

their return from the honey-moon. Henri listened attentively, and Mrs. Lamb smiled prettily from behind the teapot meanwhile. The scene took place in the dining-room at "Sheercliff," and they had just finished eating. Martin was at the head of the table, with a life-sized oil-painting of Cyrus (his father) hanging on the wall behind him; the picture seemed to glare from beneath overhanging brows at the unconscious and complacent host.

Martin told his tale with great difficulty; he was precluded from speaking at intervals on account of a spasmodic seizure, which made him twist about in his seat and give utterance to a shrill burst of laughter.

Henri lay back in his chair and listened attentively. The subdued light from the lamps illumined his bold, swarthy features; and anon he would raise his eyes to glance keenly at his host, or to flash a swift half furtive look at the girlish figure that was at the other end of the table.

"I had a sleigh waiting," said Martin, "and I paced about impatiently until Blanche came. I thought she had gone back on me!"

"Mais, mon Dieu! it was my aunt," murmured Mrs. Lamb at this juncture. "She had a sewing girl in the house and wanted me to try on a new frock."

"Ehe! ehe! ehe!" gasped Martin, convulsively—"her trousseau; eh, Tremblay? Ehe! ehe! ehe!"

Henri pushed back his chair and looked at his watch. "I am desperately sorry, Mrs. Lamb," he said, with his most winning smile, "but there is a rather important debate in the House this evening which I must attend. You may thank fortune that Martin is not a newspaper man," he went on, "and"—with a low bow—"as your husband's friend, I am truly glad that he has chosen so well. Permit me to add that he has good taste!"

This was in French, a language that the host understood but imperfectly. Blanche lifted her blue eyes demurely and said in reply,—

"Monsieur Tremblay is known as a mocker,—he makes pretty speeches and then laughs!"

Henri made a gesture of dissent. "Ah, madame, you should never judge by what people say!" Then recollecting his friend, he said, in English, "Martin, *mon ami*, you must disabuse the mind of madame; she does not think well of me!"

"*Sacre Diable!*" muttered Henri, into the folds of his fur collar, as he was being driven rapidly citywards behind one of Martin's thoroughbreds, "she knows of me! I wonder if her mother—!" he pondered deeply a moment and looked up at the clear starlit sky,—looked into the mystery of space, into the vault that has been and will be—that is not of yesterday, but of eternity! And even as he looked, his quick, restless mind kept revolving in its groove,—kept to its narrow court-yard. He was a clever man, was Henri Tremblay, and his was the character of a ruler. He despised his fellows for their contentment. He would be satisfied with nothing but the best; his aim would be to reach the highest pinnacle,—and yet, and yet,—he looked up into the clear starlit sky, into the boundless distance of eternal space, with thoughts intent only on self, with his strong will directing his subtle wits to the planning of a base plot! Verily, the bent of human character is not to be classified. Some day Tremblay might be hailed as a genius. He had the faculty of working himself into a passion over any subject under discussion. Moreover, his own words and his reflected passion were backed by a keen intelligence that instinctively directed them to play upon the strings that touch the hearts of men. He could stir an audience bravely, could Henri Tremblay.

Martin Lamb was not particularly wise; but, so far, he had miraculously escaped the fate of most rich young men who are troubled with overmuch leisure and with a paucity of brains. He had not been startlingly foolish; but, with the advent of his wife, there came into his life a new influence. This the identical passion that exalts fools and sets wisdom to parade in the garb of folly! This the old, old story, that is both pleasure and pain, that is the cause of life. Martin had come to taste of the fullness of joy; he had taken into his heart a passion that is stronger than death. He loved a woman; and, alas for him that his was not the form to attract, nor his the nature to rule! He found himself launched into a whirl that pleased him because of its novelty, and delighted him unspeakably because of the joy it seemed to give the woman he loved.

It was the one object of the poor fellow's life to please his wife. He felt himself to be unworthy to mate with such as she. But great things may be achieved by the man who

tries with his whole heart. Martin resolved to try to be worthy of his wife, and his whole heart was in the essay.

"*Mon Dieu*, if I were a man I would be *comme les autres*!" said Mrs. Lamb one day to Tremblay, in her husband's presence. The remark was accompanied by a shrug of her rounded shoulders and a lenient smile at the person addressed.

Henri had been somewhat moody and sarcastic in his comment upon certain scandals, which were whispered about Quebec with regard to his own extravagances. The words were probably spoken to console her guest, but they sank deep into the mind of the listening Martin, and in due time bore fruit. He resolved that he, too, would be *comme les autres*; he was not a sporting character by nature; indeed, he had formerly been most circumspect. But, suddenly, he took to wearing his hat awry, and to dressing in a flashy style; he even swore full rounded oaths occasionally, and drank more than was good for him. Men remarked the change, and some of the more knowing ones gave the discredit to Henri Tremblay. It was usually in the latter's company that the would-be man about town was seen.

Alas, poor Martin! It was not all fun being *comme les autres*; it was not easy for the frog to rival the ox in stature. Still the deluded little man persisted, for his heart was concerned in the venture. His face grew thin and his eyes watery, but he was getting into the swing; he was hail fellow, well met, with all Henri Tremblay's boon companions. The only difference was that these stood to a greater or less extent in awe of the strong-limbed, quick-tempered Frenchman. They durst not take liberties with him; but they laughed at the poor Lambkin, as they soon grew to call the deluded Martin.

Time passed and the seasons came and went; and gradually the influence of Henri Tremblay grew more and more pronounced. He persuaded Martin to invest in a bankrupt newspaper, which was to be had cheap. God knows what argument he used, but the fact remained. Moreover, with Henri Tremblay to direct its policy, the rag came to exert a certain influence, and to bother the Government not a little. Martin had no return for his outlay, but presumably he had learned the lesson of patience.

Then Madame Lamb interested herself in politics; she entertained on a large scale, and was persuaded that she had become a power. This because a prominent member of the Government had urged her to come over to the ruling side, assuring her at the same time that she was a very dangerous opponent. Probably the great man was but giving indulgence to a facetious strain; howbeit Madame was immensely flattered. She invited innumerable hot-headed young aspirants to her receptions, and felt vaguely that she was grasping a lever in her pretty white hands wherewith she would electrify the province some day. Hot-headed young aspirants are not particularly different from other people; they are well pleased to be entertained luxuriously by a charming woman. It is rather an advantage when the hostess happens to be somewhat silly, for the hot-headed ones are prepared to furnish any amount of unemployed intellect.

Accordingly great gaunt, hollow-eyed, long-haired young men button-holed small, nervous looking gentlemen at the Sheercliff receptions, and whispered mysterious words of weighty import. And very profound looking wights gazed into space with a world of unuttered eloquence germinating in their minds. Every second man had a carefully cultivated pose that was an exact reproduction of one used by the great Napoleon,—not one but was ready to deliver a magnificent oration, about nothing in particular, at a moment's notice.

Amongst these moved the hostess—very fair to gaze upon, all smiles and dimples; she did not often express an opinion, but she never failed to applaud when one was uttered in her hearing. Here also was Henri Tremblay, with his lithe, graceful form and magnetic smile,—and here, too, the master of the house, looking very like a fish out of water.

Small beginnings are proverbially fruitful, and ere long full fledged members of the Provincial House came to mingle with the hot-headed young aspirants. And, perchance, many a shrewd *coup d'état* had its inception at the "Sheercliff" receptions.

Was this the hand of Henri Tremblay,—this gathering together of politicians? Here in the house of his friend (which was to him as his own home) he met the men who were leaders and those who, like himself, aspired to lead.

So long as human nature remains unchanged, and the present state of society exists, questions will be asked which no man may truly answer. Wisdom nodded sagely and predicted a grand future for Henri Tremblay. Folly smiled flippantly and pitied Martin Lamb. Each looked upon the

game from a different point of view,—and it may be that each spoke the words of truth.

Howbeit, it does not require much foresight to prophecy the ultimate destiny of the ambitious Tremblay. Some day a political crisis will take place, and all French Canada will be in an uproar. Somebody will say or do something somewhere that somebody else will, rightly or wrongly, construe into a menace to the rights of the French Canadians. The somebody will probably be an influential Ontario politician, who is supposed to be an Orangeman; and, of course, the somebody else will be a would-be champion of his race in Quebec. Some influential Ontario man is continually making himself obnoxious to the French-speaking element. They give temperance dinners up in Ontario and make speeches, which are duly telegraphed to Quebec for the benefit of the would-be champion of his race. The latter can usually count on the enthusiastic support of all the budding politicians in his province.

Henri Tremblay is a budding politician; and Henri Tremblay will attach himself to the train of the would-be champion in consequence. The political crisis will not last; it never does. But ere it has gone into oblivion Tremblay will distinguish himself by making several patriotic speeches which will have been signally successful in stirring up the masses against *Les Sacre Anglais*! The would-be champion is possibly a leader of the Quebec Opposition, who will naturally be in need of just such a man on the floor of the Provincial House of Parliament. So, behold! Henri selected to contest a vacant constituency, which he secures for his party.

This the first decisive step, and the one that counts most. Tremblay knows his own worth; he has the gift of attracting men, and as yet has never encountered one whom he himself thinks his superior in mental attainments. He has but to wait for his chance. Political life in the Province of Quebec affords a never ending series of opportunities for such as he. So long as there are Orangemen in Ontario who make speeches against the Pope, and deplore the influence of the Church of Rome in the affairs of the sister province, just so long will there be a tide in the popular sentiment in Quebec that, taken at the flood, will carry Henri Tremblay and that ilk on to fortune.

Moreover, while popular prejudices prevail, and a watchful opposition hails the smallest false step on the part of an opponent with a joyful blare of semi-righteous indignation, be sure that the rising man will be outwardly circumspect. Nay, that rather than give his enemies a chance to pull him from the goal of his ambition, Henri Tremblay would, if necessary, sacrifice all else. That which threatens to be harmful to him in his career he will discard, and this in despite of any other consideration.

Supposing You and I Had Met.

Supposing you and I had met
A decade and a half ago,
When we were dreaming what we know
Before the sun of hope had set,
And shadowed all we must forget.

Supposing in the dear old time
We could have known what we know now
All life must miss and disavow
The prose in all its rippling rhyme,
Its chant of faith's funereal chime.

Its pure ideals float away,
The passion that its love imbues,
Diffused and spent, like sunset hues;
Supposing we had met, I say,
Would we be happier to-day?

Dear friend, I take you by the hand,
Our common sorrow makes akin,
Because of all that "might have been."
We missed our goal, we understand,
We looked for gold, we found but sand.

'Tis scarce a thought for human speech,
When life has reached its gloaming—yet,
Supposing you and I had met,
Would life a sweeter lesson teach?
Would so much be beyond our reach?

EMMA P. SEABURY.