

undulating toward the entrance, "how do you do? Glad to see you looking so well. I think if you'll step back here with me a moment I can explain the whole matter satisfactorily," and taking the glaring Blankensop by the arm he marched him into the back room and closed the door. For a time the sound of the old German's roar in interrupted flow was heard through the partition, but it finally yielded to the Junior Partner's oily tones, and when they came out, Blankensop was grinning somewhat fatuously, as if the props had been knocked from under what he had regarded as an Unassailable Position.

I was sharpening the Stenographer's pencils for her when Tommy came in from luncheon.

"Say," whispered he, excitedly, "I've found out what's up."

"What?" we gurgled, nervously looking to see if any of the rest had returned.

"Why, old Blankensop—old duffer who looks like a goat, you know—well, he's lost five hundred dollars out of his box, and is kicking up the devil about it with the Old Man. Going to have a Directors' meeting this evening."

"Rum doings," says I. "Who told you?"

Tommy looked wise. "Won't tell," he said.

But I knew. Jorkins had been listening through the register by way of the basement. Jorkins is the janitor, and in his character of watchman thinks all avenues which lead to knowledge legitimate.

"How does Blankensop account for it?" said I, after a pause.

"Says he left his key here with the Company in August when he left town."

"Aha, aha!" chortled I, triumphantly. "The System's slipped a cog."

For had I not most ineffectually tried to point out to the Old Man the danger of permitting patrons of the safety vault to leave keys with the Company? And had not the Old Man threatened me with dismissal for what he termed my impertinence in presuming to intimate that there could be a flaw in His System, evolved as he fondly fancied, through his own astute mental processes—but, as I knew, at the subtle suggestion of the Junior Partner?

"Aha, aha!" chuckled I to myself. "Now they're in for it!"

II The Story of the Looker-On

That I who worship Beauty and hunger for elegant seclusion should be compelled to sit at Mrs. Crunchem's table twice a day only goes to confirm my belief in a capricious and pursuing fate. And they are all so vulgarly social. They regard my reserve not with contempt—merely indifference. Of course, if I were young and good to look at they would care, but I am old and dull and flatly uninteresting—but this is not about me. They are always talking at the Boarding-House. They were at it again this evening.

"It was simply the nerviest thing I ever heard of," said the Bachelor.

"What was nervy?" asked the Book-keeper.

"Why, haven't you read the Post?" said the Woman with a History.

"Daring robbery," said the Ex-Schoolma'am.

"At three o'clock."

"Ladies' reception."

"In the dining-room."

"Four men."

"Two covered 'em with pistols."

"Two—baskets."

"The silver."

"Diamonds."

"Watches."

"Purses."

"Jumped out of the window."

"No clew."

Here the Bachelor's voice soared above the babel. "It's the darndest queerest thing! That's six in as many weeks. The detectives are no good. Can't make a thing out of it."

"I came by the house at the time," said the Theological Student, "and on my word I never heard such screaming."

Someway every one stopped just then and looked at the Mystery. He devoured chicken hash with zest. He was a splendidly built man with sleepy gray eyes.

There was an uncomfortable silence.

"Why didn't you stop and find out what was going on?" said he, wiping his mouth with his napkin, and looking at the Theological Student with an enigmatical expression.

Some of them didn't like his tone, but I understood why he used it. The Theological Student was a tall, handsome young man in the electrical business down town, and studying hard of nights

to enter the University the following winter. It needed only half an eye to see he was head over ears in love with the Stenographer. She was a timid little thing with big reddish-brown eyes, curly auburn hair and the sweetest complexion in the world. She was from the country, and had been in the boarding house only a few weeks. But that was long enough to make all the women hate her, because all the men jumped to attention whenever she entered the dining-room.

All but the Mystery. He didn't notice her particularly. At least they all said he didn't up in the parlor after the men had gone. But I knew better. He adored the Stenographer. I knew he hated the Theological Student, because the Stenographer went out Sunday nights to church with the latter, and the Mystery had a way of saying nasty things to him. I wondered why the Mystery didn't try to win the Stenographer's favor, because if I were a girl—well—if a man like the Mystery looked at me the way he looked at the Stenographer when he was off guard and thought nobody noticed!

But she was afraid of him. When he addressed her, which was seldom, she blushed all over her delicious face and murmured indistinct answers. Little idiot! But it made her look maddeningly kissable, and all the women masticated savagely.

Just then the landlady brought in the first installment of orange pudding. So the Theological Student, pretending not to notice the Mystery's question.

"Well," said the Ex-Schoolma'am, "I have my opinion of anybody who stays out so late at nights."

But this didn't count, because the Ex-Schoolma'am was in love with the Theological Student, and only wanted to make the Stenographer feel bad. Incidentally, she liked to tease the Theological Student because he had snubbed her. He attacked his pudding with vigor. The Stenographer changed color and looked at her plate. The Mystery bit his lip and spilled his coffee on the tablecloth.

"At it again," he muttered. "Why can't the old cats leave her alone. Blank 'em!" Nobody heard him say this but me.

The Ex-Schoolma'am hailed from Cross Roads, Iowa. She had been in Bikota a year and a half, and knew

what an awful wicked place it was, and how it stood around on its own corners holding out snares for the unwary. So she concluded she'd better give the Stenographer some advice, and caught up with the latter in the hall on the way up-stairs. They passed the Theological Student buttoning up his overcoat and drawing on his gloves.

"Off again?" says the Ex-Schoolma'am, maliciously flippant.

If she hadn't been with the Stenographer he would have ignored this ill-directed remark. As it was, he looked down at the Stenographer from his six feet of towering beauty—for he was a handsome wretch, was the Theological Student—and said, "I'm going down to hear your Junior Partner deliver one of his weekly talks at the Y. M. C. A. He's fine. I wish you could hear him!" enthusiastically.

"Why, is that who it is?" said the Stenographer. "O-o-h," she laughed. "I hear him enough at the office. And is he a good young man, too?" She added, with a naughty, wide-eyed coquettishness she was not above at times with men.

The Theological Student threw back his head, and laughed immensely. Someway he seemed tremendously amused.

"You little dar—er—why, of course. We're all good," said he, cooing away from the danger-point.

The Ex-Schoolma'am hummed a little tune, and looked sourly at the ceiling. The Mystery came through the hall just then, and out at the door, banging it hard.

"Well, good-by," said the Theological Student, taking the Stenographer's hand in both of his. "You'll not forget Sunday evening," said he with ardor.

"Oh, no!" said she, with another of her devastating little glances.

"My dear," said the Ex-Schoolma'am, following the Stenographer into the latter's room, and taking the most comfortable chair, "I feel it my duty to warn you."

"Warn me?" said the Stenographer.

"Yes. I see that you are in need of some practical advice. You are I fear, too unsophisticated—too believing—too trustful. You are so young—of course."

hastily, "so am I. But I was thrown out to battle with the world when a mere infant, and I have found it—"

Familiar Authors at Work—By Hayden Carruth.



Miss Tripp.

Miss Tripp for years has lived alone,
Without display or fuss or pother.
The house she dwells in is her own—
She got it from her dying father.

Miss T. delights in all good works,
She goes to church three times on
Sunday.
Her daily duty never shirks,
Nor keeps her goodness for this one
day.

She loves to bake and knit and sew,
For wider fields she doesn't hanker;
Yet for the things they have I know
A many poor folk have to thank her.

The simple life she truly leads,
She loves her small domestic labors;
In spring she plants her garden seeds
And shares the product with her
neighbors.

By Books and Authors now I see
In literature she's made a foray;
"The Yellow Shadow"—said to be
"A crackerjack detective-story."



Captain Brown.

Bluff Captain Brown is somewhat queer,
But of the sea he's very knowing.
I scarcely meet him once a year—
He's off in search of whales a-blowing.

For fifty years—perhaps for more—
He's sailed about upon the ocean.
He thinks that if he lived ashore
He'd die. But this is just a notion.

Still, when the Captain comes to port
With barrels of oils from whales
caught napping,
He'll pace the deck and loudly snort,
"This land air is my strength a-
sapping."

"I call this living on hard terms;
I wish that I had never seen the land;
I wish I were a-chasing sperms
Aboard the nor-east coast of Green-
land."

Yet on his latest cruise, 'tween whales
The Captain wrote a book most charm-
ing.
It's called—and it is having sales—
"Some Practical Advice on Farming."



T. H. Smith.

Tom Henry Smith I long have known,
Although he really is a hermit—
At least, Tom Henry lives alone,
And that's what people term it.

Tom Henry never is annoyed
By fashion's change. He wears a collar
Constructed out of celluloid.
His hats ne'er cost above a dollar.

Tom loves about his room to mess,
And cook a sausage at the fireplace.
It doesn't serve to help his dress—
Grease spatters over the entire place.

Tom Henry likes to read a book,
And writes a little for the papers,
But scarcely ever leaves his nook,
And takes no part in social capers.

Now Tom has penned a book himself.
I hope he'll never feel compunctions!
Its title is—it's on my shelf—
"Pink Teas and Other Social Func-
tions."



Ruth Jones.

I've found the Jones pleasant folk—
I've watched them all their children
fetch up.
Jones loves to have a quiet smoke—
She's famous for tomato catchup.

Ruth is their eldest—now fifteen.
A tallish girl with pleasing features.
Each school-day morn she can be seen
As she trips by to meet her teachers.

A serious-minded miss, you'd say.
Not given much to school-girl follies.
She still sometimes will slip away
To spend a half-hour with her dollies.

She's learned to sweep, to sew, to bake—
She's quite a helpmate to her mother.
On Saturday she loves to take
The go-cart out with little brother.

At writing now she bids for fame—
Her book a great success is reckoned.
"By Right of Flashing Sword," its
name,
A strong romance of James the Second.