'At last! at last!' This man, who could not for so long win God's consent that he should die, has won it now and for evermore!"

"But surely," came the answer, "he might have—"

The good *curé* bridled and scowled, flashing a look of ire on the speaker. Then he stooped and made on the dead man's glassy brow a reverent sign of the cross.

"But he did not—he did not! This to his honor and glory—that he did not!" These words the priest pronounced with an ecstasy at once gentle and wild. . . . But soon, in tones greatly subdued, he said, with a soft sweep of one hand over the bier—"Requiescat." And the room, after that, seemed to have grown wondrously still, except for the voice of a mavis, which floated through an open window. From a blossoming apple-tree on the lawn it sang, and its melody was a rapture, a delirium, of joy.

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

BY HENRY JAMES

XXI



BEFORE a new day, in my room, had fully broken, my eyes opened to Mrs. Grose, who had come to my bedside with worse news. Flora was so markedly feverish that an illness was perhaps at hand; she had passed a night of extreme unrest, a night agitated above all by fears that had for their subject not in the least her former, but wholly her present governess. It was not against the possible re-entrance of Miss Jessel on the scene that she protested—it was conspicuously and passionately against mine. I was promptly on my feet of course, and with an immense deal to ask; the more that my friend had discernibly now girded her loins to meet me once more. This I felt as soon as I had put to her the question of her sense of the child's sincerity as against my own. "She persists in denying to you that she saw, or has ever seen, anything?"

My visitor's trouble, truly, was great. "Ah, Miss, it isn't a matter on which I can push her! Yet it isn't either, I must say, as if I much needed to. It has made her, every inch of her, quite old."

"Oh, I see her perfectly from here. She resents, for all the world like some high little personage, the imputation on her truthfulness and, as it were, her respectability. 'Miss Jessel indeed—she!' Ah, she's 'respectable,' the chit! The impression she gave me there yesterday was, I assure you, the very strangest of all; it was quite beyond any of the others. I did put my foot in it! She'll never speak to me again."

Hideous and obscure as it all was, it held Mrs. Grose briefly silent; then she granted my point with a frankness which, I made sure, had more behind it. "I think indeed, Miss, she never will. She do have a grand manner about it!"

"And that manner"—I summed it up—"is practically what's the matter with her now."

Oh, that manner, I could see in my visitor's face, and not a little else besides! "She asks me every three minutes if I think you're coming in."

"I see—I see." I too, on my side, had so much more than worked it out. "Has she said to you since yesterday—except to repudiate her familiarity with anything so dreadful—a single other word about Miss Jessel?"

"Not one, Miss. And of course you know," my friend added, "I took it from her, by the lake, that, just then and there at least, there *was* nobody."

"Rather! And, naturally, you take it from her still."

"I don't contradict her. What else can I do?"

"Nothing in the wide world! You've the cleverest little person to deal with. They've made them—their two friends. I mean—still cleverer, even, than nature did; for it was wondrous material to play on! Flora has now her grievance, and she'll work it to the end."

"Yes, Miss; but to *what* end?"

"Why, that of dealing with me to her uncle. She'll make me out to him the lowest creature—"

I winced at the fair show of the scene in Mrs. Grose's face; she looked for a minute as if she sharply saw them together. "And him who thinks so well of you!"

"He has an odd way—it comes over me now," I laughed—"of proving it! But that doesn't matter. What Flora wants, of course, is to get rid of me."

My companion bravely concurred. "Never again to so much as look at you."

"So that what you've come to me now for," I asked, "is to speed me on my way?" Before she had time to reply, however, I had her in check. "I've a better idea—the result of my reflections. My going *would* seem the right thing, and on Sunday I was terribly near it. Yet that won't do. It's *you* who must go. You must take Flora."

My visitor, at this, did speculate. "But where on earth—?"

"Away from here. Away from *them*. Away, even most of all, now, from *me*. Straight to her uncle."

"Only to tell on you—?"

"No, not 'only'! To leave me, in addition, with my remedy."

She was still vague. "And what *is* your remedy?"

"Your loyalty, to begin with. And then Miles's."

She looked at me hard. Do you think *he*—?"

"Won't, if he has the chance, turn on me? Yes, I venture still to think it. At all events, I want to try. Get off with his sister as soon as possible and leave me with him alone." I was amazed, myself, at the spirit I had still in reserve, and therefore perhaps a trifle the more disconcerted at the way in which, in spite of this fine example of it, she hesitated. "There's one thing, of course," I went on: "they mustn't, before she goes, see each other for three seconds." Then it came over me that, in spite of Flora's presumable sequestration from the instant of her return from the pool, it might already be too late. "Do you mean," I anxiously asked, "that they *have* met?"

At this she quite flushed. "Ah, Miss, I'm not such a fool as that! If I've been obliged to leave her three or four times, it has been each time with one of the maids, and at present, though she's alone, she's locked in safe. And yet—and yet!" There were too many things.

"And yet what?"

"Well, are you so sure of the little gentleman?"

"I'm not sure of anything but *you*. But I have, since last evening, a new hope. I think he wants to give me an opening. I do believe that—poor little exquisite wretch!—he wants to speak. Last evening, in the firelight and the silence, he sat with me for two hours as if it were just coming."

Mrs. Grose looked hard, through the window, at the gray, gathering day. "And did it come?"

"No, though I waited and waited, I confess it didn't, and it was without a breach of the silence or so much as a faint allusion to his sister's condition and absence that we at last kissed for good-night. All the same," I continued, "I can't, if her uncle sees *her*, consent to his seeing her brother without my having given the boy—and most of all because things have got so bad—a little more time."

My friend, on this ground, appeared more reluctant than I could quite understand. "What do you mean by more time?"



"Well, a day or two—really to bring it out. He'll then be on *my* side—of which you see the importance. If nothing comes, I shall only fail, and you will, at the worst, have helped me by doing, on your arrival in town, whatever you may have found possible." So I put it before her, but she continued, for a little, so inscrutably embarrassed that I came again to her aid. "Unless indeed," I wound up, "you really want *not* to go."

I could see it, in her face, at last clear itself; she put out her hand to me as a pledge. "I'll go—I'll go. I'll go this morning."

I wanted to be very just. "If you *should* wish still to wait, I would engage she shouldn't see me."

"No, no: it's the place itself. She must leave it." She held me a moment with heavy eyes, then brought out the rest. "Your idea's the right one. I myself, Miss—"

"Well?"

"I can't stay."

The look she gave me with it made me jump at possibilities.

"You mean that, since yesterday, you *have* seen—?"

She shook her head with dignity. "I've *heard*—"

"Heard?"

"From that child—horrors! There!" she sighed with tragic relief. "On my honor, Miss, she says things—!" But at this evocation she broke down; she dropped, with a sudden sob, upon my sofa and, as I had seen her do before, gave way to all the grief of it.

It was quite in another manner that I, for my part, let myself go. "Oh, thank God!" She sprang up again at this, drying her eyes with a groan. "Thank God?"

"It justifies me so!"

"It does *that*, Miss!"

I couldn't have desired more emphasis, but I just hesitated. "She's so horrible?"

I saw my colleague scarce knew how to put it. "Really shocking."

"And about *me*?"

"About you, Miss—since you *must* have it. It's beyond everything, for a young lady; and I can't think wherever she must have picked up—"

"The appalling language she applies to me? I can, then!" I broke in with a laugh that was doubtless strange enough.

It only, in truth, left my friend still more grave. "Well, perhaps I ought to also—since I've heard some of it before! Yet I can't bear it," the poor woman went on, while, with the same movement, she glanced, on my dressing-table, at the face of my watch. "But I must go back."

I kept her, however. "Ah, if you can't bear it—!"

"How can I stop with her?" she asked. "Why, just *for* that: to get her away. Far from this," she pursued, "far from *them*—"

"She may be different? she may be free?" I seized her almost with joy. "Then, in spite of yesterday, you *believe*—"

"In such doings?" Her simple description of them required, in the light of her expression, to be carried no further, and she gave me the whole thing as she had never done. "I believe."

Yes, it *was* a joy, and we were still shoulder to shoulder: if I might continue sure of that, I should care but little what else happened. My support in the presence of disaster would be the same as it had been in my early need of confidence, and if my friend would answer for my honesty I would answer for all the rest. On the point of taking leave of her, none the less, I was to some extent embarrassed. "There's one thing of course—it occurs to me—to remember. My letter, giving the alarm, will have reached town before you."

I now perceived still more how she had been beating about the bush and how weary, at last, it had made her. "Your letter won't have got there. It never went."

"What then became of it?"

"Goodness knows! Master Miles—"

"Do you mean *he* took it?" I gasped.

She hung fire, but she presently brought it out. "I mean that I saw yesterday, when I came back with Miss Flora, that it wasn't where you had put it. Later in the evening I had the chance to question Luke, and he declared that he had neither noticed nor touched it." We could only exchange, on this, one of our deeper mutual soundings, and it was Mrs. Grose who first brought up the plumb with an almost elate "You see!"

"Yes, I see that if Miles took it instead he probably will have read it and destroyed it."

"And don't you see anything else?"

I faced her a moment with a sad smile. "It strikes me that by this time your eyes are open even wider than mine."

They proved to be so indeed, but she could still blush, almost, to show it. "I make out now what he must have done at school." And she gave, in her simple sharpness, an almost droll, disillusioned nod. "He stole!"

I turned it over; I tried to be more judicial. "Well—perhaps."

She looked as if she found me unexpectedly calm. "He stole *letters*."

She couldn't know my reasons for a calmness after all pretty shallow; so I brought them out as I might. "I hope, then, it was to more purpose than in this case! The note, at any rate, that I put on the table yesterday," I pursued, "will have given him no scant an advantage—for it contained only the bare demand of his uncle for an interview—that he is already much ashamed of having gone so far for so little, and that what he had on his mind last evening was precisely the need of confession." I seemed to myself, for the instant, to have mastered it, to see it all. "Leave us, leave us"—I was already at the door hurrying her off. "I'll get it out of him. If he confesses, he's saved. And if he's saved—"

"Then *you* are?" The dear woman kissed me on this, and I took her farewell. "I'll save you without him!" she cried as she went.

XXII

YET it was when she had got off—and I missed her on the spot—that the great pinch really came. If I had counted on what it would give me to find myself alone with Miles I speedily perceived, at least, that it would give me a measure. No hour of my stay, in fact, was so assailed with apprehensions as that of my coming down to learn that the carriage containing Mrs. Grose and my younger pupil had already rolled out of the gates. Now I *avox*, I said to myself, face to face with the elements, and for much of the rest of the day, while I fought my weakness, I could consider that I had been supremely rash. It was a tighter place still than I had yet turned round in; all the more that, for the first time, I could see in the aspect of others a confused reflection of the crisis. What had happened naturally caused them all to stare; there was too little of the explained, throw out whatever we might, in the suddenness of my colleague's act. The maids and the men





DOUGLAS VOLK

*Copyright, 1916, by Douglas Volk**The Song of the Pines*

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Portrait of Miss Alice Dorr

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Down



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SPRING EXHIBITIONS AT THE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARTISTS

looked blank; the effect of which on my nerves was an aggravation until I saw the necessity of making it a positive aid. It was precisely, in short, by just clutching the helm that I avoided total wreck; and I dare say that, to bear up at all, I became, that morning, very grand and very dry. I welcomed the consciousness that I was charged with much to do, and I caused it to be known as well that, left thus to myself, I was quite remarkably firm. I wandered with that manner, for the next hour or two, all over the place and looked, I have no doubt, as if I were ready for any onset. So, for the benefit of whom it might concern, I paraded with a sick heart.

The person it appeared least to concern proved to be, till dinner, little Miles himself. My perambulations had given me, meanwhile, no glimpse of him, but they had tended to make more public the change that taking place in our relation as a result of his having at the piano, the day before, kept me, in Flora's interest, so beguiled and befuddled. The stamp of publicity had of course been fully given by her confinement and departure, and the change itself was now ushered in by our non-observance of the regular custom of the schoolroom. He had already disappeared when, on my way down, I pushed open his door, and I learned below that he had breakfasted—in the presence of a couple of the maids—with Mrs. Grose and his sister. He had then gone out, as he said, for a stroll; than which nothing, I reflected, could better have expressed his frank view of the abrupt transformation of my office. What he would now permit this office to consist of was yet to be settled; there was a queer relief, at all events—I mean for myself in especial—in the renunciation of one pretension. If so much had sprung to the surface I scarce put it too strongly in saying that what had perhaps sprung highest was the absurdity of our prolonging the fiction that I had anything more to teach him. It sufficiently stuck out that, by tacit little tricks in which even more than myself he carried out the care for my dignity, I had had to appeal to him to let me off straining to meet him on the ground of his true capacity. He had at any rate his freedom now; I was never to touch it again; as I had amply shown, moreover, when, on his joining me in the schoolroom the previous night, I had uttered, on the subject of the interval just concluded, neither challenge nor hint. I had too much, from this moment, my other ideas. Yet when he at last arrived for our main repast the difficulty of applying them, the accumulations of my problem, were brought straight home to me by the beautiful little presence on which what had occurred had, as yet, for the eye, dropped neither stain nor shadow.

To mark, for the house, the high state I now cultivated I decreed that my meals with the boy should be served, as we called it, downstairs; so that I had been awaiting him in the ponderous pomp of the room outside of the window of which I had had from Mrs. Grose, that first scared Sunday, my flash of something it would scarce have done to call light. Here at present I felt afresh—for I had felt it again and again—how my equilibrium depended on the success of my rigid will, the will to shut my eyes as tight as possible to the truth that what I had to deal with was, revoltingly, against nature. I could only get on at all by taking "nature" into my confidence and my account, by treating my monstrous ordeal as a push in a direction unusual, of course, and unpleasant, but demanding, after all, for a fair front, only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue. No attempt, none the less, could well require more tact than just this attempt to supply, one's self, *all* the nature. How could I put even a little of that article into a suppression of reference to what had occurred? How, on the other hand, could I make a reference without a new plunge into the hideous obscure? Well, a sort of answer, after a time, had come to me, and it was so far confirmed as that I was met, incontestably, by the quickened vision of what was rare in my little companion. It was indeed as if he had found even now—as he had so often found at lessons—still some other delicate way to ease me off. Wasn't there light in the fact which, as we shared our solitude, broke out with a specious glitter it had never yet quite worn?—the fact that (opportunity aiding, precious opportunity which had now come,) it would be preposterous, with a child so endowed, to forego the help one might wrest from absolute intelligence? What had his intelligence been given him for but to save him? Mightn't one, to reach his mind, risk the stretch of a rude long arm over his character? It was as if, when we were face to face in the dining-room, he had literally shown me the way. The roast mutton was on the table, and I had dispensed with attendance. Miles, before he sat down, stood a moment with his hands in his pockets and looked at the joint, on which he seemed on the point of passing some humorous judgment. But what he presently brought out was: "I say, my dear, is she really very awfully ill?"

"Little Flora? Not so bad but that she will presently be better. London will set her up. Bly had ceased to agree with her. Come here and take your mutton."

He promptly obeyed me, carried the plate carefully to his seat, and when he was established went on: "Did Bly disagree with her so terribly suddenly?"

"Not so suddenly as you might think. One had seen it coming on."

"Then why didn't you get her off before?"

"Before what?"

"Before she became too ill to travel."

I found myself prompt. "She's not too ill to travel; she only might have become so if she had stayed. This was just the moment to seize. The journey will dissipate the influence"—oh, I was grand!—"and carry it off."

"I see, I see"—Miles, for that matter, was grand too. He settled to his repast with the charming little "table manner" that, from the day of his arrival, had relieved me of all grossness of admonition. Whatever he had been driven from school for, it was not for ugly feeding. He was irreproachable, as always, to-day; but he was unmistakably more conscious. He was discernibly trying to take for granted more things than he found, without assistance, quite easy; and he dropped into peaceful silence while he felt his situation. Our meal was of the briefest and mine a vain pretense, and I had the things immediately removed. While this was done Miles stood again with his hands in his little pockets and his back to me—stood and looked out of the wide window through which, that other day, I had seen what pulled me up. We continued silent while the maid was with us—as silent, it whimsically occurred to me, as some young couple who, on their wedding-journey, at the inn, feel shy in the presence of the waiter. He turned round only when the maid had left us. "Well—so we're alone!"

(Concluded next week.)



AN EASTER FANTASY



HE STOOD by the open window in the fragrant darkness of the Southern night. The garden below was quiet in the moonlight. The scent of the roses was borne upward to him on the warm night wind. Dimly he could see the tall white lilies swaying on their slender stalks. They seemed to beckon to him. . . . He turned from the window, went down the stairs, and out into the garden.

The light breeze stirred among the flowers. It sounded like the faint rustle of a woman's garments. Some sweet peas were growing in a hedge at his side, their delicate flower-wings fluttering as though longing to take flight. As he turned idly to pluck one, he saw, standing beside him, the girl who had dominated his boyhood's dreams.

Softly the moonlight played over her bright hair; the freshness of youth lay upon her as the dew upon the flowers.

"I am the essence of the Sweet Pea, and of the Springtime of Youth and Love," she breathed softly. "Come to me, and they shall be yours again. Think not that the joys of knowledge are sweeter."

For a minute, as she spoke, it seemed to the man that he caught a breath of the half-forgotten fragrance of that golden age, with its winged hopes, its opalescent dreams. He moved impetuously toward her, the old leap at his heart again, treading carefully upon the mignonette growing in the border of the path. The faint perfume of it floated up to him, and the words that he would have spoken faded from his mind; for he saw another woman standing before him. Her hair was red-

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