

out of the rain, I'll carry Petite here. Up stairs, please. Wait a minute. Now, then, this way.'

All this time, Jemima Ann stands, eyes and mouth ajar, looking—listening—with breathless interest.

Mr. Rogers, gentlemanly proprietor of the Stars and Stripes Hotel, further down the street, assists a lady out of the chariot at the door, and says, 'Come along, little un,' lifts a child in his arms, and leads the way jauntily up to the 'one pair front.'

'This is the place, Mademoiselle Mimi,' he says, somewhat suddenly. 'Mrs. Hopkins' select boarding-house for single gentlemen.'

'Fugh!' says Mademoiselle Mimi, curling disgustedly an extremely pretty nose; 'it smells of corned beef and cabbage, and all the three hundred and sixty-five nasty dinners cooked in it the past year.'

And indeed a most ancient and cabbage-like odour does pervade the halls and passages of the Hotel Hopkins. It is one of those unhappy houses in which smells (like prayers) ascend, and the lodgers in the attic can always tell to a tittle what is going on in the kitchen.

'Mrs. Hopkins can get up a nice little dinner, for all that,' says Mr. Rogers. 'She's done it for me before now, when the cook has left me in the lurch. She'll do it for you, Mam'selle Mimi. You won't be served with boiled beef and cabbage while you're here, let me tell you. And she's as clean as silver. This is the parlour; take a chair. And this is Jemima Ann, Mrs. Hopkins' niece, and the idol of six-and-twenty stalwart young men, Jemimy, my love, let me present you—Mademoiselle Mimi Trillon, the famous bare-back rider and trapeze performer, of whom all the world has heard, and La Petite Mademoiselle Trillon, the younger.'

Mr. Rogers waves his hand with the grace of a court chamberlain and the smile of an angel, and Mademoiselle Mimi Trillon laughs and bows. It is a musical, merry little laugh, and the lady, Jemima Ann thinks, in a bewildered way, is the most brilliant and beautiful her eyes have ever looked on. The Duchess Isoline herself was less fair! She feels quite dazzled and dizzy for a moment, anything beautiful or bright is so far outside her pathetically ugly life. She is conscious of a face, small, rather pale just now, looking out of a coquettish little bonnet; of profuse rippling hair of flaxen fairness waving low on a low forehead; of a dress of dark silk, that emits perfume as she moves; of a seal jacket; of two large blue-bell eyes, laughing out of the loveliness of that 'flower-face.'

'Oh!' she says, under her breath, and stands and stares.

Mlle. Mimi laughs again. Her teeth are as nearly like 'pearls' as it is in the nature of little white teeth to be. She can afford to laugh, and knows it.

'Now, then, Jemimy!' cries the brisk voice of Mr. Rogers. 'I know you are lost in a trance of admiration. We all are, bless you, when we first meet Mam'selle Mimi. Nevertheless, my dear girl, business before pleasure, and business has brought us here to-night. Call your aunt, and let us get it over.'

'Here is Aunt Samantha,' responds Jemima: and at that moment enters unto them Mrs. Hopkins, her 'stomach staid,' and considerably humanized by the mellowing influence of sundry cups of tea, and quantities of hot toast and broiled ham.

Mr. Rogers rises, receives her with effusion, presents to her the Mesdemoiselles Trillon, mother and daughter, and Mam'selle Mimi holds out one gray-gloved hand, with a charming smile, and says some charming words of first greeting.

Jemima Ann watches in an agony of suspense. She hopes—oh! she hopes Aunt Samantha will not steel her heart and bolt her front door against this radiant vision of golden hair, and silk, and seal.

But Aunt Samantha is not impressionable. Long years of foundry hands, of struggles with her liver and other organs, of much taxes and many butcher bills, have turned to bitterness her natural milk of human kindness, and she casts a cold and disapproving glance on the blonde Mimi, and bobs a stiff little courtesy, and sits down severely on the extreme edge of a chair.

'So sorry to intrude,' says the sweet voice of Mlle. Mimi, in coaxing accents, 'dear Mrs. Hopkins, at this abnormal hour. It is really quite too dreadful of me, I admit. But what was I to do? Mr. Rogers' hotel is quite full, and ever if it were not, there are reasons—a pause, a sigh, the blue bell eyes cast a pathetic glance, first at her child, then appealingly at Mr. Rogers, then more appealingly at frigid Mrs. Hopkins—there is a person at the hotel with whom I cannot possibly associate. I am a mother, my dear Mrs. Hopkins; that dear child is my only treasure. In my absence there would be no one at the hotel to look after her. I can not leave her to the tender mercies of the ladies of our company. So I am here. You will take compassion upon us, I am sure—clasping the gray-gloved hands—and afford us hospitality during our brief stay in this town.'

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