

### FREDERIC YALE LIKE CAESAR

Saw and Conquered Every Obstacle That Came In His Way.

His Indomitable Will Led Him to Attempt a Feat Which Caused His Hair to Turn White.

Frederic Yale was like Caesar, for he saw, he conquered, and with this achievement he did himself credit, even although his triumph pertained to the farthestmost parts of Gaul, but to a commonplace boarding house, where he tarried during his sojourn in a certain inland town.

This boarding house was by nature a weary wilderness—in the drawing room overgrown with weedy gossip and at table, under the surveillance of the proprietress, revealing barren stretches of silence. But from the moment of Frederic Yale's arrival it all blossomed into the rose. Merely his presence wrought a metamorphosis, for he sat at the table like a king and looked as handsome as Adonis and in manner showed himself a veritable William of Orange, caressing and familiar, yet civilly dignified.

He talked, too, delightfully. Evidently a man of wide travel, interestingly and picturesquely he interspersed into his conversation sundry anecdotes and recollections of many lands. Although far from proving the old-fashioned literary conversationalist in monologue, he evinced cozy chattiness with every one individually. It was with the younger fellows, business and cigars with the men, matinees with the young ladies, cards and books and news with their mammas, while even with the silver haired dowager in the corner it dwelt with enlightening facility upon her maladies, her reminiscences and the caprices of the climate.

As a crowning luster, however, over and above all his accomplishments and graces, the newcomer attracted attention as a man of secrets. For who does not find an alluring guest in the untraveling of the ominously hinted, unknown bygone intertwined about the heart of a stranger? And of such a stranger! Frederic Yale was mysterious in two particulars, principally because of the perfect whiteness of the abundant hair curling about his youthful face, while a poignant subordinate interest attached to a handsomely gemmed locket, delicately and diminutively feminine in outline, which dangled from his watch guard as a charm.

Those who had scrutinized the trim most carefully reported that one side was embossed with a miniature of a young woman's face, framed in a resplendently plumed hat. But this, pointing to an affair of the heart, there were those of the household who would have discredited. For soft innuendoes were already float of an alliance between Mr. Yale and an engaging sylph of the boarding house, who had whispered to the dowager her opinion of him. Her confidant, relishing the gentleman's advances upon herself, had promised her most masterly tactics in behalf of the girl, who, inexperienced in matrimonial campaigning, would mainly never have essayed the subjugation of so rich an empire as he unless aided by the counsels of some veteran commando, such as the aged lady. As women are proverbial romancers, it goes without saying that the locket and the snowy curls and the incipient intrigue became pet themes of conversation around the fashion plates and the embroidery of the household. But with equal zest were they discussed in the smoking room, at the billiard table, while among the few juveniles sheltered by the landlady they provoked an excitement which made their poor number quiver lest in some unguarded moment they should execute their resolutions of approaching Mr. Yale on the topic. She told them it might vex them, evoking severe reproofs before others, although there lurked within her the suspicion that he was, after all, the sweet tempered ever to become incensed at small offenders.

Gradually, however, it became apparent that all the house were harboring similar designs to those of the children and that all shared on their own account the mother's expectations of leniency in case their queries should prove unwelcome to Mr. Yale. For some days they had hoped that his general communicativeness respecting his experiences as a traveler would lead to a voluntary disclosure of the mystery; but, none taking place and the time of his stay being limited, they determined to wait no longer upon his pleasure lest he should some day here and his secret go with him, they being none the wiser.

So whenever the gentleman was absent the others fell to plotting for some way of ferreting out the mystery, if possible, without laying themselves open to reproach. The chosen plan appeared that at the close of some dinner a certain member of the company should begin an entertaining, exciting and prolonged tale; that the ladies should propose to withdraw to the reception room to hear its conclusion;

that this story should lead to a general desire for each one present to relate the most thrilling adventure to which he or she had ever been a party; that the lights should be snugly lowered as an additional decoy, and that if Yale did not readily deliver himself of his history divers little tactful, persuasive hints should be thrown out, with a view to coaxing it from him. Then, if at last they nettled or aggrieved the gentleman, they would rely upon his customary good humor for a happy issue out of their tribulations.

Little need had they, however, for any artifices beyond the first story, which was perpetrated during a certain dinner's final cupful of coffee, for at this unpretentious caravansary the coffee appeared in continuous performance. No sooner did the hazardous quality of the first recital's incidents come to light than Mr. Yale, the cynosure of all eyes, assumed an aspect of signal and miserable abstraction. Ah, he let his fingers ripple through his terrible white hair, and, eureka, they fondled that strange, beautiful little locket!

Only a few impatient minutes later, in the murky glimmer of the drawing room, his laurel crowned listeners were ushered into the presence of the sphinx. It was a sweetheart affair. At his first words the sylph's breast was dejected of all hope. He said that several years since, while trying to win his chosen lady, he found his greatest barrier in her twitting him as a carpet knight. So when he planned a tour of Scandinavia he offered to expose himself to all the peril of capturing a grebe along the scraggy cliff of the coast and promised her the priceless plumes of the bird. She admiringly agreed that if he would bring her such a royally won trophy she would give him a locket bearing a portrait of herself arrayed in the feathers, a token of her plighted troth.

Pursuant to his intentions, he was lowered in the usual way over the edge of the Norwegian precipice to a nest of grebes. The prize was secured, and he was being raised to the top when the rope encircling his body loosened. After varied dangers he landed upon the summit, to find his raven black hair turned milk white. The horror of that unutterable moment was branded upon him forever not only on his external person, but also on his mind. Never could he recall it, said he, without overpowering emotion.

Adding only that he had achieved his aim, which was worth all, Mr. Yale left the room. The audience, with a suggestion of guilt within their hearts, gave ear in indescribable silence to his ascent of the staircase and entrance into his room. While still under the charm of his narrative they sat when, perhaps a half hour later, his door reopened, for him to pass out with a letter, which he was seen to post before returning to his chamber.

The letter read thus: Lucie, carissima mia, can keep it no longer. Shall I tell the end of the beginning first? You can't know soon enough. Would have written a part of it the night I arrived here had I known how it would come out. If only you knew what dire catastrophe befell your lockless and on that luckless true love as he boarded the train which took him away from you.

Starting late for the station, I hustled through the streets rather friskily, thereby probably unsettling my wig, so when I tried to pass from my seat in the car out to the smoker, while we were swinging by at full speed and the wind was blowing high, it proved too much for those false hairs of mine. The wig whiffed off to the forty thousand corners of the earth, leaving my bald pate in purbus naturalibus. Covering it and my humiliation with my handkerchief, I sat in shame until we pulled up at this microscopic community, where fresh calamities chased me on that my dies irae. Only one coiffeur in town and but one wig in his stock—a white one! However, until another could reach me from home I made capital court of my afflictions to drive dull care away during my separation from you. I laid a scheme which did not go a-gley for becoming an object of interest to my boarding house and somewhat of a talker and for posing as a globe trotter. This evening came my delicious opportunity (the people were mad with curiosity and made it) for spinning a scandalous yarn about the turning of my sable tresses into white!

Forgive, if it needs forgiveness, my bringing you even into that nonsense, for you are ever in my thought, and gladly would I let my hairs become white or any hue of the rainbow in jeopardizing life for you. Or, which might please you better, rejoicingly would I grow some capillary organisms of my own. Tell me what you think of the escapade and believe and cherish always your friend, FRITZ.

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Couldn't See the Joke. Once Offenbach graciously accepted the invitation of some friends to visit them in Etretat. As his hosts were waiting for him at the hotel, one of them, who was very intimate with the composer, suggested: "Let us give him a rousing welcome."

The idea was taken up and developed. One of the party possessed a collection of old weapons. This was ransacked, and some two dozen young fellows were soon equipped as halberdiers. Another mounted a donkey and waved the flag of the club.

When Offenbach's carriage came in sight, a drum beat, the halberdiers presented arms and fireworks were set off from the balcony at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

As the composer stepped to the ground a venerable old man approached and presented to him the key of the hotel on a silver platter.

Offenbach, vain as a peacock and accustomed to all sorts of queer receptions, entirely failed to see the joke, though it was as broad as anything in "The Grand Duchess" or "La Belle Helene." He took it all seriously as a tribute to his genius, and, with tears in his eyes and in a voice that shook with emotion, he murmured: "Gentlemen, this is too much, too much!"

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