COLUMBIA LIBRARIES OFFSITE
1002152240

The Transgression of Andrew Vane

Guy Wetmore Carryl

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Columbia University
in the City of New York
THE LIBRARIES

Bequest of
Frederic Bancroft
1860-1945

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

of

BAL and Hor

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

BOOKS BY GUY WETMORE CARRYL

PUBLISHED BY HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

THE TRANSGRESSION OF ANDREW VANE $1.50

PUBLISHED BY HARPER AND BROTHERS

FABLES FOR THE FRIVOLOUS . . $1.50
MOTHER GOOSE FOR GROWN-UPS . $1.50

PUBLISHED BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

GRIMM TALES MADE GAY . . . $1.50
THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR . . $1.50
ZUT, AND OTHER PARISIANS . . $1.50

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Guy Wetmore Carry C.

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Transgression of Andrew Vane

A NOVEL

BY

GUY WETMORE CARRYL

Author of "Zut, and Other Parisians"

REVISED

FOURTH PRINTING

NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1904

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

8/2C2384
X

Copyright, 1904
BY
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

Published April, 1904

ROBERT DRUMMOND, PRINTER, NEW YORK

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

12-13-55 MS
55719E

TO

HENRY HOLT

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents.

PAGE

PROLOGUE. 1

CHAPTER I.

MR. CARNBY RECEIVES A LETTER. 22

CHAPTER II.

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD. 36

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL IN RED. 51

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. 71

CHAPTER V.

THE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. 89

CHAPTER VI.

A REVOLT SUPPRESSED. 106

CHAPTER VII.

A PLEDGE OF FRIENDSHIP. 117

CHAPTER VIII.

A PARLEY AND A PRAYER. 130

CHAPTER IX.

THE WOMAN IN THE CASE. 143

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER X.

PAGE
THE FAIRY GODMOTHER..... 159

CHAPTER XI.

SOME AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION..... 175

CHAPTER XII.

REACTION..... 192

CHAPTER XIII.

RHAPSODIE HONGROISE, No. 2..... 204

CHAPTER XIV.

FATE IS HARD—CASH!..... 218

CHAPTER XV.

"AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW, AND EVER SHALL BE." 237

CHAPTER XVI.

A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE..... 256

CHAPTER XVII.

A DOG AND HIS MASTER..... 268

CHAPTER XVIII.

FAIR EXCHANGE IS NO ROBBERY..... 283

CHAPTER XIX.

REDEMPTION..... 297

CHAPTER XX.

THE SHADOW..... 311

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Transgression of Andrew Vane

Digitized by Google

Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

For the things ye do, when your life is new,
And your sin is sinned with a smile,
Ye shall pay full sore, ye men, though the score
The Fates hold back for a while:
Ye shall pay, at the end, for your frauded friend,
For the secret your lips betray,
For the lust and the lie, to the Gods on High
Ye shall pay—ye shall pay—ye shall pay!

Ye shall pay ten-fold, with your heart's best gold,
Ah, tempted women and true!
Ye shall render account, to the full amount,
For each beautiful thing ye do.
For the youth ye yield, for the soul ye shield,
For the pitiful prayers ye pray,
'Tis the fancy of Fate that, soon or late,
Ye shall pay—ye shall pay—ye shall pay!

Digitized by Google
Original from
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The Transgression of Andrew Vane.

PROLOGUE.

For months past, she had felt that she was weakening, that the crescent wretchedness of five long years—an uninterrupted descent from level to level, on each of which the thorns of disillusion caught at, and tore from her, some shred of hope or self-respect—had done its work at last. Her courage and her faith, inherited, the one from the mental, the other from the moral, vigour of a rigid and uncompromising Puritan ancestry, were slipping from her. What the end was to be, she did not dare to ask; but it lay there ahead, grim and ominous, gradually taking form, through the mist of the immediate future. Its very suggestion of divergence from all that was familiar to her, of being even a degree more monstrous than what she had already suffered, sickened and appalled her, who had never known a dread of mere death, but drew back with unspeakable fear before the looming of this unknown, ultimate degradation.

John Vane had wooed his wife with the easy confidence born of adequate position, adequate means,

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

and more than adequate ability. Four years of Harvard had taught him to believe life in the little western town which had been his birthplace, to be, for a man of literary bent, a practical impossibility; and when he stepped easily from the halls of his Alma Mater into the offices of a Boston magazine, it was a practical renunciation of his early environment, and an expression of his resolve to follow in the actual as well as the metaphorical footprints of some of the greatest figures in American literature.

Six months later, he announced his engagement to Helen Sterling, the only daughter of a pioneer in copper, whose character had long since built him up a reputation, to which, later, the five figures of his income lent an added lustre. From first to last, from the occasion of the young collegian's presentation to the reigning belle of her season to the moment when she said, "I, Helen, do take thee, John"—and the rest of it—there was, by way of proving the rule, never a stumbling-block in the exceptionally smooth course of their love. They were made for each other, people said, and no one subscribed more confidently to this opinion than themselves.

But—and does ever a honeymoon pass without the uneasy awakening of that latent 'but'?—Helen was not a month older before she was forced to the unwilling conclusion that there was a singular, intangible something lacking in her husband's character. It was not that he was not gifted; for that, his most casual acquaintance knew him to be;—or in

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

love with her; for of that he gave evidence almost as conclusive as would have been furnished by the ceaseless reiteration of that spoken devotion which a woman craves, without hope of receiving, from the man she loves. But things had come to him so easily, so independently of any effort of his own, that he was become the chief of optimists, imbued with the serene and confident *laisser aller* of the clan; and, now that association was making her intimate with his methods of work, she found them to be wholly haphazard, inspired merely by the whim of the moment, unregulated by any remotest evidence of system. His performances were the meaningless flashes and snaps of Chinese crackers, not the steady and purposeful, if less imposing, fire of a skilfully laid fuse, leading on to great results. His confidence in his own ability, in the certainty of his ultimate triumph, was so absolute that he was content with the minimum of endeavor, oblivious to the fact that only statues can remain thus passive with the assurance that laurel wreaths will be laid before them. He did not realize that the living must pluck their laurels for themselves.

Lacking the initiative which is its indispensable ally, Vane nevertheless possessed all the impatience of restraint or routine characteristic of the creative faculty. A year of editorial work was sufficient to convince him that it was not possible for such a temperament as his to be trammelled by fixed hours, and strait-jacketed by observance of detail. He

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

resigned his position, on the plea of devoting himself entirely to writing, and there ensued a period during which he sunned himself in society's favour, and received his share of flattery in return for several trifles contributed to the magazines, but created nothing worthy even of the infinitesimal effort which he made. A man had to think, to arrange, to compose, he told his wife. Rome was not built in a day; and the mere manual act of transferring his thoughts to paper was a trifle, when contrasted with the process of incubation. So, month after month dragged by, and little by little, as his novelty wore off, John Vane dropped out of society's consideration as a literary potentiality, and came to be regarded as nothing more than one of many good-looking, agreeable men-about-town, to whom, in the matter of his wife and his worldly weal, the Fates had been generous beyond the ordinary.

One of the first unmistakable signs of degeneration was his now constant complaint that he was unappreciated. The average man's share of applause is in strict proportion to his deserts. In Vane's case the allowance had been appreciably in excess of his due, but it was exhausted at last; and flattery is a drug which, with indulgence, becomes a necessity. Deprived of it, he grew fretful and impatient, made occasional abortive efforts at performance of the great things formerly expected of him, and talked savagely of prejudice when his manuscripts came back from the editors, accompanied by polite notes

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

wherein the pill of non-availability was sugar-coated with reference to the pleasure of examining his work, and the regret with which it was returned.

For a time he had his wife's most loyal support and sympathy. She liked to believe that what he said was true, that literary excellence counted for nothing in a commercial age, and that a man who would not conform to silly superficial standards had no chance of recognition. But Helen was a woman to whom a goose was a goose, and a swan a swan, at all times, and regardless of ownership. Moreover, she had been a lover of the best in literature since first she had been given the run of her father's library, and had sat for entire afternoons curled up in a big arm-chair, skipping the long words of Thackeray or Charles Lamb. Her critical sense, thus perfected, was now too alert to allow of any treachery to standard. Intensely loyal she was, but intensely just, as well; and all her eagerness to believe her husband to be what he claimed could not blind her to the mediocrity, often the utter worthlessness, of his later work. With revelation arose, naturally, an ardent desire to aid him; and strict sincerity, which was her most admirable quality, pointed to candour as the only adequate means. With his resentment of her counsel came her first disheartening insight into the shallowness and perversity of his nature. That he could accuse her of attempting to belittle him, rank her as at one with those who misunderstood him, hurt her more keenly than if he had turned

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

and cursed her. It was the parting of thier ways—the first decisive step on the road which she was to follow wearily for five years of discouragement and disillusion.

With the waning of his popularity Vane renounced Boston, as he had renounced his birthplace, and they moved to New York. Here, for a time, he contributed listlessly to the humorous weeklies and the less pretentious magazines; but reputation of the kind he sought was not to be won by mere facility in rhyming or in writing around a dozen illustrations; and, presently, he reverted to his old complaint of prejudice and non-appreciation. Then a chance acquaintance led him into speculation. Where abler men failed, John Vane was swept into complete disaster. In a transient panic, he was caught long of a big line of stocks, tried to average too soon, and was finally forced to let go his holdings at about the bottom of the market.

It was ruin, absolute and utter; but Helen almost welcomed it, in the belief that the spur of a necessity he had never known before would goad him to the achievement of better things. But the character of John Vane was not the stuff whereof is made the moral phœnix. He shrivelled before the fire of defeat, and sank hopelessly into the ashes of surrender.

They moved from their luxurious apartment to a cheap hotel, thence to a cheaper one, thence to a boarding-house. The backward path was strewn

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

with unsettled bills, and loans never to be repaid. Vane wrote spasmodically for the daily papers, and for such of the magazines as would still accept his work; and, on the pittance thus earned, and the generosity of Helen's father, they contrived to exist, in a fashion, for something over two years.

But, given the temperament of John Vane, the next development was inevitable. At first Helen sturdily refused to believe that a new demon had entered the hell which he was making of her life. She met him, at night, with an attempt at a smile, deliberately ignoring his unsteady gait, his sodden face, his hot, rank breath. But the evidence was plain, constant, incontestable. Drink had gripped him; and she knew too well that whatever of weakness laid hand upon her husband never relinquished hold.

So another year went by, the gulf between them widening and widening. Finally, he struck her—and then, for the first time, that final degradation, that ominous, unknowable end of hope and self-respect, loomed, hideous and shadowy, through the fog before her. Unable to interpret its significance, she told herself, nevertheless, that it was very near.

They were living in Kingsbridge, in a little frame house into which a man who had known her husband in his Wall Street days had come, in settlement of a bad debt, and which he had offered them, for charity's sake, at a paltry annual rental The same Samaritan had given Vane a small position in his office; and the

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

latter now went to and fro, between the city and its gruesome little neighbour on the Harlem, taking leave of his wife with a curt, contemptuous nod, and returning, bloated and foul-breathed, to pass the evenings in a semi-stupor.

The chance had been too good to be disregarded; but life under such conditions was no better than sheer existence. The cottage was one of a squat, ill-favoured row on a side street, within a stone's throw of the railway station. They had found it equipped, in a way, with cheap, yellowish furniture, worn and faded carpets, and kitchen utensils distinguished by the grime of many meals and the musty inheritance of insufficient washings. About the house there was a stale, moist smell of plaster, and the plot of turf in the little front yard was dry and discoloured, like the mats of imitation grass in the establishment of a country photographer. Helen had striven to redeem the desolation of the tiny living-room with the few pictures and articles of furniture which she had contrived to save from the wreck of their former fortunes; but the attempt was not successful. The rare prints were out of place against the tawdry wall-paper, and the few pieces of Sheraton and Chippendale to which she had clung took on, in such surroundings, the shabbiness of what was already there.

She was obliged to do her own marketing and cooking and housework, as a servant, in thier straitened circumstances, was out of the question: and not the least part of her martyrdom was the pur-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

chase of scrawny yellow fowls, and vegetables of a freshness past, and their preparation in the dingy little kitchen, which left an odour of frying lard in the very clothes she wore.

Vane had left her, an hour before, on his way to the city; and now, as the weight of depression became intolerable, she took her hat, locked the door behind her, and started for a long walk over the hill-roads back of the town. This had lately come to be her habit. It was something, to escape, even for half a day, from the dispirited little suburb, with its sallow frame houses, its patched fences, and its cinder-strewn roadways, along which lean cats slunk guiltily, and dishevelled fowls picked their way in search of food. Up on the hills, the air of late November was keen and chill, and grayed with a drifting smoke-mist from distant fires of dried leaves. The brown grass was veiled here and there with thin patches of snow, stippled with faint shadows, cast by the filial oak-leaves, which cling longer than any other to the maternal bough. As Helen passed, squirrels darted nimbly away to a safe distance, and then sat up to watch her, with their fore paws held coquettishly against their breasts. It was all very sane and wholesome—all in wonderful contrast to her morbid life in the shadow of John Vane's personality.

There had been no children—a fact which, in happier hours, she had deplored, but for which she was now profoundly grateful. There are things which it is easier to bear alone. To share with an-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

other—and that other her child—the humiliation of her ill-starred association with her husband, would but have been to double the burden's weight. In her own case the period of martyrdom was well-nigh done. For his son and hers it would simply be at its beginning—tragic in its boundless possibilities of shame.

As the thought came of the motherhood thus denied her, she wondered why she had been faithful to John Vane. Once she had believed in him, and so strong had been this faith that some shreds of it yet remained, to bind her to him through all the unspeakably humiliating days of his gradual but inevitable degradation. Nor was her fidelity of the negative, meaningless kind which is strong simply because unassailed. As a woman of the world, she had, more than once, been brought into contact with men lax in their scrupulosity, but scrupulous in their laxity. She had had her temptations, her chances of escape; and the price to be paid was not exorbitant, in view of the relief to be obtained. But upon these she had resolutely turned her back, hoping against hope for the miracle which never came. Even now, her father's door stood wide to her, and every instinct of reason impelled her to a separation. But Vane had not only killed her love for him; he had destroyed her very taste for life itself, under any circumstances whatsoever. She clung to him now, not because she loved him, not because it was impossible to do without him, but because he

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

had sapped her youth, her faith, her craving for anything short of oblivion.

She stood for a long time, motionless, at a point where a little stream tinkled pleasantly over the stones beneath its first thin sheathing of ice. The trees, saving only the oaks, were bare, and stood stiffly, in close proximity, in the weird, white brilliance of *contre-lumière;* and for a few moments the barren tranquillity of the scene was indescribably restful. Then the light changed, as a slow cloud crept across the sun, and, with the coming of the resultant shadow, Helen, always exquisitely sensible to the moods of nature, returned suddenly to a consciousness of her extremity. It was not real, then, this negative beauty, this serene simplicity of nunlike, early winter; it was not real, her own unwonted calm! What *was* actual, material, inevitable, was the personality of the man who dominated her life like an evil spirit, using her as his chattel, abusing her as his slave. Abruptly, the whole course of their association spread itself before her, up to her last glimpse of him, that morning, shambling on his way to the miserable daily duty to which he had sunk. And this was the life which she had been so eager to share with him, the life which, in those early days, his promises had made to seem so fair! Together, they were to have seen the world—the wonderful, great world, that had shone in the distance, like a Promised Land, from the Pisgah of her girlish imaginings: London, Paris, Rome, the Nile, Greece, India, and Japan.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

They were to have seen them all—drunk, in company, of the wine of beauty and inspiration, doubling their individual pleasures with the magic wand of mutual comprehension, as he should turn the treasures found along their enchanted way into such words as men preserve to praise, and she, at his side, should be the first to read and reverence. And now? For the first time, the full splendour of the dream, the full squalor of the reality, swept down upon her. She saw him, diverted from his own ideals, and ignorant of hers, taking the initial step upon his downward way, no foot of which was ever to be retraced: drunken, debauched, impotent to write one worthy word, skulking, shamefaced and sodden, through a world of sunlight and manly endeavour, like some noisome prowler of the night, surprised, far from its lair, by the dawn of sweet young day. She was no more than a girl, and already it was too late. The blitheness of life was gone, never to return. For a moment she stood with her worn hands crushed against her face, and then she stretched her arms upward to their full length, and cried aloud, "Ah, God! Ah, *God!*" to the chill, clear sky of the November day.

A voice at her side aroused her before she realized that she was not alone. At the sound she turned guiltily, and found herself face to face with a man she had never seen. He stood quite near, hat in hand, surveying her with cold, steel-blue eyes. In that first instant, with a perception sharpened by

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

her mental anguish, she became suddenly as familiar with every detail of his appearance as if they had been intimates for years. He was tall and slender, and unmistakably young; and, in singular contrast to his pallid complexion, his lips, under the thin mustache, were full and red, with a strange, sensual crookedness that was half a smile and half a sneer. There was about him a curious, compellant air of mastery and self-possession, as of one sure of himself, and accustomed to control; and his first words, under their veneer of polite solicitude, were, in their total lack of surprise or idle curiosity, significant of the trained man of the world, while the quaint, foreign flavour of the title by which he addressed her was equally suggestive of the cosmopolite.

"You are in distress, *madame*?"

Helen paused before replying. With the instinctive delicacy of her sex, she realized that in the approach of a stranger who had surprised her in a betrayal of extreme emotion there was something which she would do well to resent; and yet she was come to one of those crises which every woman knows; when the need of sympathy, even the most casual, was imperative—when, albeit at the sacrifice of conventionality, she was fain to seek support, to grasp a firm hand, to hear a friendly, though an unknown, voice. Pride, her stanch ally through all the bitter hours of her despair, had weakened at this the most crucial point, and, like a frightened

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

child, she would have run for reassurance into the arms of the veriest passer-by.

"Perhaps," she answered presently. "But, believe me, the expression of my feeling was purely involuntary. I thought myself alone. There are, ordinarily, few passers by this road."

He had replaced his hat now, and was no longer looking at her, but down across the shelving slope of hillside, spiked with slender trees, as close-set as the bristles of a giant brush. When he spoke again, his tone had curiously assumed the existence of a relation between them, as if, instead of total strangers, they had been old acquaintances, come together at this spot, and exchanging impressions of the scene before them.

"Strange," he said slowly, "that you should be in distress, when Nature, which always seems to me the most sympathetic of companions, is wrapped in so great repose. In my dealings with humanity, I've frequently met with misunderstanding; but never, in the attitude of Nature, a lack of what I felt to be completest comprehension of my mood. She always seems to divine our difficulties, and to have some little helpful hint, some small parable, which, if we read it aright, will point out the solution of our problem, or at least serve to soothe the momentary pang. This little stream at our feet, for example: how it preaches the lesson that while we must meet with days that are cold, unsympathetic, drear, it's not only possible, but best, to preserve, under the ice

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

in which adversity wraps our hearts, the life and laughter which friendlier suns have taught us! I wonder if that is not the secret of all human contentment—to resign oneself to the chilling touch of the wintry days of life, secure in the knowledge that summer will return, the compensation be made manifest, and the wrong turned to right."

The rebuff which was on Helen's lips an instant before was never spoken. It was one of those moments when the intuitive assertion of dignity and self-reliance lays down its arms before the need of comfort and companionship. She did not look at him, but in her silence there was that which encouraged him to continue.

"You don't resent my speaking to you in this way?" he asked. "After all, why should you? You are a bubble on this strange, erratic stream of life, and I another. Bubble does not ask bubble the reason of their meeting, at some predestined spot between source and sea. Instead, they touch, perhaps to drift apart again after a moment; perhaps, as one often sees them, to unite in one larger, better, brighter bubble than either had been before. Neither cares a tittle for its chance companion's previous history, or for what the other bubbles say. Curiosity as to another's past is the prerogative of small-spirited men, as is also the dread of adverse criticism Now the commingling bubbles are one of Nature's little parables, and my conception of ideal sympathy."

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

His eyes were upon her now, and, strangely impelled, her own came round to meet them.

"I'm not wholly sure that I get your meaning," she said, feeling that he exacted a reply. "Is it that association and sympathy are merely the result of chance?"

"Chance is only a word that we use to express the workings of a force beyond our understanding." He stooped and picked up a little stone, weighed it momentarily in his palm, and then, reversing his hand, let it fall. "One would hardly be apt to call it chance," he added, "that, after leaving my hand, that pebble reached the ground. If we understood destiny as we understand gravitation, we should not say that our present meeting was due to chance, but rather that it was the logical outcome of a natural law."

There was a long pause, during which he glanced at her more than once, with the seemingly careless but actually keenly observant air of a skilled physician studying a nervous patient. She was a little frightened, she confessed to herself, as she gathered her wits, staring at the bit of river which was visible from where they stood, and the slopes beyond. For weeks she had been prey to an apathy which was only broken, at intervals, by an outburst of passionate revolt. Now, in some inexplicable fashion, the burden seemed to have slipped from her shoulders, and the feeling of depression was replaced by one of uplifting, of unreasonable exhilaration. The

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

sensation was vaguely familiar to her, and, groping for a clue, she found its parallel in the preliminary action of ether, which she had taken a year or so before. Through the growing, not unpleasurable, dizziness which came upon her thus, the man's voice made its way.

"Let me try to explain myself more clearly," he was saying. "Something—God, or chance, or destiny, or whatever you choose to call it—led me around that last turn of the road at a moment when, if I'm not mistaken, a fellow being came to the snapping-point of self-control. I can't think there's no significance in our meeting. I believe I was sent to help you. The question is, whether you're broad and generous and courageous enough to take for granted a formal introduction, and the gradual evolution of acquaintance into intimacy, up to the moment when you would naturally turn to me, as your most loyal friend, for sympathy. And I think you are."

Once more Helen looked at him. Her mind was curiously clouded, but the sensation gave her no uneasiness. Instead, she felt that she was smiling.

"I think you will do it," he repeated.

He was holding out his hand with the confidence of one who knows it will be accepted, and, after a moment, she laid her own within it. His fingers closed firmly on hers, and, of a sudden, the world drew in about her, graying, as under the touch of fog. Her last perception was of his eyes fixed

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

full on hers with an expression of quiet amusement.

"I'm faint," she murmured, "I am—faint—"

When she came to herself, his eyes still held her.

"In the strange, unknowable book of Fate," he said, "it was written, from the beginning of time, that you and I should meet upon a dull hillside in late November, and—and that all that has been should be!"

Before she had time to answer, he had left her.

Briefly she stood, dizzy and perplexed, and then, after one great leap, her heart seemed to shudder and stand still. *She was in the sordid little living-room of the Kingsbridge cottage, and outside the day was glooming into twilight!*

Without power to move, she watched from the window the man who had just gone, pass down the path and through the gate, and, turning, wave a farewell, before he hurried away in the direction of the station. Then she was fully aroused by the entrance of the postman, and went slowly to meet him at the door. There was only one letter, but this was directed in her husband's unsteady hand, and, as she opened it, the contents leapt at her like a blow:

"HELEN:

"Let me be as brief as you will think me brutal. When this reaches you I shall already be far at sea—with another woman. I have seen how you despised

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

me, and I think that you know this, and that I hate you for it. I shall not ask you to forgive me, for I, too, have many things to forgive. If you had understood me, much that has happened might never have been. But what is past is past. Let us bury it and have done.

"JOHN."

For a moment, which seemed an eternity, Helen stood, fingering the wretched sheet, and gazing straight before her with blank, unwinking eyes. Then, with a rush, came remembrance, and with it a great wave of relief. Before she fully comprehended her intention, she was at the gate of the cottage. But there she halted, with a nameless sense of loss and desperation. From the distance had come the yelp of a signalled locomotive, and then a dozen short, choking pants, as it dragged the reluctant train into motion. He had gone!

"But he will come back!" she murmured, "and, that he may come sooner, I will write."

It was only towards the end of her black, sleepless night that she remembered that she did not even know his name.

Late autumn slid gloomily into winter, and winter into spring, before she realized that he would never come. To her father she had written nothing of Vane's desertion. For a year past, his name had not been mentioned in their letters, so the omission was no longer noted; and Mr. Sterling's remittances

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

enabled her to live in material comfort. She clung to the forlorn little cottage with a vague feeling that by it alone could she be traced when He should come back for her; but took a servant, a slovenly little wench, who moved in a circumambient odour of carbolic acid, and amassed dust under beds and sofas as a miser hoards his gold.

Helen herself saw nothing, heeded nothing. Save in the impulse which followed her reading of Vane's letter, her mind was never wholly clear from the shadow which had descended upon it at the moment of that hand-grip on the hillside. Hour after hour, day after day, week after week, she sat at the window, motionless, listening for the creak of the gate, the crunch of footsteps on the gravel path, which would tell her that He had returned.

With spring the disillusion came, and she crept back to the shelter of her father's house, but to no change, save slow and listless surrender to the inevitable. Sometimes they heard her whispering to herself—as she sat, with some book which they had brought her, unopened on her knee—odd scraps of sentences and broken phrases, without apparent relevancy or connection. The family physician, a friend from boyhood of Andrew Sterling, tapped his forehead significantly at such times as these, and the hands of the two men would meet in a grasp of mutual understanding.

One night in late August her child was born, and the west wind that brought a new soul to the Sterling

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

door, pausing an instant in its passing, gathered up, and in its kind arms bore away, on its pathless flight into the Great Unknown, the tired spirit of Helen Vane.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I.

MR. CARNBY RECEIVES A LETTER.

MR. AND MRS. JEREMY CARNBY furnished to the reflective observer a striking illustration of the circumstance that extremes not only meet, but, not infrequently, marry. Mrs. Carnby confessed to fifty, and was in reality forty-seven. As, in any event, incredulity answers "Never!" when a woman makes mention of her age, she preferred that the adverb should be voiced with flattering emphasis and in her presence, rather than sarcastically and behind her back. She was nothing if not original.

Mrs. Carnby was distinctly plain, a fact which five minutes of her company effectually deprived of all significance: her power of attraction being as forceful as that of a magnet, and similar to a magnet's in its absence of outward evidence. She was a woman of temperate but kaleidoscopic enthusiasms, who had retained enough of the atmosphere of each to render her interesting to a variety of persons. Prolonged experience of the world had invested her with an admirable broad-mindedness, which caused her to tread the notoriously dangerous paths of the

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

American Colony, in which she was a constant and conspicuous figure, with the assurance of an Indian fakir walking on broken glass—pleasurably appreciative of the risk, that is, while assured by consummate *savoir faire* against cutting her feet. Her *fort* was tact. She had at one and the same time a faculty for forgetting confidences which commended her to women, and a knack of remembering them which endeared her to men. It was with the latter that she was preëminently successful. What might have been termed her masculine method was based on the broad, general principle that the adult male is most interested in the persons most interested in him, and it never failed, in its many modifications, of effect. Men told her of their love-affairs, for example, with the same unquestioning assurance wherewith they intrusted their funds to a reputable banker; and were apt to remember the manner in which their confidences were received, longer than the details of the confidences themselves. And when you can listen for an hour, with every evidence of extreme interest, to a man's rhapsodies about another woman, and, at the end, send him away with a distinct recollection of the gown you wore, or the perfume on the handkerchief he picked up for you, then, dear lady, there is nothing more to be said.

Mr. Jeremy Carnby infrequently accompanied his wife to a reception or a *musicale*, somewhat as Chinese idols and emperors are occasionally pro-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

duced in public—as an assurance of good faith, that is, and in proof of actual existence. As it is not good form to flaunt one's marriage certificate in the faces of society, an undeniable, flesh-and-blood husband is, perhaps, the next best thing—when exhibited, of course, with that golden mean of frequency which lies between a hint of henpeck on the one side and a suggestion of neglect upon the other. Mrs. Carnby blazed in the social firmament of the American Colony with the unwavering fixity of the Polar Star: Jeremy appeared rarely, but with extreme regularity, like a comet of wide orbit, as evidence that the marital solar system was working smoothly and well.

Mrs. Carnby was, and not unreasonably, proud of Jeremy. They had lived twenty-five years in Paris, and, to the best of her knowledge and belief, he was as yet unaware, at least in a sentimental sense, that other women so much as existed. Since one cannot own the Obélisque or the Vénus de Milo, it is assuredly something to have a husband who never turns his head on the Avenue du Bois, or finds a use for an opera-glass at the Folies-Bergère. Jeremy was not amusing, still less brilliant, least of all popular; but he was preëminently loyal and unfeignedly affectionate—qualities sufficiently rare in the world in which Mrs. Carnby lived, and moved, and had the greater portion of her being, to recommend themselves strongly to her shrewd, uncompromising mind. In her somewhat over-furnished life he

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

occupied a distinct niche, which no one else could have filled; and in this, to her way of thinking, he was unique—as a husband. After *foie gras* and champagne, Mrs. Carnby always breakfasted on American hominy, a mealy red apple, and a glass of milk. She was equally careful, however, to take the meal in company with Jeremy. He was part of the treatment.

The Carnby *hôtel* was one of a number in the Villa Dupont. One turned in through a narrow gateway, from the sordid dinginess of the Rue Pergolèse, and, at a stone's throw from the latter's pungent cheese and butter shops, and grimy *charbonneries*, came delightfully into the shade of chestnuts greener than those exposed to the dust of the great avenues, and to the sound of fountains plashing into basins buried in fresh turf. It was very quiet, like some charming little back street at St. Germain or Versailles, and the houses, with their white walls and green shutters and glass-enclosed porticos, were more like country villas than Parisian *hôtels*. The gay stir of the boulevards and the Avenue du Bois might, to all seeming, have been a hundred kilometres distant, so still and simple was this little corner of the capital. Jeremy frankly adored it. He had a great office looking out upon the Place de l'Opéra, and when he rose from his desk, his head aching with the reports and accounts of the mighty insurance company of which he was the European manager, and went to the window in

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

search of distraction, it was only to have his eyes met by a dizzier hodge-podge than that of the figures he had left—the moil of *camions*, omnibuses, and cabs, threading in and out at the intersection of the six wide driveways, first up and down, and then across, as the brigadier in charge regulated the traffic with sharp trills of his whistle, which jerked up the right arms of the policemen at the crossings, as if some one had pul'ed the strings of so many marionettes with white batons in their hands. All this was not irritating, or even displeasing, to Jeremy. He was too thorough an American, despite his long residence in Paris, and too keen a business man, notwithstanding his wife's fortune, not to derive satisfaction from every evidence of human energy. The Place de l'Opéra appealed to the same instincts in his temperament that would have been gratified by the sight of a stop-cylinder printing-machine in action. But, not the less for that, his heart was domiciled in the *hôtel* in the Villa Dupont.

On a certain evening in mid-April, Jeremy had elaborated his customary half-hour walk homeward with a detour by way of the Boulevard Malesherbes, the Parc Monceau, and the Avenue Hoche; and it was close upon six when he let himself in at his front door, and laid his derby among the shining top-hats of his wife's callers, on the table in the *antichambre*. Through the half-parted curtains at the *salon* door came scraps of conversation, both in French and English, and the pleasant tinkle of cups

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

and saucers; and, as he passed, he had a glimpse of several well-groomed men, in white waistcoats and gaiters, sitting on the extreme edges of their chairs, with their toes turned in, their elbows on their knees, and tea-cups in their hands; and of smartly-dressed women, with big hats, and veils tucked up across their noses, nibbling at *petits fours*. He turned into his study with a feeling of satisfaction. It was incomprehensible to his mind, this seemingly universal passion for tea and sweet cakes; but if the institution was to exist under his roof at all, it was gratifying to know that, albeit the tea was the finest Indian over-land, and the sweet cakes from the Maison Gagé, it was not for these reasons alone that the 16th Arrondissement was eager, and the 7th not loath, to be received at the *hôtel* in the Villa Dupont. Jeremy knew that his wife was the most popular woman in the Colony, as to him she was the best and most beautiful in the world. Before he touched the *Temps* or the half-dozen letters which lay upon his table, he leaned forward, with his elbows on the silver-mounted blotter, and his temples in his hands, and looked long at her photograph smiling at him out of its Russian enamel frame. If the world, which laughed at him for his prim black neckties and his common-sense shoes, even while it respected him for his business ability, had seen him thus, it would have shared his wife's knowledge that Jeremy Carnby was an uncommonly good sort.

He opened his letters carefully, slitting the en-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

velopes with a slender paper-knife, and endorsing each one methodically with the date of receipt before passing on to the next. All were private and personal, his voluminous business mail being handled at his office by a secretary and two stenographers. With characteristic loyalty, Jeremy wrote regularly to a score of old acquaintances and poor relations in the States, most of whom he had seen but once or twice in the twenty-five years of his exile, and read their replies with interest, often with emotion: and his own left hand knew not how many cheques had been signed, and cheering words written, by his unassuming right, in reply to the plaints and appeals of his intimates of former years. For the steady, white light of Jeremy Carnby's kindliness let never a glint of its brightness pass through the closely-woven bushel of his modesty.

He hesitated with the last letter in his hand, reread it slowly, and then lit a cigar and sat looking fixedly at his inkstand, blowing out thin coils of smoke. So Mrs. Carnby found him, as she swept in, dropped into a big red-leather arm-chair, and slid smoothly into an especial variety of small talk, wherewith she was wont to smooth the business wrinkles from his forehead, and bring him into a frame of mind proper for an appreciation of the efforts of their *chef*.

"If it isn't smoking a cigar at fifteen minutes before the dinner-hour!" she began, with an assumption of indignation. "Really, Jeremy, you're getting

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

quite revolutionary in your ways. I think I shall tell Armand that hereafter we shall begin dinner with coffee, have salad with the Rüdesheimer, and take our soup in the conservatory."

Mr. Carnby laid down his cigar.

"I lit it absent-mindedly," he answered. "Have they gone?"

"No, of course not, stupid!" retorted his wife. "They're all out there. I told them to wait until we'd finished dinner. Now, Jeremy! why *will* you ask such questions?"

"It *was* stupid of me," he admitted.

"And to punish you, I shall tell you who they were," announced Mrs. Carnby. "I might do worse and tell you all they said. You're so—so *comfortable*, Jeremy. When I'm on the point of boiling over because of the inanities of society I can always come in here and open my safety-valve, and you don't care a particle, do you, if I fill your study full of conversational steam?"

Jeremy smiled pleasantly.

"You *nice* person!" added his wife. "Well, here goes. First, there was that stupid Mrs. Maitland. She told me all about her portrait. It seems Benjamin-Constant is painting it—and I thought the others would never come. Finally, however, they did—the Villemot girls and Mrs. Sidney Kane, and a few men—Daulas and De Bousac and Gerald Kennedy and that insufferable little Lister man. Then Madame Palffy. It makes me furious every time I

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

hear her called 'madame.' The creature was born in Worcester—and do you know, Jeremy, I'm positive she buys her gowns at an upholsterer's? No mere dressmaker could lend her that striking resemblance to a sofa, which is growing stronger every day! Her French is too impossible. She was telling Daulas about something that never happened to her on her way out to their country place, and I heard her say '*compartiment de dames soûles*' quite distinctly. I can't imagine how she contrives to know so many things that aren't so. One would suppose she'd stumble over a real, live fact now and again, if only by accident. And her husband's no better. Trying to find the truth in one of his stories severely taxes one's aptitude in long division. I saw him at the Hatzfeldts' *musicale* night before last. Pazzini was playing, and Palffy was sound asleep in a corner, after three glasses of punch. I really felt sorry that a man with such a wife should be missing something attractive, and I was going to poke him surreptitiously with my fan, but Tom Radwalader said, 'Better let the lying dog sleep!' He positively *is* amusing, that Radwalader man!"

Mrs. Carnby looked up at her husband for the admiring smile which was the usual guarantee that she had amused him, but only to find Jeremy's eyes once more riveted upon the inkstand, and the cigar between his thin lips again.

"My dear Jeremy," she said, "I'm convinced

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

that you've not heard one syllable of my carefully prepared discourse."

"My dear Louisa," responded Mr. Carnby with unwonted readiness, "I'm convinced that I have not. The truth of the matter is," he added apologetically, "that I've received an unusual letter."

"It must indeed be unusual if it can cause you to ignore my conversation," said Louisa Carnby.

"That is perfectly true," said Jeremy with conviction.

His wife rose, came over to his side, and kissed him on the tip of his nose.

"Good my lord," she said, "I think I like your tranquil endorsement of the compliments I make for myself better than those which other men invent out of their own silly heads! Am I to know what is in your unusual letter?"

"Why not?" asked Jeremy seriously.

"Why not, indeed?" said Mrs. Carnby. "I have taken you for better or worse. There's so little 'worse' about the contract, Jeremy, that I stand ready to accept such as there is in a willing spirit, even when it comes in the form of a dull letter."

Jeremy looked up at her with his familiar smile.

"Louisa," he said, "if I were twenty years of age, I should ask nothing better than the chance to marry you again."

"Man! but thou'rt the cozener!" exclaimed Mrs. Carnby. "Thou'dst fair turn the head of a

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

puir lassis. There—that'll do. Go on with your letter!"

"It's from Andrew Sterling," said Jeremy. "You'll remember him, I think, in Boston. He was a friend of my father, and kept a friendly eye on me after the old gentleman's death. We've always corresponded, more or less regularly, and now he writes to say—but perhaps I'd best read you that part of his letter."

"Undoubtedly," put in his wife. "That is, if you can. People write so badly, nowadays."

"Um—um—" mumbled Jeremy, skipping the introductory sentences. "Ah! Here we have it. Mr. Sterling says: 'Now for the main purpose of this letter. My poor daughter's only son, Andrew Sterling Vane, is sailing to-day on the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. He has been obliged to leave Harvard, as his health is not robust, and I have thought that perhaps the sea-voyage and some months in Paris might put him in shape—'"

"*Good* Lord!" broke in Mrs. Carnby. "Imagine some months in Paris by way of rest-cure!"

"'And so,'" continued Jeremy, "'I'm sending him over, in hopes that the change may be of benefit. He is a singular lad—sensitive in the extreme, and utterly inexperienced—and I am going to ask if, "for auld lang syne," you will be so good as to make him welcome. I don't mean, of course, that I expect you to exercise any sort of supervision. The boy must take care of himself, like all of us, but I would

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

like to feel that, in a strange city, there is one place where he may find a hint of home."

Jeremy paused.

"Go on!" observed Mrs. Carnby.

"There is really nothing more of importance," said her husband, "except that I've also received a note from young Vane. He's at the Ritz."

"Of course!" ejaculated Mrs. Carnby. "Paying two louis per diem for his room, and making semi-daily trips to Morgan, Harjes'. They're wonderful, these tourist bank-accounts. Their progress from a respectable amount to absolute zero is as inevitable as the recession of the sea from high-water mark to dead low tide—a steady withdrawal from the bank, my dear Jeremy! How old might the young gentlemen be?"

Mr. Carnby made a mental calculation.

"His mother was about my own age," he said presently. "I know she and I used to go to dancing-school together. And she died in childbirth, if I remember rightly. Her husband was a scamp—ran off with another woman. I never saw him. That would make the boy about twenty or twenty-one."

"He will be rather good-looking," said Mrs. Carnby reflectively, "with a general suggestion of soap and cold water about him. He will wear preposterously heavy boots with the soles projecting all around like little piazzas, and a straw hat, and dog-skin gloves with seams like small hedges, and turned

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

back at the wrists. They're all exactly alike, the young Americans one sees over here. One would think they came by the dozen, in a box. And when he is sitting down he will be hitching at his trousers all the time, so that the only thing one remembers about him afterwards is the pattern of his socks."

"We ought to invite him to dinner," suggested Jeremy.

"Without doubt," agreed his wife; "but to breakfast first, I think—and on Sunday. One can judge a man's character so well by the way he behaves at Sunday breakfast. If he fidgets, and drinks quantities of water, then he's dissipated! I don't know why Saturday night is always fatal to dissipated men, but it is. If his top hat looks as if it had been brushed the wrong way, then he's religious, and has been to church. I shall go out and inspect it while you're smoking. If he does all the talking, he's an ass; and if I do it all, he's a fool."

"You're a difficult critic, my dear," said Jeremy. "You must remember he is only twenty or so."

"To be twenty or so in appearance is a man's misfortune," replied Mrs. Carnby. "To be twenty or so in behaviour is his fault. I'll write to him to-night, and ask him to breakfast on Sunday, *tout à fait en famille*, and we'll try him on a—you don't mind my calling you a dog, Jeremy?"

"Not in the least," said Mr. Carnby.

"*Eh bien!*" said his wife. "We'll have him to breakfast on Sunday, and try him on a dog! If

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

he's presentable and amusing, I shall make him my exclusive property. If he's dull, I shall tell him Madame Palffy is a woman he should cultivate assiduously. I send her all the people who don't pass muster at my dinners. She has them next day, like warmed-over *vol-au-vents*. My funeral baked meats do coldly furnish forth her breakfast-table."

"When you wish to appear most unmerciful, my dear," said Jeremy, "you always pick out Madame Palffy; and whenever you do, I spoil the effect of what you say by thinking of—"

"Margery?" put in Mrs. Carnby. "Yes, of course, that's my soft spot, Jeremy. There's only one thing which Margery Palffy ought to be that she isn't, and that's—ahem!—an orphan."

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER II.

NEW FRIENDS AND OLD.

In ordinary, Mrs. Carnby was one of the rare mortals who succeed in disposing as well as in proposing; but there were times when there was not even a family resemblance between her plans and her performances. She had fully intended that young Vane should be the only guest at her Sunday breakfast; but as she came out of church that morning into the brilliant sunlight of the Avenue de l'Alma, she found herself face to face with the Ratchetts, newly returned from Monte Carlo, and promptly bundled the pair of them into her victoria. Furthermore, as the carriage swung round the Arc, and into the Avenue du Bois, she suddenly espied Mr. Thomas Radwalader, lounging, with an air of infinite boredom, down the *plage*.

"There's that Radwalader, thinking about himself again!" she exclaimed, digging her coachman in the small of his ample back with the point of her tulle parasol. "Positively, it would be cruelty to animals not to rescue him. *Arretez*, Benoit!"

Radwalader came up languidly as the carriage stopped.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Where are you going?" demanded Mrs. Carnby, after greetings had been exchanged.

"Home," answered Radwalader. "I met Madame Palffy back there a bit, and couldn't get away for ten minutes. You know, it's shocking on the nerves, that kind of thing, so I thought I'd drop in at my quarters for a pick-me-up."

"Well, if I'm not a pick-you-up, I'm sure I don't know what is," said Mrs. Carnby. "You're to come to breakfast. You'll have to walk, though. We're three already, you see, and I don't want people to take my carriage for a *panier à salade*. I hadn't the most remote intention of asking you; but when a man tells me he's been talking for ten minutes to that Palffy, I always take him in and give him a good square meal."

"You're very kind," said Radwalader. "Are you going to play bridge afterwards? If so, I must go home for more money."

"Nothing of the sort!" said Mrs. Carnby, emphatically. "There's a *protégé* of Jeremy's coming to breakfast—a Bostonian, twenty years young, and over here for his health. You must all go, directly after coffee. I'm going to spend the afternoon feeding him with sweet spirits of nitre out of a spoon, and teaching him his catechism. Perhaps you'd like to stay and learn yours?"

"I think I know it," laughed Radwalader.

"If you do, it's one of your own fabrication, then—with just a single question and answer. 'What is

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

my duty toward myself? My duty toward myself is, under all circumstances, to do exactly as I dee please.'"

"If that were the case, my good woman, I should live up to my profession of faith, not only by accepting your invitation, as I mean to do, but by staying the entire afternoon."

"That's very nicely said indeed," answered Mrs. Carnby. "*Allez*, Benoit!"

Twenty minutes later the whole party was assembled in her *salon*. Carnby, caught by his wife as he was scuttling into his study, was now do'ng his visibly inadequate best to entertain Philip Ratchett, who stood gloomily before him, with his legs far apart, his hands in his pockets, and his eyes on the top button of his host's waistcoat. He was a typical Englishman, of the variety which leans against door-jambs in the pages of *Punch*, and makes unfortunate remarks beginning with "I say—" about the relatives of the stranger addressed. Society bored him to the verge of extinction, but it is only fair to say that he repaid the debt with interest. He was tolerated—as many a man before and after him has been—for the sake of his wife.

Mrs. Ratchett patronized, with equal ardour, a sewing-class which fabricated unmentionable garments of red flannel for supposedly grateful heathen, and a society for psychical research wh:ch boasted of liberal-mindedness because it was willing to ad-

Digitized by Google

Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

mit that, at the dawn of the twentieth century, the causes of certain natural phenomena remained yet unexplained. Her entire conception of life underwent a radical change whenever she read a new book, which she did at fortnightly intervals. She was thirty, clever, and frankly beautiful; hence a factor in the Colony.

The fifth member of the company in Mrs. Carnby's *salon*, Mr. Thomas Radwalader, enjoyed the truly Parisian distinction of being an impecunious bachelor who did not accept all the invitations he received. He might have been thirty-five or forty-five or fifty-five. His smooth-shaven, impassive face offered no indication whatever of his age. He was already quite gray; but, in contrast to this, his speech was tinged with a frivolity, rather pleasant than otherwise, which hinted at youth. Mrs. Carnby had once described him as being "dappled with knowledge," and this, in common with the majority of Mrs. Carnby's estimates, came admirably near to being exact. Radwalader's actual fund of information was far less ample than was indicated by the facility with which he talked on any and every subject; but he was master of the science of selection. He judged others—and rightly—by himself, and went upon the often-proven theory that a polished brilliant attracts more attention than an uncut Koh-i-nur. He made the superficial things of life his own, and on the rare occasions when the trend of conversation led him out of his depth, he caught at the life-belt

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

of epigram, and had found his feet again before men better informed had finished floundering. He lived in a tiny apartment, on the safe side of nothing a year, and kept up appearances with a skill that was little short of genius. Gossip passed him by, a circumstance for which he was devoutly grateful, though it was due less to chance than to management.

Such was the company into which Mr. Andrew Sterling had despatched his grandson—in hopes that the change might be of benefit. As he came through the *portières*, young Vane proved to tally, in the main essentials of appearance, with Mrs. Carnby's prophetic estimate. He was somewhat more than rather good-looking, and essentially American, with the soap-and-cold-water suggestion strongly to the fore. Mrs. Carnby always noted three things about a man before she spoke to him—his hands, his linen, and his eyes. In the first two Andrew Vane qualified immediately; n the third his hostess was forced to confess herself at a loss. In singular contrast to a complexion dark almost to swarthiness, his eyes were large and of an intense steel-blue. He met those of another squarely, not alone with the frankness characteristic of youth, but with the strange calm of confidence typical of men accustomed to the command of a battle-ship or an army corps. Mrs. Carnby, in ordinary the most self-possessed of women, gave, almost guiltily, before the keen, clear eyes of Andrew Vane.

"He has no business whatever to have eyes like

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

that, at his age," she told herself, almost angrily. "They ought to *grow* in a man's head, after he has seen everything there is to be seen."

The thought was involuntary, but it recalled to her memory where she had seen their like before.

"Radwalader has them," she added mentally. "*Good* Lord! *Radwalader!* And this child hasn't even graduated!"

During the brief interval between the general introduction and the announcement of breakfast, she studied her new guest with unwonted interest. He was of the satisfactory medium height at which a man is neither contemptible nor clumsy, slight in build, but straight as an arrow, with narrow hips and a square backward fling of shoulder which spoke of resolution.

"He has 'No Compromise' written all over his back," said Mrs. Carnby to herself. "I should believe everything he told me, and not be afraid of what I told him."

Then she noted that he was eminently at ease. There is something out of the common about twenty that keeps its hands hanging at its sides, and its feet firmly planted, without suggesting a tailor's dummy. Andrew was talking to Mr. Carnby about his grandfather and Boston, and from the first to the last word of the short colloquy he did not once shift his position. As he stood thus, in some curious fashion consideration of his years was completely eliminated from one's thought of him. He was

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

deferential, but in the negative manner of guest to host, rather than in the positive of youth to age; and, at the same time, he was assertive, but with the force of personality, not the conspicuity of awkwardness. He fitted into his surroundings instantly, like a wisely placed *bibelot*, but he dominated them as well.

"That Palffy," was Mrs. Carnby's final resolve, "shall get him only over my dead body."

And so, unconsciously, Andrew scored his first Parisian triumph.

For the first ten minutes of breakfast, Mrs. Carnby, at whose left he sat, let him designedly alone. It was her belief that men, like saddle-horses, should be given their heads in strange territory, and left to find themselves—this in contrast to the policy of her social rival, Madame Palffy, who boasted of being able to draw out the best there was in a new acquaintance in the first quarter-hour of conversation. In this she was probably correct, though in a sense which she did not perceive—for few good qualities survived the strain of that initial quarter-hour.

But if Mrs. Carnby's attention appeared to be engrossed by Radwalader on her right, and Mrs. Ratchett beyond Radwalader, she kept, nevertheless, a weather eye on Andrew; and when, presently, his spoon tinkled on his *bouillon* saucer, she turned to him.

"I've been watching you," she began, "to see how you would take to French oysters. It's a test I

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

always apply to newcomers from America. If they eat only one *Marennes verte*, I know at once that they approve of forty-story buildings, and are going to talk about 'getting back to God's country'; if they eat all six, I know I may venture to hint that there are advantages about living in Paris, without having my head bitten off for being an expatriate."

"It would seem your head is quite safe, so far as I am concerned," laughed Andrew, "for I finished off my half-dozen, and thought them very good."

"Then you have the soul of a Parisian in the body of a Bostonian," affirmed Mrs. Carnby. "A liking for *Marennes vertes* is a survival of a previous state of existence. Here's Mr. Radwalader, for instance, who can't abide them, even after Heaven knows *how* many years in Paris."

"They taste so much like two-sou pieces that, whenever I eat them, they make me feel like a frog savings-bank," said Radwalader.

"There you are!" cried Mrs. Carnby triumphantly. "That would never have arisen as an objection in the mind of any one who had known what it is to be a Parisian."

"Or a frog savings-bank," said Radwalader. "No, I suppose not. I can't seem to live down the fact that I was born in the shadow of Independence Hall. But I'm doing so much to make up for the bad beginnings of my present incarnation, that I shall undoubtedly be a Parisian in my next. Have you been here long, Mr. Vane?"

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Three days."

"Do you speak French?" put in Mrs. Carnby. "No? What a pity! You've no idea what a difference it makes."

"I've only such a smattering as one gets in school and college," said Andrew. "Of course I didn't know I was coming over here. But, after all, one seems to get on very well with English."

"That's just the trouble, Mr. Vane," volunteered Mrs. Ratchett. "So many Americans are content just to 'get on' over here. That isn't the cue to Paris at all! It only means that you and she are on terms of bowing acquaintance. You'll never get to *know* her till you can talk to her in her own tongue."

"Or listen to her talk to you," observed Radwalader. "So long as we're using the feminine gender—"

"Oh!" interrupted Mrs. Carnby. "A remark like that *does* come with *extreme* grace from you, I *must* say. Here," she added, turning to Mrs. Ratchett, and indicating Radwalader with her fish-fork, "here's a man, my dear, who spent two solid hours of last Monday telling me the story of his life. And it reminded me precisely of a peacock—one long, stuck-up tale with a hundred I's in it. Radwalader, you're a brute!"

Carnby, with his eyes fixed vacantly upon a spot midway between a pepper-mill and a little dish of salted almonds, appeared to be revolving some complicated business problem in his mind;

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

and, as his wife caught sight of him, her fish-fork swung round a quarter-circle in her fingers, like a silver weathercock, until, instead of Radwalader, it indicated the point of her husband's nose.

"That person," she said to Andrew, "is either in Trieste or Buda. His company has an incapable agent in both cities, and whenever he glares at vacancy, like a hairdresser's image, I know he is in either one town or the other. With practice, I shall come to detect the shade of difference in his expression which will tell me which it is. Mr. Ratchett—some more of the *éperlans?*"

Ratchett was deeply engaged in dressing morsels of smelts in little overcoats of *sauce tartare*, assisting them carefully with his knife to scramble aboard his fork, and, having braced them there firmly with cubes of creamed potato, conveying the whole arrangement to his mouth, where he instantly secured it from escape by popping in a piece of bread upon its very heels. He looked up, as Mrs. Carnby spoke to him, murmured "'k you," and immediately returned to the business in hand. Radwalader and Mrs. Ratchett had fallen foul of each other over a chance remark of his, and were now just disappearing into a fog of art discussion, from which, in his voice, an abrupt "Besnard" popped, at intervals, as indignantly as a ball from a Roman candle, or, in hers, the word "Whistler" rolled forth with an inflection which suggested the name of a cathedral.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Tell me a little about yourself," said Mrs. Carnby, turning again to Andrew.

"If it's to be about myself," he answered, "I think it's apt to be little indeed I've been in college almost three years, but I've been kept back, more or less, by a touch of fever I picked up on a trip to Cuba. It crops out every now and again, and knocks me into good-for-nothingness for a while. I'm not sure that I shall go back to Harvard. You see, I want to *do* something."

"What?" demanded Mrs. Carnby.

"I'm not sure. I'm over here in search of a hint."

"And a very excellent idea, too!" said his hostess. "Because, if you will keep your eyes open in the American Colony, you'll see about everything which a man ought *not* to do; and after that it should be comparatively easy to make a choice among the few things that remain."

"You're not very flattering to the American Colony," said Andrew.

"That's because I belong to it," replied Mrs. Carnby, "and you'll find I'm about the only woman in it, able to speak French, who will make that admission. I belong to it, and I love it—for its name. It's about as much like America as a cold veal cutlet with its gravy coagulated—if you've ever seen *that!*—is like the same thing fresh off the grill. But I don't allow any one but myself to say so!"

"You're patriotic," suggested Andrew.

"Only passively. I'm extremely doubtful as to

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

the exact location of 'God's country,' and, even if you were to prove to my satisfaction that it lies between Seattle and Tampa, I'm not sure I should want to live there. America's a kind of conservatory on my estate. I don't care to sit in it continually, but, at the same time, I don't like to have other people throwing stones through the roof. But about what you want to do?"

"I really haven't the most remote idea. I want it to be something worth while—something which will attract attention."

"Nothing does, nowadays," said Mrs. Carnby, "except air-ships and remarriage within two hours of divorce."

"What *are* you talking about?" asked Mrs. Ratchett, suddenly abandoning the argument in which it was evident that she was coming out second best.

"My choice of a profession," replied Andrew. "I don't want to make a mistake. But everything seems to be overcrowded."

"Exactly," observed Radwalader. "It isn't so much a question of selecting what's right as of getting what's left. Haven't you a special talent?"

"I'm afraid not," said Andrew.

"And if you had, it wouldn't do you much good in the States," commented Mrs. Carnby. "Nothing counts over there but money and social position. It's the only country on earth where it's less blessed to be gifted than received."

"I had thought of civil engineering," said Andrew.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Civil engineering?" repeated Mrs. Carnby. "But, my dear Mr. Vane, *that's* not a profession. It's only a synonym for getting on in society. We're all of us civil engineers!"

She pushed back her chair as she spoke.

"We'll wait for you in the *salon*," she added, "and, meanwhile, Mrs. Ratchett and I will think up a profession for Mr. Vane. Jeremy, you're to give them the shortest cigars you have."

"I was once in the same quandary," said Radwalader to Andrew, when the men were left alone, "and concluded to let Time answer the question for me. You may have noticed that Time is prone to reticence. So far, he has not committed himself one way or another."

"I'm afraid I haven't the patience for that," said Andrew. "Besides, it's different in America. One *has* to do something over there. It's almost against the law to be idle."

"Of course. The only remedy for that is to live in Paris. You might do that. It's a profession all by itself—of faith, if nothing else. Only one has need of the golden means."

"I think I am a homeopathist, so far as Europe is concerned," said Andrew. "I'm already a little homesick for the Common."

"It's a bad pun," answered Radwalader, "but is there anything in America but—the common?"

"You can't expect me to agree with you there."

"I don't. I never expect any one to agree with

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

me. It takes all the charm out of conversation. You may remember that Mark Twain once said that it's a difference of opinion which makes horse-races. He should have made it human races. That would have been truer, and so, more original. But a homeopathist is only a man who has never tried allopathy. You must let me convert you by showing you something of Paris. If I've any profession at all, it's that of guide."

"You're very kind," said Andrew, "but you mustn't let your courtesy put you to inconvenience on my account. There must be a penalty attached to knowing Paris well, in the form of fellow countrymen who want to be shown about."

" 'Never a rose but has its thorn,'" quoted Radwalader. "If you know Paris well, you're overrun; and if you don't, you're run over. Of the two, the former is the less objectionable. When we leave here, perhaps you'd like to go out to the races for a while? If you haven't been, Auteuil is well worth seeing of a Sunday afternoon."

"I should be very glad," said Andrew.

"Then we'll consider it agreed. I see Carnby is getting to his feet. He is about to make his regular postprandial speech. It is one to be commended for its brevity."

"The ladies?" suggested Jeremy, interrogatively.

"By all means!" said Radwalader, as his cigarette sizzled into the remainder of his coffee. "It's a toast to which we all respond."

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"By the way," said Ratchett, as they moved toward the *portières*, "I was going to ask you chaps about membership in the Volney."

The three men gathered in a group, and Andrew, seeing that they were about to speak of something in which he had no concern, passed into the *salon*. Here he was surprised to find three women instead of two—still more surprised when the newcomer wheeled suddenly, and came toward him with both hands outstretched.

"How do you *do*?" she said. "What a charming surprise! Mrs. Carnby was just speaking of you, and I've been telling her what jolly times we used to have last summer at Beverly. How delightful to find you here! Mrs. Carnby's my dearest friend, you must know, Mr. Vane."

"Miss Palffy is one of the few people to whom I always feel equal," observed Mrs. Carnby.

"I can say the same, I'm sure," agreed Andrew.

"That means that you and I are to be friends as well, then," answered Mrs. Carnby, "because things that are equal to the same thing are bound to be equal to each other. Are you going out with Jeremy, Margery?"

"Yes—our usual Sunday spree, you know. He's a dear!"

She bent over as she spoke and buried her nose in one of the big roses on the table.

"Lord, girl, but I'm glad to see you again!" said the inner voice of Andrew Vane.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III.

THE GIRL IN RED.

The saddling-bell was whirring for the third race as Andrew and Radwalader slipped in at the main entrance of Auteuil, and made their way rapidly through the throng behind the *tribunes*, in the direction of the betting-booths beyond.

"We'll just have time to place our bets," said Radwalader, as he scanned the bulletins. "Numbers two, five, six, and eleven are out. Scratch them off your programme and we'll take our pick of the rest."

"You'll have to advise me," answered Andrew. "One couldn't very well be more ignorant of the horses than I am."

"I never give advice," said Radwalader, with an air of seriousness. "I used to, long ago. I went about vaccinating my friends, as it were, with counsel, but none of it ever took, or was taken—whichever way you choose to put it—so I gave it up. Besides, a French race-horse is like the girl one elects to marry. The choice is purely a matter of luck, and there's no depending upon the record

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

of previous performances. I've always thought that if *I* had to choose a wife, I'd prefer to do it in the course of a game of blind-man's buff. The one I caught I'd keep. Then the choice would at least be unprejudiced. Shut your eyes, my dear Vane, and stick your pencil-point through your programme. Then open them and bet on the horse nearest the puncture." And he went through this little performance himself with the utmost solemnity. "It's Vivandière," he added. "I shall stake a louis on Vivandière."

"And I, for originality's sake, shall choose Mathias, with my eyes open," said Andrew, laughing, as they took their places in line before the booth.

"Well, you couldn't do better," observed his companion. "He's a willing little beast, and not unlikely to romp home in the lead. I'd bet on him myself, except that I'm so damnably unlucky that it really wouldn't be fair to you, Vane. I never back a horse but what he falls. I had ten louis up, last Sunday, on a steeplechase, and the water-jump was so full of the horses I'd chosen that, upon my soul, you couldn't see the water. It was for all the world like the sunken road at Waterloo after the charge of the *cuirassiers*."

When they had purchased their tickets, Radwalader led the way to the front of the *tribunes*, and, mounting upon the bench along the rail, turned his back upon the course, and began to survey the throng in the tiers of seats above.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"This is my favourite way of introducing a newcomer to Paris," he said presently. "She never appears to better advantage than when she is togged out in her Sunday-go-to-race-meeting-best."

With his stick he began to point out people here and there, until, from a narrow gateway to their right, the horses filed out upon the track, and they turned, resting their elbows on the railing, to watch them go by.

"That's Vivandière," said Radwalader. "Poor animal! She runs the best possible chance of breaking her neck. If the jockey so much as suspected that I'd her number in my pocket, he'd probably have taken out a policy on his life. There's Mathias—the little chestnut. He looks in rattling good form. I suspect you haven't thrown away that louis."

"It wouldn't be a very ruinous loss, in any event," said Andrew.

Radwalader was choosing a cigarette from his case.

"I wonder," he answered, rolling it between his fingers, "if you'd mind my asking you if you mean that? To some people it would be a consideration; to others, none whatever. It isn't conventional, or even good form, to pry into a man's finances, but we shall probably be going about together, more or less, during your stay, and in such a case I always like to know how a man stands in regard to expenses. I don't want to embarrass you by proposing things you don't feel you can afford, still less to be a clog

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

upon you when you wish to go beyond my means."

He looked up, smiling frankly.

"Don't misunderstand me," he added. "It's not in the least an idle curiosity. I'm an old friend of Mrs. Carnby's, and it would be a great pleasure to do anything to make your visit a success. But, if you'll trust me, I'd be glad to know how you propose to live. You don't think me impertinent?"

"Not in the least," said Andrew. "I understand perfectly. It's a very sensible point of view. And I'll say candidly that my grandfather, Mr. Sterling, has been very generous; so that, unless I'm totally reckless, there's no reason why I shouldn't have the best of everything." He paused for a moment, and then added: "My letter of credit is for thirty thousand francs."

"Thank you," said Radwalader. "It makes things easier. I'd forgotten for the moment your relationship to Mr. Sterling, or I shouldn't have needed to take the liberty of speaking as I did. I met him once in Boston, I think. Isn't he called the 'Copper Czar'?"

"I believe he is," replied Andrew. "But there's not much in nicknames, you know."

"No, of course not," agreed his companion. "There goes the bell. For once, it's a fair start."

Far away, beyond the thickly-peopled stretch of the *pelouse*, a group of gaily-coloured dots went rocking rapidly to the left, vanished for an instant

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

at the turn, and then flashed into view again in the form of jockeys standing stiffly in their stirrups, as the horses swept down the transverse stretch. People were shouting all about them, and in Andrew's unaccustomed ears the blood surged and hammered madly. He was at the age when there is nothing more inspiring than such a play of life and action under the open sky and over the close-cropped turf. The ripple of lithe muscles along the sleek flanks of the horses; the set, smooth-shaven faces of the rigid jockeys; the gleam of sunlight and colour; and the deep, crescendo voice of the multitude, swelling to thunder as the racers flew past—all these set his pulses tingling, until he, too, cried out impulsively in his excitement. It was his first horse-race, and his first glimpse of Paris into the bargain. There is more than enough in the combination to set young blood aglow.

"*Houp! Houp! Houp!*" With sharp, staccato cries of encouragement, the jockeys were raising their mounts at the water-jump, over which they sailed gallantly, one after another, like great brown birds, until the very last. There was a lisp of grazed twigs, a long "A-ah!" from *pelouse* and *pesage* alike, a dull splash which sent the spray flying high in silver beads; and then a jockey in a crimson blouse rolled heavily forward on the turf, arose, stamped his foot, and swore profusely in picturesque cockney at his mare, who had regained her feet and, with dangling rein and saddle all askew, stood looking

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

back at him, as if uncertain whether to stop and inquire after his injuries or go on alone. Abruptly deciding upon the latter as the wiser course, she set off at a leisurely gallop, to the accompaniment of shrill, sarcastic comments from the crowd, and an additional exposition of the jockey's astonishing wealth of vocabulary.

"*Voilà!*" sighed Radwalader. "That was Vivandière! What did I tell you? It's absolutely inhuman of me to bet on a horse. And look at Mathias! He's twenty metres ahead of the rest, and going better every minute. You've hit it this time, Vane. There's one comfort. You'll win back my louis, at all events. It's something to know that the money's not going out of the family."

The crowd was already shouting "*Mathias! C'est Mathias qui gagne!*" as Andrew bent forward to see the horses wheel again into the transverse cut. Mathias was far in the lead, and seemed to gain yet more at the hurdle. The race was practically over, a thousand yards from the finish, and, as Mathias flashed past the post, a winner by twenty lengths, and Vivandière came ambling complacently in, at the end of the procession, with the stirrups bouncing grotesquely up and down, Radwalader replaced his field-glass with a deep sigh of resignation, and the two men went back toward the bulletins to see the posting of the payments.

It appeared, when the figures snapped into place, that Mathias returned one hundred and ten francs,

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

which meant a clear gain of ten louis. Andrew had "hit it" in good earnest.

"I think I shall adopt horse-racing as my profession," he laughed, as they cashed the ticket at the *caisse*. "Let's see: twenty dollars a race, six races a day, seven days to the week—one hundred and twenty—fourteen—eight—eight hundred and forty dollars a week. By Jove! That's not bad, by way of a start!"

"The start's the easiest part of it," observed Radwalader. "Even Vivandière can manage that. It's the finish that counts, and the finish of horse-racing is commonly the penitentiary. It's the only profession where the hard labor comes at the end instead of at the beginning."

"I think I'll hang on to what I've won, then," answered Andrew. "If you've nothing better to do, perhaps you'll help me to spend part of it on a dinner to-night. You know all the best places. And now, if you don't mind, I'd like to walk about a bit, and see the people."

"I accept both proposals with pleasure," said his companion. "We might dine at the Tour d'Argent, if you like. I haven't had one of Frédéric's ducks in a little eternity."

Back of the *tribunes* the crowd was greater now than it had been at the time of their arrival. There was the usual gay commingling of elaborate spring *toilettes*, brilliant parasols, white waistcoats, gloves, and gaiters, and red and blue uniforms; and, all

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

about them, a babble of brilliant nothings. It was, as Radwalader had said, Paris at her best. He resumed his comments, which had been interrupted by the race, punctuating each sentence with a nod, or a few words, in French or English, to passing acquaintances, and flicking the gravel with the point of his stick.

"I envy you your first impressions, my dear Vane. It's an old story with me, all this; but I remember quite distinctly my first day on a French race-course. It seemed to me the most wonderful spot on earth. I'd always lived in Philadelphia, and from Philadelphia to Paris is something in the nature of a resurrection. For the first time in my life, I saw people in possession of something to live *for*, instead of merely something to live *on*. There wasn't so much as a wrinkle of anxiety in sight. Then and there, I adopted Paris as my permanent abode. You know this town is a kind of metaphorical fly-paper. When once one has settled, one stops buzzing and banging one's head against the window-screens of circumstance."

"And flops over, and dies?" asked Andrew. "It seems to me that's the unpleasant part about fly-paper."

"I'm not sure of that," said Radwalader. "I'd have to have the fly's word for it. All of us must die in one manner or another, and perhaps being suffocated by a surfeit of sugar and molasses is not the most disagreeable way. However, you are only going to browse along the edges."

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"There are some stunning women here," said Andrew.

"That's singularly *à propos*," replied Radwalader. "Are there any in particular whom you'd like to meet? I know about all of them."

"Oh, do you?" said Andrew. "I hadn't noticed you bow."

For a fraction of a second Radwalader glanced at his companion's face. Then—

"Hadn't you?" he said, with a short laugh. "I'm afraid your eyes have been too busy with the women themselves to take note of my salutations."

The next moment he doffed his hat ceremoniously to a little black-eyed creature with a superb triple string of pearls hanging almost to the waist of her black lace gown.

"That's Suzanne Derval," he explained, as they passed. "She's one of the brightest women in Paris."

"And alone?" said Andrew.

"Her escort," answered Radwalader, with an almost imperceptible pause between the words, "is probably placing his bet. As I said before, if there's any one you want to meet—"

"Well, there is," replied Andrew, colouring a little. "We passed a girl in red back there a bit. It's possible you know her. I'm afraid you think me a good deal of a boy."

"I'm afraid you think a good deal of a girl," laughed Radwalader. "No, my dear chap. Or,

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

rather, if your desire is an evidence of extreme youth, then the majority of men are fit subjects for a *crèche*. Come along, and we'll try to track your scarlet siren."

"We'll not have much difficulty," said Andrew, as they turned. "There she is now. Do you see? By the tree—in red."

"Oh," answered Radwalader, "oh, yes. That's Mirabelle Tremonceau. Your 'red' is *cerise*, as a matter of fact; but that's as near as the average man comes to the colour of a woman's gown."

"I can't imagine one spending much time in learning such things."

"Anywhere but in Paris, perhaps not. Here the knowledge is vital. It's part of one's education—like being able to distinguish a Louis Quatorze chair from a Louis Quinze, or a Fragonard from a Boucher ten feet away. If you want to meet Mademoiselle Tremonceau, I'll be very glad to present you."

"I might wait here while you ask her," suggested Andrew.

"Eh?" said Radwalader. "Oh, yes—by all means."

The girl was talking with an officer of *chasseurs*, on the turf, a short distance away. She was tall and slender, very pale, with magnificent violet eyes and golden-bronze hair. From the gauze *aigrettes* on her hat to the tips of her patent-leather shoes, her costume was absolutely flawless. Her gown, of cherry-coloured *crêpe de Chine, pailleté* with

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

silver, breathed from its every fold the talismanic word "Paquin," and the La'ique ornament of emeralds and ruddy gold which swung at her throat by a slender chain said as plainly "Charlier." There was not a dot missing from her veil, not the suggestion of a wrinkle in her white gloves, and not a displeasing note in the harmony of the whole.

"There's nothing wrong about the boy's judgment," was Radwalader's mental comment. "He's picked out the prettiest and best gowned woman in Paris. And it cou'dn't be better," he added, with an odd little smile.

Mademoiselle Tremonceau greeted him with a nod, a gloved hand, and a "*Comment vas-tu?*"

"*B'en, pas mal, merci,*" answered Radwalader. With his left hand he caressed his chin reflectively, and, as if this had been a signal—which indeed it was—the girl turned to the young *chasseur*, who was staring at the intruder out of round, resentful eyes, and dismissed him with a hint.

"You've had fifteen minutes of my time, *mon cher*."

Then, as he retired, discomfited, she faced Radwalader again, and seemed to search his face for the answer to some unspoken question.

"I want to present one of my friends," he said, as if replying. "Mr. Andrew Vane—an American who has been in Paris three days. We'll have to speak English. Have I your permission?"

"You're strangely ceremonious of a sudden,"

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

answered Mademoiselle Tremonceau. "I don't seem to remember your asking permission before."

"It was his suggestion," observed Radwalader laconically.

For a moment the girl made no reply. Her questioning look had observably become more keen, and with one finger she picked at the turquoise matrix in the handle of her parasol.

"Well?" she said finally.

"*Galetteux*," said Radwalader. "Go softly, my friend."

Mademoiselle Tremonceau bowed with ineffable dignity.

"You have my gracious permission to present him," she said.

Whistling softly, as was his habit when pleased, the air of "*Au Clair de la Lune*," Radwalader observed their meeting from the corners of his eyes, and was struck, as Mrs. Carnby had been, by Andrew's perfect repose. They spoke in English, of trivialities—Paris, the weather, the crowd, and the victory of Mathias—and, as the saddling-bell rang for the fifth race, all walked out together to the trackside. Here Radwalader left them, to place his bet, and Andrew found two little wooden chairs on which they seated themselves to await his return.

"You and Mr. Radwalader are old friends?" asked the girl.

"On the contrary," said Andrew, "we met for the first time only this morning."

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Oh! And what do you think of him?"

"I find him very agreeable," said Andrew; "a little cynical, perhaps, but clever—and cleverness, to twist an English saying, covers a multitude of sins."

"Yes, he's clever," answered Mademoiselle Tremonceau. "There are the horses. Are you coming to tea?" she added, after a silence, as Radwalader rejoined them.

Radwalader turned to Andrew.

"The poet says that opportunity has no back hair," he observed. "I think we might grasp at this forelock, don't you?"

"Since Mademoiselle Tremonceau is so kind, I should say, by all means."

They watched the race in silence, and then—

"I can find room for you both in the victoria," suggested the girl.

"Better yet!" said Radwalader with alacrity, "provided Vane takes the *strapontin*. The only place where I feel my age is in my knees. Since you've never occupied Mademoiselle Tremonceau's *strapontin*, my dear Vane, you can have no idea of the physical discomfort attendant upon being a little lower than an angel. Think of my having won—even a *placé!* Shall we go now? I abhor the crush at the end. Give me a minute to cash my ticket, and then we'll look up the carriage."

"Do you speak French?" said Mademoiselle Tremonceau to Andrew, as Radwalader strolled off in the direction of the *caisse*.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"I seem to be able to say what I want to when the occasion arises," he answered, "but I much prefer English. I am trying to adjust myself to new conditions, and I need all my energy for the task, without undertaking a strange language at the same time. You can have no idea how one's first visit to Paris sends preconceived notions tumbling about one's ears. So far, the Eiffel Tower is the only thing which looked as I expected it would. There's a surprise at every turn."

"For example?"

"Well, for example, French women. Even so far as my own town of Boston we know you're beautiful, and beautifully gowned, although nothing short of personal experience can teach one to what an extent. But I've always been brought up to believe that you were so hemmed in by conventionality, so strictly watched, that a chap wasn't allowed so much as to say 'Good-morning' to one of you, so long as you were unmarried, at least, except under the eyes of mothers and fathers and guardians. But it seems that it's not so at all."

As he spoke, Mademoiselle Tremonceau's lips parted in a little smile, and as he paused, she slipped in an apparently irrelevant question.

"Are you married, Mr. Vane?"

"Good gracious, no!" said Andrew. "I suppose I may as well confess that I'm only twenty."

Mademoiselle Tremonceau looked off across the track to where, in the interval preceding the next

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

race, the restless thousands circled to and fro about the betting-booths of the *pelouse*, in the manner of a multitude of ants preparing to carry off a bulky bit of carrion. Then she drew her veil tight, with a charmingly feminine little *moue* which shortened her upper lip, tilted her chin, and set her eyelids fluttering.

"Twenty?" she echoed. "My age precisely. *Tiens! C'est plutô drôlatique ça!* Here's Mr. Radwalader, at last. Did you get your payment? Only twenty-two fifty? Well, that is your other louis back, at all events. Don't you want to run along after the carriage, so long as you know how? Mr. Vane will attend to me, I'm sure, and we'll meet you at the right of the main entrance. Here's the carriage number. Simon is the *brigadier* in charge to-day. Tell him it's for me, and you won't have to wait."

Radwalader undertook this commission with cheerfulness, although the pace at which he started toward the gate was distinctly incompatible with even the most liberal conception of "running along." Evidently he was not unique in his abhorrence of the crush at the end. Many were already making their way from the *pesage*, and the crowd behind the *tribunes* was densest about the *sorties*. Andrew and Mademoiselle Tremonceau followed him, five minutes later.

"I wonder if you mind my taking your arm?" asked the girl. "I'm always a little nervous, going out."

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"With pleasure," said Andrew, adding, as her glove touched his sleeve, "I was going to suggest it, but I don't know French etiquette as yet, and I was afraid I might be presuming."

He was unconscious that, as they passed through the throng, many heads were turned, among them that of the young officer of *chasseurs*, who drew the end of his mustache between his lips, and gnawed it savagely. A perfectly appointed victoria, drawn up at the edge of the driveway, was awaiting them, with Radwalader standing at the step.

It was close upon seven o'clock when the two men emerged from Mademoiselle Tremonceau's apartment on the Avenue Henri Martin, and, hailing a passing cab, set off for the Tour d'Argent. Radwalader evinced no desire to talk, as they bowled across to and then down the Champs Elysées, and Andrew was conscious of being grateful for the silence. He wanted to think. He did not wholly understand the hour and a half which had just gone by. There had been no sign of Mademoiselle Tremonceau's family. Tea was served in a *salon* crowded with elaborate furniture, and softly illumined by rose-shaded electric globes on bronze *appliques*. Liveried servants came and went noiselessly, through tapestry curtains, and over an inlaid floor, polished to mirror-like brilliance, and strewn with mounted skins. The double *marqueterie* tea-table gleamed with a silver samovar and candlesticks, Baccarat glass, and thin, cream-coloured cups and saucers,

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

with a crest in raised gold. Here and there, huge Gloire de Dijon roses leaned sleepily from silver vases, and, on a little stand, a great bunch of wild violets breathed summer from a blue Sèvres bowl. An indefinable atmosphere of luxury and languor pervaded the room. From the girl herself came a faint hint of some strangely sweet, but wholly unfamiliar, fragrance, which Andrew had not noted in the open air. He watched her, fascinated, as her slender white hands, with their blazing jewels, went to and fro among the cups and saucers. Her every movement was deliciously and suggestively feminine, as had been her tightening of her veil, an hour before, and exquisitely languid and deliberate, as if the day had been a thousand hours long instead of twenty-four. She said but little, Radwalader maintaining a running thread of his half-banter, half-philosophy, with its ingenious double-meanings and contortions of the commonplace, whereby, in some fashion of his own, he contrived to simulate and stimulate conviction.

Andrew had found, presently, that he was growing sleepy. The abrupt change from the cool air of outer afternoon to the perfume-laden atmosphere of Mademoiselle Tremonceau's *salon*, the drone of Radwalader's voice, the soft light, in contrast to the sunshine they had left—all contributed to his drowsiness. Once, for nearly a minute, the whole room melted, as it were, into one golden-gray mist, through which silver and glass and fabrics glowed

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

only as harmonious notes of colour, and wherein the face of his hostess seemed to float like a reflection in troubled water. Then, as suddenly, every detail of his surroundings appeared to bulge at him out of the haze, and stood fixed and clear. For an instant he thought that Radwalader had raised his voice. He seemed to be speaking very loudly; but, when the first nervous start had passed, Andrew realized that this was his own imagining, and that neither of his companions had noticed his momentary somnolence.

At the end, he had held Mademoiselle Tremonceau's hand for a second beyond the limit of convention. She made no motion to withdraw it, but looked him frankly in the eyes.

"We've been neglecting you, haven't we?" she said. "Mr. Radwalader and I are such old friends, that we're inclined to selfishness, and apt to forget that our talk is not as interesting to others as to ourselves. Perhaps you'll come in to tea on Tuesday, about five, and I'll try to prove myself a more considerate hostess."

"Thank you," said Andrew. "I shall be very pleased—though I suspect you are undertaking the impossible."

The *fiacre* was passing the Rond Point when Radwalader spoke.

"This is the hour when Paris seems to me supremely to deserve her title of siren," he said. "In spring and summer, at least, I always try to pass it out of

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

doors. There is a fascination for me, that never grows stale, in the coming of twilight, when the street-lamps begin to wink, and the *cafés* are lighting up. Did you ever feel softer air or see a more tenderly saffron sky? And this constant murmur of passing carriages, this hum of voices, broken, more often than anywhere else on earth, by laughter—isn't it *life*, as one never understands the word elsewhere? Isn't it full of suggestion and appeal? I've never been able to analyze the charm of the Champs Elysées at sunset, more nearly than to say that it seems to blot out one's remembrance of everything in the world that is sordid and commonplace, and to bring boldly to the fore the significance of all that is sweet and gay. Can you imagine considering the price of stocks or the drift of politics just now? I can't. I think of flowers, and Burgundy in slender-stemmed glasses, and *tziganes* playing waltz music, and women with good teeth, laughing. I smell roses and *trèfle*. I see mirrors, and candlesticks with openwork shades, silver over red, and sleek waiters bending down with bottles swathed in napkins. I hear violins and the swish of silk skirts. I taste caviar—and I *feel*—that I have underestimated Providence, after all!"

"There is no Paris but Paris, and Radwalader is her prophet!" laughed Andrew.

"That suggests a religion," said the other, "and I suppose, all said and done, that Paris *is* my religion. How did you like Mirabelle Tremonceau?"

Digitized by Google Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

"Even more than I expected."

"That's well—and very unusual. One almost always expects too much of a beautiful woman. Beauty has this in common with an inherited fortune—that it's apt to paralyze individual effort. Looking into mirrors and cutting coupons don't leave one much time for anything else. But she's exceptional. You're right in liking her, and what's more, you'll probably like her better and better as time goes on."

"She asked me if I was married," said Andrew.

"Did she?" answered Radwalader. "Well—are you?"

"No, assuredly not."

"Engaged, perhaps."

Instead of replying, Andrew glanced curiously at his companion, his lips set in a thin, straight line. Radwalader met his glance fairly.

"I beg your pardon, Vane," he said immediately. "That was unwarranted impertinence, which you're quite justified in resenting. I'm too prone to trifling, and the remark slipped out thoughtlessly. Pray consider it unsaid."

"With the best will in the world," said Andrew heartily. "There is nothing more admirable, I always think, than a frank apology."

In the words there was a faint, curiously suggestive echo of the tone in which Radwalader was wont to voice his glittering generalities.

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

MADAME RAOUL PALFFY would, in all probability, have been intensely surprised and entirely incredulous had any one informed her that hers was an irritating personality. But the fact remained. She was flagrantly complacent, and her placidity enraged one immeasurably, and goaded nervous temperaments to the verge of frenzy. Tradespeople had been known to grit their teeth and swear almost audibly at her; and at least two guards upon the Métropolitain had lost their positions because her leisurely manner of locomotion had moved them irresistibly to breaches of the courteous treatment enjoined upon them by the General Manager's notice to the public.

Madame Palffy was a large, florid person with a partiality for jet and crimson velvet, and whose passing, much in the manner of a frigate under full sail, was apt to be fatal to fragile ornaments standing unwarily too near to table-edges. About her there was always a suggestion of imminent explosion, due to her chronic shortness of breath, the extreme

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

snugness of her gowns, and the fashion in which her pudgy palms, unmercifully compressed into white gloves two sizes too small, crowded desperately out of the little ovals across which the top buttons yearned toward their proper holes. Harmoniously, her face was fat, and dappled all over with ruddy pink, with the eyes, nose, and mouth crowded together in the centre, as if for sociability's sake, or in fear of sliding off the smooth slopes of her cheeks and chin. Her hair, with its variety of puffs and curls, appeared to have been laid out by a landscape gardener.

As for Raoul Palffy, all that one was apt to remember about him was the fact that he had married a Miss Barrister of Worcester. He was as completely eclipsed by this injudicious proceeding as if he had been elected Vice-President of the United States. He closely resembled a frog on the point of suffocation. With a loyalty worthy of a better cause, he imbibed vast quantities of the wine of his native Bordeaux, and became each year more shockingly apoplectic in appearance. Out of his wife's sight, he swelled magnificently, like a red balloon, and, between ignorance and exaggeration, was hardly on bowing terms with veracity: in her presence, he was another man. It was more than anything as if some one had taken a pin to the red balloon. As a natural result of their relative assertiveness, the couple moved, for the most part, not in the French society to which Monsieur Palffy's connections war-

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ranted their aspiring, but in that of the Colony, where his wife's pretensions and her deplorable mismanipulation of her adopted tongue were less conspicuously burlesque. After twenty years of Paris, Madame Palffy still said *nom de plume* and *café noir*.

It was to renew acquaintance with parents so curiously contrasted that Margery Palffy had returned from ten years of almost continuous residence in the States. To say that she proved a surprise to them would be to do but faint justice to the mental perturbation with which they surveyed this tall, self-possessed young person, who was, in practically every particular, a total stranger. Her father, with his characteristic lack of enterprise, had promptly given her up. He had neither the faculty of rendering, nor that of inspiring, affection; and this his daughter seemed, from the very outset, to understand, and tacitly to accept. They rarely met, except at dinner, and then with such a desperate lack of common interests as prevented any interchange of conversation beyond the merest commonplaces. Madame Palffy, on the contrary, made an earnest, if inept, attempt to fill, in her daughter's life, a place which she had long since forfeited; and, to the best of her ability, Margery strove to meet her half-way. But the gap made by their years of separation was now too wide to be effectually bridged. Madame Palffy was artificial from the summit of her elaborate *coiffure* to the tips

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

of her inadequately ample shoes: her daughter, in every detail of her sound and sensible make-up, was a convincing product of all that is best, sincerest, and most wholesome in American education. The two could no more mix than oil and water. It was to Mrs. Carnby and her husband that Margery turned for sympathy, with an instant recognition of qualities appealingly akin to her own: and these two received her with open arms. For them, three months had sufficed to render Margery Palffy indispensable, and the same period served to prove to the girl, not only her need of friendship, but that here lay the means of its satisfaction. As Madame Palffy complacently observed to Mrs. Carnby—

"I think that Margery feels that there's no place like home."

And as Mrs. Carnby replied, with extreme relish:

"I'm sure of it. It must be a most comforting conviction!"

Margery Palffy, whose attitude toward the society to which she was a comparatively recent recruit was sufficiently indicated by her desire to be called "Miss" instead of "Mademoiselle," was accustomed to reserve her Sunday afternoons for Mr. Carnby. They would go to the Bois, to walk and watch the driving, or take a *bateau mouche* to Suresnes and return, or even slip out to Versailles or St. Germain. Jeremy was a man of small enthusiasms; but he shared with his wife a profound affection, of the type which is always pathetic in the childless, for

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

this tall, slender girl, as fresh and sweet as a ripe fig, grown on the family thistle of the Palffys. An impulse, which, in the light of its results, could only be regarded as an inspiration, had prompted Madame Palffy to send her daughter, at the age of nine, to be educated in the States. A sound and rational school in Connecticut, and ten vacations in the superbly invigorating air of the North Shore under the care of a sensibly indulgent aunt, had forthwith performed a miracle. A thin, brown child, with an affected lisp, was now grown straight and tall, with an eye to measure a putt or a friend a hand which knew the touch of a tiller and a rein, and a voice to win a dog, a child, or a man. Margery Palffy was very beautiful withal, with her russet-brown hair, her finely chiselled features, and her confident smile. She impressed one immediately as having arranged her hair herself—by bunching it all up together, and then giving it one inspired twist which accomplished more than all the system in the world. Some one—not her mother!—knew what kind of gown she ought to wear, but—what was more important—she knew how to wear it. One would have said that her eyes were by Helleu and her nose by George du Maurier. Men looked to their hearts when her mouth was open, and to their consciences when it was closed—tight-closed! A laugh to make them worship her, a frown to make them despise themselves, a suggestion that she was capable of giving all she would expect from another, a somewhat

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

stronger suggestion that she would be apt to expect a considerable deal, very clean-cut, very sane, very good form—such was Margery Palffy at what might be called her worst. As for Margery Palffy at her best, as yet even the most casual of Colony gossips had never more than hinted at a love-affair.

Madame Palffy having attended two church services, and observed with gratification that her new bonnet was far more imposing than the bonnets, old and new, of her fellow worshippers, had now sought the seclusion of her Empire boudoir. She was, above all things, consistent. In this sacred spot she ventured to lay aside her society manner, but, beyond this, she made no concessions to privacy. Her lounging-gown would have been presentable at a garden-party, and she devoted five minutes to rearranging her hair, before sinking massively upon the *chaise-longue*, and giving her thoughts free rein.

An unusually brilliant week had drawn to a close the evening before. Madame Palffy's dinner-table had groaned beneath its burden of silver and chiselled glass; and her box at "Louise" had presented to the auditorium such a background of white linen and vicuna as had sent poisonous darts to the hearts of a dozen ambitious and observant mothers.

The reason was not far to seek. From the moment of her *début*, two months before, Margery Palffy had been a tremendous success. Her beauty, her novelty, her shrewd wit and unfailing gaiety, had swept through the Colony as a sickle through corn. Madame

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Palffy smiled to herself as she reviewed the past few weeks. Her daughter's had been a name to conjure with.

But, almost immediately, the smile became a sigh. Beneath her satisfaction in Margery's triumph, the ambitious lady felt that there was something lacking—and that "something" was a complete understanding of the girl herself. Since her return from the States, her mother had been slowly and reluctantly forced to the conviction that there was that in her nature which it was beyond one's power to grasp, and her apparent frankness and simplicity made the failure to read her doubly hard to analyze. Her interest in life and the society world about her was unquestionable. Fresh and unspoiled, she trod the social labyrinth undeviatingly, received the flatteries, even the open devotion, of half a hundred men with caution, and remained—herself. And Madame Palffy, to whom social success was a guarantee of a status so little lower than the seraphim as to make the difference unworthy of consideration, looked with growing admiration upon that of her beautiful daughter, and treasured every evidence thereof deep in her pompous heart. The difficulty lay in the fact that Margery impressed not only the world in general by her dignity, but abashed her ambitious parent as well. Madame Palffy was content to have her daughter talk in parables, if she would, and be as impartial as justice itself; but afterwards, when the lights were out and the guests had departed,

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

she wanted the parables explained and the preferences laid bare. And this was precisely the confidential relation which she had never been able to establish. In public she figured naturally as Margery's confidant and mentor. In private she was, in reality, hardly nearer to her than was the newest of her new acquaintances.

In this state of affairs Madame Palffy distinctly perceived all the elements of a dilemma. As was naturally to be expected, her daughter had no sooner been restored to her, than the ambitious lady's mind began to wrestle with the problem of a suitable marriage—or "alliance," as she preferred to think of it. To this intent, she had selected the Vicomte de Boussac, whom she was wont to call, for no apparent reason, "one of her boys." Nothing was further from the Vicomte's intention than a marriage *à la mode*, imbued as he was with the national predilection for marriage *au mois*; but he had a habit—had De Boussac—of describing himself as *enchanté* with whatsoever might be proposed to him by one of the opposite sex. He was *enchanté* to meet Madame's beautiful daughter, *enchanté* to act as their escort on any and every occasion, *enchanté*, above all, at Madame's disregard of conventionality, whereby he was permitted to enjoy frequent *tête-à têtes* with Margery. But he had an eye for the boundary-line. He smiled with inimitable charm at Madame Palffy's transparent hints, derived considerable diversion from her daughter's society, and,

Digitized by Google
Original from COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY