

and jars, retorts and crucibles—a modern alchemist's workshop in which nature's secrets are laid bare.

"On the stroke of three an insignificant little black-robed woman stepped in, and the vast and brilliant throng rose with a thrill of homage and respect. Next moment a roar of applause burst forth. The timid little figure was visibly distressed, and raised a trembling hand in mute appeal. Then you could have heard a pin drop, and she began to speak.

"Of her lecture I will say no more. But as I had heard the greatest personages from Sweden to Vienna speak in tones of reverence of this woman, I determined to secure her strange story. This was most difficult on account of Madame's horror of publicity. Not long after the birth of her eldest child Irene, Madame Curie took a tiny cottage on the Boulevard Kellermann, near the Parc Montsouris, a district so remote that hardly any *cocher* knows where it is. To the ordinary Parisian the Boulevard Kellermann is only something little less remote than Timbuctu!

"Here 'the cleverest woman in the world' has a little ivy-covered house, lying back from the road, and spends her days carrying on her own and her late husband's work—not forgetting her little girls, Irene, who is nearly seven, and Eve, who is two and a half. A Polish cousin of hers helps her with the children; and there is also old Dr. Curie, her husband's father, to be taken care of—a patriarch well over eighty.

"No one appears to know anything of this illustrious woman except her next-door neighbor, Madame Perrin, who is almost in the relation of sister to Madame Curie. It will be seen that world-fame has absolutely no charm for this woman, nor had it for Pierre Curie. Once or twice he received a newspaper reporter through sheer kindness of heart and unwillingness to appear discourteous. But his wife always declared she loathed reporters and publicity, and that no newspaper had a right to pry into her life.

"Now let me tell the tragic story of her life, love, and marriage. Marie Sklodowska Curie is just forty this year. Her father, Professor Sklodowski, taught science and chemistry at the University of Warsaw. It seems the salary was so paltry that Sklodowski could not even afford to hire a small boy to help in his laboratory, and so at an early age little motherless Marie, instead of playing with dolls and toys, was bustling about in a chemist's laboratory, surrounded by all the paraphernalia that were to become so familiar ere her name resounded the world over. Still, the girl must have had a vague longing to see