

tables, as made her utter a little pleased cry: "Oh, what a lovely place!"

The gardener was delighted. "Aye, miss, it's a good garden," he said, proudly. "We takes a deal o' pains to keep it oop, and his Lordship he takes that interest in it, he knows the name of every fruit that grows in it."

"Does he walk in here?" asked the girl, with a pang of fright that yet had something of hope in it. For she felt that she would dearly love to get a glimpse of this mysterious employer.

"Oh, no, he don't walk in it—least-ways, not as I knows on," added the man with sudden caution. "But he can see all over it from his windows."

With a heightened colour, Edna threw a stealthy and discreet glance upwards at the old red wing of the house, and saw that a row of windows in the upper storey commanded a good view of this garden in every part. At the same time she noticed that the windows of the lower storey were not only filled with ground or coloured glass, through which it was impossible to see anything from the outside, but that they were also fitted on the outside with iron bars placed so close to each other that she was sure they must impede what little light could come through the glass.

To add to the gloomy look of this part of the house, trees of all sorts, rose bushes, evergreens, and fruit trees had been suffered to grow up in front of the lower windows, so that it was not easy to see much even of the iron bars which made them look so prison-like.

Then Edna gave another glance at the storey above, and saw quite plainly that there was a dark figure standing behind the thin lace curtains which hung before one of the windows. For the side of the curtain had been displaced, so that the movement of the figure could be seen.

She hastily withdrew her eyes, feeling sure that this was the Viscount himself, and being anxious not to be accused of attempting to see more than she was meant to see.

"And now, miss, you'd like to see the houses, wouldn't you?"

Edna said "Yes," and followed the man to where, screened from the sight of the house by a hedge of evergreens, the long rows of hothouses and green-houses spread, with the irritating outer ugliness which contrasts so strongly with the beauties inside.

She was introduced to houses where peaches grew, and grapes, and where orchids, looking like strange insects, contrived to flourish on little strips of wood. And into fern houses which were a delight; and, above all, into a paradise of choice flowers, where her admiration touched the heart of the gardener, and made him generous in the size of the bunch he cut for her.

She went out with a sense of the exceeding vastness of all this display of luxury and beauty, and walked sedately back to the house, as if almost over-weighted by the honour done her in loading her with these lovely flowers.

She had scarcely reached her room, and taken off her hat, when a summons came to her. It was Revesby who brought the message that his Lordship would be glad if Miss Bellamy would come and play to him again, and if she would sing some more of the old songs from the book he had sent her on the previous evening.

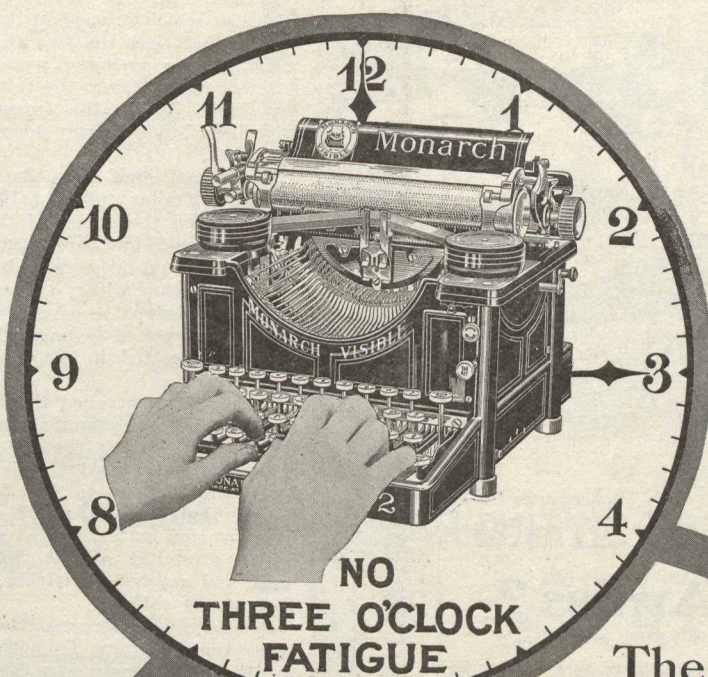
Edna smoothed her hair, placed two or three hothouse roses and ferns in the front of her dress, and went downstairs, following the stately Revesby with a fast-beating heart.

When they reached the hall she turned at once to the piano, but the butler said: "Not here, ma'am. If you please, his Lordship wishes you to play to him in the old wing."

Edna could almost have uttered a cry. Was she, then, to see Lord Lockington at last?

In a state of excitement so acute that her fingers trembled, she followed Revesby through a door into the back of the house, and along a long passage on the left, lighted only by two or three electric jets.

At the end was a door, which the man opened with a key, and then Edna, following him rather frightened, found herself in a room so dark that at first she dared not advance, but waited to be told in what direction to move, and to get used to the obscurity.



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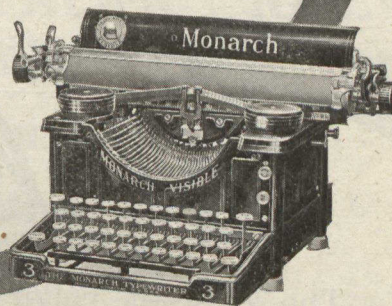
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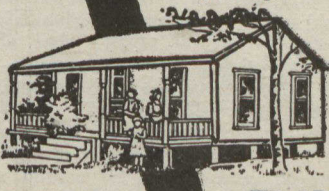


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