

THE STAR, ST. JOHN N. B., SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 1917

THE FAIR NAME OF ALICIA

By K. B. Hennessey

(Copyright, 1917, by Homer Sprague.) Plainly the young Queen Alicia was bored. Not even the cleverest compliments in raptures if somewhat trite offered by the latest court poet interested her. The points of the morning had been unending. Only a couple of riders had been unseated, and one alone had been retired permanently from the lists, with a broken neck. The Lord Treasurer had reported no new outbreaks on account of his latest tax on healthy cows with progeny—a tax made necessary because of the Queen's idea of erecting a temple to herself in the Square of the Royal Family, and to which the undisciplined people had objected. Like all who are taxed, they did not mind the piper so much as paying for the music. Decidedly, life was a foregone conclusion and the Queen yawned once more.

"Nothing new, nothing worth while today, Louise," she asked pettishly of her favorite Lady-in-Waiting. "Nothing, Your Majesty," answered Lady Louise, unless it be that my Lord, the Chancellor Devarry, tried to kiss me this morning as I passed through his cabinet. "The vulgar bores to make love so early in the day," said the Queen, resting her head against the prettiest arm in all the kingdom. "But that is not new, Louise. Devarry would kiss every woman he meets. I wonder he has not tried to kiss me," and she laughed a wicked, little laugh showing teeth that were perfect, but for their very faultlessness. "I should so like to know what my young Duke Lordevall would say if he should see Devarry attempt it. There might be a new Lord Chancellor at court!" and the Queen laughed again.

"Do you like the Duke Lordevall very much, your Majesty?" asked Lady Louise, looking at the Queen from under her long lashes. "He amuses me," said Alicia, lightly. "But he must be careful. I'm very quickly," and she yawned again. Then she turned her searching eyes on her Lady-in-Waiting. "Do you like the Duke Lordevall as well as you say?" "I should not dare, your Majesty!" The favorite looked terrified at the thought, but there was something more than fear in her eyes. The Queen saw this. She smiled placidly, but there was meaning in her glance as she said: "Do not dare, Louise, my child. But perhaps when I have tired of Lordevall, I shall make him marry you, and then we shall have to suit you." "Duchess! How would that suit you?" The Queen was inwardly much amused at the seemingly ingenuous reply, which was: "Your Majesty's word is law."

A smartly groomed young officer made abatement and approached. "Speak, Col. Freers," the Queen commanded. "What have you to report?" "Nothing worth hearing, I'll warrant you!" And she prepared to be more bored than ever. "Nothing important, your Majesty," he said. "There's a small matter about a foreigner who has been engaged by our worthy Master of Amusements. She is said to be very beautiful—almost as beautiful as your Majesty, if I am not too bold in saying so," and he looked proud of his present impudence. "You are bold, Colonel Freers," remarked the Queen, "but that is why

I have soldiers instead of mice around me. What else?" "Your honorable Household Council finds some difficulty in having orders filled. The tradespeople seem to be getting more rapacious every day, and want their money almost as soon as their goods are delivered." The officer tried to look the indignation he did not feel. "Bad, unreasonable people, ever to want their money," the Queen volunteered. "What shall we do with them? Suppose we insist on their charging us fifty per cent. more than their regular prices. See how large that will make their bills. Try it. What next?" "Nothing but war, your Majesty. Oh, pardon, your Majesty. There was a fight in the Army and Navy Cafe early this morning, and a foreigner struck one of Your Majesty's officers. We shall shoot the foreigner at sunrise tomorrow. There is nothing else to report, your Majesty." "What sort of a foreigner is he?" asked the Queen, now slightly interested. "An American, your Majesty." "Whom did he strike?" "The Duke Lordevall, your Majesty." "The Duke Lordevall! The Queen sat up straight, while Lady Louise drew closer to Colonel Freers. "How did it happen?" "The officer seemed confused. 'I was not there at the time it happened, your Majesty. My men were with the American, who acknowledged the crime, which, according to our law, is punishable with death. I never ask questions when an officer is struck. The fact is sufficient.' "The Queen saw his anxiety to be dismissed. Therefore, instantly, decided to dismiss him, and Captain Yozner and the Duke when the American struck him?" she asked. "No one, I understand, your Majesty." "Who else was in the cafe?" "I do not remember, your Majesty," and he mopped his brow, though it was a singularly cool and pleasant affair. "The Duke Lordevall, your Majesty, looked at him with her eyes of steel. "The Colonel went through the process of thinking, then said: 'It seems to me I heard that Major Brattle and the Duke, and Captain Yozner and'—he stopped again. "Think harder, Colonel Freers." "And perhaps I heard the name of Count Stephen of Blientner mentioned."

"Ah, Stephen, too," mused the Queen. "Thank you, Colonel Freers. Your memory grows better every day—with a little prodding," she added, with a gleam of malice. "You may retire now," and as he was leaving, Queen Alicia turned to Lady Louise and asked innocently: "How would you like to see this American?" "I would like to see him," said the Queen, "but he is shot." Lady Louise endeavored to appear unconcerned. "I suppose he is some common fellow, who cares little what becomes of him. I would respectfully advise your Majesty not to see the creature." "We have not heard that even common foreigners are entirely uncon-

cerned when it comes to a question of their sudden taking-off," said the Queen, pursuing her point. "We shall see for ourselves, Louise." She lightly tapped her hand and an officer of the household came forward. "Captain, send for the American who is to be shot tomorrow, and have him appear before me at once." Turning to Lady Louise, who was nervously toying with the leaves of a book, which she had been reading, the Queen said: "And now, Louise, we shall have the man tell us his own story, just to amuse us. I have heard that Americans can be very entertaining at times." She smiled, but Lady Louise did not reply. In a few minutes there was a sound of tramping feet outside the window, again, if the cause were the same. "You see, your Majesty, he acknowledges his guilt," said Lady Louise. "I did not say I was guilty of anything," corrected the American. "I merely said what I repeat: I would do the same thing again were the cause the same." "Well said, no matter what the cause," said the Queen, under her breath. Then aloud: "But tell me, prisoner, what was the cause, though that has little to do with it in our country, for the deed is itself heinous," she looked severe and judicial. "That I cannot tell," replied the American. "But I insist," said the Queen, stamping her foot. The American said nothing.



THEY FOUND THE PRISONER SITTING ON A STOOL, SMOKING A CIGARETTE

"Insolent, yes, and not polite, but a man for all that," she muttered. Then to Lady Louise she said: "Order the carriage, I want some air. These Americans are so wearing!" Midnight was tolling from the big towers. Queen Alicia sat in her private chambers, reading. Outside she heard the tramp, tramp, of the sentry. As the clock tolled out its last note, she laid down the book. "In four hours it will be sunrise," she said reflectively. A sudden decision came to her. She pulled the bell cord, which was answered instantly by a Lady-in-Waiting. "Send for the officer of the Night," she commanded, "and tell him to bring Count Stephen at once." Then she added with care, "to the audience chamber." Flinging a wrap over her filmy dressing gown, she walked thoughtfully along the silent hall of the palace and down to the floor below. Entering the audience chamber, now dark and full of spectres, she turned on the lights and heard the sleepy attendant to leave her alone. She had not long to wait. The door of the main hall was opened, and Count Stephen stood before her. "You are surprised, Count?" she asked. "Nothing, your Majesty, ever does surprise me," he answered, gazing quizzically at her. "That is well, Count," was the smiling rejoinder, "for then you need not be surprised when they know what it is." "You are right, Count," was the thoughtful reply. "But now for action. Please wait for me here. I will return in five minutes." Count Stephen went back to her chambers and returned in a few minutes, covered from head to foot in a cloak and his hood. "Count lead me to the tower where the American is imprisoned." "They went silently, across the grounds to the left wing, but not without being challenged, in each case the Queen lifting her hood and showing her face. "It is not flattering, Count," she said with a shade of gravity in her words, "that the guards do not show surprise when they know what it is." The Count wisely remained silent. "When they reached the prison tower, the Queen directed that they be taken to the American's cell. When the door was opened for their entrance, they found the prisoner sitting on a stool, smoking a cigarette and writing by the light of a single candle. When he saw a woman's form he stood up, and waited for her to speak. The Queen threw back her hood. "Have you been making your work, Sir American?" she asked. "I have," said he, "been writing to my firm that I shall probably take Saturday's steamer," and he stamped out the half-smoked cigarette. "I have been waiting for a word from our consul," he said, "I presume, sir," he said, addressing Count Stephen, "that you have come with the message I have been expecting."

"The Count looked askance at the Queen, who smiled. "Are all Americans like you?" she asked, repeating her question of the afternoon. "If so, I should like to borrow a few for my household." They were serious as she said: "Sir, your Consul has probably not even heard of your arrest. We keep these things in our own country. I have heard of your reason for striking the Duke. Tell me, what do you know about Queen Alicia?" "Only that she is a beautiful—one of the most beautiful I have ever seen," he said, with boyish frankness. "Besides I saw looking into her eyes. "Besides I saw

you yesterday with your women in the poor quarter, giving alms." "The Queen shrugged her shoulders, as she replied: "Even Alicia cannot be a butterfly all the time." The American continued: "The point is that you are a woman and your names must be bandied in public drinking places. We do not like such things in America, where every woman has every man for a companion, and so," he said, simply as a boy, "I struck the Duke. What else could I do, sir?" he said, speaking to the Count. "The man is right, Stephen said. "That is the way of Americans. The Queen looked earnestly at the prisoner and then said, more soberly than was her wont: "Sir, I thank you for all this; and to show you that the woman for whose fair name you risked your life, also has a woman's heart, I came here. Your Consul could not reach you, certainly not in time, and then there would be only an explanation, untrue, perhaps, but well attested, by the hand which stole to the next sunrise would have been your last. "You see," she said, smiling, "I would like to know what you think of me as I have thanked you." "I do thank you, your Majesty," said the American, "and I am glad to feel that feeling illuminated his clear-cut features. "I did not think I was in such a hole. But when may I go?" "Now," said the Queen, "and tomorrow I will make out a Colonel's commission for you. We need more of your kind in our army, sir." "I appreciate the honor, your Majesty would confer on me, but I must sail on Saturday's steamer," he said. "I am sorry," said the Queen with the deepest sincerity in her voice. "But, sir, would be sorry freedom to go if you may not use it in your own way. Go, sir, if you will." To the Count, she said: "Charge you, Count Stephen, to give the American an honorable conduct to this gentleman across our border. Do it as you please my friendship, I will pay you both to accompany me back to the palace. "Please follow," and as she passed out, followed by the two men, she spoke a few words in a low voice until again they had reached to the guard. Not another word was spoken. The Queen, standing on the marble stairway, turned to the American and taking from her finger a ring, she handed it to him, saying: "Take this as a passport, and as a memento of a woman who was grateful for having met a true man." "Remember, Count Stephen, free and honorable conduct, as you value my friendship, you may go." The Queen stood watching as the two men disappeared away in the shadows of the night, and as their forms disappeared, she murmured, "Oh, for such men—always."

THE YEARS OF ROYAL - By H. C. Wickes

Grant - A New Years No. 1 - Svl. The Owego Women's Club regarded Herman Grant with a feeling akin to gratitude. For two years the Owego Women's Club had been searching fruitfully for an Object. The executive committee had many a star-chamber session to discuss worthy objects. Here was the flower of Owego's feminine intellect, backed by the purse of Owego's most prosperous husbands and fathers and brothers, literally going to waste. The hospitals were ably maintained by various churches and the Women's Christian Association. They needed funds, to be sure, but no more doctors or patronesses, and what's the use of giving more money when you want to add executive ability? The club could not form a cemetery association because old Ben Decker, who had been sponged of God's acre for ten years kept it in such good order that interference would have been resented by those who contributed to his salary. The school children had organized themselves into an active club and had beautified the school walls with pictures, tastefully framed. The Daughters of the American Revolution had beautified the one historic spot which the town could boast. The Masons had erected a statue to the city's one hero. The executive committee was just discussing the chances of maintaining a day nursery or creche in a town where husbands were so discourteously prosperous that very few women had to toil for their children, when young Mrs. Calbin, with a gleam of triumph in her eye, rushed into the room. "Girls! I mean Mrs. President - I have found a worthy object for the club's benefactions and interests. There's a young man with a fine tenor voice serving soda at Bradley's drug store. His mother is a widow with three sons and he's the youngest, so she is not absolutely dependent upon him, and he might rival Caruso if I sent him to New York or Berlin or Milan or somewhere to study."

"That night Herman Grant in his next blue serge made his appearance in "Mrs. President's" parlor. He had not planned to give an entertainment and wanted him to sing. That would please his mother very much. The entire executive committee was present, also Owego's leading musicians. Herman Grant sang through his repertoire of college airs, church solos and had long led the singing at a church so unimpeachable that the members of the executive committee barely knew of its existence) and a few popular songs. The leading musicians nodded their heads and the president of the club made a few remarks and nearly plucked the red and blue ribbon off his straw hat during that speech. He tried hard to follow the patronizing tones of her one-would-be-patronesses, but in the end he went home with his mind in a jumble of such phrases as "musical centers," "Owego and the future Caruso," and "the duty of the club to the community."

The next night things were clearer. The evening party had a column story on how the Women's Club had secured a phenomenal tenor in an humble drug clerk, who they would educate for grand opera to the everlasting glory of Owego at home he found his mother smiling proudly through tears. Of course she would miss him, but then she could not stand in his light. And when he went back to the store, Mr. Bradley asked him how soon his successor had better come in. Now, Herman Grant was not a stupid young man, but never before had he been the object of motions, amendments and new by-laws. The awful truth never really sank into his mind until he found himself in the theatrical boarding house in New York, with a letter of credit and more new clothes than he had ever owned at once before in all his life. His last few weeks in Owego had been one long nightmare of receptions, teas and dinners, through which there shone just one redeeming ray of light—his mother smiling proudly in her black silk frock, with the cameo brooch and real lace collar handed down by a maternal grandmother. Now, as he sat in the dim room on a narrow cot, with his trunk still strapped and locked before him, his umbrella—gift of an enthusiastic club worker—and a neat Gladstone bag, "a mere trifle from the program committee," lying on the bed, the awful truth flashed through his being. He—Herman Grant—able-bodied, aged twenty-three, self-supporting since his twentieth year—was actually dependent upon women, and a lot of women who were not related to him, many of whom he had never seen! They were to pay his board, give him music lessons, allow him so much spending money ("to keep up appearances worthy of Owego's advanced feminine thought"), send him to the opera and the best concerts, and pay for evening clothes to be made by a good tailor. And he had agreed to such an arrangement!

He flung the bag one way and the umbrella another. His soul rose angrily against itself. His face flushed. Then suddenly from across the court came a voice, fresh, vibrant and tuneful. "The sweetest flower that grows I give you as we part—" Herman bent forward to listen, his hands clasped about his knees. That was a song his mother had sung, the mother from whom he had inherited his fine voice. The older singer's voice had been tender and reminiscent. This younger voice thrilled and quivered with life and hope and anticipation. Herman rose abruptly and began to hum. He remembered vaguely how his mother had always spoken of her musical gift as a lovely memory, something beautiful in her past. Perhaps she would like to see it live again in him. Perhaps a successful musician he might bring her more happiness than

as a mere maker of money, for Herman Grant from childhood had been recognized as possessing a good built-in tenor voice. The door opened and the American, with a soldier on either side, and with two in front and two behind, was marched in. "Let the prisoner approach," said the Queen. He was released and stepped confidently before her. "Fellow, handsome, and evidently no coward," thought the Queen. "So, sir," she said, "you are foreigner who has come into our little mountain kingdom and struck one of our most illustrious officers." She looked sternly upon him. The American, not at all disturbed, replied: "I would do the same thing

all, he never quite lost his mental and moral balance. In a vague, unreal way, he understood that it was not really his good fortune, but to a certain extent, the whim of fate. But for how long? Already he had tasted the bitter fruit of professional knowledge. When he had high-priced instructor urged him on to extra lessons, he could close his eyes and recall the experiences which singed his fresh from Europe, had detailed, a small reward of American men who had studied for years only to be set aside by some gambler of the Italian streets born with the golden light of his native land in his voice; of girls who had starved themselves of beg- gered their families only to find them-

he was doing rather foolish or extravagant things. Of course, the girl would be just as foolish when her time came—when she made her hit as he had. And thus stood matters when New Year's Eve fell upon New York, the night of merry carnival among those with much money, a night akin to riot with those who had little and used it. Herman Grant had been invited to welcome the New Year at the studio of a man whose genius built homes of art by day and palaces of exotic pleasures by night. Herman sat on the edge of polite Bohemia with a girl who was to appear the next week in grand opera. Watching the scene with brooding eyes, she sat, her hands clasped around her crossed knees. "Are those are they who make us or unmake us," she said bitterly. Herman never knew just how it happened, but as they sat, he read the girl's heart. Little by little the story came to him, and looking at her clinging velvet robe, her gleaming jewels, her snow white, quivering arms, he shivered. "And what matters it," she finished abruptly, "though a woman see her name in big type if she lose body and soul?" Herman made no reply. He, too, sat staring moodily at the picture beyond the damask draperies. A pretty girl with the dew of her country lanes still in her eyes, tried to rise, and then sat down with a silly little laugh. When she opened her eyes again Herman realized, oddly, that the dew had dried up. "Have you heard that Terry Wilson and his wife are on speaking terms again?" cackled the voice of a thin, sharp-featured old beau who was passing them with a willowy girl, whose hair burned like a bronze aureole around her carefully rouged face. "Don't tell! How horribly plebian of them!" she laughed. Herman started. What if those words had dropped from the lips of the girl with the voice; if the demurely parted brown hair should suddenly take on a bronze tinge? He rose. So did the girl in the clinging velvet robes. "Ready to go? So am I. Can I drop you anywhere on my way home?" "No, thanks. I'll see you to your carriage and then I guess I'll walk home. I'd like to hear the Trinity Chimes, but they say there is such a din—"



HE SLIPPED ON HIS DRESSING ROBE AND STEAL TO THE WINDOW. THE BROWN HEAD WAS SENT OVER A BALCONY.

him forget all else, even the girl and the sympathetic voice. An agent who supplied talent for dinner parties, that involved wearing court dress, from fly to silver buckled slippers, but the fee was large enough to cover the extra expense, and when Herman stepped forward to sing, clad in silver brocade with rhinestone buttons and lace ruffles, his fresh, boyish face beneath the white wig caught more than one world-weary eye. In certain drawing-rooms the one-time drag clerk became the rage. He met here and there society dames and debutantes, for he sang in company with grand old opera stars and appeared in conjunction with footlight favorites who danced or gave imitations or offered bits from popular plays. It was a far cry from the austere mingling of studio and business life which he had been leading, but through

selfes charged for the privilege of singing in a creditable company. But in spite of this new view of his profession, he yielded to the allurements of the moment and was hard now to keep the balance between his two accounts, for while his private engagements paid him better than ever, there were certain little expenses that never found their way into the statement received by the secretary of Owego's Women's Club. With tastes like Violeta, hansom and tea at Sherry's, the Owego sponsors had nothing to do. Sometimes when he was buying the violets, he caught himself wondering how his mother would enjoy a box of the flowers; and then he would look at the stately American beauty risen and think of the girl across the court whom he no longer saw because he slept until the very moment when he must leave the house. It rather annoyed him that his mother and the girl seemed to stand side by side at moments when sang—