

(Continued from Page 7.)

Presently the glass door is swung open, and a young man of about twenty, his cheeks rosy with the bitter mistral which is blowing outside, comes in.

"Why, really, that is young Broadlands," says Hippisley, adjusting his pince-nez. "I wonder his family allow him to be in a place so full of dangerous temptations to the young."

"Hullo, Hippisley, you here?" cries the boy, cheerily. "I'm just over from Mentone. My bear-leader's ill, so I've nothing to do."

"How very unfortunate! Who is your tutor, by-the-by? I heard that your people had sent you to travel with someone."

"Oh, Thurlow. Paul Thurlow. Rattlin' good fellow, but lost all his tin two years ago, and got jilted by some girl he was engaged to. Been down on his luck ever since, and now he's got typhoid fever. We're at the Impérial, but they won't let me in to his room. Awful rot, but the doctor says better not."

During this speech Lady Cronin dares not look at her daughter. She has a horrible fear that Gertrude is going to disgrace her—that Gertrude is going to make a scene! And when she does look up, the place opposite is empty. The girl has slipped away.

Lord Hippisley's future wife has only one thought, one over-mastering desire, and that is to get away, to find her way as soon as may be to the Hotel Imperial at Mentone. She runs all the way up to her room in the hotel. Quick, a hat and cloak—something dark. A train leaves, she knows, at a quarter to two; in less than twenty minutes she can be there.

How slowly the train creeps along the rocky shore! "He lost all his tin two years ago, and got jilted by some girl he was engaged to. He's been down on his luck ever since. And now he's got typhoid fever. And now he's got typhoid fever!" The stupid, slangy phrases have eaten into her brain.

It's a cold, grey day, even at Mentone, with a bitter mistral sweeping up the street. As the girl hurries along by the public garden and down the Rue Victor Emmanuel, she is suddenly aware that Carnival has begun. The streets are gay with flags and arches, and bands of dominoes in pink, blue, and yellow, rush towards her with falsetto shrieks, and cover her with confetti. An amorous domino takes her arm and offers her some flowers; she shakes him off with trembling lips, and turns into the entrance of the Hotel Imperial. The whole place is in an uproar, and no one asks her business. Visitors, garbed in mask and domino, are congregating in the hall, and the waiters crowd round to see. Looking out Paul Thurlow's number on the list of visitors' names, she creeps along the passage to his room, which is on the ground floor, looking towards the north. Rooms looking northwards are cheap on the Riviera, and, as bear-leader, Paul Thurlow can no longer afford to be particular.

A nurse is sitting by the bed-side, a little Frenchwoman, whose eyes are fixed longingly on the shrieking, romping crowd outside. The room gives on the street, and through the muslin curtains one can see the rickety chariots crowned by girls in rosy-wreaths, the carriages full of Pierrots and Pierrettes.

"Vous pouviez vous en aller," says Miss Cronin, "n'avez pas peur. Je prendrai bien garde de monsieur. Je suis—sa fiancée," she adds with a sad little smile, and the nurse, nothing loath, prepares to leave these eccentric English together.

And when the door is finally shut, Gertrude creeps over to the bed, and kneels down. Paul looks at her, and says fretfully:

"Why have you been so long away? You came the day before yesterday, and you never have been near me since. . . . You don't care for me, really. You want to go to the Carnival."

A shriek of laughter is heard outside, as somebody empties a bag of flour from a top story, and the scuffling crowd of masks disperse, yelling, and covered with white.

"It's such fun, you know," continues Paul feverishly; "you jump on a carriage step where there are ladies, and try and shovel

the confetti down their necks, and then you give them a bouquet and bow and jump off again. Aren't masks pretty? They are pink and white, like Gertrude Cronin. . . . Gertrude Cronin is like a mask. . . . She's got a smile like a mask, and pink and white cheeks. But she's a beast, a beast, a beast!"

And Paul clenches his fist, and then lets his hands fall on the counterpane, at which every now and again his fingers clutch. Gertrude hides her face on the bed and sobs.

"Oh, here's a sniveller," he grumbles. "What rot it is—girls are always crying. Take her away, take her away. I want that woman who was here just now. She's kind to me; she gives me something to drink. Why can't I have some water? It's an infernal shame I can't have any thing to drink!"

And all through the long afternoon Paul wanders in his mind, while outside Carnival is at its gayest. Sometimes a mask pretends to peep in at the window, and, uttering a foolish laugh, throws a shovelful of confetti at the blank pane and runs off. And Paul's fingers still clutch at the counterpane.

Gertrude has never watched at a dying bed before, and she does not know the awful portent of those scraping fingers. . . . Is this the end? she asks her self. No, he will get well, he was always so bright and strong. He will get well, and she will tell him that she always cared for him—that she cares for him now more than ever. They will go away—to the Far West, or to Australia—somewhere where girls need not dress in Bond Street cloths, nor men have shooting licences and clubs—somewhere where two young people can be happy. . . . The trivial life she has always led seems as meaningless now as that foolish riot out there in the street. Here, in this lonely sick-room, is the one good thing. He must get well—he *must* get well!

But presently, when the noise outside is at its highest, she leans over him and finds that he has fainted. And when the doctor and the nurse are hastily summoned, she is told that it is all over, and that while she has been watching there in the twilight Paul Thurlow has slipped away to the great majority.

Numb and dazed she finds her way to the door, and begs for a carriage. They call an open landau, and, all the way to the station, the girl is pelted by confetti, and escorted by hilarious masks. They are escorting her back, with falsetto shrieks of laughter, to the old life which she dreads.

THE QUEEN'S LATEST OFFER.

A Free Education or One Year's Travel in Europe.

In THE QUEEN'S "Word Contest," which the publishers of the magazine announce as the LAST ONE THEY WILL EVER OFFER, A Free Education consisting of a Three Years' Course in any Canadian American Seminary or College, including all expenses, tuition and board, to be paid by the publishers of THE QUEEN, or One Year's Travel in Europe, all expenses to be paid, will be given to the person sending them the largest list of words made from the text which is announced in the last issue of THE QUEEN. A special deposit of \$750 has been made in The Dominion Bank of Canada to carry out this offer. Many other useful and valuable prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The publishers of THE QUEEN have made their popular family magazine famous throughout both Canada and the United States by the liberal prizes given in their previous competitions, and as this will positively be THE LAST ONE OFFERED, they intend to make it excel all others as regards the value of the prizes. Send four 3 ct. stamps for copy of THE QUEEN containing the text, complete rules and list of prizes. Address: THE CANADIAN QUEEN, Toronto, Canada.

Smileus—A friend of mine saw a man who once saved his life, and he actually went across the street to avoid meeting him.

Cynicus—That proves what I've said of human nature.

Smileus—not at all. The man was a doctor and had a big stick against him.