

long green avenues of silver-trunked beeches, where the light was the green light which mermaids know. Here and there rose the fine gateways and distant towers of some great estate, and Brederode told us that Gelderland was famous for its old families and houses, as well as for the only hills in Holland.

"Fifty or sixty years ago," said he, "the nobility of Gelderland was so proud that no one who wasn't noble was allowed to buy an estate and settle here."

"Allowed!" exclaimed Nell. "How could they be prevented if they had money and an estate was for sale?"

Brederode smiled. "There were ways," he answered. "Once a rich banker of Amsterdam thought he would like to retire and have a fine house in aristocratic Gelderland. He bought a place, and wished to build a house to please his fancy; but no architect would make his plans, nobody would sell him bricks or building material of any kind, and he could get no workmen. Every one stood in too great awe of the powerful nobles. So you see, boycotting isn't confined to Ireland—or America."

"What happened in the end?" asked Nell. "I do hope the man didn't give in."

"Dutchmen don't, even to each other," said Alb. "The banker was as obstinate as his enemies. He went to enormous expense, got everything outside boycott limits, put up temporary buildings on his place for workmen from Rotterdam, fed them and himself from Rotterdam, and so in the end his house was built. But things are different in Gelderland now. People who were rich then are poor, and glad of any one's money. Arnheim is as cosmopolitan as The Hague, though it has the same curious Indian-Dutch set you find here, keeping quite to itself. A good many of the famous old places have been sold in these days to the nouveaux riches, but some are left unspoiled, and I'm going to show you one of them."

With that he drove his car through a wide, open gateway, a lodge-keeper saluting as we went by.

"Oh, but how do you know we may go in?" asked Phyllis.

"I'm sure we may," said Brederode. "Are strangers allowed?" the L.C.P. questioned him.

"Harmless ones, like us."

Far away a house was in sight, a beautiful old house, built of mellowed red brick, its great tower and several minor turrets mirrored in a lily-carpeted lake which surrounded it on two sides, like an exaggerated moat. "Fifteenth century," said Brederode. "But the tower dates from twelve hundred and fifty."

We all stared in respectful awe of age and majesty, as Alb stopped the car at a small iron gate about two hundred yards from the house. The gate, guarded by giant oaks, led through a strip of shadowy park to a glorious labyrinth of rose-gardens, and gardens entirely given up to lilies of every imaginable variety, while beyond these was a water-garden copied from that of the Generalife, which I saw last year at Granada. Nor was this all of Spanish fashion which had been imitated. Pedro the Cruel's fountain-perforated walks in the Alcazar of Seville had been copied too, and were put in operation for our amusement by a gardener with whom Brederode had a short confab. When we passed again through the rose and lily gardens, which were in a valley or dimple between two gentle hills, all three of the ladies were presented with as many flowers as they could carry, and Alb informed them that they would find more, of other varieties, waiting for them in the car.

"What a divine place!" exclaimed Nell, as we came once more to the little gate whence we had the double picture of the house and its reflection in the lake. "I don't see how there could be any lovelier one, even in England. How I should like to live in that wonderful old house! I'd have my own room and a boudoir in the thirteenth-century tower."

"Would you care to go in?" Alb asked, looking more at Phyllis than at Nell.

Nell flushed and left Phyllis to answer. "It would be quite like a fairy tale; but of course we can't, as the people of the house are evidently occupying it."

"All the better," said Brederode. "The lady of the house will receive us and give us tea."

"No, no!" cried Nell. "It would be horrid to intrude upon her."

"You'll find she won't consider it an intrusion," Alb insisted. "In fact, I called yesterday and said I was bringing you out to-day, so it is an invitation."

The hall was stone paved, with glorious oak walls and a wonderful ceiling. There were a few Persian rugs, which must have been almost priceless, a quantity of fine old portraits, and two or three curious suits of armor. Beyond was a Chinese room, done in the perfect taste of a nation which loves and understands Oriental treasures; and then we came into a white-and-gold paneled boudoir, sparsely but exquisitely furnished with inlaid satinwood which I would wager to be genuine Sheraton.

In this room sat a woman who rose to welcome us, a woman worthy of her surroundings. Her dress was nothing more elaborate than black-and-white muslin, but with the piled silver of her hair, her arched, dark brows and cameo features, her great eyes and her noble figure, she looked a princess.

"Ah, Rudolph," she exclaimed, in the English of an Englishwoman born and bred, "how glad I am that you could come, and bring the friends of whom you have written me so often."

"My mother," Brederode said; and introduced us.

I am not ashamed to confess that I was tongue-tied. What had he written? How much had he told? In what way had he described—some of us?

Nell, who usually has some original little thought to put into words, apparently had no thoughts at all; or they lay too deep for utterance. The L.C.P. was taciturn too, which was prudent on her part, as this exquisite lady had probably heard her son speak of his Scotch friend Lady MacNair. Had she ever met Aunt Fay, I knew that Alb was too wise, if not too loyal, to have brought us into her power; still I did not feel safe enough to be comfortable. And even if I had been personally at ease, I should have been too busy with my own thoughts to do credit to myself or country in conversation. As I sipped caravan tea from a flower-like cup of old Dresden, I wondered what where Nell's sensations on beholding the home and mother of the despised skipper whom it had been her delight to snub and tease.

Evidently he is adored, and looked up to as the one perfect being, by his mother, who would hardly have smiled as graciously on the beautiful Miss Van Buren, could some imp have whispered in her ear how that young lady treated her host, when he was nobody but a poor skipper on board a motor-boat. Through some careless word which gave a turn to the conversation, I discovered that Liliendaal is not the only house reigned over by Jonkheer Brederode, alias Alb. There's one at The Hague, but they "find Liliendaal pleasant in summer."

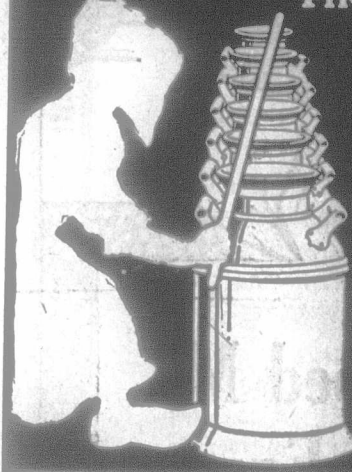
Indeed, it appears to me that "pleasant" is only a mild and modest word for the place; yet its owner can cheerfully desert it, week after week, to rub along as a mere despised Albatross on board a tuppenny ha'penny motor-boat, running about the canals of Holland.

Of course he is in love, which covers a multitude of hardships. But it isn't as clear as it used to be, which Angel he is in love with. Perhaps the latest snubbing was the last drop in his cup, which caused the whole to overflow, and he had to fill it up again—for another. He poured scorn upon me, in our first passage of arms, for being in love with two girls at once; but how much more poetical and at the same time more generous to love two at a time than not to love one well enough to know your own mind!

In any case, it was Phyllis who shone on the occasion of our call at Liliendaal, and it was she who seemed to make the impression upon the gracious mother. Whether it was the fact that she is English, or whether it was because she could talk to her hostess—as if she knew them—about various distinguished titled beings whom the lady of Liliendaal had not seen for a long time; or whether it was because Phyllis once had a cousin who wrote a book about the Earls of Helvelyn (the lady's father was an Earl of Helvelyn) at all

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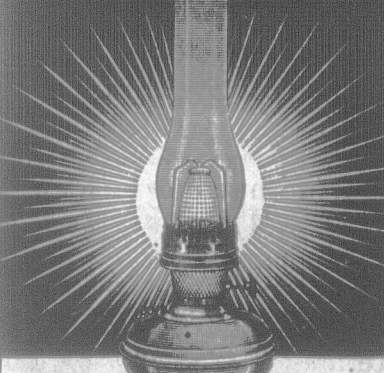
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