

against each other to the disadvantage of the State. To-day we are identified with the moving spirit of the nation. Our roots are deep in the earth, which is the best guarantee of our loyalty to Canada; the two great parties recognize our citizenship, and accord to us an equality of rights, the possession of which only the free-born sons of the soil can appreciate, and which we will be slow to relinquish, even though warned to do so by the prophecy of "A Bystander."

CANADIAN.

THE ADVENTURES OF A WIDOW.

By EDGAR FAWCETT, author of "A Gentleman of Leisure," "A Hopeless Case," "An Ambitious Woman," "Tinkling Cymbals," etc.

VI.—Continued.

"Well, I abominate her, and she knows it. I rarely abominate anybody, and I think she knows that also. To my mind she is a conscienceless, hybrid creature. She is a result of a terrible modern license—the license of the Press. There is a frank confession, for a newspaper man like myself. But, between ourselves, I don't know where modern journalism, in some of its ferocious phases, is going to stop, unless it stops at a legislative veto. Miss Cragge would sacrifice her best friend (if she had any friends—which she hasn't) to the requirements of what she calls 'an item.' She thinks no more of assailing a reputation, in her quest for so-called 'material,' than a rat would think of carrying off a lump of cheese. She knows very well that I will never forgive her for having printed a lot of libellous folly about a certain friend of mine. He had written a rather harmless and weak novel of New York society, New York manners. Miss Cragge had some old grudge against him; I think it was on account of an adverse criticism which she believed him to have written regarding some dreary, amateurish poems for whose author she had conceived a liking. This was quite enough for Miss Cragge. She filled a column of the *Rochester Rocket*, or the *Topeka Trumpet*, or some such sheet, with irate fictions about poor Edward Foster. He had no redress, poor fellow; she declared that he had slandered a pure, high-minded lady in society here, by caricaturing her in his novel. She parodied some of poor Ned's rather fragile verses; she accused him of habitually talking fatuous stuff at a certain Bohemian sort of beer-garden which he had visited scarcely five times within that same year. Oh, well, the whole thing was so atrocious that I offered my friend the *New York Asteroid* in which to hurl back any epistolary thunderbolt he should care to manufacture. But Ned wouldn't; he might have written a bad novel and worse poems, but he had sense enough to know that his best scorn lay in severe silence. Still, apart from all this, I have excellent reasons for shunning Miss Cragge, and I have told you some of them. She is the most aggravated form of the American newspaper correspondent, prowling about and seeking whom she may devour. I consider her a dangerous person, and I advise you not to allow her within your *salon*."

"Oh, I shan't," quickly answered Pauline. "You need not have counselled me on that point. It was quite unnecessary. I intend to pick and choose." She gave a long, worried sigh, now, which Kindelon just heard, above the conversational hum surrounding them. "I am afraid it all comes to picking and choosing, everywhere," she went on. Aunt Cynthia Poughkeepsie is perpetually doing it in *her* world, and I begin to think that there is none other where it must not be done."

Kindelon leaned his handsome crisp-curved head nearer to her own; he fixed his light-blue eyes, in which lay so warm and liquid a sparkle, intently upon the lifted gaze of Pauline.

"You are right," he said. "You will learn that, among other lessons, before you are much older. There is no such thing as not picking and choosing. Whatever the grade of life, it is always done by those who have any sort of social impulse. I believe it is done in Eighth Avenue and Avenue A, when they give parties in little rooms of tenement-houses and hire a fiddler to speed the dance. There is always some Michael or Fritz who has been ostracized. The O'Haras and the Schneiders follow the universal law. Where two or three are gathered together, the third is pretty sure to be of questionable welcome. This isn't an ideal planet, my dear lady, and 'liberty' and 'fraternity' are good enough watchwords, but 'equality' never yet was one;—if I didn't remember my Buckle, my Spencer, my Huxley and my dear old Whig Macaulay, I should add that it never *would* be one."

Just at this point Kindelon and Pauline found themselves face to face with two gentlemen who were both in a seemingly excited frame of mind. Pauline remembered that they had both been presented to her not long ago. She recollected their names, too; her memory had been nerved to meet all retentive exigencies. The large, florid man, with the bush of sorrel beard, was Mr. Bedlowe, and the smaller, smooth-shaven man, with the consumptive stoop and the professorial blue spectacles, was Mr. Howe.

Mr. Howe and Mr. Bedlowe were two novelists of very opposite repute. Kindelon had already caught a few words from the latter, querulously spoken.

"Ah, so you think modern novel-writing a sham, my dear Howe?" he said, pausing with his companion, while either gentleman bowed recognition to Pauline. "Isn't that rank heresy from the author of a book that has just been storming the town?"

"My book didn't storm the town, Kindelon," retorted Mr. Howe, lifting a hand of scholarly slimness and pallor toward his opaque goggles. "I wish it had," he proceeded, somewhat wearily. "No; Bedlowe and I were having one of our old quarrels. I say that we novelists of the Anglo-Saxon tongue are altogether too limited. That is what I mean by declaring that modern novel-writing is a sham."

"He means a great deal more, I'm sorry to say," here cried Mr. Bedlowe,

who had a habit of grasping his sorrel beard in one hand and thrusting its end toward his hirsute lips as though they were about to be allured by some edible mouthful. "He means, Kindelon, that because we haven't the shocking immoral latitude of the French race, that we can't properly express ourselves in fiction. And he goes still further—Howe is always going still further, every fresh time that I meet him. He says that if the modern novelist dared to express himself on religious subjects, he would be an agnostic."

"Precisely!" cried Mr. Howe, with the pale hand wavering downward from the eerie glasses. "But he doesn't dare! If he did, his publisher wouldn't publish him!"

"My publisher publishes *me*!" frowned Mr. Bedlowe.

"Oh, you're a pietist," was the excited answer. "At least, you go in for that when you write your novels. It pays, and you do it. I don't say that you do it *because* it pays, but..."

"You infer it," grumbled Mr. Bedlowe, "and that's almost the same as saying it." He visibly bristled, here. "I've got a wholesome faith," he proceeded, with hostility. "That's why I wrote *The Christian Knight in Armor* and *The Doubtful Soul Satisfied*. Each of them sold seventy thousand copies apiece. There's a proof that the public wanted them—that they filled a need."

"So does the *Weekly Wake-Me-Up*," said Mr. Howe, with mild disdain. "My dear Bedlowe, you have two qualities as a modern novel-writer which are simply atrocious—I mean, plot and piety. The natural result of these is popularity. But your popularity means nothing. You utterly neglect analysis—"

"I despise analysis!"

"You entirely ignore style—"

"I express my thoughts without affectation."

"Your characters are wholly devoid of subtlety—"

"I abhor subtlety!"

"You preach sermons—"

"Which everybody reads!"

"You fail completely to represent your time—"

"My readers, who represent my time, don't agree with you."

"You end your books with marriages and christenings, in the most absurdly old-fashioned way—"

"I end a story as every story *should* end. Sensible people have a sensible curiosity to know what becomes of hero and heroine."

"Curiosity is the vice of the vulgar novel-reader. Psychological interest is the one sole interest that should concern the more cultured mind. And though you may sell your seventy thousand copies, I beg to assure you that..."

"Had we not heard quite enough of that hot squabble?" said Kindelon to Pauline, after he had pressed with her into other conversational regions, beyond the assault and defense of these two inimical novelists.

"I rather enjoyed it," said Pauline.

"They would have presently dragged us into their argument," returned Kindelon. It was just as well that we retired without committing ourselves by an opinion. I should have sided with Howe, though I think him an extremist."

"I know some of Mr. Bedlowe's novels," said Pauline. "They are very popular in England. I thought them simply dire."

"And Howe is a real artist. He has a sort of cult here, though not a large one. What he says is true enough, in the main. The modern novelist dares not express his religious views, unless they be of the most conventional and tame sort. And how few fine minds are there to-day which are not rationalistic, unorthodox? A man like Bedlowe coins money from his milk-and-water platitudes, while Howe must content himself with the recognition of a small though devout circle... Did you meet the great American dramatist, by the way? I mean Mr. Osgood Paiseley. He is standing over yonder near the mantel... that slender little man with the abnormally massive head."

"Yes, I met him," returned Pauline. "He is coming this way."

"Have you any new dramatic work in preparation, Paiseley?" asked Kindelon, as the gentleman who had just been mentioned now drew near himself and Pauline.

"Yes," was Mr. Paiseley's reply. He spoke with a nasal tone and without much grammatical punctilio. "I've got a piece on hand that I'm doing for Mattie Molloy. Do you know her at all? She does the song-and-dance business with comedy variations. I think the piece'll be a go; it'll just suit her, I guess."

"Your last melodrama, '*The Brand of Cain*,' was very successful, was it not?" pursued Kindelon.

"Well," said Mr. Paiseley, as he threw back an errant lock or two from his great width of swollen-looking forehead, "I'm afraid it isn't going to catch on so very well, after all. The piece is all right, but the company can't play it. Cooke guys his part because he don't like it, and doesn't get a hand on some of the strongest lines that have been put into any actor's mouth for the past twenty years—fact! as sure as you're born! Moore makes up horribly, and Kitty Vane is so overweighted that Miss Cowes, in a straight little part of only a few lengths, gets away with her for two scenes; and Sanders is awfully preachy. If I could have had my own say about casting the piece, we'd have turned away money for six weeks and made it a sure thing for the road. I mean for the big towns, not the one-night places; it's got too many utility-people to make it pay there. But I shan't offer anything more to the stock-theatres; after this, I'm going to fit stars."

Pauline turned a covertly puzzled look upon her companion. She seemed to be hearing a new language. And yet, although the words were all familiar enough, their collocation puzzled her.