Short Stories By The World's Greatest Writers.

CUPID AND A CHAUFFEUR

By IAN JOHNSON.

"Everything's quite clear?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did Miss Glegg give you the order about the ride?"

"Only last night, sir."

"I suppose there is no chance of her countermanding it?"

"Not that I reckon on."

"H'm. That's all right then." The speaker, an expression of thought on his face, turned to a large square-house that sat solidly unattractive in the fiddle of a St. John's wood garden. He stood on the pavement making what seemed to be some arrangements with the quiet looking little chauffeur who sat in a motor by the roadside. Presently he consulted his watch. "It's now five minutes to two. Is the lady punctual?"

"Usually, sir?"

"Then I'll go for a stroll." He smiled as he put a note in the man's hand. "If the worst comes to the worst, I'll see you don't go begging for a new place."

"Thank you, sir." Tabby Jones pocketed the note, and felt very well satisfied with himself. His thoughts ran on the man that had just disappeared round a corner. "'E jolly well deserves to win 'e does. Five quid last week, five quid to-day, and more to come—who knows." But Tabby hadn't much time for contemplation of the future. A young lady emerged from the house, and was very soon talking to the differential motorman. She was enveloped in a very cosy-looking fur coat; a silk scarf coiled around her neck; a little woollen cap sat most becomingly on her head. Alice Glegg was—and is—an actress who had graced the stage of many a theatre in London and out of it. At present she was helping Cupid to wound hearts and make mischief from the boards of the Gallery in the Strand.

Alice would not have wantonly created a domestic disturbance, but she took undisguised delight in watching wifely jealousy deepen in proportion as husbands' affections for her increased. She had had preferences in plenty, but only one man had succeeded in rousing the real thing in heart trouble. And now that was of the past, though, let it be said, neither love-bird had ceased to chirp in secret for its absent mate.

"You know the road, Tabby?"

"Yes, Miss, I've done it many a time."

"How far is it?"

"It's exactly twenty-one miles, Miss."

"And how long will it take us to do it?"

"Well, miss, I've covered the road in just thirty-five minutes. I beat—"

"What?"

"I beat Colonel"—

"No, no, but you don't mean to say you're going to try any racing with me. I forbid you to."

"Very good, miss; would you wish to take an hour on it?"

"Yes, Tabby, an hour and a half at least." And the young lady, having pronounced this dictum, settled herself snugly to enjoy the greatly refreshing breeze that fanned the road to Egham.

It was not this masterful chauffeur's idea of enjoyment at all to creep along a level road at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, but he knew too well what precipitate rashness would mean to indulge in it. He had to do nineteen miles in three-quarters of an hour, and the only way to be up to time was by imperceptibly increasing the speed till he was swinging along at a pace of which his mistress would happily be innocent.

"Oh! Gracious! Whatever's happened?" Miss Alice Glegg's next contribution to the long interrupted conversation was as startling as the noise that involuntarily summoned it.

"Well, miss, it looks like a smash-up somewhere."

"Oh, Tabby, do look and see." Tabby was off his seat before the words were spoken. He set himself diligently to discover the cause of alarm.

"It don't look like as if we're going to get much further to-night," he said as he lay on his back under the car and looked into the face of the girl bending over the side.

"Why, what is it?"

"Valve burst."

"How tiresome! What am I to do? I simply must get to Egham before 4 o'clock.

"Get another auto, miss."

"How can I get another auto when the nearest village is perhaps miles away?"

"We're only about a mile from Staine's now."

The girl thought over the difficulty for some minutes, then impatience overcome deliberation, and she said: "What are you poking there at? Can't you do something?"

Tabby smiled inwardly as he slowly crawled out and regained a perpendicular attitude. He looked about him for a moment and, as a happy thought seemed to occur to his energetic brain suggested that there was an empty car with its nose toward them resting by a house a couple of hundred yards in the rear.

"Do go and see if any one is in charge of it. There's not a minute to be lost," urged the girl.

"It looks like a private car and a racing one at that. But I'll go and see, Miss." Tabby proceeded to negotiate terms with the many-coated chauffeur, and presently drew up with him at the distressed maiden's side. Tabby explained that he had prevail-vailed upon his fellow driver to convey the lady to her destination. Miss Glegg climbed into a seat behind the hairy one, who so far had preserved silence.

"It's very good of you to pull me out of the difficulty," said the girl as the new driver was about to start his auto.

"Not at all. Pleased to be of any assistance to a fellow motorist in distress. When the fellow is a lady the pleasure is doubled."

There was a curious look on Alice's face as the man spoke. She felt sure she had heard that voice before—or something like it—somewhere. Silence ensued for some minutes. Both people were thinking hard. One tried to prove the past, the other wondered what the future had in store for him.

But a divergence was within call. It suddenly occurred to the girl that they were travelling very fast — so fast that according to Tabby's information, Egham should have been reached.

"What place is this," she asked, as they struck the outskirts of what promised to be a town.

"Windsor." The speaker could not trust his voice with more than one word at a time.

"Windsor! What d'you mean?" For answer the man only forced the running, and in less than a breathing space Windsor was left behind. His fair charge was now genuinely alarmed, and looked vainly for a way of escape from something quite as indefinite as her enforced companion's mute behavior. Presently, after a big spurt of the open road, the car slowed down and passed to theleft through the tree-lined avenue of a private villa.

"Is this Major Ampthill's?" the actress enquired. She had never been to the Major's before, and tried to calm her troubled feelings with the faint hope that she might reach her destination by a roundabout way.

"No, it is mine!" The car had come to a standstill, the driver turned in his seat and removed cap and goggles.

"Willie!" The girl hastily corrected herself. "I mean Mr. Manville!"

"You know you don't mean anything of the sort." He looked at her quietly, his tone was firm. Then he rolled off his seat into a standing posture on the road. Leaning against the side of the vacnt seat he smiled as if nothing in the world was less important than the conquest of Alice Glegg. "Alice, I've got this machine on trial. How d'you like it?"

"It's very nice."

"As good as the one you left at Staines?"

"Oh, better than that."

"That's good news. I've decided to give it to you as a marriage present."

"But—but I'm not going to be married."

"Anyway the car will keep till you are." He made a mental calculation of the number of minutes that would elapse elapse before the momentous question was decided. "Now, then, you look so very cozy that I don't like the idea of disturbing you, but perhaps you would care to have a peep at yonder mansion grim' before we return to London."

"Willie, will you do me a favor — the only one I will ever ask?"

"Alice, it its going to be the only favor you'll ever ask of me, I have no hesitation in saying I cannot grant it.."

"What am I to do?" the girl audibly asked herself.

"I know you want to go to the Major's, But just think how long I've been waiting for this meeting. Give me a few minutes more and then I'll take you to Owlscote if you wish." He looked up into eyes that met his and added: "I'd so much like you to see my new purchase. Will you come?" William Manville played his hand well. The run of force was over; he was now dealing winning cards of conciliation and deference.

Alice felt that the beginning of the end had come when she gave her consent to accompany him. He jumped on board and steered the auto to the front of a pretty house skirtedby the river, a lawn and leafy trees. He assisted her to alight. "I bought this house last week. I hope to spend my honeymoon in it very soon," he remarked casually as he produced a bunch of keys from a jacket pocket and inserted one in the front door lock.

They wandered through the empty rooms together. He explained his ideas of how every apartment, nook and cranny should be furnished and soon had the satisfaction of finding that his companion entered wholeheartedly into discussion of the prospective arrangements. Whatever she suggested he was careful to accept as excellent in every way. As they regained the open he linked an arm into one of hers.

"Shall we make a tour of the premises now, or have you had enough?"

"No, not at all. Let's go on the lawn." They went on the lawn and turned to have a general look at the house they had left.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"I think it's perfectly delightful."

"Suppose we have a seat. There's a rather roomy looking garden chair—just big enough for two."

"Willie, why do you keep me here when you know I ought to be at Owlscote?"

"I venture to think that you are better here than at Owlscote. Perhaps we'll go there later on." They had reached the garden chair. "I told you I had just bought the house. Loadon is not satisfactory in Summer, and I thought how pleasant it would be to spend the beautiful long evenings here—on the river— on the lawn." He had taken her hand. "Alice, dear, I've never yet tasted the happiness I hope to have here before long. It lies with you to make a fellow happy or wretched. I told you I bought The Firs to spend my honeymoon in. Will you spend it with me?"

"Yes, Willie, I will. You're the dearest boy I ever met."

"Now for Major Ampthill and Owlscote," said Manville about half an hour later, as he locked the front door of The Firs preparatory to leaving. He knew what the reply would be.

"I don't want to go to the Major's—now."

"But how about the gallant Major's feelings, eh?"

"Don't tease me, Willie. He'll have plenty of girls there without me. Let's go back to London."

"Very well, dear, as you will."

They sat side by side on the return voyage; and as they turned into the main road Manville remarked: "This has been the best day I've ever spent, and two people have my very hearty thanks."

"Who?"

"Cupid and a chauffeur."

BROTHER GIOVANNI'S REWARD

By J. SACKVILLE MARTIN.

Brother Giovanni stood before the great unfinished canvas that was to grace the wall above the high altar of the monastery chapel. His palette and his brushes lay idle beside him, while he stared at the painting with eyes that did not see it, being far beyond in visions of glory, of which he had caught but a faint reflection. Yet that reflection was very beautiful. Here was set out the crucifixion of Our Lord in a manner feeling enough to convert both Turk and Saracen. The good brother's eyes wandered from the infinite tenderness of the central figure of the two weeping women about the foot of the cross, and then to a few strongly drawn lines in charcoal in the left-hand corner of the painting, which showed where the work was still incomplete.

Although a humble monk, Giovanni was held in high esteem both by These held it firm as an article of faith that none other in all Italy could paint as he could. It was useless to speak to them of Firenze and Botticelli; equally useless to talk of Rome and of Raphael. They were simply men who had not seen these things. Neither did they wish to see them; for had they not Giovanni's works?—and it was beyond question that these were beyond compare.

All things considered, Giovanni might have been excused had he been puffed up with his fame. It was the more merit to him, therefore, that he showed no sign of being so. He was ever the same; a simple, kindly, brown-eyed man, somewhat inclined to stoutness through much sitting at his work, of little use in the practical affairs of life, and so forgetful of his comfort that at times, it was necessary to drag him from his canvas to the refectory for his frugal meals.

As his eye travelled downward into the unfinished corner of the picture his face took on an expression of distress, and he awoke from his daydream with a murmur.

"Alas! I can never do it!" he cried. "What do I know of such men, or whom can I take as my model? Nay, but to find him I should have to go forth into the world and into the abode of thieves and murderers. And how can I do that? The picture will never be finished any more than it will be finished when his Lordship comes to see it this afternoon."

His distress was deep indeed; for only that very morning the Abbot Paolo had called him to his own apartment after matins and had informed him that the Lord Bishop of Perugia was passing through the monastery on his way to Firenze, bringing letters from the Holy Father himself to Lorenzo de Medici and to his guest Galleazzo Sforzi, Duke of Milan.

"It is useless," he sighed; "I cannot do it."

He gathered his brushes slowly together and went to the refectory for his midday meal.

The afternoon found him again before his canvas, yet making no further progress with it. Beyond the large window the sun shone hotly on the green lawn of the courtyard. He stood at the window, looking out at it vaguely, busied rather with his thoughts than the scene before him, so that he started as a procession of monks, headed by the abbot and a richly dressed stranger, came across the grass in the direction of his room One glance at the magnificent ecclesiasticism of the visitor's garb told him that this could be no other than the Lord Bishop of Perugia, a powerful prince of the Church, and on terms of intimacy with the Pope himself.

He rose and bowed low as the cortege entered his room. When he raised his eyes to the Bishop's face he remained staring at it as though it were a vision sent to him from heaven itself.

Yet it was scarcely a prepossessing countenance. The Lord Bishop was immensely tall. Besides him, the stout, rubicund visage of the Abbot Paolo gave one the impression of a buffoon in attendance upon a saint. The Bishop's head was bald, save for a scanty ring of sandy hair encircling his tonsure. His eyes were pale blue and shifty save when they were fixed on some definite object, in which cae they were apt to look a trifle malignant. Above them the long shaggy eyebrows were of the same sandy color of his hair. His nose was large and fleshy, and his lips shut tightly together like a steel trap, parted in one place alone by a projecting yellow tooth. Upon the left-hand side of the face, just below the mouth a large mole disfigured his chin, giving rise to a half a dozen strong, sandy hairs. Brother Giovanni stared at him as though he were unable to remove his eyes.

"Ay," said the Lord Bishop, raising his jewelled fingers by way of benediction. "So this is the picture?"

He gazed at it steadily and made the sign of the cross upon his breast. "You have wrought well, my brother," he said, fixing his eyes sternly upon Giovanni. "Yours is indeed a wonderful talent, and it behoves you to see that you use it worthily. Such art is in itself a religion. Yet tell me," he continued scanning the picture narrowly, "what figure do you propose placing here where you have left the canvas imperfect?"

"If it pleases your Lordship," stammered Fra Giovanni, nervously, "it is my intention to deulet there the accursed Iscariot chaffering with the Jews for his pieces of silver. He shall be shown holding out his hand whilehe glances furtively over his shoulder at the cross, as though fearing that he should meet with miraculous destruction."

"It is well thought of," said the Bishop gravely—"a striking conception indeed. Wherefore is it not yet finished as is the rest of the picture?"

"Alas, my Lord!" said Giovanni, "there are difficulties in the way. Yet now I may promise that it shall not be long before it is completed."

"Seethat it is so," said the Bishop. "Work worthily and reverently at your craft, my brother, and do not misuse your talent that has been vouchsafed to you. So shall you surely meet with your reward—not in silver or gold, as do the artists of the world, but in a manner fitting the work you shall accomplish and proportionate to the zeal of which you do it."

He raised his fingers once more in benediction, and departed with his companions, leaving Giovanni standing staring after him. The poor brother's head was spinning with frightful thoughts. He had made no progress with his Judas, because, being surrounded solely by men of faith and holy living, he had no model. Well, was not the Lord Bishop a holy man) And yet that nose, those shifty blue eyes, that hideous mole! With a shudder he hid his face in his hands to shut out the vision. Then, flinging his brushes down, he fled to his cell and shut himself in to struggle against temptation.

In the clear light of a summer evening the Lord Bishop and his train set out for Firenze. From the window of his cell Brother Giovanni watched him depart. Far on into the night he tossed restlessly upon the plank which formed his couch. At midnight he could bear it no longer and, seizing a horn lantern, he hurried guiltily from his cell to the painting room. Desperately he worked by the feeble rays of the lantern until the face of Iscariot stood out hideously, with pale sandy hair, and shifting eyes, and a mole upon his chin. Almost he feared to look upon it himself. It was like—horribly like! With a shudder he dashed his brush at the face and obliterated all that he had done.

During the next few days Brother Giovanni went about the monastery pale and preoccupied. The great work made no progress, for he could not touch it. He was obsessed by a vision of the Bishop's face. He knew now that no other Judas was possible for him; he knew that he would have to paint it, and he trembled at the knowledge.

On the fifth day he could keep away no longer. He fell to his work with feverish eagerness. One thing, and one thing only, he would do. He would replace the scanty hair with thick and matted locks. Possibly that would be a sufficient disguise. And he would leave out the mole, if he could. He worked as a starving man eats—without stopping and Judas grew hideously once more upon the canvas.

The good Abbot Paolo watched him with perplexity.

"It reminds me," he said vaguely, scratching his head, "it reminds me of some one—yet of whom I could not tell."

The brethren thought the same. They gathered in little groups before the picture, endeavoring to recall whom it resembled. None of them, however, penetrated the disguise of the thick-matted hair. And the mole was not there, though Fra Giovanni had long made up his mind that Judas had such a mole, and his fingers itched to put it on.

At length one morning he could resist the temptation no longer, and, with a few vicious dabs of amber, the mole stood revealed. Barely had he finished it when the Abbot hurried in with joy upon his face.

"My brother," he cried, "hast thou finished thy picture? The Lord Bishop returns this way from Firenze today, and will arrive in the afternoon. He is certain to wish to see it, and doubtless he will reward thee, my son, according to thy deserts."

"Yes," said Giovanni quietly, it is finished."

The Abbot departed joyfully, too full of his preparations for his guest's reception to glance at the canvas. But Giovanni stared at it dismally.

"He will know it," he murmured; "he cannot but recognize it."

It would be so easy to alter the face. A few dabs of paint would at least obliterate the mole. Yet as poor Giovanni looked at his work he knew it was impossible.

"I will not!" he cried, raising his hands. "Thus was Judas, and not otherwise. I will not do it!"

In the afternoon the Lord Bishop came over the hills with a numerous retinue. When he had washed and partaken of some slight refection, expressed a wish to see the picture.

Many of the brethren, proud of Fra Giovanni's skill, accompanied him. Like bees, they clustered about the canvas, leaving, however, a space wherein the good Abbot and his guest might move.

The Lord Bishop of Perugia looked long and steady at the picture. Then he turned his eyes toward Giovanni, who stood beside it, sick with fear. There could be no doubt now whom Judas resembled. Not one of the monks could miss the likeness when the model stood before them. They fell to whispering together, marvelling that they had not seen it before. And ever as he looked the Bishop's scowl increased, and with the scowl the resemblance grew stronger.

"Thou hast wrought well," he said at last, turning toward Giovanni. Thou hast well employed the talent that hath been granted unto thee. Indeed, indeed," he went on, punning with vicious pleasantry, "thou hast not hidden it in a napkin. Therefore, as I did prophesy to thee, thou shalt surely meet with thy reward—not in gold or silver, my brother, but in a manner fitting to the work whic you have accomplished after the zeal with which you accomplished it. Myself and your good Abbot will confer upon the matter."

He turned and left the room, followed by the Abbot and the whispering monks, and once more Giovanni was left alone with his picture.

That same evening, in the chapter house, Brother Giovanni received his reward, and in good measure. A couple of sturdy brethren stripped him and, placing him face downwards upon the floor, laid on to him lustily with raw cowhide until he bellowed again. Nightly for a month the process was repeated; so that long afterward the peasantry of those parts, when they could hear the wolves howl in the forest at night, would laugh by their firesides and say:

"Pisht 'tis but Brother Giovanni receiving the reward of the talent that hath been granted to him."

Moral: Even in the days before commercial competition, Art for Art's sake did not always pay.

A DUEL

By ALFRED DEUTSCH.

"Well, let me see, now?" asked Rudolph Berger himself as he came home at seven in the morning.

To be perfectly honest he did not know. He was not drunk nor had he been, but his memory failed him and it was only by an almost supe.human effort that the events came back to him.

At seven he had left his office, at half past eight he had finished dressing, and at ten he and two friends had come to a family whose every female member interested him, from the wife to the chambermaid. From there they had drifted into a cafe where several bottles of champagne had been opened.

There he had quarrelled with a young man who had never thought of offending him, and though his friends tried to hold him back he had struck him in the face.

Of course a challenge had followed, and he had left it to his friends to arrange all necessary details.

Cards had been exchanged, and in spite of the protests of his friends he had continued drinking, even after they had left him, and had come home when it was already broad daylight.

He took a cold shower, put on a business suit and sat down at his desk perfectly clear in his mind, and rather vexed that he had made a fool of himself.

He was not afraid, but it seemed ridiculous that he was to fight and maybe kill a man that he had never met before. He drew from a drawer a smallvolume, in red Morocco, entitled "Code of Honor," and began to read. His case was evidently one which came under the heading "Insult of the first order, duel with pistols or foils." He read on—he must wear a soft shirt, shoes of dull leather, and trousers not too long. He rang for his housekeeper and asked her to find him an unstarched shirt. Then he read on. The orders of the book were clear and to the point: "Drink no liquor, take a good rest, and burn all compromising letters."

He had some letters of that kind in a drawer, which he ought to have burned long ago. A liaison with a young married woman, who had sent him a letter every day and two photographs of her. With a sigh, he consigned all of these relics to the open fire, and had just finished when one of his friends arrived.

He was dressed in black and looked very solemn as he said, laconically: "Youmeet at 3 o'clock this afternoon. I shall call for you with a carriage. The weapons are to be pistols."

Rudolph Berger undressed and went to bed. He could still sleep four hours before the meeting. He had ordered the barber to call an hour before he expected his seconds.

He slept quite soundly and was feeling fine when his friends called and took him along to a restaurant, where they had some roast beef and a couple of glasses of sherry.

"Time is up," one of them exclaimed. "We must go. By the way, Rudolph, did you bring any money? We are to take dinner at the Grand Hotel. I have ordered a private dining room, and the table set for seven. The surgeon will take dinner with us."

"I do not see how you can talk that way," Berger answered. "Who knows where I may be to-night."

His friends laughed. "How foolish you are. Do you really think you are going to let yourself be killed for such a trifle? What a child you are! We know what we were doing when we chose pistols at fifteen paces. Had we chosen swords the affair might be more serious. Of course, both of you fire into the air, and you walk up to him and say: "I am sincerely sorry that this happened; it was only because I had been drinking," and you shake hands and we will all have dinner together.

He looked at them long and thought the matter over, but said nothing.

They arrived at exactly the same time as the other party. Each of the men was given a pistol and the distance was measured off. He looked at his adversary, and a feeling of hatred came over him. He called one of his seconds. "Please tell him that I will not fire in the air."

"Rudolph, you are crazy! That would be murder; the pistols have been tested."

"I shoot to kill," Berger exclaimed in a loud voice.

All became quiet, and it was as if one might hear the wings of the Angel of Death. The seconds were pale and trembled.

THE ANGEL AND ARTIST

By ARTHUR GRAHAM.

The little seaside village of Caneton may have a future before it or not; it certainly has not as yet shown any signs of development; the few houses that together formed the small fishing, and, we fear it must be said, smuggling hamlet in what now seems to be a bygone age, still remain, and have only been added to from time to time by a mixture between a villa and a cottage, and probably not a score of these within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

In fact, the place remains what it always has been—out of the beaten track; and the few visitors who find their way to it summer after summer are either artists or enthusiastic sea fishermen.

It was, therefore, matter for wonder amongst the quiet village folk what could have induced the grand lady—for she was a grand lady, being none other than the Lady Eva-Bateman—to come and settle down for a whole month, and at the conclusion of that period, which she announced when she arrived first was to be the duration of her visit, to show no signs of moving from the pretty rooms in the small cottage, where she and an elderly lady, her aunt, had established themselves.

She did not go in for painting, but used to roam about the place, a big black retriever her sole companion.

There was a pensive look about her face which, coupled with the fact that on the third finger of her left hand she wore a wedding ring, had given rise to the idea that she had been married, but to whom or when nobody troubled to inquire.

And so the time went on. The village folk had become accustomed to her presence; the children in the street curtsyed to her when she passed by, and the rough fisher folk removed their short clay pipes and touched their hats to her.

She was absolutely without society or, rather, companionship. The beach around Caneton is, as its name implies, prolific in canes, and at low tide these are easily accessible, but at high water their existence is not discernible—a fact of which the bold smugglers in the early forties were well aware.

One day in the course of her explorations of one of these caves Lady Bateman found, when it was too late, that the tide had risen and effectually cut off her retreat. Fortunately for her, her dangerous predicament had been observed by one of the two or three artists just then staying in the place, Archie Wallace, and, being an active young fellow, he had lost no time in descending the cliff—it wasn't very precipitous, and reunove the lady to a ledge of rock out of the reach of high water, remaining with her until the tide receded, when it was possible to return the way she had come.

Now the fact of being left alone for several hours in a position of more or less imminent danger, with a strikingly handsome young man who has just at the risk of his own life saved her own, cannot fail to make its influence felt on a woman, be she ever so reserved, and the natural consequence of the adventure was that Archie Wallace, having escorted his fair charge to the door of her cottage, was asked in by her, formally introduced to the aunt, and in a very short time found himself on terms of intimacy with the two ladies.

This had been upwards of three weeks ago, and the important sea piece on which the young artist had staked his reputation had not made much progress in the interval.

At the time this story commences he was sitting idly on the beach, looking dreamily at the sea before him and thinking as he always was, of her.

Inside the cottage, Lady Eva's aunt, good soul, had fallen placidly asleep, Rollo, the retriever, was lying at his mistess' feet, and she was in the act of writing a long letter to one of her bosom friends.

"You can't imagine," so the letter ran, "what he is like, so it is no use my attempting to describe him to you . . . Know, then, that he is different in every respect from the men you and I are accustomed to meet; that he is a gentleman you will have gather from my previous letters, but he is more than that. He is the very soul and embodiment of all that is honorable and true."

"He might in the Middle Ages have been a man amongst men, even in those days when chivalry to women was a more common attribute of man's character than it is now; and, do you know, he reveres me, and in fact looks upon me as something almost too good to live."

"Think of that, my dear. . . . And yet he has never said a word that could be construed in anything— you know what I mean . . . . It is not refreshing in this twentieth century to find such a man? And, having found, can you wonder at my staying on here?

"I came away wanting an entire change, a new sensation in life—and it cannot be said I have failed to succeed in discovering it. And yet at times I am half sorry.

"Heigh ho! What's the use of moralizing? I may be in a fool's paradise, but I will enjoy it while I can; and now, dear"——!

The sentence remained unfinished, for at that moment she recognized a well-known footstep on the stairs, and in another instant the man she had been describing, with a "May I come in?" and not waiting for an answer, had entered the room.

He was undeniably handsome as he stood there, boating cap in hand, as the glint of the fast-setting sun shone upon his curly hair—a mere boy he looked, although reference to the old family Bible would have revealed the fact that he was in his twenty-fourth year.

"What a shame to stop in such an evening as this. Won't you come down to the beach and see the sunset? It is going to be a glorious evening, and I shan't have an opportunity of seeing many more of them.'

"Are you going away then?"

"Yes; I have exceeded the limit of holiday I had allowed myself by a good bit even now, but it has been so pleasant here I have been loath to tear myself away," he added in a serious tone. "But you will come, won't you."

"Yes,' I'll come," and, putting her hat on, she led the way. Rollo, as usual, testifying his pleasure at going out; and the old lady dozed pleasantly on.

It was, as he had said, a magnificent sunset, well worth coming out to see; and, possibly it was the grandeur of the scene that led both of them to keep a silence for a while which she was the first to break.

"How lovely it all is! Let us take the boat and go for a row."

Had she said, let us take a balloon, he would have been only too willing to honor her, and, with a strong push of her lusty arms, he soon had the boat—her boat he had come to call it—afloat, and having seen that she was comfortably seated in the stern, was quickly pulling out towards the golden west. If it had been pleasant on the beach, it was doubly so on the water, and as the oars splashed in the sea, and the light glanced on the ripples they made on the oily surface, it was a scene to arouse the artistic sympathies of the rower; and he looked, as, indeed, he was supremely happy. Presently he rested on his oars, and he looked at his companion with unmistakable adoration expressed in his glance.

She felt its influence and shivered unconsciously.

"Why do you look at me like that,' she asked petulantly.

"Because I can't help it," he replied simply. "You ought to be an angel."

The remark was said in all honesty; there was an unmistakable ring of truth about it, but it did not please her. On the contrary, she was annoyed.

"My dear boy angels only exist in the imagination. At any rate, no woman is an angel or a saint either; I know I am not."

"I should be sorry to think otherwise."

"Oh! Archie, you are too good for this world. You have formed an altogether erroneous impression of me; but in time you will come to see things in quite a different light — forgetting all about me in fact."

"I can never do that."

"Oh! yes you will, when some new fancy seizes you. We have been excellent friends, haven't we? Well, why not let us remain so—until—until—you tire of me."

For a moment the man looked at her earnestly, and then, letting his oars drop from his hands, he leant toward her, and before she knew what he was doing, had seized one of her hands in his, and, looking at her in a way that made her wince, it was so passionately entreating, said in a choking voice: "Eva I can never tire of you, for I love you—love you better than life itself—it's no use of telling me that no women are angels when I know one that is. I have never dared to say this to you before, but when you looked like you did just now I couldn't help it."

"Oh, you foolish boy," murmured ladyship, as if to herself. "Do you know the greatest kindness I could do would be to destroy your faith in human nature once and forever?"

"You can destroy my faith in every human being save one, and I shouldn't mind; but you will always be the same to me—a woman beyond compare. I did not think I could ever have dared to speak to you as I have done, but it is out at last, and oh! my darling"—with a look of lingering affection — "have you nothing to say to me? No words of love—of—love?"

"Things couldn't go on forever as they have done, and I want you to decide when we shall end our old life and begin the new. I want you to—"

"Stop," she said. "Don't ask me—don't ask me to be your wife."

"And why? You cannot fail to have seen my affection for you. I love you, Eva, and——"

She broke into a short laugh.

"Oh, you silly boy; why couldn't you take things—take—things sensibly?"

"I—I don't know what you mean," he said blankly.

"Poor boy—why will you take life so seriously? Why couldn't you have left things be? We have been very happy—you and I—why not let it remain so?"

"I don't think I quite understand. I am not much used to women's ways Do you—do you mean—there is some reason why you can't marry me?"

"There is—the best of all reasons. I am married already."

"You have been . . . you mean—your husband is dead?"

A burning flush overspread her face No, he is alive."

The water soughed against the bows of the boat; the tide had turned; both sat as if spellbound.

"Will he never speak?" she said to herself. At last his mouth framed the word.

"Alive!"

There was something awful in the expression of his voice; it was that of an old man.

EGGS THAT BRING BIG PRICES.

Eggs of the great aulk, a bird plentiful enough a century ago, but now extinct, are worth small fortunes. Only about eigty of the eggs are known to be in existence. The British Museum possesses twelve, representing a value not far short of $25,000.

It is related that in 1879 a anrewd Scotchman picked up two of these eggs at an auction sale. As their value was not realized by those making the sale he secured them for $4. Some time later he sold them for $2400.

Valuable as is this egg of the great aulk, it cannot compare with that of the aepyornis. The egg is about twelve inches in length, and the number known to be in existence can be counted upon the fingers