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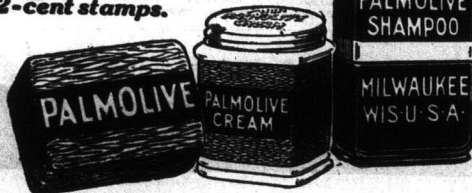
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Dollars or Dreams

By A. A. Thomson

SOMEWHERE from far away across the sleeping city, a clock struck three—clear resonant notes above the brief silence of the streets, in which night had cast her short spell of peace. Faintly the voice of the chimes came faltering through the night, softly echoing in the quietude of the room where the writer sat before his work—asleep.

The shade of the reading lamp was tilted so that its light lay only upon one side of the littered table. Within the arc of light was the head of the Writer; one cheek pillowed on his arm, his relaxed hand outstretched where the fingers had lost their hold of the fountain pen which lay among a little pool of ink, evolved in that cheerfully characteristic manner common to those stylographic fiends. The lamp, though burning low, still outlined clearly the face of this toiler who slumbered by his work. His face was worn and gray for one so young in years; a face where the potentiality of youth had been almost erased by the heavy hand of circumstance.

I have said that the tilted lamp shade only threw the light on the table. Perhaps it were better that we keep our gaze centered there, for a parlor-bedroom in a New York boarding house will not lend itself happily to the prolific and hopeful pursuit of that strangely vague and chimeric existence known as "writing."

The world, unfortunately, has always seemed to reserve its attics for the abode of those who possess literary genius.

Ah! that hard-won path of literature, how sadly different it is to many of us!

Some are born with a gold-tipped pen in their hand, and to them the formation of beautiful phraseology, of prose-poetry, is backed by an excellent education—and unlimited time is allowed for all composition.

To others comes the worn stub of lead pencil with which they scribble the paragraphs upon which depends the onerous question "to dine or not to dine?" Such an one has half-an-hour in which to finish his "copy"; his literary sanctum is a corner of the greasy-topped table in a restaurant.

On the table in this room there lay a sheaf of closely-written manuscript, clipped together by a small brass tack. If manuscript can look otherwise than prosaic, this certainly attempted to smile, or had not this sleeping Writer been commissioned to produce a "novellette" of 50,000 words?

There he lay, a single sheet of copy paper half-covered by his hand-writing in front of him, his greater task ended; worn out asleep.

As the chimes died away into silence, there seemed to pass through the room some faint and phantom breeze from out the chilly caverns of the night. The leaves of the completed manuscript rustled very slightly under one of those strange nocturnal currents of air—a stifled sigh from the weary world.

Beyond the circle of light a faint radiance seemed to centre around two persons who stood looking down on the sleeping face of the Writer. They were vague, nebulous personalities, bred by his own imagination, who had, as the Writer slept, wandered from their proper place between the pages of the manuscript—the Hero and Heroine.

"Does he not look tired?" she said. "I cannot understand how he manages to make two worthless nonentities, like you and me, cover so much space, and he, in five chapters, has made me do beautiful, womanly things which I detest, and which are very rarely done by any present-day girl."

"Yes," said the Hero, "and he makes out all through the blessed story that I worship and adore you, while, as our different temperaments are, I loathe the sight of you. You are too namby-pamby, goody-goody, pink and white—no spirit; not, by miles, the woman I could ever love in real life. And he makes out that I am a high-souled, idealistic sort of Sir Galahad, who is eternally being wronged, and who has terrible difficulties to surmount. In fact, I want to marry you because you are well off, since my ideals don't soar beyond a comfortable home and somebody to supply the cash I lack. You can give

me these things, so, despite the twaddle this sleeping Writer may cover paper with, I am proud to say that I am not in the least heroic."

"And I don't want to wander after you both, like some vampire," said the Woman with a Past, coming forward into the light. "I don't want to worry you, and though he says so, I don't regret the skittish time I had in my youth; you see marriage, like an ulcer, covers a multitude of faults."

A deep voice broke in upon their conversation. "And why should he make me suffer under the bar sinister of a villainous existence?"

They turned and beheld the Villain standing behind them. He was—in the story—dark, and possessed of a satirical scowl, his sneering lips half concealed beneath a heavy drooping moustache. He was—in reality—as villainy usually is, a gentle opened-faced type of young man the sort of fellow who men like to make a confidant of—the kind that women flirt with, to their undoing. A hangman does not carry an advertisement of his profession upon his face; why should the poor villain,—outside the necessity of the novelette?

"I'm sick of it," said the villain. "I don't hate either of you, and I don't want in the least to marry you," turning to the Heroine; "you are too foolish and insipid for anyone possessed of the least intellectual villainy to wish to harm; besides, I have a very tender heart on the whole. I am eternally getting frustrated, knocked down, or thrown into a pond; and I never was such an arrant ass as to do half the things he makes me do, in the story. I tell you I'm so sick of myself I'm glad when the old squire shoots me in mistake for the burglar—and that's not until the next to the last chapter—worse luck!"

"I'm afraid we are just old stock," quavered a voice from the other side of the table, where the Old Father of the Heroine had been standing in silence. "We simply seem inevitable necessities which the idiotic readers of novelettes demand and expect. I am not a fine old man, and I'd never forgive you, you hussy, for running away," he said, turning to the Heroine. "Of the two men I'd infinitely rather give your hand in marriage to the Villain; he is, at least, human—not faultless!"

"Peace, peace, my children," interpolated a youthful voice from the background. They turned, and looking towards the fireplace, saw a childish figure standing there.

LESS MEAT

Advice of Family Physician

Formerly people thought meat necessary for strength and muscular vigor.

The man who worked hard was supposed to require meat two or three times a day. Science has found out differently.

It is now a common thing for the family physician to order less meat, as in the following letter from an Eastern man:

"I had suffered for years with dyspepsia and nervousness. My physician advised me to eat less meat and greasy foods generally. I tried several things to take the place of my usual breakfast of chops, fried potatoes, etc., but got no relief until I tried Grape-Nuts food."

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"We have been so much benefited by Grape-Nuts that it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge it."

Name given by Canadian Postum Co., Windsor, Ont. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.