

"After Great Britain's recognition, Sweden bestowed the famous Nobel prize on both husband and wife. Then came laggard France with the Legion of Honor. But Pierre Curie replied to the government, simply declining the decoration, for it had 'no bearing upon my work.'

"But next day the Curies and Perrins went out to the quaint aerial village of Robinson two or three miles away, to have dinner in the tree-tops, where restaurants are established, and Irene climbed on her father's knee and put a red geranium in his coat. 'You are now decorated with the Legion of Honor,' the little one told him, gravely. And Pierre Curie replied, 'In this case I make no objection.'

"There came a time when the inveterate dislike of the Curies for public functions—dinners, receptions, lectures, and the like—had to be conquered; especially after the award of the Nobel prize by Sweden. Poor Marie Curie was, to put it mildly, not much given to dress. But now, protesting strongly, she had a *décolleté* black silk made; for President and Madame Loubet were giving a dinner at the Elysée Palace in honor of this marvellous husband and wife.

"This reminds me that both M. and Madame Curie have more than once flatly refused to lecture on their discoveries before royalty, alleging as an excuse that their subject would have no earthly interest for anyone who had not made a special study of it. They made an exception in the case of the Shah of Persia; but only because pressure was brought to bear upon them by the French Government.

"It was a very comic *séance*. The room was darkened, and the marvellous mineral they had discovered glowed uncannily. The Shah, greatly startled, leaped up and upset the case of radium. Then the Curies, in turn, were mightily alarmed for their precious atom, and refused to be comforted, even by diamond rings impulsively drawn from imperial fingers.

"The Shah was deeply offended at the cold rejection of all his gifts. The radium shown him was worth \$30,000 a gram. It had been specially extracted from pitchblende, a black oxide of uranium found only in one mine, at Joachimthal, in Bohemia. Whether or not this wondrous 'living' substance will cure cancer is a question for the scientist. But its most wonderful property is that it gives off light of itself, and that without any apparent diminution of its force. In Paris they called radium '*le métal conjugal*,' because it was the joint discovery of husband and wife. It was Madame Curie, however, who first noticed the strange properties of uranium, and drew her husband's atten-