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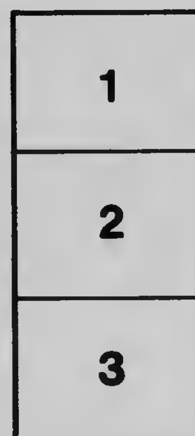

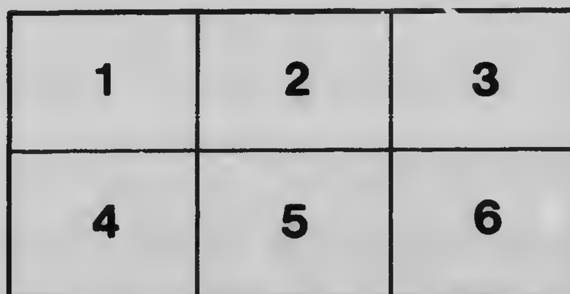

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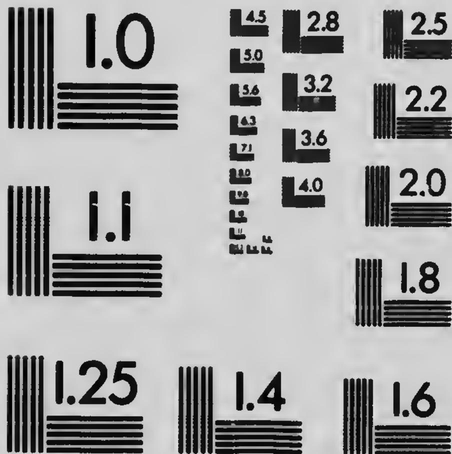

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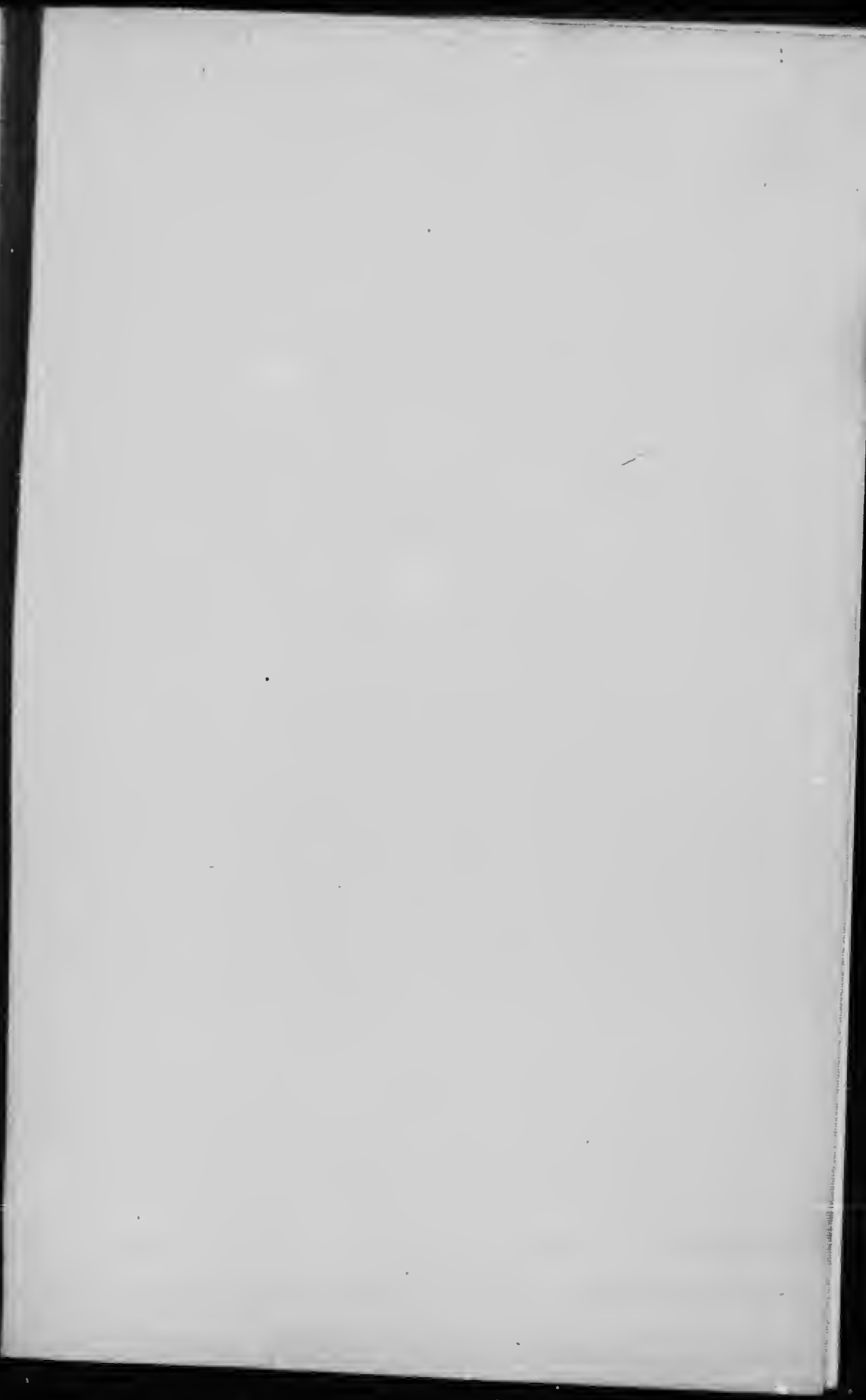

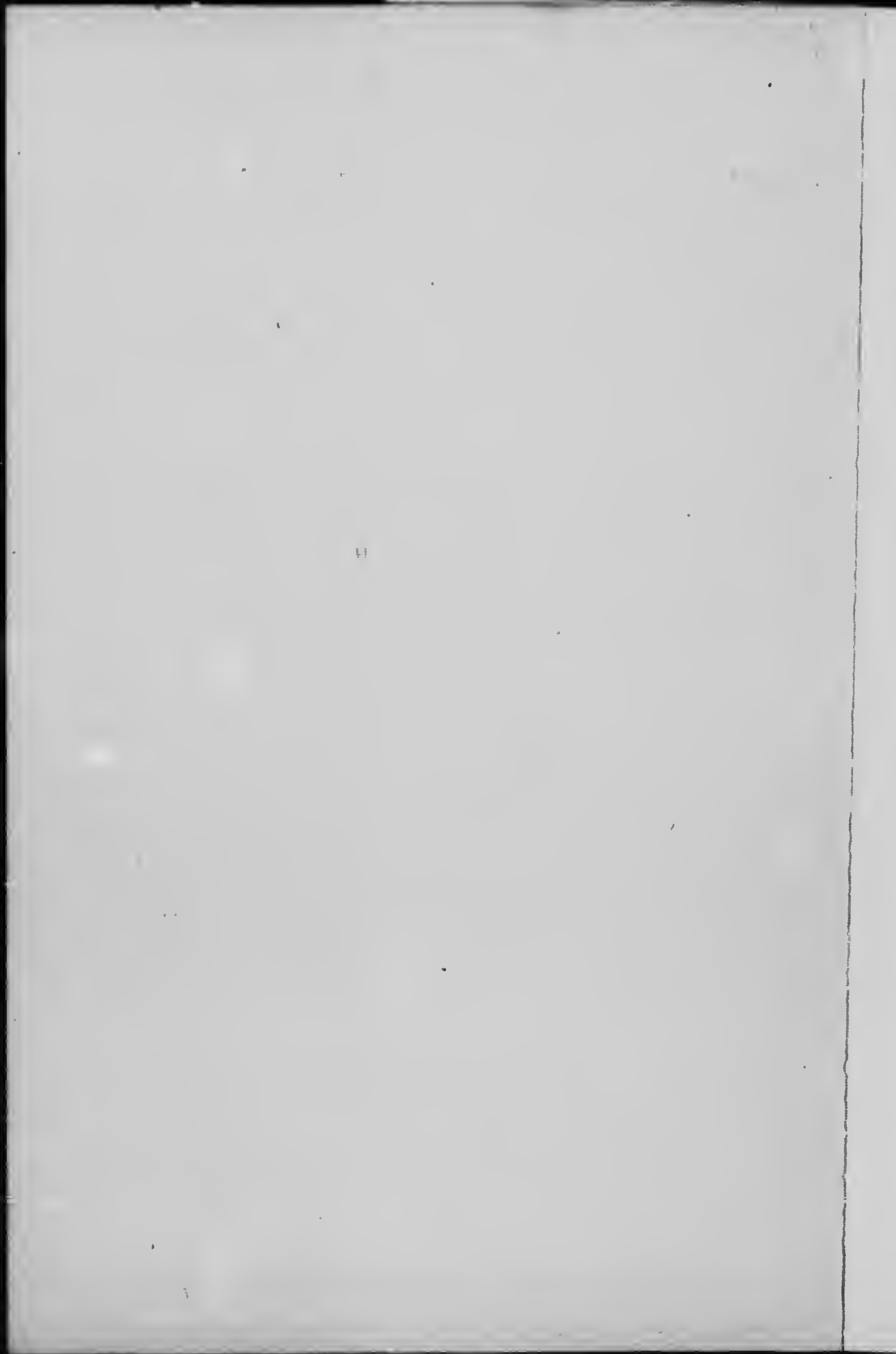

THE PENSIONNAIRES

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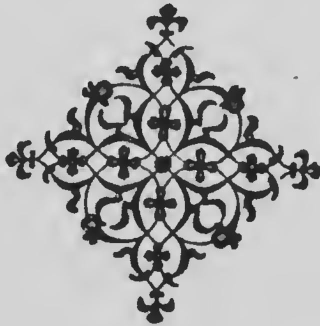
THE PENSIONNAIRES

THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN GIRL WHO TOOK A VOICE TO EUROPE AND FOUND—MANY THINGS

BY

ALBERT R. CARMAN



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PUBLISHED OCTOBER, 1903

The Heintzemann Press, Boston

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HORS D'ŒUVRE

THE Continental "pension" is like nothing Anglo-Saxon. Leaf over its guest-book and you find a cross-section of civilization; sit at its table, and you taste reminiscences of a French hotel; turn to conversation between the courses, and you are in the dining saloon of an Atlantic "liner."

It is a democracy with opinions about Botticelli; an aristocracy in exile and without leisure; an European Concert, free from jealousies and welcoming an American invasion which, in turn, anxiously repudiates the Monroe doctrine as applied to tourists.

Though an assemblage of strangers, with barely a prejudice in common, speaking one another's languages so badly that each must explain eventually in his own what he meant to say, international friendships are formed with the loaning of a guide-book, and new-comers are taken shopping on the second day. After four days together at table d'hote, *companionable people are ready to plan a month's tour with a division of carriage hire and a "pooling" of tastes.*

Intolerance—that besetting sin of the sure-

footed—finds the air of a "pension" either fatal or infuriating. There is no place like it for getting into the shoes of impossible people. When the "unspeakable Turk" sits next one at table, and speaks English, he is discovered to be human and likeable, and to have his point of view. He is not a Puritan perversely gone wrong, but the child of another world.

One deception the "pension" practises. It cheats the hasty into believing that they have penetrated a native home. A home it is, like to no other place of public entertainment. The hostess and—more especially—the host always seem to be people of leisure; and to feel an entertainer's duty toward their guests. It may, after all, be a native home, you are tempted to think—yet that bookcase of English novels!—Alas!

It is by no means a hotel; not even a rural French hotel, with Madame and her sewing in the office, and Monsieur coming in smiling from under his chef's cap to grow superlative over the pet "lions" of the neighbourhood, and the slim dark daughter lighting your fire at night with a coquettish consciousness. Madame is in the drawing-room with you, Monsieur welcomes you to his library, the slim dark daughter can sing if you really wish it.

It is not "lodgings"—no, not by a million times. Compared with that, it is a palatial hotel with six courses at dinner and a foreign grace of service.

It is, in short, not to be stated in terms of anything else. It is a "pension." And long may its mistress sit in her drawing-room to bargain with us over the cost of fires! And long may the "pensionnaires" chatter across its table of the wonders of Europe and the weariness they induce.

CHAPTER I

An American Girl

JESSICA, the unconquerable, stood at the window and flouted the yellow heat. Her mother lay upon the sofa behind her, with a loose insecurity of gowning which made one fear to see her sit up, and cooled her face with a wearily swayed fan. Jessica was for taking the tram to the Grosser Garten—for they were in cup-like Dresden with a Saxon summer spilled into the bowl—where the air possibly stirred a little beneath the trees and a café orchestra played. Mrs. Murney would not put on a dress in the furnace of that room to pay a visit to a glacier.

Jessica laughed—an achievement that seemed a miracle to her mother—and said that she supposed she might go alone. Mrs. Murney looked a trifle anxious and stopped fanning. Jessica moved across the room with the brisk hopefulness of one who sees

release ahead, and took from its place a wide, flapping hat of light straw over which a bunch of red poppies nodded. Then she stood before the glass and pinned this to her massed hair of satin black, her live hands showing white against it. But the full, lifted arms, shining through the airy texture of the white muslin sleeves, suggested rather a flesh-tinted vitality; and when she turned and the column of her throat rose free and cool from a dress that hardly seemed finished at the neck, so indistinctly did the lattice-work of the yoke fray out into nothingness, you saw that she was dark, and that her hands had not been over white. You were reminded, too, possibly, if you had a trained eye, that she was a singer, for her deep, long breathing stirred the loose fullness of her dress at the swell of the bosom, and the red ribbon that marked the waistline was not close-drawn.

Her mother wiped away with a damp handkerchief the moisture that the stopped fan had let gather on her brow.

"Sorry you won't come," said Jessica,

stooping to kiss her. "I'm sure you would be cooler—"

"You are always sure of the good of going to places," sighed Mrs. Murney. "In winter you must go out to keep warm, and in summer you must go out to keep cool."

Jessica's face pleaded guilty with a conceding smile; and, bending down playfully, she took her mother's hand in hers and started the fan going again. Then in a second she was straight and alert to be gone.

"Dinner at half-past six," Mrs. Murney reminded her from beneath the feathery zephyrs of the fanning.

"Oh, I know the rules of the 'pension,'" cried Jessica, moving toward the door. "'*Einmal klingeln*' for a '*zimmermädchen*'; '*zweimal klingeln*' for a—" But with a swift gentleness she had closed the door behind her.

In the Garten it was much cooler. She found a bench in the shade with an open mead stretching away before her, and at the right through the trees was the café where

an orchestra played softly at times, with long restful intervals. She could hear the voices of the people chatting over their tables, but distant and indistinct like voices in a dream. The deep green of the wood breathed upon her revivingly, and the book she had brought lay unopened on her lap. Occasionally people passed along the path; now a nurse in fresh Saxon costume with a hot, over-dressed, protesting baby in her arms; now a wide perspiring German, with his still wider wife and full-cheeked little girl, seeking the haven of the café; now a couple of trim German officers, erect, tight-tunicked, brisk, looking as if they were heat-proof; and now two happy lovers, frankly hand in hand. But, for the most part, the path wound out of sight, empty and silent.

Presently, however, there came into view slowly, but unconquered, that man who among mortals is most calmly superior to his environments—a young English gentleman. He was in white flannels and canvas shoes, his trouser-legs turned up as if to

flaunt in the face of this blinding sun the existence of a land where the vapors of earth banish it at will. He was hatless, his "straw" hanging down his back by a cord, and his hands were in his coat-pockets. He came nearer; a smile relieved the reposeful firmness of his face—it was Mr. Hughes, her mother's *vis-à-vis* at the "pension" table.

"How plucky of you!" he said. "I thought that this tiresome heat would have kept everybody indoors."

"It is cooler here than at the house," she explained.

"Of course; but to get here"—and the weather being so well worth talking about, they gave it considerable attention.

But presently her picturesquely superlative condemnation of the heat awakened in him a latent instinct to defend his Europe against this daughter of another continent, and he mentioned that it was sometimes hot in New York, if he had not been misled.

"Yes, heat kills people in New York," she admitted promptly, "but they die happy, with ice on their lips—real ice," and she

looked at him enquiringly to see if he knew what she meant, for the European has not learned that ice is "man's best friend" when the dog-days relieve the dog of that rôle.

"I see," he said; "the best a New Yorker asks for a death-b‹ ˋ promise is plenty of ice," and he twinkled merrily upon her. She laughed her appreciation of his retort—a curious, rising clear-toned laugh; and then said—

"'Never touched me'—I'm not really a New Yorker. But that's slang, and you won't understand it."

He looked as if he were trying to look a little puzzled and there was a conscious tolerance on his face. Slang in the abstract was "bad form," and no English gentleman could be guilty of it; but he had lived enough abroad to tolerate in others what he would condemn in his own people. Only, unhappily, his face showed it when he was in the act of tolerating.

"Now, I'll explain," said Jessica, settling her round-chinned face into a superficial so-

briety beneath which merriment visibly struggled.

"Oh, don't bother," he interjected. "I dare say I know what you meant."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" she laughed, the merriment breaking frankly through. "You English people cannot possibly comprehend slang officially, as it were; but you know what it means."

"Well, we do not encourage the use of slang," he said, with a touch of seriousness. "Perhaps it is because it is *our* language that it defaces. You Americans"—and he regarded her with a quizzical smile—"are only using a borrowed language, you know."

"A borrowed language!" she cried in surprise. And then after a moment's thought, while he still smiled on her in silence—"P'raps you're right. But you'll have to admit that we've oiled it up a good lot." And they both laughed together, she in challenge and he in unconvinced abandonment of the contest.

"You're not from New York then," he asked; and therewith put a question which

the Murneys had not yet quite decided how to answer, though on this occasion Jessica had thoughtlessly invited it by her joking disclaimer.

"Well, we are now," she said slowly, and then added, "but we used to live in the White Mountains."

"Why ever did you leave them?" he asked, with an Englishman's unconquerable preference for the country over the town.

"Slow," she said, mournfully, looking moodily at the yellow-hazed mead before them, vibrant with heat. "And then there was my singing."

"Ah! yes."

"But life in the mountains has its silver lining," she went on; and with the furnace heat of that stifling day in their lungs, she told him of the broad veranda of her high-perched home, of their leisurely life and delicious devices for the fighting of summer, and then of her autumn rides through flame-tinted forests. It all seemed so much better to her in distant, foreign Dresden, than it had when its wide peace was a prison, and

its vast quiet a soul-corroding dullness. But she would not have gone back to it, leaving the tide of life for one of its quietest eddies, on any terms. As for Hughes, he found listening to the effortless, flowing speech of New England more pleasing than he would have said, though he was not attracted by the iced drinks, nor gave his sanction to much of the zig-zag English. Still, he was very conscious, at all events, of the rose that showed on her dark, full cheek, as the light of recollection played behind her eyes—it quickened his pulses, for some reason, as rose on a fair cheek never could have done. And the cool column of her throat—that drew his eyes so often that he set himself to keep them away from it. Staring at some one not a stranger to you was far from the correct thing.

Then Hughes talked of his England—not London, with its hurry and roar and soot-sowing air—but the soft, lush loveliness of rural England, where the waving landscape is full of wide fields, golden and green, marked off by the dark, rich lines of the fat

hedges; and great trees march along mighty avenues or scatter themselves as comfortable giants might over a deer-dotted park, massing on the sky-line like a forest. But he spoke of it all without enthusiasm—though his eyes glistened at times. The village churches, he thought, were "rather fine," and it was "good fun punting on the Thames," and she should see some of the great houses when they were open and go to service in a cathedral. She knew by looking at him that he deemed England but very little lower than the home of the angels, yet that he would never say so unless someone said the contrary. English people abroad praise England chiefly by the indirect method of criticising other countries. This makes them popular with the natives.

"We have seen very little of England," said Jessica, "but we must before we go back."

"Yes," said Hughes simply, "I fancy you would like it."

She looked at him in half-doubt for a moment as he sat a-gaze at nothing, his

sharply outlined clean-cut jaw seeming as if it were set in firmness, though it had plainly only the position of habitual repose. "We Americans," she began, "dote on England." Her face was the face of a girl who doted on things. "We read so much of it, you know—Dickens and—and that. Why do English people dislike us so?"

"Why—why!" ejaculated the astonished Hughes, turning toward her. "Why—we don't, you know."

"Oh, yes, you do," she insisted, with the desperate emphasis of one irretrievably embarked on a venturous contention. "I know it myself, and I've heard hundreds of Americans say so."

"Well, do you like us?" asked Hughes unexpectedly, twinkling at her.

"Not—not always," she admitted, with that rising laugh of hers.

"Not often would be nearer the truth, wouldn't it?"

"Well, I must say that you don't usually try to make us like you," she blurted out in blunt defence. There was much red on the

dark cheek now, and the eyes were on the quivering mead, quivering with it. Hughes, being thus unwatched, found it easy to look at her, and so pleasant, as she sat there, her quick-breathing form radiating a sensible femininity through her muslin dress, that he quite forgot for the moment that politeness, if nothing else, demanded a reply from him to that last statement. But she did not forget, and presently she looked up resentfully—

"Americans," she said, "don't worry about it, you know; they just wonder at it."

"Oh, but," he exclaimed, coming to a sense of his omission, "that is not true of all English people—not of many English people. Now I like Americans very much. And then I thought it was they who universally disliked us."

"Now, honest," she said, holding her finger up at him, "don't you think we're queer?"

"No! no!" he protested sturdily, if not altogether without mendacity. "Of course," he went on, "we are not exactly alike—we

each have our notions and peculiarities. But —look here, Miss Murney," he suddenly broke in on his own laboured explanation, "we do criticise each other pretty freely, but you are the only people in the world we'd fight for on sentimental grounds, and I believe that if we were hard put to it you'd fight for us."

. . . .

After a time the lengthening shadows warned Jessica that she must go back, and they agreed to walk together through the Garten, past the tennis courts, and so down the wide Bürgerwiese to their part of the city. And very delightful it was now, with the first cooler breath of evening on the air, and the broadening belts of shade everywhere blotting out the yellow empire of the sun.

Straight, easy, athletic, paced the young Englishman with firm-set jaw and eyes that could laugh when the face did not. And light and borne up on a high tide of vitality walked Jessica, saying but little as they passed under the trees and by the much be-

shovelled sand-heaps provided by the municipality for the play of the children—yet seeming to Hughes by the very force of her personality to be tweaking at the cloak of his companionship every moment. Jessica long remembered the care-free elation of spirit that danced within her during this walk down the Bürgerwiese. She had been rather lonely in Dresden, having all a vividly live girl's love of good company, male preferred; and Mr. Hughes seemed to fit her not too exacting need with some satisfaction. Then on the morrow came Herr Vogt's amazing revelation.

CHAPTER II

"Tin and Paint"

Mrs. Murney and Jessica had not been long in Dresden, but they did not conceal the fact that they had been quite a time in New York, where Jessica had taken voice training. Some vague place in the White Mountains had been their home before that, and it was discernible, in a long conversation, that they feared it might be again. But in the meantime—in a tentative way—they called New York "home."

Dresden had drawn them because there the renowned vocal teacher, Herr Vogt, lived, and they had come in fear and trembling lest the great master should find that Jessica's laborious and costly New York training had merely wasted her time and damaged her voice. Many a girl had had such an experience—if the dictum of Europe is to be accepted. But from the first

Herr Vogt was delighted with her voice. He had nothing to change—nothing to reconstruct; he had only to go on building. And it was a marvellous voice. Not a light, frivolous jingle of bells such as might dance to the castanets of comic opera; not even a rain of starry sweetness, which so calls out and dazzles the very soul of one and then wings back to the stars without ever having so much as seen its worshipper on his knees; but a rich, pure, measureless outpouring, as human as a cry, as full as an organ, as high as the lark at morning.

But Herr Vogt was not satisfied. When he sat at the piano it followed his nervous touch up and up and down and down—it filled every note with the ease of a voice that was always at flood and never ran thin—it sang with the precision of the thoroughly trained. But "it"—the voice—did all this. Jessica stood, full-faced and at peace, emotionless beside it, an unmoved spectator.

He rumpled his hair and looked at her.

"Didn't I get that right?" she would ask genially.

"Yes, yes, Miss. Mein Gott, yes!" he would ejaculate, and then he would look at her harder than ever.

Crimson would creep into Jessica's face, a crimson that was not dissociated from temper, and she would ask herself with a little start of alarm if the rumply-haired, big-eyed German was not a trifle "wheely" in his upper story.

"Ach!" he would cry, turning to the piano with impatient fingers that banged out his perplexity on the white keys—keys that, like Jessica, were smooth and cold, but, like her, loosed the voice of music at his command.

The morning after Jessica's venture to the Grosser Garten, his bursting perplexity shattered his politeness—not a very difficult matter, though his kindness was indestructible—and he blurted out his wonder.

"I understand you not," he said in despair. "Vy are you alvays—zo—zo—" and he paused.

"So what?" demanded Jessica, about equally alarmed and indignant, for this was

the putting into words of that incomprehensible stare which had disturbed her so long.

He shook his head until his hair floated loose. "Ach! how can I tell it?" Then turning to her with an effort at calm seriousness—

"You haf one heafenly voice. But haf you? Is it yours? It zings efery note in the zong—beauti-ful! But you—zing not one."

Jessica flushed and Mrs. Murney stood up.

"You will not me understand," he wailed, and he trotted back and forth across the room. "Vy did I spoke?"

"I certainly do not know, Herr Vogt," said Jessica; and her voice shook.

"Vell, it is this vise," he said, sawing the words off with a vibrant arm. "Your voice —is vell trained. But you—you do not the music feel—you do not lif her. You stand there and zing as if you vas a heafenly phonograph—I t'ink that is him—just tin and paint—just tin and paint."

"Why, Herr Vogt!" interjected the dumbfounded Jessica, storm in her eyes.

The protruding eyes of the German languished on her with sympathy, and he was miserably silent. Why had he ever been otherwise?

"You think I don't control my own voice?" she asked; and her tones indicated that breathing was a difficult operation.

He threw up his hands in a gesture of despair. "If you had me understood," he said sadly, "then you needed not me to spoke at all." Then he went on, as if in comfort— "But your voice!—it is the cry of a poetic soul you somevere in you haf. Be prout of that."

A close look would have shown tears just under the dark lashes of the girl; for the dictum of Herr Vogt was the word of authority, and not to be put aside with a pout. If he had said her voice needed training— that was to be expected—but this! Her voice sang, but she did not. There was "a poetic soul" within her, but it was not her soul. It gave her a weird feeling; and all

the time the great man glared at her out of his bulging eyes as if she were a "freak" of some sort and he had paid his "mark" to see her. She put an ineffective question or two in an effort to pierce his meaning, but they seemed to fly wide of the elusive target.

"I know I'm nervous and frightened with you—" she began once, by way of explanation, but he stopped her with—

"Ah! the stand-stock-still person is nervous; but the sing-like-an-angel person, never-r! She know that she is the equal of the highest *hof-dame.*"

So Jessica went back to the "pension" with this astounding notion whirling in her mind. What could Herr Vogt mean? Think as she would, she could not get a tangible hold on it. It was not that she could not sing when she wanted to; that was too absurd. It seemed to be, indeed, that she sang very well, but did not act her songs. Possibly it was facial expression that she lacked; but, if so, why had not Herr Vogt said just that? Then she remembered that she often attained more expression when

singing in public; and she regretted that she had not told Herr Vogt this. That might have satisfied him.

Another memory came linked to this. Sometimes when singing before a large and sympathetic audience, she seemed to lose herself—her usually keen consciousness became blurred—the audience and the occasion faded and she lived only in the song. This she had always put down to excitement; but now she recalled, with a queer catch at her heart, that at such moments she did seem to "lif her music," as Herr Vogt would say, in a way entirely new to her. Was this "the poetic soul" that Herr Vogt fancied she had within her?

CHAPTER III

At Table d'Hôte

"PENSION" LÜTTICHAU was not properly a German "pension," for dinner was at night and not at mid-day; but on the other hand there was cooked fruit, and not salad, with the joint. The late dinner was a concession to the touch-and-go tourist who did not like the drowsy effect of a heavy meal at high noon; but the lower pressure traveller, to whom German opera at a few "marks" was a sought-for temptation, could have a supper at five which enabled him to be in his seat for the rise of the curtain at half-past six. The German goes to the opera when an Englishman goes to his dinner; and both alike growl at interrupters.

Luncheon on this particular day had begun with a stew of some sort, and a monologue on old crockery by the lady from Maine, who had discovered that early cups

were handleless and was inordinately proud of the knowledge. But now a dear old Irish lady, with white hair and a white lace cap with a large pale-green bow in front, was saying in answer to a question that she belonged to "that tabooed race, the Irish," and proceeded to tell of an experience many years old in the London "under-ground," when an English lady was afraid to talk to her lest she should bring out some dynamite then and there with deadly results. She lifted her wrinkled hands with an admirable imitation of a tremor as she repeated the English lady's — "Y-you go first, please!" when they were leaving the train.

"You have been at Delft?" Herr Werner, an erect German whose whole head—face, hair, poise—suggested light, now asked of the lady from Maine, reverting to her crockery "hobby."

"Oh, yes," she said. "I have stayed there, and I have taken a good deal of Delft ware home. A man in the museum at Amsterdam told me—"

"Where did you stay in Amsterdam?"

broke in a nervous middle-aged woman who was over with her married daughter, and seemed to think that the chief end of European travel was to get safely from one "pension" to another.

"Well," replied the lady from Maine, "we have stayed at several places there—"

"Give me one good 'pension'—that will oblige us very much," said her questioner.

"We generally stay at a hotel," went on the Maine lady, largely, "but this last trip we have tried some 'pensions,' and we like them very well—very well, indeed."

Frau Lüttichau, sitting at the head of the table, looked up at this with an expression that would have spelled impatience on any face but that of the racially patient.

"I knew a man once," volunteered a Scotch gentleman, with a merry twinkle about the eyes, "who, when asked where to stay in Amsterdam, always said, 'Any Dam hotel,' which greatly shocked—"

"Malcolm, why will you repeat that story?" broke in his wife with a feeble smile.

"There, my dear!" he exclaimed tragically, "you cut off the poor man's apology."

"Your friend's remark reminds me of the bad hotels in Germany you see advertised everywhere," contributed the Maine lady's husband.

Herr Werner turned impatiently toward him. "Do you know," he said, "that 'bad' means bath?"

"Does it?" asked the American with as innocent an expression of countenance as a twitching pair of eyelids would permit. "I always thought it was a piece of your boasted German honesty."

American foolery was not included in Herr Werner's philosophic chart of life, so he met the explanation with a look of open disgust, and mentally recorded another case tending to show the ignorant superficiality of tourists.

"That's the explanation of Malcolm's joke," now said Malcolm's wife, seizing the opportunity. "The Dam is the great square in Amsterdam, and many good hotels—"

"That was hardly necessary," interrupted Malcolm sharply; "everybody knows that."

"Everybody hasn't been to Amsterdam," said his wife, with the manner of submitting meekly to his rebuke—a manner quite contradictory to the matter of her remark.

"The two things that Amsterdamers are most proud of," said Mr. Hughes, "is that they have the biggest drink and the biggest place to drink it in in the world."

"Did ye never see the devil's punch-bowl in Ireland?" asked the old Irish lady, with a patriotic glow.

"But that was for the devil's use," expostulated Hughes, "and no Irishman ever got a taste of it—unless," he added as an afterthought—"you claim his Satanic Majesty as a fellow countryman."

The old blue eyes looked up a-glint with mischief. "Arrah!" she said, "Irishmen are quite used to have foreigners drain not only their punch-bowls, but their country, dry."

"You mean that bar in Amsterdam," asked the lady from Maine, turning to Hughes, "where they fill your glass so full you have

to stoop down and drink a little before you can lift it without spilling?"

"Yes; and the great Krasnapolsky café."

"I've been to them both," announced the lady from Maine, with airy satisfaction. "Many go to Amsterdam, and don't," she went on. "It's my mission in life to hunt up and show people characteristic sights. Now, there's the Meissen factory near here. How many—" But conversation broke out all along the table at the sound of her voice, pitched at the familiar monologue key.

Mrs. Murney and Jessica sat about half-way down the left side of the table, and opposite them were Mr. Hughes and Herr Werner, the erect German.

"Did you go to the lesson this morning?" Herr Werner now asked Jessica.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I never miss that."

"Ah! of course," said Herr Werner. "It must be a great pleasure to you."

"It's hard work," laughed Jessica; "and that's right."

Herr Werner turned to his plate. This American girl had puzzled him from the

first, and now he had about given over all effort to solve the problem. When she sang, she drew the inner soul out of him, and he —a true son of German romanticism—felt that he could die for very love of her. But when she talked, every sentence seemed a sacrilege—a desecrating blow at the ideal of her he had formed. How such a girl could sing with such a voice—that was the maddening perplexity. For a time he was spasmodically in love with her when she sang, and full of antipathy for her when she didn't; but now he felt that he had about cured the spasms.

"Jessica had an unpleasant experience this morning," said Mrs. Murney, "which may send us to another music teacher."

"May we be told of it, Miss Murney?" asked Mr. Hughes; and Jessica, glad to get another sane mind on the affair, gave a dry-humored account of Herr Vogt's outbreak.

"Those musical chaps get 'daffy' sometimes," was Mr. Hughes's comment.

Herr Werner had watched her as she talked with intense interest. It seemed then,

he said to himself, that he had been right in deeming the casket unfitted to the jewel.

"You must not think that all foolishness, Miss Murney," he now said gravely. "Your voice has always told me of something I did not see in you."

Jessica, as might be guessed, had a temper of her own; and it flamed out at this. The great Herr Vogt was to be endured, but hardly every German who went "batty." So she turned to Mr. Hughes with—

"My voice, it seems, is getting many compliments at my expense."

Hughes nodded. He had a well-bred man's talent for silence.

The Scotchman had lived long in India, and this touch of the occult in Jessica's two personalities set him talking of the "faquirs" there, whose work, he said, made all similar tricks in the European world look like child's-play.

"They have secrets of mental phenomena there," observed Herr Werner, "that we have no trace of."

"They are the cleverest cheats living,

that's all," replied the Scotchman, with a Briton's contempt for things outside of Adam Smith and Paley's Theology.

"Do you believe in ghosts?" asked the lady from Maine.

"I believe in banshees," interrupted the old Irish lady in her mellow brogue.

"I lived near Belfast for ten years," observed the Scotch gentleman, "and I never even heard of one," and he looked conscious of his disposal of that question.

"Belfast!" said she of the white cap and green bow, scornfully; "Belfast is not properly Irish."

"I presume the proper Irish are further south," he rejoined a little satirically.

"No; the improper Irish," said the old lady; and there was satisfaction in her eye.

"Well," rippled on the lady from Maine, "I don't know much about banshees, but years ago I made a collection of the ghosts that walk in the castles of Europe, and it was most interesting. Now, there's the 'white lady' of—"

But Frau Lüttichau had risen, and the various tourists were practising their *"Mahlzeit"* on each other, the foreigners with a laugh, the Germans with a polite and kindly gravity.

"Come to my room," said the lady from Maine, linking her arm through Jessica's. "I want to show you some of those handleless cups. I'm going to smuggle them through the New York customs as broken crockery, ain't I, Sam?" turning to her husband.

"You may be," said "Sam," "but I'm not. I've turned honest. Do you know what she did with me one year?" he asked Jessica.

"No."

"Well, I was runnin' over home without her, and she filled my trunk up with her bargains—ladies' stockings, new petticoats, and that sort of thing—and never told me a word about it. Of course I took my solemn oath that I had nothing but my own clothing in my trunk, and then they searched it and found all these things. Gee-whiskers!"

"Come along," said the lady from Maine to Jessica. "I'll get 'em in. I just answer questions. Unless they ask me specifically if I've got any handleless cups, I won't tell 'em."

CHAPTER IV

Herr Werner

JESSICA was indignant every time she thought during the next few days of Herr Vogt's extraordinary attempt to pronounce a divorce between herself and her voice; but it was an indignation tempered by momentary misgivings that there might possibly be something in the notion after all. Of course, when she swung about to squarely face such a misgiving, it disappeared. She knew that it was her voice. You might as well tell her that that plump, flexible member was not her hand. It was just Herr Vogt's exaggerated, foreign way of saying that she lacked animation. And she would turn away disgusted from the subject, only to feel the "misgiving" lean over her shoulder, and in a whisper recall memories of times when, while singing under some excitement, that strange other consciousness did seem to arise

in her and take her voice out of her own keeping—a consciousness that realized the poetry of her music as she (Jessica) had never done.

Well, what was more likely than that the voicing of splendid music amidst the sympathetic silence of a great many other people, all their minds following with hers the sweep of the composer's thought, should stir her imagination if she had any? A fig for such a misgiving as that!

As for Herr Vogt, he made no further reference to his outbreak, but contented himself with touching her voice here and there reverently—if with a hopeless melancholy —as an artist might polish a roughness or two from a great statue, which somehow lacked the essential similitude of life.

A week went by, and then Jessica had a weird, disquieting, exasperating experience. She was sitting in the "pension" drawing-room one afternoon alone, when Herr Werner drifted in in his usual aimless way, and after making her a formal, silent, smileless bow, sat down at the book-case where he

tumbled over the familiar collection—English, German, French—in search of something to read. They had by now practically ceased trying to talk to each other; they could find no common meeting ground. To him she was not only uninteresting, but a perpetually keen disappointment. Why was she not the woman who sang with her voice? As for Jessica, she told her mother that they "bored each other at sight."

After a time the impatient fingers of the German, finding nothing in the book-case fitted to his mental mood, and Jessica having become absorbed in her romance—one of Mr. Anthony Hope's black-and-white sketches of sanguinary *sang froid*—he shook his luminous head as if flinging off a burden, and, striding to the piano, began playing without permission or apology.

Mr. Hope's hero was at the moment riding up a lonely road at mad speed with a haughty lady to serve and a cynical villain to thwart, and, as Herr Werner played on, Jessica was swept more and more into the spirit of the wild race. She was so little

conscious of the effect of the music upon her, however, that she thought it all her interest in a splendid story, until Herr Werner suddenly silenced his mounting, hoof-beat melody and let his fingers wander softly among the minor keys. Then a sadness fell upon her and she let the book slip to her lap. All in a flash she knew that it was the music her mind had been following and not the tale, and that it had been no mere listening to the music with the cold, critical ear she usually turned upon another's performance. She shook herself out of the mood and picked up her story. But the melancholy of the music seemed to smother her attention, and, in spite of her resolve, something within her was listening—not reading. Then as she gave herself, through sheer pleasure in it, more and more to its sad magic, the liquid harmonies began to paint for her shadowy, shifting pictures. It did not occur to her in her new mood to think that she did not see them—it seemed rather that she had always seen them when certain sounds lapped at her ear. Now when the music mourned, she—

the unromantic, unimaginative Jessica Murney—saw across a sullen river a dark glade, and within it rose a white bier bearing a white form, and about the bier the tall cypresses kept silent guard. Then the music strengthened and swelled to a deep, sweet content; and the still cypresses broadened into spreading elms, touched by light summer airs, and the white bier was a tall white lady resting in the shade while little children played quietly by the brink of the river, no longer sullen but sparkling in the sunlight. Then the music spread its wings and soared toward the zenith; and the white lady was a white snow peak and the elms a fringe of pines far below, and the river she could hear falling through crystal caverns of eternal ice. And now the music sank as if tired to the vale of rest and the white lady walked deep in the shadow of the pines upon the silent carpet of their slow sowing by the side of the winding brook.

She—the prosaic—saw all this, as one sees a distant view through a thin haze, and yet she was not singing. When Herr Werner

stopped the vision slowly faded; and when her mother came in, a few minutes later, almost the memory of it was gone.

As for Herr Werner, he had never even looked at her. When her mother entered with much talk about "the too lovely things" she had just seen in the shops bubbling over at her lips, he stopped leafing over some music he had found on the piano since his fingers had rested from the erratic melody, and walked, erect, out of the room, wholly unconscious of the effect of his playing.

For days this experience haunted Jessica like a guilty secret. She told no one of it, not even her mother, and it gave her a new reluctance to speak of Herr Vogt's uncanny theory. There were hours when, if it had not been for the shame of it and the steadying effect of the wholesome companionship of Mr. Hughes—of which she had come to have not a little—she would have fled this bewildering German Dresden which had made music a religion and—to her New England eyes—religion a spectacle, and now put her in doubt of her own identity.

CHAPTER V

A "Pension" Night

THAT night the Wagner "Ring" began at the opera, and everyone went; but the next it was whispered about at dinner that there was to be music in the drawing-room in the evening—that a young Pole was coming in to play the violin and that possibly Miss Murney would sing.

"I wonder why it is," marvelled the lady from Maine, settling herself on the sofa after dinner with her cup of coffee, "that Poles are always so musical."

"It is their soul-essence," said Herr Werner, "crushed out of them by oppression."

"What! You say that, and you a German!"

"My mother was a Pole."

"Indeed! Well, I met a Pole once in—let me see!—"

"I think," said Hughes, *sotto voce,* turn-

ing to Jessica, "that it is their long hair. Long hair has always meant something from Samson down."

"Yes," laughed Jessica. "That's nearer it, I guess."

"You don't endorse the theory of soul-essence, then?"

She shook her head, looking apprehensively and not without hostility at the tall German who was attending to the Maine lady's account of Poles she had met. Then in a yet lower tone—

"Don't you think some people lay it on a little thick at times?"

"Seems so to me," said Hughes; and they exchanged understanding glances.

"My! I'm so tired to-night," sighed a young lady with bright eyes and a worn face—one of a party of five from Vassar.

"Galleries are always tiring," explained the tireless German teacher in charge of the party.

"It appears to me," drawled another of the quintette, "that touring is just bed and Baedeker—"

"Yes," laughed the first girl; "and there's too little bed and too much Baedeker."

"Nonsense!" said the leader of the party. "You didn't come over here for a rest cure."

"How did you like the gallery?" asked Herr Werner.

"Oh! perfectly *lovely!*" said one of them. "That Sistine Madonna is too sweet for *anything.*"

"Yes," and the German's face was alight. "There is so much in the eyes—so much—but I cannot say it." Then, after a moment's thought, he went on—"They are wise—wise as the Mother of God, and yet so sweet as a peasant woman with her baby."

"And those cunning cherubs—*aren't* they cute?" joined in the girl enthusiastically.

"You should not have seen them," said Herr Werner severely, "the same day that you saw the Madonna. They are of another spirit."

"They are the comedy of the picture, I think," joined in the white-haired Irish lady. "I rest myself by looking at their dear little mischievous faces and their tousled hair."

"We were over at the International Exhibition to-day," remarked the Scotch gentleman, "but it was spoiled for us—the trail of the 'impressionist' is over everything."

"There is one thing about the 'impressionist' painters that I like," said Hughes. "They are not mean in the matter of paint."

"I should say not," agreed one of the Vassar girls. "I always wonder how an 'impressionist' knows his picture from his palette."

"But do you not think," a black-bearded French gentleman asked of her, "that the 'impressionists' do not get fair play by being hung so close to you in a small room?"

"They are often better when seen from the next room," she admitted.

"You must get them in focus, so to speak," he went on.

"Most pictures," said the Scotch gentleman, "should be seen from the next room—or the next century."

"Or, as a gentleman I met in Paris said once, from very far back and well around

the corner," contributed the lady from Maine.

Then it was seen that the young Pole was making ready to play, and conversation died away. He plied a nervous bow, and his copious black hair shook loose over his knitted forehead as he straightened and bent again with the music. His violin seemed as much a part of him as the song does of a bird, and you felt that his mastery of the instrument must have been born with him—teaching always leaves something of its method in sight. As he finished, a patter of applause went around, but the real thanks came in the shower of congratulatory ejaculations in various languages. An Italian Signora kissed her hand to him, and a group of Danes near the piano beckoned him into their midst. Then he played again, shutting the windows to keep out the street sounds that had visibly annoyed him during the first selection; and then again, something of his own composition.

"Who is the young man's teacher?" the Irish lady asked of Frau Lüttichau.

"He never has had any teacher," she whispered back. "He is here taking a commercial education, but he wants to have some violin lessons very badly."

"Bless me!"

"His father won't hear of it, though. He has just taught himself."

Now Jessica was begged to sing, and she went to the piano, tossing gay remarks into the English-speaking group while her mother fussed with the music she was to play as an accompaniment. A song of misty German folk-lore was her choice; and from the moment her voice rose on the air, admiration sat openly on the faces of the company. The Danish corner listened with a critical ear, for two of them were professional singers from the opera at Copenhagen; and they smiled to each other their appreciation of Jessica's skill. They had looked at no one but the Pole himself when he played—they had hardly known there was any one else in the room to look at. Jessica's singing was to them a finished performance; it reached their critical sense, and satis-

fied it—but not their hearts. There was quite a formality of applause when she stopped; though it curiously lost heart almost immediately, for Jessica had laughed a swift, deprecating comment over at the English group and thus reminded the room of her jolly, unfanciful self. A strange thing was that people were always a little ashamed of their ardour over Jessica's singing in the presence of Jessica herself.

Herr Werner felt this to the extreme, though he never failed to respond from the depths of him to her singing. He seemed to hear another Jessica, and be satisfied—a joy that was not given to Herr Vogt. Even now he was still under the spell of the song, and crossed to the piano to ask for one similar to the last.

A nervousness fell upon Jessica as she refused; for she had begun to feel that his approach was a menace to her cheerful sanity. But she summoned a round-chinned smile and told him that she had not "taken" the song that he named, and that she did not practice her music on innocent people, when

he went back to his seat with a moody face—this was the woman of earth.

Then Jessica sang again, something Italian; and the dark Signora listened for whole bars with so motionless a pose that only her eyes seemed alive. Then she would stir impatiently. It was almost— But it was not——

"Ah! you English have no souls," said the Signora to herself when Jessica had finished.

"Won't you sing an Irish song, dear?" asked the old Irish lady; and she sang "Sweet Vale of Avoca" so that there were tears in the old blue eyes; and Hughes said heartily, "Irish music is good enough for me." One felt that even Jessica herself enjoyed the singing of this.

Then the Pole played again, and one of the Danes sang a high, trumpeting Danish song, and the Vassar quintette said that they had enjoyed the evening *immensely,* but that they must *really* beg to be excused, for they had a hard day before them to-morrow.

"We have little time for mere enjoy-

ment," laughed one of them, as they filed out, not without stiffness. Then others began to go, so there was no more singing; but gusts of gay chat, now in German, now in French, now in Danish, and now in English, sounded from different parts of the room as with slow reluctance the little party thinned out.

The last to go was the lady from Maine, who stayed to tell Frau Lüttichau that her trip to Meissen, the seat of the manufacture of "Dresden china," which had been fixed for the following day, was again postponed because some of the party could not go.

"I want them all to come," she said, "for I feel that it is my mission in life to give frivolous tourists proper ideas of porcelain."

CHAPTER VI

Mr. Hughes

DURING the days that followed that first torrid afternoon in the Grosser Garten, when it was seldom cool and only occasionally "not quite so hot," Jessica and Mr. Hughes—Theodore Hughes, known to intimates as "Teddy"—grew to be what she termed, in writing to her latest chum, "great friends." Mrs. Murney was a firm believer in the doctrine of passive resistance to heat, and liked to keep her room from luncheon to dinner, while the active Jessica stifled in the house and hailed with joy Mr. Hughes's invitation to the freedom of the tennis courts. So on broiling afternoons they would sally forth together in the lightest of clothing and walk gaily along the wide Bürgerwiese to the courts, where, with a few other unconquerables, they would play madly at a game that may be a "love game" even when both

score. Then they would sit in th shade of the trees that line the courts on one side where the air came out of the green depths of the Grosser Garten a little more coolly, and comment on the play of the others and discuss their individual likes and dislikes, and exchange amusing incidents of foreign travel with the growing intimacy of open-minded, non-secretive, not-too-deep people.

Jessica got to know that Mr. Hughes was a son of a family that had "an estate"—not that he ever said so as an isolated announcement—and that he was travelling abroad with much leisure, but without much definite plan before "settling down in life"—whatever that might mean. There was a long list of things that "he did not go in for"—not that he condemned others who did go in for them; but Jessica knew that, at the seat of his precise private judgment, he thought them really very foolish. He did not "go in" for art very much; especially "willowy, wallowy modern art." Old statuary he liked, however, when it was not too battered. He had been in Rome during the winter,

and enjoyed "brushing" up his history and his classics; and his mild interest in antique statuary had taken him twice to the Capitoline Museum and twice to the Vatican. He had run down to Naples, but it was "a nest of beggars." He liked opera, but he did not worship it the way these Germans seemed to. "Why, an opera here is like a church service, by Jove!" he said. Had Miss Murney ever seen a Christmas pantomime in London? No? Well, that was the thing. In fact, they knew how to stage nothing on the continent. You had to forget that there was such a place as London if you wanted to enjoy the theatre here.

"Or New York," said Jessica.

"I quite believe that," he agreed, "but I have never seen New York."

"You should come over before you 'settle down.' "

"It is very possible that I shall," was his response. "I want to have some 'cookies,' " he went on, with the air of teasing her. "I've heard so much of them from Americans."

" 'Cookies' are all right," said Jessica

heartily, with a round face of happy recollection. "But you won't get them in New York—you'd better come up to the White Mountains for them."

There was an uncalculated touch of personal invitation in this that was at first a little pleasing and then just a little embarrassing to them both, which showed how very well their growth into "great friends" was getting on. But the sense of pleasure in venturing upon possibly dangerous ground predominated, and Jessica went on:

"And we'll give you green corn and show you how to eat it."

"Is it puzzling?" he asked, laughing.

"Well, they say it is to strangers," said Jessica. "To me, it is as natural—and, oh! so delicious—and we'll miss it all this fall"—this last in sorrowful tones, not without a ring of genuineness.

"It is like pop-corn, is it not?"

"Yes; only bigger and sweeter and juicier—and you eat it on the cob."

"The cob?"

"Don't you know the cob, you poor, be-

nighted Englishman? Why, it is the—the stock the kernels are set round in."

"Oh!"

"And then I'll make you a pie;" and she smiled merrily at him.

"Oh, I know a pie," he said indignantly. "Not that I wouldn't like to see you make one," he added, his eyes falling upon her rounded arms as they shone, flesh-tinted, through her gauzy sleeves. He fancied them free even of the gauze, and spotted here and there with flour.

"No, you don't," she contradicted, shaking her laughing face at him. "You know a scrappy meat affair with a dough covering; and you know a 'tart'—a thick slab of pastry spread thin with jam. But a pie is a different thing."

He waited for her explanation, his usual quizzical smile in his eyes.

"A pie," she went on, "is an abundance of rich and juicy cooked fruit—perhaps cherries, perhaps long blackberries, perhaps apples—in a thin envelope of crisp, browned crust. The crust should only hold the fruit,

and then dissolve in your mouth, giving it a rich, buttery flavour."

"Do you write for the cookery books, may I ask?" was his comment. And then, when she disclaimed this occupation—

"Well, you certainly must prepare the advertisements for some yeast, or the only sanitary substitute for lard, or something of that sort."

"Oh, you're envious," she said. "You want some pie—that's it."

"Can you make this ambrosial dish yourself?"

"Sure!" she responded. "Though it's dangerous in our country to tell a young man that." And no sooner was this last spoken than she wished that she had not said it.

"Why?" he promptly inquired, to see what she would say, for he knew as well as she the meaning of the remark.

"Oh, nothing!" laughing confusedly. "I sit here and rattle on and say silly things." And she got up and stood strumming on the net of the racket with her live, pink-cush-

ioned fingers. Hughes rose with her, though his eyes still rested on her averted, flushed face. His first impulse was to tell her with a laugh that he knew what her remark implied, and see what then would come from her quick tongue. But, for some reason, as he watched her, he could not quite make a joke of it. The embarrassment in her attitude appealed to something new in him, and he felt an answering shyness. The flush on her face did not touch his sense of amusement, but rather stirred a certain tender pity in him, so that when he spoke, all he said was—

"Shall we walk?"

And there was that in his voice that conveyed to her maiden sensitiveness all that he had been thinking and feeling; and as they set off together in silence toward the shaded walks of the Grosser Garten, she turned her eyes upon him for a moment in an appreciative glance, in which there was gratitude for his forbearance, mingled with a recognition of a more delicate intuition than she had known he possessed.

In Jessica the spirit of play was never held long in subjection to formality. One day they wandered farther than usual and found an abundance of long-stemmed wild flowers—some of them new to her, but others, old friends of the New Hampshire hill-sides—and down she sank into their midst and began weaving them into loose chains, while Hughes stood helplessly by at first and then assisted by gathering great bunches farther afield, and piling them at her side. Then she made him sit down and take off his hat, while she wound him round and crowned him with her floral wreaths, singing with bursts of frank laughter snatches of child-time songs as she worked. And very content he looked when he was not teased by the thought that some one might come.

To end with, she dared him to wear his chains home; but he revolted, alleging that his bondage was plain enough without that. So she wound them all carefully off, and coiled them as a sailor does his ropes in a little recess beside a knoll, and said that he

must come there every fair day and wear his chains for a while.

On another afternoon she found some tall dandelions and shouted a happy welcome to them.

"Now I'll show you what I used to do when a little girl," she said, picking several carefully by pushing her fingers deep into the grass toward their roots.

"Sit down there where you can see and learn," she directed, motioning to a place in the grass. "Now," seating herself opposite to him, "watch!" And she put the tube of the dandelion's stem against her full, pursed-up lips, and split it cautiously with the red tip of her tongue that just flashed into sight for a moment. Then she curled each half back and back until, after many mock-serious examinations, she was satisfied. This operation was repeated with three others, while Hughes dutifully watched, though not without a running comment that delayed the business by bringing frequently to the pursed lips the relaxation of a laugh. When the four were done she put the tight

circles at the end of what had been left straight of the dandelion stems into her mouth and drew them out again, laughing girlishly at her own girlishness, when they hung in long, twisting ringlets like the curled hair of a child. Then with great care she adjusted one behind each of their ears, the ringlets hanging over their cheeks in front. Sitting back, they regarded each each other with deep, hardly preserved solemnity, until laughter broke riotously through and they shook loose from their curls like prankish children with a common merriment.

"I will try to think of more games to play with you," said Jessica, "for I never saw you forget so completely the necessity of maintaining 'that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.' "

"Do, please," he said; but in the saying of it, he stiffened into his habitual calm that seemed ever on the edge of boredom.

Other days of like kind followed—days when the heat imprisoned "Mamma"; and two white-clad young folk battled with each

other on the soft turf of the tennis courts, calling "fifteen-love" and "thirty-love" and other things across the net, and then strolled off in search of coolness along the heat-emptied paths of the Garten. They were taking the good poet's advice and dwelling in the living present, thinking nothing of the future, though their chat ran often to the past. Into Jessica's conversation there dropped occasionally a reference to "Jack"; and one day it came out that "Jack" was an opera singer and wanted Jessica to go on the stage. Mr. Hughes was dispassionately of another opinion, and incidentally critical of the theatrical profession.

"It's all paint and paste-board on the stage," he said; "and if I had a sister"—he looked very solemn as he said this—"I would advise her to stay off it."

Jessica was silent for a moment. Was that his opinion? Or was it—was it—Jack? It couldn't be. Why, she and Mr. Hughes hardly knew each other; and then Jack—Jack of all persons—it was too ridiculous. But then Mr. Hughes did not know Jack.

"Jack," she said as if changing the subject, "is to be married to a friend of mine next month."

Mr. Hughes felt that this was more satisfactory even than if he were already married to a friend of hers, but he did not say so. He merely remarked—

"Opera, of course, does give opportunities."

Jessica looked at his square-jawed face, but it revealed nothing save an access of cheerfulness. Yet, being a woman, she measured the change of temperature to a nicety; and it was a dangerous eye that she turned upon the strolling young Englishman. There was mischief in it, but there was a new interest, too; there was a touch of conscious superiority—of a knowledge of the other's weakness and how to play upon it—but just back of it lay the faintest suggestion of a coming shadow, the shadow of a woman's eternal yearning to submit. Hughes, belonging to the blind sex at its blindest age, saw nothing of this; but when he next met Jessica's eye, even he knew that

they had passed another stage on the winding path of acquaintanceship.

When, later, they arrived at the upper hall of the "pension," they met the lady from Maine, who said excitedly—

"Can you go to Meissen to-morrow? Now don't say 'no.' All the others can. I've got them rounded up at last. I was almost despairing."

"Why, I can go," said Jessica, "if Mamma can."

"Well, she can go, for I've seen her; and I think she said 'Yes' to get rid of me."

"It's very kind of you, I'm sure, to take so much trouble," observed Hughes, though he did not look convinced of the truth of his own statement.

CHAPTER VII

The Lady from Maine

"I AM sorry that that Vassar party got away," said the lady from Maine to her "personally conducted Meissen party," as they were breakfasting together next morning so as to get an early train. "They never went out to Meissen at all," she went on. "They will go home, having been to Dresden, knowing nothing of 'Dresden china.'"

"Well, they must know a good deal about Dresden," said Mr. Hughes; "for they seemed to me to be going round and round all the time, stopping off at the 'pension' occasionally for some hurried refreshment."

"That's just it," replied the lady from Maine; "they trail round on the beaten track, seeing what Baedeker tells them to see; but they never use their heads at all to pick out characteristic things. Not that I

should criticise, for I used to do that, too, but now I never 'do' an art gallery—I go to see this picture or that—and I go into the shops and talk to the people and learn things all the time." And she took another roll and asked for the marmalade—provided for the English tourists. "Eat plenty," she advised, "for you may get a slim lunch at Meissen."

"I won't 'do' galleries, either," said the Scotch gentleman to his moustache, "when I've done them all to satiety."

There were in the party—Mrs. Murney and Jessica, Mr. Hughes, an English lady and her daughter who had just come to Dresden and who took advantage of the chance to go to Meissen "in a pahty," a firm-chinned American lady, her son and her weary-eyed husband, the Scotch gentleman and his wife, and Herr Werner.

"There is rather a good schloss at Meissen, is there not?" asked the young English girl.

"Beautiful!" said the lady from Maine. "Better than the one here, I think."

"It has much of the romance of history,"

added Herr Werner. "It is that I chiefly go to see."

"There are schlosses everywhere in Germany," said the lady from Maine, with a fine air of impartiality, though it was a hostile eye she turned on Herr Werner, "but there is only one Royal Porcelain Manufactory."

"Pouf!" ejaculated Herr Werner. "Little daubed clay figures!"

The rigid patience on the Maine lady's face was beautiful to see. Mr. Hughes took refuge from the necessity of rebuking such discourtesy by looking as if he had not heard a word.

"I have always heard that the Dresden china is rather artistic," said the English lady.

"It is—where it copies Sevres" (he pronounced it "Sever"), joined in the Maine lady's husband, with the emphasis of the long suppressed. He was taking breakfast with the party, but he was decidedly not going to Meissen "for the fifth time."

"But you don't see anything of the man-

ufacture at Sevres, I am told," put in Jessica.

"Not a thing!" corroborated the lady from Maine, who always seemed to have been everywhere. "They show you one man who pretends to be working with clay, and he gives you a little unglazed cup to hold which breaks in your fingers—they always do that; and that's everything you see, except the museum and the finished work, of course."

"But the finished work!" said her husband, compressing his lips, "that's prime, I can tell you. None of this fried cake business, but art—real art."

"Painting on porcelain," observed Herr Werner, "is difficult, but it is not art. It is a copy of art sometimes; but art seeks the best, not the worst materials. Art does not expend itself in overcoming needless difficulties; it takes the smoothest, shortest road to produce the best picture."

"What do you call porcelain painting, then?" asked Jessica, who felt a desire to protest against so much dogmatism.

"Ornamentation, if you like," returned Herr Werner, coldly, and then moved, perhaps unconsciously, by the feeling that she had the soul of an artist within her to which she should give heed, he cried in a tone of open disgust—"But *you* know it is not art."

"I know nothing of the kind," returned Jessica in prompt resentment, at which some looked up and some looked down, and everybody felt the embarrassment of an approach to a "scene." Herr Werner shrugged his shoulders and poured for himself another cup of coffee.

After breakfast they all walked over to the great Hauptbahnhof, bought their tickets, and then climbed to the first story, which is on a level with the railway tracks. There the polite German officials, in their neat uniforms and their round-peaked caps, showed them the train to Meissen, and they clambered into neighboring compartments, Mr. Hughes going with the Murney ladies and Herr Werner stalking away to the other end of the car. Jessica had considerable to say, while they waited for the train

to start, about the German's rudeness. Her mother said soothingly that she need have nothing more to do with him, and Mr. Hughes added that what such chaps said really did not matter, did it?

The train drew out over a long viaduct, with the city at the right, across the Elbe, and then by level market gardens and low hills and curious German villages, until the grey schloss on the heights above Meissen was to be glimpsed in the distance. Arrived, they all went first to the porcelain works, mounting a stumpy horse-tram at the station, and rolling along through the winding streets of the still mediæval town. There was a fair in progress, which filled the "Grosse Markt" with canvas booths in which every sort of merchandise was sold, from wonderful German cakes to piles of boots which purchasers sat down on the paving to try on, while long rows of rough-made crockery lay in a bedding of straw strewn down the neighboring streets. When they reached the porcelain factory, they paid their "mark" each and were conducted over

the rambling place by a studious-looking, spectacle-wearing German, who knew enough English nouns to name the things he showed, but who could no more construct an English sentence than he could enjoy English ale. However, the lady from Maine more than made up for his lack, until at last he never seemed to speak except to contradict her. Then they went into the show-room to price "souvenirs" and marvel at the costliness of the simplest cups, while Herr Werner sat on a bench outside in the sunlight, waiting until they should be finished.

When that would have been it would be hard to say if the firm-chinned new-comer—she was Mrs. Drake, of Jersey City, U. S. A.—had not consulted her watch, and announced that they must go if they wished to lunch on the schloss hill. Whereat Mr. Drake got up from his chair at the end of the show-room nearest the door, in a prompt, well-trained manner, and walked out to the roadside to wait for a tram. His son idled up beside him and stood ready to signal the tram driver with an umbrella.

"What! are they going already?" asked the lady from Maine, peering out of the window.

"Yes," said Mrs. Drake, who was buying another placque while awaiting the waving of her son's umbrella. "It's time for lunch."

"By Jove! so it is," exclaimed Mr. Hughes, straightening up hopefully from a case he thought he was looking at.

"But I haven't shown you half what I wanted you to see yet," protested the lady from Maine pathetically.

Still they all moved out, telling her how grateful they were to her, as they politely carried her along; but she told them of things they had not seen all the way up in the tram and up the side of the schloss hill, until the massive, battlemented bridge leading into the schloss enclosure filled their attention; and many of them were things the missing of which meant "missing the best of their trip."

The bridge once carried, a division arose. Some were for lunching first and then "do-

ing" the church and the schloss afterward; others favoured visiting the schloss at once, lest a black cloud which was rising in the northern sky, bring rain and spoil the view. Herr Werner and Mrs. Drake led the "now" party, while Mrs. Murney and the lady from Maine were for luncheon first.

"Well, we can divide," said Herr Werner. "They will take a party of five through; so if four others will come with me we can go now, and then lunch while the others are visiting the schloss."

"That's so," said Mrs. Drake briskly. "There are three of us; you make four, now who will be the fifth?"

Mr. Drake heard this enrolment of himself with the "schloss first, luncheon any time" party without either surprise or enthusiasm, and, sitting down on the wall, he looked sadly far over the fruitful valley and then at the open restaurant window.

"I think we shall go, shall we not, Mamma?" said the English girl.

"We will go to luncheon," said "Mamma," moving off in that direction.

"Well, mayn't I go, Mamma?—I'm not the least bit hungry," asked the daughter in a sweetly submissive voice.

"Just as you like, dear," said her mother, "but you would be the better of a chop."

Then they both smiled lovingly on each other, and the mother went off to the restaurant, and the daughter went and stood, as if for chaperoning, by Mrs. Drake.

The path of the five, with Mrs. Drake and Herr Werner at their head, and Mr. Drake, carrying Mrs. Drake's cloak and the Baedeker, bringing up a slow-paced rear, lay away from the restaurant door, around a gray mediæval church, rising in the centre of the schloss enclosure and up to the foot of a round corner tower, within which wound a stone spiral stairway—the famous Grosser Wendelstein—to the upper stories. Herr Werner fetched the girl who was to show them through, and she unlocked a heavy door which gave upon the bottom of the stairway, and they disappeared into the gloom of the turret and the Middle Ages.

The others found their way through the

restaurant to a garden beyond, which, perched upon its eirie at the edge of a sheer cliff, hung over the red-tiled town far below. But their view to the north was entirely shut off by the blank wall of one of the old religious buildings in connection with the schloss. So it happened that they lunched in peace, not knowing that the black cloud had mounted and spread over the northern sky like the rising of an inky curtain, and that the world visibly cowered under its oncoming shadow, the air sluggish in fear, the winding river far below complaining hoarsely of the overhanging menace. The grim schloss alone fronted the threatened assault on the lofty top of its rugged crag with no change of face, the sunshine still lying, sickly and pale to death, on its gray mass. About it had played the fires of many a storm, heaven-born and man-made—that was its business in life.

The Murneys and Mr. Hughes finishing first, they crossed the court, still yellow with sunlight, and awaited the others just inside

the stairway tower. Down tramped the people from overhead, Mrs. Drake leading.

"There's a big storm coming," she announced, as she swept into the court; "but it may be over before you get through with the schloss"—and she was off toward the corner of the church, around which lay the path to the restaurant. Mr. Drake followed in a downcast manner, though there was now a little glimmer of anticipation in his eye as he thought of luncheon; but young Drake was quite perked up, telling the English girl of some fun he had had while rooming in the Latin Quarter in Paris. She patted his self-approval with eager, pleased questions until they were just entering the restaurant door, where her mother still was, when she said in a meek voice—

"Mamma does not like Paris!"

While the Murneys stood waiting with Mr. Hughes just within the shadow of the tower, the first big drops of the storm came and then a swirl of rain. The new darkness lightened a moment, and then the thunder boomed.

"We can't stay here," cried Mrs. Murney. "This place will be struck sure."

"Nonsense, Mamma," said Jessica. "We're as safe here as anywhere."

"You stay if you want to," replied Mrs. Murney, "but I'm going to ask Mr. Hughes to take *me* back."

"But I can't stay alone," protested Jessica, wanting to humor her mother and yet fearing that they would be shut out of the schloss until too near closing hour, if they once let the storm get between them and this door.

"No," admitted Mrs. Murney, and she showed a determination to stay in the schloss and dare the lightning. But another reflection of an unseen bolt glimmered and the thunder crashed again. "The others will come presently if you *will* stay," she cried, and started out into the now heavily falling rain.

"I'll come back," whispered Hughes, and, running after Mrs. Murney, he took her arm in order to help her pace. The slanting rain showed thick against their hurrying

backs, and then they disappeared behind the gray buttress of the church. A couple of minutes passed, during which the downpour seemed to increase with every second. The big bullying drops fought each other for right of way, and Jessica stepped back within the tower to avoid the spray flung up from their mad self-destruction on the pavement outside. Then gusts of wind swept this way and that across the court, carrying the rain like charging columns before them; and one, dashing in at the deep tower door, drove Jessica several steps up the stairway.

A minute or two more and Hughes should be back. But Hughes and Mrs. Murney had reached the restaurant in a drenched condition; and the party all joined in telling him that it would be simple folly to go out again until this passionate downpour was over.

"It will slacken in a minute or two," said Mrs. Drake confidently. "Then you can all go."

"I knew of a young man in Buda-Pesth

once," said the lady from Maine, "who got wet in a rain, caught pneumonia and died."

But Hughes was for going. He did not mind a little rain.

"You shouldna' restrain an eager young man wi' his lady-love imprisoned in a castle tower," said the Scotchman, smiling knowingly all round.

That decided it. "Waters cannot quench love," but scoffing can make it ashamed to be known. So Hughes awaited with a calm mien but an impatient soul for the "slackening" of a rain that beat down the harder with every minute. It surely must soon exhaust itself.

Once Jessica ventured down to the gusty door to see if he were coming; but she saw only a gray church shouldering up out of sight in a tempest of tumbling rain. Then the deluge swept in at the door and she ran, with wetted face and spotted dress, up to the first dry turn in the stairway again.

Some one spoke to her in German from behind, and she turned and saw that it was the young girl who acted as guide. She

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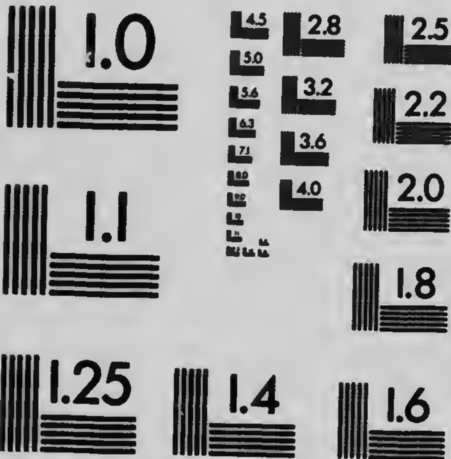

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plainly wanted her to do something; and finally Jessica made out that it was to go up into the first room and wait, as she (the guide) must shut the tower door against the storm. Jessica tried to explain that she expected the others back, but the girl apparently said that she would let them in when they came; for she went down and shut and locked the door.

Jessica stood in the half-light for a moment, and then thought that she might as well see the first apartments upstairs at her leisure. So she climbed the winding stair, grim in its nakedness of heavy stone, and passed into the great hall. She saw the massive columns from which the vaulting sprang; the dim reaches between them peopled with dark, stiff old portraits; the great windows fronting the black north!

And at one of them stood Herr Werner, motionless, watching the raging of the storm.

CHAPTER VIII

In the Schloss

JESSICA stopped instantly and would have turned back, but at that moment the girl, coming up behind her, said something about "Fraulein" in that high, carrying voice tourist guides cultivate; at which Herr Werner turned sharply away from the window and saw her, hesitant, at the doorway. This cut off all possible retreat; for to turn back now to the dark and comfortless turret would be to confess to a fear of him. So she walked across the shadowed, echoing hall to a window at the other end, quite away from the silent German. Herr Werner watched her until she reached her window, but neither spoke. Then he asked something of the girl in a growling German, and got quite a lengthy answer, to which he said " 'Zo!' " in mild surprise, and turned again to the wild scene outside. Jessica had noticed,

however, when he looked at her first that his face was alight with that rare, inborn glow, which shone from it in his moments of earnestness and exaltation; and she wondered a little at it, for certainly there could be nothing more annoying than this inopportune thunder-storm.

She leaned upon the wide window-sill, and looked out upon the black, wind-harried prospect. It did not look like stopping, did it! she said to herself, unconsciously copying the Hughes form of assertion. The upper sky was a billowing sea of ink, across which scudded torn fragments of cloud, like the tattered battle-flags of a flying army. This she would see; and then the rain would thicken before her eyes, and all become a dark steel-gray. Swirl and dash—and it was beating on the window-glass; and then the charge would pass, and the round, gray-stone tower that shouldered out just beyond her window dripped and ran with the broken columns of the rain. Right down the steep cliff that fell away almost sheer from the foundations of the castle, the wide tops

of the precariously rooted trees bent to the wind, and then fought sturdily back when its pressure lessened. At intervals the rain seemed to pass, and a wide prospect opened out; far across the narrow river at the foot of the cliff and the hamlet-dotted country, to a watery horizon, banded with a murky yellow.

At the first of these pauses, Jessica thought of Hughes, and turned to hear if he were not coming up the turret-steps. But there was nothing behind her save the empty twi-lit hall. The dark old portraits of dead and gone Saxon kings looked stolidly, indistinctly, out from the walls; the heavy columns and the rich wooden vaulting they supported showed in dim aloofness from all human interest. What cared they whether Hughes came or stayed, or that a maiden shrank, half-fearful in her loneliness, by one of the great windows, or that the Prince of the Power of the Air marshalled his black cavalry against the storm-scarred outer battlements? In her instinctive turning to human companionship, she glanced

quickly to where Herr Werner had been standing, and there he was still, leaning motionless on his window-sill, unconscious of everything but the sweep of the storm. Over him on a side wall was a fresco, which the poor light would not quite unveil; but as she looked at it in idle fascination, there came out of the dull colouring figures in armour, then faces of iron determination. A flicker of lightning played over it, and she saw a woman kneeling—and was it a child held high on a mailed arm? Ah! those were savage days! And this old schloss on its inaccessible crag had seen its share of them. The familiar rain outside was kindlier far. So she leaned again on the window-sill, watching the high-riding clouds, starting instinctively back at the sudden charges of the rain-laden wind and dazzled by the swift lances of the lightning thrust out from the bosom of the storm.

But, as she watched, her heart grew sensibly greater within her, and her spirits rose to meet the onslaughts of the tempest. She listened for Hughes in the pauses, but there

was less and less anxiety for his coming as the minutes went by. The feeling of nervous loneliness was passing from her, and she began to partake somewhat of the sturdy spirit of the schloss itself, lifting its towers to meet the fury of the attack. Let the gusts dash at the window! She straightened herself and faced them. "I am getting brave," she said to herself; "what has come over me?" The rain rushed at the massive tower near her window, and for a moment she could not see it; then it swept on and she looked eagerly out, and the tower stood grimly unmoved, while the bleeding remnants of the assault dripped from its rough stones. She could have cheered in her sense of personal victory. Surely Herr Werner saw it, and she looked toward him; but he was motionless at his window. Well, she was not alone, for the Saxon kings gazed triumphantly at her from their walls, and she knew that they all rejoiced in the impregnability of their common fortress.

Grim days were they, when men in armour clanked through this great hall and clustered

on the upper battlements! Yes, truly; but great days, too, when it was man to man, when danger rode at one from every corner, when a woman was deemed worth dying for, and when there were many things that a knight feared more than to die.

Then, in a flash, it came upon her that this feeling was the soaring, all-seeing consciousness which rose in her in mid-song—which Herr Werner's playing had called up; and for one mad moment she battled against it as a mind fights for sanity. But the wild wind at the great window, the dim reaches of the ancient hall, the spirit of the hour and place fought against her, and she slowly, half fearful, wholly glad, let her eyes rest again on "the vision and the dream."

Surely that was a step on the turret stair? She turned—apprehensively. Could it be Hughes with his ever-ready amusement at enthusiasm? He would be very wet and very caustic, and very quick to make light of these quaintly decorated rooms with their shadowy memories. The step came to the

door—and it was the German girl. Jessica laughed softly at herself. So she did not want Hughes now? Yet she could see a Jessica Murney who would have thought his witticisms very funny, and these dark-panelled walls and stiff portraits very poky and ridiculous. But that was an unworthy Jessica, she decided; a silly school-girl. And how fortunate she was to stand in this great hall alone without the others—the peering, questioning, itemizing, matter-of-fact others, who never saw the spirit of a thing, so busy were they checking off the thing itself in their guide-books. All thought of loneliness or fear had now left her, and presently she ventured back into the great hall, gradually growing lighter with the lessening of the storm, and walked from portrait to historic fresco and from fresco to portrait, living in the spirit of the mediæval time when it was the doing of things that counted and not the talking of them. Before one fresco she stood quite a while, hardly catching its meaning.

"Do you know the story?" asked Herr

Werner at her shoulder. She had not known that he had come up; but she said quite frankly, forgetting all her antipathy to the German:—

"No! what is it?"

Then he told her a tale of plotting, of scaled battlements, of stolen princes and of peasant courage, that stirred her blood as always must a bit of plumed romance made real by saying "and there is where he climbed," and "here is where he dared death."

"How splendid!" she cried, looking up at him with shining eyes. "Ah! those were the days, Herr Werner, when there was no mistaking the manner for the man."

"Yes! yes!" he agreed heartily; but there was wondering surprise in the look he turned on her.

"How full this old schloss is of the spirit of that time!" she went on, half dreamily. "I have been standing at the window watching it battle with the storm; and it fought like a true knight, relying on itself and never asking quarter."

"Good! and you saw it!" cried Herr Werner. "The songstress has come to life then."

Jessica looked at him with understanding eyes. A sub-consciousness told her that she should be very much offended at his frank outburst, but she knew that she was not.

"Ah! then come and I will show you this schloss, for you will see it," the German went on, his face shining joyously upon her. He turned to lead her to the lower end of the hall, but stopped in a moment and, bending towards her, added in a half whisper—

"Most people come and look and nod and rush on to another room, and look and nod and hurry away; but they see nothing—nothing. Mrs. Drake—would you believe it?—she stood in this hall. 'Portraits,' she said. 'Let me see! One-two-d'ree-four-funf-six-and so on to eleven,' " pushing his finger pudgily at each one as he counted. 'But my guide says there are twelve,' she complained. And then 'Herr Werner, Herr Werner! Please ask the Fraulein to show us the twelve portraits.' I asked the Frau-

lein, and she told us that one had been removed. I tell Mrs. Drake. 'All right,' she said. 'What room comes next?' and off she went. I stayed here." And he waved his arms as if banishing all such folk, and strode off down the hall with Jessica—a wide-eyed, eager Jessica—at his side.

If ever a man was made to tell a legend as if it were very truth, and to breathe into rugged history—history of the mailed hand, the dagger and the dungeon—the pervading soul of reality, that man was Herr Werner. Six feet, erect, a face that out-talked his tongue and kept pace with his eyes, eyes of a sincere blue and a flaming earnestness, the hands of an emotional actor, and a perfect genius for "posing" unconsciously as the central figure of his story, he led Jessica from place to place in the great Hall, and then from room to room in the rambling schloss, telling her thrilling tales of Saxon daring and of old-time cruelty and superstition, and the deeds of a might that thought itself the only right. Together they measured the thick, grim walls, and marvel-

led at their strength; and studied the old portraits with their heavy armour and hardly less heavy robes of office; and re-peopled the old rooms with the court ladies and their cavaliers; and talked of the days when men played the game of life with the highest stake always on the table, not having syndicated their courage nor entrusted their safe-keeping and their lady's honor to the police.

"That is the one priceless inheritance you European peoples have," said Jessica; "the one thing we can never take nor buy from you, the tangible homes of these mediæval memories."

"They are the inspiration of what is best in us," answered Herr Werner. "Our poetry, our art, our high thinking. But they have a new foe, a foe that, perhaps, you have brought them—the spirit of commercialism."

"The Midas touch," breathed Jessica.

"Yes—though I should rather call it 'the Judas kiss,' " said Herr Werner. "It is that that I fear. Commercialism is very kind

to these old piles. It embraces them, it restores them, it flatters them, it advertises them like—like a new soap; and all the world comes rushing to pay its entrance fees and buy its cheap pictures, and tramp through their most sacred places with ignorant questions and blind eyes, hurrying from a porcelain factory to a schloss, and from a schloss to a beer garden, so as to get in a full day." And the blonde head was shaken in disgust.

Jessica was silent; for she saw that other Jessica who looked so like her, but who was of a spirit so dull-sighted, so heavy-footed, hurrying—sightless—to see the sights with all the world.

"And with the tramp of their crowding feet they frighten the familiar spirits of these sacred places away," went on Herr Werner. "Formerly only those came here who had eyes to see—whose hearts had at these shrines worshipped for long, long years. They as pilgrims came—reverent, seeking, seeing. They came alone; and in the hush of a sanctuary from which all modern life was shut out, they communed with

the mightiest of the past; and then they went out to write an immortal poem or paint a deathless picture or do a splendid deed."

"And now," said Jessica, with bowed head, "we come in droves for no higher purpose than that no one shall have seen more than we."

"But," protested Herr Werner, "you must not say 'we.' That was yesterday. To-day you may say 'I,' for you have become an individual—you dare your own life to live—you are at last the woman who sings with your wonderful voice."

"Am I, do you think?" said Jessica, humbly, looking up at him with clear eyes, from which she tried to throw back the last maiden curtain that he might see and judge her truly—for in that brief afternoon Jessica had recognized in Herr Werner blood-kin to her better self.

"Ah!—yes!—yes!" he answered slowly, his whole face deadly earnest with his reading of her. "It is a great thing to say," he went on, "for the woman who sings in you is one of the queens of earth; but, on my

soul, I think you are she—and to know you," he added in a lower voice, "is to me a great happiness."

Jessica slowly lowered her eyes, thoughtful and content. Then a long sigh rose on her breath.

"What a wide, beautiful world it is," she said, half to herself, "when the clouds have lifted."

Then, prompted by her simile, they both turned to look out of the window, and they saw that the clouds were really lifting and that all the north was streaked with blue; but they did not know that three times had Hughes walked over through the drenching rain and beaten with furious fists on the lower door, and that nothing but his perpetual fear of being absurd had kept him from summoning the police to have the lock forced.

CHAPTER IX

"The Itemizing Others"

Now, however, that the rain had stopped, the whole party came clamouring to the lower door which the gentle German girl, who seemed to have charge of the schloss, had already opened.

"Hurry and find out if your daughter is all right," said Mrs. Drake to Mrs. Murney; "for we want to do the cathedral while you are in the schloss. I'm very much afraid *you* won't have time for the cathedral now," she added, conscious of her own virtue in having reaped the schloss while the sun shone.

Mrs. Murney hurried up the winding stair, calling "Jessica" at every turn, until breathless she burst into the great hall. There stood Jessica, unfrightened, with Herr Werner, serious-faced, at her side.

"Why, Mamma!" said Jessica, stepping

forward solicitously. "Why did you hurry so?"

"Why," gasped Mrs. Murney, "I was so uneasy about you."

Jessica smiled in loving, mock-indulgence at her mother. "You shouldn't have been," she said. "It has been magnificent, garrisoning this old schloss against the storm."

Mrs. Murney looked up in surprise at the sentiment—it was hardly like Jessica; and it was not without apprehension that she saw the unusual light on her face. Then the lady from Maine walked through the door and glanced about with a friendly smile.

"Family re-union," she remarked. "Hope I don't intrude. Weren't you very frightened, Miss Murney, in this big, big schloss all alone?"

"No," said Jessica, politely. "Then I was not alone."

"Oh, of course, Herr Werner was here;" and one could tell from her face that she thought there was something queer about that. "Once when I was at Monaco," she began, "a rain came up and our party got

separated—" But the Scotchman just then helped his wife through the door with—"A step there, my dear! Ah! the lost lamb is found." And then in a stage whisper, "Mr. Hughes will be at peace now, and can go and dry himself." Jessica looked up at this in quick remembrance; but was it alarm or sympathy on her face?

Then came the English lady, and behind her a well-wetted but wholly unperturbed Hughes. His hat was a soggy mass with an uneven brim, his clothes clung damply about him; but he bore himself as if neither of these circumstances were known to him. His first glance was for Jessica, and his second for the Scotchman. Plainly he suspected the merry twinkle of the Scot's blue eye. Then he patiently waited his chance to speak to Jessica in a perfect panoply of good breeding.

"My wife wishes to know if Miss Murney is all right," asked an uninterested voice from the doorway. Then, without waiting for an answer, it went on—"Ah! yes, thank you, I

see she is;" and Mr. Drake turned carefully about, and heavily descended the stairway.

"You must act as guide now, and do what I did for you at the porcelain works," said the lady from Maine to Jessica.

"There is a guide," observed Herr Werner, indicating the German girl.

"Does she speak English?"

"No, German."

"Well, I can't understand German," concluded the lady from Maine emphatically.

"She will not anyway understand if you tell her what you yourself see," Herr Werner growled in low tones to Jessica, approaching in his disgust the German construction.

But Jessica was not so pessimistic, and began to tell them something of the history of the dark-vaulted hall in which they were. They stood at polite attention, and looked with smiling interest where she told them to look. "What did you say his name was?" the lady from Maine would ask occasionally; and, at the end of each incident, the Scotchman's wife would add, "Very sweet, I'm

sure," or "How very brave," or something of that sort; while the English lady always came in with "How *very* interesting!" in a listless voice.

But Jessica kept on. She would have liked telling over these old-time new-found tales, even if there had been no one to listen save the portraits of the men of whose deeds they were the record. And three pairs of eyes, at least, watched her with unflagging interest. To her mother, this Jessica was by no means a stranger, but she ought to have been singing, not talking. To Herr Werner she was the serene genius of the past, come to live in a modern maiden, who was the very flower of the latest people of the new time. To Hughes, she was the Jessica he knew, but somehow lifted out of his reach by her own abstraction. It was as if she were high on the wings of one of her foreign, incomprehensible songs—songs whose chief merit was to be "difficult." He must wait until the music had ceased and the flush of excitement had passed, and they were keeping step together again on the home-bound

pavement. He did not quite fancy her, he told himself, in this new rôle. Still she was a picture as she stood, sometimes in a grim, gray archway, sometimes framed by a soaring window; and she had about her a new grace of unconsciousness. But she really knew so little of this musty past of which she talked so seriously that she turned continually to that "moony Werner" for prompting. He liked her better when she was laughing with him at this whole Werneresque nation.

How long the politeness of the rest of the party would have endured the recital of events connected with names not mentioned by Baedeker, was not put to the final test—though there were signs of budding impatience; for when they were in one of the upper rooms, seeing where somebody of no importance had done something of a disorderly and unlawful nature, Mrs. Drake came to their rescue with the announcement that her party had "finished" the church, and that it was time to go.

"But," broke in the lady from Maine, "I

haven't had a chance yet to tell you how Böttger discovered how to make porcelain in that room across there, and how the king came to see him in his laboratory, and——"

"There!" said Mrs. Drake, following the Maine lady's indicative finger with her eye. "We were in there this morning, and I presume the girl told us all about it, though I don't understand a word of German."

"Well, our guide hasn't taken us there yet," sniffed the lady from Maine, glancing at Jessica lest any one should mistake whom she meant. She was as romantic as anybody, and just loved knights and midnight raids, and—but porcelain was serious business, and should have been attended to first.

"I did not know of it," said Jessica, a little blankly—she had thought she knew so much about this schloss.

"It matters nothing," declared Herr Werner harshly, and with an angry frown on his brow. "It is not as a factory that this schloss is famous."

"A factory!" exclaimed the lady from Maine. "This was a great scientific discovery."

"It was the recovery of a trade secret, that was all," said Herr Werner. "Science was merely picking up a workman's tool for him again."

"And science could not be better employed," put in Mr. Hughes.

"Well, well!" exploded Mrs. Drake, impatiently. "Here's the room! Look at it and come, or we shall miss our train. We want to get back in time to do the Brühl Terrace to-night."

So they filed into the room and filed out again, the lady from Maine murmuring loose scraps of information relative to Böttger and his discovery as they went; and then made their way to the great hall and the stair tower. Hughes walked with Jessica, but he seemed out of mental range of her.

"Queer old place!" he said.

She looked at him as if she did not see him and answered—

"I think it is bewitched."

"It, or you?" he asked, laughing.

Now her eyes appeared to see him. "Both," she said, seriously.

He sobered, too, and glanced uneasily at her.

They were the last to enter the tower. Before stepping through the heavy doorway, she stood quite a time looking back at the hall, with its wide-spaced emptiness.

"Farewell," she said at last, slowly—"or perhaps it is '*auf wiedersehen.*'"

Mr. Hughes looked at the doorway arch critically. He thought it best to keep his eyes busy lest they should be garrulous.

CHAPTER X

The New Jessica

THE next morning Herr Vogt was a happy man. The wonderful Miss Murney sang as she had never sung before, and she, herself, was a part of the song. Would she come some night to his house, and sing to his friends? He had told them so much of her never-had-they-heard-the-like-of voice, and now he was ready to have them hear it for themselves.

Jessica gave a gasp of pleased surprise—and yet, was she surprised? Did not all things seem possible since—since yesterday? But this was the great Herr Vogt who was asking her from among all his pupils to come to his very house and appear before his friends as a choice product of his teaching. Mrs. Murney beamed upon him, and was the first to say that Jessica would be very

pleased to come. Jessica had let that be taken for granted.

"Ah!" he said, "we will one great night haf. I will ask—and—and—" and he named many of the first in musical Dresden. "And they will come if they possibly are able, for they are eager—they on the tip-top-toe stand to hear you."

And when the night came, Jessica went and sang in his large drawing-room, while round spectacles shone at her in groups, and round Germans filled the air with happy ejaculations when she had finished. Herr Vogt coaxed her to sing oftener than they had planned; and then he would sit and play and sing himself, and the high pleasure he had in her success bubbled over on the swelling tide of his own music. Then they all talked of what she would do. She could go back to New York and her country people astound—she would a great opera star be, and rivers of gold would themselves at her feet pour out. One man—an authority—with bated breath and many a qualifying phrase, went farther. She might, he

thought, possibly stay in Dresden and be taken on the Royal Opera, and by hard work and patient training get eventually to sing one of the leading parts. But at this, even Herr Vogt shook his head. It was not well too high a mark for the young ambition to set.

But for all his joy Herr Vogt was desolated at one thought. In eight days he would go away to Lucerne for his yearly holiday, and the Murneys were not sure that they could await his tardy return to Dresden. They had thought to get away sooner even than this. Why had not Miss Murney discovered herself before?—he groaned to himself. He began talking of giving up his holiday, although he would have no other pupil in Dresden, having dismissed them all that he might be free to go.

"Why could Miss Murney to Lucerne not go, isn't it?" asked a friend. "It is one beautiful place."

The very thing! Herr Vogt eagerly pressed it. He knew a good "pension" where they would be so comfortable and see

so-not-to-be-equalled a view, and the Murneys were quite talked into it, though they only promised to "see."

On the way home Mrs. Murney decided what part of New York they would live in when Jessica was singing in grand opera there. Jessica said little, but she knew that the stars were bright, and that away on the lonely height at Meissen the grim Saxon kings looked out from their heavy frames and saw these same stars—like diamonds on a bed of dark velvet—shining through the great windows.

What Jessica thought of herself during this time would be hard to put down, though she thought of little else. To begin with, she seemed to be doing this thinking with some one else's mind. Its point of view was novel to her. The world was no longer chiefly a joke, with relieving intervals here and there to rest your face muscles; it was not even a great playground with a few necessary attendants about to keep the turf smooth and serve refreshments. Life, on the contrary, seemed to be part of a purpose.

She could not see the purpose clearly, for the bulk of it disappeared beyond the limits of her horizon everywhere—and there were blood-stains on it. Look where she would, and that life that had been a joke could not be found. Built into the "purpose" were many, many lives, but they were serious, straining, sometimes sad.

That was one new window in her new mind. Another was turned toward the beautiful, and on its broad sill she lost count of time. She discovered, for instance, the decorative quality in early Italian paintings. Hitherto they had been stiff, unnatural, badly drawn and consequently failures to her; to-day their massed colouring and careful grouping made them panels of beauty. Then her songs—it was no longer a wonder to her that people went mad when she sang; she went mad herself. And those who did not were like the old Jessica.

The old Jessica! Upon her this new mind dwelt longest. She was a good girl, a happy girl—but she was blind. Still, what had happened to her that day at Meis-

sen? What was the meaning of this change that had come on occasions before but had now come to stay? What had slain the old personality? And there was no extracting the disquietude from that thought. What was insanity but believing yourself something that you were not? But, at this point, Jessica, woman-like, paused. Eve would never have ridden out of Eden on logic. When thinking becomes unprofitable, woman falls to embroidering her fig-leaf.

During these days of exaltation Mr. Hughes drew himself more and more within his racial shell. He passed from simple surprise to smiling wonder and at last threatened to harden into stiff disapproval. It was "amazing the way Jessica made up to that boorish German fellow," he thought within himself. And Jessica had been such a sensible, jolly girl. But Jessica did not permit him to withdraw in silence. She talked to him at table with more apparent determination that there should be conversation than she had ever shown before. But he grew less and less responsive, [illegible]lk

had a nasty trick of slipping out of his fingers into those of Herr Werner, who was always ready with some "moony" sentiment or imaginary experience, remotely suggested by the topic, with which to attract Jessica's attention. He had great faith, however, in the sobering effect of the tennis court, and asked her several times to come and play. But the first day she had something to read which explained the legendary origin of a song she was to sing the next morning to Herr Vogt, and could not go; and another time Herr Werner was to take her mother and herself to see something historic and ruinous in the Saxon Switzerland. This stopped the invitations for a while, but a few days after Herr Vogt left for Lucerne, he tried again—a last cast—and she cheerfully accepted.

But it was not the old Jessica who swung her tennis racket by his side as they paced up the paths of the Bürgerwiese or afterward strolled in the Grosser Garten. Her step had the same light spring, she carried herself with the familiar buoyancy and easy vital-

ity, but she was serious now where once she had been playful. She would barely smile at his dry joking, but was always challenging him to see "the march of a conquering army" in the up-and-down walk of a German officer, or "the straining of a peasant people after the warm beauty of colour" in the outlandish costume of a perspiring nurse-maid, or some other fanciful thing which was not there to be seen.

That night at dinner, Herr Werner said—

"The wings of your mind are tired tonight. What have you been doing?"

"Playing tennis."

"Ach! What an animal waste of the force of life!"

"I am afraid it is," and Jessica sighed—though not so much colour had massed on her full cheek for many an evening.

Mr. Hughes looked as if hearing were a sense that had been denied him; but the next morning he left for a walking tour through the Saxon Switzerland.

Two days later the Murneys went to Lu-

cerne, the lady from Maine having given them one hotel and two "pensions" to choose from in case they did not like Herr Vogt's selection. Herr Werner left, too, to visit his people on the borders of Poland.

CHAPTER XI.

Lucerne

THE journey from Dresden to Lucerne, taken at one leap, is long and wearisome, and they were two tired ladies who trailed, heavy-footed, over to a hotel near the station to spend the night, postponing the search for a "pension" until the morning. In the morning it was foggy and raining; the heavy cabs splashed and scraped along slimy streets; the waters of the lake lay silver-gray and dead under the gliding mists; not a mountain—not even the neighboring Gütsch—was to be seen. But, in the eyes of the Murneys, hotel bills were still things to avoid in spite of their golden dreams for the future; so they dressed for the weather, and set out. But it was a dismal business. This "pension" was full; that—Herr Vogt's recommendation—was too expensive; another—with a rude stare—did not take

ladies; still another, far, far down a splashy road, had only a dark room on a cellar-like court, and there was an odour of stale cabbage in the front hall.

How different it all was from the spick and span, cheerful, homelike "Pension" Lüttichau!

Finally they were semi-satisfied, however, on a side street, not far from Thorwaldsen's "Lion," where they were "convenient to all the sights," as the landlady told them in automaton English. This gave them a momentary fillip of encouragement, but the rain still streaked steadily down and Jessica had to walk back through it to get their trunks. This was even harder than she had anticipated, for she called a "cabby" who knew no English and could not understand her German.

"Now, if Herr Werner were only here," she said to herself ruefully; and then nearly forgot her troubles in surprise at the protest that came from within her against the presence of the romantic German. It was not "the vision and the dream" she wanted with

this rain pattering against the carriage and on the emotionless face of that stolid, stupid Swiss "cabby," but a practical man who would face difficulties with so perfect a courage that he would not even admit their existence—whose sure confidence in himself would soon infect her with the comfortable feeling that these were a poor and pitiful people, in their wilful ignorance of English, and their perverse knowledge of something far less worthy. That was what she wanted—a human tonic and not a frothy intoxicant, and she astonished the waiting cabman by laughing blithely to herself as she added mentally—

"And to be genuine, it should have the name 'Hughes' blown in the bottle."

After that the rain somehow did not seem so sad a gray, and when she finally got home it was to cheer her mother with an unquenched good humour, lit by many a prankish notion, so like the Jessica she knew best.

But the next morning, still cloud-hung and dull, when they had taken the boat to a point down the lake where Herr Vogt's cot-

tage stood, it was a gradually saddening singing teacher who found himself compelled to see that this girl, standing so woodenly and emitting that wonderful voice, was the Jessica Murney he had known and despaired of before that never-to-be-forgotten glorious morning, when she had first seemed to be the mistress of her own voice, and to sing with all her soul her own songs. "Tin and paint once more," he said to himself. "Tin and paint."

And then he sought to rouse her. He talked seriously to her. He told her that as she was those last days in Dresden, she had the world at her feet; but that as she was to-day she was only "a curiosity, a freak;" and he told her many other things even less pleasant to hear.

As from her mountain-top Jessica had judged and condemned her careless, contented self in the valley; so now in her valley, she scorned the visionary Jessica of the mountain-top. She assured Herr Vogt, with not too much patience in her voice, that when she got before an audience she would

get facial expression all right—she always had. He needn't worry about that. But one couldn't ride the moon all the time.

"Facial expression! *Ach, mein Gott!* It is soul expression that I want," he cried; and when they had gone away, Jessica with a facial expression suggestive of storm, he mourned audibly for hours over the mysterious retrograde change in his marvellous pupil. Jessica went to him every other morning as agreed, but with the old unsympathetic demeanour toward her own music; and Herr Vogt was just on the point of telling her to go back to Dresden—or anywhere else she pleased—when he had a call one afternoon from a strange young man, erect, luminous-headed and outspoken.

The stranger said that his name was Werner, that he was a friend of the Murneys, and that he would like to be told where they were staying in Lucerne.

Herr Vogt said that he could give him their present address, but added impulsively that they would not be likely to stay there long.

"'Zo?'" said Werner, inquiringly.

"'Yah,'" replied Herr Vogt; and thinking that this young man might perform the unpleasant task of breaking the news to them, told him the whole story of Jessica's backsliding.

"'Zo!'" said Herr Werner, comprehendingly; and asked when Jessica's next lesson came.

"Day after to-morrow."

"Do not decide until then," said Herr Werner, and he strode back to the boat. Herr Vogt hurried to his door to look after him—an extraordinary young man. Still he was a German!

Herr Werner found the Murneys in their side street, sitting listlessly in-doors; for they had "done" the Lion and the Glacier Garden and the bridges and the old town, and it had been too rainy to go down the lake or up any of the mountains. They welcomed him as one who had come out of their old happy life at Dresden, though his presence suggested the regretful thought that it might just as easily have been

Hughes. And he, knowing himself to be out of tune with the spirits of both the ladies, did not stay long; but got them in their dullness to promise to come with him for a little walk the next morning.

It proved to be the first morning since their arrival of the complete victory of the sun. The over-mastered clouds still lay in fruitless hiding in the farthermost mountain recesses, while the smiling peaks trailed torn fragments of them in triumph before his shining chariot. Herr Werner took the ladies almost in silence first to the little garden before the crouching Lion of Lucerne. They protested that they had been there, but he said that he had something in particular that he wished them to see. There, as they sat on the bench while the girl from the "curio" shop giggled in the back-ground with the uniformed "runner" from the Glacier Garden, he told them the story of the Swiss Guard who, having made merchandise of their very lives, delivered the goods without flinching.

"Brave!" said Jessica. "Brave, but stupid."

"Stupid? Measured by the draper's clerk —perhaps. But come, I want to take you up the hill apiece;" and walking together past the church, with its little *"campo santo"* about it, they followed a climbing road that led behind a fringe of houses on the edge of the slope. As they went, they disputed over the quality of the devotion of the Swiss Guard, Jessica insisting that it was a stupid fulfilment of a stupid bargain, while Herr Werner saw in it the nobility of a supreme honesty. Like many in their day, they had hired out as soldiers; and, having taken their wages, they did their work.

The road, as it climbed, now had a great field of wild flowers on one side, at which Jessica exclaimed again and again; but, on the other side, houses and gardens cut off the view to the lake and the mountains. Presently, however, Herr Werner stopped and said—

"This is my 'pension.' Won't you come

in for a moment and see the view from the gallery? It is superb. We will go through the garden and you need not go into the house at all."

So they went with him along the gravel walk and up on the side veranda and around the corner of the house to the front. Mrs. Murney gave a gasp of astonishment and sank into a chair. Jessica stepped forward and leaned on the veranda rail. Before them lay a panorama of north Switzerland. The hill fell away at their feet—a slope of massed tree-tops through which showed the roofs of scattered houses—to the edge of the lake, which, sparkling with a light ripple, spread away far beneath them to the bases of the great mountains opposite. On the left rose bleak Righi, on the right, green Pilatus, and between, a measureless vista of tumbled immensity, crowned in the distance by the eternal snows.

After a time Jessica straightened back and looked at Herr Werner, the light of her higher self shining from her face. "I have

been thinking," she said, "of those Swiss peasants who left this to die in the Tuileries. They were the victims of a wretched system; but they bore themselves as—as these mountains had taught them."

" 'Zo,' " said Herr Werner; and his eyes were the first to tell Jessica that she lived again in the land of "the vision and the dream."

Before the end of the week three things had happened. Herr Vogt had got his wonderful pupil back again; the Murneys had moved up to Herr Werner's "pension" on the hill-top, and Mr. Hughes had returned to "Pension" Lüttichau and had a short conversation with the lady from Maine.

"I think some one ought to interfere," she said. "That girl is hypnotized as sure as beans."

"Do you really think so?"

"Why, of course I do. She stopped being like herself and became a sort of gushing imitation of Herr Werner."

"But Werner is not with them now."

"Don't you believe it."

"Why, is he?"

"How do I know? But, if I were a man, I'd go and see."

CHAPTER XII

New "Pensionnaires"

THE Murneys found themselves at the *table d'hôte* of their new "pension" opposite two ladies who talked a good deal to each other, though as far removed as the poles in temperament and interests. One was a faded social flower—a widow, who had lived all over the world and had a set of correct opinions ready for every possible subject. The other was a cold, unornamented, "ramrody" sort of woman—a spinster, a very Amazon in the service of advanced thought, tempered by a touch of British conservatism. The widow commonly came to dinner in a lace mantilla; the Amazon appeared at luncheon in a walking hat and skirt. Next the widow sat a lady who was quite hard of hearing; and with her the widow delighted to talk of aristocratic mutual acquaintances. It was sensibly elevating, socially, to hear

the widow conjecture in a tone loud enough to pierce her companion's dull ears whether or not Lady Blank would go to her villa in Cannes for the winter, or why the Prince of Centesimi had ceased to be interested in his Tuscan estate.

Next Mrs. Murney sat a non-conductor, conversationally—a Russian who never spoke to anybody except his hostess, and to her in German. Beside him was a German girl who delighted to practise her English. Opposite the latter was a rich French doctor and his wife who seemed to talk anything they liked; and beside her an Italian who had lived many years in Siam, and who talked a remarkable English all the time. Opposite Herr Werner, who sat next to Jessica, was a young American couple, in love with each other and with travel.

"I'm really afraid to buy anything," the young American wife was saying. "The New York customs house is simply awful."

"I think we all get to be free traders over here," observed Mrs. Murney.

"I heard of a man once," said the Ameri-

can husband, "who thought it would be a good joke to scare his wife; so when they got off at New York he called a customs house officer and said: 'You better search that woman. I think she is smuggling some lace.' So they called her aside and searched her, and found eight hundred dollars' worth on her which she had bought for friends and didn't tell her husband about. When the officer came out and thanked the astonished husband for his timely hint, he realized the pleasures of being too funny."

"I thought," said the French doctor, sweetly, "that American wives and husbands kept nothing from each other."

"That," observed the widow, "is a pleasing fiction. I lived for twelve years in America."

"I shouldn't call it 'a *pleasing* fiction,'" broke in the Amazon in a wintry voice. "Why should a woman sink her individuality in a partnership?"

"Why should a man?" the American husband inquired militantly.

"Why should he, indeed?" retorted the

Amazon, "though, for that matter, he seldom does."

"Does the woman, do you think?" asked the widow softly.

"Too often," from the Amazon.

"It is better, I think, where they both do," observed the American wife with downcast eyes and a sweet half-smile.

"It is best," said Herr Werner, "when their individualities are alike;" and Jessica raised her eyes to his approvingly.

"German husbands—ah—wear a—I cannot think," began the German girl with more pluck than vocabulary.

"A long pipe?" suggested the French doctor, innocently.

"No-o!" said the German girl, quite seriously; and she was visibly going over her mind methodically in search of that missing word.

"A pair of spectacles?" laughed the American husband.

"A marriage ring?" growled Herr Werner.

His countrywoman smiled her thanks at

him. "Yes," she said, "that is right. German husbands wear a marriage ring; but you English—husbands—put it off, isn't it?"

"They never put it on," said Jessica.

"No-o?" cried the German girl in great surprise, looking as if she would doubt the propriety of a marriage of that kind.

"Different people," observed the American husband, "wear the ring of subjection in different places—the German on his finger, the bull in his nose, the American in his voice."

"While the Englishman, I am told," broke in Jessica, with a recurrence of her old manner, "puts it in his wife's name."

Herr Werner had a gratified expression at this, until the Amazon remarked that a German's treatment of his "frau" was simply uncivilized.

"The frau," observed the German girl, "is out of the kitchen getting—"

"To make room for men," shot in the French doctor, "as in France. With us, the business of cooking is too vitally impor-

tant to be left to the ladies," and he smiled jocosely at his wife.

"The ladies," said the Amazon, "seldom cook with us."

"But they do with us," cried the American husband. "We have the cook-lady and the laundry-lady, you know, and all the rest of it."

It would be impossible to put in print the disgust on the Amazon's face. The gentleman from Siam now began a monologue upon Italian domestic life, deadening his voice at regular intervals—but never stopping it—with a forkful from his plate.

"The Italian is a queer fellow," he was saying presently. "One said to me just the other day—'It costs me five thousand lire to live; two thousand to keep my house, to feed me and to clothe me, and three thousand to drive me out in the corso.' Now I would have said four thousand to live and one thousand for carriage; but the Italian is all for show. Still he lives very cheaply; he eats many macaroni, cooked in all styles, and much vegetables;" and he began giving the

price of vegetables in the various Italian cities.

The table had been subtly conscious for some minutes that an affectionate difference of opinion had sprung into existence between the French couple. Only a low word or two in lightning French had been spoken, but an incessant though noiseless discussion by means of shrugged shoulders and wrinkled foreheads and moue-ed lips had followed. Now, however, it was ended, and Madame had her way; for she placed a quieting hand over the Doctor's as it lay, potently nervous though still, on the table, and asked the Swiss hostess if she wouldn't poach an egg for "M'sieur."

"Oui, certainement," and a smile; and the order was given.

The Doctor assumed a delightful air of resignation. Madame flashed at him a mischievous glance that had, however, a light touch of motherliness in it. Then he turned to Jessica with—

"My wife spoils me."

"Nothing is pleasanter," responded Jessica.

Madame beamed on her and almost spoke, but thought better of it; possibly she might have told the girl that she would learn one day that it is as pleasant to do the spoiling.

Several days later when the Murneys climbed the hill from the quay, after having spent the morning with Herr Vogt, Jessica caught sight of a familiar face in the drawing-room. Pushing open the door, she saw others; and then she knew them—the Vassar party.

"Why, Miss Murney!" "And *Mrs.* Murney!" they chorused; and then—"Are *you* here?" and "When *did* you leave Dresden?" and "Where *have* you been since?"

"Where have *you* been?" asked Jessica.

"Oh! let me see," cried one of them. "From Dresden we went to Prague and then to Vienna—Oh! Vienna *is* sweet. You ought to see the officers on—on—What is the name of that street?—Where the cafés are, you know!"

"Kärntner Strasse," said the Fraulein in charge of the party, a little wearily.

"Kärntner Strasse! Oh, yes! Such distinguished looking men! And then the Prater on a Sunday!—and the Bohemian girls!"

"Oh, and you should see the girls wearing Cashmere shawls over their heads in Venice," broke in another enthusiastically.

"Why, have you been to Venice, too?" asked Jessica, in astonishment.

"Yes; and Florence and Milan. We were a long time in Florence—did everything."

"How delightful!" said Jessica, her head beginning to whirl.

"But the Last Supper there is a fraud," one of them warned her solemnly. "All faded."

"It is not in Florence, Bertha," corrected the Fraulein. "It is in Milan."

"Oh!" said Bertha. "Well, we took the street car to it anyway."

"Are you going to stay long here?" asked Jessica.

"Quite a while!" said one of them. "We

are going to do Lucerne and a run down the Lake this afternoon, go up the Righi to-morrow, and possibly on to Geneva next day."

That afternoon Jessica went with Herr Werner to study the old paintings on the two curious wooden bridges that cross the swift Reuss as it flows out of the lake through the city; and very redolent of the elder time they found them. Slowly they walked from one to another, making out the meaning of each, so full of the mystery of a religion that was frankly and constantly supernatural, and of the greatness of rulers who led their people into battle, risking something more than the annoyance of disturbing cablegrams.

When they had tired their eyes and sated their imaginations, they walked home past the Schweizerhof; and Mr. Hughes, who had walked Lucerne three days in silent search of the Murneys, there met them.

So it was true, he told himself; Werner was here, and not in Poland at all. The three chatted for a few minutes and ex-

changed addresses; and then Jessica and Herr Werner went on up the hill.

"He's hypnotized her, damn him," said Hughes to his moustache. "She is up in the air all the time—not a bit like herself. Should have a brother here, by Jove!—I wonder what her mother is about. Hypnotized, too, likely."

Which last was nearer the truth than most of his soliloquy; for Mrs. Murney was again dreaming of New York opera and golden streams, and a home on Murray Hill—yes, and a cottage at "the Pier."

CHAPTER XIII

Werner Moves

Mr. Theodore Hughes considered his position at great length that night, sitting in the starlight on one of the benches by the lake and near the Casino while doing it. The sound of singing floated in from happy boatloads out on the placid water; a circle of lights marked the sweep of the old town; upon the hill behind him an occasional bright ray broke through the foliage of the trees, one, perhaps, from the lamp beside which Jessica possibly sat—Jessica and "that cursed German." Across the harbour tingled and circled and clashed a light-etched "merry-go-round" with a mechanical orchestra. The clear, cool air of the Alpine night lay on his cheek and the vast mountain masses were a dim shadow. Gradually Mr. Hughes's cigarettes turned from coal to ash,

and he seldom moved except to extract another from his case.

What should he do about it? Should he do anything? He found it easier to argue that he shouldn't than that he should, but the conclusion was less satisfactory. Still Miss Murney had no claim upon him. She was not even a countrywoman of his. If she chose to have that dreamy German with her, and her mother was willing that she should, why should he——but that German was disgusting, and no mistake. They probably took walks together, and she sat among the wild flowers and made daisy chains for him. It would be unmanly in him (Hughes) to go away and leave a young girl to that. He would drive off the German vampire and then he would go away. If she did not want him about, he would not stay about; but it was only common chivalry to rescue her from positive danger before he went.

As for the "how," he knew but one way, and that was to see the German and tell him he must clear out and leave the girl alone, and if he wouldn't "clear out," to

knock him down. That settled, Mr. Hughes took a turn by the lake and went to bed.

The next day Herr Werner went down town in the morning and did not turn up for luncheon at the hill-top "pension." But the others did, and the French doctor was inclined to be talkative.

"I like Americans," he said to Mrs. Murney with that astonishing skill in point-blank compliment which is second nature to the French race. "They seem nearer kin to us than the English –not so cold, quicker, more—more intuitional."

"I think we are," agreed Mrs. Murney. "I find English people difficult to get acquainted with."

The widow shrugged her shoulders. "Some people," she said, "prefer peanuts to walnuts because they have so little shell."

"You are not English," said the Doctor to her quickly.

"No, but I like them," she replied. "They know what friendship means—they are steadfast and loyal."

"Pouf!" cried the Frenchman. "Every

man is his own best friend, and of the rest of the world he asks—sympathy with his mood, entertainment, '*bonne camaraderie*,' nothing more."

"Yet sometimes he wants to borrow a dollar," remarked the American husband drily, with a smile to his plate.

"Don't you think that Americans make good friends, too?" Jessica asked of the widow.

"Splendid!" was the reply, and with enthusiasm. "Especially," she added, "for light afflictions. They are so instantly kind, and so solicitous, and so quick to take trouble for you."

"But do you never want friends when the sun shines?" asked the Doctor.

The question seemed to reach an inner sanctuary in Jessica, and she said thoughtfully, half to herself—

"Do we, I wonder? Is it not companionship we want then?"

"Ah!" breathed the Frenchman, with a quick glance at her that told how true he

found her intuition, and how surprised he was to find it so.

"That is which I think," joined in the gentleman from Siam, who had begun to find his own long silence oppressive. "When I am gay, I want friends, friends, friends; but when I am sad, I select to be alone."

"That is like the animals," pleasantly observed the Amazon. "When wounded, they hide themselves."

Jessica heard little of this, for she was still thinking of the Frenchman's question.

"You like to enjoy things," she now said, "with people who see them as you do, without asking whether they would stand by you in trouble or not, but when trouble comes, you want one with you who will stand the closer the darker it grows—and it matters little then whether o. not he sees all the colours of the rainbow as you do."

" 'One'—'he,' " quoted the young American wife under her breath.

Jessica heard it, however, and flushed furiously, resolving never to think out loud in public again. For she knew that in her

mind, "companion" had meant Herr Werner, and "friend" Mr. Hughes, and she was not a little startled to see so plainly her attitude toward the two men.

The conversation then turned to the kind of time the Vassar party were probably having on the Righi—with an interlude by the Italian from Siam on the loneliness of life in the "clubs" of the tropics—and from that tc the dangers and follies and daring of Alpinism.

"Alpinism! It sounds like a new religion," said Jessica.

"It is," the American husband assured her cheerfully, "with a ready-made hymn in 'Excelsior' and climbing toward heaven as an object."

"And for a god," observed the Frenchman, "the image of one's self a niche higher than any other," and then, after a pause—"this making of gods in one's own image is not a new idea in the history of religions."

Herr Werner was meantime having his luncheon with Herr Vogt, and there was a suffused flush under his left eye and his

nose looked large and tender. And Herr Vogt's protruding eyes were rolling in alarm at Herr Werner's singular story. He was learning for the first time what it was that killed the song-spirit in the wonderful Miss Murney, and made her a lump of clay. It was the malevolent presence of a rude, frozen-faced, soulless, raw-beef-eating barbarian from England, who led her to play at a silly ball game until she was a mere panting, perspiring animal, who ridiculed every out-reaching of the soul and cared only for jingle music or sloppy ballads, who had no imagination, no love for the dream, and who, when he was present, dragged the song queen down to his level—that of a street singer enjoying a romp in the country. And, worst of all, he had followed them from Dresden to Lucerne.

"But can you not keep her from him?" cried Herr Vogt—of course in German.

"He has seen her," answered Herr Werner gloomily, "and he knows her address, and nothing on earth—not a regiment of Uhlans—would keep him from her."

"What can we do? What can we do?" lamented Herr Vogt. "We must not lose her again. She will be the star of Europe."

"Listen to me," said Herr Werner, impressively. "Who brought her to you this last time when she was lost?"

"It was you."

"Yes, and though you did not know it," went on Herr Werner, "it was I who brought her to herself the day she went to Meissen."

"Ah!" cried Herr Vogt. "She told me that it was there that her eyes were opened."

"Yes—and with me. Now listen! We must get her away from here and at once. We must hide her from this barbarian."

"But will she go?" asked Herr Vogt.

"Yes; now she will—she has not been seized by the English bulldog yet. But you must command; you must say that you are going and I must only seem to follow."

"Yes—but where?"

That was the question, and for an hour they discussed it. Berlin would have won, but it would be so easy to trace them there—

Herr Vogt was so well known, and the German police so omniscient. Then the Murneys would want a reason for passing Dresden.

At last, Herr Werner had an inspiration. "Why not say Paris?" he proposed. "We can tell her that it is for the advantage of the opera, and I know a safe nook in the Latin Quarter."

So it was settled, and Herr Werner took his boat back, stopped at a chemist's to get his eye painted and his swollen nose reduced, and then climbed the hill and walked through the garden to the veranda to find Hughes and Jessica pacing up and down there as if they trod the deck of a ship.

The two men bowed stiffly and Herr Werner said that he had been taking a little journy on the lake. Then he called their attention to the rose-tints and the softly shaded blues that lay among the massed mountains piled up to the southern horizon.

"Very pretty," said Hughes, patronizing the prospect in quite a proper, self-respecting fashion.

But Jessica had leaned upon the railing, and her eyes went out to the marvellous beauty of the scene, soft and yet rugged, majestic and yet tinted like a garden flower.

Herr Werner smiled under his moustache. He had pitted the Alps against the Englishman. Let him bully them if he could!

CHAPTER XIV

"Purple Gods"

As Mr. Hughes walked down the hill from the Murney "pension," he did some resolute thinking. Clearly, the "knock down" argument did not dispose of Herr Werner. He came up after it, not exactly smiling but unabashed, and while Mr. Hughes despised him for not fighting back as the rules of the game demanded, he had a sporting respect for the man who had come out of the struggle unconquered. He was still at the Murney "pension"; he would be there to-night, practising his devilish mesmeric arts. For there was no longer any doubt about them. He (Hughes) had found Jessica dreamy and abstracted when he had called after luncheon, just as she had been during those last days in Dresden. If he had not known her as she was before Werner got hold of her, he would have

thought her pretty dull company. But there was the same soft, smooth cheek—a shade thinner; the same deep-breathing bosom; the same masses of silken black hair; something of the same quick play of mind—but not quite. It winged about so much in the clouds now that he hardly knew whether it was quick or slow. But gradually as they talked she had come nearer and nearer to the prankish, gay-hearted spirit of the old Jessica. Then "Svengali" came! when in a flash she was back in the clouds again, talking a sort of watery, womanish rendering of Werner's nonsense. It was downright sickening.

Well, what should he do? Let Werner go on? He might not get a chance to knock him down again for a month. Perplexed and growing more indignant with every step, he reached his hotel; and there was amazed to find a lady with outstretched hand and sweet smile, awaiting him in the hall.

"I know you're surprised," she said. "I knew you would be when I got Sam to come on here. But I wanted to see how you made

out with the big hypnotist and his poor victim. Herr Werne[illegible]ere all right, isn't he? I just couldn[illegible] wait." It was the lady from Maine.

"Well, I'm not making out," said Hughes savagely.

"He's here, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"I knew it. I knew it. I told Sam—"

"Who's Sam?"

"Why, my husband—don't you know?"

"I never heard his first name."

"Oh, well, Sam's with me. And now come up to my room and tell us all about it. I'm just dying to hear."

At first Hughes demurred. There was nothing to tell. But the voice of the lady from Maine rose as she conjectured freely what had happened with a view to improving his memory, and people in the hall began to look at them curiously—so he went. There she elicited from him that he had seen them, that he believed Jessica to be hypnotized, that he had met and remonstrated plainly with Herr Werner, to which he added, with a

reserved, deep-throated note of self-approval, that he had incidentally knocked him down—

"No! Did you?" cried "Sam," waking up to a new interest in the affair.

Hughes nodded.

"Why, however did you get the chance?"

"Met him outside the wall."

"Well, that's 'magnifyke,' as the French say."

"And he's still there?" asked the lady from Maine.

"Yes, he is," grimly, "and she's still right under his thumb."

"What—can—we—do?" the lady from Maine conjectured in slow wonder.

"Rescue her and carry her off," suggested her husband lightly.

"Where to?" she demanded, cheerily ready for the adventure. "We couldn't bring her to this hotel"—doubtfully.

"Well, I guess not," agreed her husband in hearty tones. "I don't want to carry no screeching women through these halls, thank you."

Hughes had risen. He was in no mood for this banter. The matter was serious—and Jessica was not to be regarded as "a screeching woman." How hopelessly vulgar some good-hearted people were.

"Might take her to Jimmy Wood's cottage across the lake," drawled "Sam" in slow tones, getting up to see Hughes out.

"The very thing!" cried the lady from Maine, excitedly. "Sit down, both of you; sit down. The very thing. Oh, I've always wanted to rescue some one from somewhere, and now I shall. It will be so—mediæval and—and romantic. We'll climb the hill—at night—"

"No, we won't, Martha; not we," drily, from her still standing husband.

"Oh, you won't—unless you're made," his wife flung impatiently at him; "but listen, Mr. Hughes—" and she told him, while he stood listening stoically, but eager to get away and think, how Jimmy Wood had told them they could use his furnished cottage down the lake, how nice it was and how complete in everything, and then pointed out

that she and her husband could take it and could carry Miss Murney off there and keep her for a few days until Herr Werner's spell was broken, when she would be grateful to them for ever after.

Mr. Hughes smiled, said that he must congratulate her on still retaining the romance of sixteen, and politely took his leave.

"You are the silliest old fool," growled her husband.

"After dinner," said the lady from Maine, "we will row over there and see what the cottage looks like."

When they started the evening was yet light, and Mr. Hughes was standing on the veranda, mechanically smoking a cigarette.

"We're going to get the cottage ready," said the lady from Maine, smiling knowingly.

Mr. Hughes smiled back slightly and lifted his hat in farewell. Then he went on smoking and thinking. What could he do? Hour by hour, Jessica's peril had grown more real in his eyes. Werner, who had taken his knockdown and then come back

again with a pale smile, seemed no longer a man to him—a man restrained by decency and human feeling. Hughes felt that he had no reliable key to the conscience of such a man—his sense of what was proper did not work like that of other people—"other people" meaning English people. What might he not do with two helpless ladies in his hands, and one of them a lovely girl?

Yet how could one interfere? What case had he for the police—if, like a born Englishman, he did not entirely distrust a foreign police? For the fourth time his twitching fingers broke his cigarette, and then he began walking aimlessly down the street.

The light faded and the shadows of the mountains lengthened and thickened until it was dark. Conscious of what he was doing and yet not recognizing it in the open court of his keen sense of "the correct" in conduct, he slowly wound up the hill toward the Murney "pension." He found himself at the lower side of it, with a garden between him and the house, entirely hiding all save the roof. But here was a gate and yonder

wound a path. Dignity stood in his way for a few moments, and then there came to him on the quiet air the sound of her singing—low and unforceful as if she were singing to herself. Perhaps she was alone in the garden; the gate swung noiselessly under his hand and he went toward the voice. It stopped—and then came again—and then died out. He mounted several flights of steps and followed the windings of the upward path until the house came in sight—the high veranda with lighted windows behind it. The cheerful chatter of voices swept in gusts out of the open windows, but none of them was Jessica's. Then slowly he became aware of two figures seated outside in the shadow. One of them laughed—the pure, rising laugh he had learned to listen for. His cheek burned suddenly as he remembered where he was, and he stepped noiselessly backward with a view to making his escape. But Jessica's voice arrested him.

"Why is it," she was asking, "that when I am with you I seem to have another self inside me—a self with eyes to see? I have

it all the time now since we came to this 'pension'; but I lost it wholly after I left you at Dresden."

Hughes set his lips. Was more proof needed?

"Now to-night," Jessica went on, "out there in the purple dark I seem to see a great god sleeping—the great god of the mountains—I," and there was awe in her voice, "can almost hear him breathe, deep and slow."

"You see him," said Herr Werner, solemnly, "because he is there. The wonder is not that you see him, but that so many do not."

"Purple gods!" said Hughes in his choking throat. "Blue devils more like!" And red-faced, strangling, he went headlong down the winding path. The laughter that followed him from the open windows seemed the merriment of fiends.

Could he do nothing? Was the sweetest girl in the world to be the victim of this cowardly, insinuating charlatan with his cheap tricks, while an Englishman who loved

her—yes, who loved her—stood by with lax fingers?

It was a white face that he showed the lady from Maine in her room that night when he asked—

"Is the cottage ready now?"

"Yes. Why? How—"

"To-night?"

"Why to-night?" she cried in amazement. "We could plan so much better—"

"It is to-night or never with me," said Hughes.

She looked at him hard, and saw that he meant it.

"To-night, then," she cried, waving her hand above her head. "Hurrah! To-night!"

Hughes turned quickly as if to speak. He could not do it with such absurd people. But he hesitated, for the question came like a blow—"What then will you do?" He might rescue her alone, but the essence of the thing was to have somewhere to keep her while she regained her senses. That the

lady from Maine offered. So he set his chin again.

This alliance with inevitable absurdity was harder than to face death. To die was entirely proper, but a midnight escapade with these—. Still it was to be endured; it was all in a day's work; and he would do it.

CHAPTER XV

The Rescue Party

"SAM" was dead against the enterprise. The things he said to his wife would have assured her a divorce in any civilised court. He began by belittling her judgment and ended by challenging her sanity; and all the time Hughes sat silent, firm in eye and lip. "Sam" showed that the plan was impossible; but Hughes had a racial contempt for the impossible, and the lady from Maine loved it with the passion of the "ten swords to one" romance-reader. "Sam" said that the police would run them down in a day if they succeeded, and this nearly frightened his wife into giving the sweet adventure up; but Hughes spoke for the first time, pointing out that they were not dealing with Scotland Yard, and that, in twenty-four hours, the Murneys would be blessing them as their rescuers from an awful fate. Then it would

be Herr Werner who must look out for the police. The baffled "Sam" shouted out in helpless disgust that it would be ridiculous—absurd—that they would be "the laughing stock of Europe," and at this Hughes winced; but the lady from Maine hardly considered it in her hurry to get to details.

This much favored them—Hughes knew that the Murneys had a corner room opening on the second veranda, and that the room next to it was vacant.

"Well, how are you goin' to get 'em out?" asked the exasperated husband. "I fancy I see myself prancin' about in the sleeping apartment of two ladies whom I know and who know me, draggin' 'em out of bed with a pistol to their heads."

There was a flash in the eyes that Hughes turned on him, and his hands unconsciously closed.

"Why, what nonsense you do talk, Sam," said his wife. "It's as simple as can be. You and Mr. Hughes will just boost me up on that top veranda, and you'll stay down at the bottom of the ladder. Then I'll tip-toe

across the battlement to their French window—"

"The 'bat-tle-ment'!" snorted her husband.

"Well, you know what I mean. Then I'll have a 'jimmy' with me, and I'll force the window—quietly, you know."

"The lady cracksman!" sarcastically from "Sam."

"Then"—elaborately ignoring her husband and addressing Hughes—"I'll wake them! I'll tell them not to *dare* to scream—I'll tell them I'm a friend and that there are more friends below, but that a great danger threatens them, and that I can't answer questions then; and that they must dress themselves at once and come with me; and that they will not be hurt if they keep quiet!"

"But what if they do holler?" asked her husband.

"Then I'll flourish my revolver," with a fine air of bravado.

Hughes looked alarmed. "Ought you to have a revolver, do you think?" he asked.

"Oh, I won't have it loaded—I wouldn't

for the world," she assured him. "Why, it might go off."

"They'll recognise your voice, as sure as eggs," snarled her husband.

"No, they won't. I'll talk gruff—like—this: Dead-women-tell-no-tales!"

"You must be careful not to frighten them, mustn't you?" said Hughes.

"Only just enough to keep them quiet," she answered, airily. "And then if they do recognise me, I'll just sit down on the edge of the bed and tell them all about it—how they are in the power of a villain and don't know it, and how anxious all their friends are, and how their only chance is to escape at once with me, and that my husband is waiting outside to help, and all that, you know."

"And what'll we be doing all this time?" asked "Sam."

"Standing to your posts like true knights in the service of distressed beauty," answered his wife, with a gaiety that was meant to cover good advice.

"Standing in the wet grass like true idiots, catching rheumatism," was his rendering.

"Now, Mr. Hughes," she said, turning to him with the air of coming at last to the practical side of it; "you've got to get me a 'jimmy' and a revolver—and a dark lantern—and a safe ladder; and I'll pin up my skirt—Oh, and a mask—and I'll wear a waterproof, and do my hair tight—and you better be masked, too; at first, anyway. And, Sam, you see about the boat and store it with—let me see!—a basket of potatoes, four loaves of bread—no, six loaves—some beaf-steak—oh, and plenty of canned goods; and tea and sugar and butter and—"

"What is this—a Polar expedition?" demanded her husband, indignantly. "And where am I to get all these things at this hour?"

His wife looked at him with suppressed opinions bristling from her face. "When a lady asks—" she began, and then gave it up with a little sigh of futility. "Mr. Hughes," she added, impressively, "hasn't asked me where to get a 'jimmy'."

"P'raps he knows a burglar off-duty," growled the unabashed "Sam," whereat Mr. Hughes allowed himself the first smile of the night. After all, was it not too absurd? But if not this, what? He could hear a sweet voice—a voice whose cadences moved him to his soul's centre—saying, "Out there in the purple dark I seem to see a great god sleeping"; and then Werner's voice replying, "You see him because he is there." This fantastic plan of the Maine lady's might succeed; and, knowing no other, he would try it.

So he went out to improvise a "jimmy" and carefully unload his revolver. He had a carnival mask that would do for the lady, while he could use a handkerchief himself—but the ladder, that was the puzzler! "Sam" found a man with a boat and hired them both for an indefinite time—they would keep the man at the house and he could tell nothing; then he filled the boat with supplies and told the boatman to await him opposite the Casino from one in the morning until he came.

"Ha! All goes well!" said the lady from

Maine when they had reported to her; and at a little before one they let themselves out of the hotel, Hughes two minutes ahead. He had stolen a ladder and hidden it in the garden of the "pension."

"Let's go round the easy way," suggested "Sam."

"No. No. That's through that ghastly little grave-yard," said his wife; "and I just won't go through a grave-yard at midnight."

"Pshaw! It won't hurt you."

"Well, I don't like it."

"You're a pretty house-breaker, you are! —afraid of a tombstone!"

"Well, I'm not a body-snatcher," was her retort.

Then they trudged for a while in silence up the steep road.

"Isn't this really romantic?" gurgled the lady from Maine. "I feel like a knight errant. So—so—, you know."

There was no comment on this, unless a low rumble from "Sam's" direction might be taken as one. After a little he spoke on his own account:

"I'll be dinged if I like this early-in-the-morning business," he grumbled.

"Sh—sh!" whispered his wife; "you mustn't talk." But soon she said to Hughes, "My mask won't stay on. It keeps bobbing down over my mouth."

"It wants tightening, I fancy," said Hughes; and he laid down the "jimmy" and th. dark lantern while he tightened it.

"However am I going to hold a 'jimmy' and a lantern and a revolver in my two hands?" she now enquired anxiously.

"Carry your revolver in your teeth," sardonically suggested her husband. "It will keep you from betraying yourself by talking."

"Keep it in your pocket," diplomatically proposed Hughes.

"Well, then, I'll have to lay down the 'jimmy' and the lantern when I want to take it out," she fretted; "it takes two hands to get anything out of a woman's pocket, you know; and they would scream their heads off while I was doing it."

"We should have gone to some good 'night

school' in burglary before we tried this," was her husband's opinion. "They'd teach you how to carry yer tools."

"You might leave the 'jimmy' outside," said Hughes. "You won't need that in the room."

"Tarnation! There comes my mask down again. If it does that in the room, however am I to get it up? I could never push it up with the revolver barrel. Ugh!"

"It is not loaded," Hughes assured her.

"No; but it's co-old."

When they got to the garden they walked on tip-toe, and each thought that the others were making a terrific noise. Pebbles would crunch and even roll; and the ladder the men were now carrying up the path scraped against the branches of the trees and even banged on the steps. But they roused no one and, after a time, stood in the open space before the house, now dark, tall and silent. Hughes lifted the ladder into place against the second veranda.

"W—will it hold?" asked the lady from

Maine, chattering—whether with cold or with nerves, who shall say?

"Yes," said her husband, testily; "if you're fool enough to go up it."

"Is it—is it—s-safe, do you think, Mr. Hughes?" she repeated.

"Perfectly," said Hughes, calmly. "And we'll hold it."

"Now give me the things," she said, and put the revolver carefully in her pocket. "Now light the lantern," in a tremulous whisper, and she picked up the "jimmy" and held it firmly in her right hand. "Isn't this f-fine?" she went on. "So old world—so——"

Just then her husband sneezed loudly, and showed signs of doing it again.

"Don't do that!" in the shrillest, fiercest whisper. "Don't do that again, I tell you. Do you want to spoil everything?"

"I want to go to bed," he said, gloomily.

"You've no romance in you—no spirit—"

"Not a drop." mournfully wiping his nose.

"Here's the lantern, Madame," said Hughes.

"Thank you s-so much"—taking it in her left hand and moving toward the ladder. Then suddenly——

"Oh! Oh! I can't go. We'll have to give it up."

"Why?" asked Hughes.

"Why"—almost crying—"with these things in my hands, I can't hold up my skirts to—to climb the ladder. You see—you see now how we women are handicapped in life."

"Sam" grinned unfeelingly. "Can't compete in the burglary business, eh?" he said.

"Why, of course," said Hughes, "I quite forgot. I'll take them up for you. I'll go first and leave them on the veranda."

"And you'll have to come up for them afterwards."

"Oh, yes," said Hughes, pocketing the house-breaking "kit" and starting up the ladder. At the top, he found it rather difficult to get down inside the railing; so, leaning over, he whispered:

"You'd better come up while I'm here, and let me give you a hand off the ladder."

"All right," whispered the lady from Maine, and started heavily up the ladder, which creaked and bumped and swayed under her.

"Hold it tight, Sam," she hissed down urgently.

"Oh, I'm holdin' it," he assured her ungraciously. "This personally conducted burglary business is a screaming farce."

"I'll wake 'em sure," she muttered to herself. "There's my water-proof caught! Oh, dear!—My! How far is it?—This ladder *will* fall—I can never ask them to come down it—Oh, Mr. Hughes, *so* glad to get—Oh, but you will have to be grateful to me for this!"

"You're doing bravely," he assured her, helping her down. "Now get your breath and calm yourself before you begin on the window." And with a doubtful, may-God-help-us look about, he disappeared down the ladder.

The lady from Maine leaned on the rail-

ing and rested. It was so quiet that she could hear the ripples of the lake break on the strand away below. Gradually her excitement subsided, and the shifting of her husband's boots on the gravel beneath warned her that time was passing. So pushing her mask into place and picking up the "jimmy" and the closed dark lantern, she approached the window. First she put down the "jimmy" and opened the lantern slide, when a shaft of light danced over the trees. "My!" she exclaimed in a suppressed voice, and turned it quickly on the window, when it flooded the room. "Goodness!" and she shut it off with a sharp click, and then waited with a thumping heart to see if she had wakened anybody.

"Don't need a light anyway," she assured herself. "I'll just pry the window open." So she adjusted the "jimmy" and applied her strength.

Bang! Crash!! To her excited ears it sounded as if the Crystal Palace had fallen in; and then a howl of dismay came from within the room.

"Hush! Hush!" she cried, excitedly pushing her way through the swaying windows. "Hush-sh! Or you will wake the people in the house!" But even this contingency did not appear to still them, for the howl broke out louder and more hopeless than before, and several different qualities of piercing screams joined it. "What is it?" asked a sleepy voice. "We are being killed," wailed some one in answer.

"Excuse me! I'm in the wrong room," cried the lady from Maine, now quite flustered; and she rushed out on the veranda. But she was mistaken—it was the right room. Only the Vassar party had come back unexpectedly that evening; and, it being a large room, the landlady had borrowed it from the Murneys to put them all into it, that being the best she could do on the spur of the moment.

Outside, the lady from Maine paused in perturbation.

"Why—it's—a—woman," she heard a voice, weighted down with astonishment, exclaim within the room.

"And an American, too, I'm sure,' said another.

"It's Mrs. Murney mistaking her room," conjectured a third.

"But she wouldn't come in the window," was snapped out.

"Get up, Jennie, and see! You're near the window," urged a shaking, nervous voice. To this there was no response, and an awful silence followed.

"Come down, you old fool," came in hushed but wrathful accents from below.

"Bring the things," whispered Hughes.

So she stepped back to the window to get them when another howl went up: "She's coming again! She's coming again!" it wailed. Then rose a German voice, strong and resonant, calling for help and police and other things in German. But the lady from Maine heroically grabbed up the lantern and the "jimmy," and, rushing to the edge, hurled them at Hughes, crying, "There they are!" and then began the perilous journey down the ladder.

"Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!" hissed her hus-

band; and once upon the ground, he caught her arm and ran her at a breakneck pace down the winding path. Hughes picked up the lantern and "jimmy" and followed quietly; and now lights were appearing at the windows, and a maid was leaning out of an upper casement and calling upon the police to arrest the robbers.

This might readily have happened before the skurrying three reached their hotel, if the whole night force in that part of the city had not been waiting with the public-spirited boatman opposite the Casino to arrest the suspicious character who had hired a boat for the astonishing hour of 1 a. m., and then secretly victualled it as if for a voyage. That looked like kidnapping; and the boatman had hastened to inform the police, and the police had gathered in full force to trap the villain.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Lady Burglar

The first person to reach the door of the vociferating Vassarites was the young American husband.

"What is the matter?" he demanded, rattling the door vigorously.

They all told him at once and each at the top of her voice; so that he was still in doubt.

"Shall I break in?" he asked; but there was no mistaking the chorused "No!"

"Oh," he said, knowing less what to do than ever.

"They're on the veranda," some one shrilled faintly.

"Who?" he asked promptly.

"A lady," was the astonishing response.

"What is the trouble?" came from behind him. It was the unruffled voice of the landlady.

"There's a lady on the veranda," he ex-

plained, as if in doubt of his own statement.

"Well, can she not get in?" asked the landlady in amazement.

At this the French doctor arrived from down stairs at a breathless trot, still buttoning his shirt, and demanded in excited French the cause of the disturbance. Had any one fainted?

The landlady answered in disgusted French that the American gentleman said there was a lady on the veranda who wanted to get in.

"Mon Dieu!" cried the Doctor, still in French, "Why don't they let her in, the poor little thing!"

The landlady pounded on the door and then asked in English, "Don't you know how to open the window?"

"It is open," cried several of them. "She broke it open," one added by way of further horrification.

"Oh; and is she in now?" the landlady asked in a tone which indicated that all this would be charged in the bill.

A confused soprano babel, which seemed

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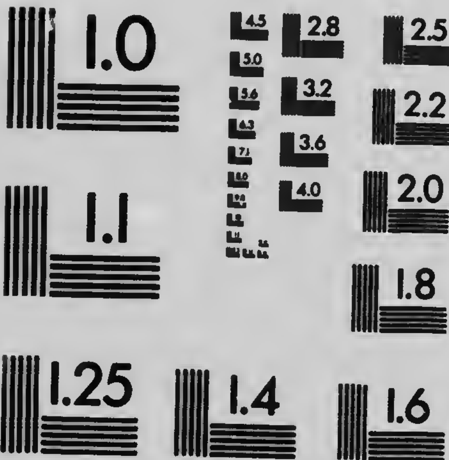

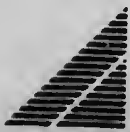

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to be a negative, arose at this; and then the voice of the Fraulein, "Keep quiet and I will explain," which she did fully and in German.

" 'Zo'!" said the landlady; and she went off briskly to rush the servants around to the front to see if they could catch the mysterious lady burglar, while the Frenchman explained the situation to the American.

"She's no lady anyway," was his laconic verdict.

"She was," said one of the girls, earnestly, from behind the door; "and an American lady, too."

"How do you know?"

"Heard her speak."

"L'Americaine terrible," marvelled the Frenchman.

It was an excited party that came early to breakfast that morning. The exclamatory Vassarites had decided by then not only that the lady burglar was an American, but that they had heard her voice somewhere before.

"It seemed as familiar to me as possible," said one of them.

"That was because it was American," explained Herr Werner, who had slept all through the disturbance, his room being at the back of the house.

"Do all Americans talk alike to you?" asked another with an enquiring laugh.

Herr Werner denied this, but explained at some length that they, naturally expecting to hear a native voice under such circumstances, found something strangely familiar in the unexpected American accents.

"Americans," said the French doctor, "have not cut the connection between their emotions and their vocal cords, as the English have."

"Nor have they," acidly remarked the Amazon, "substituted their emotions for their judgment."

"Can you anything on the gallery this morning see?" asked the German girl, and the conversation went back to the great event. The servants had found a ladder standing against the balcony, the marks of much trampling on the gravel, the catalogue

of a Lucerne porcelain dealer—and that was all.

"I think it was a foreigner," said the landlady, with a little smile; "for the prices on the catalogue were intended for tourists."

"Oh, ho!" cried the American husband. "That is a new touch in detective work. Think of a criminal traced by the prices quoted to him in estimates found in his pockets."

Jessica and Mrs. Murney went to Herr Vogt's after breakfast for the regular lesson, and found him full of a plan for going at once to Paris. Jessica, he said, was now ready to commence her career, and Paris was both a good stage for her début and a capital place to get a sort of finishing varnish by studying the great artists of the French opera. He should soon be back in Dresden, and the engagements for the Parisian season were now being made—two good reasons why their start for Paris must be made immediately.

"Paris," he said, " is where you should begin for New York. It is no better than

Dresden—*nein! nein!*—Dresden incomparable, out of sight, is—but for New York, Paris the better is known."

The Murneys were amazed. They had just begun to feel at home in their Lucerne "pension," and Jessica never had experienced more keenly the exaltation of the great in heart. To leave the Alps, for flat, clattering, pushing Paris! She felt her spirits sink at the thought. Again she must hunt through muddy, sticky streets for a new "pension"—again she must face a strange language of which she knew little—

But Herr Vogt was going on to say that they would go together to Paris; that he had a place for them, cheerful, home-like, artistic; that they would to the great opera go, again and again—a temple where music could be worthily worshipped; that she herself should sing to the never-could-they-get-done applauding French; and then to New York and fame and fortune.

Jessica flushed to the edge of her silken black hair, for the great Herr Vogt was to her the high-priest of song; and his words

were not flattery, for those who dwell on the altar never stoop to flatter. And Mrs. Murney smiled the quiet, modest smile she was practising for that spacious drawing-room on Murray Hill.

CHAPTER XVII

"Had I a Chance?"

THAT afternoon Mr. Hughes walked up the gravel path he had hurried down the night before, and called on the Murneys. He felt a slight touch of pleasant elation at the risk he was running; but neither of the ladies so much as mentioned the previous night's disturbance—and, of course, he could know nothing of it. The truth was that they were too full of the projected move to Paris where they were to hear great music, and get a French finish to their German ground-work — and, perhaps, sing a little themselves. They said nothing about Herr Werner in this connection, but he felt an oppressive certainty that the ballooning German would follow them, if, indeed, he was not at the bottom of the new plan. Herr Vogt, who was a fellow-German, seemed to have the whole affair in charge,

the ladies not even knowing where they were to live. It was not like Americans in their senses to trust such details to an impractical German music teacher.

After a time Mrs. Murney went indoors, and the afternoon shadows began to fall into the broken mountain masses across the lake. The ladies had talked as if they might leave for Paris at a day's notice; and, even if he could get their address, he did not like to think of the figure his self-respect would cut if he followed them in purposeless fashion again. Jessica had had little to say since her mother had left them; for she was in the lotus mood of silence, her eyes resting dreamily on the play of light and shade over the wide scene before her. Hughes looked at her cheek, and thought, with a movement of pity, that it was pale; then at her pose and, with a sudden, furious, inner anger, cursed it as sentimental—as Werneresque. What could he do to rescue her from that impassive, blonde vampire? Her hand that lay in her lap nestled itself a little more cosily among the folds of her dress, thus

calling the attention of his wandering eyes. It had a strange familiarity for him. He had so often looked at it, half-unconsciously, with a subtle sense of its appealing beauty. He had watched it weaving together the flowers of his wreaths; he had seen it, lithe and quick and dark, playing a mock melody on the net of her tennis racket; and now he saw it, inert and relaxed but of a shapeliness that called something to life at the seat of those emotions whose language is the caress.

In a moment, the memory surged up in him that what he wanted was no mere rescue from Werner, but possession for himself. And did he know now any other even possible way of accomplishing the rescue? Still this plan had itself the appearance of the impossible; for surely his case was hopeless while she sat under the spell of Werner! But there was the odd chance, and he had an innate love for the odd chance. And then Jessica should at least know that a lover stood at her hand, and would stand there so long as it was in him to stand anywhere. The day

might come when she would feel the need of him.

But the plan was hard trying. The conversation would not be led so much as in the direction of a tender avowal; and there was imminent danger that Mrs. Murney would abandon her attempt, audible from the drawing-room, to convince the young American wife that where the Germans differed from the Americans they were patently and wilfully in the wrong, and come out on the veranda. Then Jessica's manner, at times, seemed to take her out of his reach; but he felt that that would not be so, once she was his and Werner were banished.

"Miss Murney," he broke in at last, facing the plunge, "I have hardly a fighting chance, I know; but I wish you would tell me, for my comfort, one thing. Do you think—or—eh!—rather, did you ever think—of me—of me as a lover?" It was a quick change from the present to the past tense—as quick as the "side-stepping" of a boxer to avoid a blow.

Jessica looked swiftly at him, but it was

plain that the summoning of her mind back from the awing Alpine scene to his question was a slower business.

"That *is* a queer way to propose, isn't it?" and he smiled feebly; then his face drew into a stern earnestness, and he said: "But I love you, and I want you to know it—and—" with a rush of anger—"I know well that you are being taken from me by black means."

"Taken from you?" quoted Jessica in offended surprise.

"Yes," he said doggedly, and then, "Please answer my question—strange as it is. It has a purpose. Search your memory, for God's sake—for all our sakes—and answer it truthfully." His voice had the ring of command, but his eyes shone with the humbleness of supplication.

Jessica, with a woman's true instinct, gave heed to the eyes. "I am afraid," she began gently, "that you and I are not exactly suited to—"

"No; no!" he interrupted; "that was not my question. I know I've no chance now. But hadn't I once? Forgive me for asking

so strange a question, but do answer it!" The supplication had now got into his voice.

Jessica considered. An enlivened imagination loves to toy with the past of its possessor. Was there ever a time when she could have thought of Hughes as a husband without this dread that he would stand, an earth-bound figure, between her and the beautiful in life? Undoubtedly, there was. That other Jessica of the valley—and the mad tennis court—would have felt no such fear, at all events. In fact, she had liked very much the nonchalant, capable, quizzical Hughes; and Jessica could hardly keep from smiling at the oddness of her self-analysis while Hughes waited in stern, reserved patience for his answer. But could she say this to him? It was so—so—— Then she looked at him and was touched by the gray suffering which even his resolute self-suppression could not keep from his face.

"Mr. Hughes," she said in a voice as soft in touch as a grieving mother's, "I think there was once a time—once before my

awakening—when we could have been better friends."

Now that he had got his answer, his mind seemed to go to pieces. There were things in plenty that he ought to say—something about that "awakening," for instance—but he could get none of them in marching order. That damnable past tense blocked the gateway of his intelligence.

"And now?" was what he said—what he cried, his reserve for once all gone, and the man of him looking out from his strong face in stark earnestness of vital questioning upon the woman in her.

"And now!" she echoed, emptily, timidly, the ancient fear of woman in the presence of a compelling suitor cowing her modern spirit for a moment.

At the sight of her shrinking, a sort of shame seized him.

"Forgive me again," he pleaded. "I am badgering you to no purpose. I have had my answer. If I could only believe it is you who have given it, I could go away decently—"

At his resumption of the modern attitude, Jessica regained her position of conventional superiority.

"Mr. Hughes," she said, calmly, "you are mistaken in supposing, as you seem to do, that I am not thoroughly myself—"

"You are not," he interrupted gloomily. "It sounds ridiculous to say it to you, but you are hypnotized."

"Hypnotized?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Hughes, you are joking."

"Never was more serious in my life."

"Who has hypnotized me?"

"Herr Werner."

"Absurd!" and Jessica sprang angrily to her feet.

"Well," said Hughes, getting up, "as we are to part, it perhaps is as well that we should part this way. But I shall tell you the truth before I go. That villain has made you a copy of himself with all his moony nonsense. You were as sensible as—"

"As Mr. Hughes himself, I presume," she broke in, ironically.

He straightened back as if he had been struck a blow; and then stiffened into his habitual reserve.

"I think I should tell *you* some truth," Jessica went on in a voice that cut out her words in high relief. "I was a girl with a splendid gift, but very, very unworthy of it. Music and the great in life awakened a better self in me. That is all. Herr Werner was one of those who showed me where the great was to be seen. I was impatient at it myself once," she continued, a little more kindly, "when I looked at it as you do now."

Hughes had not moved a muscle while she talked. Now he tossed his head. "The great in life," he remarked savagely, "is beyond my ken, I suppose."

"You blind your eyes to it," she responded quickly.

To this he made no reply, but said, after a moment of silence, in what might have sounded like dull repetition to some ears,

but Jessica knew that it was pain that numbed his mind:—

"Well, I have my answer—I have—"

Then he stopped. "Either you or I are mistaken," he began in another key, high and tense. "But if you are really on solid ground up among your clouds, then I must jog along down here by myself. Yet—" and he turned his deep eyes on her firmly—"if you ever find that you are not, you—you can count on me." And he stood looking at her with the effect of a mighty emphasis.

"Mr. Hughes," and she impulsively held out both her hands to him, "you're not going—far?" A sudden, unformed fear had shot into her heart.

"I will stay at your elbow if you want me," he said quickly, taking her hands.

But the fear had passed. It was an eruption of that lower Jessica, she told herself. "No, no," she said slowly, withdrawing her hands, which he instantly released. "You—you are—what can I say to you that will not sound false? But I feel that in your

esteem I have something that I cannot quite let go. Though—"

"It is not my esteem," said Hughes, quietly; "it is my heart's love; and you can never lose it, whether you will or no."

Before this Jessica was dumb; and tears shone over her lower lids ready to fall if her tenderness so much as breathed again. Once more the heart within her wavered. This was a man clear through. But, as they both gazed in their helpless silence upon the silent Alps, rose-tinted now on the distant snows and a fathomless green in the lower depressions, Jessica felt that she saw what he did not; and that, in some way, that must separate them. He could have died with the Swiss Guard, she knew; but would he have known the nobility of his own action?

He put out his hand to her, still in silence. She laid hers softly in it.

"Remember," he said—and he tried for a careless smile—"if you find it cloud-land after all, a word and I will free you from it, though I have to upset the European Concert to do it. Here, I'll scribble you my

father's address,"—and he did so on one of his cards—"There! That will always find me." He took her hand again, and the poor, lifeless smile vanished from his face—

"God! I wish you had a brother."

Then he gripped her hand tight, tighter than he knew; and again he strode down the gravel path. Jessica watched him until he disappeared, straight, square-shouldered, potent to the last. Then she turned to the Alps, but the rose was now blood-red and the fathomless green a hungry black. It was not only beautiful—it was terrible, menacing. And she was alone! The Man had gone.

Her eyes narrowed with an unnamed fear again; and, running round the house, she plunged into the field of wild flowers just outside the gate, carefully keeping the bulk of the "pension" between her and the awful Alps.

CHAPTER XIX

Werner Awakes

THE next day at luncheon it was known that the Murneys were going immediately to Paris, and that they had never been there before.

"You will like it," said the French Doctor. "It is the ideal playground for people of an artistic temperament."

"You will see the dear, delightful art students there," added the widow, "with their wide trousers and their wandering hair."

"You will do more than see them if you go out on the streets alone," was the Amazon's contribution. "Ugh! The greasy little beasts!"

"I was never spoken to once on the streets in Paris," said the American wife with a little conscious air of making a remark that was part of a discussion.

"You were always with your husband, I suppose," shot back the Amazon.

"Not always!"

"Pouf!" exclaimed the French Doctor. "Ladies who observe the customs of the country are not annoyed in Paris—and great allowance is now being made for the independent habits of American ladies."

"Do the men actually speak to you on the street in Paris?" asked Jessica in amazement.

"Of course they do," said the Amazon, "and they step on your toes, and sing 'tra-la-la-la!' in your ears."

"Awful!" cried Jessica.

"You must not go out alone," said Herr Werner, "nor look at the men. That is all. Frenchmen do not understand that young ladies ever go out alone."

"In England it is the same," snapped out the French Doctor.

"It is not," countered the Amazon bluntly.

"Do young ladies go unchaperoned there?" he asked, mildly.

"No," she said; "but if they do, they are not insulted."

"'Insulted!'" deprecated the Frenchman, extending his hands and tilting his head. "*Les jeunes hommes* are only playful—and, as I tell you, they generally respect the peculiarities of Americans now."

"It is a playfulness that is not always understood, Doctor," observed Herr Werner.

"True!" returned the Doctor. "Not by the races that never play."

"Sh-sh!" whispered Madam.

"'Never play,'" picked up the Amazon. "Englishmen are noted for their devotion to sports."

"But an Englishman does not play at his sports," expostulated the Frenchman. "He works at them—furiously; they are like little sections of war. You go to the Thames and you see Englishmen 'playing' with boats—stripped, panting, fighting for first place; you go to Venice and you will see them robe themselves in gay holiday costumes to play with boats, and float about to music, or flutter off down the lagoon like a

flock of colored birds. Is not that so?" turning to the Italian.

"Yes," heartily agreed the Italian. "All Southern races are playful—like children," he explained as by way of excuse for the Northern English; and then went on to tell of some river fêtes he had seen in Siam. When he had finished, the young American husband reverted obliquely to the old topic by saying that he had heard a Californian pronounce "the battle of flowers" at Nice "an utter fizzle." "Why," he had said, "you should just see the floral chariots we get up for our flower parades in California. Nothing to touch them here, I can tell you." He did not reckon in at all, added the American, the bushels of fun the Provençals got out of it.

"That's it," said the Frenchman. "You Anglo-Saxons are a great people; you only take pleasure in excelling—excelling—excelling! We Latins are more simple-minded—or is it more civilised?"—with a bright smile—"We are not always wrestling with each other; we can gather flowers and toss

them at one another, and get great gaiety out of it."

"But do you not think, Doctor," asked Herr Werner, "that the tossing of flowers is a child's business when both nature and man are so full of things worth giving one's whole mind to?"

"Do you never relax?"

"Rest is necessary," answered Herr Werner, with a brisk certainty of mien; "but I don't go to the nursery for it."

"You like a beer garden better," returned the Doctor; but it was impossible to take offence in face of his disarming smile.

The departure to Paris was not made quite so quickly as Herr Werner would have liked; for Herr Vogt was not a bird to take wing in a minute. He had much to arrange for; many boxes to pack for shipment to Dresden, and many precautions to take lest he should find himself in foreign Paris without a proper supply of familiar comforts made only in Germany. The Murneys were ready before him, and Herr Werner could hardly keep the secret that he intended to

follow. Indeed, he was tempted to join the party in his impatience to get it off; for was not the clean-cut, unperturbed figure of the menacing Hughes to be seen day after day on the wide promenades of the Quay? But, luckily, it did not again mount the gravel path—and often Herr Werner wondered why.

The lady from Maine had been hurried off to the Tyrol by her alarmed and doubly-disgusted husband on the morning after the night escapade.

"I don't want to run into that boatman again," he said. "He'd have me up for breach of contract or lunacy or something of that sort."

"Well, it was an experience," said the lady from Maine, ecstatically, as she bent energetically over her dress-suit case. "I guess few tourists ever get anything of that sort."

"I should hope not," was her husband's hearty comment. "If you want to find people who have done that kind of traveling, you'll have to go to the State prison—and it will be fun to hear you crowing over a

man who has never 'burgled' outside of the New England States."

"I don't regret it," she protested. "It was so romantic and—and unusual—like a scene out of a story of chivalry, with moated castles and turret windows and champing steeds and that sort of thing, you know."

"You're thinking of a dime novel," snorted "Sam." "'Maggie, the Midnight Marvel.' But you'll never catch me again—I've had my fill of rescuing distressed females."

"But think of the poor girl, Sam—and of poor, brave Mr. Hughes."

"Think of that boatman eating my groceries and thanking his stars that my keepers got me again before midnight."

Hughes bade them "Good bye" in the secrecy of their own chamber, and promised the lady that she should be told all that might happen after her flight. Her husband said: "All I ask of you is to keep dark what happened before our flight."

"You may be very sure I will," said Mr. Hughes; and they believed him. He might confess a crime, but never an absurdity.

The last night before the Murneys were to start for Paris, Herr Werner and Jessica paced their "pension" veranda, reveling in the white shine of the moon on the sleeping lake and the indistinctly outlined mountains.

"What an unreal world it is!" said Jessica. "It must have been on moonlight nights that the legends of the supernatural were born."

"Unreal?" questioned Herr Werner. "It is different from the day; but which is the unreal?"

And with this thought in their minds they leaned in silence on the veranda railing, drinking in the soft beauty of the mantled scene—mantled by a shrouding light that covered more than it revealed. And they were each conscious of the other—an unusual experience. The morning was to bring separation—Jessica thought that it might be final. Herr Werner knew better, but—Paris was another world, and French artists were swift to woo beautiful women. Was Paris a wise choice after all? Yet with their

long acquaintance and their common love of the beautiful, there had never been the faintest approach to love-making between them. They were like fellow-students of an entrancing art—but an art that was as sexless as the single-minded study of the nude. They took hands without a thrill. They saw the same beauties, and knew that they alone saw them; yet felt them not a whit more beautiful for that fact. Still there was close companionship between them—a companionship which at that moment neither of them had with any one else in the wide world, nor felt it possible to have.

"I wonder," said Herr Werner, "if you will really like Paris as well as this."

"I can't think it possible," replied Jessica.

"I never have," went on Herr Werner. "Paris has an endless variety of beauties, which, however, only seem to tickle my sense of the beautiful. This fills it—and more."

"Yet if one is to do anything one's self," said Jessica, "I suppose that Paris is the place to learn."

"Yes," laughed Herr Werner. "One can marvel at an Alp, but can hardly hope to be one."

"I shall miss you in Paris," said Jessica quite frankly; and then she wondered if she should have said it.

"I shall miss you—very much—when you go," replied Herr Werner in a lower tone, which added to Jessica's doubt as to the propriety of her naïve remark.

Then there was silence for a few moments. "Miss Murney," said Herr Werner presently. "Would you like me to come to Paris?"

Jessica felt her mind leap foolishly at the alarm of the question, as she might have started herself at a threat of unlocated danger. Why could she not say—what was the truth—that she would like him to come, but that this liking had no suggestion of loving about it? Yet how could she?—it would be so unmaidenly.

Herr Werner's pulses quickened as he saw her hesitate. Hesitation could mean but one thing—the question had a tender

side to her mind; and, while he had hardly intended it to have, he was a man, and the sight of such a thought in a woman's mind called forth a response from his.

"You need not answer," he said in a minute. "I should not have asked it—but I will come."

"Oh, no!" cried Jessica impulsively. "Not in that way!"

"In what way?"

"It is not like you to put so stupid a question," she tossed at him with some asperity.

Abashed, he stood in silence.

"But if you are coming to Paris—as a friend," she went on with a distinct commonplaceness of manner, "I am sure that I shall be less lonely."

So when Herr Werner bade the Murneys and Herr Vogt "au revoir" at the train next day, three of them knew that he had the address of the "pension" in the Latin Quarter in his pocket-book.

CHAPTER XIX

A Latin Quarter "Pension"

On an unusually wide but quiet street winding from "Old Boul Mich"—the "ch" is pronounced soft—diagonally across the district below the Luxembourg Gardens to staid St. Germain, a comfortable Madame and her black-haired, heavy-lidded and artistic daughter managed a "pension" for "permanents." The tourist was very seldom to be found there, one reason being that the "pension" was not known in sightseeing circles. Occasionally an American art student, on a holiday home, gave the address to a friend who had been fascinated by his Bohemian tales of the care-free, unconventional life of the Latin Quarter; and the friend on a subsequent tour—possibly with his wife—drove up the empty, blank-walled street in the course of his search for a "pension," but, more frequently than not, all the

rooms were taken. He would get a look, however, into a long drawing-room of barbaric furnishing; orientally draped lounges piled with colored cushions, a taut-stringed banjo on a tumbled centre table, a shaggy skin before the dull grate fire—if the day were a little chill—well-used pallets and maul-sticks hung about like mementoes, an open piano covered with music, unframed canvases on the walls—some sketches of heads, others impressionist landscapes, one a warm-tinted copy of Mercie's "Venus." If he were lucky, he would also chance upon a glimpse into one of the rooms which might have been to let; the den, perhaps, of an artist who was something of a sybarite—a long mirror hidden by photographs of all sorts and conditions of people from a group of the artist's chums to a half-length picture of his "model," from Rosa Bonheur in her blouse to the latest favorite at the "Folies Bergere"; a rose-wood piano; crossed foils, tied with ribbon; a medley of velvet garments hanging in a corner; an out-door sketching outfit on the bed; and half-finished

pictures stuck wherever they would hold. Or it might be the bare room of a student at the Sorbonne with its shelves of books; its lounge heaped with note-books; books, face-down, on the table; lurid posters on the walls; a grate full of crumpled paper; and a variety of hats on the bed.

But, in any case, as he wound around the bicycles in the passage and took his disappointed way downstairs, "Ma'am'selle," with her painty fingers and her restless, coquettish eye, assuring him with a flattering concern of manner that she was "so very pained that there is not one room," he would feel confident that he had missed thereby half the enjoyment and real insight into life that Paris might have given him.

This is the place to which Herr Werner had sent the Murneys and Herr Vogt, they having ascertained by telegraph that there were rooms for the party. Herr Werner had been there himself some years before, had duly fallen in love with "Ma'am'selle" and then had fallen out again when he perceived that he had no more clue to her

methods of thought than he had ability to keep pace with the thought itself. Both the "falling in" and the "falling out" were officially unknown to Ma'am'selle, who took no notice of such things unless she was told of them, as she usually was when they happened to her fellow-countrymen and sometimes when they didn't.

It was night when the party got to Paris, and the rain was falling. But the streets, as their horse splashed along, seemed walled with bright windows and hung with moony planets and paved with bars of liquid light. Then their cab rolled out into the dark, and they looked through the windows and saw beneath them, and away between wide parallels of marching lights, the river in which quivered the myriad reflections of a night city. Then another bright, crowded, light-soaked thoroughfare; and then quiet and black walls and slowly passing street lights. Madame, amply-made and with a winning smile, awaited them at the top of the stair, and showed them their rooms with many a "*Voila!*" and many a kindly attempt to

speak a French slow and simple enough for their comprehension.

It was not until the next evening that they got to know much of their fellows in the "pension." The afternoon had turned a little chilly toward the close; and when the two ladies came in from a walk in the Luxembourg Gardens, they found a glow of fire in the drawing-room grate and a babble of swift French playing about it. They threw off their wraps in their room, and then took Madame's invitation to come in to the fire. "Ma'am'selle" was there, and introduced them to the rest, at which they got a number of bows in the dim light and a composite sense of many foreign names. One young fellow came promptly out of the group, however, and shook hands with them as if he liked it.

"Americans?" he asked. "So am I. Awfully glad to see you. Have a sort of family feeling toward all Americans who are not too snobbish to live in the Latin Quarter."

"Are there many living here—in this Quarter?" asked Jessica.

"Quite a few—and a rare good sort."

"We were brought here by my daughter's singing teacher," explained Mrs. Murney, not quite sure enough yet that it was the Murray Hill thing to do, to take the responsibility of it.

"It's the right place—you'll like it," the young man assured them. "I've been here for three years. My name's Huntingdon—Horace D. Huntingdon of Cleveland, Ohio. I guess you didn't catch it from Ma'am'selle. She calls me 'Hoot-eeng-tong' "; and he laughed cheerily.

"Did you catch ours?" asked Jessica.

"Oh, yes. I've been here long enough to know what a Parisian means when he says 'Moor-nay.' What part of the States are you from?"

The two ladies looked at each other, and then Mrs. Murney said:

"Well, our last home was New York."

"But our real home," broke in Jessica impulsively, impatient of the mild deception

and prouder, in her new spirit, of the mountains than of the city, "is the White Mountains."

"Jupiter! I know them. A painter's paradise!"

"Lovely!" agreed Jessica.

"But we shall probably live after this in New York," said Mrs. Murney firmly.

"Oh!" said Mr. Huntingdon, as if noting the fact; and then—"Come over to the fire and we'll make them talk English."

A young Frenchman sprang up as they approached, giving Jessica his chair and making room with a swift movement for another for Mrs. Murney. Flat on the rug before the fire lay a short, boyish chap, with his hands under his head. The glow of the coals showed his face to be dusky and covered with the short, silken, scattered hairs of the youth who has never shaved. His eyes were closed, but his lips bubbled intermittently with a popular air that ran like a subdued accompaniment to the chatter. At his head sat on the rug, with striking uprightness, a girl whose age it would have

been difficult to guess. About her neck lay a loose scarf, knotted in front; and her dark, greenish-colored dress seemed to hang from her shoulders like drapery, though it was caught in at the waist. Her eyes sparkled perpetually as the talk played round her; and a picturesque figure she made in the uncertain light with her olive-pale skin and her smooth, low-sweeping hair. Hardly less picturesque was "Ma'am'selle," sitting opposite her, while in the shadow at her back stood a man who seemed to inhabit his clothes imperfectly, so large and voluminous did they look. You saw the man himself when you looked at his feet, which in shining little boots seemed a pin-point pedestal for his swelling figure; then his trousers widened out impossibly and spread away to meet the capacious skirts of his coat in the latitude of his hips; finally, you began to detect the man again at the shoulders, and then quite re-discovered him at his thin, clean-shaven face, crowned with black, loose hair. Another man, olive-tinted, with goatee and horizontal waxed moustache,

dressed in correct black for the street, sat at the piano reading music and occasionally striking a few notes. The young man who had given Jessica his seat wore a short velvet coat and an enormous black tie; and with a shudder she saw that one of his finger nails was long and white.

Huntingdon's demand for English checked the conversation for just a moment; then the girl on the rug said in rather a staccato manner:

"Perhaps Mees Moor-nay will give us her opinion. Can one serve two masters? Can one be an artist and be anything else?"

"I should hope so," said Jessica, doubtfully.

"Mais non," cried her questioner. "It is not to hope. It is a thing to know. If you love art, can you love a husband?"

"I vote 'yes,'" said Huntingdon, relieving the newcomer of a difficult question.

An impatient discharge of French followed from the gentleman in the wide trousers.

"M. Bilot says that I don't love art—that

I only love success," Mr. Huntingdon translated to Jessica.

"Well, shouldn't you want to succeed in your painting?" asked Mrs. Murney with a view to comforting the assailed young man.

"Sure!" he responded cheerfully.

"Then — you — never — will," pronounced the pale oracle from the rug, shaking a serious face at him. *"Jamais! jamais!* You must think only of your art, never of success, never even of what the masters will say. You must think only of doing the perfect thing *par-faite-ment!*—always! always!"

"Ma'am'selle" remonstrated in French at some length, Jessica gathering that she quoted her own example to the contrary; and, curiously enough, neither the girl on the rug nor the man behind her answered a word, but listened in flattering silence. Later, Jessica learned that this was the way in which the "pension" usually received "Ma'am'selle's" statements, no matter of what character. "Ma'am'selle" was too near the larder to be disputed.

"But you don't think that marriage interferes with art?" Huntingdon now asked the young lady on the rug.

"For a woman," she said, "it is death to art. A man may save his art if he keeps his wife entirely secondary."

"I have known," said the man behind her, "a good artist to lose his sense of proportion because his wife had a bad figure. He grew to think it good, poor fool."

The young man in a velvet coat shone suddenly into a sweet smile.

"Then it is good," he said, "to marry one's 'model,' *n'est ce pas?"*

Mrs. Murney picked nervously at her dress. She was not quite certain that this was conversation to be listened to. Just then Herr Vogt arrived, however, and his introduction jarred the conversation into another channel.

CHAPTER XX

The Art Sect

To Jessica, the free, unregulated talk of this "pension"—what she could understand of it—was a revelation. There was nothing in the breast of man—or outside of it—that these astonishing folk would not discuss with the utmost frankness and unconcern. They seemed not to know that there were certain things never to be spoken of in a mixed company; though with a quick appreciation of her shy withdrawal from the conversation when it approached forbidden ground, and of her mother's fixed lips and averted eyes, they had a habit of slipping into French at such times, when the two Americans could presume that they were merely dissecting their neighbors' characters. Another odd thing was that they did not think of reckoning three Americans in the party, though Huntingdon was never

tired of proclaiming his nationality. Conversationally, he had become acclimated in his three years; and Cleveland, Ohio, would have been amazed at some of the opinions that fell from his lips. But quite the most curious thing of all was the entire absence of any of the results to be expected from so much license in discussion. There was no vulgarity of tone; on the contrary, a delightful and artistic refinement. Where nothing of human interest was to be avoided, there was no sense of a difference in moral quality between this subject and that. There was not a covert glance nor a snicker in the whole conversation. Jessica sometimes felt, when her flaming face was the first signal at the table that something had been said which should not have been, as if she were the one of vulgar mind who read a meaning into the talk that was not there. But then she knew that, whatever else had happened, she had not done this; for the meaning which she had perceived was the meaning on which the conversation swung.

There were phases of the talk into which

Herr Vogt did not go, sitting silent; but into most of it he plunged with the eagerness of a man who finds himself unexpectedly at home. These people, one and all, talked of art as the one reality; and art meant the expression of the soul, whether in music or on canvas or in clay or with the pen. There were differences in the degree of their devotion. "Ma'am'selle" did much copying at the Louvre and thought it possible to care for other things. M. Bilot had his own studio and painted what was within him without reference to anything else in the pressing world. It was on record that he had refused to paint a portrait once at a fancy price because he was working on an inspiration of his own, representing the Christ when the first doubt stirred in his mind respecting the sincerity of the Pharisees—though at the time he was living on the *"plat du jour"* of a neighboring wineshop and was four months behind in his studio rent. M'lle Eglantine was a kindred devotee; and it was rumored that she had, more than once, when hard pinched, earned

money as a "model." But Herr Vogt naturally found most in common with the moustached man of the piano, M. Albert Laforest, who had his physical wants supplied by a small regular income, but who really existed on music. Of nights, these two would take turn about at the piano, playing and singing mostly things of their own composition, while the others sat in motionless silence, even breathing as it were under their breath. Then Jessica would sing, and the inner circle of the free masonry of art was open to her, though she knew so little of the jargon and still carried so many of the shackles of conventionality. Later in the year, M. Bilot painted a picture of the party grouped about the drawing-room in attitudes of tense quiet while Jessica sang; and it was hung for weeks in a window on the Rue Lafitte.

Of course, the purpose of Jessica's presence in Paris was steadily pursued. She took daily lessons now from Herr Vogt; and they all three climbed to the gallery of the Opera House again and again to hear

the best singers of whom Paris boasts—if the polite Parisian appreciation of the good in art or music can be represented by so assertive a verb. Herr Vogt was at great pains to preserve his incognito, for he had a lively fear of Hughes in his mind—a fear he might have, had he known that young man's movements, freely dismissed. Herr Werner had come, and now lived near them; and he, too, found the atmosphere of the Murney's "pension" fairly to his liking—but "Ma'am'selle" seemed at times to resent his worship of the new star. He appeared slow of thought and speech in that hair-trigger company; but when they came to know him, they waited patiently for the unfolding of his thought, for they found it well worth while. There seemed, however, to be one subtle difference between his and their point of view. Together, for instance, they could revel in picturing the gathering of glittering knights and gaily dressed ladies for a mediæval tournament—an exercise he was fond of introducing into their talk—but the others dwelt only on the

pageant, the streaming colors, the picturesque dress, the old time manners and customs. To him these were but the fitting trappings of the magnificent manliness, the ever-tested courage of the jousters, and the high spirit of the women who kept their favors for the brave and not for the merely entertaining—for the knight rather than for the minstrel, to say nothing of the "fool."

Jessica in this stood with Herr Werner. "It seems to me," she said to him one day, "that these people would paint a knight's armour, while you would understand his very spirit"—a saying she was to recall before many moons.

Early in their stay, Herr Vogt had to face a serious question. Would he let his other pupils go for a time, and stay to direct the marvellous Miss Murney's career in Paris; or would he leave her to a French teacher and go back to Dresden? He liked neither alternative and was about deciding to try and carry the Murneys back to Dresden with him, defying "Herr Hughes" to

destroy the effect of all these weeks of "living her music," when, through the instrumentality of M. Laforest, Jessica received a flattering invitation to sing at a great function a little in the future. She accepted at once, for this was what they had come for; and Herr Vogt doubted his ability to persuade her to give up the chance. So he waited; and Mrs. Murney carried Jessica off to "shop" for a suitable gown for the occasion, and dragged her hither and thither in jostling stores and charging streets until she was well-nigh worn down to the spiritless level of those first dreary days at Lucerne. This might, indeed, easily have happened if it had not been for the deep draught of the truly artistic spirit which was pressed to her lips nightly at the "pension." But, as it was, she sang still with the soul of her; and Herr Vogt awaited his triumph, for now that Jessica was to sing in public, he could abandon his irksome hiding. As for Herr Werner, he read the loud advertisements, and thought of the indefatigable Hughes—but there was much hope in him,

for Hughes had appeared to give up the contest even in Lucerne. He did not mention this to Herr Vogt, however—it was as well not to be too sure.

Finally the great night came, and the whole "pension" marched over to the cheapest seats in the house to hear their familiar divinity. But, although they gave her a lonely spatter of applause when she came out, the rest of the audience received her in silence. She was a newcomer and an American, and America was a land of cheap finish and easy supremacy. At her first notes there was a slight stir, and then a deeper silence. The compliment of close attention was being paid in italics; and when she finished, a storm of applause broke over the house which did not abate until she had come back twice to bow and then a third time to sing. The judgment of the audience approved her like the snap of a spring. At her second and only other appearance, she was received as an old favorite; and at the close the musical coterie in the audience mobbed the stage waiting-room

to see and praise her. Here Herr Vogt was discovered and re-discovered, and flooded with congratulations on having found this marvel, and brought her, with rare sapiency in a German, to Paris; and they were both invited here, there and everywhere, and one serious engagement for a month ahead "booked" before they escaped to their cab. The next day some of the papers, which had heard of the event promptly, had much about "the new American singer," and other papers kept publishing it as fresh news for the remainder of the week. Jessica was "discovered" nearly every day by a new journal, which apparently imagined that no person had heard of her until one of their musical contributors found time to send in an elaborate and signed "appreciation."

It was then that Mrs. Murney began talking of London. London was the place from which to dazzle New York. These French people were all very kind and appreciative, but look at their papers! They'd never get Jessica's picture in. From Lon-

don every success would be cabled to the illustrated Sunday journals. Herr Werner took new alarm at this talk of London. London spelled Hughes.

But Hughes was on a ship bound for the west coast of Africa, where he had a brother captaining a handful of British "Tommies" who were keeping the flag floating and the natives up to the mark at one of the outposts of Empire. He could see nothing in Europe but a lost Jessica, and he longed to mix his life with the primal currents of being. He should have been a soldier, b'Jove, he told himself, and had his duty to do.

Herr Vogt had a final struggle with himself as to the future, and decided to leave Dresden definitely for the winter and ally himself to Jessica's soaring fortunes.

CHAPTER XXI

Art and Love

THE buoyancy of the said fortunes was such as to give Mrs. Murney permanent employment as a day-dreamer, and to turn M. Bilot into a male Cassandra who was always warning Jessica that she would lose her art in its success.

"That is the master peril to all artists," he would say. "A man labors and waits, squeezes his very heart's blood out on his pallet, beckons phantom after phantom, hoping that each one is the shadow of inspiration, and at last does something near enough to the lowest good to seem even to his fellow artists, who know not all he has striven for, to be among the best. Then the public come and they say it is the best; and, what is more, they tell each other why it is the best and what are its points of excellence,—choosing, probably, some slip of the

brush or some mannerism from which he has vainly struggled to escape. Thus success comes to him, and calls him away from his hard days and heart-sick nights, and feeds him on adulation, and tells him that his faults are virtues until he half believes it, and demands the repetition of the weaknesses which the public, with an unintentional irony, call his 'style.' And"—here M. Bilot would sigh and shrug his shoulders—"the poor devil likes success better than half-starved failure, and he tarries in the cushioned vestibule which the public call the 'holy of holies,' and never toils up the lonely stairway to the Temple. And so he dies and in ten years is forgotten, while the man who did not 'succeed' and whose feet were not stayed by the press of the people, pushes on to the Temple itself; and when he has been ten years dead, the world discovers that his is the perfect work and not that of the idol of the vestibule. It is best for the artist, Miss Murney, not to succeed until he is thoroughly dead."

"But I am a singer and must please the present," Jessica would say.

"Yes; but the principle is the same. The moment you become satisfied, that moment you stop trying to express yourself better. And popular success tends to that fatty sense of satisfaction which is another name for fatty degeneration of the soul."

All this sort of talk was so much Greek to Mrs. Murney, and she would have dismissed it as a part of the common and incomprehensible folly of that "pension" if Jessica had not taken such serious note of it.

"What else can you do, child, but sing your best?" she asked her pondering daughter.

"Nothing, dearest. But that's just it. I already feel a temptation to do what the people seem to like instead of what it is my inner impulse to do."

And Herr Werner supported this view. The great thing was for her to choose the music that her soul at its best preferred, and then sing it with as finished skill as

she could. This would eventually please the people—if not here, then in Germany, where they knew good music; and, what was far worthier, it would clarify their soul-sight and open to them the kingdom of the great and the good.

It was while talking together in this way one afternoon when they sat alone by the grate fire in the "pension" drawing-room, and Jessica had confessed to a fear that it might be even harder to do this in New York than in Paris, that Herr Werner had leaned towards her and said:

"Would you not take help in so great a mission in life?"

Jessica knew in a flash that a crisis had come in her life; that she was at a choosing between the ways—and before she had decided which to choose. She looked steadily into the fire, but no word opened her lips.

"You will be more alone in New York than here," he went on, "and I could live my life out encouraging you when you needed it—reminding you of the higher path when

the people seemed hurrying you along the lower."

There was silence again for a little, and it was Herr Werner again who broke it. This time his voice was lower and less under control than usual.

"Don't think, Miss Murney, that this is a cold wooing—that I don't love you with my whole soul because I have not blurted it out to begin with. But simply that I loved you seemed so poor a reason to beg you—*you*—to marry me, that I felt that I must begin with another. Yet I love you as—"

"That's it," she broke in sharply, with a harshness which would have been cruel had it not been wrung from her by a perplexity that distracted her like a pain. "That's what stops me," she went on. "I—cannot tell myself that I love you. I"—and she now turned toward him, her face as pinched by anxiety as his by suspense,—"find my greatest support in your sympathy and understanding. You know me as no one else does. I need not say things to you—you see them."

"Surely that shows us congenial?" he pleaded.

"Congenial? Yes. The best of friends, Herr Werner. You cannot think that I do not value your friendship. But—can—can I marry you?"

He did not attempt to answer this, and they both sat in silence. Then Jessica began speaking again—clearly to herself. So at home was she with Herr Werner that she could do this in his presence, even when the subject was his proposal.

"I am never lonely when you are here," was what she said. "I feel the want of no one else."

A new hope shot into his face. "Wait!" he suggested. "Wait a little; and, perhaps, you may love me."

"No! No!" she flung back almost violently. "I could not," she cried with passionate positiveness.

He paled to the lips. "I can go away," he said quietly.

"And leave me to face all this alone!" she cried in dismay.

His face was that of a man tossed back and forth between hope and despair by a capricious hand. "I will stay if you want me," he said as quietly as before.

"I want you. I need you," she assured him in an earnest voice. "But"—she looked at him as if she half expected a blow—"I could not let you touch my hand as—as a lover."

He stood up and took that cruel saying with only a quiver. Then his face flamed, and his mouth worked as if struggling for utterance—or for silence?—and, turning, he strode out of the room. Jessica waited for a few moments in the poignant loneliness that his going seemed to create; and then she ran, mentally benumbed, upstairs like a troubled school girl and burst into her mother's room, and, throwing herself beside the bed on which her mother was resting, cried heartily in a nervous and jerky manner.

For three days they saw nothing of Herr Werner at the "pension"; and Jessica, unsupported by his way of approaching every

topic in a deeply philosophic manner, had begun to taste an artificiality, or, at all events, an unsatisfying superficiality, in this worship of art. Herr Werner had somehow given it all a profound guise of wisdom which she now missed. Now it was always the armour of the knight, never his spirit.

But on the fourth day Herr Werner came in. There were several in the drawing-room, and they greeted him boisterously, demanding that he give an account of his absent days. He smiled in defensive silence, however; but, in greeting Jessica, pressed her hand and said for her ears only:

"May I take up again the rôle of friend?"

"Yes! Yes!" she said eagerly; and soon she felt in the discussion that ever went on in this high-tensioned "pension," the reassuring pressure of his strong mind, which always struck the roots of its opinions far below the surface and down into the foundations of things. They had no further word together until he was going away, and then he said:

"Are you sorry that I turned back—that I did not go to Poland?"

"Did you start?" she asked with a little sinking at the heart.

"Yes," he said. "I got to Cologne."

"Oh!"

"But there I got off. I felt myself going away and away from the joy of life. I walked across the *platz* opposite the station and into the Cathedral, and I thought of you 'facing all this alone,' as you had said; and, though I hoped for nothing better, I turned back to face it with you."

"Thank you, my dear friend," she said, every word a tender emphasis. "I missed you—much—terribly. It may be—" and she stopped.

"What?" he asked.

"I dare not say it, Herr Werner; for it may not be."

He lifted his face. "But it may," he proclaimed aloud; and the others turned from the fire to see what was meant. Being of the race to which intuition is a sixth sense and the language of love-making a mother

tongue, they probably knew; but politeness and tact being commonplaces with them, they did not let Jessica suspect it.

That night, however, as Jessica was going to her room, M'lle Eglantine put her arm around her, and, after a few preparatory flutterings toward the subject, said:

"We poor women must choose between our art and our love. Whatever man can do, we cannot keep both—we have no practice in keeping a wife and a mistress"—and she laughed. "Don't tell M. Bilot," she went on playfully; "but I am not sure that it is always, always best to choose the art." And a great seriousness was in her eyes when she finished. Jessica said nothing, for love was not in the question—not yet.

CHAPTER XXII

Fontainebleau

THERE are many cities of Paris. The man who stays at a boulevard hotel, beginning his day at *dejeuner* and ending it at a *cabaret,* sees one; and the married pair who live between the Place de l'Etoile and the Trocadero and consider their average day as fairly well ended with the ringing *"ferm'"* of the galleries, see quite another. There are others and others in plenty; but there is none more wholly pleasing to the eye ot youth than that made out through the tinted haze of the *Quartier Latin.* From here, the Louvre is not a task or a maze or even a picture book; it is a temple where one may go when in the mood to worship for a time at the shrine of an artistic ancestor. To rush from picture to picture—that is the tourists' tread-mill; to see through and

through one or two, and compare, and marvel—that is the disciple's privilege.

What Paris means to the true citizens of the Latin Quarter, only they may know. As well might the stock-broker try to imagine what the poet sees when he looks on a leafless wood in the white winter. But to the sojourner among them, the shadow of the vision is ever a magic haze. When he has heard them clash opinions for a long night over the work of some painter he has quite missed at the Louvre—or, more likely, the Luxembourg—he goes to seek it the next day with a new light in his eye. He finds himself, after a time, in some crude fashion, distinguishing for himself the good from the bad, and getting a new and keen pleasure in the study of things that formerly he did not know were there.

Jessica, who had an abundance of time and a passionate love of the beautiful, saw little by little, as the days went by, this glorified Paris. On dull days when the light did not suit him, M. Bilot would take her and her mother up to the Louvre and talk to

them of the pictures, and introduce them to dirty-bearded old men, and white-haired, white-faced old women, and luminous-eyed, oddly-dressed young women, who were copying them; and the proportion of his talk that Jessica understood grew greater as the autumn wore on. Sometimes M'lle Eglantine would come, too, and quite often Mr. Huntingdon; and then Jessica understood less than ever. Mr. Huntingdon was fonder of taking her to the Luxembourg, where the modern pictures hung, and she liked this the better, too; but she could come to no proper understanding of his ecstasy over the "impressionist school." At nights they would all turn out together and saunter down the Boulevard St. Michel, where the men spoke gaily to painted butterflies she could scarce look at, and introduced her to sallow, wide-hatted, nervous-eyed old young men who made her blush with their open gallantries. M'lle Eglantine took similar compliments as a matter of course; and Jessica numbered no more essentially modest girl among her acquaintances. In some way

these people looked at things after a far different fashion than she had been accustomed to. M'lle Eglantine went to a studio sometimes where men and women painted together from the nude; but Jessica would have died rather than go with her. By accident, she stumbled into such a studio one morning; and it was nausea and not shame that she felt when she saw the poor old "model" shivering on his throne.

Her success as a singer satisfied even Herr Vogt; and the talk of taking her to London soon, where the New York public would be better aware of her, grew more serious. And now even Herr Werner had ceased to fear the reappearance of Hughes. He must have withdrawn from the contest —which was quite a surprise to the thoughtful German. His theory of the English character included doggedness.

The Christmas holidays approached, and the Murneys felt intermittent longings for home. Herr Vogt was going home for the festival, and had already conducted by correspondence the negotiations for the pur-

chase of a proper Christmas tree. The Murneys talked quite seriously of going home, too, and coming back after the New Year; for Jessica's winnings were already considerable. But they practised self-denial and shopped at the little booths which had sprung up along the sides of the boulevards, and went to midnight mass at St. Sulpice on Christmas Eve—with its maze of lights and the devout women and the ringing of many silver bells—and then pretended all the following day that Christmas was over again and the next a year ahead.

The story of the first of the New Year was a repetition of the past, only with clear, frosty days instead of cloud and occasional skating in the Bois. An architectural student came to the "pension" and they all took a new interest in the churches and public buildings of the city. Then a young Egyptologist turned up, and Jessica spent days in the Egyptian rooms at the Louvre. M. Bilot marvelled at this, for he had not known before that there were any Egyptian remains there.

"There is art there," said the Egyptologist, "which has already lasted ten times as long as the canvases of your Raphael."

M. Bilot twirled his ring. "This ruby has lasted longer," he said, "and so has the dirt under this city."

"But this is the work of man," protested the Egyptologist.

"Art is like a maiden," said M. Bilot. "It does not depend upon age solely for attractiveness."

Herr Werner continued his rôle of philosopher and friend to Jessica, though in that of guide he had assistance. From the others, she learned what and how to see; from him, what to think of the things she saw. Gradually a certain use to his presence wore itself a nest in her being—the beginnings had been there when he started for Poland and stopped at Cologne—and now she felt that it could not be empty. Either he must fill it—or pain. Her liking for him took a noticeably more affectionate cast; and she would look at his straight figure and bright, thinking face with a wish to

reward his patience—with a desire to mother him in his loneliness.

When the spring came, they all felt the natural human desire to go out to the wide, unpaved country, and greet it. And so well had they all thriven in the winter that they decided they could allow themselves the pleasure. So they fell one night to discussing "where." Herr Vogt said "anywhere but Versailles." He had been at Versailles in '71 with his regiment, and did not want to see it again.

"Nor I to go with you, you beast," said M'lle Eglantine under her breath.

"Where do *you* say?" the "Ma'am'selle" of the "pension" asked Mr. Huntingdon.

"I?—Oh, I say Fontainebleau," he replied. "Fontainebleau from Friday to Tuesday."

"I vote with you," added M'lle Eglantine. "Fontainebleau and By."

"Fontainebleau with the breeze in the trees will suit me;" and M. Laforest gave in his concurrence.

Soon M. Bilot came in and was asked

where in all the world he would like to go for a few days to welcome the spring.

"If I had my choice," he said gravely, but with a glad look in his eyes, "it would be Fontainebleau—Fontainebleau and Barbison."

He got a patter of hand-clapping for this. There is nothing we applaud so much as agreement with ourselves.

The architectural student had, when he came, a momentary leaning toward Chantilly with its great chateau; but they told him he must choose again, when he named the Palais at Fontainebleau. It was quite a round of applause that assured him he had spoken the mind of the company.

There remained only Herr Werner then to hear from—for the Murneys were strangers and were "to be taken"—and when he came that evening, they discussed faring forth to hail the spring as quite a new idea and asked him for a suggestion as to whither they had best go.

He thought of it with eager seriousness,

mentioning reasons why they should not go to several places, and then asked:

"Why not run down to the Forest of Fontainebleau? The spring——"

But the shout that endorsed his proposal drowned his reasons in support of it.

So the next Friday, they all walked over to the *Gare de Lyon,* and filled a compartment in a train that shot them across the country to the station at Avon, where they boarded a tram to the Palace gates.

All the way down they had debated where they should stay for their "English week end"; and had decided nothing when they got off the train except that they would not go on, as M'lle Eglantine urged, to a country hotel, with a court-yard, near By. "Monsieur," she told them, "was the chef, and he made a fish sauce which rendered you indifferent to the kind of fish, and yet brought out the flavor of the fish so nicely that you almost—but not quite—forgot the sauce——"

"What a gourmand you are!" exclaimed Huntingdon.

"Me?—Oh!"—and she wrinkled her face into a protest that was meant to look insincere—perfectly acted, you would say; and you would be wrong, for this is second nature to the Latin. "When I have only bread and wine," she went on, "I choose the bread of a certain crustiness—not too much, you know, yet hard and thin; and I want Southern wine. But this hotel! Madame is in the office; and, M. Bilot, she has a Murillo face. They give you cream in little earthen jars with fresh leaves tied over them—and it is not far from Rosa Bonheur's studio."

"Ah, that is it!" cried M. Bilot. "It is not the fish sauce nor the cream, but Rosa and her canvas menagerie that draw M'lle to that hotel."

So they all got off at Avon and swarmed into the tram, three small bags and a couple of loose, shopping "hold-alls" carrying their baggage. The architectural student was for a hotel near the Palais, and M. Bilot for Barbison; but they all went up first to a "pension" "Ma'am'selle" knew of near the

Forest. Here, by great luck, there was accommodation for five, which was taken, after some debate, by the Murneys, "Ma'amselle," M'lle Eglantine and Herr Vogt. M. Bilot, Herr Werner and M. Laforest walked on through the Forest to Barbison, and the architectural student went back to his hotel near the Palais.

CHAPTER XXIII

"The Knight"

THE next morning, Herr Werner and M. Bilot walked over together through the Forest to the Fontainebleau "pension" to get the party to go out and picnic at the edge of the Gorges de Franchard. They were to pick up M. Laforest at an appointed spot on the way back. M. Bilot led the conversation on the way over to the financial standing of M'lle Murney and tried to learn from Herr Werner what he knew on the subject. Of course, she was rich—all Americans were rich—but how rich? Herr Werner did not know. No, of course not, said M. Bilot, with a teasing drollery. Herr Werner was a sly dog in his opinion. Herr Werner then said that he thought the Murneys were poor. Oh, so bad as that, said M. Bilot with great dejection. How wonderful it was that they tarried so long in Europe!

Herr Werner now waxed argumentative and explanatory. Miss Murney was learning singing so that she might go back to America and support herself and her mother. "A voice of gold is as good as a dot," observed M. Bilot, succinctly; and called Herr Werner's attention to the shades the sun brought out in the tender green of the new spring foliage.

For the rest of the day, Herr Werner thought profoundly over this conversation, denying himself several good discussions in order to do so with the more speed and thoroughness and came to the conclusion by six different lines of reasoning that M. Bilot was thinking of proposing marriage to Jessica. Nor was this conclusion dissipated by the fact that, while he was thinking, M. Bilot encouraged Jessica by the subtle flattery of an awakening interest to talk of her American life and her American friends, and finally took her off alone to show her the afternoon lights on a part of the gorge long loved of artists. When they came back he was practising her in the pronunciation

of "Georges," which was his Christian name. Herr Werner had never thought to tell her his.

"M. Bilot is getting prosperous and bourgeois," M'lle Eglantine complained to M. Laforest in French. "He will be burying himself in an establishment one of these days."

"Ump! He is already picking the upper housekeeper," agreed M. Laforest.

"They all see it," thought Herr Werner; and his logical mind at once faced the question of what he should do. M. Bilot was more dangerous than "Herr Hughes" for he could pierce into Jessica's thought and learn the sort of man she wanted and then act the part to the very life, with a number of additional flourishes which would only occur to the fancy of a French artist. Consequently he (Herr Werner) could afford to wait no longer. It was all very well to loiter with Hughes beaten out of the field and no other rival in sight. But M. Bilot would clearly not be a tardy wooer.

So that night he made a move that, for

once, outran M. Bilot. He said that he would walk back to Fontainebleau with the Murneys, leaving the two Frenchmen to go to Barbison alone. There he would hunt up and stay with the architectural student, and drag him from the Palais into the Forest the next day. Walking back through the Forest, shot through and through with the level lights of approaching evening, Herr Werner lingered behind the others with Jessica and talked to her first of how the majestic old forest, putting on again for the thousandth time its bright, new gown of spring, as eager for its fresh finery as ever, seemed to him. This was the point of view that Jessica most admired in him—a philosophic, sympathetic, understanding worship of the beautiful. It was seeing beauty not merely with the eyes, but with the intelligence; and it satisfied her as something deeper than sensuality and yet as sensuous as an opium vision.

Then abruptly—

"Miss Murney, my domino and mask—

the domino and mask of friendship—is worn through."

She looked quickly at him. "I am so sorry," she said, for want of knowing what else to say.

"I don't think," he went on, "it can hide me any longer. I love you too much—I must show it or I must go away."

They walked on without speaking for awhile.

"Am I to go?" he asked at last, with a pity for himself in his tone.

"No," she said at once. "Not if I am to decide it." But her voice bore no hope that she meant by this that he was to show his love.

"You are certainly to decide it," he said. "But it must be my love—or my absence."

"I—am afraid," she said, falteringly, "that I—do not—love you—yet."

"But how much longer can you want me to wait?" he demanded, with a brusqueness he would not have shown were it not for the latent plea for delay in her voice. "Week after week goes by. I have been here for a

whole winter. What must people think of me? What will you come to think of me?"

"I was hoping—" Jessica began, and then stopped.

"You will think I could wait forever on that hope—hope of what I hardly know," he cried. "But I can't. I am at the end of my strength. I must go if you have nothing for me."

Again there was silence.

"You will not go," said Jessica presently, "until we get back to Paris?"

"No."

"Then"—with a little sigh—"I have till then." And almost in silence they walked on under the great trees and down the paved, dull-walled street to the "pension."

The next two days at Fontainebleau were mainly a wearying perplexity to Jessica. What was this love she was waiting for? Was she spoiling her life for a school girl's romantic notion? Here was a man whose mind fitted to her's like a seasoned yoke-fellow, on whose strength she liked to lean, whose judgments seemed to her the

wisest and most just in the world, who could act as pioneer for her in the ever-widening domain of the great and the beautiful. Yet she hesitated to marry him. She thought of sending him away forever, and going on alone in life, looking for—what?

Marry him? That was what he asked. Then she would have him always at her side —she would never be alone, crowded about by those who saw not what she saw nor understood what she said. Marry him? She would be a good wife. Marry him? He would take her in his arms and kiss—No, she could not stand it. If he were sitting yonder in that chair, she could almost say that she loved him, so keenly did she enjoy his companionship; but were he beside her here on the sofa as a lover, she must run upstairs and lock herself in her room for very terror. Yet if she said this, he would go; and she must go on through all the future without him—without any one. What a weak fool she was! Girls often married where they did not love—where they did not even find sympathetic companionship as she

would; and yet they were happy. How they would envy her such a companion in her husband! And married life was not all kissing—they need not be a silly couple—they would be nearer together far than most who touched wedded hands.

So, puzzling over it in this manner, the problem shadowed her mind like a penetrating, windless fog. She could see little else, no matter which way she looked. Was she shown a noted clump of trees; "How would I like to live there with Herr Werner?" she would ask herself; and then frown impatiently at her folly. The Palais seemed to her the one place she could have for a home; for there Emperor and Empress had apartments apart and she could have her women about her. Rosa Bonheur alone at By brought tears to her eyes—the great painter had no Herr Werner near, and was driven to a succession of woman friends to whom she clung with a pathetic affection. That struck her chill; and she knew that she was getting ready to say "Stay" to Herr Werner when he should finally ask her.

So silent was she on the return journey that M. Bilot rallied her openly—hoping thereby to break the mood that had kept him out of mental touch of her for two long days —but Herr Werner reading the cause in her eyes, said only in parting—

"I will call in the morning."

The Egyptologist "took in," as he said in his English way, the *London Telegraph* and the latest copy lay on the drawing-room table as she settled down by it wearily after dinner. M. Laforest was playing bits of Lohengrin softly on the piano—it had been but a tin-panny affair they had had at Barbison. Jessica picked up the paper with—to her American eyes—its dull, unbroken columns, and its formal "headings" which always spoke in a respectable monotone and saw, without interest, that Mr. Chamberlain favored the temperance people doing all the good they could, so long as they did not bother the Government; that two more Boer commandoes had been captured and that the war was approaching one of its termini; that another American combine pro-

posed to capture the English market by really surrendering it to their English rivals —if they would only come into the combination; that the Archduchess of Somewhere was going to make a love-match which exactly suited the dynastic requirements; that the King had been out in his motor car the day before; that—

Who was Captain Hughes? Not her Mr. Hughes; for he wasn't in the army. But he had a brother a Captain — somewhere in Africa. And this was in Africa. Capt. Hughes had held his station at some outlandish place near the Congo against a native uprising most bravely. "Splendid heroism," she read; "no water—stockade on fire—a party decoyed out and trapped."

Ah! She felt the suffocated effect of quickly born excitement. This was what she was looking for—fearing to find—"A Mr. Theodore Hughes, brother of Capt. Hughes, who was visiting the station, volunteered when the condition of the garrison grew desperate, to try to make his way through the bush to the main post for help.

Capt. Hughes forbade it; but the young civilian slipped out unnoticed at night, leaving a note for his brother saying that he knew he could be spared because he was 'such a cursed poor shot and yet such a tax on the larder'——"

"How like him!" glowed Jessica.

"—and, after many hair-breadth escapes, he reached the main post at ——— with one arm broken by a fall, and faint from hunger. Col. Blackader at once despatched as strong a force as he could spare under Capt. Trumbull, a gallant officer who had made a record in the Soudan campaign; and after a splendid forced march through the tropical jungle, they drove off the natives and raised the siege, and none too soon, for——"

But there was little else for Jessica in the remainder of the despatch except that Capt. Hughes was found to have received three wounds, and was to be invalided home at once. But there was not a word about the condition of "the young civilian" who lay with a broken arm and an emaciated frame in a fever post near the Congo. The na-

tives were to be punished, and the despatch told how and who was to do it, and what their previous record had been; but not whether the man who saved the garrison was coming home with his brother or not. At all events, he must be alive; for it would have taken only two or three more words to have recorded his death.

Jessica leaned back in her chair, her pulses tingling. That was Mr. Hughes, through and through. Brave as a lion, yet making a joke of it. She could see him, smiling to himself as he slipped over the stockade and into the jungle, thinking more of his letter to his brother than of the watching death in the shadow. Had she met him in spirit and talked of his magnificent deed, he would have stood in uncomfortable silence, or, possibly, joked again. He could not have told of it, other than in a deprecatory manner, to save his life. Now M. Bilot would have related every incident of the adventure with great gusto and engaging frankness, acting again the heroic parts to the life; while Herr Werner would have

analysed his inmost soul and told just what he thought when that black fall left him with a broken arm, and the midnight jungle rustled and cried about him. Even if some one else had done the deed, poor Hughes could never have analysed the man's courage, any more than he could have painted his spent, limping figure. But he could do the thing himself, and do it with a smile.

For some reason, her mind went back to the old hall at Meissen; and again she was looking at the stiff portraits of the Saxon kings. They were men who dared, though with the grim seriousness of their race. But was it likely that they were good at recounting their exploits or theorising about the quality of their courage? As she came to think of it, she doubted it.

Suddenly there flashed into her mind what she had once said to Herr Werner—

"It seems to me that these people would paint a knight's armour, while you would understand his very spirit."

"Yes," she added to herself now; "and Mr. Hughes would be the knight." Then

she sat thinking; and her thoughts must have been cheerful, for she smiled—though, in a swift moment, the smile was gone and anxiety lay in her eyes.

The next morning Herr Werner called; and in half an hour he was gone with an unseeing eye and a gray face, while Jessica sat steeped in sorrow for his suffering. But the call within her to the sick bed of a wounded knight was too insistent to let her hold out hope any longer even to the man who had guided her so far up the mountain side of life.

"Dear Herr Werner," she had said at last, "you more than any other living soul opened my eyes to the life I might live. Can't we remain friends?"

"No," he said, "not as things are. I should always think of love if I came back to you a hundred years hence. If"—and he seemed to find it hard to say—"if you loved another, I might cover my love by very helplessness, and turn it into deep, tireless friendship; but as it is——"

"Herr Werner; if I open my soul to you,

will you—will you hardly look at all; and then forget that you have looked ever so little?"

"Miss Murney!"

"I suspect"—and there was a quivering light in her eyes—"I suspect that I do love——"

"Oh!"

"But he does not know it—he has not asked since——"

Then Herr Werner got to his feet, his eyes fixed on the window. Neither of them spoke as he took his hat thoughtfully from the tumbled centre table. Then he said:

"When you are married, perhaps—" and turned toward the door without so much as looking at Jessica where she sat, a-quiver with sympathy. And that was their parting.

CHAPTER XXIV

In London

M. BILOT, who prided himself on reading people, found himself puzzled by Jessica as the days went by. At first, noting the disappearance of Herr Werner, he thought her under the shadow of the loss of a friend who had suicided by turning into a hopeless lover. But soon he came to put a question mark after the "hopeless"—Jessica remained so long enwrapped in her abstraction. Was it a lovers' quarrel? M'lle Eglantine had thought them lovers, but he had never so much as surprised a covert glance between them. Still he might be mistaken; Germans were cold, matter-of-fact wooers. So he laid a trap for Jessica. Walking out near Bartholdi's "Lion" with her one morning—a dull morning when he would not trust his sense of color—he talked to her in a passion of bitterness of the Fran-

co-Prussian war and heaped all a Frenchman's lurid opprobrium on the "barbarian Germans"—but Jessica gave him her sympathy. She never once flashed out, as he half-expected, in defence of Herr Werner's countrymen. She could not love Werner, he thought; and drew his happy experiment to a conclusion by mentioning the "British atrocities in South Africa" as evidence of the similarity of all Germanic peoples—when his flash of protest came. Jessica did not believe a word of the foolish stories about the British soldiers; the Englishman was a brave gentleman and incapable of cowardly cruelties. M. Bilot was nonplussed for a moment; and then put it down to the solidarity of the English race. But for all that, his wooing made no progress. When he talked of art, Jessica listened and questioned; but when he talked of her—with his open, inoffensive admiration—and of himself—with a child-like boastfulness that seemed almost modest—Jessica was either inattentive or full of a gentle raillery. The only progress he made was when talk-

ing to Mrs. Murney, from whom he got a loose, general idea that her people were persons of great wealth and corresponding consequence.

The project of going to London before "the season" closed had now, of course, Jessica's support; and within a week after Herr Werner's departure, it was simply a question of when Herr Vogt could secure for her the most striking "début." He was well known in musical London; his word for it that he had a wonder to put on the concert stage, was enough to get a place in most programmes. And finally it was agreed that she should sing first at a popular "morning concert" in St. James's Hall, then at two ultra-fashionable functions in the Park Lane district, then once for a Bohemian gathering, including all the New York correspondents; when the future might be left on the knees of these--and other—gods.

The "pension" on the quiet street was sorry to see them go. Madame had their favorite dishes prepared for their last meals. Mr. Huntingdon had in all the Americans

he knew one afternoon to drink his tea and bid them "good bye." The French party took Jessica for several farewell walks on the night boulevards, and introduced her to scenes she had never even heard of before, and begged her, with what she thought was superfluous zeal, never to forget Paris. And the young Egyptologist gave her a letter of introduction to the mummy expert in the British Museum, with the assurance that he could show her things of which the Louvre had no parallel.

But all the time, Jessica—the new Jessica—the Jessica who knew not Hughes and of whom Hughes despaired—weaved for herself a fanciful picture of the flower of the new knighthood; it was a young man with a smooth, firm-chinned face and an eye given to cynicism; a man who always did what he thought to be the right thing, but did not take himself seriously while doing it, regarding death if it chanced to stand in the path as calling for nothing but a laugh in the bully's face. But this was not all that went to the making of the picture of Jessi-

ca's new knight. The word "knight" itself has a subtle suggestiveness about it—especially to the mind attuned to the mediæval note—which carries a glint of color, an assertiveness of bearing, a romance of purpose into any descriptive phrase of which it forms a part. Unconsciously, Jessica made Hughes over in the spirit of her new life—Hughes being far distant and seen only through the ennobling medium of his magnificent deed. When she wondered why she had not seen this and that and the other quality in him in the old days at Dresden, she put it down to lack of sight on her own part; for, at first, was she not merely the blind Jessica of the valley, and, at last, was not her new vision an unaccustomed gift, needing some illuminating incident to enable it to pierce the self-deprecating, self-suppressing Hughes exterior?

It was May in London when the tired trio from Paris drove up to their lodgings near Russell Square, having met a procession of "sandwich men" on High Holborn clothed mainly in an announcement of the "morn-

ing concert" at St. James's Hall at which "Miss Jessica Murney" was to appear—and Miss Jessica had the largest type on the bill. It was only two days later in May when Capt. Hughes arrived at Victoria station accompanied by his brother, they having just landed from the steamer that had brought the wounded contingent from the beleaguered West African post. The British public hardly knew of their little affair, in which only a half-dozen clean-limbed young Englishmen had been wiped out and twice as many maimed; for a more wholesale and spectacular killing was going on farther south. But Capt. Hughes's wife met them, and she almost fainted when she saw her brother-in-law get out of the compartment with his arm in a sling and then pass in his well hand to a tall, limp figure which stumbled down to the platform with the helpless uncertainty of a man newly blind—and not used to it. They had not written her that he was blind. Blind! Good God! Blind at twenty-eight! His profession closed to him, and no money to live on!—and she with

two children! But he was a brave soldier, and she——

Her arms were round his neck, and his arms were round her with a convulsive grasp. "I'm not blind, Dora!" was the first thing he said. "Not blind!—do you understand. Don't be afraid, little girl. My eyes only need rest."

And then she began crying. She was braced to greet the worst with a brave word; but at the reprieve, she relaxed into a sobbing woman.

It was a common "poster" on a dead-wall that told Hughes that Jessica was to sing the following Saturday afternoon at St. James's Hall; and he determined to stay and hear her. After so long an abstinence he could humor himself this much. She would not see in the great crowd that he was there, but he would see her again—the olive cheek, the round column of the throat, the soft, nestling hand. So, after dinner, he went to his brother's room to stipulate for the loan of a pair of strong glasses he had.

"But you can't stay here alone till Saturday," said the captain.

"I am of age," returned Hughes. "Your wife will take you down home and let you smell the hawthorn."

"But the fever might come back."

"Not in England."

"Well, we don't go."

"Yes, you do. I'll take you down, and then slip back."

"Not if mother gets hold of you."

"Whew!—That's so!" said Hughes.

"No; Dora and I'll stay," said the Captain. "I want to hear Miss Jessica myself." His brother looked up in alarm. "Not a word, Teddy, my boy. Not a word!" said the Captain, feeling the look, though he could not see it; and Hughes knew that he meant he would tell no one of how he had heard the name of Jessica on the hot, fever-laden dark of the Congo nights.

The next afternoon there were two ladies asking for Mr. Theodore Hughes in the hotel parlor, and the names on the card they sent up were "Mrs. Murney" and "Miss

Jessica Murney." They had happened on the "personal" in the morning paper which told of the arrival of the Hughes brothers, and where they were staying. When Hughes came in, Jessica met him with both hands out—

"There is nothing one can say to you," she said. "We have worn out all our words on inferior deeds."

"It is very good of you to come," he responded. "How did you ever learn where we were?"

"Oh, even your English papers managed to record the return of two heroes."

He laughed a little uncomfortably. "You are going to sing, I see," he said.

"Yes," she replied. "I'm coming out in London;" and Mrs. Murney went on to give further particulars.

"Oh! Lord Dovercourt's!" exclaimed Hughes, when he heard that Jessica was to sing there. "You will see rather good people there, you know."

"Yes—the people who stay home and

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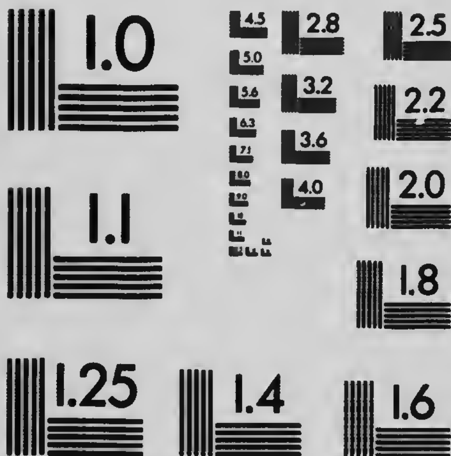

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patronize real men, like you and your brother," exploded Jessica.

"Oh! They are ready enough to fight," cried Hughes, with an Englishman's loyalty to his aristocracy. This led to a little of the familiar banter between the New Englander and the Old; and Hughes began to feel an approach of the spirit of those first days at Dresden. But Jessica was never farther from them. This was her Knight; and she was his Lady, seated under her canopy of red and gold, with the clanging field of chivalry beneath her. True to this point of view, she tried to lead him to talk of that night in the jungle; but there was nothing that he could say of it, except that it was dark and that he was mortally afraid of snakes. Then he grew indignant at the stupid policy of his Government, which planted so isolated a post among treacherous natives. So Jessica talked of the jungle which she had never seen, save in fancy; and Hughes grew moody at what he regarded as a return of Wernerism. And all

the time she pitied his arm in its white sling, and grieved, mother-fashion, over the leanness of his firm jaw. As for him, he greedily enjoyed again the play of rose on her dark cheek, and watched her hands as they nested themselves cosily and more cosily in her lap. Never were two people more in love with each other through the eyes; yet each felt a difficulty in finding the other mentally.

When it came time to go, Hughes said that he would get his brother and his wife, for he would like them all to meet one another; and soon the five were engaged in the spasmodic, erratic game of conversation that semi-strangers play. Capt. Hughes said, jokingly, that "Teddy" had a great preference for simple music; and Teddy said that Miss Murney knew that already, and asked if she remembered singing "Sweet Vale of Avoca" that night long ago in Dresden. Jessica remembered and her eyes shone on Hughes as she said so. She added that she liked simple, heart music her-

self; and Hughes felt that at last their minds were holding hands as it had been their will to do from the first.

"Sing 'Sweet Vale of Avoca' on Saturday," he said lightly, but his eyes were grave with meaning.

"Yes," said Jessica, with quick eagerness; "I will." Who should be humored if not the hero-knight? Then the thought of what Herr Vogt would say, and of what the musical public would think, came to her; and she doubted. Hughes was watching and saw the doubt fill her face. "She has just thought of what my request means," he said to himself; "and she does not want to encourage me to hope again."

Now Jessica spoke--

"It may not be best to sing it after all," she said. "I will see." And she was very serious over it; for she wanted him to know that his wish weighed deeply with her. But he read in her seriousness a sorrow that he had again raised the old question, and would have said something tantamount to a with-

drawal—being ever chivalrously tender to a woman, no matter at what cost to himself—but at that moment her face brightened and she held out her hand to him in "adieu," with, "I will try hard to sing it."

CHAPTER XXV

"Sweet Vale of Avoca"

WOULD she sing it? What had she meant by saying that she would "try hard to sing it"? Why should she "try hard" to encourage him to hope for her love?—for that was what it meant to him. It was not a thing to be tried for—it was a case of knowing at once whether she wanted it or not. But it might have been a chance phrase meant to cover a deeper meaning. At all events, the thing was—would she sing it? For the rest of the week there was no other question before Hughes—a Hughes, be it remembered, who had left much of his equipoise on a recent fever-bed.

The lady from Maine was in town, saw the Hughes "personal" and called.

"I knew you had it in you," she said admiringly. "I have known it from that

night.—Sh-sh! No. I mention no names. You can depend on me."

"I should hope so," said Hughes with genuine disquietude.

"I'm all right," she assured him. "But Sam is getting reckless—he thinks it too good a joke on me—"

"But he mustn't," cried Hughes energetically.

"I wish you could scare him into keeping 'mum' some way," sighed the lady from Maine. "If my brother ever gets hold of it—"; and she sighed again. "Yet it was a brave, good, chivalrous thing to do," she went on emphatically; and then she broke off with—"Say! Of course you know the Murneys are here?"

"Yes," said Hughes.

"And Herr Werner?"

"No. Is he?"

The lady from Maine nodded. "I saw him with Herr Vogt on Oxford Street."

"With Herr Vogt?" exclaimed Hughes in surprise. Why had not the Murneys mentioned him? "I will try hard to sing

it," Jessica had said. Was she struggling against Werner's influence? He had hoped, when they said nothing of Werner, that the moony German had not followed them to London. But why should he hope it? Was Werner a fool to let a song bird in his hand escape? Then he pulled himself together; for he noticed that the lady from Maine was talking about a curious case of hypnotism that had occurred in Algiers, where she and her husband had spent the winter. It was a young man who was so under the influence of a withered old crone —a native—that he would get up from the "pension" table at meal time to go to her, believing that she had summoned him; and he finally married into her family, dressing as an Algerian. "And after that," said the lady from Maine, "he was no longer hypnotized—they say he used to beat the old woman—but his nature was entirely changed; and he really became one of them."

At the time, Hughes thought nothing of this incident, lumping it with the jumbled

mass of incongruous experiences related by the lady from Maine; but when his mind went back by the familiar channel to Jessica, he wondered if Werner's hypnotic influence might not finally—if it had not done so already—work a permanent change in her character. More than ever the question was, "Would she sing 'Sweet Vale of Avoca'?" thus signalling to him a message of encouragement. Jove! How easy it would be if such a message could be got by dropping over a stockade at midnight, and plunging into the jungle! He might return her call, and put all to the test of a question; but, after his failure at Lucerne and his long hopelessness, he felt that he could do nothing till she flew her song-signal of hope. He must wait for that.

The Hughes trio went early to St. James's Hall to attend their "morning concert" which took place in the afternoon. Capt. Hughes had improved already so he could move slowly along an uncrowded street without help, except at the crossings; and his wife wore a look of peace again.

But "Teddy" had not been so well. The fever burned occasionally in his cheek and at the temples; for, in his reduced state, the longing wonder over what Jessica would do was no light anxiety. From their seats in the front row of the gallery they watched the audience come in; and, with great delight, Hughes pointed out to his sister-in-law the lady from Maine and her husband. After a time, the tall form of Herr Werner showed against the mass at the entrance, but Hughes was silent. Would that luminous head forbid "Sweet Vale of Avoca"? Could it?

Jessica was down twice upon the programme—both German songs. But, of course, that was to be expected. She could not put a simple air on the printed programme—Hughes knew enough of musical "good form" for that. It would come as one of the "encores." There was other music. A big fellow with waving hair blocked the stage for a while with a fat 'cello, and for a moment Hughes feared that he would be recalled; but the applause died away before he

could decently come back. Then there was a song largely composed of bass growls and stentorian invocations; then an old favorite with Hughes played the violin and he forgot for a while his anxiety; then a tall, thin girl, with a tall, thin voice; and then—Jessica!

The audience sat as if caught in a spell—all except an old man near them who "conducted" for Jessica, while she sang, with a happy, uplifted face and two tremulous hands, vibrant in the air. Hughes had never heard her sing in public before—that is, the great, strange public of the concert hall. Just at first, the apparent lack of purpose in her music—to his unmusical ear—held him at bay; then came a note that was the familiar Jessica, and after that he seemed to hear the song only in his heart. If he could have seen poor Werner at this time, some part of the load of anxiety which he had been carrying for days past would have gone forever. On Herr Werner's face was stamped such a look as one might wear whose best loved was dead, but had

now seemed to have come back again—and to have come to others.

When Jessica finished, the applause that broke out, first rapturous and then determined, made Hughes's decision to insist upon an "encore" superfluous. So he got the bouquet he had chosen ready to send to her when she should have sung his Irish air. She came back smiling and bowed and sang—something Italian. Her reception had pleased her, and she showed it. But she had no notion that Mr. Hughes had attached any such importance to his request for the "Sweet Vale of Avoca" as, in his fever-weakened condition, he had; so when Herr Vogt had scouted it at first hearing, she had pressed it no farther, thinking that a sufficient reason to give Hughes when she should see him. And there was a feeling now in her breast, born of maiden shyness, that she should leave it to him at this point to take his natural man's right of initiative. He might have returned her call, and he had not.

Hughes sat stolid in his chair and listened

to the Italian song—not with his heart now, hardly with his ears. This was the far-away Jessica—Werner's Jessica. What a weak folly it was in him to think that she had meant anything by her call but a kind gratulation on his escape from death! However, retreat was not in his make-up, so he waited for the next song, and the next "encore." They came in time—both of them. But never once did her voice bear out to his ear the familiar strains. Quicker and quicker in the hot atmosphere had the pulse at his temple beaten; and by the time he had heard her second "recall," and knew that it was not that for which he waited, the throbbing pulse had turned into a roll of drums—the drums of the relieving force—and that was all he heard.

When they carried him out after Jessica had finished, the bouquet he had meant for her rolled from his lap to the floor; and the man who rushed down from "standing room" to seize the vacant chair, put his heel on it.

Jessica did not hear until the following

Wednesday why it was that the Hughes party had not waited for her in the Hall after the concert, and why Mr. Theodore Hughes had not called since. The lady from Maine, her husband and Herr Werner had waited, but no Hughes. The lady from Maine had seen Mr. Hughes in the gallery, but had not seen him go. So Jessica went home, her elation in the day's success lost; and it was with an uneasy eye that Herr Vogt regarded his marvellous but uncertain pupil.

On Wednesday, Jessica met Mrs. Capt. Hughes, who had come up to town to get a specially trained nurse for her brother-in-law. They had managed, she told the wide-eyed Jessica, to get him down home after his seizure at the concert; but they did not know how the tearing delirium which was now tossing him about on a sleepless bed might end. His strength had been so badly eaten out by the African fever before they started for England. "I am sure you couldn't do it," she began, with the tenderness of a good woman who is most reluctant to locate blame

when she feels it is most deserved, "but it is too bad that you could not have sung 'Sweet Vale of Avoca.' He seemed so set on it."

"Did he say so?" cried Jessica.

"Say so?" repeated Mrs. Hughes sadly. "Not a word before; but he has hardly said anything else since."

"O-oh!—in his delirium," breathed Jessica.

Mrs. Hughes nodded slightly with set lips. They were two silent women who faced each other then amidst the roll of a London street; and, from that time on, Mrs. Capt. Hughes knew that Jessica loved "Teddy" as "Teddy" loved her. And Jessica knew that she knew. So it was without any premise that she said:

"Could you take me down with you?"

"Yes. I leave Paddington at 5.10."

"Mother and I will meet you on the platform—and go to the hotel."

"There will be room at the house, but—"

"We will go to the hotel," repeated Jessica with a touching smile that told her thanks.

Herr Vogt, when she got back to their lodgings, pronounced an instantaneous and imperial veto. It was madness—it was impossible—it was Friday night that she was to sing at Lord Dovercourt's. She would be all out of tune—she would be depressed—she would her fine reputation ruin. Mrs. Murney was silent, with a numb feeling where she was usually conscious of her ambitions. The column of Jessica's throat held her head at a firm poise, her eyes had the glint of a fixed purpose, and the swell of her bosom rose and fell with her quick breathing; and she got her mother's things and her own ready for the journey. All she said to Herr Vogt was that she was going, and that she hoped for his sake—and for her own—that she would be back, well and bright, for Friday.

"Go vith her! Go vith her!" Herr Vogt cried at last to Mrs. Murney; "and pring her pack, tod or alife."

CHAPTER XXVI

Another "Vale"

A RIVER flowing softly through green banks, and ever brimming over a weir. An arched bridge spanning it, and over it a road that on the further bank becomes the street of a quiet village. Door-yards filled with old-fashioned flowers; stone houses for the most part with windows enframed in vines. An inn, with a creaking sign in front—"The Jolly Hostler"—and a driveway through the lower story between the coffee room and the bar into an inner court. A gray, plain church with a square, plain tower in a grass-tossed, mossy-marbled grave-yard. A long, low stone wall at the upper end of the village, curving in finally to great gates, through which a driveway sweeps into an avenue of chestnuts—and beyond the Hughes homestead.

Jessica and Mrs. Murney stopped at

"The Jolly Hostler," and Mrs. Capt. Hughes and the nurse went on to the avenue of chestnuts and the anxious house at the end—silent save for the ravings of one poor panting being who ran the gamut of hope, anxiety and despair with sickening regularity. It was far oftener despair than anything else, for he lived over again those weary, empty, ghastly West African days when with the tireless doggedness of his race he sought to murder memory. The Captain knew nothing at that time of his trouble, for he confessed only to *ennui* when he came; but when he lay on his fever cot at the "post" the Captain learned much of a girl whose name was Jessica, and whose throat was round and full like that of a Greek goddess, and in whose cheek the rose had a trick of coming and going, and whose hands were soft and cool—cool. "Jessica! Ah—beg pardon—Miss Murney," he would say, huskily. "Would you—just put your hand—on my forehead. Thanks—delicious—delicious!"—and sometimes he would go to sleep thus.

But there was more than this. There were passionate outbreaks against a doubly-condemned, blackguardly, cowardly dog of a German hypnotist—a vampire—a man who would not "stand up to it"—and sometimes there was talk of a "rescue," followed by much self-contempt and muttering shame. And then there would be brighter intervals, walking the paths of a "Garten" and playing amid the flowers.

But now the tortured stoic-faced Captain found a new interlude in the delirium into which the patient ran again and again. It began with a reserved pleasure—an ecstasy held well in hand—over a new meeting with a restored Jessica—almost the old Jessica, by Jove!—quite the old Jessica, for she would sing "Sweet Vale of Avoca"—of course she would sing it; she said she would try hard. But Werner was in town. Well, they would see. Of course, she would sing it. She had said—And so the raving went on in an ever-maddening paroxysm of anxiety, until he would shout out that she was coming to sing it—that there she was—

didn't they all see her?—but, of course not—they didn't know what she was going to sing—only he knew that—only he—he and she—it was their secret—

And now she was singing—now she was singing—And his voice would die away to a whisper—"Not it"—the Captain had to bend over him to hear what he was saying—"Not it. Not it. Not it"—in mournful repetition. After each of these paroxysms, he seemed visibly to sink.

All day Thursday, he did not regain consciousness; and though Jessica and Mrs. Murney went up the avenue of chestnuts three times and shook hands with a tearful group of women—mostly in silence—and talked in low tones with Mr. Hughes, Sen., in a corner of the garden whither he led them out of hearing of the house, they did not think it safe to let Jessica within the sick room—nor did she feel herself in any position to urge it. Friday morning brought two urgent telegrams from Herr Vogt, one to Jessica and one to Mrs. Murney. Jessica should come back by an early

train so as to get her nerves in order. That night was the great night on which all things depended. Jessica said, "We will go up and see how he is."

"But you will sing to-night!" pleaded her mother.

"Yes," said Jessica after a little—"if he is no worse."

There was no change; so she told Mrs. Capt. Hughes of her engagement at Lord Dovercourt's, and what it meant to Herr Vogt and her mother, and said that she would come up again in the afternoon and then leave by the four o'clock train—if Mrs. Hughes would promise faithfully to send her a telegram that night and another in the morning. Mrs. Hughes promised, and said that it was too bad that she had to sing when she felt so anxious.

"The public," said Jessica, smiling ruefully, "is like a cat—very amiable when it is stroked the right way, but it would never think of going without a meal simply because the song bird it had bargained for was needed at the nest."

When they came up to take leave in the afternoon, Mrs. Capt. Hughes was the only one who could speak to them. "Teddy" was worse. He had had a bad spell, and was now deeper in the fogs of delirium than ever. Jessica stood breathless for a minute; then—"I cannot go, Mamma!" she said.

"But Jessica!" was all her mother said.

"Yes, I know," said Jessica humbly—she was thinking of the crumbling of her mother's dreams. "And Herr Vogt would be so disappointed, too." Then—"Could I see him, do you think?"

"I'll ask the Doctor," said Mrs. Hughes; and in a few moments the Doctor came in with—"Yes. It can do no harm."

"Oh! Don't say that!" cried Jessica, going up to him. "It sounds so hopeless."

The Doctor—an old man with a bushy whisker—wiped his moustache away from his mouth, and coughed—and smiled—and started bravely out with—"But you don't want—" And then he stopped. He could not make his obvious joke. His lips came together again. Then he put his hand on

Jessica's shoulder. "I wish," he said, "he could see that look on your face, poor lad. It would cure him."

Then Jessica went up and sat in the chair they placed for her at the foot of the bed. Hughes with flushed face and tossed hair lay muttering, sightless, before her; and she knew only that grief was strangling her. A pain came in the centre of her forehead and pressed dully on her mind. The mutterings became coherent—he was in his old paroxysm of anxiety, eagerly assuring himself again and again that she would sing his chosen air. Mrs. Capt. Hughes touched her on the shoulder. "Would you like to go out?" she said. Jessica grasped her hand for answer, and sat upright and still. With pitiless slowness, the delirium went its usual course. He was confident—he doubted—at last, he saw her come. Would she—would she sing it? Did they not see her? No! Of course not. Only she and he knew what she would sing—it was their secret—now she was singing—what was it?

And then, in that hushed chamber, gray

with the shadow of death, rose from the white lips of the erect woman at the foot of the bed, now leaning somewhat forward, the soft, sweet strains of "Sweet Vale of Avoca." The poor mother looked up from her chair, where she had been silently weeping, and held out a hand to stop her; but the Doctor took the forbidding hand in his and motioned Jessica to go on. But Jessica saw neither of them. The voice of the sick man, as it had pleaded for the song, filled her mind. So on she sang, and the flushed man on the bed ceased muttering—then he turned his eyes toward her; and she came to the end of her song.

"Sing it again," said the Doctor, quick and sharp; and again Jessica sang it through. Hughes lay listening in silence and his breathing became more regular.

"Well, that beats Beecham," muttered the Doctor to his beard; and, crossing to Jessica, asked—"Can you stay to sing that when he gets bad again?"

"Yes," said Jessica simply.

"But—but your engagement," whispered

Mrs. Captain Hughes at no little cost to herself.

"I have not forgotten," replied Jessica; and, going down stairs she put her arms around her mother, and told her what had happened. And Mrs. Murney, without a word, went to the postoffice and wired Herr Vogt—

"Jessica cannot come. Cannot, you understand. Am writing."

And that night when a distracted musical manager was apologising to Lord Dovercourt—and especially to Lady Dovercourt—for the absence of his "star," and when another young singer was, all in a flurry, having her chance because of the unexpected gap in the programme, "the wonderful Miss Murney," who was to have sung weird, wandering things in German, and soaring, ecstatic things in Italian, to a properly bored company who gave their tolerant patronage to nothing less "correct," sang an old Irish air again and again through the long night in a sick chamber from which the gray shadow of death lifted and lifted until, with

the coming of the sun, it vanished altogether.

It was four days before the Doctor would let Jessica leave; and by then Hughes had known of her presence for two. He could do little yet but lie and look at her, but he managed to say before she went—

"It was so good of you to come—Mother would like it so"—and then—"You sang it, didn't you? I seem to remember that you did."

"I have sung it a hundred times," she whispered back; and he was satisfied.

She went into London the day before her second engagement in the Park Lane district, and Herr Vogt tried her voice with great anxiety. She had been for a week in the very atmosphere against which Herr Werner had specifically warned him; and there was a new look on her face. She stood out from the piano and sang one of her first selections with him—a German love lyric; and half way through there was a faltering, and then the music stopped. But it was

Jessica who turned to Herr Vogt for an explanation; for it was he who had stopped playing, and sat looking at her with his great bulging eyes a-swim and his fingers working nervously.

"You haf it learned," he said throatily. "You know what lof is."

Jessica looked at him and smiled. "How did you know?" she asked.

"You told me," he said simply; and then—"You make me to lof. You will make all the vorld to lof—ven you like that sing."

And he let her sing love songs to the "crush" in Park Lane, and the most industrious function-goer could hardly remember to have heard the general conversation so seriously interrupted.

Then the Murneys went back to the country, for Mrs. Hughes had written to ask them; Jessica only coming up for the day to sing to the Bohemian gathering. The Bohemians thought her rather absent-minded, but felt the magic of her singing; and cabled a third instalment of praise of her to New

York. When Jessica went back to the country she took Herr Vogt with her; and he stayed at "The Jolly Hostler."

CHAPTER XXVII

Love and Art

As the days went by Mr. Hughes grew stronger, and Jessica gradually withdrew from the character of singing nurse. With returning vigor, he became more himself—more reserved—more jealous of permitting his emotions expression. But the mask had been up for a while, and Jessica had seen that there was more in that heart than she had ever dreamed. When she glowed over a splendid sunset as it showed right down the avenue of chestnuts, and Hughes only said—"Yes; it is worth sitting up to see," she knew that it was not his perception that was at fault; it was only that he had been trained in a racial school of self-suppression.

But, for all that, she likewise knew that there were things in her soul that were not in his—that thoughts filled her mental hori-

zon with beauty and nobility and inspiration which never so much as showed above the sky-line of his. And this knowledge gave her disquietude; for now they both knew also that each loved the other and there was no thought but that the day would come when he would ask leave to put a ring on her finger. Still when they talked together, first as he lay on his cot on a side gallery and afterward as they walked in the shade of the chestnuts, she saw that this difference did not make for dullness, and then—somewhat to her surprise, it must be confessed—that there were qualities in him that were not in her, and that he saw some things at first sight which he had to teach her to discern.

They were not alike; this she had known all along—but she felt her face grow hot as the memory came that she had thought this due to his failure to leap with her from the lower to the higher mental plane. She was far better than she had been; but she was no longer certain that the old Jessica was an exact counterpart of Hughes. She—the new Jessica—saw and comprehended things

in him to which the old Jessica would have been hopelessly blind. And she was constantly peering into his mind, trying to get a full view of principles and motives there, of which he only showed—and with reluctance—a fragment at a time.

One day the curate came up the chestnut avenue with his wide hat and his smooth face and his oily voice—and his impressive way of saying nothing—and said that they were going to give a garden party at the Rectory and that he would like Mr. Theodore Hughes to promise to be present, for that would bring a lot of the neighboring young men to see the hero. Hughes flushed to the hair line, and looked as uncomfortable as a well-bred man dare. Jessica knew that he would rather risk the jungle again than face a circle of perspiring young admirers in the character of a hero; and she expected to hear a confused but emphatic refusal. But he accepted and promised to go; and the curate shook hands with everybody and learned that they were all well, and took an anxious but teachable interest in the perplexity of

Mr. Hughes, Sen., as to whether a certain plant with a purple flower should be put at the upper or lower apex of a crescent-shaped bed, and then went off down the avenue of chestnuts with a walk that was a nice blend of the cloister with the proper friskiness of a semi-athletic curate on a day of church sports.

"It is very nice of you to go," said Jessica to Hughes; "but I was surprised that you would."

"Oh!"—and he made a deprecatory grimace—"I shall hate it!—but a fellow should, you know."

Jessica wondered why Hughes thought so. She thought so herself, but she took a delight in exploring the "run-ways" of his mind. So she said—

"Yes, I suppose so. But I wonder why?"

"Duty," said Hughes, shortly.

"To the Church?"

"Ye-es; but not altogether. One should" —and he paused—"it is not nice to say it— but one should set something of an example.

I—they think I did something down in Africa——"

"You did," Jessica could not help breathing, though she feared to interrupt him.

"Well—they think so, anyway—and if I go to the Church affair—to show off"—and he threw up his head in a short, embarrassed laugh—"it will bring some young men there—and it'll, perhaps, give them the idea of doing their duty when the pinch comes—they will see that it is recognised."

"Doing their duty?"

"Yes. Climbing a stockade or—shooting a Boer, or something of that kind."

Duty! That was the first word in Mr. Hughes's religion—and it generally meant doing what was expected of an English gentleman.

It was Herr Vogt who brought things to a climax—and a settled basis. He naturally tired of living at "The Jolly Hostler," giving Jessica an hour a day, and seeing her hurry up to London to sing at what engagements he got for her. This was not launching her upon a career which was to make

them both rich and famous. So he thought out and proposed a programme. Now that their visit was over—this he assumed—they would go back to London and close the season with a blaze of glory; then, on a profit-sharing basis, he would go with them to New York to get ready for the opening of the winter season there—or he would go back to Dresden, and leave them free to do what they liked.

No, they both said, he must come to New York with them—he must share in whatever success they might have. Well, then, he asked, could they come to London to-morrow? Mrs. Murney feared that "to-morrow" would be rather abrupt; but Monday? "*Gut!*" Monday would do—these English did "nothing" on Sunday and began doing it on Friday. Jessica wondered in her heart what Monday might see.

Mrs. Murney told of the decision at the head of the avenue of chestnuts, and was full of polite gratitude for their "English hospitality." She knew now what an English home was.

Hughes looked swiftly at Jessica, met her eyes in startled questioning for just a moment—and then he smiled. What he read there seemed to bring him reassurance and content. He crossed over to where she was and said—

"Come. Let us walk in the shade of the chestnuts."

So they went off together, his step still a little weak and his arm helpless in a sling. Jessica was steadily silent, leaving the first word to him.

"Can you manage to give it up?" was what he said.

"Must I?" she asked in momentary regret and incipient rebellion.

"Oh, no! Not altogether," he hurried to say. "It is quite the thing to sing—a little —in society; in quite an unprofessional way, you know——"

Jessica drew a deep breath and lifted her head.

"And then there are Church things to be sung for," he went on doubtfully; "and——"

"But that is not art," burst out Jessica. "Singing selections at a parish concert—singing ballads at a school closing—" And she stopped.

Hughes was silent, for this was the Jessica he did not know. They walked on for quite a minute, the flecked sunshine falling through the chestnuts, dappling their figures. There came a little increase of paleness to Hughes's face, and then he said—

"I could not have you a professional singer."

Jessica looked at him, rigid and intent on his thought. It seemed so school-girlish to remind him that he had not yet asked her to be his in any capacity. So she only said—

"It is not to be a professional that I want—it is to be an artist—to work and work at my music until I can put the best in me into the best of it and then sing it to—to you and—everyone."

"I shall never stop you from that," he said quickly. "I may not know all you sing, but when you come to live here——"

She laughed and he stopped. Then his eyes twinkled in the old way.

"Haven't I put it in words yet? Well, I did once, you know; and I took it for granted then that you would not come—perhaps I have taken it for granted now that you will—" And he stopped again, and looked at her with eyes from which an eager question was not altogether absent. Jessica thought to tease him with a doubtful smile, but it melted before the rising of something overwhelming within her, and her heart looked out at him through her passionate eyes.

"My darling!"—and his unhurt arm was about her, and both of her's about his neck—and it was well that they stood where a chestnut and the old wall cut off the view on one side, and a great empty field promised privacy on the other.

"We will be together," she whispered, "whether for art or—or——"

"Together!" he said. "And may God keep me from trying to clamp you down to my limitations!"

She raised her head and looked at him, her eyes a-swim with tenderness. "Your limitations," she cried reproachfully; and then—"We are not alike, dear, in everything"—repeating an old thought—"but you have no limitations—you have only some unexplored — jungle" — and she laughed a little laugh that suggested tears —"and you are not afraid of jungle. But I"—and her face grew serious—"have nothing of your depth."

"Nonsense!"

"No, I haven't, dear. But you will teach me—character—that on which things rest —like the bases of the mountains at Lucerne, you know. And I—I will gather flowers for you on the mountain side, as I did in the Grosser Garten—" And there was a soft laugh in which they both joined —a laugh of recollection.

There are so many ways in which the rest of the story might be told that the pen hesitates. What Herr Vogt said, as he trotted

up and down the parlor of "The Jolly Hostler" when he learned that "the wonderful Miss Murney" would not even try for a career after all he had sacrificed for it—and her—might be put down in the wreckage of two languages; what the lady from Maine said when he met her on Fleet Street and blocked the traffic with his gesticulating woe; what the little village at the lower end of the avenue of chestnuts said when it was known that "Teddy" Hughes was to marry an American singer, and what it said when, a year later, she appeared at the Rectory garden party and sang three times with an unforced willingness and a voice that might have been coined into gold in London. What musical New York said when she sang at a few private functions there before the wedding, would be interesting, too, and gave Mrs. Murney many moments of regret. What M. Bilot said when Herr Werner called at the "pension" on the quiet street in the *Quartier Latin* with the news, was subversive of all proper conceptions of matrimony

and could not be put down here at any price; but what Herr Werner himself wrote to Jessica at New York, sending it to her with a wonderful brooch as a wedding present, might be recorded.

"My dear Miss Murney," he began. "That you have given up your art, as Herr Vogt says, I do not believe. Having known for so long what it is to live for the best, for the most uplifting, the most beautiful, you could not forget it. I cannot think that you have chosen best in selecting England as your home; but I do not imagine for a moment that you have selected it—you have loved an Englishman and you have accepted the consequences of that handicap on your development. It is not for me to advise a defiance of love. The world is cumbered with the wreck of lives which, but for love, would have been great.

"But this is not a letter for a bridal. Love can also uplift. You may through it work a miracle and unseal the eyes of your Englishman. I was in England but lately my-

self, and I know him—the Englishman as a type—far better than I did. He is not a brute—he is not even a savage. But he tries to teach himself brutality lest he grow effeminate, and he has made over the stoicism of the savage into a stiff mental outer garment which he wears constantly for fear some one will find out that there are streaks in him which love art like a Parisian and enjoy sentiment like a German. You—with love and song—may get your barbarian to lay aside this garment; and, if you can do so, you may have done as much for the ultimate civilization of the race as if you sang for years to the German people who already dwell in the kingdom.

"Still, at all events, you will receive my congratulations on having discovered love—for nothing short of love would link you to that task. And love is the sweetest folly in life. Preach as I will, I would sell my soul to-morrow for love—and I have a soul to sell. But the cup of that intoxication has been denied me. And I learned this, too, in Eng-

land—to suffer and be silent. There is this flower I will give your husband—he belongs to a race which has kept better than any of us the tradition of how to do great deeds."

THE END.

See the next page in regard to "Sweet Vale of Avoca."

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