

encounter bits of glowing color—like these carnations for instance. Yes, one would know you were the artist born."

She was pleased, and brought out some watercolors for his inspection.

"No less than five of Lake Ontario in a storm!" he exclaimed.

"I'm a March-born child and stormy by temperament," she explained. "Besides, I was born on the shore of the lake."

"I love storms. They're inspiring, vivifying. I too was born on the shore of Lake Ontario—in the village of Dayspring?"

"Dayspring? Why, so was I! Who in the world are you? Wait. . . . Are you a son of David Brett?"

"No, he was my uncle. My father was James Brett who moved west about thirty years ago. He died and my mother married again."

Of course, after this, she felt no qualms whatever about accepting his invitation to the theater and the following day, which was Sunday, they went to Long Branch. A week passed, a week full of pleasant meetings and little trips, dinners and motor-rides and not once in all this time did either of them mention Gilroy's name.

Then one afternoon, When Brett had called to take her out for dinner he remarked that he had had a telegram from the Captain.

"He will be in the city to-morrow," he said, in a casual tone.

Miss Manners started. She had almost forgotten the Captain's existence.

"His eyes?"

"Very much better. Shall—I bring him around to call?"

"No, no! It won't be necessary will it? Couldn't you explain about—"

"He's really a very nice chap, Miss Manners."

"I know that."

"And every word in those letters he meant. I have been wondering why you express so little interest in him. Not once have you asked what he looked like. Do you not care—any longer?"

Miss Manners cast her eyes down. It was a searching question, one she had been afraid to ask herself.

"I hardly know," she replied. "I have not given it much thought."

"Why do you smile?"

"I was thinking how badly you play the role of Miles Standish's emissary."

Brett looked disconcerted. Miss Man-

ners busied herself with her gloves, and watched him from the mirror where she adjusted her hat.

"You didn't mind that?" she asked, penitently.

"I did, rather. Something I have never done and never will do is the Miles Standish stunt. Let every man do his own courting I say."

"Then why are you so concerned over the Captain's heart affairs? Why are you sounding me?"

Brett moved restlessly from the window and back again.

"If I were to tell you why—" he began and broke off.

"Go on. It is only a little past five and we have plenty of time," she encouraged.

She saw again that troubled, diffident look that he had worn the first evening when she had confessed about the correspondence. She felt that he was in the Captain's confidence to a greater extent than he would admit.

"First answer me a straight question," he commenced, wheeling about and facing her in grim earnestness. "Then I will tell you—everything. Is your regard for him serious?"

She breathed rapidly, her eyes on his face. In this humor she was almost afraid of him. How warmly he had stuck up for his friend that first night!

"I care nothing for Captain Gilroy," she said at length. "How should I when I have never seen him?"

"I am glad of that," he said frankly, after a pause.

"You are—glad? Why?"

"Because," said Brett with tense look and in a voice that vibrated. "Because Gilroy is a married man."

Miss Manners had superb self-control. She did not start or otherwise betray any emotion she may have felt. Her companion came forward a couple of steps and bent that keen glance of his on her face and still she did not flinch.

She stood there, a dainty figure in old rose silk, the color accentuating her clear pallor, the dull glow of the shaded light on her rich brown hair, a mocking glance in her cool grey eyes. She had removed her hat the better to adjust the veil and now she smiled as her fingers busied themselves in the meshes of the filmy fabric.

"Is it possible that you—that this piece of news has no effect upon you at all?" he demanded.

She looked up quickly and in that instant he read something in her eyes before they fell again that made his heart beat with smothering violence. A moment he stood silent and then with a boyish rush of ardor he seized her hand—both hands.

"You know—you have guessed that I love you?" he cried.

She did not reply for a moment. Then:

"I have guessed—a number of things," she said in a low voice, and drew back, forcing him to release her hands.

"Then—you know?" he asked after a short tense silence. "How did you discover the truth?"

He wanted to ask if it made any difference in their comradeship but fear of her answer withheld him. She wasn't smiling now.

"Why didn't you tell me that first night?" she demanded.

"And have spoiled our nicely budded friendship?"

"You should have told me. It—was hardly fair. I told you everything."

"When I had found you I had just one desire and that was to be near you. You will recollect that I was on the point of—confessing my identity but you insisted on closing the discussion. I really was going to be foolhardy enough to let it all out."

She sent him a sudden bewildering smile.

"Were you? Then I might possibly find in it my heart to forgive you," she murmured. "But your defence is slim."

"And I am small-souled! I like to pay folks back in their own coin. I have a kindly heart I hope, but I have also a very jealous disposition. All week the thought of poor old Gilroy has driven me half mad."

"But what a poor dissembler you are! All week I have known!"

"Impossible!"

"Well, ever since Monday. You remember that delightful old Inn on the lakeshore where they make you write your order on a pad?"

"By Jove!"

"And you really do make your capital T's like no one else in the world!"

He smiled ruefully.

"After all, the question is am I forgiven?"

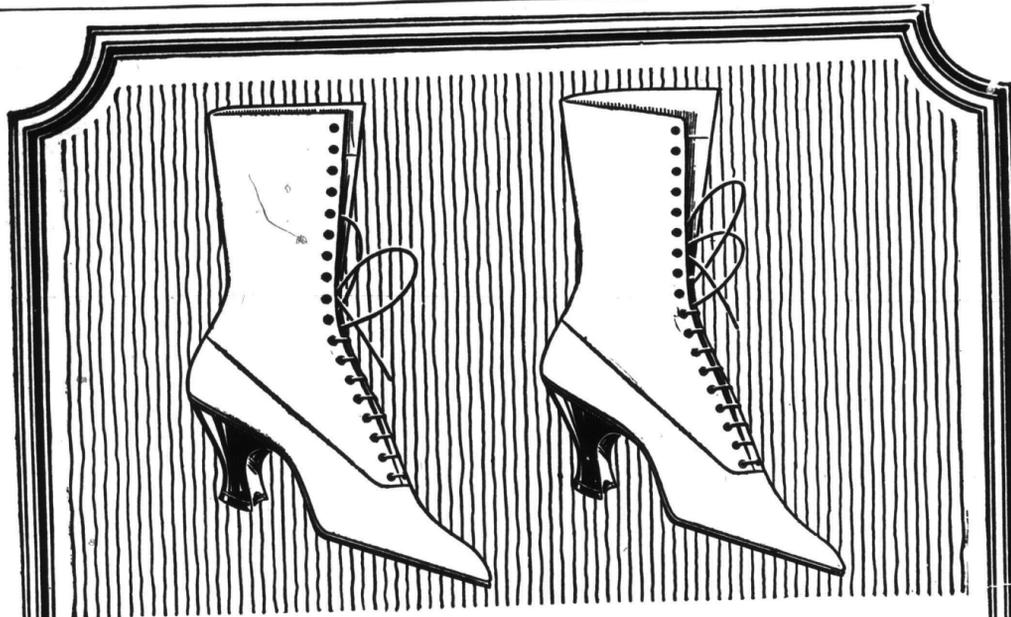
"I suppose so."

"You say that grudgingly. So I suppose it is up to me to do some further elucidating. Well, I wrote every letter you received but only the first three were done for Gilroy. That was because of his eyes. Did you notice a discrepancy between the third and the fourth letters?"

. . . . That was due to two things: the fact that I had resolved to keep you myself—"

"What!"

"—for a correspondent. And the fact that just then Gilroy had fallen head over ears in love with an English girl. (They were married two weeks ago and came over on the same ship with me.) So he had kindly told me I could 'take you on' as well as seven other young lady correspondents he had been in touch



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