

Labour interest called me during the last electoral campaign? My disciple and secretary, young Dale Kynnersley, the only mortal besides Rogers who knows my whereabouts, trembles for my reason. In the eyes of the excellent Rogers I am horn-mad. What my constituents would think did they see me taking the muddy air on a soggy afternoon, I have no conception. Dale keeps them at bay. He also baffles the curiosity of my sisters, and by his diplomacy has sent Eleanor Faversham on a huffy trip to Sicily. She cannot understand why I bury myself in bleak solitude, instead of making cheerful holiday among the oranges and lemons of the South.

Eleanor is a girl with a thousand virtues, each of which she expects to find in counterpart in the man to whom she is affianced. Until a week or two ago I actually thought myself in love with Eleanor. There seemed a whimsical attraction in the idea of marrying a girl with a thousand virtues. Before me lay the pleasant prospect of reducing them—say, ten at a time—until I reached the limit at which life was possible, and then one by one until life became entertaining. I admired her exceedingly—a strapping, deep-chested, healthy English girl who looked you straight in the eyes and gripped you fearlessly by the hand.

My friends "lucky-dog'd" me until I began to smirk to myself at my own good fortune. She visited the constituency and comported herself as if she had been a Member's wife since infancy, thereby causing my heart to swell with noble pride. This unparalleled young person compelled me to take my engagement almost seriously. If I shot forth a jest, it struck against a virtue and fell blunted to the earth. Indeed, even now I am sorry I can't marry Eleanor. But marriage is out of the question.

I have been told by the highest medical authorities