

Myra Justin McCarthy

"Look here, Horace," said his married sister to him one day—and her tone was decidedly peremptory—"I can't have any more of this. I can't see you aimlessly drifting about in this sort of way." "You may call it loafing," he replied, turning with a lazy, loving smile to the eager young woman. "Well, yes, I do call it loafing," she said. "It is loafing, and nothing else. And I won't be a guilty looker on at any more. So that's all about that."

Each other! I have no theory on the subject—but I know that women whom I have questioned about it all tell me that they do not. Still they do it, and if nobody likes it, why should anybody do it? Then Horace Gilliat advanced and was presented to Mrs. Leven. All this took place on the lawn of Mrs. Vaughan's house—a wonderful place, only five miles from the Marble Arch, and seeming as if it were embedded in the very heart of the country. The house was old-fashioned, with a great hall from which the outer doors opened, and only one flight of stairs. Mr. Vaughan was very proud of his family home. "I always call it the family home," he used to say to his friends, "although the truth is that I bought it myself, but it sounds nicer to call it the family home." Mr. Vaughan was a gentle, genial sort of humorist in his way. He was a rich man, knew a little of everything, and was a delightful amateur who never had the slightest ambition to be anything else. He and his wife were absolutely devoted to each other. Mr. Vaughan came on the lawn in the wake of Mrs. Leven. He began telling something to his wife, and Horace was left, not unwillingly, to walk up and down with Mrs. Leven. "I have heard a great deal of you from your sister," Mrs. Leven said. "What a devoted sister she is! She is never tired of telling me about you."

to Horace they seemed fraught with unfathomable depths of meaning. The eyes spoke wonders. Then Mrs. Vaughan came up and said it was about time to be getting ready for lunch, and announced to her husband with an air of genuine delight that dear Myra was coming to stay with them for a few days, to begin on Saturday. "You will stay, of course, Horace?" she said, turning to her brother. She was a little astonished at the eagerness with which he said: "Oh, yes, of course, I'll stay with pleasure." "Just like my luck!" Horace thought to himself as they were going back into the house. "There is something in the eyes and in the voice of that woman that makes me think she might turn out to be my ideal—and—there—she is married already!" Horace Gilliat had, indeed, been knocking about the world in a rather aimless sort of way. He was one of the men about whom all his friends said, when he was still very young, that there was nothing he could not do if he only turned—a foolish saying, for if a man have it in him to do anything he will most assuredly do it, come what may between him and his achievement. But Horace was undoubtedly a clever fellow, who might at least have done something, if he would only turn to—might do something even yet, if he would only turn to. But he did not turn to—he very much rather turned from. He had no very decided tastes. He was fond of yachting, but he did not devote himself to yachting. He was fond of riding, but he did not go in for the turf. He was fond of pictures, but he did not go in for either painting or collecting pictures. He had a very good income, and he did not want any more. So he travelled and he drifted—he never explored—exploring would be far too much trouble. He had just come back from Ceylon, where he went to study the remains of the wonderful buried cities compared with which Pompeii and Herculaneum are but toys in a basket and he proposed to take chambers in London and settle down. His sister reminded him now and then that he was getting within measurable distance of forty years of age. The Saturday came, and the visit of Mrs. Leven to the home of the Vaughans began. Horace had a delightful time of it. His sister apparently made it over on him to take care of Mrs. Leven and find amusement for her, and escort them all to theatres, and operas, and picture galleries in London, and to show her all the places and points of interest around Mr. Vaughan's house. The time glided quickly through Horace Gilliat's hands. Mrs. Leven had the most delightful gift, an intelligent curiosity. She wanted to know all about Horace's travels and his doings generally, and showed the most genuine and evident interest in everything he said and did. He was peculiarly grateful to her because she entirely spared him on the great marriage question—that is, on the question as to whether he ought not to look out for a wife and get married. This rather surprised him, because Josephine had frankly told him that she would set Myra Leven at him. Sometimes he wondered that a clever and loving woman like his sister should think she was promising her desire for him to get married by throwing him so much in the way of a charming young woman who was already married. "What can Josephine be thinking of?" he asked of himself again and again. "What good could it do to again? 'What good could it do to anyone who was trying to convince himself that he ought to get married to be forced into the company of such a woman as Mrs. Leven? Why, it can only put me against marriage for all the days of my life! If Myra had only a twin sister now—but no, no, no—it would never do—the twin sister would be sure to be quite unlike her in intellect, or temper, or the tone of her voice, or something. What an unlucky fellow I am! I have at last found my ideal, only to know that she is already the legitimate legalized ideal of another fellow." In truth, it had come to that already with poor distraught Horace Gilliat. There was something strangely, winningly sympathetic about Mrs. Leven's nature, her temper, her intelligence, the look in her eyes, the sound of her voice, that took his soul captive. She seemed without any effort at anything of the kind, to draw out all that was best in his intelligence and in his heart. The days passed like a dream of delight to him. "How they do get on!" Mr. Vaughan said to his wife one day. "I say, Josephine, don't you think you ought to tell him?" "Tell him—and things going on so delightfully as that! Not likely, my dear! The spell is working wonders." The words were epigrammatic, but let us hope that Mr. Vaughan was able to make something of them. Anyhow, he said no more on the subject just then, and Myra and Horace went their way unwarmed of anything. The visit was coming to an end, and Myra and Horace were walking together through the shrubs—alone. There was a silence for a moment or two. "I wish you were not going away," he said, suddenly. "And yet what would be the good of your staying?" "It would be very pleasant to me, if I might stay a little longer," she said, and she looked at him with a kind light in her eyes.

"It wouldn't do much good to me! I am sometimes almost in a temper to wish that I had never seen you." "How very rude—how cruel of you to say so! What have I done to make you feel like that? I have tried my very best to be agreeable to you." "Ah—there it is—there's where the trouble comes in!" "What trouble, Mr. Hilliatt?" she asked, almost angrily. "You have spoiled me for every other woman," he said, with something like passion in his voice. "What did you promise Josephine to try and do?" "Yes, you do touch me there," she answered. "I know I have neglected all that part of my task. I did undertake to do my best to convert you to the necessity of getting married—and I have not taken any particular pains that way. The truth is, Mr. Gilliat—and I am always a very outspoken woman—I was afraid it would worry you, and I did not care to live in your memory only as a woman that worried." "I wish to heaven you did!" "Did what? Tried to persuade you that you ought to get married?" "No, I wish you had done that or anything else that would have made you live in my memory only as a woman who worried." "I don't understand; I can't make you out at all to-day." "Can't you see? have you no eyes or senses? And people tell us that women are all so acute, and have such instincts and perceptions and all the rest of it—" "Oh, please, please don't let us come to discuss woman in the abstract, but tell me plainly what fault you have to find with me." "Well, if you must have it, and can't guess, or won't guess—" "I can guess—I would guess if I could, and save myself the necessity of begging for an explanation from you." "Very well, then, I'll give you the explanation right out. What have you done? You have made it impossible for me, ever to marry! You have made me in love with you! I hate and detest the thought of any other woman! Yes, I do! I never thought I could love a woman as I love you! Yes, I love you—love you—love you. There, you have heard it all, and now denounce me as you like." He was expecting a burst of wrath. He was expecting that she would turn from him with an air of offended and insulted wifehood—that she would burst into tears, perhaps—that she would accuse him to his sister. He was surprised to find that the tears and the anger did not come. She looked into his face wonderingly, and then a light seemed to dawn upon her and an unmistakable blush came into her face, but she did not turn her head away. There was a dead silence or a while, as they walked on side by side. She was making up her mind to some resolve, and he, waiting daring to look at her, kept waiting for the outburst. "Mr. Gilliat," she said at last, "do you know what year this is?" "What has that got to do with us?" he asked, hotly. Was she only making a sport of him? "Perhaps it may have something to do with us," she said, quietly. "Do you know, Mr. Gilliat, that this is Leap Year?" "Well, and what's that to you—and what's that to me?" "A good deal to both of us, perhaps. Mr. Gilliat, I assert my woman's right this day of this Leap Year, and I ask you to marry me!" He staggered back as if something had struck him. The solid turf seemed to go up and down under his feet. "What do you mean?" he stammered; "you are married." "I was married," she replied, delighted with his emotion; "but my husband died while I was still very young—more than five years ago." "But Mr. Leven—Charlie, as you call him?" "Why shouldn't I call him Charlie? His name is Charlie." "Oh, call him what you like—but who is he?" "My brother-in-law to be sure—what else could he be?" "And Josephine never told me!" "Are you sorry she never told you?" "It seems so unfair to you," he answered, not attaching any particular meaning to his words. "Oh, please, never mind about me. I have taken matters into my own hands. Come, are we not rather wandering from the subject? I put you a Leap Year question, and you haven't yet answered it. Will you marry me, Horace?" She held out both her hands. He clasped her in his arms, and the compact was made. "Oh, how happy I am!" he exclaimed. "I never thought the world could have such happiness in store for me." "And you never guessed?" "No, I never knew, and never guessed, or thought there was anything to guess about. If I had known, I might have been more shy—in the beginning." "Perhaps your sister suspected something of the kind, and left you to your encouraging ignorance," Myra said, smilingly. "After all," he said, "the end is much more delightful than it could otherwise have been. There is no commonplace about this. Any fool might ask a woman to marry him, but one is best of the gods indeed who inspires a woman to ask him to marry her." There was much embracing, and there were explanations, and reminis-

ences, and repetitions, and so forth. Then the pair retraced their steps towards the house. On the lawn they found Mr. and Mrs. Vaughan awaiting them. "Josephine," Mrs. Leven exclaimed, with hurried breath and sparkling eyes, "I have fulfilled my mission and my destiny! I have prevailed upon your brother to marry!" "Not really—have you?" "Yes, dear, to marry me!" "Yes, but I told her I was in love with her," Horace insisted, "before she spoke an encouraging word! I was the first to move—" "Yes, and wasn't it very wicked of him, for he thought I had a living husband all the time?" "But I only said it to explain my farewell for ever," said Horace. "And then I struck in," Myra eagerly interposed, "and you know, Josephine, this is Leap Year, and so I asked him!" "God bless Leap Year," Horace said, fervently. And Josephine and her husband together added, "Amen!"

PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION BUFFALO GOLD MEDAL AWARDED Labatt's Ale and Porter SURPASSING ALL COMPETITORS

"BREAD THAT IS BREAD" Such is the opinion of the people that use TOMLIN'S The Toronto Bakery 420, 422, 424, 426 and 428 Bathurst St.

OUR BRANDS The O'Keefe Brewery Co. Limited TORONTO. Office and Yard FRONT ST. NEAR BATHURST Telephone No. 449

P. BURNS & CO. WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALERS IN COAL AND WOOD Phone Main 131 Head Office: 38 King St. East

THE DOMINION BREWERY CO., Limited MANUFACTURERS OF THE CELEBRATED White Label Ale Their other brands, which are very fine, are: INDIA SPECIAL, AMBER, JUBILEE, CROWN SPECIAL, XXX PORTER and HALF-AND-HALF.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS EPPS'S COCOA If you are Renting or working for someone else, why not get a farm of your own in

New Ontario For particulars write to HON. E. J. DAVIS, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Toronto, Ont. Empress Hotel Owner of Young and Gould Streets TORONTO Terms: \$1.50 per day.

JAS. J. O'HEARN House and Sign Painting Graining in all its variety. Paper hanging, etc. SOLICITS A TRIAL 161 QUEEN ST. WEST 3 D'ARCY Telephone Main

The Surest Remedy is Allen's Lung Balsam It never fails to cure a SIMPLE COLD, HEAVY COLD, and all BRONCHIAL TROUBLES.

\$700 FOR CHARITY. At the 19th annual meeting of the Toronto Savings Bank Charitable Trust, held at St. John's Grove, Sherbourne street, His Grace the Archbishop presiding, the following named members of the Board were present: Messrs. Thos. Flynn, H. T. Kelly and M. O'Connor, Secretary-Treasurer. After the disposal of the general business it was determined to set aside the sum of \$700 to be distributed among the charities by the Secretary-Treasurer as follows: House of Providence \$100 House of Industry 100 Monastery of Our Lady of Charity 100 St. Mary's Industrial School for Girls 150 St. Nicholas Institute for Boys..... 150 Orphanage, Sunnyside 150 Mr. William Dineen was unanimously elected a member of the Trust Board.