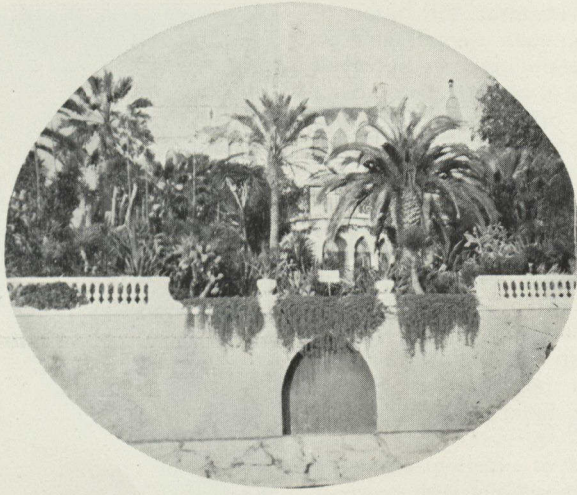




AN ITALIAN PALACE

"MY BRIDAL TRIP"

By Albert R. Carman

IT was Marc Stewart who called it "my bridal trip." Marc Stewart is the man with the ethical judgment in our set. He is the vault in which are deposited our approved standards of honour and conduct. Whenever any one of us is in doubt as to whether he should take a favour at the hands of Mr. A., with whom his firm has business relations, or a weekly cup of "five o'clock tea" from the fairer hands of young Mrs. B., in whose sentimental past he was an "also ran," he consults Marc Stewart—with a non-committal air, however, which is intended to convey to Mr. Stewart the impression that it matters little what he says on the subject. But it does. Yet not one of us would take his judgment on anything of importance. Like a professional conscience-keeper, he is insulated from the sordid currents of earth. His choicest business conceits could be published as a new and valuable list of "Don'ts." But when we have had dinner, and escaped into the world of smoke-rings, and vaguely daring politics, and more daring sociology, and

touch-and-go literary appreciation, and delicate moral problems, we all long for Marc Stewart. He is so impractical, so superior to conditions, so stimulating to the conscience in fields where that organ can do little real harm.

Thus it came about quite naturally that I told him one night all about my experience with the Campbells on their wedding trip; and he summed it up as being, in reality, "my bridal trip," and not Jack Campbell's at all.

It began one evening at Cannes. I was staying at a large "pension" there, and was feeling rather lonely; for there was no one else at the "pension" except a German family, a solitary Russian, and a group of English people abroad for the first time. English people must take two or three trips abroad before they become companionable to strangers whose hereditary burying-place they do not know. I had been walking on the Croisette until sunset, when that chill falls on the Riviera air which drives all the world in to "five o'clock tea," and now I was sitting before the coal fire