

My Friend the Chauffeur.

By the time we got into Alessandria, with its mighty maze of fortifications, I was so weak from laughing that I fell down on the doorway of a hotel which was waiting for me.

"I was sorry to miss you this morning," she said, "but after bidding you an evening adieu, I suddenly remembered that I had a friend in Alessandria whom I had not seen for long, and it occurred to me that I would pay him a visit."

"Oh, that would have been nothing," she said, "indeed, if there were hundreds to be born, I would have preferred to share them with you."

"I don't know what would have happened at that moment if I had met Mamma's eyes, or the Babo's eyes, or indeed, any eyes on the ground, but I avoided mine. The Babo was expecting, or said that she was expecting, Joseph to arrive in Alessandria, and we planned to stop at Pavia for a few days, but he would be in Milan on the 15th, or rather the 16th, of the month."

"Through the road was poor, except in this, and gave us all the bumps mentioned in Sir Ralph's rules, the country was lovely and lovable. Grapes, mulberries, and stuff called mastic, which looked exactly like a happy family of sisters, and from the hills dotted about, more thickly than Mamma's 'cousins' or her 'nieces', looked down old feudal castles as stately as the pyramids that stood behind them, like the old friends of their old country."

"O! Tortona and Voghera I carried away only the ghost of an impression, for we dined in the noon-day table, and dined, not again on the straight white ribbon of road that was leading us to all the No. 1000 Italy. It was so dusty that Mamma, Maida, and I put on the motor-covers of the trip till now; things made of pongee silk, with windows of talc, over our eyes and little lace gloves for our hands to pass through. It was fun when we would awaken speed in some town or village, to find out that young Italian tried to pry into the motor-covers of secrets and find out if we were pretty. How much more than her two grey-haired companions, if they had her two eyes, our features could have flattered themselves on an equality with her eyes. Even months before, face and hair, I had been through wide miry bays, and in the blue shadows of hoary mountains, searched those that windows of our eyes with dark eyes, and they were as light as buttoned-up eyes as the car with the three veiled ladies would sweep round a corner, and I think, there must be something in the matter, about a passing glance from a pair of eyes in a face that will always remain a mystery. If I were a man, I believe I should like it so. Anyhow, it's fun for a girl to guess how the other would feel about things if she were a man. I suppose though, we're generally wrong."

"After we had frightened enough horses and other domestic animals to overstock the whole of Northern Italy and felt quite old in consequence (considerably over thirty), a sweet peace fell suddenly upon us. We had reached the place where Napoleon's great battle was fought, and Voghera, where we might have stopped, to see the battle but didn't, because we were too hungry to be sincerely interested in anything absolutely unconnected with meals. Then turning towards Pavia, we turned at the same moment into Alessandria. There was no more bread in our pastries, and I was so tired that I was not to be bothered with people; there was only quiet country, with a narrow but deliciously smooth road, colonies of chestnut and sycamore trees, and tall growths of ornamental grasses and blossoming grain. It was more like a by-path through woods than an important road leading to a great town, and Mr. Barrymore had begun to wonder about it he could possibly have made a mistake at some cross-way, when we spun round a corner, and saw before us a wide yellow river. It lay straight in front, and we had to pass to the other side on the oldest bridge I ever saw; just old grey planks laid close together on top of a long, long line of big boats that moved up and down with a slow motion as the golden water of the Po flowed underneath."

"This is a famous bridge," said the Chauffeur; so Mamma hurried to get on her camera and take a picture, while we looked our way faintly over the wobbly boards at a foot pace; and another of the men at the far end who made us pay toll—so each passenger, Maida never failed to pay. She says she likes to take pictures. Mamma always takes them, but she usually has three or four on her street cars with Italian faces, legs, and sundials, as if they were in a row. I don't see that in the end it will be much of an ornament to the journal of travel we're keeping."

"This is where the Po and the Ticino meet, so we're near Pavia," Mr. Barrymore told us; and if our eyes brightened before our make, it wasn't so much with interest in his information, as at the thought of lunch. For we were to lunch at Pavia, before we came to the Certosa that Maida had been talking about for hours with the Chauffeur; and before us, as clear as the Ticino—bathed by a clear, old, smiling, wood-roofed thing supported with a hundred granite columns—sublimed and soared a group of grey domes and campaniles against a turquoise sky."

The roadstead, that seemed to be a long, long, and so conspicuous, in a regular factory for turning out Italian lace, so old-fashioned and so conspicuous, in a dignified kind of way, of its own pre-eminence. I felt that, if I could only remember, I must have studied heaps of things about this place at school; and the town was full of students who were proud of their studies, with more profit, now. They were very Italian, very good-looking, very young youths, and they were all so interested in us that it seemed ungrateful not to pay more attention to them than to their studies. They grouped round our automobile with a crowd of less interesting people, who had stopped before a hotel, and some of the students came to the motor-car, and Mamma and I pretended to be interested.

"I suppose he's thinking of Maida," said I. "Not at all. Probably, if you could see into his mind you'd discover that he's wishing you hadn't wandered away from his orations. The thing which he considers more beautiful in the student is the student at Tolentino, Sicily. But this isn't the part of Italy Terry loves best. He never begins to smile till he gets to Verona, and even Verona he calls only a charming inn where the world's great travellers have left mementoes of their passage, rather than a true Italian town. When he's at the divine genius of Italy, stamped during the last season for use in cold weather."

"The student is, will be like me in Venice," I asked, looking up at the entrance of my eye at the tall Chauffeur in his leather coat, showing a heavenly white marble doorway to Maida, and Mamma. "Of course he will. You mustn't be disappointed by his manner. If only he thought you were poor!" "I'll be intimate with him that Maida is very rich."

"No, no. I wouldn't deceive him about that. Let well alone. All will come right in time." "Meanwhile, I suppose I must put up with you?" "If you can. Unless I bore you. Would you rather let me alone?" (To be continued.)

By G. N. & A. M. WILLIAMSON, Author of THE Lightning Conductor THE Princess Passus, ETC.

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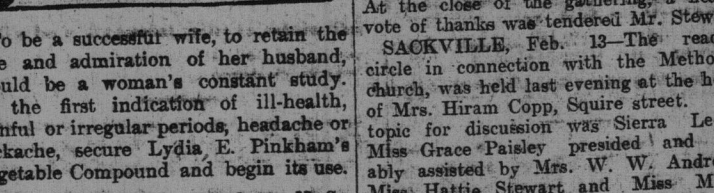
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PONCA INDIANS HAVE PITY ON LONGWORTH Bring Buffalo Waistcoat as Wedding Present—Tell Roosevelt Bride-elect Must Not Get Them All.

Washington, Feb. 15.—Ten Ponca Indians, who came from Oklahoma to present Representative Nicholas Longworth with a buffalo skin vest, were much disappointed at not finding Mr. Longworth in the house when they visited the capitol this afternoon. The Indians were especially painted and dressed in beaded buckskin clothing in anticipation of an elaborate presentation ceremony. Their gift for the president's prospective son-in-law which is more highly prized by the Indians than any other trophy of the hunt.

The Ponca Indian delegation called on President Roosevelt this afternoon to pay their respects to the "Great White Father." Incidentally Eagle Horse, chief of the band, presented the president their gift for his future son-in-law. The chief added that they made a present to the groom and not to the bride, because they felt that for his future son-in-law to be neglected in this respect, President Roosevelt had received many presents on behalf of Mr. Longworth, promising to see that he should get it.

Mrs. Montgomery, of Carleton Heights, gave a number of little folks a valentine party on Wednesday.

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THE BAIRD COMPANY'S Wine of Tar Honey and Wild Cherry

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Saint John Railway Company will apply to the Legislature at its next session for the passing of an Act authorizing the company to make an agreement with the City of Saint John relating to the repairs of the streets and the removal of snow also way system. The Company will also apply to have all Acts repealed or amended so far as they are inconsistent with 60th Victoria, Chapter 23, January 21st, 1906.

WELDON & McLEMAN, Solicitors.