

DAILY MAGAZINE PAGE FOR EVERYBODY

"The Blue Danube" Brings Many Dear Memories Back

By WINIFRED BLACK

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Winifred Black

I SAW them yesterday in the smart cafe, the three elderly women. One of them had white hair, as white as the foam on the breakers of the blue, blue sea; she's been in troubled waters, that woman. And one was just beginning to gray a little at the temples, the clever woman, this was the woman with brains and management and good fortune. The other woman was really the oldest of the three, but her hair was still a soft, bright brown. They were having a great time at the cafe, the three elderly women; they ordered rather an elaborate luncheon and had it rather elaborately served. They were very polite to each other and solicitous as to the temperature of the soup, the quantity of the salad and the quality of the dessert.

They began by being very gay. They laughed and looked around and spoke of the people near them.

It was the moon hour and the place was full of business men and near-business women; shoppers who came to meet their husbands there; stenographers who lunched with men of their acquaintance; college boys in town for a day's lark; stock brokers and men of affairs; two or three newspaper men, editors from the adjacent offices, alert, keen-eyed, tolerant as is the fashion of their kind.

"When We Were Young"

And there was music, rather good music for a cafe—the new Strauss, which nobody seemed to like particularly; Tchaikovsky, and one or two rag.

And then, all at once, there was a rumour of violins and a sobbing of bass viol, a strumming of low tones, a crash, and the band was off into the "Blue Danube" waltz.

La lumps-tum, tum tum, tum tum—The white-haired woman caught it first. She laid down her fork.

"Listen," she said. La lumps-tum, tum tum, tum tum, tum—

"It can't be," said the woman with the gray just beginning to show in her temples.

"It is," said the woman with the soft brown hair and the tired eyes. And then they all leaned back and listened wistfully to the old, old waltz.

And the middle-aged stock brokers heard the repetition of the old, old theme, set down their glasses, and listened, too. He smiled bitterly, and looked satirically at his companion, a little girl with round eyes and rosy cheeks.

"Do you know the tune they're playing?" said the editor.

The little girl with the round eyes listened gravely.

"No," she said, "I suppose it's something new, but it sounds like an old-fashioned waltz."

"That's what it is," said the editor, "an old-fashioned waltz. You wouldn't remember it, of course."

What was it he saw in his lifted glass, I wonder; whose face was it that smiled to him from the amber of the wine?

An elderly stockbroker laughed aloud. The music fell to a low accompaniment. "I've weighed a hundred and thirty-five pounds then," he said.

"That's all. And she—"

The white-haired woman was smiling tremulously. "The Marine band played it the year I came out in Washington," she said. "There was a young lieutenant, just from West Point; he danced like an angel, and he had the dearest southern accent. But my father never liked him."

The gray-haired woman laughed. "Here's to the young lieutenant," she said, raising her cup of black coffee and smiling over it as if it were a glass of wine. "I hope he's a general now."

The Only Selection Whistled.

"They played it at the charity ball in New York when I wore my first evening dress," said the gray-haired woman. "The Blue Danube—I remember three of the men quarrelled over that dance with me, and I had 23 bouquets sent to the house. And the man I really liked danced 'The Blue Danube' with another girl whom I didn't like at all, and so, after all, to me the ball was a failure."

The woman with the brown hair spoke. Her eyes were shining.

"Joe and I danced together the first time I ever met him, and afterwards, at our wedding party, they played 'The Blue Danube,' and always at our anniversaries." The little woman with the brown hair and the tired eyes clasped her hands so that her fingers touched lovingly the little band of gold on her wedding hand. "I really must be getting back home tomorrow," she said, "I've stayed away too long."

The little woman with the brown hair had never been a great beauty like the one with the gray hair, nor a great success like the one with the white hair. Her clothes were not quite in the latest mode, and I think her hat was really a little old-fashioned. But the two other women looked at her affectionately.

"Here's to the home-coming—and to Joe—and to the 'Blue Danube,'" said the gray-haired woman. And then the two looked at each other rather pitifully—it seemed to me.

And then the band burst into a brand new rag tune. But when the people went out of the restaurant of whom they hummed at it while singing to their own hearts the old-fashioned waltz of "The Blue Danube."

Three Minute Journeys

By TEMPLE MANNING

WHERE DANCE-MAD GILLES REIGNED IN A BELGIAN MARDI-GRAS

IN the heart of devastated Belgium, not more than two hours from Brussels, there still stands, let us hope, the saddest town of Belgium. Once a year Bincbe used to go carnival mad, to the delight of all the country round and the thousands of visitors that flocked there for the Mardi Gras.

Built uphill and downhill, possessing one broad street and a "grand place," a beautiful old town hall newly done up in gold, when I was 10 years ago, Bincbe was the quietest, sleepiest, old town you could imagine. But it always woke up into deliriously delightful gaiety into the maddest of the Shrove-tide festival. Its Mardi Gras celebration was like many others all over the world in one respect—their own New Orleans Mardi Gras—it was a grand masquerade of young and old, and differed from the others only in the manner it was carried out by those taking part.

That Sunday before Ash Wednesday when I sailed forth from the quaint inn in Bincbe with my chattering guide at my elbow, comes back to me with my amazement at the wonderful difference in the air from that of the sleepy days that had gone before. As quickly as we could my guide took me to the place where the 200 Gilles, who are chosen by the civic committee, were getting their coats stuffed with straw to make their hunchbacks. Looking over the



The Riot of Oranges.

by flowers and ribbons, and topped by splendid and costly ostrich plumes from two to three feet long, which waved to and fro as the wearer walked, and lent him an awe-compelling stature. The coat and long trousers are practically impossible to describe, so gaily colored and so fantastically designed they were, but about the waist were hung little cowbells that tinkled as their wearers moved. On their feet the Gilles wore the ancient wooden shoes, and in their hands they carried wicker baskets.

During the two and a half-days of the carnival made that quiet and sleepy town I learned why the Gilles carried the baskets. In procession, and the processions seemed continuous, the Gilles danced among the crowds, like plume-mocking, colorful fashions that never rested, jangling their bells and pounding the cobblestones with their clattering wooden shoes, tossing into the gay mobs innumerable golden oranges.

They carried in those baskets. You had to be quick to dodge the oranges, catch them, and then back again.

On the final day a sort of war dance took place in the place before the town hall. Every one of the Gilles danced alone before the committee to win a place and a glass of wine from the mayor's hand. Then when the dancing was done the festival ended. Next morning I walked the streets that were as empty as they ever had been, and wondered how many days it would take the Gilles to recover from their exhausting duties.

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"You've missed a beautiful sight by never having seen me in that picturesque pose," I teased mischievously.

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"Why, Bubbles," he exclaimed, "I can't conceive of you staying over a washboard that I ever catch you bending over." So I had to explain to him, gently, but firmly, that the tubs were of very definite use—that I didn't propose to let my fine bits of linen and muslin take perilous journeys in alien washbaths, and I intended doing them myself. Poor Bob was distinctly mortified, and didn't like the idea at all.

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