POOR DOCUMENT

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THE LAW OF THE LAND

By FRED M. WHITE

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CHAPTER XXVIII—(Continued.)

"I frighten myself," Ralph said. "I hope I am not talking what you might call absolute nonsense."

"You are," Dick said sternly. "I will not say another word. Now go to bed or I'll knock you down and drag you there."

There was a sharp, decisive ring in the speaker's tones, so that Ralph knew that it would be fruitless to ask further questions. Only a moment since it seems as if he would never need sleep again, as if his brain would reel until he dropped from very exhaustion. And now the desire for slumber had him in a close grip. He could not keep his eyelids open, he staggered up the stairs. Almost in a dream he divested himself of his clothing and fell on the bed. Then came the sleep that he so sorely needed, the sleep of utter weariness. . . .

It was well into the morrow of the day before he woke again. He stretched himself with a glad sense of strength and the knowledge of joyful exertions. Joicey came in presently with the information that luncheon was ready. Ralph started in surprise. He had a keen desire for food. Down in the dining room Dick was gravely eating a cutlet, and Stephen Holt sat on the other side of the table. He looked pale and drawn; there was a stiff linen bandage about his throat.

"Matters are progressing very well," Dick said. "By the combined aid of the telephone and the telegram I have worked wonders. Dr. Barca has had an early lunch and has gone to the station to meet Mrs. Lingen. I must admit, my dear Ralph, that all this is very irregular and unusual, but in the circumstances I could do nothing else. And if you think that you are under the necessity of offering Mr. Holt an apology——"

"It was my own fault," Holt said with some difficulty. "I played a bold game and I failed. I should have gone on playing the game with Barca's assistance had not Charteris here been too clever for us. Charteris will tell you how cunningly he used the fact that I was suspected of robbing my friend Vandernort. I had to come forward and defend my character; I dared not let it go to arrest."

"Vandernort understands by this time," Dick said. "It was a pure bit of luck that robbery, and I saw my way to turn it to advantage. But I will tell you all about that presently, Ralph. Meanwhile, I am expecting Mrs. Lingen every moment and also my sister Enid."

"You want them to meet?" Ralph asked in some surprise.

"I am exceedingly anxious they should meet again," Dick smiled. "I should recommend Mr. Holt to take a turn in the garden till we need him. He appreciates that I am absolutely master of the situation."

Holt rose by and by and shuffled from the room. It was a little time later before Kate Lingen appeared, accompanied by Barca. She was looking fresh and charming as ever; she had the same expression of heavenly innocence, her blue eyes were tender and pathetic. There was just a touch of color on her cheeks that betrayed a certain inward agitation. She flitted up to Ralph and held out her hands as if they were the best of friends.

"I have been hearing strange things," she said. "All kinds of strange things. But you will forgive Richard Barca for what he has done—it was all for my sake. Believe me, I am more sinned against than sinning. You will believe that, Ralph."

Ralph muttered something. He was almost deceived in spite of all he knew. It seemed almost impossible to take the pretty little butterfly in earnest. Dick looked on quietly through his eyeglass. He moved towards the door. Outside he could see the figure of Enid as she came across the lawn.

"I had better see Mrs. Lingen first," he said. "Perhaps she will come into the drawing room in a minute or two. I shall be ready for her then."

Kate turned a dazzling smile in the direction of the speaker. She would have the pleasure of hearing what Mr. Charteris had to say. Dick hurried to meet Enid, he took her by the arm and led her to the drawing room. She seemed pale and anxious.

"What is it?" she asked. "Dick, what is going on? And why did you not come home last night? And why is your head bandaged up?"

"Ask as many questions as you like presently," Dick replied. "Just now you are going to play the part of eavesdropper. It is not a very pleasant occupation, but I can think of no better way in the circumstances. Besides I do not want to see Kate Lingen making friends again with my sister. Get behind that screen."

"Dick! As if I could do anything so—so mean! What do you want me to hear?"

"My dear girl, I want you to hear the truth, the truth about that woman and Ralph. I want to make everything clear between you; I want you to have the word of the woman who has brought about all the mischief. She has come here on purpose. Now will you listen, or will you stand there till it is too late?"

Enid hesitated a moment with a face that burned with a shamed red, then she slipped behind the screen. She had seen scenes like this on the stage, but had never expected to find herself a leading actor in such a comedy. She caught her breath presently as she heard the gay voice of Kate Lingen.

"Oh, let us get to business," Dick said gaily. "I suppose Barca told you everything that has happened here lately?"

"How shocking," Kate Lingen cried. "So dreadful. And so terrible that Richard Barca should try to make money out of Ralph's hasty display of temper. He told me everything as we walked from the station. And you found it all out! How dreadfully clever creature! Like a play, was it not? And Ralph gave Richard £5,000 on condition that he would not——"

"Not blackmail him any more," Dick said drily. "Now we are both people of the world, my dear Kate, and we know how that promise would have been kept. I see you are aware of everything—I need not gloss over any of the details. Barca meant to make a handsome thing out of Kingsmill. But you had need of money, and so he had to anticipate his scheme and force Kingsmill to let him have the £3,000 necessary to keep you out of jail. But, unfortunately for you, I stepped in just in the nick of time and spoilt that little game. Barca has the cheque, but it will not be met when it is presented at the bank."

What were they talking about? Enid wondered. And why did Mrs. Lingen immediately cry out in a voice that spoke of both rage and fear!

"You mustn't do it, Dick," she said. "You will not be so cruel. Unless I have that money by Saturday I shall go to prison. Oh! how hard you are."

"I am not hard at all," Dick retorted. "Nothing like so hard and cruel as you are, for instance. Do you forget how keen and cruel you were the last time you were here? You pretended that you were engaged to Ralph Kingsmill; you took a foul delight in stabbing my sister to the heart all the time. I could have wrung that pretty neck of yours with pleasure. And all the time you knew that you were never engaged to Ralph, though he had written you those passionate letters. You never cared for him."

"Yes, I did, in my own way. But it is no use trying to humbug you, Dick. I enjoyed those letters of Ralph's; they were good fun after he had found me out."

"And you would not have come near him again but for his good fortune, eh?"

"Of course not. You know that as well as I do. I was desperately in need of money, and Ralph was rich. What I ought to have done was to borrow a good sum from him. But I played a higher game than that and failed. But I hated your sister at that moment! How I fooled her. And all the time Ralph was caring for her—his fancy for me was only the sham sentiment of a poet. But don't let him stop that cheque, Dick. Let me have that money, and I will make any kind of confession you like. You shall dictate the most abject apology to your sister; I will go as far as to tell the truth about myself if you like. Only don't be hard, Dick, don't send me to jail. I may richly deserve to be punished, but ——"

"Oh, drop that handkerchief trick," Dick cried. "I'm not going to send you to jail. You shall have the money, and Barca may keep the balance. And you shall marry him and both come to hate each other in six months. We owe your brother a little for our severe treatment of him, and he shall have enough to take him out of the country. And as to your confession, as you call it, why I daresay my sister will take my version of the affair. Now let us gas back to the dining room and settle this business right away. To be quite candid, the sooner we see the last of you the better we shall be pleased."

In the dining room Ralph was passing a bad half hour with Barca and Holt. His face cleared as Dick and Kate Lingen entered.

"You leave the people to me," Dick said. "It is far better, and you don't know all the ins and outs of the case as I do. And you can ask me all the questions that you want to know when our visitors have departed. Besides, there is a lady in the drawing room who wants to see you. It is a pity to keep her waiting."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Balm in Gilead.

It was on the tip of Ralph's tongue to declare that he was in no mood to see anybody just then. That the whole outlook so far as he was concerned had completely changed he knew perfectly well. But there was still much that mystified him. How had Charteris arrived at all these definite and extraordinary results? It was as if he had deliberately arranged his puppets for this denouement. Very little had been said during Charteris' absence; the situation was strained and uncomfortable. And Ralph was naturally anxious to know how everything had gone.

He stood there looking at Dick in some doubt. The latter shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of impatience.

"I think you had better go," he said. "The lady is anxious to see you."

A rippling smile played over the dainty features of Kate Lingen. She saw in a flash exactly what had happened. She was not in the least annoyed with Charteris; it was a bit of strategy after her own heart. Besides, she was safe. She was in a position to defy that implacable creditor; there was no further risk of those dreadful criminal proceedings. And now she was free, she had made up her mind what to do. She would get away to Paris and try her luck there for a time. Kate Lingen was not the woman to worry because her plans had failed, which perhaps was the secret of her wonderful youth and bloom. Besides, she had not done so very badly after all. There was no malice in the way she smiled at Charteris.

"Oh, but you are clever," she said. "I wish I had known before how clever our dear Dick was. He might have been useful to me. And so this is the end of it all. Well, I suppose I ought to go down on my knees and ask your forgiveness. Upon my word, if I felt in the mood I could make an exceedingly pretty scene out of this. Just think how well it would come out in a play, and how I could win the sympathies of my audience, despite the fact that my methods are not such as would commend themselves to respectable middle-class society. You will pardon me if I make light of this matter and regard it as a good joke."

"You can't regard it as a better joke than we do," Dick laughed. "My dear Ralph, it is no use frowning at me like that. It is quite impossible to take Mrs. Kate Lingen seriously, and, for my part, I don't propose to do anything of the kind. And, besides, you must recollect that she was no party whatever to the scurvy trick that her brother and Barca played upon you. I don't suppose she knew anything about it until the last few hours. At least, I give her the benefit of the doubt."

"Spoken like a man and a brother," Kate Lingen cried. "I did not really know till quite recently, so that is not on my conscience, at any rate. And if I don't bear malice against you, I do not see why you should be hard upon me. I know that I am not a good woman, but, like a certain person who shall be nameless, I am not so black as I am painted."

"I don't think you are," Dick laughed. "And as we are meeting probably for the last time——"

"You are too clever for me, the woman said. "And our young friend Ralph is clever in a way, but it does not appeal to me. Positively he does not understand."

It was even as the woman said. Ralph stood there not even dimly comprehending the good news that Dick was telling him. There was something so subtle here as to baffle his dreamy nature. With renewed impatience, Dick bundled his friend out of the room.

"I don't want you here," he said bluntly. "You are in the way. And the lady who is waiting for you in the drawing room is part of the problem. You must see her. Please go at once."

Ralph crossed the hall to the drawing-room. Enid was still there, standing by the window in an undecided kind of way. She was wondering if her presence was needed any further, she was rather hurt by the manner in which her brother had left her. It had been mean to hide behind that screen and listen; it was not the sort of thing that Enid was accustomed to. But she could see why Dick had hit upon that scheme. He was dealing with a woman utterly devoid of scruple, and it became necessary to meet her with her own weapons. The hot blood faded from Enid's face; the shamed feeling cooled away. Something like a wave of indignation swept over her.

How utterly that woman had deceived her! How innocent and injured she had looked! When Enid came to think it over, she could not blame herself for taking the part of Kate Lingen against Ralph. The beautiful adventuress had acted superbly, she would have taken anybody in. It was wonderful how naturally she had called the tears to her aid. And Enid had had every reason to regard Ralph as a selfish monster who had deliberately played with the hearts of two poor innocent girls! The flush of indignation deepened on Enid's face. She recalled now all the cruel things she had said to Ralph. And how well he had borne them! He need not protest his honor now that Mrs. Lingen had made so infamous a confession.

And she had been shameless and utterly heartless into the bargain. She had allowed Dick to speak to her in a way that no good woman would permit. She had laughed in reply and admitted everything. She was even pleased at the way in which she had played with the feelings of the listener behind the screen; she said that she had cared nothing for Ralph, but merely regarded him as a tool to get money out of. And she was not honest either; she had come within measurable distance of a prison.

And there were other things that puzzled Enid. There had been allusions to crime, to some tragedy in which Ralph was mixed up. Enid's curiosity began to burn and flame. And behind it all was the one desire to see Ralph and let him know how sorry she was. She stood there hoping he might come to her. Perhaps he would come when once the house was clear of that dreadful woman.

Then Enid turned to see Ralph by her side. She gave a little cry; her hands fluttered out to him. But Ralph did not move for the moment. He was surprised to see Enid there, only beginning to comprehend what Dick had meant. He stood there so long that Enid began to misunderstand his feelings. Her lips drooped, her eyes filled with tears.

"I—I did not expect to find you here," Ralph stammered. "Dick told me that a lady was in the drawing room waiting to—to—but I never expected a surprise like this. Of course, I had hoped before long to have an opportunity to right matters between us, and I was looking forward to the chance with mingled dread and joy. And surely, Enid, you would not have come here today unless you had been prepared to regard me—"

Something rose in Ralph's throat and choked further utterance. The exquisite pleasure of being in Enid's company again was almost too much for him. He felt all his manhood burning in his veins now, but at the same time he had overrated his strength. He was still suffering from his troubles.

Yet it was good to see Enid standing there with a flush upon her face and all the cold, proud scorn gone from her eyes. There was a tender little smile upon her lips, a sort of shrinking shyness that suited her well. She must have come with some good reason, with some idea of tying the silken threads up again and resuming the old happy relations.

"You are looking dreadful," she murmured. "It seems almost impossible you could have changed like this in so short a time. And as for myself——"

"I want to hear you talk about yourself," Ralph said. "I want you to forget all about me. You are changed, too—a change for the better. I am glad to see you standing there with something like a smile upon your face. It is a sign that perhaps in the course of time—but maybe I am presuming. I cannot altogether forget the words you said when we parted last. And at that time I did not think ——"

"How should you, Ralph? And you are angry with me. You do not like to say the words that are on the tip of your tongue. If you only knew——"

"Shall I ever know?" Ralph cried. "Shall I ever get to the bottom of the mystery? Enid, what did you come for? Did Dick tell you my secret?"

"Dick told me nothing; indeed, I have had no opportunity of speaking to him. He sent me an urgent message asking me to be here this afternoon. Then he made me hide behind the screen there, like a character in a play. He made me listen to a conversation between Mrs. Lingen and himself. Oh, Ralph, if you only knew how ashamed I am of myself, how miserable I feel because I preferred that woman's story to yours, why——"

Enid paused, she was afraid to trust her voice further. Ralph could see the pitiable quiver on her lips, could read the pleading appeal in her blue eyes.

"There is no need," he said. "Appearances were against me. Upon my word, when I saw Kate Lingen in this very room with that piteous look on her face I felt myself to be one of the basest of men. Anybody would have believed her rather than me. And there was no getting away from the fact that I to a certain extent deceived you. But I told you the truth, Enid, when I said that I had never loved anybody before. Kate Lingen was an episode, if you ever saw those letters you would say they smelt too much of the egotist and the poet. Still, those letters existed, and I said nothing. If Mrs. Lingen would tell the truth——"

"My dear Ralph, she has," Enid cried. "Dick dragged it out of her in my hearing just now. You are not listening to what I am saying. She was brutally frank, almost vulgarly so. She came here to rob you if she could, she had need of a large sum of money to keep herself out of gaol. She was pleased to find that she had deceived me. It seemed almost impossible to believe that a woman could be so beautiful and yet so vile! Ralph, if you still have any of the old feeling left for me——"

"Feeling left?" Ralph said hoarsely. "As if my feelings could change. If you could forgive me——"

"But, dearest, there is nothing to forgive. I was that woman's victim, as were you also. And now I can see with eyes clearer than they have ever been before. I asked too much of you; my view of men had been too romantic. What did it matter about the past so long as you cared for me now and for the future! Oh, Ralph, can't you see that I am trying to—to——"

Ralph saw at last. He came a step forward and Enid fluttered into his arms. There was no need for words on either side when heart was speaking to heart and the mists were rolling away into the distance. For a long time they were content to stand there, Ralph wondering how it had all changed like this. The black night of his despair had vanished, the sun of happiness was shining as it had never shone before.

"You will not think that I have been very foolish," Enid whispered at length.

"You have not been foolish at all," Ralph said. "It is my folly that calls for the greater punishment. When I asked you to marry me, darling, I knew that you loved me. And if I had told you everything then I should have been forgiven. Oh, I know what you are going to say; you are going to remind me of your silly remark about the family jealousy. As if that would have made any difference! But I concealed part of the truth from you, and I have been punished for it. I had forgotten those letters for the moment. I had the promise of the one woman on earth for me; I was the happiest man alive. Then late that night Stephen Holt came to me. He had been dining at your house, he was on his way to London. He came to ask me to give you up; he said that you were the only one who could keep him in the straight path. He said that at one time——"

"Yes, yes," Enid whispered. She hid her face on Ralph's breast for a moment. "It is true. I did fancy that perhaps he and I—but that was before you came. Go on, Ralph."

"Naturally I refused to hear him. He had discovered everything from the expression of your face when my name was mentioned at the dinner table. He wanted me to give you up. And then he spoke of those accursed letters of mine to his sister. I gathered that he would give them to you if I did not withdraw my suit, Enid. It seemed as if happiness was slipping away from my grasp. The man maddened me. I was not responsible for my actions. I took a knife from the table and killed him."

"My dear Ralph! Stephen Holt is in your dining-room at the present moment."

"Enid, to all moral purposes I was that man's murderer. He lay as dead at my feet. I raised no alarm; I went to bed and left him there. Nobody knew that he had come to see me. The thing should pass as a mystery or an accident. I will not dwell on my feelings. But when next day came, Stephen Holt's body had vanished, and with it all trace of the crime. At first I did not understand, but when later Barca explained what had taken place in a kind of parable, I saw clearly what was before me. That man was going to blackmail me for the rest of my life. Enid, if you only knew the hell that has been raging in my mind for the last two days! But it is impossible to describe it. . . .

"I told Dick. I told him on the very day that Mrs. Lingen came down here. That was before Barca let me know what had really happened. I had to tell somebody or I should have gone mad. It was all like an evil dream to me, but from the very first Dick began to see his way to the solution of the mystery. He told me that everything would come right, but I could not believe him. And yet he was correct in every word. Don't ask me how the thing has been done, for I am as ignorant as you are. Dick shall explain after the people have gone. But I wanted to tell you the worst, Enid. And if, after my confession, you cannot see your way to go on with—"

Enid laid her fingers on Ralph's lips; then she rested her cheek against his.

"I could not let you go," she whispered. "I love you, Ralph. And I know now that it would be all the same if you were the vilest man on earth. And now you know."

CHAPTER XXX.

Dick's Story.

"Spoken like a good and true woman," Ralph said, with a thrill in his voice. "I will do my best to make up for all in the future, dearest. What we should have done without that wonderful brother of yours, goodness only knows. Let us go out into the garden, Enid, and wander among the flowers till those people have gone. I never appreciated the beauty of God's blessed sunshine as I do today."

It was perhaps an hour later before the sound of wheels crunching on the gravel smote on the ears of the lovers. Between the trees they could see a landau driving away with three people seated inside. Two of them looked moody and downcast enough but the third was chatting and smiling gaily. The light, sweet laugh came floating on the wind.

"A wondrous woman," Ralph said. "Truly a marvellous creature. I should not be surprised if she married brilliantly yet and became a leader of society. But I'm glad they've gone, Enid. The place seems all the sweeter and purer for their departure."

Enid agreed mutely. The landau disappeared at length and the sun came from behind a little cloud, making the good old garden fresh and glorious. Presently Dick strolled on to the terrace. There was a cigarette between his teeth and he beamed through his eyeglass. He appeared to think that he had every right to be on good terms with himself.

"No need to ask how you are getting on," he said, as he dropped into the rustic seat by the side of the lovers. "You both look too foolishly happy for anything. But it has been a very near thing for the pair of you dear little innocents."

"I suppose it was," Enid laughed happily. "But all is well that ends well. Still, you might just as well tell us now that you have succeeded so cleverly how the whole thing was done. Ralph is equally anxious to hear all about the psychological side of the scheme, though, of course, he has told me most of the plain facts. But, before you proceed to reel it off like another Gaboriau, I want to know something about Mr. Clarkson and that dear little girl of his. I understand that you have put the poor man right as far as Mr. Vandernort is concerned, and that you intend to give Mr. Clarkson a fresh start in life. Do you think he would mind if I asked the little girl to come down here?"

"Of course, he wouldn't," Dick said. "He would be exceedingly glad. I have got him some good descriptive work to do in the North for a London paper, and if he succeeds, as I am certain he will, then he will get a staff appointment. I fancy Clarkson will go straight now for his own sake, to say nothing of the child. However, a little later, when he is beginning to get a proper grip of his self-respect, we will have him down here and you can judge for yourself."

"Dick has a very tender heart for a model detective," Enid laughed. "I shall have to respect him in future."

"You will when you have heard everything," Dick said modestly. "My word, but I have had a job over this business. You don't catch me trying to straighten out the affairs of a poet in future. But now I am going to blow my own trumpet a little. I suppose you really would like to hear the story in my own way."

"Tell us all about it," Enid asked eagerly. "Ralph is about as much in the dark as I am. He has told me all he knows, but he says you will complete the story."

"And not a bad story, either," Dick said complacently. "I flatter myself that it was a very neat piece of work altogether. I have got rid of those people. We shall never see Stephen Holt again, and I have also obtained certain letters ——"

"Don't," Ralph pleaded. "Never allude to them again. When they are destroyed—"

(To be continued.)

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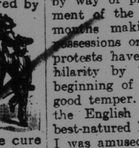

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GOSSIP OF THE RIVIERA, LONDON AND MONTE CARLO, WRITTEN FOR THE TELEGRAPH'S READERS

The Suffragettes' Cause Becoming Monotonous Because of Methods Employed—Socialism Discussed—St. John People in London—New Features in Life of the Metropolis—Noted Gambling Resort at Monte Carlo Seems on Decline.

(Special Correspondence of The Telegraph.)

Hotel Bordighera, Bordighera, Italian Riviera, Feb. 26—Sunshine, soft air, and flowers! Such a trio of good things was of course to be expected of the Riviera in "the green month of February"—they are matters of course. But such a description does not necessarily describe this region exclusively just now. England, I hear, has just been producing a February that can challenge comparison with the best that this country has to show.

To be sure that "taut little island" could not bring forth a varied wealth of flowers such as nature dumps down in this highly colored corner of the earth; it is not pretended that ivy geraniums, heliotropes and golden hued shrubs are decorating every garden fence and dead wall in Egland just as they do here. Spring's floral luggage consisted only a few snowdrops and crocuses when she paid her surprise visit to England. Nevertheless it is safe to say that whatever she lacked in decorative effects she made up in geniality and balmy air, not always to be found along this coast even when the sunshine is at its hottest and fairest. For among the heavily-laden branches of the orange and lemon trees, over the fields of wall flowers, stocks and violets there generally blows a bracing little wind, coming, one feels sure, from the great mountains to the north, where the white snow peaks, rising above our background of olive-clad hills suggest a baby winter being held up to peep down into the valley where all the other seasons are at work on their gorgeous tapestry of flowers.

Even when the sun is high, ice may be seen lying in the shallow ravines, and icicles hang pendant from green banks where orange trees in full fruit shade wild anemones and cultivated carnations. About four seasons at a time seems to be the average allowance for the Riviera.

But the premature spring that visits England is far too well-bred even to hint at winter. There the air is really balmy and though the sunshine is not strong as that of Italy, it is so radiant and joyous that one cannot avoid the suspicion that it goes like wine to the heads of some of the people, who, under the impression that a continual April 1 has dawned upon the world, do strange and weird things.

Suffragettes and Socialists.

Such at least is the only charitable working explanation of recent doings by the Suffragettes and Socialists. So constant is the supply of sensations from these two bodies of zealots, that, paradoxical as it may sound, their startling and original eccentricities are becoming monotonous and there is actually some danger that public interest in them may wane through sheer boredom in which case their organizers would discover that their occupation was gone.

People only smile languidly now when they read that the Suffragettes walked about Leeds ringing muffin bells during the recent bye-election. The action did not seem to bear upon the situation, while the hand to hand encounter with the police in Victoria street impressed the public as being rather hackneyed. To drive up to the "House" in a Pantechnicon van and qualify for Holloway jail by a riotous descent upon the Mother of Parliaments, was indeed a stroke of genius. But it was not even a nine days wonder, the applause was very brief, but there are still many people who are convinced that the women have a good cause in spite of the outrageous behaviour of its supporters.

Similarly the deputation of Socialists who waited on the king to request him to hand over Windsor Castle and its grounds to them, created but very ephemeral interest, while that member of the band who still lingers in the neighborhood seeking an eligible residence in which to ostentatiously starve himself to death—on bread and tea and porter—as a protest against the difference between the rich and the poor only gains an occasional comment from the press.

Also there was a scene on Clapham common recently which must have furnished food for thought to this particular class of enthusiast. There a Socialist rose to address the crowd, and after announcing that the recent inspiring events at Lisbon were a sign that the time had come to get rid of all kings, proposed to begin on King Edward. Thereupon he was promptly seized by his hearers—who had no exalted appreciation of the charm of murder—and summarily ducked in the pond to the tune of the national anthem, which was lustily sung by his correctors.

It is by such extravagances that Socialist and Suffragette alike are gradually convincing the public that they are actuated more by a desire for personal notoriety than by an ambition to right the wrongs of which they are so eloquent. Nobody who thoroughly believes in a cause will risk its ruin by bringing down ridicule upon it.

Nor are these zealots the only offenders; the thirst for agitation is in the air. "If ye have fads prepare to air them now" appears to be the watchword of the supporters of any conceivable "cause." Even such a worthy and well meaning body as the Protestant Alliance must needs snap at an opportunity for bringing itself into unpleasant notice, even at the risk of raising a furore of sectarian bitterness. So these good people have presented a memorial to the King "humbly" pointing out that by attending the requiem service for King Carlos at St. James', Spanish Place, he had broken his coronation oath and should forfeit his crown. Fortunately this extraordinary document has only excited surprise, the rest of the public learning for the first time that there was any danger to the state or their liberties in the king's action.

In the house of commons too, a group of "pro-Zakkas," led by Mr. Redmond, have been violently abusing their country by way of protesting against the punishment of the Zakkas, who have been for months making raids upon the British possessions on the Indian frontier. These protests have been received with genuine hilarity by "the house," which at the beginning of the session is generally in a good temper. When all is said and done, the English parliament is probably the best-natured legislative body in the world. I was amused to read the other day that when the infant son of F. E. Smith was christened at St. Margaret's, Westminster, Winston Churchill was one of the godfathers. In probably no other country would a man endow his child with the Christian name of his bitterest political opponent.

But in spite of agitation, London still busies itself with a variety of things that make for enjoyment of life. Already there is a perceptible stir of preparation for the coming season, which should be a very bright one if all good intentions are carried out. The Anglo-French exhibition at Shepherd's Bush and the Chelsea pageant will be among its most interesting features. It is in consideration of these two events that the great London pageant has been postponed till next year and thus a clash of attractions is avoided. Lord Strathcona, Lord Desborough and the Earl of Jersey are on the committee for the formation of a garden club in connection with the exhibition. A wonderful dining hall is to be 100 feet in length, there will be numerous rooms for private luncheon and dinner parties, while for ladies there will be special suites of boudoir and reception rooms.

Lord Strathcona has also interested himself in the new Waldorf hotel at Aldwych and himself performed the opening ceremony. The building stands upon historic ground once frequented by Johnson, Lamb, and of course the admiring Boswell. Four hundred rooms are in the Waldorf, with several suites designed especially for Americans and other folk who prefer hotel to home life. Among the 230 persons who attended the opening reception was an imposing array of notabilities.

New London Features.

So much for the things that make for future enjoyment. The visiting Canadian will find several new features in London this year. Hungary is to be the subject of the Earl's Court exhibition and preparations on an unusually elaborate scale are now almost complete. The Dickens revival of last summer has borne fruit, and on the author's birthday a permanent Dickens library was opened at the Guildhall to be an endless source of interest to the thousands of Dickens lovers in the nation.

Sicilian plays by Sicilian players are among the latest theatrical novelties; but it is too early yet to prophesy that the intensity, force and passion which is so much admired in these people will influence English dramatic art as some seem to expect and hope, notwithstanding the difference in temperament between the two peoples. Another interesting item for intending visitors is the advent of the sixpenny cab. It is now not only possible to drive an appreciable distance in London for that very modest sum, but one may even omit cabby's tip—at least so I have been told—without incurring his sarcasm and abuse, so soon has Jarvy discovered the profit to be derived from small fares.

And speaking of Canadian visitors reminds me that well known St. John people have already begun to arrive. Mrs. H. H. McLean and Miss Elise McLean gave some London residents a joyful surprise when they paused in that city for a week on their way to Paris. Father Davenport too—surely St. John may put in a claim for him after all his years in that city—is waiting in England till after the Pan-Anglican Congress, and I am glad to report that he is feeling much better.

It seems odd writing about all these things with the blue of an Italian sky above me and purple iris flowers growing beside me just beyond the shade of an orange tree. And yet, daily life for the English in Bordighera does not differ materially from the routine in England. A round of visits, tennis and tea parties for the afternoon, and dinners, dances and concerts for the evenings whirls as unceasingly as Ixion's wheel. The topics, too, are much the same—politics in general and Socialism in particular. This last is a burning question here, as I think I mentioned in my last letter. Matters have grown even more interesting since the local Italian Socialists, a strong and revolutionary body here, getting wind of recent proceedings among the English community, have asked for sympathy and support. This has been readily promised them—by an ardent Socialistic clerk in the English bank who took upon himself to answer for the English community without any authorization whatever. The sensation that the little episode has created may be imagined. And yet this is a place where people come for a rest cure.

At Monte Carlo.

It leads irresistibly to the conclusion that when a Bordighera resident really needs quiet he goes to Monte Carlo. I ran up to that famous resort the other day and came back wonderfully disillusioned in spite of the fact that my modest venture on the tables had yielded me a brilliant reward.

Having read much about it I had thought to find Monte Carlo an alluring centre of all that makes worldiness glittering and attractive. I was not prepared to find it dull. True, the entourage was sufficiently gorgeous. The splendid terrace edged with brilliant flowers crowded by finely dressed people, commands magnificent views of an ultra blue Mediterranean, a coquettish town about the curve of the bay, all backed by splendid mountains. Also the rooms glitter with gilding and fine frescoes, and the band is excellent. But for the rest it is a scene where haggard age and fresh youth alike sit drearily silent for the most part, absorbed in a pursuit which brings only hard indifference and certainly no outward sign of pleasure to their faces.

Their impassive blankness was awful. The flame of emotion underlies them, I suppose; but to look for any sign thereof was about as profitable as to try to form an idea of a fire from the contemplation of stoves in a hardware shop. Even the money seemed to lose its significance. The five franc pieces might have been tin medals, the golden coins so many melon seeds, so little seemed their worth when they were raked about carelessly by an impassive croupier. Added to which the air was hot and drowsy, being permeated by a heavy vulgar perfume. And this was dazzling Monte Carlo!

I was not surprised to learn that it is going down. The Goold tragedy dealt it a heavy blow, and then there is the great and ever increasing influx of the newly-rich Germans. These people have a genius for economy which, however laudable in a moral sense, disqualifies them greatly for indulgence in the pleasures of a world-famous casino. They stake too little and with great caution, and leave contented with comparatively small gains. Also they drive out the rich and reckless English, who in Italy have become as a proverb for lavishness. Stories of the shrewdness with which they bargain for hotel accommodation are told by way of accounting for the diminution of comfort and splendor in these establishments, while the frugality of their tips is the subject of bitter complaint. Such things do not make for the prosperity of the Temple of Chance.

So be it. If the German succeeds in abolishing Monte Carlo he will do a good work. One could easily spare the place out of a region where blue sea and grey green olive groves, quaint brown rock villages and snowy mountain peaks make up a scene of loveliness which will last till the end of time.

N. L. J.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Fire Protection in Hotels.

To the Editor of The Telegraph:

Sir,—Will you kindly insert the following in your valuable paper in regard to the inadequate fire protection in hotels:

The writer has deferred for some time in calling the attention of the proper authorities to this one very important necessity of better fire protection to the traveling public. No doubt any traveling man will bear me out in the statement that at least 90 per cent of the hotels in the maritime provinces are inadequately supplied with what should be forced requirements along this line. I know of only one hotel on the above territory which is provided with a rope in every room fastened underneath the window, and that is the Wallace Hotel, Pictou (N. S.) I am told that a certain hotel in New Brunswick is constructed in such a way that the rooms lead off from the stairs running up through the centre of the building, and not an escape from the bedroom windows unless you jump to the ground below and take chances. In the event of a fire starting at the foot of the staircase, your chances of escape would be utterly impossible. Only a short time ago a fire occurred in Campbellton (N. B.) The Royal Hotel was burned to the ground in less than an hour between 8.30 a. m. and 9.30 a. m. Had this fire started during the night, some of the guests would have surely been burned to death. As it was they barely just escaped, most of them losing their personal effects. The hotels, with their steady advance in rates in the last few years, should be forced to provide better fire protection, and in such a way that each sleeping room should contain its own escape, as well as the structural iron ones on the larger hotels.

The provincial government or the insurance companies, or whoever the proper authorities are, should see that a law is passed (if such a one is not in vogue at present) and insist upon its enforcement or otherwise be held responsible in case of accident or death through their neglect.

Another thing which I would suggest is a system of bells in each and every room, so arranged that by pushing a button in the office or in some other convenient way, all the bells would ring at once.

A COMMERCIAL TRAVELER.
March 6, 1908.

MORE SMALLPOX CASES AT MONCTON.

Moncton, N. B., March 6.—Two new cases of small-pox developed yesterday, and as a result the quarantine on the Victoria skating rink and other places of amusement in the city is not likely to be raised this week. St. Bernard's church will also be closed on Sunday.

The new cases have developed in a house off King street, occupied by two families named Richard and Govang. Children are the victims in each instance, one being aged fourteen and the other fifteen years old. The cases were reported to the Board of Health and a special meeting was immediately called, and held in the office of C. E. Northrup, the secretary. All the members of the board were present, as well as the Rev. Fr. Savage, pastor of St. Bernard's church. The situation was thoroughly considered, and it was decided not to re-open the places of amusement this week.

The quarantine on four houses is to be raised. These houses are Dennis Melanson's, corner of Queen and Lutz; Philip LeBlanc, James Bourque and P. Legere.

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