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"No! No," he said, "that step! it is the thing born in you!"

The Toes of Toinette

By Frederick Palmer

THE private secretary's rule about callers at the 135th Street aerodrome waiting their turn melted under her imploring request to take her card in to Danbury Rodd at once.

"Mademoiselle Antoinette Rodd!" Rodd read aloud. "And what does she want?" His face lighted as he finished the question, which he answered by his own exclamation: "Of course! It's Toinette! One forgets that she has also a surname!"

Her attraction for the aviator was no secret among his friends. Many times he had excused himself from company in order to be at the theater in time to see her dance. She was a kindred spirit of flight, unchaining his imagination. She came nearest to being aerial of any earthly creature he had ever seen.

"What shall I say, sir?" the secretary inquired. "She seems to be in trouble," he added, by way of using his influence.

Rodd paused as soberly as if he were deciding a matter of state. Purposely, he had always chosen a rear orchestra seat. To him, Toinette was an abstraction, an impersonal expression of human grace. He disliked to spoil an illusion which he had deliberately nursed. Probably her charm before the footlights was the product of calculated training in front of a mirror, and in real life she was a most matter-of-fact being, talking professional slang.

"Is she anything at all like what she is on the stage?" he asked.

"That's the surprising part," said the secretary, who promptly acted on his own responsibility. He opened the door and beckoned, as he drew to one side with a punctilious bow.

Rodd was hardly on his feet when Toinette, in furs, came into

his office with the same radiant quickness of the Toinette in costume appearing from the wings. It was herself, not an actress, that her audience saw, night after night. She might be nineteen, this fragile woman, yet she was like a child in her spontaneity.

"I speak to all the peoples with my feet, is it not?" she said. "So you will excuse me if I miss the steps when I speak the English."

Whatever her request, she had no mind to be balked of a full hearing. As if the movement were a part of a courtesy, she took the visitor's seat, while Rodd, in the presence of such grace, felt his arms and legs disjointed fans of a windmill as he sank into his own chair.

"Meestaire Rodd, how very queeck can you run your queeckest flying machine to Philadelphia?" she inquired, tossing back the furs from her throat and setting her muff at an angle on her knee in keeping with that at which she held her head.

"Why, I have done it with a bank of wind at my back from the Schuylkill to the Hudson in twenty-eight minutes, but that was pretty wild going. In average weather, I think we can depend on forty," he told her.

"Ten forty-five, ten feefty-five—yais, that will do," and she whirled the muff round and round jubilantly, her feet rat-tatting the floor. "You will—you will?"

"Who am I to take?" he inquired.

"Moi, moi, moi!" she repeated beating her jacket with her muff.

"And when?"

"To-night—this very night!"

Rodd looked at his calendar pad and saw that he had three engagements for that evening.

"But I have been so excited I did not tell you it right," she went on. "I am playing in Philadel-

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