

Perhaps You Need a Tonic

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The Countess of Landon.

CHAPTER XV.

The quarter of an hour before dinner had been called the worst in one's existence, but Seymour was not at all awkward or embarrassed, and talked to one and all with fluent ease.

He had something to say on politics to the Earl of Balfarras, discussed the agricultural prospect with the baronet, exchanged gossip with the officers and talked eloquently and feelingly of the mission to Timbuctoo with the doctor.

As the bell rang for dinner, Irene entered the drawing-room. She came in quietly and noiselessly enough, but nevertheless her appearance created, what is called in newspaper parlance, a sensation.

The lady maid was dressed entirely in white. Her frock was of soft white silk, which, colorless as it was, did not dim the glorious ivory of her neck and arms. She wore no jewelry, but a white rose nestled in the silken folds of her golden hair, and another rested on the bosom of her dress.

The officers, all the young men, in fact, opened their eyes, and found their hearts beating at this vision of loveliness, and even Seymour was startled.

He had never seen Irene in her "war-paint," and to-night she was a revelation. The blood quickened in his veins as if had never done at anything before—excepting baccarat.

He had valued her hitherto for her money, but to-night he realized her indescribable beauty, and it made his pulse quicken.

The dinners at Monk Towers were always perfect, and sometimes magnificent, when, as to-night, the table groined under the gold plate for which the family was famous. They were all some times slow, but to-night no one could complain on that score, for

the famous author had caught fire at Irene's beauty, and for once gave rein to his eloquence.

They all, encouraged by his example, talked more or less, excepting the countess and Irene, who sat and listened—the first with impassive calm, the latter with a smile of interest.

The young officer who had taken her in, and was more than half afraid of her celestial beauty, fell head over heels in love with her before the third course, and, though he was a silent man as a rule, found himself trying to amuse and interest her.

He did not know who she was, and had no idea that she was the countess's ward and living in the house, but regarded her as a guest of the evening, like himself.

He told her some anecdotes of barrack life, which delighted her because Royce had been a soldier; but presently he made her start and turn pale.

"I had hoped to see the earl's brother, Mr. Royce Landon, to-night," he said.

"He is not here," she said in a low voice.

"No! I am sorry for that, for I wanted to see him very much. A young brother of mine is in the same regiment, and he is quite mad about him, and will talk about him by the hour together—in fact, as long as he can get any one to listen to him."

"Mr. Landon has—left the army," said poor Irene.

"I know; and I suppose he's in a sort of disgrace. His people have 'sent him to Coventry.' Isn't that so?"

"Yes," faltered Irene.

"Well, I think it's rather too hard on him, and not fair." Irene's face flushed, and her heart beat fast.

"Why do you say that? Tell me," she said.

Delighted at having interested her, the officer went on:

"Well, I fancy the whole truth of the business isn't generally known. I've got the rights of it from my brother, and I'm convinced that if young Landon had stood his ground, he would not have had to resign. My brother says that the colonel was and is a perfect brute, and that he exasperated Landon beyond mortal endurance. The colonel had got a grudge against him, and lost no opportunity of rounding on him—I beg your pardon; that's barrack slang."

"I understand; I know. Go on," murmured Irene, breathlessly.

"Not a day passed but Landon had to endure some open or covert insolence, and he bore it wonderfully until the night when the other man threw wine in his face. Why, in the old times, such an insult would have had to be wiped out with blood. And I'm afraid you, being a lady, won't agree with me—but I'm not sure that in such a case a duel wouldn't have been quite fitting and proper."

"Royce—Mr. Landon would have killed him," murmured Irene, with a shudder.

Science and Invention

THE MOON ROCKET AGAIN.

The rocket that will be able to travel from the earth to the moon in less than eleven hours may soon be a reality. It is explained that though the rocket could easily reach the moon, it will not be called upon for so useless a journey, but will be employed in scientific exploration of the higher atmosphere, thus making available invaluable scientific data from an almost unknown region. Prof. R. H. Goddard, of Clark University, who has been carrying on investigations aimed at this result for the past fourteen years, has recently announced to the American Association for the Advancement of Science that he is now near his goal. Says Science Service's Daily Science News Bulletin (Washington):

In early experiments under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, Professor Goddard used smokeless powder as a propelling force, but he has recently solved the problem of utilizing liquid fuel, burning it continuously and gradually in pure oxygen without overheating the combustion chamber. By this means it is possible to give the rocket a speed of 6.6 miles a second.

The average distance of the moon from the earth is close to 240,000 miles. A rocket traveling at a rate of six and six-tenths miles a second would traverse this distance in about ten hours and five minutes, or about the time it takes mail planes to go from New York to Chicago.

A Romanian professor, H. Oberth, in a paper published recently, suggests the possibility of some such overnight limited service to the moon; but Professor Goddard has only in mind the more modest and practicable plan of obtaining records of the intensity of the sun's radiation, and of the composition, electrical conditions, and temperature of the atmosphere at heights hitherto entirely inaccessible to man.

Dr. W. J. Humphreys, professor of meteorological physics in the U.S. Weather Bureau, and an authority on commenting to Science Service on Professor Goddard's scheme:

"It would be a great advantage to the meteorologist to know the composition and temperature of the upper atmosphere at heights above those already explored by sounding-balloons. On both these points observations and theories based upon meteors and auroras are in radical conflict with each other, and both differ entirely from the hitherto recognized orthodox theories. The Goddard rocket gives promise of definitely settling the question of conditions at such high altitudes. It would be possible to construct apparatus that would bring down samples of the air at any desired height and at the same time register temperature and pressure without using the delicate and expensive recording instruments now employed.

Knowledge of the upper atmosphere has come mostly in recent years from that of sounding balloons. These are about three feet in diameter and carry up a set of recording instruments which come down fastened to a parachute after the balloon bursts. None of these balloons has reached a height much greater than twenty miles, while the Goddard rocket can easily go three or four times as high or even be driven off into space. Its location at a given point in its flight can be made known by an explosion of flashlight powder.

There is great diversity of scientific opinion as to conditions existing in the upper atmosphere. Some think it contains frozen crystals of nitrogen floating in a temperature of 513 below zero Fahrenheit or lower, while others believe that the temperature is not lower than about 60 below zero.

The velocity of the Goddard rocket, which is propelled on the same principle as the familiar Fourth-of-July firework, depends on the velocity of the gases expelled, and on its altitude. It starts slowly and increases in speed as long as the fuel lasts, for several reasons. It encounters less resistance in the thin upper atmosphere or the near-vacuum of interstellar space. It carries less weight as its fuel is used, and it becomes less and less affected by the force of the earth's attraction which decreases in proportion to the square of the distance from its center of gravity.—Literary Digest.

at the Movies



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"And serve the ruffian right," he said, warmly.

Irene lifted her eyes to his with a grateful glance that thrilled while it puzzled him.

"All the sympathy was with Landon," he went on. "He was the favorite of the regiment, and the colonel was detested. According to my brother, Landon was just what an officer should be: kind and considerate to the men, and as full of pluck and generosity as—

as this glass is full of wine. He was the best horseman in the brigade, and there was nothing too daring for him to attempt. If we'd had one of our little wars, Landon would have got the Victoria Cross for a certainty."

Irene could not see her plate—her eyes were so full of tears.

"My brother—I'm afraid you'll be sick of my brother, Miss Trevelyan," he laughed, apologetically.

"No, no. I—I should like to see him. I am sure he, too, must be brave and generous."

"Oh, he's a smart enough youngster," he said. "Well, I was going to say, he took Landon's resignation so much to heart that he called upon the earl, Lord Landon—"

"Called upon the earl?" said Irene.

"Yes; rather a cool thing to do, but he has plenty of cheek. He went to him and laid the whole case before him, gave him the full particulars, and begged him to use his influence at the War Office and get Mr. Landon back again; and my brother is convinced that there wouldn't have been any great difficulty in reinstating Mr. Landon."

Irene looked across at Seymour, whose face was beaming with an unconscious smile.

"And—and did he, the earl, try and do what he could?" she asked, breathlessly.

"I don't know," replied the officer, with some hesitation; "but I think not. I suppose he thought that it was of no use. We should have been sure to have heard of it if he had applied to the War Office—these things always leak out, you know. My brother is awfully cut up about it. He adores Landon—simply adores him—and I fancy he has been trying to find him, for since his resignation Landon has completely disappeared. I suppose, though, that his people know where he is, and what he is doing?"

Irene shook her head.

"No, they do not know," she said, sadly; then, with the color coming and going in the lovely face, which she turned to him anxiously, she asked:

"Do you think that it is not too late now—to restore Roy—Mr. Landon?"

"No, I don't think so. The earl, I believe, has a great deal of influence with the Government, and could bring tremendous pressure to bear at the War Office. But I don't think he himself is very hopeful. Perhaps he fancies that it would only make the unfortunate affair more public than it is. I'm afraid I've bored you to death, Miss Trevelyan; but the fact is, my brother is always drumming the business into my ears, and I've caught something of his enthusiasm."

"I am not bored in the least," said Irene, so sweetly that her voice rang like music in the young fellow's ears, and kept him silent for a minute or two.

Every now and then Seymour glanced keenly across at the two. He saw the sensation Irene had produced, and it set him thinking that he had better not postpone his attack, unless he wanted to see her borne off by some other man.

The dinner was got through at last, and the ladies retired.

(To be continued)

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