

THE IDIOSYNCRASY OF LONDON

Everybody who knew him declared John Landon was unusual. In the first place, he was unusually good looking.

Among those who knew him best he was considered an unusually good fellow. What is more, he was unusually indifferent to women, since, with wealth, good looks, and a fair amount of good nature, he had reached the age of 25 and was still a bachelor.

In this latter respect Landon was the pet despair of the wife of his partner, a happily married and, therefore, matchmaking young matron. It was in vain that Mrs. Clare inveigled him into various dinner parties and soirees where there were always to be met maidens more or less charming.

After dutifully consenting to grace the occasion with his six feet of blonde masculinity, he invariably proceeded to make himself as agreeably as possible, after dutifully consenting to grace the occasion with his six feet of blonde masculinity.

Thus it happened a few days later, when the thermometer was reading the nineties that Landon bethought himself of his partner's invitation, and a few days later was speeding in the direction of the latter's country home in Michigan.

He had just time to get into his dinner jacket upon arrival, and when at dinner his hostess announced a hop down at the little hotel on the beach, and that he "really must come home as there was the summer resort scarcity of men."

Landon acquiesced, as was his habit. The dance was in progress when they entered the pavilion, all early decorated with wreaths of evergreen, flags and multicolored bunting, and Landon was soon bowing low before one of Mrs. Clare's divinites. He was conscious of a pair of over large blue eyes, soft, floating ruffles, and a lot of fluffed red hair. Landon had always hated red hair.

As they drifted around the crowded ballroom in the dreamy way, suddenly a pair of dark eyes gazed into his, so close that a transient raven look brushed his cheek. She had a diamond partner, but by some skillful maneuvering a collision was averted.

Landon looked again, his lips forming a conventional apology, she was gone. His glance roved over the drifting, rhythmical human sea, then the waves parted for a moment and he saw her. She was looking straight at him. Their eyes met, and the tiny, festooned ballroom seemed flooded with roseate light. He caught his breath, and became aware that the bulging blue eyes of his dancing partner were watching him.

"So you, too, have fallen a victim," she said, with something like a sneer in her voice. "Why—why?" he stammered. "I do not understand you, Miss Ready."

"O, I was only joking," she hissed. She hesitated a moment, then added, with a sigh: "Grace has a partner for every number."

Another pause, then: "Men seem to prefer girls who dress like me, Mr. Landon."

John looked across to the far end of the room, where an exquisitely molded creature drifted for a moment before his vision, then was swallowed up again by the moving tide of dancers. He wondered vaguely, in unsophisticated man fashion, why an all white gown of delicate lace-like material, following closely the contours of the figure, and swathed and decorated about the feet in a filmy, graceful way, was the sort to be designated as "loud."

Then, as the dance ended, and she was immediately surrounded by a crowd of chattering admirers, he turned away with an unaccountable sick at heart feeling utterly new to him, but which had the effect, strange to say, of causing him to assume an extremely deferential air toward his bright companion and to listen with a great show of interest to the petty small talk which seemed her fund of conversation.

And when, later in the evening, he was making for the smoking-room, and Mrs. Clare headed him off, saying "Come, I want you to meet Miss Chalmers," with a sidewise nod toward the graceful figure in clinging lace, he really believed he went unwillingly, and that he felt bored at being obliged to make the conventional request: "Would she favor him?" though he did not attempt to account for his disappointment when she held up her card, showing every number taken.

"You are too late, you see," she said, smiling. The next minute she was whirling away with her partner. "I'm tired," said Mrs. Clare. "Let's hunt up Edward and go home."

Alone in his room, with his feet on the back of a chair and puffing clouds of smoke toward the ceiling, Landon sat. He tried to read, but always a pair of dark eyes looked earnestly up at him from the paper. He threw the book aside and lay back watching the changing wreaths curling upward from his pipe, but a divinely perfect creature in swirling draperies persistently came and mingled with the wreaths of smoke. He knocked the ashes from his pipe and went to bed.

"If I did not know that such a thing is impossible," he thought, as he turned out his light, "I should say I had fallen in love this night."

Early next morning Landon, with his host and various fishing paraphernalia, rowed across the lake, "after their breakfast," as they explained to Mrs. Clare. They passed another boat containing a man and a woman, a pair of dark eyes peered from beneath a wide sunshade, as salutations were exchanged.

"They say Cameron is the favored one," commented Edmond. "Looks like a chump," growled the other. "Ah, no; Cameron's a fine fellow."

Then, turning suddenly, Edmond scrutinized the face of his guest, while a quizzical smile turned the corners of his mouth. Landon was intently gazing after the boat vanishing in the distance. The sunshade was tipped suspiciously as if its wearer was looking backward.

After dinner that night there was what Cameron called a "roundup" at the Clare cottage. Cameron had spent some cowboy days on his father's ranch in the vicinity of the Rockies. Miss Chalmers was, of course, the center of attraction, and Landon devoted himself assiduously to the girl with the fiery hued tresses. He could not refrain, however, from an occasional glance in her direction, and she seemed always to meet his gaze. Once he thought he detected amusement in her deep eyes, and again, when the bulging blue ones were beaming at him unmistakably, he caught a glimpse of a pair of red lips curled in scorn. He went out on the piazza and lit a cigar. The moonlight streamed through the lattice.

A soft step approached. Landon turned quickly, with a look of expectancy, which gave place to disappointment when he saw—Miss Ready. Throwing away his cigar, he walked with her back to the dining room. Next morning the birds, chanting their matins outside his window awoke him. Between the trees a path ran up, disappearing in green shade. It looked inviting, so he dressed, and went out. He had not followed the path far when he came upon her. She was coming from the opposite direction.

"Yes, it is a pretty walk," she told him. "You will feel repaid." "Not if I must travel it alone," he replied. "Won't you turn back?" "Without a word she turned and walked by his side. They paced leisurely on in the cool shade of the branches for nearly an hour, and time passed as if it were not there. She bent to the same pattern find each other.

When they emerged from the shadow of the trees on the lawn surrounding the Clare cottage they met Mrs. Clare. "Breakfast has been waiting some minutes for you two truants," she announced. Miss Chalmers, however, had promised to return and waken her mother, who was not an early riser, so she passed on down the narrow roadway toward her hotel. Her duty this morning gown trailing the ground. "Edmond," said his pretty little spouse later in the day, "John is falling in love with Miss Chalmers."

"Quite the wrong thing to do," quittedly responded that extremely practical individual. "Ye-es," was the slow answer, "but Grace Chalmers will have plenty of 'chances' whenever she takes it into her charming head to marry, while with Maud Ready—looking thoughtfully at her husband, immersed in a night and day of contemplation. "I shall not encourage it," she added, half to herself, since her audience was unheeding.

Out on the piazza she found Landon. He placed a chair for her and she sat down. "John," she began, "I am going to have Miss Ready to dinner tonight. You must promise to be agreeable to her."

"Sorry, Mrs. Clare," he returned, "but I have decided to go back to town, tonight on the 5 o'clock train. There's some important business waiting."

Nothing in his quiet manner betrayed the fact that John Landon was running away from something that had frightened him—nothing less than the sudden transformation the world had undergone for him since a pair of bulging blue eyes had gazed into his and a lock of waving raven hair had swept his cheek.

Once in his own bachelor quarters in the city he felt he would be safe. Poor Landon! His was the same fate that awaits every misguided mortal who attempts to run away from himself.

He sought out all the women of his acquaintance and surprised them with unwonted attentions. How could they know that he was studying the ancient prescription of "woman plural" for "woman singular?"

The upshot of it was the end of one week found Landon wending his way in the dusk of the evening, by a narrow path that led from the railway station to the summer home of the Clares, "for another fishing trip with Edmond," he complacently explained to himself. He passed the hotel a gay party was collected on the veranda. Along the eaves colored lanterns swung and danced in the soft breeze.

Seated on the steps, and surrounded by half a dozen men, as usual, was Grace Chalmers. He heard Cameron's voice. They could not see him where he stood, but the madman gazed as if fascinated by the bright picture before him. Suddenly he heard her laugh, a ringing peal of mirth. The joyousness of the madman gazed as if fascinated by the bright picture before him. Suddenly he heard her laugh, a ringing peal of mirth. The joyousness of the madman gazed as if fascinated by the bright picture before him.

He turned and rushed blindly down the slope. There was a quick cry of surprise, and the slender figure of Miss Ready blocked the pathway. She held out a silver salver. He brushed it roughly aside and continued his headlong flight. A train was pulling away from the little station platform. He swung on to the steps of the last coach.

Arrived in town, he went immediately to his office and wrote some letters. One was to a client respecting the latter's request hitherto refused, that Landon go to Cape Nome and settle some claims that had become involved in a tangle. In a few days he had set out on the long journey.

It was four months later when he found himself once more in his native city. The long, lonely days had taught John Landon much. He called himself a seceder of the state of mind of the first water. All his waking hours had been haunted by the memory of a girl in swirling draperies, holding up to his gaze a filled dance programme, and the echo of her words "too late."

It was early in the forenoon when he alighted from the train. Going to his hotel, he hastily brushed off the stains of travel, and immediately made his way to the Chalmers residence. Miss Chalmers received him with frank cordiality. He held on to the hand extended in greeting, and talked so rapidly his words crowded each other.

"I love you," he told her. "I have loved you since the moment we met. My girl! My girl! Be my wife!" She drew her hand away sharply. "Why, Mr. Landon," she began. Then a light dawned.

"O, you do not know, Mr. Cameron and I were married in Paris nearly two months ago."

She blushed rosily and dropped her eyes, velling with the long lashes that indescribable expression of mingled amusement and scorn.

At the age of seven, in conformity with the custom of the royal house of Spain, his care and his education were taken entirely out of the hands of woman-kind, and he was given his own education by the King's officers and servants. His father's old valet Jorge took the place of his former nurses, and a military staff controlled his studies.

These things, however, were not the King's constant companions for the last nine years, one or another being always with him, day and night. But the King's officers were more numerous. Under the tutelage of Senor Alfonso Merry del Val, who speaks English like an Englishman, and an excellent knowledge of English literature, his mastery had learned to speak our language almost as well as his father did. M. Luis Gayan has made him good French scholar, and Dr. Escobar has taught him an apt pupil in German. Other professors, have been chosen for special branches of knowledge, and for the last year Senor Santa Maria de Paredes, a well-known juris-consult, has instructed him in the elements of law, political economy, and the theory of government. It is said that the King has shown a very marked aptitude in this branch of study, although his personal inclinations have been on the side of more exact sciences, but all his professors are agreed in finding his quickness of intelligence very considerably above the average.

Holiness the King has naturally shown great interest in the choice of his godson's spiritual directors. The King's first confessor was Monsignor Merry del Val, who, after his English tutor, and some time afterwards one of the Pope's secretaries. The second, Padre Morano, a Jesuit, made himself distasteful to the country owing to an imprudent newspaper polemic, and was obliged to retire. Since then the King has been dependent upon the chaplains of the court.

Some idea of the industry required of the King may be gained from an account given in 1909 of his ordinary day's work: "The King rises always at 7 o'clock, and works, with the exception of one hour on horseback, until midday, when he takes his first meal. He breakfasts in company with one of the chief of his studies and the professor of the day. After breakfast he takes a lesson in German or in drawing. From 2 to 4 he goes out, in order to profit by the sun in winter time, generally in the Casa de Campo or on the road to the Pardo. On returning from his walk or drive, he joins her majesty at tea. Literature, for which, as well as history, he shows the same inclination as his father, occupies his leisure time. He now he dines with the Princess of Asturias and the Infanta Maria-Theresa. After dinner he plays the piano till 9 o'clock."

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THE EDUCATION OF SPAIN'S KING

The Lesson of Responsibility Learned by Alfonso.

His Days of Childhood Almost Less Eventful Than They Are to Most Children.

The first sixteen years of life do not offer much in the way of history, or even of indication of character. Still, they are years of education, and the education of a king as a matter of considerable importance to his future subjects. Legends are too apt to grow about royal infancy to be anything but doubtful evidence of character, but there is one legend about Alfonso XIII, which may very likely be true in fact as well as in suggestion. A bomb explosion had taken place in Madrid, and the ladies of the royal nursery were expressing wonder that they had not heard it. "I heard it," remained the most Catholic majesty, who had but lately learned to talk. "Your majesty could not have heard it," objected one of the ladies. "The King heard it," he repeated in correction. "The King hears everything."

At so early an age had one of the duties of a king been revealed to him. Efforts have been made before now to bring up a future ruler of a nation in ignorance of his coming power and in subjection to his temporary guardians. With Alfonso XIII, the opposite was the case. He has an admirable will to no will but his mother's. There was but little time for him to learn the lesson of responsibility, but, at least, it was begun as early as possible. "The days of childhood were almost less eventful to Alfonso XIII, than they are to most children. The best etiquette of the Spanish court, tempered only by the affection of his mother and sisters, swathed his infancy and confined his first childhood in its inexorable bonds from the day that he was presented to the great officials and grandees of Spain, a newborn infant lying upon a silver salver. He has hardly worn recording now that he opened his first Cortes in his nurse's arms at the age of one, or that at two years he sat on the throne of Spain in the exhibition of Barcelona, or that his first pair of shoes was made memorable by the gift of many hundreds of his own subjects. He has had the usual illnesses of childhood, one of so severe a character that it cost the country many days of painful suspense, but, in addition to other delicate children, he grew in health and strength as the years went by, and his subjects were very soon able to assure themselves of his vigor. He has had the usual illnesses of childhood, one of so severe a character that it cost the country many days of painful suspense, but, in addition to other delicate children, he grew in health and strength as the years went by, and his subjects were very soon able to assure themselves of his vigor. 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