

Peace—The Stranger

(Continued from preceding page.)

Clad in her fantastic garb, and standing under the flags of the Allies (which decorated the gallery tea room), she might, the boy thought, have stood for a picture of enemy-ridden Belgium, herself—so wan and sad and haunted. And the sight of her had upon him the same effect as had had that tragic, war-swept, battle-scarred land—the desire to help, to comfort, to fight her battles; for the gift of imagination, the capacity for suffering with which his literary temperament had endowed him, rendered him sympathetic beyond his years—and his late experiences on the battle-field had not ceased from troubling.

"You are tired," he said. "Let's find a quiet corner and have some supper."

"If I dare brave the fiery glances of your young and pretty friend—she's wondering how you can turn from her charms to the sorry glances of your maiden aunt. Oh! no, don't—I'm not fishing—and I'd have felt the same at her age, so I can sympathize."

"Maiden aunt," he scoffed, "when the lovely sibyl condescends to bestow upon this poor mortal a few moments of her time. Rest ye, tired spirit, while I seek such fare as may tempt your fairy palate—nightingale's tongue, and butterfly's wings, mayhap."

"Nay, rather, good ham sandwiches and plenty of them for your old witch godmother," she retorted.

He was gone—she had had the last word, and that word rang in her ears.

Godmother—somehow it suggested a benefactress. To him? To whom? Could she benefit him?—how? Give him something, perhaps—some emotion (a transitory one, of course) to fill his mind for the moment, and wipe away the searing memories of war.

Someone brushed past her and drew her attention to the busy scene around her; where women, who would scorn to do a hand's turn in their own homes, and girls, weary of office routine, vied with each other in eagerness to spend themselves for the Great Cause—earning comforts and necessities for our boys in hospital or holding the long line.

Godmothers, benefactors all—these women, and might it not be that they should reap some benefit themselves, some broadening or deepening of nature or character from the efforts put forth in these troublous times—these times of stress so infinitely harder on the women than on even the men grimly engaged in their conflict against oppression's hordes?

Ah! if from the dreadful, sordid, soul-sickening maelstrom of modern war could come to the women of the world one gift—the gift of helpfulness—how changed the world would be. Vanity, jealousy, levity, subordinate to charity!

"Come out of it," murmured the boy—and she dropped to earth.

It was a dull, misty winter day—as the Pacific Coast knows winter—but in the big ball-room at Government House the many-colored gowns of the women and the dancing gleams of light from the fire-place defied the surrounding gloom.

A benefit for war widows was in progress, and the musical programme now under way was being conducted by a number of the city's leading artists.

In a curtained alcove window facing the sea, the boy (freed for the afternoon from his journalistic work in the Government offices) stood talking to the young woman who in the last three months had come to mean so much in his life. She was clad again in her gypsy garb, and would presently take possession of a fortune-telling tent erected in the hall.

"Why will you not let me speak?" he pleaded. "Always you change the subject when I ask for an answer to the (to me) most vital question in the world. You say there is no one else, and that you are fond of me—is not that enough?"

"Enough? Yes, perhaps—for me; but I'm thinking, also, of you. Why shorten your boyhood by settling down with a woman who has quaffed deeply of life's draughts both bitter and sweet, and now craves only a quiet corner—and peace—if peace be anywhere waiting for me. My life is behind me—yours all ahead; they cannot meet—why, why, try the impossible task of linking them together? Such a situation could only result in disaster—and I'm so unlucky; I fear I bring ill luck to all who love me."

"Nonsense, I'm not afraid—you're too

imaginative; and don't you think you're maybe making a mistake? I'm getting along well at my work, and that little legacy I came into this year will keep the wolf from the door in any case. Also," he added in a more playful tone, "that extra birthday ought to help some, since you say you're not going to have any more—that will let me catch up in no time. And remember what everyone's saying, that Canadian girls will have to be a little less particular in their choice from now on, as men will be scarce."

"Oh! I've thought of all that—but you see I have loved and lost, which is something—why not leave for some other girl the chance she might not otherwise get?"

"Does that mean—No?"

"I think so—but wait, I must go now. Later I will give you a decisive answer."

She slipped away, and the music went on, and the people wandered past him, unheeded—and still he stood, gazing tensely across the terraces to the sea—so cold to-day it seemed, that sea; no sunshine coaxed the sparkle from its depths; so cold it seemed, and grey, with white-capped billows breaking on the beach; cold as she was not cold, yet in the restless, peaceless tossing of the tide, seemed something vaguely reminding of her.

The afternoon was drawing to a close, twilight had come, when through the tangled currents in the room a message came, borne on invisible wires. He knew she'd made her choice, and felt that he must know his fate at once, so, threading his way through the crowd, he passed into the hall—someone was just coming out of the tent, and heedless of those waiting he stepped inside the curtain.

"I've come," he said.

"And I have chosen," she answered, smiling dimly. "Ah, I've thought and thought and thought, and always the answer is 'No.' Whenever I stretch forth my hand toward happiness I receive only pain. Peace and I seem fated never to meet. You also, so young and bright and hopeful, I should only drag into the shadow. To me, to-day, have come women young and women old, with oh, such tales of misery and grief—and I have tried to give to each a message of hope; for though I may not help myself sometimes I'm vouchsafed the power to help others."

"And oh! those thousands upon thou-

sands of my sisters who need help—now, and later; for where are the men nature intended should provide homes and havens for them all? Lying dead on the fields of Flanders or hopelessly crippled and helpless. Ah! the problems that will arise from this world war; and all those women seeking the gaiety and pleasure of life that is their birthright—much thought and care and kindness will be needed to keep their feet from straying; therefore, to them I dedicate my life.

"You know I have Belgian blood in my veins—and somehow my nature seems allied to that fatal land, always longing for peace, striving for happiness and quiet domesticity; then, when the goal seems just in sight, war again, and pain and grief and death."

Someone opened the great hall door and the voice of a newsboy without came clearly through the air:

"Berlin wants peace—all about the German peace proposals—evening paper."

"Peace," she went on, "It must come, and soon—but many of the wounds this war has made, no peace can ever cure."

The curtains parted and through them stepped Sweet-and-Eighteen; so young and winsome did she seem she might have stood for fair young Peace, bringing her healing sweetness into a war-warped world.

"Oh," she stammered, "I didn't know you were engaged."

"I'm through, I can take you now," smiled the palmist.

And the boy? His health had improved, and the scars the ruthless battle-front had carved in his soul were mending. Perhaps a woman's sympathetic touch had helped in the healing process. Youth and joyousness were asserting themselves once more; and now, even through the pain her refusal had created, there leaped into his expressive eyes such an appreciation of the youth and beauty in the curtained entrance that the older woman knew positively and for all time that with him all was well.

He went—and mechanically the palmist took the girl's hand in hers for a preliminary survey—but in her heart a storm raged—loneliness, pain, and jealousy battled with common sense and her sense of fair play. Almost the former allies won and she thought to draw him back to her again—then, looking into the young girl's eyes and reading there all this earth holds of good—her moment of renunciation came—and passed, leaving her cold, an alien lonely soul. Youth to youth, gaiety to gaiety, and for herself—a mission, perhaps, and to once more sally forth in weary quest of Peace, the Stranger.

Annette Kellerman

(Continued from page 9.)

referred to what I already knew—that she was born in Australia. She is British through and through, and very proud of it, and was glad to be interviewed by a Canadian publisher, she told me.

It seems almost incredible that as a child Miss Kellerman was a cripple, and that it was purely by her own effort and determination she was able to walk. Perseverance and exercise have, however, developed her so marvellously that to-day she is the finest swimmer and diver in the world, and most perfectly formed.

It was quite a shock to Miss Kellerman's parents, who were very much interested in music, to find that their daughter was going to adopt swimming as a profession. However, she persistently had her own way, after many an uphill fight, and when she had become fairly experienced, she landed in America.

Her first engagement of any consequence brought her a salary of \$1,250 a week. Success and fame were already within her grasp, when she was visited by a representative of certain syndicate newspapers, and told that unless she paid them \$1,000 a week they would support some swimming act, other than hers. For a long time Miss Kellerman had to give way to this blackmail, which left her a very small amount to live on, considering her enormous expenses. However, troubles of this nature are now all past and her only concern is in doing all she wishes inside of twenty-four hours, so great is the demand upon her time by film concerns and theatres in all parts of the country.

Miss Kellerman was very anxious to have me see her in action; in other words, going through one of her acts either before the public or before the

film. This, however, I was unable to do until she was making some of her pictures in her new production, "Queen of the Sea," which is about to be released. It was, indeed, a pleasure to be with Miss Kellerman during the taking of part of the scenes of her new picture, and from what I know of the story and have seen of the making of the film, I think the public will agree with me in saying that it is infinitely superior to "A Daughter of the Gods," or any other Kellerman production.

The story runs as follows:

Merilla, who is Annette Kellerman, Queen of the Sea, learns from the good fairy, Ariel, that she must save four human lives to become a mortal herself. That very day, under orders from Thonor, King of Evil, a ship is wrecked and the crew leap into the waves. Word that Merilla has rescued three of the men is brought to Thonor by the sirens. He determines that she shall no longer interfere

with his work. His henchmen, therefore, seize her, after a chase through the deep, and she is carried before the King.

Thonor promises to spare her if she will promise never to save another mortal life. The torture chamber is the alternative, but Merilla courageously chooses it. Meantime, the Prince of a nearby country, has set sail to meet a Princess to whom he is betrothed, but whom he has never seen. It is before him, in the course of his voyage, that Ariel appears. She tells of Merilla's plight and urges him to help the Queen of the Sea. This he readily consents to do. While Thonor is upon the waters in his phantom ship, the Prince rescues Merilla with Ariel's aid.

The Queen and the Prince become sweethearts at first sight, but the fairy reminds him that his word is pledged to another, and whisks Merilla from his sight.

Thonor learns that the Prince has freed his captive and has taken chests of treasure (which belonged rightfully to the Prince's father). He starts out in pursuit of the Prince in his phantom ship, and causes a heavy storm to sweep the ocean. The Prince and his men are plunged into the sea, but Merilla's skill in the deep circumvents the King of Evil and she succeeds in bringing the Prince safely to shore.

In fulfilment of her promise, Ariel changes Merilla to a mortal then, and takes her to her kingdom in the clouds.

The little Princess who is to marry the Prince falls into Thonor's hands as her carriage hurries along the road. In her dwelling place above the earth, Merilla (to whom Ariel shows the Princess's fate in a crystal) is very unhappy without the Prince. When she sees what is happening to the Princess, she decides to save her for the Prince's sake.

Thonor, with his evil power, can see her descending through the clouds. He makes her fall to the ground, but she escapes unharmed and stumbles into the party of courtiers who were escorting the little Princess. They rejoice at their luck. The Prince has never seen the girl he is to marry and they persuade Merilla to impersonate the Princess for a few days before the wedding, until they can rescue their mistress. This Merilla consents to do.

When she stands before the Prince once more, he begs that she become his wife, to seize this final chance for happiness. This she refuses.

"There can be no real happiness bought at such a price," she says. "You are pledged to the little Princess."

"But I shall love you all my life," he replies.

Merilla goes by sea, the Prince by land, to free the Princess from Thonor's grasp. Thonor's men capture Merilla, and their chief places her in a room adjoining that in which the Princess is. Between them are a series of blades and swords, seemingly impassable without death. Merilla manages to best this barrier.

Then the good fairy appears again.

"I can only show you a way to carry word to your friends," she tells Merilla, and points to a cable stretching from the high tower in which Merilla and the little Princess are kept. Merilla walks this wire for a distance and then dives boldly 125 feet into the sea beneath. She makes her way to the Prince and he flies at once with his men to the rescue of the Princess.

There is a spirited fight in the castle between the opposing forces, in which Thonor's men are vanquished and Thonor himself is killed by the Prince. In gratitude for what Merilla has done, the Princess releases the Prince from his bond, and the road to happiness for the Prince and for Merilla is cleared at last.

The Drip of The Honey

(Continued from page 7.)

"Elmer!"
"Frankie!"
The noise of Via del Babuino drifted up to them, thin and muffled and far away.

"What is it, deary?"
"Isn't that the Pantheon, the round dome with the flat top, just beside the Madama Palace?"

"Confound that old Pantheon! Kiss me, angel!"

She raised her head slowly, pouting up the curved ruddiness of her lips.

Then she hesitated. "But just one!" she said sternly.

Again there was silence, and more stars came out over the Campagna.

Then she gazed out over the twilight city of bells and domes and spires, as the dusk grew deeper about them. "Ah, Rome!" she said, with a happy little sigh. "Isn't it beautiful?"

"Glorious, isn't it?" he said contentedly, as they leaned on the stone balustrade side by side.

And they sighed companionably, and were silent once more.

THE END.