

THE YACHT CLUB

The débutante declared it "the most delightful ball under the sun."

Her chaperon drew her opera cloak more closely about her, moved uneasily in the chilly draught, and remarked in matter-of-fact tone that balls are usually held "under the gaslight." But the débutante was consulting her program and did not hear.

"Lancers are so slow," she commented, in undertone; "and besides, Jack ought to give a duty dance to his cousin. I'll stay up here with you, auntie—you must be lonely—and then I'll be rested for that lovely Sousa valse—with Jack."

Auntie smiled expressively, but accepted the companionship, and the two leaned over the gallery rail watching the pretty scene.

The entire ball-room was a glow of warm, soft color, a rhythm of graceful movement. The dome was a mass of fluttering red and white, festoons of dark cedar and long chains of Japanese lanterns. It was the prettiest possible bewilderment of color glow, stirred occasionally to gentle movement by the heated air.

The stage was converted into a yacht deck artistically represented. There were the wheel and shining compass box, the inner cabin revealing open grate and cosy furnishings; the upper deck, below whose awning the pretty girls and matrons grouped with such picturesque realism that one expected the gay idlers to break it into some merry "Pinafore" lay.

"We sail the ocean blue,
Our saucy ship's a beauty,"
hummed the débutante.

"How pretty it is," she said; "and that girl knows she looks charming at the wheel. I'll get Jack to take me up there after our waltz."

The lancers were in their last figure-weavings; all the floor was a rustle with the swish of silken skirts, and the air was murmurous with low laughter, as up and down and around the bright groups swept.

Here one caught a glow of crimson roses held by some pretty dame, while ever and again the odor of that great nosegay of violets rose to the gallery.

"What a mass of violets; what an expensive bouquet," commented the chaperon, thriftily; "and they are not a night flower either; the delicate tint turns to dull purple or grey under the gaslight."

The first chords of the valse were sounding and the little débutante went off gayly with Jack, while the chaperon resigned herself to loneliness again.

The lighting was deliciously warm and soft in tone, but a trifle dim, she thought, to do justice to the lovely gowns upon the floor, or could it be that her eyes were failing? Surely, it was not many years since she too

until she had seen his name in the obituary column, and now—here was this little niece of hers with another Jack.

What a crush of débutantes upon the floor; could this ball mean as much of pleasure to them as that one of years ago did to her, she wondered.

"Oh, auntie," cried the young maid, breathlessly, "that waltz was just lovely, and we peeped into the supper-room as we passed, and the tables look delightful. Come and see them before they are raided by the hungry horde."

Suppers are the mainstay of chaperons, and this was an especially dainty one, most temptingly set forth.

The center-piece was a miniature of the club's Island home, cosily glowing over the lake water, rough with the greenest and stiffest of painted white-capped waves. Tiny boats and yachts lay at anchor or were turning with bow directed cityward.

Sucking pigs and turkeys, adorned with carvings in creamy butter; dainty piles of partridges, half hidden in vines, with grape clusters suspended above them; splendid salmon *a la mayonnaise*; cases of tempting sweetbreads—these, and every conceivable delicacy poetically set forth—lit with the deep colorings of yellow in orange, green in vines and crimson in blossom.

"It is really a pity to break in upon it with anything so prosaic as a carving-knife, or so demoralizing as an appetite," the gay little débutante declared; but even as she spoke the hungry dancers swept in, and all the beauty vanished.

The chaperon forgot her sentiment in substantial meats; the pretty maid feasted on sweetbreads; while Jack steered skilfully between shimmering silks and laces with coffee and claret cup.

The "extras" floated enticingly through the doorway, and presently the young folks slipped away into the ball-room. The chaperon and a congenial friend found their way into the conservatory, all dim and warm and sweet, and sat chatting, as elder folks will, of other Y.C. balls and other dancers; a little present gossip also of the night's gowns and the morrow's interests—that satins were less in evidence and silks more general.

The débutante came in upon them, her eyes starry with pleasure. "No, I will not dance any more just now," she said to someone who wasn't Jack; she meant to rest awhile beside auntie. So the "someone" went away, and the young maid nestled down in the low couch beneath the tall palms, listening half-dreamily to her elders' talk, and wondering if there ever had been a ball half as lovely as this.

"It is time to go home," the auntie said

at length. But, somehow, just at this moment Jack turned up again and pleaded for "just one more."

Then came the cloaking and the carriage call, the rumble over the quiet city streets, and that most delightful of all pleasures, the débutante's first ball, was over.



had been a débutante and come out at the Yacht Club ball. She had a "Jack" to wait upon her also, she remembered, and they danced as many dances together as her chaperon would permit. What a lovely time it was. Jack died in India last year. She had almost forgotten him