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*The Wisconsin
Literary
Magazine*

Volume XIX



Number 7

The Sacred Coyotes

"I'll Say She Did"

Spanish Gold

PUBLICATION OF THE STUDENTS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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May, 1920

Democrat Printing Co., Madison, Wis.

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The Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Publication of the Students of the University of Wisconsin

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Volume XIX

Madison, May, 1920

Number 7

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ON WISDOM

THERE is a proverb that says, "The man of wisdom is the man of years." Old men are held to be wise not merely because they have had much experience, but because they have consciously or unconsciously organized their experience and drawn from it general conclusions that are their guides; they have builded the mass of details into a comparatively few broad principles. Particular application of these principles is their manifestation of wisdom.

Wisdom is defined as "knowledge of the best ends and the best means." That, of course, is true, but it does not include quite enough. Mostly outside the realm of wisdom, but far enough inside to deserve consideration in the definition, is the faculty for wisdom. Before he can be wise, a man must be able to convert the raw knowledge that clutters his life, into the refined product that orders his days.

A man need not wait for old age to hammer into him with many blows wise principles. If a man has the

faculty for wisdom, he circumvents old age, takes a short-cut to wisdom, and is wise in his youth beyond his years. This faculty for wisdom, this ability to recognize and organize truth against a time of need, may be acquired.

The method of acquiring this ability is illustrated in the following incidents.

This afternoon two men sat musing in the same room. Suddenly one of them said:

"If a warm-blooded, sentimental young man who is in love should write in the spring-time a cloudy rhapsody on love, striving to veil the yearnings of his heart in general statements, he should seem a ridiculous fool. On the other hand, if he would unburden his soul, he must write of love. But if he writes of definite occurrences, if he philosophically examines love, anatomizes it in a scientific way, he relieves himself and at the same time appears wise, or at least well-informed. Isn't that so?"

The truthful answer was, "Yes."

"Well, then," said the first speaker, "I think I'll write a theme for Mr. Harkness on love."

Both men laughed and chuckled for some little time. At length the first speaker said:

"Do you realize that we have uncovered one of the fundamental principles of comedy? Let me state it: To utter an obviously true, generally applicable, philosophical remark, and then suddenly give it a whimsical, particular, personal use is funny."

"That's true enough; everyone knows that to use a twelve-inch rifle for a pea-shooter is funny."

"But you don't really know it until, when you want to be funny, you use the principle; and you don't use the principle until you've seen it in play often enough to recognize it. The sooner you recognize it and formulate it, the sooner you'll be able to use it."

The conversation wandered on until a little later one of the men said:

"Mildred's new landlady mistook the old dray man who moved her trunk for her father."

They laughed. The speaker went on, "Isn't that nutty?"

"Well, no," was the thoughtful answer. "One time a psychology lecturer had five unrelated disturbances occur simultaneously during his talk. He had it all arranged. The big disturbance was a mock fight between two men in the front of the room. He asked the members of the class to write a truthful report of what had happened. In every report that was handed in there was a plausible connection of the disturbances made in a series culminating in the fist-fight."

"What's that to do with Mildred's landlady?"

"It's the same sort of happening. Human beings always connect and relate facts arbitrarily in a plausible story. The proverb about leaping to conclusions is profoundly true; and men will vouch for the truth of their conclusions. That is the reason why no evidence can be absolutely conclusive."

The talk drifted on until one of the men said:

"Let's have a drink." Accompanied by a prose paen to Bacchus, he opened his trunk and took out a precious pint of *Johnny Walker* in a quart bottle. He put the bottle on his desk, and picked up two tumblers. They were dirty; he left the room to wash them. In a few seconds his companion hurried after him; explaining that he wanted to stay in sight in order to obviate all suspicion of his stealing a drink. They both laughed. After they had returned and were pleasantly engaged in sporadic ingurgitation, the owner of the whiskey said:

"You know, I really should have suspected you if you hadn't gone with me."

"Do you know why?" asked the other. "I'll tell you. It is because you'd be tempted yourself if you were left with a bottle. Isn't that right?"

After a moment of sober thought came the answer, "Yes."

"Yes. It is an example in support of Emerson's aphorism: Know thyself, and then know that everyone else is the same as you are."

* * * * *

Now during the course of these three trivial incidents, these two men recognized definitely, at least three great truths concerning men; three principles that always have been, are now, and always will be. In doing this they showed that they possessed the ability to recognize and organize truth, the ability that I have called the faculty for wisdom.

This faculty for wisdom, to be explicit, is nothing more than the ability to erect at once on a particular set of circumstances a generalization to cover a large number of sets of circumstances, and the courage to use this ability. Thus have I generalized this essay.

—BERT GILL.

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MY SKY

(After Browning)

The high blue sky
 In the rough, free wind
 Lifts me and I
 Forget I've sinned.
 What then of pain?
 Here's the place of the soul
 Where the world's the part
 And I am the whole.

My sky that calls me to float in its deeps—
 Let me hold to it fast, let me hold to it all,
 Find great solace and peace in great space and love it.
 Let my heart go out to the free wind's call;
 Let them cast down their eyes who would seek above
 it.

—PAUL GANGELIN

The Sacred Coyotes

THERE was no mistaking that look. The old Indian guide was afraid, very much afraid of something. His lean hands shook when he kindled the campfire for the evening meal. He dropped the raw bacon in the sand and jumped like a frightened deer when I spoke suddenly from my lazy posture on a bed of leaves. His eyes glittered strangely and he glanced repeatedly at me, wistfully, in wonderment. He annoyed me. I sent him to picket the burrows for the night and grudgingly went at the preparation of supper myself. When he returned, the purple shadow of the lofty, rugged mesa to the west was deepening in the lower recesses of the canyon. The cook fire, glowing through the half-twilight, was the one cheerful speck in the whole gloomy outlook. The eastern wall of the canyon, plated in yellow gold from the fast disappearing sun, glowed like a burnished warrior's shield, and seemingly carved deep into its face, the farthest reaches untouched by the sun, there was a great cavity, long and narrow, about midway between the sky-line and the canyon floor. Within, tiny spires and citadels, broken pillars and crumbling walls, the ancient city of the forgotten race of Cliffdwellers, thrown out in bold relief, shone magically in the falling light. It was the Dead City, last stronghold of the prehistoric race of the Southwest, built with the crudest of tools, no one knows how, but with the most cunning of workmanship. The unanswerable question rose to my lips then as it had ever since I took up my professorship of Archaeology in a California university, and as it probably always will: where have the ancient builders gone? No trace, save the monumental works left behind, has ever been found to indicate what calamity struck their race absolutely from the annals of history. Were they sought out and killed by fierce northern savages, even in their fastnesses, or dragged away to slavery in some unknown land? Or do they—and this was a question I had come over a long, arduous trail to solve—still inhabit the high cliffs unseen and unknown to civilization? On its face it is a foolish question and hardly has enough foundation to warrant any sensible action. But so baffling has been the mystery and such an absorbing study for me, that even the quite unconfirmed rumor of a new explanation was enough to send me into the depths of the arid Southwest, hungry for further information. And then I made a very startling discovery when I had made a careful investigation of the sentiments of the Indians in the vicinity. The

obsession to look into the matter which had been started by that faint rumor gradually grew upon me stronger and stronger at each fresh disclosure, and finally mastered my mind to such an extent that I felt that nothing could satisfy me short of absolute knowledge of the mystery shrouding the ancient City of the Dead.

The old Indian inhabitants held the belief that the coyotes which infested the old ruins were the reincarnated spirits of the prehistoric Cliffdwellers. They seemed to vanish mysteriously in the daytime, but crept back to guard their ancient city at nightfall. Their remarkable power was the astounding thing. Two venturesome souls, making light of the idea that the Sacred Coyotes, as they came to be called, were dangerous, had at separate times attempted to spend the night alone in the Dead City. Neither had ever been heard of again. Nor had there been any evidence of violence or bits of clothing left as a clue to the nature of their end. Of course the ancient city had been searched thoroughly in daylight for it was understood that the terrible power of the Sacred Coyotes only existed in reality when night had fallen. I am not superstitious nor given to letting weird tales fascinate me, but I confess that I very much wanted to disprove this wild story.

The blank, silent darkness of the desert was fully upon us by the time we had finished the frugal supper. The old guide had not spoken since late afternoon, but watched me with nervous wistfulness. Matches, plenty of them, a few candles, a pocket flashlight, a blanket, and my 38 revolver, I stowed them all away on my person and we turned up the slope away from our camp, leaving only a smouldering ember in the cooking fire, the dry twigs of the mountain sage crackling under foot, the only sound disturbing the profound stillness. In the thick blackness we found the foot of the long stairway of stone, hewn out of the solid rock by the Cliffdwellers of the forgotten ages, which weaves back and forth on the face of the cliff, finally terminating at the portals of the Dead City. The trembling old Indian very reluctantly consented to guide me to the top. He placed his hand on my back as a trifling support and we slowly felt our way up the slippery steps. I think it was the clammy touch of the damp, smooth stones of that ancient stairway that first lent me a thrill of doubt. And a slight excitement and nervousness, try to fight it down as I might, began to grow upon me as we groped upward. My ears

sharpened. Sweat began to dampen my heavy clothing. Probably from the exertion. I stopped after several minutes and sagged wearily against the cold, moist wall. The laborious, uncertain puffing of the guide was all that disturbed the profound hush of the atmosphere. A dead, stale breath was permeating the air. Suddenly it struck me as queer that even the usual sounds and chirpings of the night were silent. Strive and strain as I might, not the slightest sound of life from the insect or the animal world was audible. I could hear loudly the blood pounding at my inner ears. Even the feeble radiance of the stars was denied us, for a bank of low clouds effectually muffled them. Nervously I struck a match. At its sudden flare the guide cursed fearfully and struck it to the ground.

"The Sacred Coyotes——," he warned in a hiss which meant much more to me than the spoken words. It portrayed such a wholesome fear of the strange night denizens of the Dead City that I instantly resolved to be particularly careful not to strike another light that night, for as the quivering guide told me brokenly, the Sacred Coyotes gather at a fire or light, and my only hope lay in remaining undetected. I felt my excitement rising in spite of myself, and knew that my resolve to stick it out the whole night was slowly fading. I never should be able to endure the torment of impenetrable darkness. We must act quickly while my nerve was somewhat stable. So we pushed on. I did not look ahead, but kept my eyes bent upon the steps even though absolutely sightless.

The guide screamed, a horrible, grown man's scream of fright and pain. His trembling hand was suddenly withdrawn from my back, and leaving me paralyzed with the unnerving suddenness of it all, a helpless heap at the top of the long stairway, I heard dumbly his stumbling, blind footsteps, echoing and reverberating suddenly in the hollow vault overhead, dying away down the long passage. Finally the rattling of the loosened stones and the thud of his feet faded away faintly in the distance. Then, and not till then did I lift my head. I was so numb and totally unnerved by the astounding action of the guide that the yell of fright which rose involuntarily at the grisly apparition with which I was confronted (at a distance of not more than two feet) merely rattled dryly in my throat. Two gleaming eyes, framed phosphorescently by the hoary white visage of a monster coyote, gazed unblinkingly at my cowering figure, from the shadowy portals of the Dead City. Hardly knowing what I did I kicked out savagely with my foot and sprang up. The figure vanished and I heard no sound. The blood came back with a rush. I gathered myself a little. My imagination was running riot. There had really been

nothing there. It was a picture of the imagination, otherwise why had it vanished so suddenly when I broke the spell of my temporary inaction? Yet what had so frightened the guide? He must have seen it too. Perhaps something had crept stealthily up the dark steps behind and struck him as we reached the top. I whirled about. The blackness was intense. Nothing was there. I put both arms out as far on either side as I could reach and felt the two great posts of rock which formed the narrow gateway of the City of the Dead. The smooth stone was cold and moist. I felt along carefully with my feet and advanced inside the portals. The Stygian blackness was terribly oppressive. Again that stale, musty odor of long desertion weighed the air like a poison vapor. It made breathing difficult. I must have spent a full fifteen minutes at the doorway, hesitating and trying to collect myself. It was foolish for me to think that a light would draw the Sacred Coyotes, guardian spirits of the Dead City. Everyone knows that animals fear fire. I pressed the button of my pocket flash. The feeble cone of light stabbed weakly off into the gloom, glistening on the damp, age-old pavement of the narrow alley-way leading off into the heart of the Dead City. The gray, rough-bricked faces of the vacant, crouching buildings within a radius of a few feet showed me that I was at once within the limits of the ancient city. The hush of the forsaken lay profoundly over everything.

And I had come to spend the night there. To prove to myself, to the superstitious Indians, that the myth of the Sacred Coyotes was an abstraction, a fantasy of the mind, a creation of the imagination. Something of my original assurance flowed back upon me with the flare of light from the electric flash in my hand. Ah, the comfort of a light! How my bursting eyes welcomed it! I advanced again down the center of the dim alley-way, my heavy boots clanking on the cold pavement worn smooth by thousands of bare feet in the forgotten years of long ago. The narrow street led on, interminably it seemed, and I followed warily and at high tension, not knowing where to stop or what to do. My tiny pencil of light I poked down every cross-street, but its feebleness was disgusting. I was fast losing all fear of the Sacred Coyotes in particular, but I nevertheless felt that something strangely ominous was charging the atmosphere. And I began to have a horrible fear of being watched; just as if my every movement was being carefully observed, calculated and weighed. Soon I began to feel as if something was following me back in the darkness where the weak ray of my flashlight could not pierce. I continually flashed it behind, a trifle spasmodically

in my nervousness, but nothing rewarded my vigilance. I stopped and leaned back against a crumbling, dusty wall, the petrified finger prints of the thousands of prehistoric brick makers plainly visible in the uneven, gray bricks. I let the little circle of light fall upon the irregularly smooth pavement and listened. Yes, I could hear it very plainly now that I had halted. A gentle padding somewhere out there in the unknown blackness, as if some creature were creeping stealthily and carefully up the narrow alley-way between the ancient buildings of the Dead City. I flashed the light suddenly in that direction. The sound ceased instantly, but nothing was to be seen. Something rustled a little as if some creature had inadvertently brushed against some obstruction, this time in the direction which I had been going. Again I turned the flash. Nothing. It was irritating. Again I felt the weight of those unseen piercing eyes. They seemed to penetrate my very thought and soul. How much worse they cut than eyes I might have seen! Something tangible, I expected that. Human nerves cannot bear up under the strain of the suspense of waiting, waiting, watching, shuddering involuntarily at the mysterious, creepy sounds of the dank, unnatural place such as the desolate City of the Dead. My reverie was broken by a continuation of that stealthy creeping, this time simultaneously from both directions. I broke the spell by pounding my feet vigorously on the stone pavement and stalking quickly down the old street. I felt that something was retreating as I advanced and something following as I led on, on toward the mysterious heart of the dusky City of the Dead. I quickened my step unconsciously. Faster, faster, until I was almost running. The old street terminated abruptly in an ancient citadel, the long deserted place of worship. Through the low arch the steps led down. I stumbled through panting and lay huddled on the bare, cold floor.

By the flash I saw that I was alone—as yet. Moisture clung like tiny sweat drops on the gray walls, glittering in the pale yellow flash. I was at the end of the run. Here I would spend the night—Sacred Coyotes or no Sacred Coyotes—let them come! When my breathing returned to normal I drew forth my blanket and spread it over the stones. Cocking the revolver I held it ready in my right hand and lay the flashlight on its side in such a position as to illuminate the archway a couple of feet above the floor of the old chapel. Grotesque drawings of prehistoric monsters in white pigment frescoed the wall over the arch and lent a weird, eerie atmosphere to the vacant chapel. Those stealthy footsteps again. Nearer, nearer. Plainer, plainer. Very near the door. Si-

lence. The mysterious prowler must be within a foot of the doorway. But I was cool and collected now. Holding the revolver and light first, I sprang up through the arch. The deserted alley mocked me. Slightly unnerved, I dropped back into the chapel of the old citadel.

A bat swooped from somewhere in the void overhead, striking the light from my hand. Astonished I saw it disappear as it dropped. It seemed to pass directly through the floor. I fell on my knees and suddenly felt a new draught of air from somewhere soughing up from the depths. I had forgotten, in my consternation and fright at the uncanny movements of the Sacred Coyotes, the bottomless pit of the Great Earth Magician. About eighteen inches in diameter, the gaping mouth of the bottomless well, level with the floor, leered at me. I caught a glimpse for a second of my flashlight tumbling end over end hundreds of feet down, then utter darkness reigned. I lay full length gazing vacantly down into that pit which has been a mystery to all science, bored by the ancient priests to lead into their city the spirit of the Great Earth Magician. And the horrible thought gripped me. Ah, I knew where those two misled men, my predecessors, had gone! Had they dropped—or been forced into the bottomless pit of the ancient chapel? I shrank back in the darkness. The thought of that sickening plunge! Again I felt the pressing of unseen eyes upon my back. I whirled about. Level with my eyes, two feet distant, two gleaming yellow orbs framed by the hoary white visage of a monster coyote regarded me fixedly, unblinkingly. Frozen with horror, I could not scream. I dropped back weakly. My elbow slipped over the brink of the pit. Just by the most superhuman wrench did I save myself from dropping into that eternity. Ah, that was the way they had gone! The merciless power of the Sacred Coyotes forced them into the pit of the Great Earth Magician of the age-old Cliffdwellers. And was my fate to be the same? Not while I still breathed. I lifted the puny gun full in the face of that grim apparition and fired. The blinding flash and rush of pungent powder smoke choked the little chapel, and the crash of the shot awoke the weird, hollow echoes in the drooping sandstone ceiling over the mystic City of the Dead. Some gray shape, queerly malformed, glowing slightly phosphorescent, thrashed about silently in the center of the pitchy alleyway between the low buildings. In a mad frenzy I sprang for it, scarcely knowing what I did—just one thought surging in my mind: to get away from the sink pot in the old chapel, and to get a tangible hold on the grisly thing I had shot. I threw myself at the thing thrashing on the chilly pavement. My bare hands felt a

gush of warm fluid—fluffy, yielding mass of sticky hair, repulsive, nauseating. I struggled blindly with the writhing form. My grasp was slipping—slipping. It was crawling, creeping away. I was losing hold—losing—. I could feel again those penetrating eyes, felt that shadowy forms were closing in from all sides, silently, intently. The thing was slipping——oozing——. Something struck the back of my head with terrific force. I knew no more.

Hours later, lying in the grateful sunlight at the floor of the canyon while sensing the appetizing odor of bacon from the dinner the old guide was preparing

simply and effectively, I forced a weak smile, even with my aching head. It was with grim satisfaction. Well might I smile! But to this day the old guide believes that I am a spirit medium and not an ordinary human being, for he found me, late in the morning, alone, stunned, face down on the smooth pavement before the ancient citadel of the Cliffdwellers. There were no signs of a struggle or marks upon the pavement, but a jagged brick, dislodged, perhaps, from one of the crumbling minarets, lay beside me. And my hands were crimson with blood.

—ROE BLACK.

Artists

SHE had taught school for years to save up enough money to go to art school. And she
The old maid school teacher

was distinctly soured on life. Her views on it were emphatic and sharp. Probably her nerves had been hopelessly frazzled by teaching.

Most of us found her unpleasant.

I wasn't particularly nice to her.

A week before I left, she gave a supper for me. It was at her rooms, and some other women from school were asked.

I know that she enjoyed having us there, but—yet it was an effort for her not to be able to disagree with anyone, because she was the hostess. She had some lovely Burne-Jones prints, and when I admired them, we fell into a discussion on painters, and I discovered that we agreed rather well about most of them.

She was an odd woman, though. About the middle of the evening, the subject of clothes came up, and she advanced the theory that clothes were more immoral than no clothes. She had arguments to back up her theory, but I can't imagine her putting it into practice. Her clothes, however, were rather—well—odd.

Bobby.

She was twenty-six, but her red hair was bobbed. That was why they called her Bobby. It was straight, red-golden hair, that curled under just a little at the ends. She was round and fat, with red cheeks, and she used to wear purple or green or blue. She was not handsome, but nice looking, and generally very cheerful.

Bobby was working as an instructor in the night classes, and going to school in the daytime. Her people lived in town, and once she had me out to dinner with them.

She was not on very good terms with them, because she was trying to obtain a divorce from her husband. Her family felt that this was a disgrace.

But she told me that she had only lived with him four days before she left him. Why, I don't exactly know. She said that he would not support her.

Sometimes Bobby had moods of awful melancholy, but generally she was the jolliest kind of a person. The women in the school, however, did not like her.

It may have been on account of the divorce—and then, it may have been because all of the men were so fond of her. They said she was a good scout. They tagged her and trailed her and took her to movies and told her their troubles.

I have heard since I left that Bobby obtained her divorce in February, and had three proposals that month.

Larsen

We had a drawing instructor named Larsen. He was a tall, rather good-looking man, with blonde hair that curled like that of the Hermes of Praxiteles. He looked a lot like the Hermes.

But he was either afraid of women, or else disliked them very much. So he made up a Self-Defense Wife to keep them away. He never came to any of our parties and dances, because he said that his wife wouldn't let him. Lots of the women believed him, so they let him alone.

Larsen had been at school at the Art Students League of New York. He never let us forget that. As a drawing instructor he was not much of a success. He didn't like to do it very well, so he would just sit down in front of our drawing, and wipe out the part he didn't like, and make it over, so that when he was through, the drawing was not ours, but Larsen's. This

we tolerated because of the glamor he borrowed from having studied at the Art Students' League, which we all knew, was the best school in the country. He never mentioned how long he had been there.

However, one day my chum and I were talking to another of the instructors who knew Larsen well, and she told us that he was not married, and had only been at the Art Students' League for three weeks.

The kind man

There was one man, who was, I think, the gentlest man I ever knew. He was the only one of the older students who was kind to us beginners. The others were not consciously unkind—it was that they were so engrossed with their work that they were not aware of our presence—because artists are like that—or if they knew we were there, they didn't want to be disturbed.

He was all wrapped up in his work, like the rest, but yet he was so gentle that we were not afraid to come to him for help and advice. Sometimes he must have wished that we would go away, but he never said so.

He was tall and thin and very stooped. His eyes were blue, and his hair was beautifully silky and yellow. He seemed to be always smiling—not hilariously, but wistfully, yet benignantly.

He had taken many prizes, yet he never seemed to be able to make any money from his pictures. He was putting himself through a post graduate course at art school by working at night. Once a friend and I were down town in a little ice cream parlor, and we saw two paintings hung up, for sale. One was priced fifteen dollars. The style of them was familiar, so we asked the waitress who had brought them there. She

told us—they were his. We were there over a month later, but neither of them were sold. And the man could paint divinely.

Once he and I were down in the school store, and he had received a bright new penny in some change. He gave it to me for a lucky penny. I gave him one, too, because I could not think of taking even a penny from him without a return. I believe that the man is slowly starving himself to death.

Dick

Dick had a pair of prize dice, and every morning at recess some of the men and he would shoot craps. Dick had a tremendous passion for gambling—he could not let it alone. However, he curbed himself by only bringing a limited amount of money to school with him. If he won, he had lunch. If he lost—he lost all he had with him, and went without lunch.

He was Norwegian—had the hair and eyes of a Viking, but the speech of a street gamin. However, he was one of the few men at the school who could dance decently, and as such, he had a certain appeal to most of the women.

We used to dance in the auditorium at recess. The fellows would be shooting craps in a little room just next door. One morning Dick came in from the little room, and said to me,

"Let's have this dance. I want you to change my luck."

So we danced, and then he went back to gamble again. After recess I met Dick again.

"What luck?" I asked.

"Get away from me, woman!" said Dick, and indeed, he was not at the lunch room that noon.

—PENNELL CROSBY.

MAY DUSK

There's a soft wind in the tree tops
And a bird flies to its nest;
(But always in the heart of me
There is unrest.....unrest).

There's a stillness in the dusky streets,
A drowsy sort of peace;
(But in my heart a longing
Will never cease).

—JANET DURRIE

Graziella

(A One Act Play)

The scene is laid in the rather shabbily furnished rooms of Lamartine and Graziella, about five o'clock in the afternoon of April 27, 1812, in Naples. There is a table down stage to the right which is covered with a litter of manuscripts and books, at which Lamartine is discovered writing by candle light. He looks very young and exquisitely fragile, with handsome features and an air of childlike gravity. A fire burns in the recessed fireplace in the center at the back, and by it is a cheap armchair. There is a door to the left, leading into the hall and one down-stage on the left which leads into the kitchen. There are two windows, one on either side of the door, through which comes a soft light.

Lamartine is in smoking jacket and slippers and is looking thoroughly comfortable, when the door suddenly flies open and Aymon de Virieu bursts in gaily without knocking. He is a more healthy and energetic looking young man than Lamartine, although his face is equally sensitive. He has faultless manners, notwithstanding the sudden entrance, and an inconsequential air.

Lamartine (startled)

Aymon! *Mon cher ami!*

Virieu

Surprised you, did I, Alphonse? Well, that's what I had hoped to do. I always like to see my little plans succeed, you know.

Lamartine

This is great! How did it happen? This morning's letter from you was postmarked Rome. Well, well, sit down. (He looks at him affectionately) I'm overcome with joy at seeing you. It seems years since we have been together.

Virieu

Does, doesn't it? Has been quite a time----- Oh, I just got tired of writing letters and had nothing in particular to do, so I thought I'd run up here and see you. *Comment ça va?*

Lamartine

Well enough, except that I've been losing rather heavily at the tables lately.

Virieu

Hard luck! Very much?

Lamartine

More than I can pay. Mother hasn't been sending me much—a few hundred francs. I can't pay my debts on that, you know.

Virieu

(Goes over to the table and writes a check)

I rather expected not.

Lamartine

Thank you, Aymon, that's good of you. I'll pay you back as soon as I hear from Mâcon again.

Virieu

When did they last write you?

Lamartine (frowning)

This morning there was a letter from Mother with the one from you----- (Pause) She wants me to come home.

Virieu

Well----Why don't you go?

Lamartine (indignantly)

I could hardly leave Graziella. You forget I have not merely my own future to consider.

Virieu

Oh, yes! To be sure! The little Italian who works in M. de la Chavanne's tobacco factory?----- But----ah----merely a liaison, *n'est-ce pas?*

Lamartine (with an air of injured innocence)

Not at all. She is my first real love. A ravishing creature—wonderful beyond description. You have never met her, have you?

Virieu

Oh yes, don't you remember that time on the bay?

Lamartine

Of course. That lyric day. Ineffable, never to be forgotten memory!----Have a cigarette?----Well, then you have seen her; you understand why it is utterly unthinkable for me to go back to France. She would wither away without me like a lovely flower, plucked too soon. Really, you can't conceive of her affection for me. It is as enveloping as the twilight.

Virieu (laconically)

But not, therefore, necessarily as enduring as night! You think seriously that she couldn't live without you?

Lamartine

I know it. She has even told me so.

Virieu

Really, Alphonse, for a man of your years you are terrifyingly naïve. (Ironically) What else does she tell you?

Lamartine (plainly hurt)

I'm disappointed in you. I thought you were the one friend in the world in whom I could confide with-

out reserve— (*philosophically*) But human nature is by necessity finite, I suppose.

Virieu

Perhaps!

Lamartine

Tell me frankly! You didn't like her?

Virieu

Toute à fait charmante. But frankly, I don't believe that any woman should rob a man's genius. And I have great hopes for your future as a poet, Alphonse.

Lamartine (*fervently*)

To have Graziella is worth losing the world. You do not understand Love, for all your apparent wisdom. Probably you will never understand it.

Virieu

I hope not. Understanding is the beginning of disillusion and disillusion is the beginning of satiety.

Lamartine

Poof! That may be clever but it isn't true.

Virieu (*dryly*)

Oh, well, it is impossible to be both wise and poetical, I suppose. (*He rises at the sight of Graziella in the doorway. She is unsophisticatedly beautiful; her black, glossy hair is drawn plainly over the ears, making her features seem almost classic in their severity; her cheeks are flaming and her dark eyes sparkle. She becomes slightly embarrassed at the sight of a stranger.*)

Lamartine

You remember meeting Aymon de Virieu, don't you, Graziella? He surprised me this afternoon by an unexpected call.

(*Graziella and Virieu exchange nods*)

Of course he will have supper with us.

Graziella

You will, won't you?

Virieu

I should certainly be delighted, but I have another friend whom I must see before leaving tonight.

Lamartine

Why can't you make your call and come back when you are through?

Virieu

Splendid! (*To Graziella*) Thank you for your kindness. Goodbye! I shan't be gone long. (*Exit Virieu*)

Graziella (*going to Lamartine, down stage*)

I remember meeting him. I don't ---- like him.

Lamartine

But you will, *cara mia*; he is a very dear friend of mine. (*He looks at her admiringly*)

You are beautiful tonight, Graziella. I was proud of you as you stood there in the doorway. Your eyes are like wells of fire, your cheeks like pomegranates out of Eden. How you are beautiful, O *carina mia*. The scent of you is like some strange exotic herb; you are my Flower of Italy, whose perfume----

Graziella (*prosaically*)

The tobacco leaves smelt pretty strong today. I think sometimes they choke me. Pff! (*She coughs raucously while Lamartine looks at her, disconcerted and helpless*) I did not mean to interrupt my Alphonse (*looking at him adoringly*) You do mean those nice things you say to me, don't you? You love Graziella more than Lucy. Stupid Lucy!

(*Again she has sounded the wrong note. Lamartine ignores this and walks away to the window*)

Lamartine

Your Italy is more beautiful than even my France, Graziella. It is the most beautiful thing under heaven—except you.

Graziella

You say such pretty things, Alphonse. I like the pretty things you say----I wish----

Lamartine

Yes? What do you wish, *mon ange*?

Graziella

Nothing.

Lamartine

Tell me, *cara mia*? I insist. If there is anything that you wish that I may give you (*grandly*) it shall be yours.

Graziella

I wish that I might listen all day while you say those nice things and----never go back to the tobacco factory. I detest the boss.

Lamartine

Not M. Dareste de la Chavanne?

Graziella

No, no; I like him. It is the boss. He says things to me about my eyes. Not beautiful, like you say. Silly things!

Lamartine

(*Startled, as the idea has never occurred to him. There is a long pause. Then, with an air of seraphic martyrdom. You shall not go back. (dramtically)*) I shall make money for us both, my darling. The

poems I have been writing will bring us more than enough.

(*Taking her in his arms*) We will live, like birds, like larks—joyous—

Graziella (*muttering to herself*)

Now my hands will be white like a lady's. As white as the boss's wife's. (*She laughs coarsely*)

Lamartine

(*Again disturbed, he takes in his long sensitive hand her stubby fingers, stained a dark brown from tobacco leaves, looks at them, drops them, and says with a shade of irritation in his voice*) I had another letter from Mother this morning,—wanting me to come home.

Graziella (*anxiously*)

But you aren't going?

Lamartine

No—Aren't you going to get supper? Aymon may be back soon. (*Graziella goes upstage and opens the door of a cupboard which displays a very meagre array of cracked plates and glasses. The kettle is soon boiling on the fire and the table arranged downstage before it. Lamartine abstractedly places a jasmin for the table, while Graziella is busy with the supper things, and puts two candles at either end. Then he goes to the window and stands gazing out in beatific tranquillity. Suddenly he leaves the window and begins writing at his small table, brushing aside the pile of manuscripts. He writes slowly and dreamily. Graziella is humming a little Italian song as she works*).

Lamartine

Twilight descends like the robes of a woman sweeping over the firmament, where the stars, seeking instinctively the eyelids of the dreamer, dispel the shade like a golden powder on the steps of night.

Graziella

Why doesn't he come? Supper is ready.

Lamartine (*oblivious*)

They seem to rest on the tree tops like a celestial bird whose rapid wings throw forth flashes of light as they open and close.

Graziella (*coming to him*)

There is not much to eat tonight, Alphonse.

Lamartine (*not heeding*)

The stars are like gleaming reefs whitened by the foam of the sea— They are like eyes opened upon the sleeping world; like the white sails of ships in the azure, which, returning to the port from a distant shore, shine on the ocean with their morning rays. What a

multitude of similes! My heart is filled with beauty tonight. I hardly know what vague and sublime and infinite thoughts pass through my brain every minute. (*Rising and embracing Graziella*) Look! *Cara mia! Le crepuscle!*—My heart is too small to contain so much beauty, Graziella. Yours must cherish that which mine cannot hold.

(*As he is speaking Virieu is heard knocking at the door, which Graziella opens*)

Virieu

Hope I haven't kept you waiting. You know how hard it is to get away from people.—(*Noticing the strained atmosphere*) Or perhaps I came too soon. Am I interrupting?

Lamartine (*adjusting himself to a several thousand-foot spiritual fall*)

Not at all. Didn't somebody say that twenty-four hours of continuous rapture would disintegrate life? Quite right. (*During this speech they have been taking their places at the table*)

Virieu (*pleasantly*)

Delightful weather for April, isn't it? You must both be very happy here. Italy is incomparable in Spring.

Lamartine

Italy is incomparable at any time.

Graziella (*in a whining tone*)

Just think, M. Virieu! Alphonse's mother wants him to come home. Back to France! And to leave me alone!

Lamartine (*with forced gayety*)

Then who would read *Paul and Virginia* to my little song bird on the dark winter evenings? (*To Alphonse*) Graziella loves St. Pierre, don't you, my dear?

Graziella (*speaking with her mouth a bit too full of fish*)

I love to hear you read anything.

Virieu

(*Under his breath to Lamartine*)

That's hardly very intelligent, is it? (*To Graziella*) How utterly charming!

(*Meanwhile Lamartine has been watching Graziella with a fixed intense look. He frowns slightly and is not eating*)

Graziella

What is the matter, Alphonse? You have hardly touched your food. Isn't it all right? (*looking anxiously at both men*)

Lamartine (*shortly*)

I'm not hungry tonight. (*Then with an obvious attempt at courtesy he joins Virieu in saying*) Very good, indeed.

(*Graziella begins to remove the dishes and goes out into the kitchen*)

Lamartine

(*Abruptly to Virieu*) Is it you who make her seem like a fool? ----- Or is she one?----- She has never before seemed-----Ah-----

Virieu

Coarse?

Lamartine

Yes. Like this. Sh!

(*Graziella returns with the marrons glacés and coffee.*)

Graziella (*in a boasting tone*)

Well, M. Virieu. I'm going to be a lady now. I'm not going back to the tobacco factory any more. Alphone has said I didn't have to.

Lamartine (*very much irritated*)

Mon Dieu! I had forgotten that! Yes, yes, of course, you are not going back. (*To Virieu*) Why should she work like a Roman slave?

Virieu (*laughing*)

While you write poetry about Ischia and the Bay of Naples? No reason at all, *mon ami*. Very excellent idea. (*Smiling at Graziella.*) Then you will have time to read *Paul and Virginia* for yourself.

Graziella (*sullenly*)

Oh, I don't read.

Virieu

Don't you, really?

Lamartine

Have a cigarette.

(*They rise from the table, light their cigarettes and go down stage. Graziella removes the supper dishes.*)

Lamartine

(*Savagely to Virieu*)

I think you were positively insulting to her!

Virieu

(*Looking very much surprised*)

Why, my dear fellow! I'm sure I had no such intentions. If I have offended you or your—or her, I am sorry. She is a most beautiful creature. I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world. What did I say?

Lamartine

(*Dazed and angry*)

Oh I don't know-----You said----- "Don't you really?"

Virieu (*laughing heartily*)

But you would hardly call me insolent for that, could you now? Be reasonable!

Lamartine

Well, I know you are laughing at her through those half closed lids of yours. And at me, too!

Virieu

Really, Alphonse, this is too foolish.

Lamartine

It isn't foolish! That is the tragedy of my disillusion!

Virieu (*dryly*)

Well, I am leaving for France tonight.

Lamartine

(*After a pause*)

Aymon! My mother's letter will serve as an excuse-----I'll come!

Virieu

Good!-----Hurry!

Lamartine

I can hear her at the dishes; I must go before she is through! I could never say goodbye to her!

Virieu (*practically*)

Get a valise. I can help you pack.

Lamartine

(*With a graceful gesture*)

Clothes are nothing!

(*Virieu raises his eyebrows drolly as he walks about the room in great excitement, a contrast to Lamartine who is going through a series of beautiful poses, although he is almost in tears.*)

Virieu

Even "the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" doesn't get the trunks packed!

Lamartine

Will you be still?

(*He goes to his table and writes a note to Graziella. Even after complete disillusion it is impossible for him not to be sincerely sentimental. He is weeping and he writes with infinite tenderness. One is almost convinced that he believes what he is writing.*)

"Good-bye, Graziella, my beautiful one. I have been forced to leave you. My mother's letter weighs upon my heart. Farewell forever. Through eternity—

Your

Alphonse."

(*It is with great difficulty that he forces himself to reduce this sublimated emotion into so few words. He goes to the window.*)

Good-bye my radiant Italian valleys. The breath of your wind mingled with the scent of the orange trees will perfume my hair no longer! *Mais quand tout change pour toi, la nature est la meme, et le meme soleil se lève sur les jours.* (*He blows a kiss out the window*) *Adieu Graziella!*

Virieu

(*Taking him by the arm*) Hurry, up, you idiot! Remember she whistled her soup!

(*They go out. Graziella is heard in the next room washing the dishes.*)

Curtain

—JANET DURRIE

Spanish Gold

ALL this happened in the good old days, before there was a war, when rum was cheap, and seamen were considered the scum of the earth. What became of the Kid, I don't know. The cook is serving life, somewhere, for getting handy once too often, with his "stillet," and the Chief Engineer, fat and uproarious as ever, owns a nice little fleet of tramps, and counts his shekels by the millions.

* * *

The first Sunday the "Beebe" was out, after things on board had been put in ship-shape order, the decks and deck-houses scrubbed, the cabins cleaned out, the pilot-house and the engine-room set to glistening in a glory of newly-shined brass, the crew prepared for the routine of the trip with a poker-party. The men sat in the after hallway, next to the noisy, vibrating engine-room, and had as interesting a time of it as could be expected of a crowd which had just spent two sailor-like weeks in port, and had as much money left as seafaring men were apt to have. Most of them were there, who were not on watch, two of the mates, the deckhands, a quartermaster, some of the stokers, two oilers, and the fat, jolly chief engineer, who won all the money, and laughed uproariously during the process. And the half-Spanish cook with the hollow cheeks and the beady eyes, having spent every cent he owned on a glorious, two-day jag, sat by, watched, and made witty remarks.

"Keep it up, Fatty!" He told the chief engineer, who didn't mind the familiarity in the least, "Keep it up, and I'll borrow some of that off of you, down below, when I go to see my Jap woman."

"You go back to your kitchen, and start dinner. And see to it, you don't produce any of that junk you fed us yesterday!" the engineer told him.

The cook got up. "You men don't appreciate me," he said. "Guess I'll have to go see the Kid."

The Kid was a puzzle to these men. A great big hulk of a lad, a coal-passer who could shovel more tons per watch than any other man on board, a nice enough fellow if you treated him right, he never went ashore with any of the men, never joined in any poker-sessions, and, in his two months on the "Beebe," had never been seen really drunk. He liked to tell wild tales, however, of drinking-orgies with the harbor women. These were listened to with all due respect and disbelief, and followed up, all around, by wilder and more improbable ones, until he had time to recollect another set of

unsurpassed adventures in low life. The men didn't quite know what to make of him, but the general opinion was that, in spite of his weaknesses, and his cheap way of getting rid of his money, all by himself, provided, of course, he got rid of it at all, he had a good line of talk and was probably a good sort of a scout if you knew how to take him. And to hear him and the cook swap stories and kid each other was as good as a show, any time.

Just now, he was lying on his upper bunk, all alone in the after-crew's quarters, reading, for the twentieth time, a scrawly letter, on stationery which had once been blue, but was now mainly a mess of greasy fingerprints. He had a satisfied smile on his face, which developed into a chuckle every time he came to a part of the epistle that especially appealed to him, and he was thinking of how pleasant life would be, some day. But when the cook's shifty eyes and leery mouth appeared in the doorway, the Kid stowed the letter under the pillow and asked him what the devil he wanted, when he ought to be up above, making stew.

"Just came to cheer you up, sweetheart," the cook told him. "Why don't you join the party? Got no money, I suppose."

"Ain't eh?" Peter blurted out. Then he checked himself. "Well, neither have you, you drunken pig, so we're both out of luck."

The cook didn't resent the name. He could stand a good deal from this overgrown boy, anyway.

"The Chief is sure some performer with the cards," he went on, amiable as ever. "He'll have them all cleaned by noon. Must have something up his sleeve."

There was a long silence. The Kid was in no mood for swapping stories that day. He wished the man would leave him alone. But the man didn't leave him alone.

"How's your woman?" with a grin and a wink.

"What do you know about my woman?" Pete flared up. There were subjects on which he was touchy.

"Too much, entirely," the cook told him. "Too much about all of them. Got no use for the blooming things. What do you want for dinner today, roast chicken or oysters?"

"Aw, get out of here!"

When Pete was once more alone, he reached into the lining of his mattress, pulled out a wad of greasy bills, and carefully, so no one should suddenly come

into the room and see what he was doing, counted the correct amount, and lay back and smiled, wondering how long two-hundred-odd dollars, plus another trip's wages, would last a guy and his woman, minister's fee, house-rent, and furniture all included in the expenses.

After that Sunday, when the Chief had cleaned out almost every man on board, life on the "Beebe" became the long routine of a tedious voyage. The after-crew stood watch and watch in the engine-room and the firehole. The deck-hands spent most of their time painting the bulkheads. The captain had a grouch on, and snapped at the mates; and the cook and the Kid jollied each other along, and were watched with a sort of lethargic interest as two queer birds. There was little wind, and the weather grew hotter daily, as the little tub chugged her way southward. There was no wireless to keep in touch with the world, and what little reading-matter was on board, mainly cheap magazines, was at a premium. Occasionally, the men would get together and gossip about the officers, or tell monstrous tales about their own hardness and absolute degeneracy. And wild stories, not a few of them, true, perhaps, were told about the cook, who, with his boring look, was held somewhat in awe by most of them.

"That guy is an artist with a stillett," one of the watchmen would say. "I saw him once, down at Seasick Joe's, fighting three men, and nicking them up in great shape."

"I wonder if he always carries a knife," some deck-hand would say.

And then Pete would pipe up and tell of the time he had almost killed two men, in a saloon-fight, in Baltimore, and his fireman would tell him he didn't believe the Kid had ever even been drunk. There would follow a hot discussion about the respective merits of these two, as drinkers, which the fireman naturally won, having had the whole crew, and half the waterfront of New York as eye-witnesses, only the last time in port.

And so life went on.

Pete and the cook, totally different as they were, became fast friends.

* * *

"You got a woman, somewhere," the cook told him, once. "I can tell by the way you act."

"Is that so?" Pete said, careful on the subject, but no longer resentful.

"I've got one, too,—a little Jap woman, down where we're going to, but I ain't going to see her this trip."

"One is good. What's the matter with this one? Does she bite?"

"I got her mad," the cook answered, "and then all her good looks don't help a guy."

And then he went off on another wicked tale, that Pete didn't half listen to, having had an idea for a much better one, which must be fully worked out and ready to be told by the time the cook got through.

It appeared that the pretty little Jap woman had once owned a beautiful necklace.

"Four feet long," the cook described it, "Double strings, made entirely of gold coins from all over the world, and at the end of the chain was a gold crucifix, thick as your thumb and set with rubies."

Naturally, the first chance he'd had, he had slipped the thing in his pocket and gone off with it.

"First thing I did," he went on, "was bury it behind a big tree. I knew she was going to raise Cain. And before I got back to the boat, I got pinched."

The police had searched him and questioned him. The Jap woman had made herself heard all over town, reviling him and swearing revenge. But nothing had been found on him, and he had known nothing of any blooming necklace, and the woman had a bad reputation at headquarters, so they had let him off.

"And next time I got drunk," he said, "I gave the chain away for a hundred dollars. It was worth a thousand, at least."

"That's nothing," Pete answered. "Did I ever tell you about the time I stole an auto in New York, and wrecked it on the road to Philadelphia?"

So they went on, till late in the night, while the stars blinked down on them, and the moon sent a broad, shimmering river of light from the horizon clear down to the boat, where it was lost in the seething and swirling pathway churned up by the propeller.

Long after the cook had gone to bed, the Kid sat out on the after-deck and thought of the great thing that was going to happen when he got back to New York with the necessary two-hundred and fifty, thought of the life he was going to lead when he got away from all this monotony, with its intermingled smut and lies, and hauled out the greasy, blue letter, to read it over a few more times.

"Remember," it told him with its laboriously and ill-formed words, "Remember me, when the men want you to pull any rough stuff. And don't get drunk too often!" And it went on and told him a good many more things, mainly of the future, when he'd settle down to a decent job, somewhere.

The days grew hotter, and life grew more monotonous as the "Beebe" went southward. There were minor disputes, of course, and gossip grew strong. The men grumbled about the high prices the chief engineer charged them for tobacco, and gloves, and overalls. A

deckhand claimed to have seen the cook in his room, toying with a shining knife-blade.

Once, when they were but two days from port, the cook asked Pete if he wanted to make some money.

"Sure thing." Pete answered, thinking of the two-hundred and fifty.

"I lied to you, that day I told you about the necklace."

"Naturally, so did I."

"I stole the thing, all right," said the cook, "but I never had a chance to get it again, and it's still there."

"Where?"

"Where it's buried, of course, around the corner from the Jap woman's house. Thought maybe you'd get it for me."

"Nothing doing!" said Pete. "Why in hell don't you get it yourself?"

"I'll get nabbed if I go ashore. The police are watching for me."

"You go to hell!" said Pete.

The cook didn't like it. The Kid was a bum sport, and afraid to take a chance. Everything was safe. He'd give him half the haul.

With another more or less polite request to go to the devil, the Kid left him, to stand his watch in the fire-hole.

Two days later, the "Beebe" was tied up at a rickety little South American dock.

* * *

The Kid went to his bunk and reached into the mattress. He wasn't going to leave all his money in the crew's quarters, when the oilers had been talking, that very morning, of cleaning the bug out of the place. Not much, he wasn't. He had a letter there, too, that it wouldn't do to have that gang of rough-necks guy him about, all the way home. Then he started for shore, for a place where a guy could get something decent to eat, instead of that everlasting rot the murdering Spaniard had been feeding him.

And the first restaurant he came to was the "Internationale."

Now the "Internationale" was a large but dingy looking basement affair, beloved by the men of the waterfront, because they could get good food there, and strong drink, and pretty women, and because the police left the place almost alone, and the owners took American money. Pete went in there, because, since he had left home, he had always gone into places like that, and because the glitter and respectability of a more expensive place made him tired.

He went to a lonesome table, way at the back of the room, ordered a decent meal, topped off with wine, and sat down to enjoy himself, to watch these men

from all over the world go in and out, and to listen to them talk in every language and jargon on the face of the earth.

There were Spaniards there, and Chinese, big Norsemen, Yankees, and many others, from God only knew where. There were women, too, some of them pretty, who smoked cigarettes and ate and drank with these men, smiled at them, went to the street and away with them. And Pete was glad he had one, who could beat these women all four points to the wind, with her hands tied behind her.

Then someone came up from behind, and sat down next to him.

"Hello sailor-boy," said a high-pitched voice.

There, at his right, sat a little Japanese woman, pretty as a picture, with a gorgeous, silken kimona, and a way about her that made her different from anyone else in the place.

Pete thought of the cook, and wondered. He looked at the little thing beside him, and inwardly called the cook a thieving beast. He remembered having heard something about a wondrous, blue kimona that should have gone with the necklace. Before he realized what he was doing, he had called a waiter and ordered another meal with wine.

They got along famously together. The cook had taste, Pete would say that much for him. And a little woman, up-state in New York, was going to hear all about this. She had sense enough to understand, and not to get jealous.

But when the Kid paid the bill, carefully, so no one should see the wad he had in his pocket, she said to him:

"You stay?"

"Nothing doing!" A man had to be firm; Pete knew enough of the world for that.

She began to beg and plead. She almost cried. Poutingly she got up as if to go.

"Aw, come on," said Pete. "Have a drink and forget it."

So she sat down again, opposite him, pretty as ever, with a smile on her face, but with a wicked line at the corner of her eye, that this overgrown boy never saw.

They had a drink, and then another. She became amiable once more. Pete grew confidential and told her of many things, of a girl, of the fine years to come.

Something happened after the third drink. She seemed to float away somewhere, into the distance. The Kid grew suddenly limp. He wanted to lift his glass, but couldn't. Then she was back again, looking at him from the other side of the table, with that same old smile, but with a look in her eye that he hadn't seen before. He tried to talk to her, but he couldn't say a

word. He could just sit there limply and look at her, and watch her float off again into a hazy mist in the distance. He knew she'd doped him, but what did he care. He had a woman up-state, and he was going to sleep— sleep—

* * *

There was a continual, ceaseless pounding and ringing in his head, as if all bonds would break, and his head would split to a million pieces. There was a deadening numbness about his limbs and a sickening at his stomach. The air was cold and damp, and this soft thing he lay on gave forth an abominable smell. Peter rolled over. What was this he was lying on? It smelled infernally like the dung-pile on the farm, back home.

Then, suddenly, he came to his senses.

The restaurant—the little Jap—the money—

He reached frantically into his pocket. The money—

* * *

The "Internationale" was a respectable place. It turned out all downstairs lights and locked all doors, promptly at twelve. And at half past twelve that night, a big hulk of a lad, unmindful of the ringing in his head, unmindful of the smell in his clothes, unmindful of everything but that he must have his money, that his happiness, his life depended on it, came running to the door and kicked it and pounded it, while the moon and the stars leered down from above, and the cellar restaurant laughed back in hollow echoes to his blows. Upstairs a pretty little Japanese woman assured the boss that everything was all right, that this was only a crazy drunk, who would soon go singing and carousing down the street.

And, sure enough, the commotion stopped, and the crazy sailor sat down on the steps and blubbered, as drunken sailors are apt to blubber, and was homesick as only an overgrown boy can be homesick.

He thought of his ruined life, of the farm back home, of the girl and of his mother. He thought of the little devil of a Jap woman, and, after he had been there, no one knows how long, he thought of her silken kimono, and of the chain she'd once owned. The cook had buried it behind a big tree, around the corner from her house.

* * *

He found a vacant lot, with a big tree in it. He fell to digging, with his hands, with a board, with a stick, frantically, furiously, one foot from the tree, two and three feet from the tree, all around it, deeper and deeper, as if his very life depended on it. Once, when something told him to be careful, he dropped back,

into the shadow of a house, and watched a lone, drunken sailor go careening down the street. He fell to digging again, with his board, and his hands, and his stick. He dug under the roots of the tree. Finally his hand fell on something, and he pulled out a necklace, four feet long, made entirely of gold coins from all over the world, with a crucifix at the end of it, thick as your thumb and set with rubies.

And two minutes after he had left for his ship, a half-Spanish sea-cook came sneaking down the street and found a big tree, with a newly-dug hole around it.

* * *

Peter ran back to the boat. He made the gangway in three jumps. He ran down to the after hallway, to a place he knew of, under the floor, where nobody would ever find anything. The engineer, at work at some repairs in the engine-room, peered through the open door and wondered what the hell the Kid was so excited about.

Then the cook came back. He went straight to Peter's bunk, and told him to go outside, where the rest of the men wouldn't wake up and hear them.

"Come across with it!" he said.

"With what?"

"Now, listen here, Kid. You ain't going to double-cross me in this, and you know you ain't. Come across with that chain!" The cook was toying with a wicked looking knife.

But Peter held his ground. "I ain't got your chain," he said.

The cook grew wild. He swore to kill any little kid that tried to double-cross him. He made a pass with his knife, that just grazed Peter's cheek.

Crazy with fear, sick from the events of the day, the kid crouched down and begged for mercy.

"Quit it!" he cried. "I'll get it."

But when he got down to the after-hallway, the necklace was gone.

* * *

The Kid spent two long months, after that, in a South American seamen's hospital, recovering from a knife-wound. The cook never got into trouble over the affair. He was a good cook, who knew how to keep down expenses, and could handle the captain. What became of the chain, nobody knows, but the chief engineer grew more uproarious than ever, and, on his return to the states, bought eight hundred dollars worth of shares in the World Shipping Corporation. To this day, he likes to tell the story of how he rushed up on deck, and caught the murdering Spaniard's arm, barely in time to save the Kid's life.

—EARL P. HANSON.

“I’ll Say She Did”

SHE wasn't the type of girl who usually frequents the Libe on Friday nights and she looked, felt, and acted out of place. It stuck out all over her that she belonged at the Candy Shop—and that she knew she did. Idly I watched her as she slipped off her befringed and braided cape disclosing simultaneously a startling red lining and a collection of high school pins carefully arranged to the best advantage on a dark dress. She glanced self consciously around, nervously patted her smoothly corrugated black hair, and then with a great show of industry, noisily flipped the pages of the patient book spread open before her. But she soon wearied of this and supporting her head on her hand began idly to chew the eraser end of her pencil. Her gaze became abstracted and her wide blue eyes assumed an expression of injured innocence. Suddenly our eyes met and she quickly let hers fall, but only to raise them immediately. Her expression was now speculative. I returned her impudent little stare in kind, and then casually got up and moved to a seat across from her. If there was to be war, I thought, it might as well be on even grounds, and she had had the advantage of having a lamp to hide behind—and besides I don't like shooting at long range—you never know what you're going to hit. She seemed a bit flabbergasted by this last audacious move on my part, and began maltreating her book again.

Well, I thought, two could play at that game as well as one; so with much dispatch I flapped and rattled the pages of my book in gross imitation of her. Apprehensively I watched to see how she would take my latest venture. To my surprise she gave me a frank broad understanding grin without the faintest hint of coquetry, and on the strength of it I slipped across a note to her.

“Are you hungry?” I wrote, “If you are, will you come?”

Flushing a little she took it, read it, darted me a look and sent back, “Yes.”

I suppose you think I'm crazy but I was rather interested in seeing what the kind of a girl was like, and then I liked her grin. On the way to the Chocolate Shop she handed me a nice little line about how she hated to have missed the Candy Shop this week, but she just had decided she couldn't go with that awful man again.

“So you thought you'd get another,” I queried, “Well, how do you like what you drew?”

Now she was in her element, and she flirted back beautifully. After we had eaten some sticky messes in the softly shaded booths, I lighted a cigarette and suggested that we stay and talk awhile. She said yes, that would be adorable, and then we sat and neither of us said a word for some time. I puffed away and thought how cozy and nice it was. The girl wasn't bad at all, but she didn't seem exactly true to type; for instance the frank little grin didn't go well with the rest of her make up. Oh, yes, I liked her but I admit I was a bit disappointed that she wasn't as typical as she looked. Still—she talked baby talk. I looked at her speculatively. In the dim light her eyes as they met mine seemed darker and as though veiled. For a full second we dared let our eyes meet, and then, a slow flush mounting her cheeks, she looked down.

“Look at me,” I said breathlessly.

A ringing laugh answered me, “Well, it's been fun, hasn't it?” she said and completely disarmed me and left me gasping by grinning her broad little grin.

“You won't enjoy my little story—but you know I'm not really like this at all—why, I don't even look like this, I wanted to see if I could do it and I did it.”

“What do you mean?” I stammered: Was she laughing at me?

“Well, I'll be perfectly frank,” she said. “I didn't have a date, and, well, other girls have done it so, I—I tried. Wasn't I clever for a green-horn?—now tell me I was,” and she demurely looked down.

“You little devil—yes. You fooled me right along except when you grinned like a good fellow when I made fun of your method of studying in the Libe. Somehow your grin didn't go well with the rest of your rig.”

“Well, I'll confess I was scared to death when you came over and sat down across from me. But your impudent imitation of me rather reassured, as well as amused me—and I liked your grin too.”

Solemnly I stretched forth my hand across the table. “Shake on it, old girl, I said, “and I want to ask you a question. Will you go to the Candy Shop with me next Friday?”

She smiled slowly and looked provokingly at me through narrowed eyes—

“I did succeed, didn't I?” she said.

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Communication

Paris Day by Day—The plight of Europe—Light and shadows—Discomfort of the Franco-ophile.

When is the inevitable American tourist coming back? This is the question which curio merchants and hotel keepers are asking themselves everywhere; the former eagerly, for they can hardly keep body and soul together, the latter anxiously, for in spite of the fact that so many millions of men are dead there seems to be no room anywhere. It is a most extraordinary state of affairs. Europe is like some giant box of skillfully packed sardines, once taken out of alignment and disordered, for the life of you, the half cannot be got back into the box; impossible. There is an enormous amount of labor unrest and consequent idleness in spite of the fact that there is so much to be done. The writer just succeeded in getting out of Italy 24 hours before the national railway and telegraph strike was declared, arriving at Paris in due time for the waiters' and taxi-drivers' upheaval, so that if this article seems a bit pessimistic in spots the sceptic may well blame it on under-nourishment and over-exercise, the popular foot and stomach disease. The acute coal problem, everywhere except in England, prevents the factories from running more than half blast, besides

there is a distressing lack of raw material. The demobilized men linger in the great cities, fascinated by the bright lights and a life of indolence after those five long hellish years which almost atrophied them. Then there are the refugees too in Italy and France, who fled to cities like Paris and Rome for shelter, and now they cannot be ousted either by violence or logic. There has not been very much consideration shown for those who fought and bled on the battle fields; their places were all filled during their absence, and except for the highly skilled, the employer is reluctant to take them back, knowing that they are not as tractable as once upon a time and perhaps not as industrious. Then too the women have been emancipated by their newly acquired importance in every field of labor and they are naturally unwilling to relinquish tasks which they have really filled exceedingly well.

It is quite natural that in a war which lasted as long as this one, so violent and appalling at its beginning, but soon becoming a humdrum, monotonous part of everyday life, its heroes, in the eyes of the sleek and smug civilians, should have re-sunk to the level of ordinary mortals. The state of war was accepted as if it would last forever, how then could men doing their duty continue to be regarded as phenomena? But England and America are the only two countries which

(Continued on page 193)

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Sunnyside

The seventh burning glass went down,
 My head reeled like a feather,
 And I was young, and bold, and new;
 The boys were thronged together.
 "You cannot ride Old Sunnyside
 And never once pull leather!"

The speaker spilled a roll of bills
 Out on the glistening bar,
 And mocked me with his leery eye
 To follow suit as far,
 And back by gold my rider's art
 Or reputation mar.

And I was rash, I called his bluff,
 And satisfied his frown;
 Three thousand stripped I from my hip
 And boldly slapped it down;
 Then forked the bey I rode that day
 Whirled madly out of town.

The whole town knew what I had done:
 I had to back my name,
 And should I ride Old Sunnyside
 Then mine eternal fame,
 But should I cast and lose at last
 No time could hide my shame.

I rode far out upon the plain
 Where few men dare to go,
 Where nothing touches nothing,
 And time itself is slow,
 Where nothing but the wildest horse
 Can live and bear it so.

Three dreary days of sand and haze
 With fitful nights between;
 Thin grew my store of bread and meat,
 And shallow my canteen,
 But on the third a voice I heard,
 And a golden sign was seen.

The last red ray of the dying day
 Crept o'er the purpling plain;
 A sudden flash glanced by my eye
 Like a sudden flash of pain
 Or the distant glint of the dipping sun
 On a distant window pane.

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With a brilliant gleam the last bright beam
 Glanced on Old Sunnyside;
 He stood emblazoned on the plain
 His figure glorified,
 He stood far out across the sage,
 The stallion I must ride.

His challenging neigh rang o'er the plain,
 His eyes flashed living fire;
 I watched that night keen for the fight—
 Wild impulse of desire!
 And watching long, fresh sprang the dawn;
 My nerves were barbéd wire.

I cringe to tell of what befell
 Me on that awful chase,
 But on the north Death Range loomed forth
 When we began the race,
 And on the south the desert drouth
 Surged fiercely in my face.

And Sunnyside, his nostrils wide,
 Led straight off t'ward the west,
 Braving the heart of the vacant land,
 And close behind I pressed,
 The fetid breath of the desert heath
 Surged fiercely on my breast.

The sun swung low, it plunged below;
 The steady hoof-beats rang
 All weird and ghostly through the gloom,
 While wan the moon did hang,
 And angry, pin-pricked stars popped out
 And still the hoof-beats sang.

My eyes were raw, they played me tricks,
 From sleep so long delayed;
 The low sky line, it glowed like lime,
 The feeble lightning played
 Subdued, and shifting, then renewed,
 Yet we were undismayed.

Slower yet and slower yet
 The weary hours slid by,
 Up shot the sun and all alone
 Did commandeer the sky,
 And all alone we struggled on
 Beneath its wicked eye.

All that day and all that night
 I followed and he led;
 Desperately I tried to rope
 His wildly tossing head,
 For we were far, O far from home,
 And the desert lay so dead.

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With fifty awful hours of thirst
 We struck six water holes
 All cracked and baked, with throats unslaked,
 Our eyes like glowing coals;
 A seventh through the trembling sage
 Let hope into our souls.

And in the land the wind and sand
 Had scooped a hollow rare,
 And in it gleamed, or so it seemed,
 A patch of water fair,
 Could Sunnyside at one great stride
 Suck all that he found there?

The angry sun which has begun
 To breed an angry mind
 Scorched out all faith and hope and love,
 And all thoughts just and kind;
 Now vain self held alone the field,
 And ghastly stalked behind.

With ears pricked up and yearning mouth—
 My jealousy flamed hot—
 That wild horse beat me in that heat!
 But O the awful thought!
 For mad and cursed with bitter thirst,
 Old Sunnyside I shot!

His tired hoofs slipped, his weak knees tripped,
 He fell, nor tried to rise,
 His nose out-thrust as dry as dust—
 High up the buzzard cries—
 His skin was bagged, like canvas sagged,
 And hell burned in his eyes.

But O too late, what fiendish fate
 Had showed me there to be
 A glist'ning, cool, pure water hole
 With just enough for me?
 'Twas cracked and bare through the quaking air:
 A mad man's fantasy.

Now Sunnyside was dead and gone,
 And soon too dropped the bey;
 A better pony never stepped
 Who earned a better day.
 Why lingered I? "You'll never die,"
 I felt a whisper say.

I drifted deep into a sleep
 Where gentle voices sing,
 And when I woke they called the joke,
 The glasses high they fling;
 And some there are who say that I
 Imagined the whole thing.

—ROE BLACK

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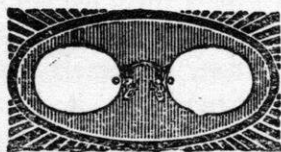
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COMMUNICATION

(Continued from page 185)

have made very much noise over the returned warriors, and England far less than we, not having the rah-rah spirit quite so completely developed. France has been most cruel in this respect, life being made just about as hard for the unshackled poilu as possible. Surely his long martyrdom was enough, but the attitude of the self-complacent seems to be that the returned ones should be so happy over still being alive the public could not possibly owe them anything. Nothing done to flatter their vanity, or soothe their ire, and even the wounded are shunted off to remote villages. And

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meanwhile the Chamber of Deputies votes itself an increase of salary of 100 per cent.

France fell into the habit of letting entirely too much be done for her by others; well-meaning but over-sentimental philanthropists made Utopian promises, until the Government took it for granted that America would rebuild the entire devastated region—and anything else which might be delapidated, and would continue to send money and clothes by the thousands of tons to people perfectly able to take care of themselves; it thereby and forthwith considered its own responsibilities considerably lightened. If a strict account were demanded of the distribution of the millions contributed to the French Orphans Fund, you all remember the bazaars and fetes we used to give—and it may be still going on for all I know, it would be difficult indeed to render. Only those who had some sort of influence succeeded in getting put on the fortunate list, the needy and obscure remained obscure until death relieved them. These French peasants are a cunning, crafty lot in spite of their admirable thrift and clear intelligence, it is not an unusual experience to have one of them get out an old stocking from some hiding place and change a note for 1000 franc, if you owe him anything. I wager they are hoarding enough gold to reestablish French credit abroad. Their cordiality, when it exists, is a very thin veneer, and they drive exceedingly hard bargains, ask any of the Overseas boys. One of their chief problems at present is not so much to increase production, which is so badly needed, but to outwit the tax-collector, whom they hate more cordially than the Hun. The French Budget is in a deplorable condition. Courage to levy direct taxes, hit the profiteers, make the rich pay has been conspicuously lacking in each new Ministry. The heaviest burden at present has fallen on the small bourgeois and the non-producer; he indeed, has a miserable time. Besides in Latin countries it is quite one thing to decree taxes and another to collect them.

The writer is still possessed of his same ardent love of French literature and philosophy, and for this limpid, musical and most expressive of languages, he is still all admiration before the best qualities in the French temperament, their marvelously quick intellects and sensitive natures, and their sure aesthetic appreciation; he still thinks that Paris is the most beautiful and fascinating city in the world, and he is proud to count certain friendships in France as the warmest and most inspiring he has enjoyed anywhere. BUT—continued examples of French parsimony and avarice, the sordid materialism which wrote the Treaty (which is entirely French) and which has run riot both in official circles and in the lives of individuals, the infamous example set by that worst of "canaille" Clemenceau, by which

he has been proclaimed one of the greatest national heroes of all times, showing where the heart of the people lies; French imperialism, and the absurd jealousy and belittling of Italy, the fear lest she get Fiume, and then blaming it all on poor Wilson, the convenient scapegoat for everything that has gone wrong in Europe; intolerance toward and lack of comprehension of the English, by whom France lives, and sneering contempt and utter weariness of the Americans who came so far to help them—but willingness to exploit them as long as they stay; the same blind, unreasoned attitude towards Germany, increased now by overweening arrogance as if France alone and unarmed had subdued the raging lion, thereby showing clearly to the world who was the real Superman; the recent ghastly blunders of French diplomacy, so crudely grasping and self-seeking that all honest Frenchmen assiduously avoid discussing it,—to mention a few examples, the Rhenish Republic agitations, the harshness and injustice of the so-called "cordon sanitaire," the rebuff to Belgium over the Luxembourg, the plotting for monarchy in Hungary, certain dabbings in Poland and Czeko-Slovakia, the haggling over Syria, the determination to keep the Turk in Europe at all costs because so much French money is sunk in Ottoman bonds; it would be a long list indeed to enumerate the details of this short sighted policy which is alienating from her all of Europe except that part which is directly dependent on her for favours.

So the writer submits that this, and other little matters of disillusionment which would grow monotonous to relate here have to a considerable extent dampened the enthusiasm for "La Belle France" which he felt as a student many years ago in Paris for the first time, and he finds himself now somewhat doubtful about the wisdom of certain propaganda which he once helped to spread in their behalf when he had the faith. One thing at least seems quite certain, and only very polite Frenchmen would deny it, namely that American intervention—"interference" as it is now popularly called, has conspicuously failed, except in hastening the victory, and now that is entirely forgotten, having never been more than grudgingly admitted by most people. Practically all the ideals for which we thought we were fighting have been dissipated into thin air, it is the old game of grab-as-grab-can. The American Senate has rightly judged that Wilson was duped and that the fourteen points became as a hollow mockery. France by such utterly artificial means as the Treaty has tried to reverse the situation against Germany and with far smaller natural wealth and a stagnant population (large families not being economical, what sophistry!), half efficient industry and backward methods, to accomplish by one fell sweep of the pen,

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with the connivance of England who thanks God to see her strongest commercial rival thereby disappear, what long years of German toil, infinite patience and ever increasing man power had painfully built up in the natural course of events. What can have happened to the "sacrée logique française" to imagine that such a structure of cards would long endure?

The mark "Made in U. S. A." is becoming about as unpopular as another sign along that order recently was, and European merchants and bankers are talking of Pan-Americanism in commerce. It is certainly high time for us now to clear out now and wash our hands of the whole muddle, even though by much talk and high-sounding words, through our President, we largely contributed to the muddling. Leave off loans, and relief commissions and such for a while, and let Europe help herself and she will probably come out all right—at least she will help herself to anything tangible that is lying loose somewhere and waiting to be claimed. The League of Nations cannot be called still-born, but it committed suicide successfully in its early infancy. In its conception it was but an alliance against Germany, a little later it decreed the starvation of Russia. It has turned the Poles loose upon their helpless neighbors, left the Adriatic problem in hopeless confusion by conniving at a buccaneer like D'Annunzio instead of court-martialing him, was brow-beaten by Japan and is now ready to sacrifice the fruits of victory in Turkey; finally it has made militarism rampant in Europe so that wherever one goes there is still to some extent the impression of being in an armed camp—except in Central Europe, the writer is told. It is impossible for a thinking person to dwell in the midst of these daily happenings and not take cognizance of them. And if he is an American surely his most fervent prayer must be that the next time we will make a few stipulations before we give ourselves so whole-heartedly and that those stipulations will be not from our side alone but an international agreement to render the world a better place to live in. For surely Europe would make that sacrifice to drag us in again, and the next time something might turn up.

ALEXANDER G. FITE, Grad.

Paris, Jan. 29, 1920.

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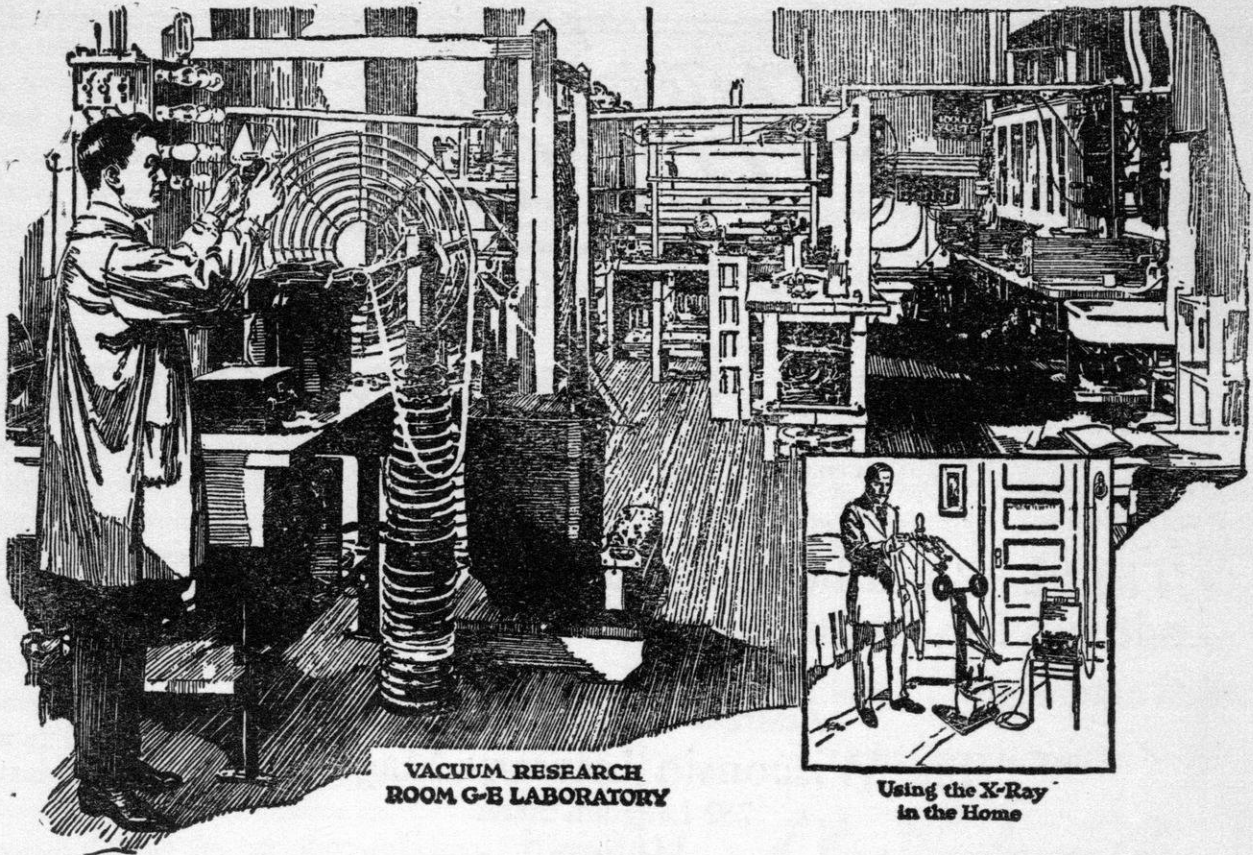
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