

In A Second Balcony.

BY ELIZABETH McCRACKEN.

The theatre was empty and dimly lighted. Even the doors leading to the unreserved seats of the second balcony had not yet been opened. Seton smiled slightly as he passed through the main entrance and made his way to the second balcony. He could scarcely do less than convict himself of what might be called an entire want of propriety in preparing to spend another person's performance from an unreserved seat.

Seton's own parts were usually strenuous to such a degree that he gave up one matinee a week. He had not often devoted to the matinee performances of others; but lately his leisure had become of little value and he gave it freely to the pursuit of his fancy which promised momentary diversion.

When the crowd poured into the second balcony, he opened his eyes and watched with interest its struggle for seats. The second balcony of a theatre would seem to possess the power to awaken, even in persons not usually addicted to jostling and pushing, that primitive instinct which would award the best to him who first can seize it. Seton looked at the crowd with curious pleasure and wondered if in any other pleasure and wonder of the theatre such eager anticipation could be found. He speculated as to the reasons for the marked enthusiasm of the people who rushed into the theatre, and he thought that the faint Bohemianism of the second balcony was of itself an alluring charm and incites independently a youthful hilarity utterly out of the question in a procenium box.

"No wonder they call it a rush!" he said aloud. To his surprise, his neighbor on the left, a middle-aged woman, with a care-worn face, replied.

"No, it's not a wonder," she remarked. "Such pushing is never seen—and they call this a civilized country!"

"The pushing is part of the fun!" he heard a girl back of him say, with a laugh, to her companion. Seton smiled at this revelation. He had been about to conclude that the "rush" was the compensation for the pushing.

The fun was none the less large and genuine. He had come to look at the play from the standpoint of the people in the second balcony, so that he found himself looking at nothing so much as the people themselves. They were so diverse; they ranged from newboys to college instructors, from not very well-bred schoolgirls to women who were even distinguished in appearance; and they were equally, if as diversely, interested in the performance.

Seton glanced from the woman on his left to his neighbor on the right, who was also a woman. She was intent upon the performance; and Seton's glance lengthened almost into a stare. Her manner of looking at the play was unlike that of any other person whom he had noticed in the balcony. She was seeking the causes of its effects.

To Seton, a member of the profession, this was almost instantly apparent. When the audience laughed, she laughed; when she knitted her brows and riveted her attention on the scene was interrupted by an involuntary burst of applause, she leaned forward in more intense interest.

"She is an actress, or a playwright—she might be either," Seton thought. He glanced again at her.

Her utter absorption in the play and the varying of her expression as she watched it alone gave her a certain beauty. In addition, her hair was soft and dark, and she had blue Irish eyes. The distance from the line of her eyes to the tilt of her mouth had a wistful sweetness and charm which also suggested an Irish ancestry. She was leaning forward, but Seton guessed that her height was above the average.

"She looks more like an actress than a playwright," he thought, as he contemplated her. "She is almost beautiful; and she has a most professional way of looking at a play." It did not occur to him that she might independently and unprofessionally have possessed both beauty and that critical appreciation which would presuppose a personal professional interest.

He looked at her very nearly as intently as she looked at the stage. She appeared so oblivious of anything but the stage that he forgot to be guarded; and when she turned unexpectedly and looked at him he was startled and confused. In the same instant, he observed that the curtain was descending and that her attention had naturally been taken from the stage.

There was no shade of annoyance in her expression as she glanced at him. To his surprise, she started very slightly; and her face softened as she turned it away from him. He supposed that she had recognized him, and he was the more convinced that she belonged to his profession, for he was aware that very few persons who had known him only on the stage recognized him when they saw him off it. He did not know that the girl, who saw an act of a play with such quick and clear intensity, had as intently seen his face and had been startled and moved by its drawn and haggard lines.

She was younger than her appearance and her keen intensity had suggested to Seton. At the end of the next act, she turned and spoke to him, with a singular lack of convention in which there was yet no slightest lack of dignity and breeding. If she felt any need of justification of the unconventional, other than the man's face, she found it possibly in the fact that she was in the second balcony.

"Don't you think this rather a remarkable play?" she said in the question anything which strengthened his theory that she was a member of his profession or his supposition that she had recognized him. As most persons regarded the particular play as rather remarkable, he could, in fact, see nothing in her criticism especially indicative.

"Yes," he said, "I think it is, a very remarkable play." Seton did not add

in his profession so quickly as other persons in it; and then I remember how she must have inspired her husband when he got discouraged." She paused for a moment; but her listener made no comment. She felt vaguely that he was interested. She supposed that his interest lay in the fact that Seton's fame made even the casual hearer interested in any anecdote relating to him and the fact that the grief caused by his wife's death was known to many persons to whom he was a stranger. She wondered if a similar grief made his man sympathetically interested; and she said reverting almost to the beginning of the conversation:

"It is no wonder that her death was such a shock to him and that it made him reckless. Suppose he had been trying to forget his sorrow. I suppose people do try until they can believe that what they want is not to learn to forget but to learn to be strong enough to remember. Don't you think so?" she appealed to him.

"Yes—oh yes I do," she said. He had thought she looked almost too young to be so strangely wise.

"Has your husband been on the stage long?" he asked abruptly.

"Long? Oh yes; very long. He hasn't done very much yet—not so much as we hope he may. I am constantly anticipating seeing him do something really large and fine. He is young of course and may get opportunities." She smiled wistfully. "He will be all ready for them when he does—and so shall I."

Seton smiled. "There is a great deal in that," he said. "And in hoping. I remember Mrs. Seton said she cared even more about her husband's success and his profession than she did himself; and I think I must care tremendously to care that much."

"Yes," Seton said, as he regarded her beautifully sensitive face. Again he bit his lips; he was older than his understudy, but he was young enough to see his life stretched before him, long and brilliant and solitary. This girl had said of the play he was seeing that it was clever and worldly-wise, and he had seen many people who said to him: "He did not get that she also had said of it that he might have produced it. Still, with a singular keenness, he had seen that the strongest force in his life had been the tender, exalted girl who would have turned her eyes from this play."

Following this reflection, he asked, "Do you like this play?"

"No, I don't," she said quickly. "But I admire it; it is so clever, one must admit it; and all plays interest me, but I'm glad my husband isn't under study in it."

"You prefer Seton's play?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! I like Seton best in Shakespearean plays. He is a wonderful actor. I have a copy of the one he produced that year that I met Mrs. Seton; she sent it to me."

"She did?" Seton asked. He knew now that his wife must have thought well of the girl.

"Yes, she did; with her card, thanking me—for the opera-glasses, you know. Wasn't it beautiful in her? I shall always remember her," she repeated. "She was so uplifted. I saw her just that little while, in that momentary way, but there was something about her that made what is the finest and highest seem naturally most desirable. She gave one patience; too, I'm even a little more willing to wait for my husband's—"

"Opportunities?" Seton concluded for her.

"Yes. The wife of a famous and successful man doesn't—always have that effect," the girl said.

"Isn't it an effect almost as valuable as an opportunity?" Seton observed.

"Alas! it is! I have a copy of the one he produced that year that I met Mrs. Seton; she sent it to me."

As she gave expression to this opinion, the last act of the play began. As it ended, and before the crowd had begun to rush as precipitately from the balcony as it had rushed to the stage, she turned to the girl and smiled. "Don't get tired of your monument!" he said. Then he lost sight of her in the crowd. She smiled at his parting advice, as she made her way down the long flight of stairs, and then she sighed.

"I'll try not!" she thought. "For man, he looked so unhappy, as though some awful thing had happened to him! He ought to know how to give advice."

Seton, meanwhile, went to his hotel, mused over the opera-glasses, and he could ever be again. He had encouraged his friends when they would have spoken to him of his wife, but the wife of his understudy had touched the subject so happily. She had taken his life as simply and as sweetly as she had been wont to give herself. His pleasure in this made him remember the less impatiently the girl's speculations as to himself. Her relation to his understudy awoke in him a new interest in the man, whom he had long known so very slightly.

When, somewhat later, he went to the theatre, he more than once looked critically at the husband of the girl who had been on his right at the second balcony of the neighboring theatre. "Perhaps opportunities may be his," he had said, and he reflected; "usually they are not, though."

At the end of his play, he observed to the stage-manager that he was more than ordinarily fatigued.

"Think you'll be all right tomorrow?" said the stage-manager, anxiously.

"Yes—oh, yes, certainly," Seton said, not to be equal to his performance that cheerfully; but the next afternoon he telephoned to the theatre that he would not.

"What shall we do?" ejaculated the stage-manager.

"Why, I've got an understudy, haven't I?" Seton said impatiently. "He can do it; he'll be all right in it."

"Well, it is the best we can do," agreed the stage-manager, dolefully.

"Yes, it is this season," said Seton to himself, as he left the telephone. He smiled slowly. Then, suddenly, he turned to the telephone and called up a dramatic reporter who was one of his particular friends. "Say, Philson! Don't be alarmed if you hear about my sudden illness. It's nothing serious; I'll be able to appear again tomorrow night. I came."

"Great Scott!" he thought from the other end of the telephone, "aren't you on tonight? You're sure it's nothing serious."

"Perfectly; it's the beastly weather."

"Who substitutes?"

"My understudy, of course."

"Is he any good?"

"Yes—unusual amount of good; really promising amount of good."

Seton smiled. "Yes, do," he said; and then, slowly, he added half aloud to himself, "some one says somewhere that a girl's love comes aptly in."

WHERE FALLING STARS LAND.

It Must Be Dangerous to Walk Out on Dark Nights in Mexico.

The fall of a great meteorite, a few days ago, at Cuicapan, where it demolished a bronze statue before burying itself deep in the ground, causing panic among the people, calls fresh attention to the curious fact that Mexico is the greatest country in the world for such "falling stars."

Ten known meteorites which have dropped within the area of the republic have had a total weight of 95 1-2 tons or an average of over nine tons apiece. The ten biggest ones found to date in the United States together, weigh less than one-twentieth as much.

And, oddly enough, all of the large Mexican meteorite "iron" has fallen inside of a belt 1,000 miles long by 200 miles broad which follows the axis of the great Central American plateau, says the Saturday Evening Post.

The largest celestial body that ever visited the earth, as far as is known, was recently discovered by Prof. Henry A. Ward in the state of Sinaloa, Mexico. It is a mass of solid iron and nickel, 13 feet in length, and weighing about 50 tons. The existence of this greatest of meteorites, which is approached in size by only one other recorded specimen, was reported as far back as 1829, but no scientific man has ever seen it and the story was supposed to be a fable. It was located, according to the tale, in the far northern part of the republic, near the village of Bacubirito.

Prof. Ward, who is an enthusiastic meteorologist, started to investigate the story. He was obliged to cross Mexico by train to the west coast, and to go by steamboat 600 miles to Altata, on the Gulf of California, whence it was four days' journey to Bacubirito. On the popular rumor proved correct, and he came upon the long-sought monster a short distance south of the town. It lay in a cornfield, half buried—a huge boulder of black iron shaped like a hammer.

Attracted by native laborers, Prof. Ward dug out the mass, which was lifted on end with levers to be photographed. With much difficulty, owing to the hardness of the substance, he succeeded in detaching a small piece of 11 pounds weight, which he brought home with him and deposited in the Museum of Natural History in New York City. The length of the meteorite was 13 feet, with a width of 36 feet, and a thickness of somewhat over five feet.

Before long the Mexican government will move the newly discovered monster to the City of Mexico where it will be weighed to an ounce. A dozen years ago \$10,000 was spent in fetching five of the biggest meteorites to the capital, where they are mounted on pillars at the entrance of the School of Mines. Prof. Ward obtained a chemical analysis of a bit of the fragment which he brought home, and ascertained that the greatest of all meteorites was composed of 88 per cent iron, 10 per cent nickel, a fifth of one per cent cobalt, and a little phosphorus, with a trace of sulphur and silicon.

A PROPHECY CAME TRUE.

Here is another extract from the report, which in the light of today, is a prophecy come true. Mr. Longley wrote: "Owing to the present stagnation in the coal trade, the traffic derived from this source has not been large, but considerable shipments have been made from Pictou Landing during the season, and a much larger business will probably be done the coming year. It has been reckoned an exciting sort of pastime. Yet the game somehow reminds me of a sport we used to follow when we looked for recreation."

"Was the pastime known as 'Soakem'?" This, like golf, was played with war clubs.

Played with clubs both straight and crooked.

Short and long and light and heavy. Our opponents in the contest were another tribe of Indians. Were another tribe of Indians. Were another tribe of Indians. Were another tribe of Indians.

Belowed out the watchword, "Soakem" And our little old shillelals Whistled through the air and landed on the topknots of our victims.

This, my little dears, was Soakem. 'Twas a game that called for muscle, Also nerve and some precision. Unlike golf, when we had driven There was no lost ball to search for. No small sphere of gutta percha Over which to lose our tempers. Golf is not a game for papooses. You can play it if you want to. But our Uncle Hiawatha Much prefers the game of Soakem.

WHEN I WAS A BOY.

Up in the attic where I slept When I was a boy—a little boy, In through the lattice the moonlight crept.

Bringing a tide of dreams that swept Over the low red-trundle bed, Bathing the tangled curly head, While moonbeams played at hide and seek.

With the dimples on each sun-browned cheek— When I was a boy—a little boy.

And oh, the dreams, the dreams I dreamed. When I was a boy—a little boy! For the grace that through the lattice streamed.

Over my folded eyelids seemed To have the gift of prophecy. And bring to me glimpses of times to be.

When manhood's dawn seemed to call, Ah! that was the sweetest dream of all— When I was a boy—a little boy.

I'd like to sleep where I used to sleep When I was a boy—a little boy. For in at the lattice the moon would peep.

Bringing the tide of dreams to sweep Over the low red-trundle bed, Bathing the curls and the curls of the years The crosses and griefs of the years away.

From the heart that is weary and faint today; And those dreams should give me back again The peace I have never known since then— When I was a boy—a little boy.

—Eugene Field.

ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKEN.

"Think of it! For three days and three nights that quartette sat about a table, shuffling, dealing and cashing in jack pots, and when the game was finally broken up every man had exactly the amount he had begun with."

"Humph! Odd, the way they came out even, isn't it?"—Philadelphia Ledger.


Mail.

THE OFFICIALS AT THAT TIME.

The general officers to reside at St. John, were: George Taylor, (Halifax, N. S.) general freight agent; H. M. Whitney, (Shediac, N. B.) mechanical superintendent; Alexander MacNab, (Halifax, N. S.) engineer; Thomas Poole, (Halifax, N. S.) accountant; J. J. Wallace, (St. John, N. B.) auditor; William Sandler, (Shediac, N. B.) storekeeper; George Ryan, (St. John, N. B.) cashier; H. W. McCann, (Toronto, Ont.) physician.

The road was divided as follows: Western, central and eastern divisions. A. Busby, of Halifax, was placed in charge of the eastern division, with headquarters at Truro. Pending the appointment of a central and western division, transportation master at St. John, had charge of that portion of the road.

Gavin Rainnie was appointed trackmaster of the western division. J. Star Trites, of the central, and William Faulkner, Truro, of the eastern. William Johnson was appointed mechanical superintendent at Richmond. Edward Shaffer, Halifax, was appointed master car builder, with headquarters at Moncton. David Pottinger (now general manager of the road) was appointed station master at Halifax. Thomas V. Cooke, at Pictou Landing, and Rod McDonald at Truro.—Correspondence of Halifax Mail.



YOUR MONEY BACK

IF, AFTER A TRIAL, YOU FIND THAT

LAXA-CARA TABLETS

are not as claimed, a cure for constipation, you can get your money back. That shows better than anything else the faith we have in this medicine.

It will promptly correct and permanently cure any case of constipation with its attendant evils.

This is guaranteed to the very letter.

If Laxa-Cara Tablets fail, your money awaits your call. Purely a vegetable compound, put up in tablet form, small and easy to take, and pleasant in operation.

35 cents a box at all druggists, or by mail on receipt of price.

FRANK WHEATON
FOLLY VILLAGE, N. S.
SOLE AGENT FOR CANADA

IN LIGHTER VENUE.

HIAWATHA ON GOLF.

"I have seen," said Hiawatha, "Certain youngsters known as caddies, carrying quivers full of war clubs, Hiking over the grassy meadows, Crossing streams and climbing hill-sides,

Jumping ditches, hurdling fences, Wading through the swamps and do-ling.

Various other stunts, my children; Closely followed by gazabos Springing terms like 'tee' and 'bunker,' 'Brassie,' 'cleek' and likewise 'foozle,' Smashing balls of gutta percha.

Clear into the southwest quarter Of the south half of the section! This is golf, the people tell us, This is what they call amusement.

When I was a social lion. In the days of Minnehaha 'Loved that I was all the money, Golf would hardly have been reckoned An exciting sort of pastime.

Yet the game somehow reminds me Of a sport we used to follow When we looked for recreation— 'Twas the pastime known as 'Soakem.' This, like golf, was played with war clubs.

Played with clubs both straight and crooked. Short and long and light and heavy. Our opponents in the contest were another tribe of Indians.

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HANDHOLDING IN KANSAS.

The Etiquette of the Evening Call Laid Down in Emporia.

An important question was up for discussion last night at the regular meeting of the Almalgated Handholders' union, Rae Witherington, who holds a high office in the national organization, was accused by a certain west side girl of being "slow," that he had called at her home a few evenings ago, and after making a few attempts at holding her hand had given up and hadn't done a thing but talk the remainder of the evening, and that in her opinion he wasn't a fit or competent person to hold the place he did in the Handholders' union, says the Emporia Gazette.

The story reached the ears of Witherington's enemies in the union, and they at once brought charges of "incompetency" before the "Exalted Stringholder," who decided to investigate the charges. Witherington was called before this official and told his "side." He said that he had made a conscientious effort to hold this girl's hand, and when she refused the sixth time and had threatened to call her father, he had desisted, thinking that further effort would be rude and ungentlemanly.

The west side girl was then called on the witness stand and asked to testify. She said that Rae had tried six times to hold her hand, and that she had given up and hadn't done a thing but talk the remainder of the evening, and that in her opinion he wasn't a fit or competent person to hold the place he did in the Handholders' union, says the Emporia Gazette.

When her testimony was completed a long discussion arose as to how long a young man could persist in trying to hold a young lady's hand without being considered rude and ungentlemanly, and how soon a self-respecting young lady, could give up without acquiring the reputation of being "easy." It ended by the Exalted Stringholder giving his opinion that three attempts were enough and that six was too many and that any girl with a melting point either above or below these figures was to be boycotted.

The question of how long a young gentleman should hold a young lady before he held her hand was also brought up for discussion. After considerable debating and deliberating by the officials it was decided that a young man ought to call on a girl at least two times and not more than four times before he was entitled to sit in the hammock with her and hold her hand.

MR. FULLER'S HANDSOME AUTO.

Eastern Steamship Co.'s President Is In Town With the Handsomest Machine Yet Seen Here.

The handsomest automobile yet to be seen in Bangor arrived here Saturday. This was a big Pope-Robinson touring car owned by Ransom D. Fuller, the president of the Eastern Steamship Co., and William Wallace, President of the Bangor Insurance Co. They were accompanied by Mrs. Wallace and the chauffeur, Joseph A. St. George. They started from Boston, Portsmouth being the first stop. The road from there to Portland was reported as being in wretched condition. Notwithstanding this fact, the car had made an average of 25 miles and did not exert itself then.

This Pope-Robinson car is a handsome olive green vehicle with yellow running gear and a white canopy top. It has a gasoline carriage with a vision capable of developing 45 horse power, an energy sufficient to send the machine over the road at 50 miles an hour if necessary. Two acetylene search lights are fitted to the front with power to throw a clear light for 300 feet or to illuminate the road. This handsome touring car weighs 3,200 pounds and costs \$7,500.—Bangor Commercial.

RETRIBUTION.

First Mosquito—The experts are trying to murder us.

Second Mosquito—Don't fear. We'll soon put them behind bars.—Judge.