

A DOUBLE EVENT

A Story of Two People Struggling For Literary Fame.

By AMELIA PAIN.

The first letter fell out of a blue sky, signed "John Giddens," on to unprepared soil, addressed as "E. F. Cornish, Esq., Care of the Editor," and ran as follows:

Dear Sir—I have just read your story, "The Carbuncle." May I refer you to a sketch of mine, entitled "The Book," and published in *Stoner's Magazine* for April last? I am naturally much flattered at being found worthy of your attention, and I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it. At the same time, as I hope you will find it well worth your time to read it, I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it.

The answer came three days later: "Dear Sir—Your letter of the 4th has been forwarded to me. I had not read your story, 'The Carbuncle,' until this morning. I had seen it, however, and I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it. I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it."

John Giddens immediately wrote again, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the explanation, and suggesting that in future they should revise each other's proofs to avoid further risks.

Will you accept the small volume which I send herewith as a peace offering? It is my first attempt at a novel, and I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it. I am sure that you will find it well worth your time to read it."

E. F. Cornish allowed the lapse of a week before returning thanks for the book. "I waited to read it, contrary to my general rule," was the reason given, borne out by a most careful criticism and most uncommon praise. "The book has appealed to me more strongly than any other modern novel. I hardly dare or care to tell you (after what has already passed between us) that the plot is almost identical with one which I have been secretly nursing in my mind for years."

But so it is. It gave me the oddest sensation—as if my thoughts had somehow escaped my brain or had been stolen from me. I had a moment of senseless rage. And toward the end of the letter: "Of course you are right about my name and sex being assumed, but you are the first who has unmasked me and trusted to your discretion. I am sure that I safely may. There are reasons why this should be of importance to me. As to your feeling of toward an intellectual twist? I feel my part, my frankly curious to know more of yourself as well as of your work. Will you let me? Remember that I know nothing of your personal history, your address, and that I am no less curious than the rest of my sex."

Whereon John Giddens showed himself no less flattered than the rest of his sex by replying with a long letter, delicately personal, a trifle sentimental in parts, but with high lights of humor that must have appealed particularly to E. F. Cornish, if sympathy in humor goes for anything. And of course there was a counter petition for personal information. "There is always a satisfaction," he ended, "in seeing a portrait of any one of whom we have vividly imagined. May I not see a portrait of you—a sketch, a photograph—anything that can give me the faintest idea of you? I intend faithfully to return it. If you refuse, you must, of course, bear my excuses."

"I haven't got one photograph of myself that I would show to a meeting of cats," answered E. F. Cornish, "but to stiffen inferences I must tell you that there will be at least two portraits of me in next year's exhibitions (I am a victim of painter), and those you shall see and know. Tell me, meanwhile, what your imagination has painted me. Describe me. I will describe you by way of encouragement. You are of medium height. A trifle tall. Short, broad, and stout. I think grayish eyes. A sensitive mouth—almost femininely so—and very white hands. You are not strong, physically, and you are thin and stoop a little. You are emotional and a little nervous. Tell me, as soon as you like. A short and whimsical lament on the 'abyssal difficulties' that beset the work of a young girl who is writing intently in secret closed the letter."

"Dark," John Giddens painted her in his reply, "with straight brows and full lips, a strong, self-reliant face and upright figure. Large eyes, rather restless, with a bit of the devil in them. Age about twenty-five, but sometimes three. A little bit too wealthy for your own happiness as an artist, a little bit spoiled by worldly admiration. Heavens, how I shall tremble before your next letter!"

The next letter was already a certainty. From now they wrote constantly, letters that slipped gradually into intimacy, letters full of kindred humor, often frankly personal.

It was John Giddens who at last, after two months of this correspondence, approached the question of meeting, till then carefully avoided. "Why should we remain mere paper friends when fate so clearly intended more? Think of all we may be foregoing; or, better still, think not at all, but send me a simple, trustful 'Yes.'"

And she did send by return a colossal "Yes" that occupied the whole of the first page. On the second came instructions: "Let it be at the British museum (for respectability) by the Elgin marbles (for inspiration) next Tuesday afternoon at 5 o'clock. And, to avoid assaulting the wrong people, let each wear a yellow orchid—I in my dress, you in your coat. Rob (of John Giddens' novel) has decided me. I was receding last night. Those whom a common humor hath joined together let no man part asunder."

Tuesday was a pouring wet day, but at five minutes to 5 a tall, gaunt woman, large footed, with a yellow orchid in her dress, entered the Elgin marble room, wiped some spots of rain off her gloves and cape, looked nervously at her watch and looked about her with furtive, short-

sighted eyes that glanced excitedly behind her glasses. She must have been blind if a minute, but had the originality to face it squarely in her soberly expensive garments, her unchallenging—almost apologetic—bonnet and her hygienic boots. A certain broad humanity in the mouth and a decided glint of humor in the eye saved the face from downright ugliness, or—well, nearly saved it.

At three minutes to 5 a young man of about twenty-two, very short, very fair and very clean, with a stoop, and a yellow orchid in his buttonhole, entered the same room from the other side. He, too, looked about him with quick, light eyes, wherein a corresponding glint of humor fought with an unobtrusive mouth.

They did not appear to see one another at once, these two, although the room held no more than its usual half dozen people. But they moved toward each other, from statue to statue, with slow, casual steps, and a deep interest apparently in the antique, till they met. Then they glanced hurriedly over one another and passed on in opposite directions. Both continued this way for some time. This time the woman stopped, fastened her shortsighted eyes on the man's buttonhole, and said with a rush, "I am John Giddens."

He looked steadily at the orchid in her buttonhole and said, "And I am E. F. Cornish."

She held out her hand, their eyes met squarely, the glints struck and they stood there laughing hysterically, two ill-shaped, civilization-soiled moderns among the cold glories of the ancients.

Questions and explanations followed in quick alternation. Why had John Giddens masqueraded as a man in a private correspondence?

"Don't you see that I thought you were a woman?" she explained frantically. "Don't you see what a sublime situation I was in? I was brought about to work up to the point of romance, almost of love, and then meet a man to whom and whom I should have been perfect. But why you should pretend to be a woman?"

And E. F. Cornish had to explain how the idea, once given to him, had seemed irresistibly suggestive; how he, too, had determined to represent himself as a young and beautiful girl, that he might wallow in the moment of disillusionment.

"Again the same idea, you see," he ended. "But after one hour's talk, sitting face to face in that silent company, each said and heard enough to realize that there was indeed an unprecedented intellectual sympathy. It was extraordinary. No two friends of half a century's standing could have played better parts. Each other's hands taken each other's allusions with quicker grasp, enjoyed each other's utterances with more unjealous admiration."

It was almost unconsciously that she told him such fragments of her life as could interest him; how sheer boredom and social reaction had started her pen in middle life, and how her age and her wealth made her fearful of ridicule and determined her to conceal her identity. And, equally unconsciously, he gave her glimpses of his lower middle class setting in Hampstead, his attacks of literary despair, his sister, who painted screens and bellows, his struggles against ill health, his finest flower—spontaneous, beautiful, urging eternal union. Only—there were likewise the facts of his twenty-two years, his five feet four and his head, and his forty years, his probable consumption and his certain mother; and, far above all, the fact of their common humor, illuminating all these and holding them to their part of mere friendship—a friendship which lasted their time—King.

The Spinning Machine of a Spider.
The spinning machine is situated under the hinder part of the spider's body. It is a close inspection shows to consist of six small bodies resembling tubes. Four of these contain an immense number of minute openings—as many as a thousand can be counted in each—and from every one of these openings a viscous fluid issues, which hardens on exposure to the atmosphere. The whole machine is contained in one line, twisted together would not have a combined diameter greater than that of an ordinary hair from the human head. It is impossible to conceive the excessive elasticity of one of the 4,000 threads which compose such a line. The bare statement that each one has a thickness only one sixteen thousandth of that of a human hair does not in any way convey the impression of its wonderful fineness. The mind can no more grasp the meaning of such figures than it can understand the immense distance of which astronomers talk so glibly.

A Rocking Stone.
The rocking stone which stands on the flat surface of an outcropping of rock on a little eminence in Bronx park does not attract so much attention as the Elgin marbles, but there is something about it, nevertheless, always interested people walking around it and trying to see if they can move it.

This great fragment of rock, which weighs perhaps eight or ten tons or more, has in its general outlines a form in some ways resembling a large egg. It lies on its side, and so nicely balanced is it that one man of fair strength can readily move it, and almost any two persons can start it into the rocking movement of which, through a small radius, it is susceptible. A woman comes up and lays her gloved hands upon it and presses gently; it doesn't budge.

"Why, it doesn't move," she says. "But two or three women together can set the great stone rocking easily. And no matter who it may be that sets the rocking stone in motion, it is pretty sure to find in setting it rocking a sort of fascination."—New York Sun.

The Pansy.
Ida Bennett says in *American Homes* that there is scarcely a plant in the garden about which so many musty traditions exist as about the pansy. Chief of them, she says, is the tradition that it is a shade loving plant. Fifteen years' experience has convinced her that pansies are best grown in the sun, and watered in the middle of the day. The essentials of success are a twice a day watering and the faithful going over the beds every day during the blooming season and the removal of every faded flower. She lays special stress on the latter, saying the ripening of even one pod of seed materially shortens the plant's season of bloom. Of course during the very hot weather one may not expect pansies, for, like other plants, they have their blooming season and take a rest after it.

The doctor sometimes passes a harder sentence than the judge. But the sentence of the doctor is more often set aside or overruled than is that of the judge. In the case of Mrs. Reynolds, given below, the doctor sentenced her to about eighteen years of physical punishment and misery. But she rebelled against the sentence, and commenced the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. In a few weeks she was a well woman. It's a peculiarity of the cure effected by the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, that they are generally cures of chronic diseases. A woman suffers with disease peculiar to her sex, she takes medical treatment, gets no better, and has no hope held out to her of improvement. Then in her discouragement she turns to Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It finds a prompt and lasting cure. "Favorite Prescription" establishes regularity, dries unhealthy drains, heals inflammation and ulceration and cures female weakness.

"Four years ago my health began to fail," writes Mrs. Nellie Reynolds, of Greenwood, Washington Co., Oregon. "I had a very heavy dragging and weight in the region of the uterus, and in back and sides, could not lift anything heavy, rest at night very poor; stomach deranged. One physician said I had congestion and filling of uterus. He treated me nine months and said I would not be well until I had passed the change of life. I was only twenty-seven years old then. I became discouraged, and began using Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. Took a teaspoonful three times a day; began feeling better and feel I am in good health. I believe Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription has saved me from a life of suffering. It would give me a fair trial they would give it a trial."

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Dives and Lazarus were both beggars after all. The only difference was that Lazarus begged in time while Dives begged for eternity. But that is a big difference, come to think of it!

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MR. ARTHUR LYNCH, M.P.

The Man Who Defeated Mr. Horace Plunkett in the Galway-Why He Hates the British Empire.

Ireland, which invented the absentee landlord, says The London Express, seems likely to invent the absentee M.P. Galway has elected Mr. Arthur Lynch, the chosen candidate of the Nationalists, to the British Parliament, but it is almost a certainty that he will not sit in the House. If he returns to England as a British subject he is liable to be arrested for high treason and shot as a traitor. On his own confession Mr. Lynch has borne arms in the Transvaal against the British Government.

The reason why Mr. Lynch hates the British Empire and all its works is said to be "because London killed his literary ambition. He is a writer of more than ordinary power, a poet of considerable talent, a man with some pretensions to rank as a thinker. A Master of Arts of Melbourne University, civil engineer, athlete, journalist, war correspondent, military officer commanding the 2nd Irish Brigade with the Boers, Arthur Lynch is unusually versatile. But all his gifts have been nullified by a narrow fanaticism of view and a fierce contempt for all prejudices except his own. When the Rhymer's Club met at the Cheshire Cheese Arthur Lynch came as the guest of a well known Irish mystic. With a mind that could not tolerate the medical-student pleasantness of the Rhymer's, Lynch showed that he resented such trifling while he was one of the company. The result was that when he first issued his book, "Modern Authors," those of the Rhymer's who were critics remembered, and mercilessly reviewed his work. Three books which followed received the same treatment, and then the aggrieved author, instead of kissing the rod, issued a satire called "Our Poets," which is one of the most savage satires since "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." He selected such representative poets as Austin Dobson, Swinburne and Kipling, and satirized them in their own metre. But when he came to the minor poets he was venomously merciless. Of one long-haired gentleman, who was a fashion some years ago he said, "the sugar-coated prig," and added in a footnote that his claims to beauty might be summed thus: "He has a fine forehead, but the prim, mean mouth of a parlor-maid." "Our Poets" was soon out of print—bought up, it is hinted, by the satirized Rhymer's. There was no further edition, and although Mr. Lynch has published two books since then, it is easy to understand that they were not a success.

In Paris, where he represented a London daily paper, Mr. Lynch came under the spell of that curious character, Miss Maud Gonne, who rejoices in the mock sobriety of "The Irish Joan of Arc." The lady lost no opportunity of adding fuel to Mr. Lynch's hatred of things English, and she was instrumental in organizing the departure of a number of "mercenary" Irishmen, who were of the late Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil and Arthur Lynch, to the Transvaal. The latter's military ability has won the enmities of Louis Botha, but if Mr. Lynch enters the sphere of British influence he will be sure to himself are likely to be unpleasant.

The Irishman on the Stand.
Lawyers with an appreciative sense of humor enjoy nothing so much as to get a quick-witted, ready-witted son of the Emerald Isle on the stand to relieve the monotony of the legal technicalities of a case. A gentleman who had been collecting samples of Irish wit and repartee for some time relates the following anecdote. Some of them are doubtless mellow with age, but in any case they will bear repetition: "Are you guilty or not, guilty?" asked the court clerk of a prisoner charged with some trifling offence. "That are yes there for but, to found out?" was the quick rejoinder. A henpecked husband had his better half arrested for assaulting him. The plaintiff was on the stand. And now, Mr. O'Toole, said his counsel, tell your kindly tell the jury whether your wife was in the habit of striking you with impunity?"

"Wid what, sor?" "With impunity." "She was, sor, now an' then; but, she generally used th' potaty mash."

A witness, testifying in a murder case, was asked to describe to the jury the exact location of a flight of stairs.

"Explain to the jury," said the prosecuting attorney, "exactly how the steps run."

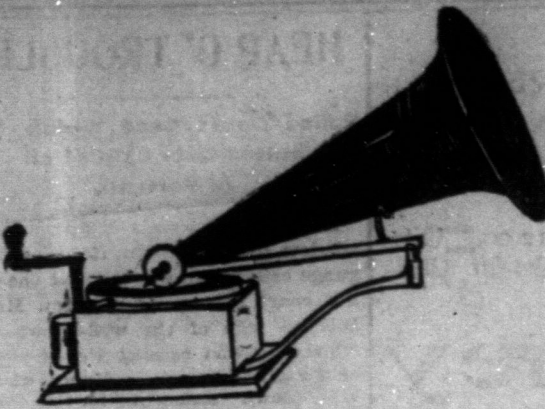
"Shure, sor, if ye stand at the bottom of the steps up an' if ye stand at th' top they run down."

In a suit brought by an installment house to obtain payment for a suite of furniture, a witness was asked if he knew what "quartered oak" meant. Here is his definition:

"It means that it's three-quarters poine"—Baltimore Sun.

Proved His Innocence.
An amusing story is told of a clergyman, taking occasional duty for a friend in one of the moorland churches of a remote part of England, was greatly scandalized on observing the old vergar, who had been collecting the offertory, quietly abstract a half crown before presenting the plate at the altar rails. After the service he called the old man into the vestry and told him with emotion that his crime had been discovered. The vergar looked puzzled. Then a sudden light dawned on him. "Why, sir, you don't mean that old half-crown of mine? Why, I've 'led off' with he this last fifteen years."

Could Dream at Will.
A physician mentions the case of a man who could be made to dream of any subject by whispering about it into his ear while he slept; and it is a familiar fact that persons who talk in their sleep will frequently answer questions if spoken to softly.



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