

TAUCHNITZ EDITION

COLLECTION OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN AUTHORS

VOL. 4878

C. L. McArthur
BLACK SLEEVES

IT HAPPENED IN HOLLYWOOD

Maude
MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON

(ALICE M. WILLIAMSON)

IN ONE VOLUME

April 23rd 1929 -

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Continued on page 3 of cover

An amusing story
of Hollywood Tal. pleasant
for an **COLLECTION** hour on
a warm day —

BRITISH AUTHORS

TAUCHNITZ EDITION

VOL. 4878

BLACK SLEEVES

BY

MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON
(ALICE M. WILLIAMSON)

IN ONE VOLUME

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MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON

(ALICE M. WILLIAMSON)

AUTHOR OF "CANCELLED LOVE," "SHEIKH BILL," ETC.

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LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1929

BLACK SLEEVES

IT HAPPENED IN HOLLYWOOD

MRS. C. N. WILLIAMSON

ALICE WILLIAMSON

ALICE WILLIAMSON, "BLACK SLEEVES"



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BLACK SLEEVES

CHAPTER I

MALCOLM ALLISTER'S TABLE

MALCOLM ALLISTER tried to look blasé, at least thirty-five, and to seem what these jolly Americans called "hard-boiled."

In reality he felt so happy that he could have jumped on to the table and danced for joy. He was afraid that he didn't succeed in looking more than twenty-five, which was two years less than his real age.

All the beautiful Visions glanced, and more than glanced, at him as they undulated past with the young men of their species.

It was not too imaginative or conceited to be sure they were saying, "There's Malcolm Allister, the English author who wrote 'Red Resurrection.' I know that's his table! Pierre points it out to everyone. Isn't he *young*? He's terribly good-looking too, don't you think?"

Allister was not wrong. The girls were saying all these things and more. They wondered why he didn't go into the movies instead of writing for them. They despised most authors, did these little would-be stars, but Malcolm

Allister was "different." "Everybody talked about 'Red Resurrection,'" and the play he'd done from the book would have been a wild success on the stage if the horrid old censor hadn't stopped it. That had queered it for a picture, of course. No studio would dare do a film now, and call it "Red Resurrection." But it was "sort of leaking out" that the scenario Allister had contracted to write for Paragon would turn into a version of "Red Resurrection" camouflaged. *That* was how to get away with these things! And Gee! that baby boy looked like the one to do it. You'd never take him for English, would you? Maybe he wasn't. Maybe he was Irish, or Scotch or something. But to look at him you'd say Spanish or Italian, wouldn't you? A regular Valentino! Too bad he was only a writer. But he might have some life in him at that!

As a matter of fact, Malcolm Allister had no resemblance to the late Rudolph Valentino, or to any other popular "sheik" of Hollywood, except that he had what Hollywood calls "patent leather hair," very black and smooth. He was one of those "dark-browed Yorkshiremen" of whom a poet has sung; and the Armada had left warm traces of Spain in his ancestral blood. In the war he'd been in the air force—an ace, and the youngest one, a detail which none had discovered or cared a hang about till Allister sprang to fame with his "Red Resurrection."

He had made a pot of money with the book in England and America, and it was nobody's business except his own if he had dropped more than half the pot's contents in putting on his own play. Producers had been afraid of just what had happened. But, well, anyhow he had a bit left: more than he'd ever dreamed of owning, before "Red Resurrection" somehow wrote itself round his wonderful war romance with Solange Ardette in France. And here he was in far-off Hollywood, being treated as if he were a prince—a royal prince, not one of those sad-faced, hungry-eyed princes playing extras at ten dollars a day in all the big Russian picture productions. The Paragon people had given him a bungalow for the duration, not of "hostilities"; even to be sarcastic one couldn't use that word (though there were hot arguments sometimes), but the duration of his stay, whatever that might be. He had his choice of Hollywood parties tame or wild for every night if he should care to accept, which often he didn't, being a victim of the desire (apparently foreign) to be alone now and then. In fact, a young man who'd been nobody for more than twenty-seven years, was suddenly somebody. It was the adventure of his life to be asked in state to Hollywood, if you didn't count the little old war as an adventure; and why should you, when all chaps of his age had been in it, whereas few persons of either sex or any age were invited overseas to Hollywood?

The pale, dark, tired-looking young man, at the table known at the smart new restaurant Montparnasse, as "Malcolm Allister's table," was far from tired; indeed he was enjoying life so much that he felt capable of desperate deeds, the more desperate, the more fun! And it was just as he told himself this, that a girl appeared at the door.

"Appeared" is the word. She was suddenly there. And she stood staring into the restaurant with its rose and golden glow, its large windows that were sapphire squares of twilight, its small, satiny-white tables, its floor cleared for dancing, its glittering saxophones, and its huge, illuminated African drum awaiting the musicians' return.

Was the girl seeking someone? If so, lucky man! Yet no, she hadn't the questing expression. She looked worried, anxious, uncertain what to do. Allister wished that he had the cheek to jump up, claim the young woman as an acquaintance, and say he hadn't ordered dinner, because he was expecting her to come.

Perhaps she was no prettier than some of the prettiest stars of Movieland, at whose almost incredible beauty Malcolm daily wondered without as much personal interest or increased blood-pressure as he felt he ought to have. But the best beauties of Hollywood didn't somehow seem to him like real women. They were just Visions, in blinding light. This girl looked real, and extremely human.

She had on an evening dress that was made of dainty material—silver gauze or something of the sort—and was noticeably picturesque, yes, quite a picture-frock; yet, Malcolm couldn't have said why, it hadn't the air of being *right*.

All those who faced the doorway fixed their eyes upon the girl, but Malcolm didn't feel that it was her beauty which held them: Hollywood was too "fed up" with beauty to be paralysed by Helen of Troy or even Venus herself. Something would certainly have been wrong with both the ladies, even as there seemed to be something vaguely wrong about this fair young thing.

In their case the defect would most likely have been bulk. In Helen's day men didn't launch a thousand ships for a female lathe, as they would now, if any. And Venus was never rumoured to resort to lean chops and pineapple at Olympian dinner parties.

This girl in the doorway was thin enough to delight a fashion artist of *Vogue* or *Eve*. It was her dress which gave her that odd look, and it was the dress at which the women stared.

"Looks like the ark," he heard a Vision murmur to her escort, as both got up to leave vacant a small table close to the "Malcolm Allister table" in the best window. "Two years old, if it's a day!"

That was Hollywood! Malcolm said to himself. No distinction between the flood and two years ago!

Both epochs were much the same to the girls of Movieland.

Two years old! Well, maybe——! Do dresses live as long as that? Anyhow, it *was* picturesque; silver, with those crushed pink roses, and floating scarves of silver lace. And as the girl saw herself eyed and criticised, she seemed to increase visibly in beauty, youthful dignity, and even stature. It was a tall young creature who almost strode with a forced air of self-confidence into the room. She had creamy skin, with no colour in it, and a full mouth painted crimson by nature or art. Her long throat, held erect, was slender enough to suggest the eternal simile of a lily stalk. But her great splendour, which gave that effect of dazzling beauty, lay in the contrast between copper red hair and immense yellow-brown eyes, black-lashed and black-browed.

Of course the contrast might easily be due to henna and mascara. Surely all the women were thinking this, because one did judge by oneself in Hollywood. And the idea occurred also to the young man who was hard-boiling himself in the heat of the Klieg lights. Still, he couldn't believe the obvious, especially as the girl's hair was neither bobbed nor shingled. It was wound in thick red wheels, one over each ear, Arab dancing-girl fashion. And then the dress which suggested the Ark to cats. Well, *cats* had certainly gone into that vessel in more pairs than one, by the way they'd reproduced since!

Having dared the plunge (it was rather like a plunge into surf, Malcolm thought, braving that wave of light and perfume and high-pitched chatter!) the girl pinned her gaze on the just deserted table and made straight for it.

"Please clear this," she ordered a waiter who hovered in surprise at the lone onslaught.

He was French, and had not got beyond, say, his sixth Berlitz lesson in Americanese. "Oui—yeah, Madame, Mees," he stammered, torn between politeness and a conviction that all was not well. "Mais—but—deese tables, he is for two. Aussi—also, he sure is betooked. If Mees——"

"I'm going to sit here," said the girl. "I know it's not taken. Clear off these things, and bring me the menu at once—please."

The waiter was the newest bit of flotsam and jetsam from the quota. He had heard comrades equally French yet already Americanised, talk about the temperamental stars of Hollywood. For all he could tell this might be Pola Negri or Greta Garbo or Dolores del Rio, ladies were so different off the screen! Anyhow, no proud and poverty-stricken Grand Duchess stranded in Paris had ever brushed aside *hoi polloi* with a more expensive air than this lady. Hastily he cleared the table, and began rearranging it. "Mademoiselle, she is seule—alone? Or do I put for a monsieur?"

"I am alone," replied the girl.

She did not even glance at Allister, so flatteringly stared at by others. She seemed preoccupied with herself, and then with the menu, when it had been placed in her slim, ringless hand. But Malcolm could hardly unhook his gaze from the girl. Who was she? Why was her manner so peculiar? Why was she by herself at this hour in Hollywood, where every Beauteous Dream had her own Screen Idol in attendance, or if not a Screen Idol, the next best thing, a fat, generous "Sugar Daddy"? Or as a last despairing resort, her own husband? Was her dress really of the Ark period, or was it prettier than anyone else's, as Malcolm began to think her face was.

CHAPTER II

THE GIRL

THE two tables were so near together that Allister's ears missed no word the girl spoke. It was not eavesdropping to listen while a young woman chose her dinner from the menu at a restaurant! In most cases, it wouldn't even have been entertaining, but in this case it was so, because of the queer situation in which a beautiful girl dressed from "the Ark" had placed herself; also because she was ordering such an enormous meal.

"Hors d'œuvres, clam broth with whipped cream,

chicken à la Mary Pickford, salad Pola [Negri, Pêche Marion Davies, demi tasse, cigarettes Montparnasse."

Heavens! And this was Hollywood, where the food part of taking a girl out was so cheap that smart restaurants had to make their profit in other ways! The girl wouldn't remain slim for long, at this rate!

Malcolm had nearly finished his dinner, which was on no such scale as hers, but he determined to add another feature or two. He simply had to see this girl business to its close! He wouldn't miss it for a hundred dollars—or more. He laughed at himself a little. It was rather absurd, the way he enjoyed throwing money about! But it was nice.

The first course of the girl's meal arrived. She had a dainty way of eating, yet she ate quickly, until she got as far along her menu as the Pêche Marion Davies. By that time hunger was satisfied, and no wonder! Such masses of food would have sufficed a dozen of the dieting beauties of Hollywood. Now she could afford to play with what was left. Time was evidently no object. It was lucky that Allister had thought of adding new dishes to his list. Otherwise he would have lacked an excuse to linger. This was not one of the popular evenings for dancing at Montparnasse. There were only a few couples on the floor, although Marco Lopez, the handsome and graceful professional, had appeared for duty at eight-thirty as usual. A preview was on at a new picture theatre,

and though it wasn't in itself an important affair, screen people liked to show up, if only to be photographed on entering, in a white blaze of calcium. Most of the diners had gone there for the pleasure of being seen, and the satisfaction of saying to each other "How *poisonous!*" Even Malcolm had meant to go. He was young enough and new enough to success, to enjoy (secretly) being pointed out as one of the celebrities. But the solitary girl with the red hair and the dress from the Ark, had caused him to erase the preview from his programme.

At last she had finished her dinner, had drunk two tiny cupfuls of black coffee, and had smoked several cigarettes. She sat still for a few minutes, then took from a silver bag that matched her dress a small coin, which she laid on the table. She glanced at the hovering waiter, but got up to go without asking for her check.

He darted forward, however, and presented it. "Ze bill, mees," he announced.

"I will speak to the manager, or the *maitre d'hôtel*," the girl replied, accepting the check with seeming indifference.

Allister had paid his, and left a crisp dollar bill on the table for his waiter, so that he might be free at an instant's notice. Now he was rewarded for his foresight. He followed the girl at a discreet distance as she walked towards the door. Her waiter, distressed, had hurried ahead to find the great Pierre before the

client could escape without paying, if that were her intention. . . .

Pierre, the proprietor of the popular Montparnasse—the new and only rival of Hollywood's beloved Montmartre—was a genial fellow, a real personality, and Allister liked him. They generally exchanged a few words when Allister went out, and had a standing joke about the latter's desire to buy a share in the restaurant. The Frenchman had a round, smiling face, humorously exaggerating his own resemblance to a full moon. But for once the smile was missing. The gaze which fixed itself upon the girl was gimlet-sharp, and inky black.

"Mademoiselle, your waiter says you have forgotten to pay your check," Pierre addressed her firmly, placing a large body in correct evening dress between the young woman and the door.

"I haven't forgotten," she replied. "I haven't the money to pay. I hadn't even enough for a decent tip: only ten cents."

"You mean you came from home without your purse?" politely suggested Pierre.

"No," said the girl. "I hadn't any money. But I was horribly hungry. I had to eat! I came here because I thought you might care to give me employment. Then I could pay you for my dinner—and go on living afterwards, which otherwise I don't see much prospect of



doing. You have only one girl here, selling cigarettes for you. At Montmartre they have two. Why shouldn't *you* have two—and let me be one?"

Pierre's big face flushed. The young woman—a stranger—had ordered an expensive meal, and having safely eaten it was now trying to make a fool of him. The instinct of long experience told the ex-head waiter of Paris restaurants, that this was no practical joke. It was an impudent bluff. The girl no doubt hoped that his natural distaste for a "scene" would save her. But fortunately the room had emptied. The few clients who remained, with the exception of Mr. Allister, were dancing to the loud moan and whine of saxophones. There was no serious reason why Pierre should sacrifice justice to expediency.

"I do not need two cigarette sellers," he said, "and if I did I would wish to choose both myself. You have done a dishonest thing. You attempt to cheat me. Your bill is ten dollars. If you refuse to pay it is a case for the police."

Malcolm Allister stepped forward quickly. "I say, Pierre," he broke in, "it's time to stop this little play. I dared the young lady to do this! I thought it would be fun to see how deep your good nature went. I oughtn't to have done it! But I really did believe, you see, that you'd bow her out, like a chivalrous knight, and say you were pleased to be her host. Then I was going to explain

—and settle. Miss—er—Smith, I apologise for letting you in for something disagreeable. My faith in French politeness has crashed! Pierre, you'll have to mend it by engaging Miss Smith to sell cigarettes if she wants to. What about it? Miss Smith, hand over that check to me, please. I've lost my bet; it's for me to settle!"

The girl stared, with wide open eyes; and Pierre stared with eyes narrowed. He knew instinctively that the rescue was a "fake." The girl had played a trick upon him, and she didn't deserve to be shielded. An old trick, too, he reflected! It annoyed him to see the little gold digger get away with it. Pretty raw, even for Hollywood! But he would certainly not satisfy his spite at the expense of offending a client like the author of "Red Resurrection."

"Very sorry, Mr. Allister," he apologised. "I'm afraid I lost my temper. I have had much trouble lately with customers who wish not to pay, some of them most pretty ladies, and I do not like to be made a fool. If I thought your friend, Miss Smith, really wanted to get work in my place, I would see what I could do for her, to please you. *Only* for that, because it is true I need no more help, but——"

"I do want to work here," the girl interrupted him. "I need money, and besides——"

"But I was going to say I cannot pay much," Pierre in turn cut in. "If Miss Smith thinks that the tips——"

Allister flashed him a look, and Pierre's quick Latin wits translated it. "The tips will help out the pay I can give," he went on quietly. He had intended to warn Miss Smith that she must depend upon tips alone, if she wished to play the part of second cigarette girl at Montparnasse. But since Mr. Allister was ready to supply the deficiency (such was Pierre's interpretation of the look) why be mean with the money of another?

"Will Miss Smith accept" (his eyes sought Allister's) "thirty dollars a week? I might raise to thirty-five shortly!"

"I would be thankful for thirty," the girl answered. "But—the costume." At this moment pretty Nora Casey, the one incumbent at present, had a moment of leisure, and Miss Smith studied what might be described as a "harem dress." "Would you buy it, or should I have to——"

"I would buy it," replied Pierre, voicing the suggested answer in Allister's eyes. He took a thin notebook from his waistcoat pocket, scribbled something, and tore out the leaf. "Here, Miss Smith," he said, "you may go to that place to-morrow morning, and they will make you a costume. In style it must be like Miss Casey's, but you may choose your colour. In one day they will finish the dress, because it is for me, not you, they work: and it is for Mr. Allister, not yourself, that I say, Come when the costume is ready, day after to-morrow; report at ten

a.m. and I will show you what to do. We open for lunch at eleven-thirty, but there is little work at that hour. I hope you are pleased, Mr. Allister, that I accept your friend?"

The emphasis was marked, but Malcolm took no notice. "Yes, I'm much obliged, Pierre," he said. "I'm going now, but I'll drop in for early lunch to-morrow."

Pierre understood that he would then settle the business of Miss Smith's wages, etc., in a way satisfactory to the restaurant; and Malcolm knew that the Frenchman shrewdly guessed just how long, and how well he had been acquainted with the said Miss Smith. To-morrow he would make it clear, he resolved, that his interest in the girl was purely chivalrous, not sentimental!

Whether that explanation of his conduct was or was not entirely true, he couldn't have sworn. But he must insist that it was so, for Miss Smith's sake. Meanwhile, he was consumed with curiosity about the girl. What kind of a person was she who would steal a dinner, then save herself by letting him name her his "friend Miss Smith," and accept a position given her to, "please him?"

She allowed her rescuer to walk out at her side into the dazzlingly lighted Hollywood Boulevard. The street was bright as day; all the shop windows brilliantly lit, showing smart hats and dresses, paste-buckled shoes with immensely high heels, and fantastic jewellery. Even

Broadway with its famous white lights and coloured electric advertisements could hardly be more scintillating.

The girl wrapped round her shoulders a silver scarf, the only cloak she had, and stopped Allister as he beckoned the negro doorman.

"I thank you more than I can tell!" she said in the same low tone in which she had spoken to Pierre. "I suppose you think I'm dreadful. Maybe I am. But—if you only *knew!* Besides, I was so terribly hungry. The trouble is, I can't explain. I'd rather not even tell you my real name. 'Miss Smith' will do very well. I hope I shall see you again, in the restaurant, and I shall pay you back when I get money, which I ought to have soon. Besides, there'll be good tips, I hope. I shall accept them! I know, of course, that man Pierre expects you to stand for my salary. But I mean to be a success, and then he'll be willing to invest at least thirty dollars a week in me, himself. Now I must go. Good-bye, and thank you once more."

"Do let me take you home," Malcolm begged. "I won't ask to know your name. But I'd like you to know mine. I am——"

"I heard the man call you Mr. Allister," the girl broke in. "And I always see the newspapers, so I suppose you must be Mr. Malcolm Allister who wrote 'Red Resurrection.' Don't think, please, that I don't *trust* you. I do! The way you did everything showed me I could.

Besides, I've read your book. The man who wrote that would never—be horrid to a woman. Only—I'd rather go home alone, thank you all the same! I live not very far away, in a house where they let rooms."

Malcolm was disappointed, though not vexed. Perhaps he even liked Miss Smith better for her refusal. "I'm sorry!" he said. "I won't urge you. But I hope we're going to be friends. After meeting in such a queer way, we ought to be. And—look here! For heaven's sake don't misunderstand, but—but you said you were hungry——"

She laughed. "Well, I'm not now! I shan't be for a long time. I took good care of that. I know what you want to ask. You'd like to suggest lending me some money to go on with. That's not necessary. My landlady will believe me when I tell her I've got work at Montparnasse, starting at once. I owe her only for one week. I hate getting into debt. That's why I was hungry! Everything's going to be all right with me now—thanks to you. But I believe, even if you hadn't helped me, I should have landed that job. I *had* to!"

"It doesn't seem your sort of job," Malcolm objected. "Have you tried to break into the picture game?"

"No," Miss Smith answered. "I've been in Hollywood only two weeks. But in any case I don't——"

"I'm sure I could get you a small part in my picture," Malcolm said. "I mean, the picture Paragon will

do from the scenario I'm writing now. It's going to be called 'Black Sleeves.'

"You *are* kind!" the girl exclaimed. "That would be a perfectly miraculous chance for me if I did want to act. But just at present I don't. What I want is to be what I'm going to be at Montparnasse. Now, good-bye again! We shall meet there."

She was gone!

She had dashed away like Cinderella at the stroke of midnight. And she was as mysterious to Malcolm Allister as Cinderella had been to her prince at the ball.

She would work at Montparnasse. She preferred to be second cigarette girl there rather than accept an offer over which most young women would have been inclined to faint with joy. Why? Why?

Slightly dazed, as if he had taken a cocktail too many, Malcolm nodded to the liveried black giant who had already become one of the "features" of Montparnasse. The car which Miss Smith had refused to share was brought to the door by a chauffeur whose possession by the author of "Black Sleeves" was sheer youthful swank. Malcolm would discharge him as soon as he had got used to the noble new Rolls Royce and the fierce traffic of Hollywood which made London and New York streets look like village lanes. Allister hadn't meant to go home on the edge of the evening, but some-

how the girl episode had got between him and thoughts of amusement. Presently he opened the door of his charming bungalow, and walked straight into trouble.

CHAPTER III

DOWN WITH EVERYTHING

IN the hall, which was living-room as well, stood Camillo, Malcolm's Filipino butler, at the telephone.

The little brown man who (like most Filipino servants in Los Angeles and Hollywood) took more interest in the weekly Stadium boxing contests than in his work, was too busy talking to hear the door open and shut.

Malcolm stood still for an instant, smiling, and wondering whether Camillo was making a professional engagement for himself at that famous place where five thousand Hollywood husbands are supposed to spend all Friday evenings. Camillo was a better boxer than butler; but he was so pleasant and smiling that Malcolm knew he would forgive another Friday absence as he had forgiven the last. The Filipino, however, was not "dating up" for one of the minor fights. He was talking on his master's business.

"Welly solly, sah, you have so much twouble. But Mist' Allist' not home yet. If you not get him at Mont-p'nasse I not know what say. Yas, sah. I tell him call

you when he come, at youah house numbah; no matt' what time, yaas."

Malcolm waited for Camillo to hang up, as the speaker at the other end of the line might be some stupid bore who had better not learn the news of his return. As the Filipino turned and saw him, he spoke, "Hello, Cam! Who was that calling?"

"This time it was Mist' Kerlin, sah," announced the small brown man, who looked more Mongolian than Spanish. "Little while ago it was Mist' Narbo, and one time it was Mist' Vintnor."

"Oh!" said Malcolm, surprised. Joseph Kerlin was the president of Paragon. John Narbo was the famous director who had been given charge of Malcolm's picture, "Black Sleeves," and Karl Vintnor was the almost equally famous continuity writer who would put the novelist's somewhat amateurish scenario into shape for the director to handle.

Malcolm felt a sudden prick of anxiety, a "hunch" that something was wrong. He had lunched that noon with the important trio, and with Reina Norska, who would be the star of his picture, in the bungalow of that lady. The bungalow in question, which was quite a miniature palace consisting of gorgeously decorated dressing-room, bath, reception-room, tiny dining-room and a gleaming white kitchenette, stood on the Paragon lot. They had all discussed the plan for the screen play in

which, as a matter of fact, Malcolm was trying to incorporate uncensorable bits from his "best seller" and the play he had written from the book. It had been a difficult problem, but he had told Reina and the three men that he believed he was conquering the difficulties. Pressed to give details, he had said that he was a "duffer" at telling a story in spoken words, but he expected to get his own scenario back from the typist he employed, in an hour or two. He would look it over hastily for corrections, and bring it himself to Mr. Vintnor or Mr. Narbo, whoever preferred to see it first. Finally it was arranged that Malcolm should hand the typed manuscript of the revamped "Red Resurrection" (now entitled "Black Sleeves") to Karl Vintnor, who would read the stuff quickly and call in Narbo for an immediate consultation. Malcolm had left the lot gaily. When he had read through his own work, beautifully typed, he had not felt so happy since he saw the first notices of his successful novel. And, for the love of Mike, what *had* he to worry about? What he ought to be feeling was that Kerlin, Vintnor and Narbo were tumbling over themselves to say how pleased they were with the ideas he had knocked together. The only wonder was, that Reina hadn't called up too. But maybe, star as she was, she hadn't been shown the scenario. Malcolm didn't yet know the etiquette of these procedures in Movieland.

Still, he couldn't overcome that queer "shivery"

sensation; much as he'd often felt when ready to give himself an ice-cold shower bath, at home in England on a December day.

He called the president of Paragon, not at the studio, but at his house, according to Mr. Kerlin's instructions to Camillo. He gave his name to the discreet servant who inquired "Who is speaking?" and in a few seconds Malcolm heard Kerlin's rather guttural voice at the 'phone. "Hello, Allister! Got you at last! Will you come up here at once? Narbo and Vintnor are both with me. We need to see you."

"All right!" replied Malcolm. "I'll be there as soon as I can do it in my car."

His bungalow was between Hollywood and the smart Beverly Hills district, where most of the richest film stars have built since Mary Pickford and "Doug" turned fashion in that direction. The Kerlin villa was at Santa Monica Beach, about twelve miles away, but Malcolm Allister's chauffeur needed no encouragement to "burn up the road," and despite traffic the car arrived at the gate of "Seahaven" in less than half an hour.

It was a beautiful house, standing with its back to the white road, and its face to the sea. Joe Kerlin and his pretty wife (who had been a blonde film star before a rich marriage destroyed all film qualities) lived there when they were not in New York. Malcolm had been entertained at Seahaven when he first arrived, at a "little

dinner" of twenty lovely ladies and the same number of marvellous men. But there was no air of festivity to-night. The dinner hour was long over, and he was ushered directly into Mr. Kerlin's "study." At a big Empire desk, said to have belonged to Napoleon I, and certainly costing enough to be genuine, were grouped the three men he had gaily parted with at Reina's luncheon. They had tall glasses of whisky and water ("highballs" Malcolm had learned to call them), and big cigars which proclaimed themselves Corona Coronas. Yet they were in no merry mood. They looked at Malcolm as if he had murdered several of Paragon's most beautiful stars and destroyed the expensive young bodies in quicklime.

"Sit down," said Joe Kerlin abruptly. "Have a highball?—a cigar? No? Well then, let's get right to brass tacks. The fact is, Allister, your stuff won't do."

Malcolm stared at the small dark man, whose eyes under bushy black brows were like blue ice. But he kept his head, as he'd learned to do at zero hour between the years of 1916 and 1918. "What's the matter with it?"

"Only everything," gloomily answered John Narbo, the director, a handsome, sallow man with a hook nose and magnificent grey hair.

"Yeah, I guess that's about all that's wrong," echoed Karl Vintnor, a tall and stringy person who looked like a flattered caricature of a "down east Yankee." "Only everything, my boy."

"Please tell me exactly what you mean," said Malcolm.

"Well," replied Kerlin, with his guttural accent, "these boys got their heads together on your 'Black Sleeves' stuff, and they both thought it was the bunk. They brought their grievance to my office, but I'd just left the lot, so they had a bite to eat and came on here. I'd promised to take the missus out, for once, to that blah preview of Nationwide's new flop, but I let her down when I heard the business was urgent. We tried to get you at various places, including Montparnasse, and learned there that you'd left for parts unknown with some Peach."

"I shed the Peach in front of Montparnasse, by her own request," said Malcolm, his jaws squaring in a way that made his smooth-shaven tanned face take on at least five years. "I went home, to the bungalow you so kindly supplied me with, Mr. Kerlin, in order to write the scenario you now label as bunk."

"Keep your shirt on, Allister," said Kerlin. "You know, we're not in this business for our health, or even the health of our nice young friends. You're a smart chap, and we expect you to deliver the goods."

"England expects that every man——" began Malcolm, with a forced smile. But none of the other three present made any sign of appreciating the quotation.

"This is America, not England," said Kerlin. "We may not be Shakespeares or Bernard Shaws, but we think

we do know good moving picture material when we see it, and we're out to get it. That's why we sent for you, and made considerable fuss over giving you publicity."

"Yourselves, too!" Malcolm couldn't resist the retort.

"My dear chap, do we *need* publicity?" came the bored question.

"I don't know," laughed Malcolm, though there was no laughter in his heart. "All I know is, you keep a cageful of publicity hounds out here and another in New York, to say nothing of the private publicity staff each star employs."

"This is a long way," said Kerlin, "off the question of 'Black Sleeves' as things stand now. Or rather, they *don't* stand. They've fallen down."

"There's time yet for you to put them on their feet again," Narbo, the most sympathetic of the three, said more cordially.

"How have I fallen down, and what, according to you, must I do to put Humpty Dumpty on his feet again?" Malcolm wanted to know.

"Why," said Kerlin, taking the words out of Narbo's mouth, "'Red Resurrection' was as snappy as a live wire. You've made 'Black Sleeves' dull as ditchwater."

Malcolm's dark face reddened, and his eyes lit, though he kept his temper. "Indeed!" he said. "I think that's rather a harsh criticism, especially as——"

"We haven't got time in Hollywood to drink sugar

and water before we speak," broke in the great magnate, who knew himself one of the highest rulers in the Screen World.

"I was going to say," Malcolm went on, "especially as you had yourself told me to tone everything down for fear of the censor."

"There's a happy medium between red hot stuff and tepid dishwater," Kerlin persisted. "Now don't take offence. We're meeting to discuss matters. Narbo and Vintnor both say your stuff is blah, and they can't make a go of it. You got yourself on to the top of the book world with 'Red Resurrection,' but, of course, your picture won't be worth to us what it would be if your play had gone over. Still, I'm treating you all right financially, and I don't want to be let down with a flop."

"Our contract is that I must write you something 'satisfactory,'" Malcolm volunteered. "I don't know whether that's the usual contract in such cases or not; but I realised that I was a novice at scenario work. I begin to doubt now, after what you've said, if I can content you. In that case, you will owe me nothing."

"We've spent a good bit of time and publicity on you already," said Kerlin. Even he, who not only refrained from "drinking sugar and water," but seldom covered his iron hands with velvet gloves save when pressing the palms of pretty ladies, didn't quite care to mention the cost of bringing Malcolm Allister out and providing him

with a bungalow. "Now these boys and I" (Narbo was over forty and Vintnor would never see thirty-five again) "have talked over two propositions. You might tell him your suggestion, Narbo."

"Why, my dear chap, it's this way," began John Narbo, who always called men his "dear chap," and girls "honey," except when he acted in his capacity of director. "Try again, of course. Pep the stuff up all you can, short of going too far. For instance—but no, I may see what I'd do with it myself, and Vintnor may know what touches he would give; but none of us here would offer advice to you, unless you asked for it."

Malcolm thought of the money he had spent, how much he was pledged to spend, and how little he would have to spend if the contract crashed now with a loud thud. Yet he could not reduce his pride far enough to ask for advice on his work from these men. They were smart men in their way, but they had never written a best seller, and never would write one. He was the one who had made the hit.

"I don't ask for advice," he said drily. "What is your alternative suggestion?"

"Well," Vintnor explained after a glance under lifted brows at Narbo, "give us your book, and the script of your play, and let us tinker with them. I expect we could do what's wanted. And your name could stand, for publicity's sake."

"I see," said Malcolm. "I'm to try and 'pep' the story up or I'm to hand it over to you two, as experts."

"That's the idea," answered Kerlin. "Only, if Karl and Narbo spend their time and brain matter, you'll have to agree beforehand that you accept their work, without a squeal?"

"I would never agree to that, for anything to appear under my name," said Malcolm. "I've heard of other writers who've had experiences like this, out here, trying to please you movie men and still hang on to the rags of their self-respect. But like a fool I thought *I'd* be all right! Pride comes before a fall! But I'm not quite down and out yet. Of course I'll try again. I'm willing to do that. But I'm far from sure a second scenario will be better than the first. I draw the line at a third. I'm no Sisyphus struggling eternally to roll his stone uphill and never getting to the top."

None of the three men had ever heard of Sisyphus, though the name of "Dante" would certainly have meant something to them all. They were not of the type who would cable to Beaumont and Fletcher for the rights to a play.

"All right, suit yourself," said Kerlin. "But Karl thought of a pretty good stunt for the end. You might get a wow instead of a flop, by sticking it in. Change that French Hotel to one at Palm Beach, and make the star, who has left the ballroom and gone to bed in a

rage with her lover, walk in her sleep instead of writing a letter. Nothing for the screen in letters! She comes back to the ballroom in her nightie—thin chiffon, of course, with the light behind her figure as she appears. Reina could stand that. Then George, seeing what's up and all eyes fixed on the girl, tears down a curtain, wraps her in it and rushes upstairs with her in his arms. A good staircase effect could be——”

“I don't see it at all. I think it would be rotten,” Malcolm ventured to interrupt the magnate, who was used to “yes men” around him, and would there and then have turned his thumb down if he had been Nero and Malcolm a gladiator.

“Think of something better—on those lines, then!” he snapped, biting his annoyance into the gold-brown skin of a cigar. “But we've got no time to waste. Time is money here, with our salary list running on—and what not. Go to it, won't you, Allister? Take your stuff home now, and think it over before you sleep.”

“Sleep!” Malcolm didn't see himself sleeping that night, but he took his scenario, and stalked out like a king, feeling a worm. He sailed luxuriously back to Hollywood in the glittering Rolls Royce which he would probably have to sell now for a fraction of what he'd paid a few days ago. Reaching the bungalow, it no longer felt like home. It was a roof grudged to him by a prospective enemy. He was bleakly sure that he couldn't

change "Black Sleeves" to please those unpleasable men. He would have to leave the bungalow—leave Hollywood, with everyone knowing he had failed. That was bad; but worst of all was the girl at Montparnasse. He had offered Pierre to pay her wages, and buy her costume. Well, he wasn't and wouldn't be too poverty-stricken to keep his word. But—if he left Hollywood, it would mean leaving her!

His blood began to run faster through his veins. No, he wouldn't do that. He'd succeed somehow. He'd stay in Hollywood. He'd see this adventure to the end, bitter or sweet.

He let himself into the house, and the first thing he noticed lying on a silver tray, was an Air Mail letter.

CHAPTER IV

HIS SACRED AUNT!

AIR MAIL letters were so new to Allister, that the "Lindy" stamp with the graceful plane sailing across it gave him a little prick of excitement. But emotion died at sight of the handwriting. It was that of his aunt, Lady Gates of Leeds, the busy, foggy Yorkshire town which seemed for her an appropriate frame.

She had written to him some time ago suggesting that she might "come and keep house" for him in Holly-

wood, a place she'd always wished to see "since beginning to interest herself in the movies." In common gratitude Malcolm ought to have wired back to the lady who was his godmother, and had more than hinted at a will in his favour, "Dear Aunt Kate, do come. Shall be delighted." But instead he had hastily telegraphed, "So sorry impossible put you up small bungalow lent by Paragon. Don't think you would be happy Hollywood. Best love, Malcolm."

Now, here was her answer and—suddenly excitement rose again. Holy cats! One didn't send Air Mail things from England! Besides, the letter was postmarked New York. "Good Lord! The last straw!" groaned Allister, as he opened the envelope.

"DEAR MALCOLM," he read, "you said you were sorry you couldn't put me up in your small bungalow, so I know from that you would have *liked* to do it if you had found it possible. Well, I had somehow set my heart on seeing Hollywood, and when your cable came I felt so dissatisfied that I just made up my mind to go, anyway! Of course, my dear boy, I won't incommode you! I have learned of a very nice hotel they say is half-way between Los Angeles and Hollywood, called the Ambassador, so that is where I'll stay, and by the time you get this a suite will be engaged for me. I am writing this in New York, as you will see by the postmark, and

sending it to you by air, which I think quite thrilling, and *so* American.

“Well, now I will go back to explain that I decided what to do the minute after receiving your cable at the Savoy in London, where I was spending a few weeks enjoying myself when I wrote to propose a visit with you. I got the hotel people to take all the trouble off my hands, except the fussy passport business which one has to do oneself. They bought my stateroom on a perfectly wonderful ship called the *Leviathan*, which has been a revelation to me because, as you know, I have never, till now, even crossed the English Channel. I met some Americans on board the *Leviathan*, and they told me about the Ambassador. They seem to feel that everyone must love California, so perhaps I shall like Hollywood better than you think. You see, I have changed a good deal since my poor husband died. George was a good man, though trying in some ways, and living with a person of such powerful personality did get me into a Puritanical habit of thought. Would you believe it, I saw my first screen play after his death! And to that, and the interest for moving pictures it started in my mind, I attribute a kind of waking up I have noticed in myself. I'm not at all the same staid aunt you visited at Leeds. London has helped. The *Leviathan* has done more. New York is having its influence already, and I'm sure California with its sunshine and gaiety will make a new woman of me!

"I didn't wire from London because I feared you might feel it your duty to wire back 'Better not risk it' or something like that. And I *wanted* to risk it! I am at the Ritz, as you will see from the stationery, the smartest hotel in New York I have been told. To-morrow I leave, and as I said, expect to arrive in Los Angeles the day after you receive my letter. I will telegraph from the Santa Fe Limited train, somewhere *en route*, so you can be sure of the time; and then I know I don't even need to *ask* if you will meet me at the station. I am so excited over this adventure, which is the greatest of my life, that I feel quite young and skittish already!

"Your loving godmother and aunt,

"KATE."

"Young and skittish!" Malcolm almost groaned at the picture. Aunt Katherine Gates was, he imagined, about sixty. She couldn't weigh less than one hundred and seventy solid American pounds. She had thick grey hair, heavy black eyebrows, a snub nose, a few wrinkles on a wholesome ruddy skin, a rather short neck, two comfortable chins, and what might be called an "old-fashioned figure." He had made this mental note the last time he visited her house at Leeds: "She upholsters herself, and dresses her drawing-room." Later, he had caused somebody in "Red Resurrection" to say this about

somebody else. Now Aunt Kate was coming to Hollywood, feeling young and skittish!

As for Malcolm, he felt as old as Methuselah and as sad as Job. But not alone was it his duty to be decent to Lady Gates. Her money might prove useful to him in the crisis he saw ahead. He couldn't and wouldn't leave Hollywood defeated, now that this mysterious girl in a silver dress had appeared on the stage of his life! He might need to produce his own picture if it were to be produced at all. And he told himself that there was nothing sordid or disloyal to his aunt in suggesting that she join him in a movie speculation. If she wanted to be in the spirit of Hollywood, that ought to please her better than anything else—a fat, stodgy old lady who could hope for none of the joys of Hollywood youth!

He did not even try to do what he had been bidden to do by Paragon's president; "think over" his scenario with the idea of changing it to suit requirements. After that talk with the three Big Men of Paragon, he foresaw that he couldn't make the changes they wanted and keep his self-respect as a writer. He had been a good fighter in the war, and something of the old fierce, eagle spirit stirred in him now.

He'd be a coward to ruin his work and hurt his reputation for the sake of satisfying these men, hanging on to the bungalow, and watching money roll comfortably in. A coward was what he didn't intend to be!

"Somebody else will produce 'Black Sleeves' instead of Paragon," he told himself. "Or if not—well, I may find myself thanking Providence for poor old Aunt Kate. She's pretty sure to turn out a sport."

The girl of the silver dress would not begin work at Montparnasse next day. She would have to wait for her new "harem" costume. But Malcolm went rather earlier than usual, to lunch at the smart restaurant, and arrange financial matters for Miss Smith. All his reckless joy in spending easily-made money was suddenly gone, but he wasn't going to be a pauper even if worst came to worst; and he and Pierre settled up things between them. Then, having been roused after an almost sleepless night by the promised wire giving the time of Lady Gates' arrival, he started off directly after luncheon to meet the Santa Fe Limited.

There she was among the first to leave the train, and Malcolm's quick glance told him that Aunt Kate was changed indeed. She was still the stout, grey-haired old lady of sixty, but she was no longer "upholstered"; she was dressed, and dressed—Malcolm imagined—from some fashionable shop in London. She had pearls—real ones, no doubt, since her husband, Sir George Gates, had died "worth" half a million pounds. And from her ears hung diamonds as big as large-sized peas. In old days, during the life of the stout and keen-witted Lancashire cotton magnate, knighted for services to the Conservative

party, Lady Gates had been repressed* in manner, almost timid. Now she greeted Malcolm so expansively with a slight Lancashire accent, that all the lovely stars who had returned "to the coast" from New York, stared openly at the fat, bejewelled Englishwoman.

Malcolm took her in his Rolls Royce, which she greatly admired, to the wonderful Hôtel Ambassador with its lawns and smart shops, its bungalows, its palms, its theatre and general effect of being a whole town in itself. A suite of bedroom, bath, and sitting-room with a view, had been engaged in advance, and provided with flowers by the "management." Lady Gates was entranced with everything, including the sapphire sky and brilliant sunshine, "So different from dear Leeds!" and she was feverishly anxious to begin "seeing life."

Malcolm had got out of an engagement for the evening, and invited his aunt to dine at Montparnasse. "It's one of the nights when they dance there," he said, "and now you've turned into such a gay young person, you'll enjoy watching the fun."

Yes, Lady Gates agreed, she would enjoy watching the fun. But at eight o'clock, seated beside Malcolm at his table, her jolly face with its double chin was clouded.

"I never saw so many beautiful girls and wonderful young men!" she said. "Who is that gorgeous dark man waltzing with a little yellow-headed thing? Is he some well-known star?"

"No," explained Malcolm, "that's Marco Lopez, the professional dancer here. He's a Spaniard, or Argentinian or something. Graceful, isn't he?"

"Graceful! I should say he was!" breathed Lady Gates. "He's perfect. Oh, Malcolm, seeing these girls dancing with him and the other men, makes me long to be young, and have my *own* fun, instead of watching others. I never realised before, but it's awful to be old. I wish I could go back to twenty!"

Her eyes filled with tears. Malcolm was sorry for her, but sorry for himself too, for he was afraid she was going to cry.

Just at that moment the celebrated and popular Marco, with the "little yellow-headed thing" waltzed smoothly past their table. Lady Gates' eyes and those of Marco Lopez met.

CHAPTER V

PEARLS AND DIAMONDS

A FEW moments later, Lopez was bowing before Lady Gates. With Latin politeness, he begged Allister's permission to ask his guest to dance. The man's English was good, but stiffly precise.

Malcolm's heart sank. "*Like* the swine!" he thought. "Attracted by the diamonds and pearls." Aloud he said civilly that it was for Lady Gates to decide; and his

imagination painted a humiliating figure of what the stout, dressy figure would look like, circling round the dancing floor of Montparnasse in the slim dark Argentine's arms.

But all that still clung to Lady Gates of good Yorkshire common sense helped her to resist the tempter. Red with excitement, her face beamed joy at the flattering invitation, yet she coquettishly refused.

"I think it's a real compliment that you should ask me," she stammered. "And I'd love to! I can't dance so very well. I'd be frightened to make an exhibition of myself. But—but I wonder if—now don't be offended!—do you ever give lessons?"

"Yes, Madame, I do to a very few ladies, in the days when here at Montparnasse they do not have the dancing," replied Lopez, his splendid eyes just glancing again at the jewels. "I would teach you with great pleasure if you wish."

"I do wish. Can I have a lesson twice a week at the Ambassador Hotel where I am staying?" Malcolm's Aunt Kate asked without glancing at her nephew. She looked ashamed yet mulishly determined.

"But certainly, Madame," Lopez assured her in his attractive baritone voice. He gave her an address and telephone number, which she jotted down quickly with a gold pencil in a gold-backed notebook in her gold mesh, diamond-rimmed vanity bag. She then extracted

a visiting-card of her own, from some other gold-backed receptacle contained in the bag, and under "Lady Gates" scribbled "Hôtel Ambassador."

"I suppose you think I'm a great big old goose, Malcolm," she apologised when Lopez had gone, to begin dancing with someone entirely unlike Lady Gates and exactly like Hollywood. "But, well, somehow or other I want to get into the spirit of the thing here as much as I can. Poor me! It's thrilling. I feel as if I'd been drinking champagne."

Malcolm was tempted to say, "Don't let it make you feel as if you had drunk too much!" But he didn't. And he didn't confide to his aunt the heavy trouble that oppressed him concerning "Red Resurrection" alias "Black Sleeves." He couldn't see his way to suiting Mr. Kerlin and the others, yet it was terribly important to suit them. He had been called up again by all three, and had had to say "No progress so far worth speaking of." Their voices had not sounded patient, and Joe Kerlin had spoken again about the waste of time with salaries and overhead expenses running on. Malcolm foresaw a "showdown"; a row. And that was the only thing he did see clearly in his future.

He listened smilingly to Lady Gates' chatter, though his thoughts were so far away that his soul seemed to have gone from behind his eyes and left them like empty windows. Lady Gates, now that "dear George's" large

shadow no longer obscured her path, had become a very self-centred woman, but even she soon saw that Malcolm wasn't really there with her at the table.

"What's the matter, Boy?" she inquired, a little tartly, using her old name for him, "you haven't heard a word I've said for the last five minutes! I asked you what was the best beauty shop in Hollywood or Los Angeles, and you said, 'Yes, quite so!' I believe you're thinking about some girl!"

Malcolm was on the point of denying this, when suddenly it occurred to him that this rich, more or less good-natured old aunt might be extremely useful to Miss Smith if the girl were a stranger in Hollywood, as she appeared to be. If Lady Gates first met her selling cigarettes at Montparnasse, and wearing a "harem get-up" for all the world to see, more than likely the Yorkshire woman would be snobbish. But what if he interested her in Miss Smith to begin with? He could make a story about the girl, and work up the mystery. Then the knight's widow from Leeds would look upon Miss Smith as a princess in disguise, and perhaps be "nice" to her. He had a feeling that Miss Smith would need to have people nice to her; and an elderly woman as a chaperon might aid him to get better acquainted without being misunderstood.

"Well, I must confess I *was* thinking of a girl!" he admitted.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Lady Gates. "Have you fallen in love with one of these movie stars?"

"No, indeed," said Malcolm. "They're beautiful, and they're not the dumb-bells that the people who've never been to Hollywood imagine them. They're jolly clever, some of them, and fascinating. But they don't seem real to me. They're just what Hergesheimer calls 'shapes in light.' The girl I'm thinking about is as beautiful as the best of them, but—she's different. I don't know how to explain, exactly, but somehow she's *real*. She's facing life. There's a mystery about her——"

"Oh, a mystery!" broke in Lady Gates. "Mystery is all right in movies and stories, but beware of it in women you meet, especially in such a place as Hollywood, the home of vamps!"

"This girl has only just arrived here," said Malcolm. "She's certainly no 'vamp'! She isn't *of* Hollywood yet. Maybe she never will be. She has come for a special purpose, frankly I don't know what, but I'm sure it's something to be proud of rather than ashamed. And queerly enough, it concerns Montparnasse. She—er—hasn't much money, and needs work. I—er—people I know could have got her a screen job, if only to walk on at first, and even that would pay her seven dollars a day—sixty a week. But no. She refused. She wanted to be here—said she 'needed to be here.' And, well, the only job going for a woman at Montparnasse, at present,

anyhow, is that of a cigarette girl, at half the money she could have earned more easily on the Paragon lot or somewhere else."

"A cigarette girl!" repeated Lady Gates, disillusioned.

"She will sell cigarettes to people lunching and dining here, as that young woman you may have noticed to-night does. She'll be on hand to-morrow. Her costume will be ready then."

"A costume like the young—person's over there!" Lady Gates exclaimed, nodding towards the undulating figure of the fair cigarette seller in "harem" dress who in private life was Nora Casey. "Oh, Malcolm, you *wouldn't* marry anyone like that!"

"She's as unlike as possible to this one," said Allister. "Wait till you see her. I told you, she has a reason—a mysterious reason apparently for being employed at Montparnasse. She isn't the usual type at all, and besides——"

"But the costume! Why, it would be like marrying a chorus girl!" came the protest.

If it hadn't been funny, Malcolm's anger would have risen against the silly old lady. But it *was* funny, and instead of frowning, he laughed.

"Don't count my chickens before they're hatched, for heaven's sake!" he said. "I've seen Miss Smith (as she'll be called here) only once——"

"As she'll be called! Then Smith isn't her name?"

"Well, it's not, so far as I know. As a matter of fact, I wished the 'Miss Smith' on to her, myself."

"How strange!" sighed Lady Gates. "And what is your Miss Smith's real name, if you don't mind my asking?"

"Unfortunately," said Malcolm, "I *did* 'mind' asking her that very thing myself, as she volunteered no information—almost refused it. But I was able to do her a slight favour, and if I can win Miss Smith's confidence by good behaviour, maybe she'd tell me her name and all the rest by and by. I wanted to interest you in her, Aunt Kate, because I know how kind-hearted you are, and this poor girl's in need of a helping hand—a woman's hand—here in Hollywood, where she doesn't know a soul worth knowing, I imagine, and where she came just a fortnight ago."

"I'll *look* at her, of course, dear boy," promised Lady Gates, with a somewhat martyred air. "But you'll forgive me if I say that I'm afraid she *won't* be my sort."

"And you may not be hers!" Malcolm snapped, losing his sense of humour in Lady Gates' humourlessness. "My idea is, that she'll turn out to be a princess in disguise, and you used to have quite a weakness for princesses, Aunt Kate."

Lady Gates did something with her two chins which gave the effect of "bridling." "We shall see!" she said aloud. Inwardly she was saying, "*I shall see!*"

CHAPTER VI

SOMEONE IN THE DUSK

AT Montparnasse there is an interval, on the famous dancing nights, when the orchestra fades out like a scene in a moving picture, to take a rest and sample a few bottles of "near beer"—as near as possible. During this interval, on the evening of Lady Gates' first appearance at the restaurant, Marco Lopez snatched a chance to go to a telephone booth.

He got the number of a popular Los Angeles newspaper, and inquired for a reporter named Jennings. "Tell him it's Marco Lopez," he said. A few moments later he was answered.

"Hello, Lopez; this is Tom Jennings," called a nice Californian voice. "What's the good news?"

"Maybe it is not so important, but I promised you always to call if anyone new and interesting came in," Lopez replied in his best English. "Even if you do not so much care about this lady I speak of, it will be a favour to me if you can make her talk a little of herself for your paper. I have a reason and I have done you some favours. I am talking of a Lady Gates, from England, who has come to stay I know not how long at the Ambassador. She is not young or handsome, but she is dressed from Paris I think, and her jewels—if they are real—are worth a fortune."

"All right," said Jennings. "I can always use a title, and maybe there'll be something snappy in her motive for coming here. I'm breezing out to Hollywood on another assignment and I'll drop in at Montparnasse to look her over."

"Better 'phone to the hotel in an hour," suggested Marco, "I think she will soon be going. She is with Mr. Allister, the writer, and he has the air of wishing to finish. I do not know if they are relations, or for what motive he pays court to her. Of course, do not mention my name."

"Mum's the word!" was the reporter's assurance, as he hung up.

Lopez was right in imagining that Lady Gates would soon be leaving Montparnasse. She had become thoughtful, partly because of her nephew's confessed infatuation for a mysterious cigarette seller, less likely to turn out a princess than a designing hussy; but even more reflective on her own account. She hadn't dreamed that seeing the Youth and Beauty of Hollywood amusing itself would upset her as it had done. But she had not been so oppressed with gloom since her George died; perhaps, to be honest, not even then, for at that time there had been compensations. She felt so old, now, so plain, so out of the picture! And Malcolm had given her no comfort at all! He'd been thinking of another person, a very undesirable person. Lady Gates wanted to be

alone, and plan. Exactly what she could plan to improve her situation she hardly knew, but there must be something!

Back again at the Ambassador, she didn't ask Malcolm in, and he was glad of that, for he'd been coining excuses in advance. He left her in the hotel lobby, after arranging to fetch her again with his car the next evening for dinner at Montparnasse. His aunt's manner had made him regret almost fiercely that he had mentioned Miss Smith and begged friendly help for the girl, but he couldn't now recall the invitation. It was too late for repentance! Miss Smith would be introduced to Lady Gates at dinner.

Alone in her suite, the latter wasn't sure that she wouldn't indulge in a good cry as she took off her jewels and the smart dress which hadn't made her look even one week younger! But before the first tear fell she was called to the 'phone, and it was cheering to know herself of enough importance in brilliant Movieland, to be interviewed for a big newspaper. She consented, of course, and would have appointed the next day for the talk, but the reporter, who said his name was Tom Jennings, reminded her ladyship that it was only ten o'clock p.m. Could he buzz round in his auto, and have a few words with her to-night? Then the stuff could come out in the morning edition.

Lady Gates said "Yes," and put on her pearls again.

Next morning, in his little bungalow on what is called the "wrong side of Hollywood" (the flat side), Marco Lopez read the interview with Lady Gates of Leeds and London, England.

Of course Mr. Jennings alternated his "Lady Gates" with "Lady Katherine Gates," in every other sentence, blissfully unaware that only daughters of dukes, marquises and earls have the courtesy title of "Lady" attached to a Christian name. That the new arrival in Hollywood was the widow of a mere knight meant little to him; and this was soothing to Malcolm Allister's Aunt Kate.

"I'm just as good here," she told herself, "as if I'd been an earl's wife!"

Lopez, in a crimson dressing-gown, read over his eleven o'clock breakfast, that Lady Gates was the famous Malcolm Allister's aunt. She admitted that her late husband had been a millionaire, and "confessed" that though her jewels had cost over a hundred thousand American dollars, she had a weakness for wearing them, and not shutting them up in a safe.

"Everybody here seems to be rich, and have famous jewels," Mr. Jennings made her ladyship remark. "So I expect that I and mine will seem just nothing at all. I'm of no importance in Hollywood, compared with my nephew. But I expect to enjoy myself."

To Marco Lopez Lady Gates seemed of far more importance than Malcolm Allister. In common with

Moving Picture magnates, and scenario departments, he too considered writers of novels lower than the dust.

When he had finished breakfast he went into the tiny kitchen of the bungalow, which was servantless, made some fresh coffee, and arranged a small, napkin-covered tray with a glass of orange juice in ice, and a covered plate containing thin toast, to accompany the steaming coffee. With this tray in his hand, and looking very handsome, though his usually sleek hair was rumpled, he knocked at a closed door.

"Come in!" answered a soft, weary, contralto voice, and Lopez, pushing the door open, felt his way through purple semi-darkness to a bedside.

Curtains of a deep rose-purple were drawn across a wide window, and the room was scented with the perfume of Jacqueminot roses. Out of the ruddy dusk a face glimmered white as pearl. It was almost like the face of a ghost.

"Didst thou sleep after all for a few hours, dear one?" Lopez asked in his own language.

But the contralto voice replied in English: "Yes, two or three hours perhaps. I dreamed of you! Oh, you are good to me, Marco!"

"I adore thee! Thou knowest that," Lopez answered, using as always with this loved woman the intimate "thee and thou" of the Latin races. "Shall I pull back

the curtains now, and sit by thee to watch that thou dost eat thy breakfast?"

"Not too much light," said the woman resting among the pillows. "I don't like you to see me looking my worst. I am bad enough these days at my best. But I shan't trouble you very much longer, I think, my Marco!"

"Do not say that, for the love of God!" cried Lopez. "To me thou art the most beautiful woman who ever lived, and the dearest! 'Trouble' me! What words! And I have come to thee this morning with the news that thou canst help me. Together we will make something from this English lady—and of her. But that last is thy part."

"She's worth while, then?"

"She is immensely rich and her jewels *are real*. They are worth a hundred thousand dollars."

"She has told your reporter man this?"

"Yes. But I am sure she is not one who would lie or boast. She is too simple. Already she has called me on the telephone this morning before I began my breakfast, asking me to come and see her at the Ambassador about four in the afternoon. I will go. Perhaps she will offer me tea. I think she will. And we will have a talk, that lady and I, a talk about many things. But—art thou strong enough for the task, my wonderful one?"

"Oh, quite," said the woman. "It will amuse me. Such a long time it has been since we worked together."

"I shall try to arrange for sometime to-morrow," said Lopez.

"Why not this evening?"

"Evening is not a good time for thee, till thou art stronger. Thou wouldst cough—and not sleep at night. Besides, this Lady Gates might have to put off an evening engagement with her nephew to come here, and I am sure it is better for him not to know what is on, while there is time for him to advise his aunt against us."

"To-morrow, then," said the woman. "Ah, but this good coffee you make for me is reviving, Marco! It gives me life—for the minute. How I thank you for everything!"

Malcolm came early to Montparnasse and claimed "his" table for luncheon. He was in a horrible mood, for he had been at the studio, and had had a "row" with Kerlin. He had asked to be released from his contract, and, somewhat to his surprise, the request was granted without a word of objection. So secretly, that the emotion had hardly been recognised by himself, he had hoped that Kerlin was merely "bluffing." He had had visions that, if he held out against altering his scenario according to studio suggestions, the president of Paragon would yield or compromise. But evidently Malcolm Alister, author of a great best seller, wasn't of the supreme importance to these picture people that he himself had imagined. They had invited him to come from England

to California; they'd provided him with a bungalow to write in, and had poured forth cataracts of expensive publicity concerning him and his work. Yet now it seemed a matter of comparative indifference to them that the whole campaign, and thousands of dollars, should be wasted! Queer people these movie magnates! They had to be seen to be believed in! Malcolm was furious, and had rushed to consult an attorney, only to be told that he ought to have had a different contract. He had been too trusting. Most much advertised authors who came to Hollywood with a loud accompaniment of trumpets went through his experience, or something like it. But they had all assured themselves of a certain sum, whether they failed or succeeded. Malcolm had been so dazzled by the offer, and so innocent, that he had simply signed the document he was asked to sign, without the advice of a lawyer before sailing from England. Now he was punished. But nothing could be done.

Malcolm walked into the restaurant at noon in a mood to throw dishes, but at sight of a figure in emerald green gauze and satin, rage died within him.

The girl came to his table offering her tray of cigars and cigarettes. "Here I am," she said, with a friendly smile that warmed Malcolm's heart. "How do you like me?"

"More than I can say!" he eagerly caught her up.

"I mean the costume, of course," she explained.

"Oh, of course! So do I," Malcolm assured her gravely. "You are—I mean, *it is*, more beautiful even than I expected."

"Thank you," said the girl, as he handled package after package of cigarettes, slow to choose from the contents of her tray. "I hope I shall be a success, and that Monsieur Pierre—I must tack on the 'Monsieur' now he's my employer—will keep me."

"You'll be a success all right, no fear!" prophesied Malcolm.

What he feared was that she would be too conspicuous a success. Everyone who came in stared at the slim figure in green, with its glorious crown of unbobbed red hair. Then heads drew together, and eyes continued to stare as lips whispered. The other cigarette girl was a nice looking, pert little thing, but this one was a dazzling beauty.

"I may have to thank you, Mr. Allister," Pierre volunteered, hovering beside the table when the girl had moved away to sell her stock elsewhere. "I shall not be surprised if your Miss Smith turns out a good investment, in which case you will not have to open your pocket-book. She looks as if she is going to be worth her salt—and sugar too. Oh, yes, there may be sugar for her—as much as she wants. Do you not think so?"

As he spoke Pierre threw a suggestive glance from

under raised brows to a table where a fat, dark man was being slower than Malcolm had been in choosing "smokes." He was gazing up at the figure in green with a look which Malcolm burned to strike off with his fist, and there would be more men like that—many more men every day and every night till closing time.

"Gad! I'm afraid I'm going to love this girl—really love her!" The thought branded itself on his brain. "And I'm less than nobody at Hollywood, now. Everyone will know soon how I've failed. I can do nothing for her at all."

She had escaped from the fat man, who refused change for a five-dollar bill. Perhaps Malcolm Allister's ardent thought touched her on the shoulder, for she turned, glanced at him, and had begun faintly to smile when her look passed his face and was riveted upon something or someone behind him.

The girl's expression was so strange that almost mechanically Malcolm twisted round to see what had stiffened her smile and frozen its sweetness.

Marco Lopez had come in, for to-day there was dancing at Montparnasse in the luncheon hour.

CHAPTER VII

THE VEILED PROPHETESS

MALCOLM remembered the look in Lady Gates' eyes when she had first seen the Argentinian. This look of Miss Smith's was very different. There had been unashamed admiration in the old woman's eyes. There was thinly-veiled dislike, even hate in those of the young woman. Yet—was it hate? Well, anyhow, it was an emotion which she wished to hide.

Suddenly Malcolm asked himself (or rather he heard the question as if spoken aloud in his head), "Is *this* the reason she was so bent on being at Montparnasse? Has she come to be near Lopez?"

The suggestion was disquieting to him, and humiliating. He couldn't get it out of his mind, though Lopez apparently paid no attention at all to the presence of a beautiful new cigarette girl in the restaurant. So little interest did the professional dancer seem to feel in the latest acquisition that he got leave from Pierre to go home a few minutes before his usual hour.

As he started in his cheap but beautifully kept little car for the Hôtel Ambassador, the Argentinian smiled to think how little "that writing man," Malcolm Allister, guessed whither he was bound. The fellow had stared at him rather rudely. Could he suspect already how deep was the old lady's interest? "Allister has his own

axe to grind with his rich aunt, of course," Lopez reflected, shooting along the palm-shaded boulevard whenever he could flash through an open space in the congested traffic.

He had noticed the new girl in the green-gold embroidered satin and spangled gauze. Her beauty and the glory of her hair had attracted his eyes and vaguely stirred his curiosity, but not his heart. Such heart as the Argentino had was otherwise engaged. He hadn't missed seeing that the new vendor of cigarettes appeared to be "intrigued" by him, and if she had been a client of the restaurant he would certainly have invited her to dance. That would have been business. But Miss Smith's face was not familiar to Lopez, and it did not occur to him that his might have another attraction for her than the usual one with women; his good looks.

He hadn't deceived himself when he pictured Lady Gates offering him tea. "Ask him to come straight up to my suite," was the message when the telephone announced that Mr. Marco Lopez had arrived. And there sat her ladyship, rather terrible to behold, her bulk lightly draped in scarlet georgette. She reclined among rainbow cushions on a sofa faced by an elaborate little tea-table for two, and Lopez, ushered in by a bell-boy, hurried to save his large hostess from struggling up to welcome him.

"Dear lady, do not rise for me!" he said in the husky voice Katherine Gates had found so alluring.

She invited him to sit beside her, and rang for tea, which came almost at once to join the tiny sandwiches and *petits fours* already on the table.

They chatted of Montparnasse, and Hollywood in general, and of Mr. Marco Lopez in particular, a subject always welcome to the gentleman concerned, when able to keep it free from too much questioning. Lady Gates waited until tea was over, and Lopez smoking one of the best brands of cigarettes obtainable at the Ambassador, before she mentioned the suggested dancing lessons. This silence had slightly worried Lopez, because the plans he had made seemed to depend on the lessons, or at least on a certain amount of friendly privilege with the lady of pearls and diamonds. He was too clever and experienced, however, to speak first about his profession.

Lady Gates did not smoke. "I'm afraid I'm old-fashioned," she said, "and that makes me a little sad. I didn't realise how sad until I came here, though I'd begun to be a bit restless about myself in Paris and London. But with my nephew at Montparnasse, a weight seemed to fall on me, Mr. Lopez, if you can understand. Everyone else was so young and beautiful! I'm telling you all this, because I have to explain why I feel as I do about the dancing lessons. When you came up and asked me to dance that night I wanted to do it—yes, almost more for a minute, than I can remember ever

wanting anything! But the *next* minute I knew I mustn't make myself a laughing-stock. I had to refuse. Still, I couldn't quite give up the idea; so I thought about the lessons—with you. Well, now, I should enjoy them. I haven't danced for many years, before I married, that was. But where could I ever dance, except here, in this drawing-room maybe—a woman of—my age, and size? What's the good of learning an—an art that I can never use?"

Some men might have been touched by so piteous a confession from an elderly lady who had everything in the world except the three things most important to women: looks, and love, and youth. But the Argentino's emotion was not pity. He had no desire to laugh at Lady Gates, but the tears swimming under wrinkled eyelids made little impression on him. He was thinking of another woman, and of Marco Lopez.

"Dear, charming lady!" he soothed her. "You judge yourself cruelly. I do understand—I sympathise. But you are wrong. You may not be a young girl, yet there are many women in Hollywood of your age who pass as beauties, and look like girls or not much older. Why, you can't be more than fifty, if that, and there are stars of the screen over forty, though few know it except themselves!"

Katherine Gates was vaguely comforted. If *he* didn't take her for more than fifty (he did: he guessed her exact

age) why disillusion him? "Still . . . I'm afraid *I* could never pass as a beauty!" she sighed.

"Yet that is not impossible—at Hollywood," Lopez gently ventured.

"What *do* you mean—at Hollywood?" she questioned, hope and curiosity rising together. "Why at Hollywood of all places, where everyone is young and handsome?"

"May I make a suggestion, Madame?" Lopez asked.

"Do, please!"

"It is this: a very wonderful lady has her studio attached to my little bungalow. An artist built the house, but he had a love tragedy, and killed himself there. For that reason the place was cheap. I had no fear of ghosts, and I took it. But I had my way to make then, and as I did not need the studio for myself except maybe for a few hours now and then if I decided to give lessons, I advertised to let it. Soon this lady of whom I speak became my tenant. She uses the studio on certain afternoons and evenings. To-morrow is one of her days. I should like to advise that you consult her."

"What about?" inquired Lady Gates, puzzled but interested.

"The lady is a very accomplished astrologer, and scientific palmist. She also reads the crystal," explained Lopez. "She is not strong in health, or she would make a fortune, for she could have all Hollywood and Los Angeles as her clients. As it is, she refuses most people.

But I am privileged to have become her friend since she took my studio, and those I ask her as a favour to see, she sees."

"What is her name?" Lady Gates wanted to know.

Lopez smiled, and let lowered lids give him an air of secretiveness, of mystery. "If I could tell you that, you would know she is very famous," he said. "But I am not allowed. The lady calls herself here, Madame Blank. And because she always wears a veil when she receives clients, sometimes people speak of her as the 'veiled prophetess.' You see, she truly is a prophetess. And not only does she foretell what is likely to happen, she gives advice how to avoid the bad happenings which hover over the future, like black birds of prey; she counsels how to fight them off."

"Nobody can change the future!" spoke the sensible side of Lady Gates from Leeds.

"Are you sure of that, Madame, in these days of great scientific discoveries? Have you no belief in the power of Thought to summon good and destroy evil influences?"

"Well, there may be something in that," Katherine Gates admitted.

"All I suggest is that you let me make an appointment for you to talk with Madame Blank," persisted Lopez. "She will be able to help you in ways of which you would not dream. As for the dancing lessons, do not even think of them again till you have been advised

by this lady. It has been a pleasure for me and an honour to come here. I am a man, before I am a professional! Would you like an appointment, if I can arrange it, for to-morrow afternoon, say at this time?"

"I would," exclaimed Lady Gates, her eyes tearful no more, but sparkling with vague, mysterious hopes and a very definite excitement. "I think you are a *wonderful* man!"

"You will find Madame Blank wonderful," said Lopez. "May I call, and take you to her?"

"Oh, do! We'll go in the car I've hired by the week till I decide whether or not to buy one," answered Lady Gates.

After Lopez had bowed himself out, the fat woman in the scarlet tea-frock stood gazing pensively at the dimpled, much-ringed hand which the "wonderful man" had respectfully kissed.

She was dazed by rose-coloured dreams of youth and beauty—at Hollywood. Foolish dreams for her, she told herself, since they couldn't become realities. And yet—yet—how strangely Marco Lopez had talked—and hinted.

She could hardly tear her thoughts from to-morrow, at five o'clock, and the "veiled propheticess." But the rest of to-day had to be lived through. Luckily she would have the interest, to-night, of "looking over" that cigarette seller, at Montparnasse. An awful creature, she was sure!

CHAPTER VIII

THE CRYSTAL

"My only friend in Hollywood—the only one in all the West!" the girl called "Miss Smith" spoke in her heart of Malcolm Allister, as from across the room she looked at him under her eyelashes.

She yearned towards him, for she was more lonely than she had expected to be, and if it were not for the thought of Allister's protection she would have been afraid of Pierre.

Not afraid physically! The girl would not have come to Hollywood at all, and especially on the errand which had brought her, if she'd been anything like a coward. But she wanted to stay at Montparnasse: she *must* stay for a while; therefore it would be stupid to offend the proprietor.

"What is your name besides Smith, Mademoiselle," he had asked after her arrival, while the restaurant was still empty of clients.

"That is my Hollywood name, 'Miss Smith,'" the girl insisted firmly but gently. "Or Mary Smith, if you wish, Monsieur Pierre." And he hadn't looked pleased.

But to-night she longed to tell Malcolm Allister all the details of her strange story, watching his face to see if he believed she spoke the truth. She wanted to say

to him, "I am Madeleine Standish. Did you ever read that name in the newspapers, and do you remember in what connection?" She wanted to do this in order to prove to him fully that she trusted him; but she must keep silence about herself for the present, of course, for Malcolm's sake even more than her own. He must not be involved if anything horrid—happened.

Malcolm Allister had been chivalrous to her, as men are in books and plays, and (it seemed to her) very seldom are in real life. He was her one friend; but she must do without his advice and keep her secret for a time, at best.

Besides, she was probably doomed to lose his friendship and, yes, admiration, because here was this stout old lady ("all dolled up" as Nora Casey put it), his aunt, it seemed. She had the air of being rich, and fond of her nephew. As she had followed him to Hollywood, she was most likely alone in the world, and intended to leave him heaps of money when she died. Madeleine Standish, alias "Miss Smith," was still so young (not quite twenty-two) that if a woman were fifty she might as well be seventy-five and have done with it! So Madeleine thought of Lady Gates as a doddering old thing who might be of any age up to eighty, and ready to drop out of life next minute. Therefore, if he were his aunt's heir, Malcolm Allister ought to do everything he could to please the old lady, and not cross her in such

an important way as interesting himself in unsuitable girls!

When Malcolm had seated Lady Gates facing all the "human interest" of the softly-lighted, attractive room, Madeleine didn't glide in her Moorish slippers to Mr. Allister's table, smiling her lovely, friendly smile, and proffering her tray of cigarettes. If Mr. Allister wanted her, he could beckon, or ask: or if not Nora Casey could go to that table.

Malcolm did beckon. He took pains to catch Miss Smith's glance when it wandered in his direction, and his eyes and hands both invited the girl to serve him.

"Cigarettes, Mr. Allister?" she asked.

"Yes, thanks," he replied. "Egyptians for me, and I am going to teach my aunt to smoke, on something very mild. What do you recommend?"

Madeleine suggested something innocuous; and as he paid, he said: "I've been talking to Lady Gates about you, Miss Smith. At least, I've been telling her that you are a princess in disguise, and that interests her very much. Doesn't it, Aunt Kate?"

"Yes, of course it does," returned Lady Gates, smiling kindly, though she was not devoid of interior cattiness. She liked Malcolm too much to see him make a fool of himself here in this bewildering, sunlit and Klieg-lit Hollywood. But she was naturally too good-hearted to be rude to anyone, except under great provocation.

Besides, she must study the girl: and anyhow, rudeness wasn't the right way. It would only make matters worse. "I am quite interested, and I'd like to see something of you. But I suppose we mustn't keep you talking too long here, or the proprietor would be annoyed with us. Maybe he'd visit it on you! So I've been thinking. Let's see, what times of the day or evening are you off duty?"

"I come on at half-past ten in the morning," Madeleine told her. "At least, I have to be here then to get into this dress. And every other night, I'll be off at nine. To-night's one of them, because they don't have dancing. That's only every other night. The other g—Miss Casey will be on to-night till twelve. To-morrow I'll be here till midnight."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Lady Gates. "That doesn't sound like what they call 'union hours.' You see I come from Leeds, a busy manufacturing town in England, so I know a lot about such things, from hearsay."

"I don't belong to any union," said Madeleine. "And I'm only too glad to be here at Montparnasse no matter how late I have to stay."

Malcolm was wondering if she had asked Pierre to let her stop late on the dancing nights, in order to meet Marco Lopez, at whom he had seen her look with—with almost a greedy look. Another stab of jealousy and dislike of the professional, gave him a sharp pain. He

was almost sure that the girl had done exactly that thing, and for that motive. He could ask Pierre and find out. But nothing would tempt him to such prying meanness. He would sooner have his hand chopped off.

"Well, I'm going to a preview of a picture with my nephew to-night, as soon as we finish dinner," said Lady Gates. "He has quite excited me, telling about the crowd that collects to see the movie stars get out of their grand limousines in front of the theatre, and how the photographers shoot on floods of calcium or something to take their pictures not only for newspapers but the 'movie news' at all the picture houses. Why, Malcolm is such a celebrity! I'm afraid they may snap me along with him, that's the only reason I'm scared to go!"

Madeleine imagined that "afraid" ought to read "I hope." But in this she misjudged Katherine Gates. The stout, elderly woman was *really* afraid. If there were truly a chance of reducing her size and beautifying her fat, elderly person in any desperate way at this magical Hollywood where all women were visions or else hid themselves, she would have liked to "lie low" till after the metamorphosis. Still, she couldn't resist accepting Malcolm's invitation to the preview, one of the season's best, with a "long run film" at a new theatre more suitable in architecture to Bagdad, or some other city in the Far East, than to the jumping-off place of the West!

"In a day or two," she went on, "I'll ask you to come on one of your early nights, and have supper in my little sitting-room at the Hôtel Ambassador, just with Malcolm and me. Then you can tell me all about yourself!"

Malcolm frowned at this, but didn't speak; and the girl, thanking Lady Gates politely, inwardly resolved to reveal less than nothing of her own affairs to the expansive lady.

"I wonder exactly what he has said to her about me?" the girl asked herself. She did know in her heart that Allister admired her, but she hadn't gone far enough to think of *love*. She wasn't even aware that some such emotion for him was hovering uncertainly, like a butterfly over a flower in a strange garden, in the region of her heart.

If she had known, she would only have scolded herself for a fool, because her errand in Hollywood was the all important thing in her life, and it would most likely prevent her from dreaming of happy love—ever!

The next afternoon was that of Lady Gates' appointment with the "prophetess."

Lopez was prompt in arriving at the Ambassador, and Lady Gates, who had hardly slept for thinking of what she might be told, was ready and waiting. Her car carried the two smoothly to that "wrong side" of Hollywood where the professional dancer lived. But even the

“wrong” side of Hollywood has its charm. The bungalow which Lopez had chosen, as the best he could afford, was in a gay little street of many bungalows, each utterly different from the other, all shaded by pepper trees or palms, and possessing unfenced lawns.

There were “colonial” frame bungalows, painted white or butter-colour, with bright green or blue blinds. There were miniature copies of Marie Antoinette’s little toy shelters for shepherdesses at Versailles. There was a one-storeyed German fortified castle built of cement, imitating grey stone. There were Spanish and Italian villas, and a “cliff-dweller cottage.” But Lopez’s dwelling (not so near his neighbours as to hear them brushing their teeth or even taking a bath) was the best in the street. It was larger than the rest; that is, it must have contained at least five fair-sized rooms: and it had the semi-detached studio which he had described to Lady Gates. The architecture was Spanish Mexican, as he explained to her now.

“We are expected,” Lopez said, “so I can take you straight in to Madame Blank. She will receive no one else this afternoon. Your car will have to wait for you perhaps an hour.”

He opened the door with a key, and they entered a vestibule hung with more or less Spanish brocade, and a mirror with a carved Spanish frame.

A knock at an inner door brought the answer, “Come in!” spoken in a low and singularly impressive voice.

Katherine Gates' heart began to thump, she hardly knew why. Even in the vestibule, there was a faint fragrance of incense. As Lopez gently opened the door a wave of amber-scented smoke poured out from a mysterious region of blue dusk.

For a moment the lady from Leeds felt that she was half blind and completely dazed in this perfumed twilight; but presently a few pieces of furniture took shape, and she saw a reclining form swathed rather than draped, in white, a long, lazy, graceful shape on a divan of deep purple or black. Behind its head were piled dark, velvety cushions, on which eyes, accustoming themselves to dimness, caught here and there a gleam of gold and silver embroidery.

Over the face of the woman in white was fastened a white veil which left her eyes uncovered, and was somehow draped over the head, completely covering the hair.

The eyes that looked up to hers, thought Lady Gates—impelled to poetic fancies—were wells of ink; and the hand half revealed under a flowing sleeve, as it reached for her plump gloved fingers, was white as the sleeve itself; long, thin rather than slender, and with polished nails that were like pale coral on ivory.

Lopez invited the guest to be seated in a chair, already placed in front of the divan.

"This is Lady Gates, of whom you have told me, Marco," announced the low contralto voice. "I do not ask you the question, for I know from the touch of her

hand it is so. Now, Lady Gates, take off your gloves—both gloves. I wish to read the two hands. Each tells something different.”

“Don’t—won’t—you need more light?” stammered her ladyship.

“No,” answered the voice. “This is light to me.”

The figure on the divan sat up, and bent over the extended hands, first one, then the other, and studied them.

Lady Gates was informed that she had “never known love, never known real happiness,” and that a message to her soul from beyond had brought her here “into the sunshine to find both.”

She was told other things, too, things which almost anyone might have learned by consulting the “red book,” and turning the leaves to “Sir George Gates, Kt., etc., etc.” But those two were the statements that seized her attention.

“It’s too late for me to have love, or the kind of happiness that goes with it, Madame Blank,” she sighed, more freely than she might have dared had not Lopez slipped discreetly out of the room.

“No,” replied the “veiled prophetess.” “What you have come to find, you can find, if you know how.”

“But I don’t know how!” exploded Lady Gates. “Can you tell me how to perform miracles?”

“Let us see,” said Madame Blank. “The time has come to consult my crystal. You will give me, before you leave, the date of your birth and other details, so

that I can ask the stars for you. But to-day it shall be the crystal."

She did not rise from the divan, but pressing a button-like ornament on the wall, a small door opened, and she drew out a swinging shelf or table. This was covered with black, and throwing back a piece of black velvet drapery, a handsome crystal on a black stand was revealed. Into the dimly gleaming ball Madame Blank gazed, and her eyes above the veil were more like wells of ink than ever in their concentration.

"I see you," she almost whispered. "Yes, it *is* you! But it is different from you as you are now. It is a figure, not slight as a girl's, no, yet shapely and slender enough to be attractive. You are dressed for a dance. It must be a dance, for you tap your foot as if keeping time to music. You have on a peach-coloured gown patterned with brilliants. A princess might envy it! You are wearing beautiful jewels. Your hair is cut short and waved——"

"Grey hair like mine—short!" groaned Lady Gates.

"Hush! Do not speak. It breaks continuity. Your hair, in the crystal, is not grey. It is the colour of copper—beautiful. Your eyebrows and lashes are black, your eyes large and bright. You have not a line on your face. You have a full chin, but it is young. You seem not more than thirty, or thirty-four at most. Men ask you for dances. You are very happy. One man comes, dark,

handsome, like Marco Lopez. You trust him, as well you may, for you feel that he is fine and noble, though not understood or appreciated by many men, because of his profession. You go with him. You dance lightly and gracefully. He is much interested in you. His eyes show it. He speaks. You listen. You are so happy . . . ah, now the crystal is clouded over. That means nothing of sorrow. But now the picture is finished for us."

"Oh! If it *could* come true, this miracle!" breathed Lady Gates with the almost agonised earnestness of prayer.

"Of course it can come true. The crystal never lies," said Madame Blank. "I can tell you precisely what to do to gain your wish."

CHAPTER IX

LADY GATES RECEIVES

THE next dance-night at Montparnasse, Lady Gates was with her nephew again.

Malcolm would have excused himself if he could, for he was deeply preoccupied what to do now that he had torn up his contract with Paragon. He knew that he must settle with someone else, or go away defeated from this place of sunshine where the flower of love had begun to bloom for him. But the time was close at hand when Lady Gates might help him if she chose to

go in for the film game. It was for her to decide, after he had put the pros and cons to her, pointing out the advantages and dangers. He didn't mean, however, to open the subject with his aunt until he had interviewed several producers. If some well-established concern would interest itself in "Black Sleeves" (his version of his own story, not theirs!) no money would be needed. But if an "independent" company undertook the business, some thousands of dollars from outside might be required for a big production.

As for Lady Gates, she was so completely absorbed in her own affairs that she did not even notice Malcolm's absent-minded air, much less did she question him about his work. She thought of nothing but herself in these days, and she had induced her nephew to bring her again to dine at Montparnasse because she "wanted to talk with Miss Smith." She had "something special" to say to the girl, if that would please Malcolm.

It did please him; though he had an odd conviction that she wasn't doing it for that purpose. He felt that she had some motive of her own, an entirely selfish motive in wishing to speak with the girl. That this could be so seemed improbable, yet Malcolm was convinced, and his curiosity became painful to bear.

Lady Gates did not send for Miss Smith at once. She watched Marco Lopez dancing, and the girl realised with pitying surprise that the fat old woman was fas-

minated by the professional. Madeleine saw him go to the table and speak with Lady Gates. She saw him invited to sit down between dances; and when Malcolm got up to Charleston with a golden-haired star, the elderly woman and the dark Argentinian spoke earnestly and seriously together.

It was only a little later that Lady Gates beckoned to the cigarette girl. Madeleine went to the table at once, and "her ladyship" fumbled with ring-laden fingers among the packets of expensive tobacco.

"My nephew, Mr. Allister, has spoken to me about you," she said rather stiffly, but not unkindly, "so I thought I wouldn't wait for him to come back from his dance but would just call you over here for a minute's chat. You and Mr. Allister are quite good friends, aren't you?"

That prim "Mr. Allister" seemed to push her down gently yet firmly to a sub-social level. Madeleine repeated it. "Mr. Allister has been very kind to me," she said. "I feel grateful to him: if you call that being friends."

"Well, he wanted me to be nice to you," Lady Gates blundered on. "What can I do?"

"Thank you—and him. I can't think of anything just at present," answered the girl, a little hurt, a little amused. "Do you like these gold-tipped Melachrinos?"

"Ye-es," said Lady Gates. "I was just wondering! What time do you have to get here mornings?"

"A little before eleven."

"Would you care to come and see me at my hotel to-morrow morning—at, say, nine? I'll be in bed, but you won't mind that, will you? There's something you may be able to do for me if you'd like to. And you needn't mention it to Mal—Mr. Allister. Then he can bring you just the same to call to-morrow night, or some other night soon when you're off duty here early."

Lady Gates spoke hurriedly, rather nervously, as if she were anxious to get her morning invitation either accepted or refused before her nephew came back. But Madeleine had time to think, while her ladyship babbled on. At first she was inclined to refuse condescending patronage, and maybe an offer of work of some sort, from Malcolm Allister's rather bumptious, silly old aunt. But a voice seemed to murmur close to her ear, a voice whose whispering, secret call had brought her thousands of miles to Hollywood. This time it said, "Here may be your chance! You *must* get at Lopez somehow, and you've been wondering how to do it. Now you see the way—it may be a way! Take it!"

So Madeleine thanked Lady Gates and said that she would be at the Hôtel Ambassador next morning. "Do I understand that you don't want me to mention this to Mr. Allister?" she asked.

"Only the part about what *you can do for me*," Lady Gates explained. "I shall tell him myself I've invited

you to call. He'll be pleased. But nothing about the reason—the *real* reason.”

At this moment Malcolm hastened back, having shed his dancing star upon another partner. He was delighted that his aunt had called the girl to her, and suggested taking Miss Smith to the Ambassador for a short visit the following night. This was settled, and Malcolm forgot his worries and his rages and all the injustices of the world in thinking of the few moments he should have alone with the girl in the Rolls Royce which so soon might be sold!

He was almost happy with this thought, until the same fat, dark man who refused change for five dollars when he bought cigarettes, came in again and began eating up the glittering figure in green, with his big, almond-shaped eyes.

“Who is that large misshapen gargoyle?” he asked Pierre, when the latter paused for a minute at his table.

The proprietor of Montparnasse smiled. “That gentleman is certainly not so young and not so charming as Monsieur Allister, but he can do something for any ambitious beauty who has not yet made her mark in Hollywood. Have you not heard of Oscar Sonnenberg, ‘Big Ossie’ they call him?”

“No,” said Malcolm, “I haven’t, and don’t care if I never do hear.”

"He's the head of the most successful of all the 'Quickie' concerns in Hollywood. He's got money to burn," announced Pierre, "but he has better uses for it than burning. He does not mind what he spends when it is for himself and his interests, but they say he would think it a waste to let a pair of pennies go down into the grave on his dead grandmother's eyes."

"Doesn't look as if he'd *had* a grandmother!" snapped Malcolm. He didn't wish to discuss the large dark man with Pierre; he wished he had enough influence with Miss Smith to order her to keep away from the fellow! When the "big stiff" wished to indulge his taste for tobacco, at Montparnasse, let Nora Casey serve him. She was "hard boiled" enough!

Neither Lady Gates nor Miss Smith dropped a hint before Malcolm about the morning appointment. But Madeleine, more and more sure that she was doing a wise if unpleasant thing, was prompt at the Ambassador.

She was shown up to Lady Gates' suite, and found her hostess just finishing breakfast in bed.

The elderly woman was rather a pathetic object in a transparent blue georgette bed-jacket over an elaborate "nighty," and a coquettish boudoir cap with a bunch of roses covering each ear.

"I feel like nothing on earth!" she sighed to her guest. "I'm so excited and upset I couldn't sleep, and I've no appetite. I've been able to eat only a piece of

melon and some cereal and a couple of rolls, and to drink a few cups of tea."

Madeleine wondered of what the lady's breakfast consisted when she *had* an appetite! But she murmured something sympathetic, trying to guess why on earth Lady Gates had asked her to make this early morning call. There was some motive other than friendly interest in Malcolm Allister's "queer little protégée," the girl decided.

Almost as if her thought had put words in the older woman's mouth, Lady Gates spoke.

"Do you know Mr. Marco Lopez?"

Madeleine's heart jumped. Perhaps she hadn't come here for nothing!

"I haven't spoken to him," she answered. "I've never seen him outside Montparnasse, where he dances."

"He's handsome, isn't he?" inquired Lady Gates.

"Very," Madeleine replied. The conversation was going her way.

"And he's a gentleman," Lady Gates went on, "not like some of these foreign young men you read about who dance professionally in restaurants and cabarets. They say some of them are awfully wicked. But he has told me a few things about himself. He comes from a good family, and could call himself a count if he wished."

Madeleine would have liked to say, "Hollywood is full of counts and don't counts." But she was painfully

anxious to hear all she could about Marco Lopez. The more she heard, and the more interested poor old Lady Gates proved to be in the dark Argentine, the easier it would be for Miss Smith to carry out her rather desperate plan.

CHAPTER X

A PAYING PROPOSITION

"I'm finding it just a little hard to speak to a stranger about this thing I wish to speak about," went on Lady Gates slowly. "But my nephew asked me to be nice to you, as I told you yesterday; and there's something you can do for me that will incline me to be *very* nice in return. Well—let me see how to begin explaining." She looked embarrassed, and began turning over the diamond rings which she wore even in bed. "Mr. Lopez came here to discuss my taking dancing lessons from him. I wanted to, but—well, I was afraid of making myself ridiculous—at my age—not that I'm so terribly old as things go nowadays—but I'm rather stout, and I explained to him that I felt a bit sensitive and unhappy in this place where everyone seems to be young and slim and beautiful. Then he—sort of—intimated that it wasn't too late, and I could be all these things myself to a certain extent if I went to work in the right way."

She paused, as if she hoped the girl would help her

out by asking questions. But Madeleine feared to get upon the wrong track. She was waiting—waiting.

“He—that was where he was so kind,” the poor lady had to stumble on unaided. “He took me to—a person who told me the most wonderful tales—if only they can be true.”

This time the girl did not wait. “A person?” she caught the other up eagerly.

“Yes. A lady he knows. She said that there are scientific doctors here in Hollywood who can practically *make* you all over again. They reduce your fat and give you a lovely youthful figure. They restore your hair to its natural colour without dyeing it in the ordinary way. They teach you to become as supple as you used to be—or better. And—most important of all is the facial surgery that can take twenty-five or thirty years off your looks in as many minutes. Did you ever hear of such miracles?”

“Ye-es; at least I’ve seen advertisements in the papers,” said Madeleine. “But——”

“These wonderful people don’t advertise,” broke in Lady Gates. “They’re above it. And they don’t need to do it. They have more clients than they want. They—they would undertake my case only as a favour to—the wonderful woman I met through Mr. Lopez.”

Madeleine stopped her gently, though her eagerness was so great that she had to make a strong effort to hold it. “This woman!” she said. “Who is she, Lady Gates?”

"That doesn't make any difference to what we're talking about," replied her ladyship.

"Only this," Madeleine righted herself anxiously. "Would she be likely to know——"

"She seemed the kind who'd be sure to know everything!" exclaimed Lady Gates.

"Oh, a woman in society here—or in Los Angeles——?"

"I think," pronounced the lady from Leeds, "that we needn't waste your time, Miss Smith, in dwelling upon *her*, what she is or isn't, because that's not the question at present. She told me about these people and said they were celebrated, and she will use her influence with them. She'll give me their addresses. I made up my mind for good or ill, to consult them and put myself into their hands. But the more I thought about it, especially the *surgeon*, the more scared I got. I felt I must have someone to go with me to the consultation and—and maybe afterwards if I should undergo the operations or whatever you call them. My nephew is no use! He'd do nothing but try to dissuade me. So I thought of you."

"Why not the lady who gave you the advice?" persisted Madeleine, still harping on the subject which held her as in a vice.

"Because that would be impossible." Lady Gates gave her ultimatum rather sharply.

"You—you make her sound quite mysterious!" the girl faltered.

"Nonsense!" snapped her ladyship, who, good-natured as she was at heart, had become slightly imperious since the death of the tyrannical old man who could no longer grind her will under his foot. She had his money now, and had blossomed into a woman of importance. (It was said of her in Leeds when she broke away and went to London, that "the old mare was feeling her oats.") "Why do you keep harping back to that lady?"

"I—but supposing these doctors should do you harm?" argued Madeleine. "It might be her fault. She——"

"Never mind that now," cut in Katherine Gates. "She can't go with me, and I'm not inclined to talk of her. I want to talk of something else! I know you haven't much time free, but there's all the morning till nearly eleven. And I presume money is an object to you, Miss Smith, or a girl like you wouldn't be working at a place like Montparnasse? If you care to see me through this—this business, and will promise to say nothing to my nephew, I will pay you for your services at the rate, say, of ten dollars an hour. How does that strike you?"

Madeleine did not reply on the instant. Not that she contemplated refusing the offer. She had reasons of her own for accepting, besides the hope of rescuing this

foolish old woman from an unscrupulous couple. She might also solve the secret she'd come to Hollywood to solve, or if she could not do this unaided, the "doctors" with whom she hoped to get in touch through Lady Gates might put her on the right track. She hesitated only about how to treat the money offer. She did need money of course. She had great and pressing need of it. Yet her impulse was to say to Malcolm Allister's aunt, "I won't take a cent from you!" The objection to that course, however, was that it would give the old lady "furiously to think," and Madeleine didn't wish her to think. She was particularly anxious that she shouldn't think!

Accordingly she answered: "Thank you very much. I shall be glad to do anything you want me to do."

"On these terms?" Lady Gates made sure of her.

"On these terms."

"Good!" The elderly woman gave a great sigh. "I found I was a coward! I just couldn't go through such an ordeal alone. As I said, the thought of the surgeon scares me the most, so we'll get the consultation with him over first. Already I've made an appointment—a provisional one—for ten o'clock. It's only a quarter past nine now. I usually take ages to dress. But I won't this time. Go and amuse yourself in my sitting-room for a few minutes and I'll be ready. This Doctor Elmer has his place at Hollywood, so we'll be near enough to

Montparnasse for my car to drive you there in five minutes when I'm through with you."

Madeleine had a vague sense of guilt in agreeing to see Lady Gates through the adventure. But after all, she argued with herself, nothing she could say—try as she might—would lead the woman back into the path of common sense. Besides, if the poor creature were ready to risk so much in the hope of turning back Time's clock, why shouldn't she have her way?

When Lady Gates appeared, hatted and cloaked, Miss Smith had brought herself to the pose of the ideal paid companion—the "yes-girl."

Doctor Elmer had a suite of offices and consulting-rooms on the twelfth floor of a tall new building in Hollywood Boulevard. Madeleine had sad, secret reasons for her complex against white-coated surgeons and white-capped, white-clad nurses, and while she waited in an outer room for Lady Gates to return from her consultation in an inner one, the girl felt faint, as if she herself had some physical ordeal to face. But she controlled her nerves, and chatted with a young woman in nurse's garb, who sat at a desk, and now and then answered telephone calls. Madeleine was anxious to ingratiate herself with these people. Through them there was some faint hope of finding out what an eastern detective had failed to discover. The girl had sold the few jewels which had not been swept away from her by a flood of

tragedy in paying that detective. To be sure, he hadn't been a first-rate one, but he had been the best she could afford. Her last dollars had been spent in coming out here, on what the discharged detective had warned her was a "wild goose chase." She must justify herself by success!

Never in her best and happiest days had the girl worked so hard to be charming as she worked with this figure-head of a nurse at Doctor Elmer's desk. It was she who received all the telephone messages, and it seemed probable that she would know who had sent Lady Gates to the surgeon. She drew the hard-faced, peroxide-haired young woman to the subject of movies, and learned that she had come out to Hollywood with the intention of "going into pictures." Her name outside office hours, was Mildred Montgomery. Apparently she had never got farther than the door of a casting director's office, but still had yearnings if not hopes. Madeleine had time to say that she knew somebody who might gratify Miss Montgomery's long suppressed desire to see the inside of a studio. The girl was thinking of "Big Ossie Sonnenberg." He had asked Miss Smith why she wasn't on the screen instead of selling cigarettes in a restaurant; and she hadn't made the answer she longed to make, because a queer idea had occurred to her at the moment.

Gossip had already got hold of the news about Mal-

colm Allister's "row" with Paragon. Rumour had enlarged and embellished the story, for "dishing dirt" is a good game at Hollywood, as at most other places where everyone knows everyone else. Nora Casey had mentioned to Miss Smith that "Allister is just about on the rocks, and will be on them soon if he can't sell his scenario." Which was the reason why Madeleine had smiled pleasantly on Mr. Sonnenberg, and by so doing annoyed the man she wished to serve. Now, she said to herself, "If this Montgomery woman will tell me what I want to know, it will be worth my while to be decent to that fat old Sugar-Daddy for her sake. But I'll have to be sure first. For he isn't safe."

She was not a girl who had had "experiences." Until a few months ago, she had been a child in knowledge of the world. But there are warnings given by instinct. "Does Doctor Elmer really perform miracles?" she asked the hard-boiled nurse.

"He sure does," replied the white-clad one. "You'll see an eyeful, my dear, if this old dame of yours has got the money and the pluck to go through with it."

"She's got the money, anyhow," Madeleine said. "I wonder how she heard about Doctor Elmer? She hasn't told me."

A veiled look came over the white, powdered face. "I couldn't say," she answered non-committally.

"I thought maybe Mr. Lopez, the professional dancer

at Montparnasse, might have recommended the doctor," Madeleine said, trying to seem casual, as if she were merely making conversation to pass the time. "Lady Gates has got quite friendly with him, and says he has been very kind."

"Maybe that's the way," echoed the nurse. "Patients come from all over. It's a wonder this place isn't full of them waiting to-day. It generally is."

Madeleine realised that she was not destined to have an easy task; but she was not discouraged. Mr. Sonnenberg would need to be used, she was afraid.

Just as she had begun again on another tack, Lady Gates was escorted out of the consulting-room by the white-coated surgeon himself. The comfortable, double-chinned face had lost its flush. Her ladyship looked as bad sailors look when they go reluctantly yet firmly on board a Channel boat on a particularly "choppy" day.

Doctor Elmer, a middle-aged man with hard, thin lips, a formidable jaw, and keen eyes hiding their keenness behind round owl glasses, fastened a curious glance upon the pretty girl who accompanied Lady Gates.

"*He* could tell me the secret!" Madeleine thought, "if only he would!"

But he was of the type that tells nothing it is not wise to tell.

"Well, everything's arranged," panted Lady Gates, breathless with dread and excitement, when they had

been bowed out of the ante-room to the elevator. "I'm afraid there'll be a lot to do to me! He admits as much. That is, if I want to go back thirty years. And I do—I *do!* Simple operations the doctor performs under local anæsthetics in his office. But I shall take a room and bath in a private hospital and stay till—till—I can walk out looking a *dream!* You'll go with me, won't you? Yes, of course I mean at a time of day when you can. Oh, I'm scared to death, but I'll go through. I *will!*

Madeleine shivered. "Oh, do you think you *ought?*" she faltered.

"Nothing and no one could stop me now!" her ladyship answered. "Remember your promise. Not a word to Malcolm."

CHAPTER XI

FACE VALUE

MORE can happen in three weeks at Hollywood, than anywhere else on earth.

It seemed to Malcolm Allister that everything in the world had happened to him. It seemed the same to Madeleine Standish. And to Katherine Gates it seemed that she had passed through several lives into another world.

So far as Malcolm knew, his aunt had been taken ill with "flu," and, while keeping her suite at the

Ambassador, had gone to a private hospital to rest and recuperate. He was not allowed to see her, but might send flowers and notes. News of her progress he received from Miss Smith, who called upon the invalid every morning before coming "on duty" at Montparnasse.

Malcolm was told "not to worry"; and perhaps even without this soothing advice he might not have done so, for his thoughts were clamped with hooks of steel to his own anxieties.

He had given up the beautiful bungalow and the agreeable Filipino butler provided for him as an honoured guest of the Paragon company. He was no longer "honoured." He was no longer a guest. He had taken a room at the pleasant Hôtel Hollywood, where he would have been perfectly happy if the Future hadn't stared him fiercely in the face, contriving in necromantic fashion to edge between him and the present.

He was too proud to hawk his scenario of "Black Sleeves," which everyone knew now had been "turned down" by Paragon. He was hanging on by his eyelids, as he put it to himself, in the gradually fading hope that he would be "approached" by another studio.

This would have seemed to a sensible mortal exactly the wrong time to fall in love. But Malcolm had fallen, and fallen hard before he had time to be sensible. So there it was!

One night, before Lady Gates was ready to spring

her great surprise upon her nephew, Oscar Sonnenberg sprang one upon Miss Smith. He sat in his big black car, parked near the entrance of Montparnasse waiting for her to come out. When she did come, all he had to do was to open the door of his limousine and say, "Good evening, little girl!"

Madeleine started; though she need not have been greatly astonished at anything this man dared to do, considering the encouragement she had given him of late. Still, she hadn't expected him to sit lurking in a dark corner, like a spider on the watch for a fly.

Thoughts travel fast, and Madeleine interrupted herself as she was about to answer coldly and pass on.

"This is exactly what you've been working up to. Don't be silly!" was the mental warning that stopped the words on her lips.

"I was wondering if you'd like to take a little ride with me," Sonnenberg hurried on. "Now, don't be afraid! I'm no kidnapper. You haven't got a date with that scenario writer, have you?"

"I don't know a scenario writer," said the girl, "and I haven't got a date with anyone. Only I—of course I'm not *afraid*, Mr. Sonnenberg. You're quite a prominent figure in Hollywood, and you can't afford to make a scandal, even if you wanted to!"

"That's right!" answered the man. He wished she had chosen some other expression than "prominent

figure." (That word "prominent" might have two meanings, and this girl had a sharp little tongue when she wanted to use it. However, perhaps he was too sensitive about his bulk.) "But you know who I mean well enough. That bird Allister has taken you out lots of times. I've seen you with my own eyes!"

"Not lots of times," said Madeleine calmly. "Just three times. Once he took me to call on his aunt, Lady Gates, who wanted me to help her about something. Once it rained when I had no umbrella to go home with: and his car was here. Once—but after all, I don't have to defend myself to you, Mr. Sonnenberg."

"Of course you don't, kid," he apologised. "I was only joking. But Allister hasn't been visible at Montparnasse for a couple of days, so I just asked myself if you were having secret meetings after hours!"

"We are *not!* Why should you or anyone think such a thing? I'm quite tired enough when I get off, to go home to sleep and rest," said Madeleine. "As for Mr. Allister, he must have made lots of friends. I wonder he comes to Montparnasse even as often as he does!"

"He comes for the same reason as I do," said Sonnenberg. "To look at the most beautiful girl in Hollywood, and to get a few words with her. Yes, the *most beautiful girl*. Everyone who sees you says that, and wonders why you're not on the screen. That's the very thing (among others) I want to talk to you seriously about to-night.

Will you go for that drive? Just out to the beach for a whiff of salt air. See?"

"Very well. It's only ten o'clock," said Madeleine. "I'll go for an hour. Santa Monica and back."

Oscar Sonnenberg had got lumberingly out of the car to converse. Now he invited Miss Smith to take the place next to the driver's seat, and clambered in himself.

"I've been thinking ever since I came back from my trip East, and saw you the first day I lunched at Montparnasse, that you ought to be in pictures. I've said as much before now. And if you'd given me the chance I'd have told you, too, that I'm the guy who can put you there!"

Madeleine temporised. Of course, if Lady Gates were rich enough, and fond enough of her nephew to risk money for the making of "Black Sleeves," Malcolm Allister wouldn't need this common, pushing person. But the "person" was a millionaire, and the "quickies" which he produced were the very best done by any of the independents. It was a pity that this crisis couldn't have been staved off till after Lady Gates appeared on the scene again. But it had come! The girl was face to face with it, and if she wanted to show her gratitude to Malcolm she mustn't offend Mr. Sonnenberg.

"A good many people have said this kind of thing to me at Montparnasse," she replied, with a little air of coquetry.

"Oh, people!" snorted Sonnenberg. "What sort of people? What can they do for you?"

"Directors have said it," Madeleine told him. "They've offered to have tests made of me."

"Blah!" sneered Sonnenberg. "Small part stuff! I'm a producer. I can give you a lead and by and by star you, if you like."

"Are you going to begin a new picture?" asked the girl. She tried not to show eagerness. But a great deal—for Malcolm Allister—might depend upon whether Sonnenberg had a picture or wanted one.

"Yes, as soon as I find what I need in the shape of a story—and a girl. You're my ideal. What I'd do to show you off would be to produce some of the scenes in colour to give 'em the effect of your red hair. What price you in an Italian garden, all fountains and things; girl in white dress, copper hair, with a baby spot turned on it—eh?"

Madeleine had never been inside a moving picture studio, but she had heard enough studio-talk among the patrons of Montparnasse to know that a "baby spot" was a light, not an infantile pimple.

"There's an Italian garden in Mr. Allister's picture, 'Black Sleeve's,'" she remarked, as if dreamily.

"Allister's picture!" Sonnenberg barked. "All he's got of a picture is a scenario the Paragon threw down,

and lord knows how many other studios have done the same since."

"As a matter of fact, it was Mr. Allister who threw down Paragon," said Madeleine. "He tore up his contract and literally 'threw it down' because they wanted him to make changes which would have spoiled the whole thing."

"Oh, indeed?" sniffed Sonnenberg. "That ain't hardly the story that's going round. How do *you* happen to know so much about this bird's business, baby?"

Madeleine very much disliked being called "baby" by Sonnenberg and others of his type who "petted" her with eyes and words, from the tables of Montparnasse; but she restrained the frown which she kept on her ordinary programme.

"Lady Gates, Mr. Allister's aunt, told me," the girl glibly fibbed. "I see her nearly every day, for she has been ill in a private hospital, and she has so few friends that she actually pays me a salary to cheer her up and run errands—choosing her the new novels and so on. I know all about the plot of 'Black Sleeves' from *her* not from Mr. Allister, and I'd give my—well, my hair which you seem to admire, for a part in it. Now don't imagine I'm saying this for Mr. Allister's sake. It's for my own."

"If I should do business with 'Black Sleeves' would you leave Montparnasse and be my little star?" cooed

Mr. Sonnenberg, like an enormous, over-developed dove.

Madeleine's previous inexperience did not prevent her from understanding exactly what the man meant. But she felt confident that she was well able to take care of herself and manage any situation which might arise from "running a risk." As for the man, she had no scruple in disappointing him. Such males deserved disappointment and nothing else!

She intended to accept Sonnenberg's offer, so far as the business part was concerned, but she thought that she was "strong" enough to make a few conditions, and she intended to make them. But she would lead up to them in her own way. For instance, she cared for her own sake not at all what man star might be engaged for "Black Sleeves." Malcolm Allister and Sonnenberg would have been welcome to arrange what details there were so far as she was concerned. But she dared not fling the name of Marco Lopez at Sonnenberg's head unless she mentioned other names first. Unfortunately, still less did she dare leave Montparnasse and lose sight of Lopez.

"The star part in 'Black Sleeves' is a man's," she said. "But the girl's part is good, too. I'd be satisfied with it, if you got the right man to play opposite me."

Sonnenberg burst into a guffaw of laughter. "*Well*, for crying out loud!" he chortled. "For sheer cool cheek

you beat the band, little lady! Are you a runaway royal princess in disguise that you dictate terms and make conditions when you are offered a star part in a big film?"

"I *may* be," returned Madeleine pertly. "That seems to be the secret of my success in Hollywood. Nobody knows who I am, and judging by the way people behave, everybody *wants* to know."

"You're no modest violet whatever else you may be, sweetheart," chuckled Sonnenberg. "You appreciate yourself, don't you, at your face value?"

"That's just it. 'Face value'!" repeated Madeleine. "I'd be a moron if I didn't know I had it, and a few other attributes of the screen, after the way people make me offers of splendid parts every day. I've learned several secrets of Hollywood since I began selling cigarettes at Montparnasse. One is this: if a girl *wants* to get into pictures, let her just try to get in! She can grow old trying. If she wants to keep out, let her *try* to keep out! She'll be in before she knows what's happened."

Sonnenberg laughed again, and was more and more interested in Miss Mary Smith, so calmly posing against the background of other men's admiration. The girl intended to create this effect upon his mind, and counted on the fact that she was not exaggerating her own very curious success at Montparnasse. She was a mystery, a beautiful mystery. If she hadn't been beautiful no one would have cared to solve her mystery. As it was, every-

one seemed to care. She was a new topic of conversation at Hollywood. She had been told that the subject of her beauty and unknown origin even interfered with bridge at one or two clubs!

"If you produce Mr. Allister's 'Black Sleeves' who would be your choice for the man's part?" she persisted.

"Well," hedged Sonnenberg, "whatever picture I make for my next, Jack Inescort would be my choice if I could get him."

"Mine too!" said Madeleine. "I'm sure Mr. Allister would approve. There's another important thing! One of the big scenes in 'Black Sleeves' is a ball at that Italian villa we were just talking about. Something vital in the story hinges on it. There ought to be a professional for the girl to dance with: a Latin-looking type. He has to be a sort of villain. Our professional at Montparnasse would be perfect: Marco Lopez his name is."

"These lounge-lizards' names mean nothing to me," said Sonnenberg. "Have you got a crush on the guy?"

"A girl can't have a 'crush,' as you call it, on two men at once!" Madeleine scolded him. "Five minutes ago you accused me of one for Mr. Allister. Just make your choice. Then you'll be as right about one man as the other."

"I'll take your word for it, baby," grinned Sonnenberg, admiring the "star airs" this little girl so competently assumed. He liked her the better for her "cheek,"

and his knowledge of screen values told him that he had "picked a winner." He didn't believe there was an angle of her face that wouldn't photograph well. And there weren't many girls in Hollywood of whom you could say as much!

CHAPTER XII

"BIG OSSIE"

It was now an extravagance for Malcolm Allister to lunch and dine at the expensive Montparnasse, for the Hôtel Hollywood, where he had moved from the bungalow, was run on the "American plan." But, even though this meant paying double for his meals, Malcolm had no other way in these days of seeing Miss Smith. She would no longer allow him to walk home with her when she went "off duty" at night. She had a wise reason, she said, and some time soon, she would explain. Then he would see that her refusal was for his own good.

At luncheon the day after her talk with Sonnenberg, as she sold Allister a packet of cigarettes, Madeleine slipped a folded bit of paper into his hand. Instantly she moved away without a backward glance, and Malcolm opened the note.

"DEAR MR. ALLISTER," he read, "You will know all about Mr. Oscar Sonnenberg as a producer, one of those

independent ones; but everybody says he is really important and does things well. He can get what they call 'good releases' (is that the right word?), and he is interested in the scenario you have made, 'Black Sleeves.' Perhaps you have noticed him here at the restaurant? I've talked with him quite often, and *only* for the sake of this very scheme. *Please believe that.* And I think you will believe, for two reasons. One, because you ought to know I'm very grateful to you. If you hadn't befriended me, Pierre would have thrown me out of Montparnasse on that night you may remember. I was sure then and am sure still that you offered to pay my salary without letting me know it was you. Since then, I seem to be a sort of success here in my gauze and spangles, so Pierre knows I'm worth my money, and he assures me he has stopped calling on you for it. But I shall never forget, and it would be a great big joy to me if I could do even a small thing for you in return. Well, that's one reason why you should believe me when I say I've 'cultivated' Mr. Sonnenberg for your sake. And the other reason is this: you ought to know by now, that whatever else I may be, I'm no gold digger!

"Well then, if you haven't yet got a better offer for the production of your film, please, *please*, at least have a talk with Mr. Sonnenberg. He's awfully rich, they say, and no worse than other men though he is more prominent *physically* as well as financially than some! He's

willing to give me a part in the picture if he produces it, if *you* are willing to have me in it!

"Your grateful (may I say, *friend?*),

"MARY SMITH.

"P.S.—Mr. Sonnenberg will call you up if he doesn't see you here."

Malcolm's first emotion was fury against Sonnenberg. He thought he could visualise all that had happened. Sonnenberg wanted to get a hold upon Mary Smith, and this was a splendid way to do it. Malcolm didn't believe that the man cared a hang for "Black Sleeves," or the name of Allister as the author of a best seller. He wanted the girl; and as no doubt he was in the market to buy a story, "Black Sleeves" would suit him as well as any other. Mary Smith was able to persuade the man to meet the author, because she was willing to run some risk for herself to pay a debt of gratitude. Sonnenberg would do business with Allister for Miss Smith's sake if it didn't prove too expensive, just as Miss Smith would do business with him for Malcolm Allister's sake.

It didn't surprise Malcolm that Sonnenberg was ready to thrust a raw amateur into a big part, for the girl was so exceptional, so beautiful, so rarely graceful, so mysterious a figure at Montparnasse, that Hollywood had taken her up as a subject of conversation, and to Malcolm's certain knowledge several directors had offered to put her into

pictures. He was touched, charmed and angry all at the same time. He couldn't bear to meet this Sonnenberg through Mary Smith in such circumstances. And yet . . . how hurt she would be if he refused!

Thinking the matter over, he glanced up with a far-away gaze; but it was difficult for the most absent-minded person to look through such bulk as that of Oscar Sonnenberg, and Malcolm's eyes suddenly brought up against that gentleman's diamond tie-pin, which was moving in his direction like the headlight of an engine.

In another moment he found himself shaking a solid and slightly damp hand, while the producer of the best "quickies" in Hollywood introduced himself.

Some weeks had passed since Malcolm had joyously believed the author of "Black Sleeves" to be an important personage. He knew that all Hollywood knew how his version of his own already half-forgotten best seller had been turned over and then turned down by Paragon. They probably thought it had met the same fate from all the principal motion picture producers on the coast; therefore he received no shock from Oscar Sonnenberg's casual manner. Seeing that Sonnenberg wanted to "get down to brass tacks" without wasting time over preliminaries, Malcolm invited him to take a chair at the little *tête-à-tête* table.

"Well, what about this scenario of yours that you split up on with Paragon?" was Sonnenberg's first question.

"I shall doubtless split up with several other studios over it," Malcolm defiantly volunteered.

Sonnenberg grinned perfunctorily. "Well, I want to do a picture that'll be talked about," he said. "Something with all the sex stuff in it I can get past the censor. Most of the new films put every little bit of that into the title, and leave nothing to go on the screen. But they tell me your story is hot stuff all right."

Malcolm's ears burned, which is as near to blushing as most men come. He explained with cool, elaborate patience that he had made no bid for sensationalism in his book, though it was frank and, he hoped, true to life as he saw it. He had toned the scenario down too much to please some people, too little to suit others. And that was the situation at present. He didn't see his way to any further changes. In fact, he didn't mean to make any. He would rather the thing never went on the screen than spoil it, and by so doing hurt the book, which still had sale value.

Sonnenberg listened with a fish-eyed look, which said that he had let his mind wander; but when Malcolm ceased speaking he picked up the wave length. "Well, suppose you show me your stuff," he said. "I might be interested, and put it on as *is*—subject to two or three conditions, of course. But the talk is, that it would make an expensive production. I get a good release, but not what Paragon and some of the other

big fellows do, of course. I can't lay out more than fifty grand. Can yours be done on that?"

Malcolm knew enough American slang to understand without asking that fifty "grand" meant fifty thousand dollars or "bucks."

"No," he said without pausing to reflect. "'Black Sleeves' can't be done well on that, and I don't want it done at all if it's not done well. I've calculated that, with economy and no waste, it could be produced for seventy-five or eighty thousand dollars, though no doubt Paragon would have poured out twice that sum at least—maybe more."

"Sure," agreed Sonnenberg. "Well, let me see your script, will you?"

"But what's the use," Malcolm questioned, "if you've decided that you can't run beyond fifty thousand? I'm not bluffing or holding you up with my estimate."

"Well, somebody might be found who'd be interested in going in with us," Sonnenberg returned.

Instantly Malcolm thought of his aunt, as he had thought often before, in this financial connection. He had heard from her. To-morrow she was coming out of the hospital after her weeks of seclusion, and had asked him to dine with her at the Hôtel Ambassador. She had, she hinted, a big surprise for him, and she hoped he would be as much pleased as she was. That sounded encouraging!

"Possibly!" he assented aloud to Sonnenberg.

"Do you know the right man?" asked the latter.

"I'll have a talk with—er—a friend to-morrow night," Malcolm promised. "That is, if you read my stuff meanwhile and like it."

Sonnenberg suggested that Allister should send him the scenario at once by messenger, addressing it to his apartment not far from the Ambassador. This Malcolm agreed to do, and the two men parted without any mention either of Mary Smith or Marco Lopez, two living "conditions" on which production hinged.

Next day Malcolm and Sonnenberg met again informally at Montparnasse, with the image of Mary Smith in their minds, but not a word concerning her on their lips.

Sonnenberg announced in a "hard-boiled" manner, not calculated to raise a crop of conceit in an author, that to his mind "Black Sleeves" wasn't too bad, if a bit amateurish. It could be licked into shape on its present lines, and there was a nice part for a smart, pretty girl in it: not so much acting, but good looks counted. He was ready to sign a contract if he were allowed to choose the leading characters. Mr. Allister might consider the matter practically settled, if he could raise twenty-five thousand dollars. He would then be paid for his scenario, and get a share in profits as well, which was a good thing for an author if his "stuff" turned out to be a "wow," a "sure fire" success.

Malcolm knew of one "leading character" who would be chosen, and that was enough for him. He was prompt at the Ambassador that evening at a quarter to eight, to welcome Lady Gates back from "flu" or whatever she had had.

He was invited up to her sitting-room, and let in by a bell-boy, for it seemed her ladyship was not quite dressed.

Malcolm seated himself on a sofa which faced the closed door of the bedroom. Four or five moments passed in silence. Then the door opened, and an amazing vision appeared.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLOCK OF TIME

MALCOLM stood staring, bewildered. It was the voice of his aunt that greeted him, but the words came from the mouth of a different person. This woman, in a knee-length, décolleté and sleeveless slip composed of pale pink sequins, surely wasn't Lady Gates. She couldn't be!

"Well!" the vision exclaimed joyously. "What do you think of me?"

"Why—why, it isn't you, Aunt Kate?" stammered Malcolm. "What has happened to you?"

"Happened?" repeated Lady Gates, with the pertness of a girl who knows she is pretty. "I've had the clock

of time turned back for me, that's all! If you'd never seen me before and didn't know anything about me, how old would you take me for?"

Malcolm was still confused in the presence of this new and flapperish relative. She did look younger, of course, much younger. She seemed to have lost many pounds in weight. Her double chin was gone, and her face was smooth as a billiard ball, not a wrinkle to be seen, even under her eyes. Her snub nose had been changed to a Grecian effect. Her once grey hair was a bright auburn, bobbed, and marcelled in glittering waves. The thickish eyebrows, which had given a certain individuality to the face, were gone like the chin. They had been plucked, and in their place faint, arched lines had been drawn according to taste. The eyes themselves seemed to have been lengthened, and the lashes were heavily blacked.

The strange vision was of a pink and pearly radiance, as if it had been carefully enamelled from the roots of its brilliant hair to the low neck-line of its still more brilliant dress.

Malcolm hardly knew what to say in his surprise and bewilderment. He had enough sense left to know that Lady Gates expected rapturous praise, and that tact called upon him to give it. Nor was he a conscientious objector to white lies, if told to please a woman. The difficulty he felt was to make the lies sound realistic, for

he honestly thought that his aunt had turned herself into something like a wax figure, made in Germany for a cloak and dress model in a small town Main Street.

"Why don't you speak?" Lady Gates urged, her marvellous new eyebrows drawing together. "Don't you think I look nice?"

"You look—extraordinary," Malcolm managed to ejaculate.

"Well, is that a compliment, or the reverse?" she snapped.

"To tell the truth, if I must," he said (which was stupid of him since it was all against his own interests to offend her), "you do look younger, of course, in a strange sort of way, but I can't help preferring you as you were."

If Lady Gates flushed, the colour was invisible under her lily balm and smooth coat of pink rouge; but her eyes flashed, and she stiffened all over.

"You do?" she flung at him furiously. "I might have known! I did hope you had a little unselfishness in your make-up. But you haven't. I'm your aunt, and you thought of me as old. You wanted me to live and die quietly and leave you my money, instead of having a little real life and fun of my own! You grudge me going back to my youth. I wasn't so old, anyhow! Lots of widows older than I am marry and are happy. That's

what you're afraid of—my marrying! You needn't think I don't understand!"

Malcolm was startled, for, in truth, such a fear had jumped into his mind. It was not for himself that he feared. He really did exonerate himself there; but an elderly woman who would go through weeks of martyrdom to make herself over into a cheap wax doll was in peril from the first adventurer. Malcolm saw her suddenly as easy prey for any unscrupulous boy young enough to be her son. But it was hopeless to try and explain; to say: "I'm worrying about *you*. I'm afraid you're ripe to make even more of a dashed fool of yourself than you've made already." If he said anything of that sort she wouldn't believe a word, and would be angrier than ever.

"You do me an injustice, Aunt Kate, I assure you," he tried to defend himself without floundering into a morass of intricate explanations.

"Injustice!" she sneered. "That's nonsense. There's only one thing to think, and I think it. You're cruel. You're selfish. You're hard! Here I am, back at my hotel after putting in the most awful three weeks of my life. The surgical part came first. That wasn't so bad, for I was under ether during the operations. But I've had a rolling treatment to take off flesh in a hurry, and, oh, my *goodness!* Heaven alone knows what I've gone through besides, in this sanatorium, where any sort of treatment can be given while the bruises are clearing off your face!

I told Miss Smith not to say a word to you, Malcolm, for I was so looking forward to to-day—to giving you a grand surprise. And this—*this* is what I get!”

“If you are pleased, I’m pleased, Aunt Kate,” said Malcolm. “Anyhow, it isn’t my affair. You’ve no one but yourself to consult. Only, you took this long journey half across the world because I was here, so I feel responsible for you in a way. I’d hate to have any trouble come to you.”

“Don’t worry!” she snapped. “I don’t expect trouble. My troubles are all over now, and my fun begins. I’ve made one or two friends out here, and I don’t have to depend on *you*, young man!”

“Don’t let’s quarrel, Aunt Kate,” Malcolm said, stifling his own quick temper which bristled at Lady Gates’ harsh words. “I’m fond of you for the sake of the past, and I’m afraid you may be sorry if you throw me off. At least I’m sincere. I’ve told you the truth.”

“The truth!” she threw back. “The truth in my experience is mostly something disagreeable about somebody else. You’re a *gloom*, Malcolm Allister, that’s what you are! You’re a wet blanket, and I’m in no mood to be wet blanketed, I assure you. There’s just nothing to be done so far as I can see. You can’t eat your words. If you did I’d know you were lying—which I mightn’t have done at first if you’d just been decently polite and remembered on which side your bread was buttered. I

expected to enjoy such a gay evening with you! Well, I'll enjoy it without you, that's all. Since you don't like to have an aunt young enough to make a new life of her own, you can go away and forget her, my boy. Good-bye! Good luck!"

Malcolm stood still for a moment. He hated to take the angry woman at her word, for if he did, most likely it would mean a definite break between them. Just because he *had* had an axe to grind, pride would forbid his trying to come back and grind it! He was sharply sorry this thing had happened, yet, picking up the threads of the conversation, as one studies the tape in a ticker, he didn't see how he could have spoken differently. Compliments upon this poor stretched, painted face, dyed bob, and stiff figure would have burned his lips. He couldn't have uttered them without a sense of shame for himself.

Yet he hesitated to go and shut the door between his friendship and the foolish old woman who might soon be needing it. He would have begged her to think twice, but, without glancing at him again, she walked defiantly to the telephone.

There she called a number and got it almost at once.

"Hello, is that you, Mr. Lopez?" she cooed, her tones and her whole personality softened. "Yes, Lady Gates speaking. You know when you invited me to go out with you this evening, I had to say I'd made an engagement

with my nephew, Mr. Allister. Well, the engagement's off. Is your invitation still open? I know it's your free night at Montparnasse, but—— Oh, I'm glad! Then do come to the Ambassador as soon as you can. We'll dine here. No, I don't mind waiting for you one bit! Delighted. . . . But of course it isn't going to interfere with to-morrow night at Montparnasse. I'll be there—at a table of my own, not my nephew's. I'll be frightened out of my wits to try dancing with you, but since you're so sure I can, I'll do my best. Oh, I know you're just a wonderful leader. I hope I shall be all right and not disgrace you. . . . Well, I'll see you in about half an hour. Splendid!”

When his aunt hung up the receiver, Malcolm stood as he had been standing when she ran to the telephone.

“Oh! Are *you* still there?” she inquired coldly. “I thought you'd gone.”

“I'm going,” said Malcolm. “But, dear Aunt Kate, before I go do let me beg you for your own best good to be careful about this Lopez. He may be all right, but he's only a paid gigolo at Montparnasse, hired to dance and ready to accept tips. He's a foreigner. No one knows anything about him. You have your dignity to think of. People will say the usual thing——”

“Oh, do hold your tongue!” Lady Gates shrieked. “Prig! Sunday-school teacher! You're terribly proper for *me*, but what about yourself? What about the pretty

cigarette girl you've almost stuffed down my throat? Maybe *she's* all right. I've accepted her for your sake and I've been nice to her. But you don't give Marco Lopez, her fellow professional, even the benefit of the doubt. Down with him! Heavens, you're not young, Malcolm Allister. You're older than I am. You bore me. We'll speak to each other after this, not to make gossip. But that's *all*. You understand? Good night again—and finally."

There was nothing for Malcolm to say but to echo her "Good night."

As he shot down in the elevator, however, a voice seemed to chuckle in his ear: "You've cooked *your* goose, young man!" . . . Well, he had!

There was no chance now that Lady Gates would interest herself financially in getting "Black Sleeves" produced. Not only that, it was probable that she was angry enough, spiteful enough, to change her will and cut him completely out of it, once and for all.

CHAPTER XIV

WHY SHE CAME TO HOLLYWOOD

ALLISTER'S first thought after parting from Lady Gates, was: what about the twenty-five thousand dollars Sonnenberg had demanded? Would the fellow go on with the production, adding twenty-five thousand of his

own to the suggested fifty thousand, provided that the author agreed to accept smaller profits?

A short time ago he had been reluctant to sell his scenario to a man like Sonnenberg. He had thought, vaguely, that his aunt might possibly be interested enough in his success to put down the whole sum needed, in which case he could have become his own producer, and would only have needed to find a good release. To do that hadn't seemed by any means impossible, for he still had important friends in the picture game who might have been willing to use their influence as well as to give advice.

But he had been dreaming—counting his chickens before they hatched; and the less likely did it seem that Sonnenberg would rise to the occasion, the more did it seem to Malcolm that Sonnenberg was his last hope.

His dinner engagement with his aunt was off, but he was anxious for a few words with Mary Smith. He wondered if her disappointment at losing the chance of a good part would be very severe. He hardly thought so, for Mary Smith was one of the few girls on earth whom you might perhaps believe when she said she didn't really care about getting into pictures. She had assured him that what she had done had been for his sake, not her own; that she had accepted Sonnenberg's offer to her because it appeared to be the one way of getting the money for "Black Sleeves." Malcolm had taken this for truth, and had been thrilled beyond expression as well as deeply

grateful. But he would not have consented to the production of "Black Sleeves" on such a basis if he hadn't felt convinced that Mary would be better off as a film star than as a vendor of cigarettes in a Hollywood restaurant.

Mary had so much beauty and magnetism that to Malcolm she seemed born for success on the screen. Her personality was sure to "get across," and he would have bet what money remained to him that once on the screen she would stay there. She was ideal in appearance for the young girl in "Black Sleeves," "Serena Robins," and with her cleverness combined with charm, she was bound to make a hit. Every studio would want her, and her future would be assured whereas, if she remained at Montparnasse she had nothing to look forward to unless it might be marriage. For that reason Malcolm had not said: "Miss Smith, I won't accept Oscar Sonnenberg's offer which is made, not for my scenario, but for you."

In any case, no matter how Miss Smith might regard the bad news, the sooner she had it, the better.

Malcolm went to Montparnasse and had not been seated long at his own table when an imploring look brought the sparkling green figure to him.

"Cigarettes?" asked Madeleine, with a less "carved in marble" smile than she gave to other admiring men.

"Thanks, yes," said Malcolm, selecting a popular brand which would have been cheap except at Mont-

parnasse. "Miss Smith, you've been seeing my aunt, so you must know what a blankety-blank fool the poor dear has made of herself."

"I know what you *mean*," Madeleine admitted. "But I *don't* know that I quite agree with you about her being a blankety-blank fool. I think she's pathetic."

"Pathetic, but ludicrous too," said Malcolm. "A woman over sixty trying to look sixteen."

"Well, if she can *do* it, she may have a much better time in life," Madeleine argued.

"But she can't do it."

"Perhaps we're not fair judges," suggested the girl. "You've always thought of her as your nice, stodgy old aunt from Leeds or somewhere. As for me, I've seen her in the sanatorium while she was under treatment, and I can't get that picture out of my mind. But to the people who haven't known her before, the poor lady may look a perfect thirty-six!"

"You're charitable!" Malcolm exclaimed. "She made me tell her what I thought of the change, and—well, I was like George Washington. With my little hatchet of truth I felt forced to strike. I hit where the lady lives, and now she's made up her mind to shed her one and only nephew for ever and a day."

"She has!" echoed Madeleine. "She won't help you with 'Black Sleeves'?"

"I didn't even ask," said Malcolm. "I knew, when

she flung out dark hints about her will, that she wasn't likely to help finance me for a film."

"Did she say she'd cut you out of her will?" asked the girl, distressed.

"She accused me of counting on her money when she died, of wanting her to stay old, and grudging her any fun."

"I see," said Madeleine. "But surely she'll be sorry and change her mind? She came all this distance just to visit you."

"And to revel in the joys of Hollywood. She seems to have made at least one friend here whom she can depend upon. Heaven knows how he may exploit her! Mr. Marco Lopez, our handsome patent-leather-haired gigolo at Montparnasse, for instance."

"Marco Lopez!" repeated the girl, a sharp note of surprise, and something more, in her voice.

Malcolm was startled by her tone. A question came to the tip of his tongue, but before he could speak Madeleine had gone. She had either been called to a table at some distance or else she had invented an excuse to escape in a hurry. He could not see the expression of her face, for she stood with her back turned to him; and he wondered if even that had a motive in it. *Marco Lopez!* This was not the first time she had shown—no, "betrayed" was the word—a peculiar interest in the professional dancer. The way in which

she looked at the man had disturbed Malcolm once. Now it was the stifled emotion in her voice as she repeated the name which worried him.

What had he said to upset the girl? He tried to recall his own words, and couldn't exactly. But he had hinted that Lopez might make an unscrupulous use of the rejuvenated lady's favour. Had Miss Smith's evident anxiety sprung from friendship for Aunt Kate, or—from something other than friendship for the Argentine 'Count'?

Malcolm didn't believe that there were Counts in the Argentine. He had heard, however, that Lopez was supposed to possess some vague title; and the fact that he must have started the rumour himself prejudiced men against him. Women were more credulous as a rule. Lady Gates and Mary Smith might look upon him as a figure of romance, a self-banished aristocrat forced to earn a living as best he could in a foreign land.

Luckily, Malcolm had come to the restaurant late, after his scene with Lady Gates at the Hôtel Ambassador, so that it wasn't difficult to pass the time there until the hour when Mary was free. He had had no further chance to speak to the girl, and in these days she no longer allowed him to take her home. But she couldn't send him away without a word if he "happened" to run across her at a discreet distance from Montparnasse!

Malcolm contrived to accomplish this by lying in wait

beneath the shadow of a huge pepper tree in the street through which she must pass. But he didn't make the mistake of pretending he was there by accident.

"I know you won't be pleased to see me," he said, "and that you must have some more or less good reason for wanting to go home alone these days, but——"

"I've a very good reason," Madeleine broke in. "Haven't you guessed what it is—you, a writer, supposed to read people's inner workings like those of a watch?"

"No, I haven't guessed," said Malcolm. "I hope it isn't because you——"

"I'll save you the trouble of guessing," the girl cut him short again, not crossly, but gravely. "That is, I will if you'll promise not to misunderstand."

"I do promise," he answered. They were standing still under drooping branches jewelled with pale coral berries, for Miss Smith had stopped short at his greeting, and had not taken another step since.

"Well, frankly then, it's on account of Sonnenberg," she said. "I'd be an idiot if I didn't know that he is—what he would probably call 'gone' on me. That's why he wants to put me into a picture, of course. I suggested *your* picture, and instantly the man—imagined things. I told him you had a wonderful part for a girl in 'Black Sleeves' that I'd love to play—and so on, and so on. But I'm sure he still has ideas in his head, and I don't

want him to have them. He might be spiteful enough to turn down your scenario after all, if he felt convinced I was 'stringing him along' for your sake."

"He will turn down the scenario, anyhow, now that I can't put in the money he wanted," Malcolm reminded her.

"No he won't, if I play my cards well," said Madeleine. "I'm almost sure that stuff about the twenty-five thousand was bluff. He has loads of money. He won't want to give up producing 'Black Sleeves' now he's gone as far as he has."

"Because you'll pay your cards in such a way as to make him think he will lose you if he throws me over!" Malcolm exclaimed.

"Yes. That's what I mean," agreed the girl. "But remember your promise to me just now! I'm not afraid of him. I can manage the man. Only, if he's having me watched, as he very likely is, it will be best if you and I are not seen going about together as though we had some secret understanding behind his back. That would defeat our object."

"You don't realise the position you place me in!" broke out Malcolm. "You're doing this for me—putting yourself in this fellow's power——"

"Pooh!" laughed Mary Smith. "Don't be Victorian. I thought you were one of the most up-to-date authors of our time!"

"I'm a man!" Malcolm defended himself.

"And I'm a woman, old enough to vote, so I ought to be old enough to take care of myself. It's perfectly true I'm working for your interests, but it may have occurred to you that I shan't be ignoring my own if I make a success in a picture—yours or anybody else's!"

"It has occurred to me," said Malcolm. "Otherwise I wouldn't have let you go on."

"You'd have had harder work to stop me there than you've had to stop me here in the street," the girl laughed. "Now that's *one* thing you *must* 'let' me do—go my way home alone."

"If you insist," Malcolm had to agree. "But let me ask you a question first. I can't sleep unless I ask it and get an answer. Why did you seem upset about Marco Lopez and my aunt? I know I haven't any right to catechise you. But do tell me. Once or twice I've thought you seemed interested in that 'sap,' as they call him at Montparnasse. I—I've tortured myself, Mary, wondering if you wanted to work there because of him. You see, I love you, dear, I love you terribly, and——"

"Don't!" Madeleine stopped him. "I haven't any right to love or be loved. You've been a wonderful friend to me. Oh, please, go on being a friend! I needed one the night we met first, and I need one—almost as much—now. Believe me, you're the friend I need, and wish to keep, even if—if I tell you that I *did* come to Mont-

parnasse because of Marco Lopez. I came to California—I came to Hollywood—because of him!”

She spoke in a low, tense voice, with her bare little hand on Malcolm's arm. But as she uttered the last words, breathlessly, the girl withdrew her hand and literally ran away.

Malcolm knew that he must not follow. Before this she had told him why, and it hadn't made him too unhappy. He had been very far from losing hope, and even though there might be troubles ahead, their futures had seemed to lie together. She was acting for *him*. She cared for him. But now, in a second, everything was changed. The mystery of her, which had seemed the mystery of a wandering princess, was beautiful and romantic no longer. It had become sordid, because it was connected with this swarthy, smooth-headed dancer, Marco Lopez, for whose sake she had come to California.

CHAPTER XV

HANDS OF FATE

MADELEINE STANDISH almost ran home to her lodging-house in Hawthorn Avenue. It was not the same place at which she had lived before taking up work at Montparnasse. The first money she earned from Lady Gates (and she *had* earned it!) paid her debt there, and thank-

fully she had moved out of sordid disorder to comfort and decent cleanliness.

It was necessary to her plans that she should save money, for any day now she might need a considerable sum. But her room and bath cost her only twelve dollars a week, and she had all her meals, save an early cup of coffee which she made herself, at Montparnasse. Soon, too, she would be receiving a good salary for the part of "Serena Robins" in "Black Sleeves"; Oscar Sonnenberg didn't pay his stars four or five thousand dollars a week, as the big producing companies did; but, amateur that she was, Madeleine counted on two or three hundred dollars to begin with. He wouldn't dare offer less, for fear of losing her! He knew very well that she wasn't "screen mad," and ready to snap at anything. As for his "turning down" Malcolm Allister's play for lack of twenty-five thousand dollars, Madeleine was not worrying. The man wanted her too much. But what Malcolm had said about Lopez and Lady Gates troubled the girl.

She sat in the one comfortable seat the little room provided—a rocking-chair, covered with blue and white flowered cretonne to match the curtains—and thought over the whole conversation.

Had she said anything indiscreet about Lopez to Malcolm? she asked herself. Had she given herself away?

She knew that Malcolm had fallen in love with her, and that she was deeply in love with him. She thought

he was handsome and charming and altogether perfect. She was proud of him first as a soldier and secondly as a successful writer. She sympathised with him in his Hollywood disappointments so warmly that her heart ached. She felt like his sweetheart and his mother. In other words, she adored him. But she had spoken the truth in saying that she felt love was not for her. Before long she might be involved in a serious scandal. She might be driven to a deed that would be called a crime, and she mustn't let Malcolm Allister be involved with her, as he would be if she admitted her love for him. Even if they were not actually engaged, once he knew that she cared he would proclaim himself her lover and fiancé before the world, in order to protect her from the wolves.

The girl looked round the room with its neat, cream-white walls, its few cheap, conventional etchings, its blue-enamelled furniture and its grey, felt-covered floor. The blue and white hangings and chair covers and the bright nasturtiums, presented by an admiring landlady, gave a look of pleasantness and peace; but Madeleine Standish knew that nowhere could there be peace for her. She hadn't come to Hollywood for peace, but for a battle, and each day was bringing her nearer to it. She had done the only decent thing in putting Malcolm off by telling him the truth about Lopez—the truth, so far as it could be told now. But, in hurting him, she had hurt herself, and she felt very sad to-night.

Besides, there was poor Lady Gates to think of, and pity!

Madeleine had grown rather fond of the foolish old woman, who was kind at heart and staunch in her way under all the silliness. Knowing more or less what Marco Lopez was, the girl's fears ran ahead of Malcolm's hints. She thought Lopez quite capable of attempting to marry Lady Gates, and it was on the cards that he would succeed. Better that the poor old thing should die than become Lopez's wife! Better for herself, and better for Malcolm! Married to Lopez, he would inherit everything his wife had, and the nephew would be left out in the cold.

Madeleine wondered if Malcolm's thoughts had run as far afield as that, when he spoke of his aunt and the dancer. She hardly imagined that he had pictured Lady Gates married to Lopez; but the more she dwelt on the idea the more probable it seemed that marriage with the rich old woman had been the Argentino's aim from the first.

"It mustn't happen!" the girl said to herself, half aloud. "I—I won't allow it. I'll do something to save poor Malcolm's inheritance from going to that wretch!"

There were several things she could do, none of them certain of success and none of them wise; but the easiest and best, Madeleine thought, would be to speak with Lady Gates.

She was no longer in her ladyship's employ. The odd "engagement" had ended with the patient's release

from hospital, but the two were on very friendly terms and there was no reason why Miss Smith shouldn't call at the Hôtel Ambassador before going to work next morning.

It was nine o'clock when the girl telephoned from one of the booths downstairs, and Lady Gates had just ordered breakfast in bed.

"My dear, I'm so happy!" she said. "This is the first day in about fifteen years I haven't hated to see my own face in the mirror. I used to think that every year I was growing to look more and more like a round but wrinkled baked apple, or a puffy muffin. But now—well, by the time I've learned to make myself up according to expert instructions, I won't be such a blot on Hollywood. Yes, *do* come up! It's nice of you to call. I shall be delighted to see you—and have you see me!"

Madeleine was touched. "Poor old dear!" she thought. "If only she can be saved from Lopez."

Lady Gates had already tried an experiment in make-up for the benefit of the waiter who had brought in her breakfast. She had blackened her plucked eyebrows and short lashes, rouged her cheeks, painted her lips to represent a crimson Cupid's bow, and pulled a gold-net boudoir cap over her waved auburn crop.

"Well, my dear, what do you think of me?" she gaily inquired. "Am I a success?"

"You are quite wonderful," was Madeleine's answer, and it was indeed true. She hesitated, not knowing how

to work up most tactfully to what she had come to say. But Lady Gates unconsciously gave the opening the other sought.

"I'm delighted you think so, because I believe you're sincere," she said. "Didn't my nephew mention me to you last night at Montparnasse?"

"Yes," said Madeleine. "He knows we have become friends, you see, so he told me—just in a few words—how sorry he was to have offended you. It was only through his fondness for you, and respect. Hollywood is a queer place—different from anywhere else in the world. It—I suppose it's difficult to—break out from old habits all of a sudden—and—and yet play safe."

"Please don't try to defend my nephew to me, Miss Smith," said Lady Gates, her tone stiffening a little, "though no doubt you mean well. Did he ask you to call on me this morning?"

"Certainly not!" the girl protested. "He has no idea that I've come. I made up my mind in the night that I'd try to see you—because of something Mr. Allister said—but not about himself."

"Not about himself?" Katherine Gates repeated. "What then?"

"He mentioned that you had thrown over your dinner engagement with him to dine with Mr. Lopez, who dances at Montparnasse."

"Well, what if I did?" demanded her ladyship. "I

suppose I'm free to dine with whoever I like? And, anyhow, why should you be interested, my dear Miss Smith? Are you a friend of Mr. Lopez?"

"No," said Madeleine. "I never spoke to him until a short time ago, as I told you before. Even now we merely say 'good evening' if we come near each other. And he has bought cigarettes from me a few times. But, dear Lady Gates, please don't be angry! You've been kind to me, and I like you so much, and want you to be happy. A man like Mr. Lopez isn't—isn't a good friend for you to have."

"Well, upon my word!" exclaimed her ladyship. "Why this sudden anxiety for me, my dear? You knew that I'd made Mr. Lopez's acquaintance and that he'd been of use, advising me about this and that. I mentioned that to you before I asked you to go and see the surgeon with me. Don't you remember?"

"I do," said Madeleine. "And I was a little worried for you even then. But I didn't know you very well. And, besides, it's rather different now. You are launching out on a sort of new career, as a younger woman. You'll probably be dancing a good deal with Mr. Lopez at Montparnasse, unless he——"

"Unless he what?" Lady Gates echoed sharply.

"I was going to say, unless he should decide to take a part in a moving picture. I've heard that he's likely to receive an offer. One hears everything at Mont-

parnasse. But even if Mr. Lopez gets this offer and accepts, he'll have enough time at his own disposal to be dangerous to you if you're not careful, Lady Gates. Oh, do believe I'm speaking for your good! Though I hardly know Mr. Lopez personally, I do know his reputation."

Lady Gates' natural colour now more than rivalled her rouge, and had flushed her whole face darkly red.

"Anybody would think I was your age, and you mine!" she said. "I'm trying my best to be young, as you very well know, but I'm not so young as all that! At least, I'm old enough to judge for myself what men friends to make! I really do wonder at your—your cheek, Miss Smith. I can't help thinking that my nephew *did* send you, or else—or else that you've fallen in love with Mr. Lopez yourself, and are scared, because I'm richer than you and rather more important in the social scale, that I may take him away! Yes, that's what you make me think—that you're *jealous!*"

"Oh, Lady Gates!" the girl exclaimed, springing to her feet. "You can't believe that of me."

"Why not?" the other snapped. "I'm not so old and hideous now, I suppose, that nobody *can* be jealous of me? You must have had some strong motive for daring to lecture me like this. If you come from Malcolm Allister, tell him again from me that I'm going to live my own life. I don't need him in it, and after last

night I don't want him. If you're here on your own account, my answer to you is the same. I intend to enjoy myself at Hollywood, in my own way, with my own friends. I'm afraid you've travelled quite a long distance this morning for nothing. And I suppose by this time you must be hurrying back."

Madeleine resigned herself to the inevitable. She could do no more. This poor lady was in the hands of Fate.

CHAPTER XVI

THE END OF THE BLUFF

MADELEINE had been right in her estimate of "Big Ossie" Sonnenberg. She had only to "hold him up" to make him see the lost twenty-five thousand dollars as she saw twenty-five cents.

If she wanted to play "Serena Robins" in "Black Sleeves" she was going to play it. If she wished the part to be turned into a star part, why, Allister must turn it into one. What . . . she *didn't* want to be a star—yet? Well, then, Serena Robins could stay as she was, the ingénue (he pronounced it "ongenoo"). She'd be sitting pretty, at that, for all she had to do was to be nice to poor old Ossie, and he'd buy the next story after "Black Sleeves," with a wow of a part in it—a regular Clara Bow part!—for little Mary Smith.

Madeleine had no mid-Victorian qualms about where "being nice" to Ossie was supposed to lead her. She knew what he meant, and she knew even better what she meant. The two meanings were at opposite poles. But hers would prevail, and there would be no hitch in the progress of the film or of the maiden.

Malcolm Allister was surprised when Mr. Sonnenberg informed him that his failure to "cough up" the sum suggested was going to make no material difference at all. Sonnenberg explained that, having re-read the scenario, he liked it better than he had expected, and thought it worth risking a bit of money on. But the surprise was less agreeable to the author of "Black Sleeves" than it would have been if Mr. Marco Lopez had not been included in the cast engaged.

No hint was uttered of a suggestion from Miss Smith, but after her admission concerning Lopez Malcolm had no doubts as to why the Argentinian had been selected by Sonnenberg to play the dancer in the ball-room scene.

Once more Malcolm was in funds. Once more he was a figure of some importance, if not of his old importance, in Hollywood. He had been redeemed from the humiliation of failure. With good-looking Jack Inescort as the star and Pauline Fordham as the "heavy" lead, to say nothing of Mary Smith as the young girl, John Landis directing, and the famous Jim Carson as head camera man, "Black Sleeves" seemed fairly sure to come out as a good picture.

Yet the certainty that Mary Smith had asked Sonnenberg to engage Lopez spoiled everything for Malcolm.

He had tried to convince himself after that strange admission of hers, that though the dancer was important in the girl's life, she hated rather than loved him. But that couldn't be true, after all, for a woman couldn't wish to act in a picture with a man if she disliked him. Malcolm knew that Mary had seen his book "Red Resurrection," for he had given it to her and told her in detail exactly how he had changed the story for the film, even describing the principal scenes as he had worked them out in the scenario. She was aware that Serena Robins would have to dance with Marco Lopez and try to save his life when attacked by the indignant hero in a garden overhanging an Italian lake. . . . No, Malcolm assured himself again and again, if hope arose in his heart, that there couldn't be much doubt of what the mysterious Mary Smith's feelings were for the equally mysterious Marco Lopez.

Oscar Sonnenberg not only headed the Worldwide Pictures Company, but was virtually the whole company. The others with him were figureheads. He had no studio of his own, but could always hire one of the old studios in Los Angeles, or secure the use of a stage in one of the big studios in Hollywood or Culver City, when the company owning it "slowed down" on productions for a time, as most companies do now and then. He had bought at a bargain after the death of a great star, a

beautiful "Italian" villa in a large garden to match; and again and again in "Worldwide" pictures this property of his had been utilised. Shots were made from different angles, and so the public didn't find a tiresome sameness in the filmed scenes. Now the Villa Stella Mare would come in very handy for "Black Sleeves," and, as usual, would save Oscar Sonnenberg a good deal of money. A devastated village in France he could hire for a week on the Paragon lot. The Casino at Monte Carlo was free at Marvel City for two days, and a scene on a cliff above water, supposed to be Lake Como, would be shot near the beautiful restaurant of La Venta, where scenery was lent by Nature.

Instead of working a reasonable number of hours a day and taking months to finish a picture, Worldwide earned its name as a "quickie" by speeding up production at a feverish rate. Sonnenberg's rule was to engage a couple of popular free-lance stars and pay them a high salary. The rest of the cast had to be good, though not expensive, and sometimes he would give one or two attractive amateurs a chance, as he was now doing in "Black Sleeves." His company worked uncomplainingly an unreasonable number of hours which carried them far into the night. Little time for sleep or meals, no time for fun during the filming of a "quickie" picture! But Worldwide would do in ten days, or a fortnight at most, what Paragon and the other "big fellows" spread

over months, and often, in a superficial way with a smart director such as John Landis, it would give as good an effect.

Malcolm Allister was being paid only ten thousand dollars out of the seventy-five thousand allotted for the whole production. He had willingly agreed to this small price, wishing the picture not to be "scrimped." But if "Black Sleeves" turned out well and made a hit, his work would be in demand. He ought to have been happy!

As for "Miss Smith," so highly were her services valued by Pierre, that she was invited to return to Montparnasse, when her picture work should be finished, at a salary of fifty dollars a week instead of thirty. But, Pierre and his patrons asked each other, when would the girl's picture work be finished? Ossie's offer had not been the first, though it might have been the best, and men—young and old and middle-aged—who had admired the mysterious cigarette girl since her first appearance, made big bets now that after the release of "Black Sleeves" she would be snapped up at a thousand dollars a week by Paragon or Mellin-Gordon or de Rennes. Not much chance, they said, of Mary Smith ever being seen again at Montparnasse, except as a client of the restaurant, a gorgeous young star.

Everyone who came to Montparnasse was so interested in the future career of the green-spangled harem girl that the reappearance of Lady Gates—a dazzlingly changed Lady Gates—passed comparatively unnoticed.

Plenty of ageing women at Los Angeles and Hollywood suddenly lost their chins and their wrinkles. It was only a little funnier that a lady of title from England, the rich relative of a well-known author, should go through this metamorphosis, than that a Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Jones should do it. People who had seen her before, fat, comfortable, if overdressed, stared at the changed creature and made a few ribald jokes over her dyed, marcelled hair, her pink and white face with its slightly drawn smirk, and her—more or less—sylph-like figure.

“Well, she couldn’t have been worse than she was, so she must be better!” remarked a woman who knew by experience just what Lady Gates had gone through, but had not made the mistake of arriving beforehand at Hollywood. “And even if *she* is a nightmare, her new clothes are dreams!”

But Lady Gates was not a nightmare. The oftener Malcolm saw her the more ready he was to admit that she looked twenty years younger, and was greatly improved—if one didn’t mind a few inches deep of paint and powder touched up with mascara and framed in henna.

His aunt would have been pleased could she have known that her too-frank nephew actually admired her pluck when he had had time to think things over. But she gave him no opportunity of expressing contrition, even if he had been ready to do so. Though she came on every dance-evening to Montparnasse, and sometimes

to luncheon, the cool nod and "Keep your distance!" look she bestowed on Malcolm was from the first encounter a warning not to approach. She sat at her table, and Malcolm sat at his. The polite bows they vouchsafed each other modified gossip, but, of course, those interested saw that Malcolm Allister and his rich aunt must have had some sort of quarrel.

"Perhaps he's peeved about the lounge-lizard," suggested a man to Pierre, who merely shrugged his shoulders and knew nothing.

Pierre privately thought, however, that the suggestion was probably correct. Lady Gates was evidently very rich. Her jewels had always been wonderful, and now the dresses she wore were as beautiful, as well chosen, as those of the most famous moving picture star. Even her shoes were perfect, with real diamond buckles and heels. Her lace-clocked stockings must cost a hundred dollars a pair. She had bought a handsome ermine cloak which feminine Hollywood had wistfully admired in a shop window and left there at the price of eight thousand dollars. All this was apparently for the benefit of Marco Lopez, for she talked only to him, danced only with him, and, it had to be confessed, danced rather well considering what must be her years.

Pierre chuckled to himself when Lopez announced that he had been asked to play the part of a dancer in Sonnenberg's picture, but that he had arranged not to

work at the studio in the evening. He could, he said, continue to dance at Montparnasse, if Monsieur Pierre could find someone to fill his place in the afternoons while the picture was being made.

Monsieur Pierre could and would do this. Lopez was a splendid dancer, good-looking and popular. He brought a number of fair clients to the restaurant, the proprietor was sure; and Lady Gates alone spent as much there as any dozen of Lopez's other admirers.

"When he has landed his fish and married her, the two will continue to come to me and spend milady's money," Pierre told himself, well content.

It was not surprising to him that Mr. Allister was annoyed with his rich aunt!

So time passed; and then one day, when production of "Black Sleeves" was about to begin, Marco Lopez broke the news to the lady in the darkened room.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PERFECT SCHEME

THE lady of the darkened room lay, as usual, on a cushioned sofa. But to-day the sofa was drawn near the long, open window, and only a pair of rose-coloured curtains drawn across the light gave the effect of warm, becoming dusk which the lady loved. Even in the rosy

twilight she was pale, but she was also amazingly beautiful in a haggard way, and the great eyes that looked up at the man bending over her had passion in them and tragedy.

Lopez kissed the thin fingers with the polished nails which Lady Gates had once thought like coral on ivory.

"Dear Marco," she murmured. "I've been waiting for you."

"And I for the moment when I could come to thee," he answered in Spanish. He drew up a chair and sat down beside her.

A French novel in a yellow cover slipped off the purple silk coverlet over her knees and fell to the floor. Even that slight sound jarred the woman's nerves. She started, and then coughed a little.

"Thou art not worse?" Lopez asked tenderly.

"No," she said, when the coughing had stopped. "This is nothing. I'm a little tired, that's all. I've been out walking in the patio. But oh, Marco, I am *triste*—I am bored—bored—bored! I know there's nothing left for me in life but this, and sometimes I wish, since I must die, I could die soon."

"Thou wilt break my heart if thou speakest so!" Lopez said, and went down on one knee beside the sofa.

"Forgive me," the woman begged. "I'm not ungrateful, really. You are more good to me than I thought it possible for a man to be, Marco. You saved my life—

such as it is—and more than my life. I daren't think what would have happened to me without you. And in return I can do so little!"

"Thou hast done miraculous things," Lopez soothed her. "Lady Gates is our latest success, but we have had many others before her. Silly women! Their vanity is fair game. Our commission upon Lady Gates' treatment was nearly a thousand dollars, my dear one. Without thee, neither she nor the others before her would have been persuaded to go through it."

"But what are a few thousand dollars to us?" the woman complained. "If we are ever to escape and go where we wish to go, we will need many thousands."

"I know," Lopez agreed. "And I see my way to winning the many thousands."

"Not by dancing at that wretched cabaret!"

"It's not a cabaret, most beautiful one. But certainly thou art right. It is a pittance I earn there. Yet it has been a stepping-stone—a means to an end. And the end is in sight, if again thou wilt help."

"What can I do?" she asked.

"There are two things thou canst do. I am almost afraid to tell thee what they are."

"Why? Haven't you found me always ready to do what I can?"

"Indeed, yes, always. But these things are different. My fear is that thou mayest misunderstand. Promise,

before I tell thee, that thou wilt not do that, whatever happens."

"I can't—*promise!* Tell me quickly. If you don't I shall be excited, and then I shall cough."

"The first thing is this: that thou wilt not be sad or mind too much if I am away from thee most of the time for the next two weeks. I have an offer to act in a picture. It is the picture I have spoken of, by Lady Gates' nephew."

"'Black Sleeves!'" exclaimed the woman. "I know. And I've read about it in the gossipy rag of a paper you buy to amuse me, *Secrets*. But you dislike the Allister young man. You've told me that he looks at you as if you were the dirt under his feet. He is putting the cigarette seller at Montparnasse, whom *Secrets* has named 'the Mystery Girl,' into the cast."

"It is not Allister who puts her in," Lopez explained. "He has no power. It is Sonnenberg, the producer. He is in love with the girl and cares not at all who knows it. She is everything with him, and in the picture. She does what she likes. All goes for her with Sonnenberg!"

"Then," said the woman quickly, "perhaps she puts *you* in the picture."

Marco Lopez shrugged his shoulders. He was as much in love with the lady of the darkened room as he could be with anyone except himself. She fascinated and held him as no other ever had. He wanted her love in return;

but in his experience love was invariably heightened by the knowledge that others saw the loved one's attractions.

"Possible!" he admitted. "Miss Smith and I do not have much to say to one another. Yet I have noticed that she looks at me often, and lately she and this Sonnenberg have talked about me. I have seen that. But it is not my business how the offer comes. I have it! I am to play a part like myself—a dancer. Sonnenberg suggested at first only four hundred a week. I would not listen. I tried for a thousand, and compromised in the end for seven hundred. That means fourteen hundred for the two weeks. And, besides, I can keep on my night work at Montparnasse. I made special arrangements with Pierre. Thou seest how I strive after every nickel—for thee."

"All day long for two whole weeks I must do without you, and you will be playing love scenes with this cigarette girl who is *épris* with you!" the woman sighed. "And for fourteen hundred dollars! Marco, are you sure—*sure* it wouldn't be safe now for us to sell some of the jewels—just a few here—and maybe a few in San Francisco or other places? If we could do that, we should be free!"

"We should not be free," Lopez told her. "It would not yet be safe to sell even one. Far better if we need try to sell none at all in this country. That is what I hope for, thou knowest; to find other ways out. And I

have found a way! Now I have explained the first thing thou canst do to help me: to let me go from thee for a while without too much sadness. So it is time I tell thee the second. Thou wilt not like it, yet if it brings us enough money for our escape, and to be comfortable, if not rich, for the rest of our lives——”

“Don’t keep me in suspense,” the woman said.

“It concerns Lady Gates,” Lopez began. “Thou speakest of this girl who may be in love with me. If she is, it’s an affair of no importance. But, with a person like Lady Gates, it is a very different matter. At first, dost thou remember, after she came to consult thee thou didst laugh and tease me about my ‘conquest’? Well, maybe thou didst put the idea into my head, or maybe it was there already—for thy sake, to get money for thy good. But, I have made the conquest. This old woman is mad about me. We have now, thou and I between us, only to exploit her.”

“What do you mean?” the sweet, husky voice questioned.

“What I mean sounds far worse than in reality it is,” Lopez excused himself. “If I promised to marry her, she would tear up the will where she has left all to her nephew, and make a new one in favour of me.”

“To *marry* her!” echoed the woman. “You can’t be serious?”

“Why not, dearest one?” argued the man. “What

would such a marriage be? A mere form. It would not interfere between us."

"But it wouldn't be a marriage!" she objected. "If you could have got rid of your wife in Buenos Aires you would have married me before we came here. At least, that's what you made me believe."

"And it is true," Lopez assured her. "That is good for my plan now. She will *think* I am her husband. That alone is necessary. When I have won her confidence and got her money—her jewels too, which are worth a large fortune—I shall leave her."

"I see," said the woman slowly. "But how do you think you would *get* the money and jewels?"

"I have several ideas," Lopez said. "All good ones. When I am sure which is the best of them, I will fix upon it. But in the beginning I may need your help. Someone has tried to prejudice this old woman against me. She admits that, but will not name the person. She and I have had talks. She calls it a 'delicious flirtation,' the poor fool, who puts on all the airs of a young beauty now she has taken off a few chins and pounds of flesh, and changed the shape of her figure and nose! But she hints that she has doubts of my sincerity. Thou canst convince her which way happiness lies for her in future, by casting her horoscope. Wilt thou do this—not for *me*, but for *us*?"

"Did a man ever ask such a thing of a woman he pretends to love!" the husky voice protested.

"Many times, I should think, carissima, men who have truly loved have asked help in such a way, and have received it," answered Lopez. "Thou knowest I love thee. If not, would I be thy servant and thy slave? What is there for me in living as we do, if it were not for love? Nothing! But thou and I have all to gain in such a scheme as I have told thee."

"I must think," said the woman. "I can't answer at once. Perhaps it's because I'm so ill and have a fever burning up my blood that horrid fancies come to me at night. I have visions of you when I am dead—free to go where you wish—with *the jewels* which you say always we dare not sell here. I may begin now, being tortured with a new nightmare; me, out of your way, dead, and you with a rich old wife, very easy to deceive—you *say* she is!—travelling around the world, amusing yourself with others, waiting for her death."

"I will shoot myself if thou talkest so!" cried Lopez, springing to his feet. "Even from thee, I cannot bear such cruelty, such injustice."

The woman broke into tears. "Oh, forgive me, Marco!" she sobbed, and began to cough. "I'm sorry! I'll—do anything for you that you ask."

Instantly he was on his knees again beside her, his arms round the frail, shaken body. He murmured words of love, and kissed the wet cheeks, the heavy, perfumed hair. Soon the coughing ceased.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER

It was a dancing-night at Montparnasse, and Lady Gates came early to her table, dressed in a diamond-dusted, peach-blossom film that looked like dew-spangled petals, scattered on a silver wave. This was the idea she had had "expressed" by the smartest dressmaker in Hollywood, to carry out the remembered prophecy of the veiled Madame Blank: the prophecy which, in the days of her fat elderly drabness, had foretold her present glory.

Now she had gone again to consult this lady. Her horoscope had been cast and hints had been given of happiness with a dark, handsome man from a southern land, who adored her, despite a difference in their ages.

Lady Gates was ecstatically pleased with herself. Never would she have believed that a life could be so made over anew. She imagined, because people stared at her and whispered when they thought she wasn't looking, that she had become strikingly beautiful, and had acquired what they call in Hollywood "S.A." She must have it, if only judging by the way men looked at her!

She had covered the walls of her sitting-room at the Hôtel Ambassador with mirrors. Her ladyship never tired of gazing at her pink and white face, with its

straight, transformed nose, its Cupid's bow lips built up with crimson paint, its thin black brows and thick black eyelashes, and its reduced chin; or admiring her rounded, but no longer to be called stout, form! She adored her hair, too, which was of so shining an auburn that it might have been a fluted copper helmet. She was sure she didn't look a day over thirty-five, if as much, and honestly she couldn't see why Marco's passionate protestations, which made her tremble with ecstasy, shouldn't be sincere.

She was waiting for him now, counting the moments. Work on "Black Sleeves" had begun some days ago, and Marco seemed pleased with his part. He had promised his divine "Katherina" never to speak with that little cat, Mary Smith, except when they were in a scene together; even then to confine himself strictly to business, and he had such a wonderful look in his glorious eyes when he made the promise—a dark gaze straight into her very soul, it was!—that she would have been a hard woman not to believe his word.

Still, she was pleased when she saw the Smith girl come in with the fat producer, Sonnenberg, and Landis the director of the film, who was bringing his wife. The latter was a beautiful, youngish woman, whose professional name was Pauline Something, Lady Gates had forgotten what; but the thing she did remember with pleasure was, that Marco said the woman had a better

part in the picture than the cigarette girl had been given.

They all sat down at a table, decorated with red roses, and evidently engaged in advance. Pauline Thingumbob wore the same brand of rose stuck in the extremely décolleté neck of her black transparent velvet gown, but Miss Smith wore an orchid pinned on to the breast of her white frock, and this worried Lady Gates.

She glanced down anxiously at her own floral decoration (she was, for once, without jewels to-night, save for a diamond brooch or two) and became more anxious than ever. There could be no doubt, Mary's orchid and her two were exactly alike.

Marco had sent Lady Gates her flowers, with a card which had on it, in his adorable, foreign handwriting: "To my rare orchid woman, from her lover." Could he have been treacherous enough to send a twin orchid to Mary Smith, who had almost certainly got him into Sonnenberg's production in order to be near her?

To Lady Gates' mind, it seemed that no normal woman could resist Marco Lopez; he was so utterly alluring as a man! She had been sure for some time that Mary was in love with Marco. That didn't matter much, though Mary had been disgustingly catty about it, and had tried to part them. But, if Marco had been seduced into flirting with Mary, after his promises and his protestations that she, his Queen Katherina the

Great, was the only woman he had ever really loved, she couldn't endure it. Somehow, she must find out the truth. She must make completely sure!

As she so thought, with the blood beating in the veins of her neck, Nora Casey—now the sole cigarette seller at Montparnasse—approached her ladyship's table.

Katherine Gates was opening her gold mesh vanity bag to buy Marco's favourite brand of cigarette—a sort of glorified cheroot—when she saw that the pretty Irish girl had a letter in her hand.

"The doorman asked me to give this to you, Lady Gates," Nora announced.

Katherine's heart jumped as she took the envelope. She was afraid that the letter might be from Marco saying that he had been delayed, or even prevented from coming, so that his new understudy would have to "do" the professional dancer throughout the whole evening at Montparnasse. But, thank goodness, this wasn't Marco's writing! She ought to know, because he wrote her a wonderful love letter each night to be delivered in the morning with her breakfast.

The stationery somehow looked familiar; she couldn't, at this moment of excitement, think why, but she was sure she'd never before seen the writing on the envelope. It was rather queer and uneducated-looking—or else it was disguised. The latter suggestion barely touched

Lady Gates' mind, however, for why should a correspondent of hers disguise a handwriting?

She opened the blue-grey envelope and read the few lines that half covered the first page of the paper within.

"LADY GATES,—You must, for your own happiness, give up your intention of marrying Marco Lopez. He does not love you. He loves someone else. He wants you only for your money. But worse still, he could not possibly make you his wife, as he has one in Buenos Aires. You can prove this.

"ONE WHO WISHES YOU WELL."

Katherine Gates was dazed for a minute. She felt that this couldn't be happening. The letter was part of a bad dream. Soon she would wake up. Oh, she must make herself wake up! She couldn't bear this suffering.

But she read the words over and over. There they were, always the same. She tore her eyes from the sheet of blue-grey paper which had a small piece neatly cut out of it at the right, and near the top. She let her gaze travel round the now familiar room. Most of the tables were filled. Pretty girls, beautiful women, and well-known men of the moving picture world were laughing and talking to each other. Pierre stood near the door with bows and smiles for his most important clients. The music had begun to play. The heavy notes of the

big illuminated drum were like the beat, beat of her sick heart.

No, it was not a dream that this letter had come to her. But that didn't make its words true! Of course, they were not true! Marco wouldn't dare to deceive her so, even if he were dishonest—a woman of her birth and money and importance! She adored Marco, but she couldn't help knowing that in the world's eyes she would be condescending if she married him. He knew it, too, and often poetically called her his goddess stooping to a poor mortal.

Some jealous and wicked person had written this letter. Anonymous letters were notoriously false! Lady Gates put her mind to the matter. Was a woman the guilty one? If so, who could it be but Mary Smith, who had already behaved like a complete cat? Or, was it a man? Lady Gates' thought sprang like a tigress to her nephew. One or the other it must be: Mary Smith or Malcolm Allister. Or possibly the two had joined forces in concocting this lie to ruin Marco and part her from him.

Now she remembered that the blue-grey paper was very like that on which Malcolm had written her several notes when she first came to Hollywood. His stationery was of that colour and, so far as she could recall, the same texture. It had borne the address of the bungalow lent him by the Paragon people. She fancied the two lines of old English print in very dark blue had been at

the right hand side and near the top just where the piece had been cut out of this sheet. But she couldn't be quite sure. All grey-blue paper had a certain familiar resemblance, and it was some time now since Malcolm had left the bungalow and gone to live at the Hôtel Hollywood. However, she would find out! Nobody could play such a cruel, cowardly trick upon her and poor Marco behind his back, and "get away with it"—as people said here.

As her angry, excited glance roved round the restaurant, she caught the gaze of Mary Smith. On an impulse she beckoned imperiously.

Her first idea had been to summon Nora Casey and find out what sort of person had handed the letter to the doorman. And she would do this if Miss Smith refused to come.

But Miss Smith did not refuse. She saw that Lady Gates was struggling with some intense emotion and guessed quickly that it had to do with the letter in her hand.

To Madeleine Standish also that blue-grey paper was familiar. Several notes accompanying flowers had come to her lodgings from Malcolm Allister at the Paragon bungalow, and she said to herself, with a sharp little stab of apprehension, "The poor old thing has got bad news from her nephew! She's sorry she was nasty to me, and wants to tell me about it."

"May I go over and speak to Mr. Allister's aunt for a minute?" she asked, addressing not only her host, "Big Ossie" Sonnenberg, but Mrs. Landis and that lady's director-husband. "She's beckoning me—and she seems to be upset."

The girl was on her feet before she had permission to go. And if it came grudgingly she scarcely heard.

The two tables were not far apart, and a moment later Lady Gates, in a queer voice, was saying: "I want to speak to you. Sit down."

Madeleine sat down in the chair that was ready for Marco Lopez when he should arrive and have a few minutes' pause between dances.

"Look at this," said Lady Gates, in a fierce, low tone, thrusting the sheet of blue-grey paper under Miss Smith's eyes, but still holding it tightly between thumb and finger. "Did you write it?"

As Mary began to read, almost unconsciously she saw that Lady Gates' hand grasping the letter lacked its usual burden of rings. She wore not one, except the thick old-fashioned band of gold on the third or "wedding-ring finger."

Madeleine's eyes flashed quickly from line to line of the badly-written anonymous letter.

"No!" she exclaimed emphatically. "I didn't write it! Of course I didn't! But I should think very likely what it tells you is true!"

"I don't want your opinion," snapped Lady Gates. "All I want to know is, whose is the poison pen? After what you were impertinent enough to say to me about Mr. Lopez some time ago, it will take more than your word to convince me that this is not yours. If not, I shall soon know who the writer is, and take steps—legal steps if necessary—to stop this kind of thing."

"If you imagine that your nephew, Mr. Allister, would write you an anonymous letter, you know him very little," argued Madeleine. "If he found out any secret about this Mr. Lopez that you ought to know, he'd tell you himself, by word of mouth, you may depend on that, Lady Gates."

"I don't depend on anything you say, and certainly not on anything Malcolm Allister says, either," the elder woman flung back. "You are both my enemies. You may tell Malcolm Allister next time you meet him that I'm going to change my will and leave him out of it—in the cold, where he deserves to be! Whether I marry Marco Lopez or not, it's Marco who shall get every penny I own in the world, when I die, because I trust him and love him. So there! Now you *know!*"

Madeleine rose to her feet. She was very angry, and even more embarrassed than angry, because Lady Gates had lost all self-control and spoken her last sentences in a very loud, harsh tone. Everybody in the restaurant had turned to look, and there was scarcely one who didn't

know Mary Smith, the "mysterious cigarette girl," lately promoted to the movies. Everybody knew Malcolm Allister's name, too. There had been laughing gossip because the aunt and nephew seemed to be "on official terms" only, of late, bowing smilelessly across tables when they met each other's eyes instead of lunching and dining together nearly every day as they had done at first. There had been other gossip, too, of course—just as funny in its way, and more malicious—about her rejuvenated ladyship and the professional dancer at Montparnasse. This outcry of spite, this announcement of Lady Gates' intentions, would be nuts and wine to the "dirt dishers" of Hollywood, and even to the good-natured ones who were actually "in the know."

Her face burning, Madeleine Standish—alias Miss Smith—the late cigarette-seller of Montparnasse, walked away from Lady Gates' table back to her own. There she sat down again in the chair she had deserted. She said not a word because she could not have spoken without bursting into tears.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STORM

"THE old tiger cat!" mumbled Oscar Sonnenberg.

"Upon my word, Mary, in your place I'd have slapped her lifted face till the stitches gave!" exploded the beautiful and temperamental Pauline Fordham.

"You behaved very well, my child," John Landis praised the girl. "Hello! Here comes Allister now. Ossie, we ought to have him at this table, to show everyone he's got friends. What do you say?"

If Mary Smith had made this suggestion Sonnenberg, who was still jealous of Malcolm, would have found some excuse to object. But, coming from Landis as it did, he couldn't well refuse.

"All right, we'll make a place for him," he reluctantly agreed, and, rising fatly in his chair, motioned to the author of his new film.

Malcolm Allister, entering the restaurant, saw the gesture with astonishment. He knew that Sonnenberg was far from fond of him, and since the casting of Lopez in "Black Sleeves," the writer and Miss Smith had not spoken together in private. But Mary Smith was gazing at him, a lovely, imploring look in her eyes which said: "Do come!" and, of course, he obliged, with a pleasant smile of surprise.

Sonnenberg and his three guests moved closer together as a waiter hastily laid knives, forks and a napkin for the newcomer. An extra chair was brought, and Malcolm was sandwiched between Pauline Fordham and his host. This was rather an awkward arrangement, but it was by order of Sonnenberg, who was determined that Allister should not sit beside Mary Smith.

Thus placed, Malcolm was seated directly facing

Lady Gates at her not far distant table. He bowed to his aunt as usual, but his face stiffened as, instead of nodding in return, she gave him a venomous flash of the eyes and then imperiously beckoned.

Madeleine forgot that Malcolm had not been kind to her of late. She loved him, and though they had never come to question and answer on the subject, she knew that he was misunderstanding and feeling sore with her because of the unspeakable Lopez. That was merely misguided love on his part, and easy to forgive! She remembered nothing now except that everyone in the restaurant was tingling with curiosity as to his quarrel with his relative and wondering how he would behave.

"Oh, Malcolm—Mr. Allister," she pleaded, while Sonnenberg scowled. "Lady Gates has been talking to me about you in—in a horrible way. You'll have to go over and stop her tongue. This can't—it mustn't go on. But be careful. Don't make things worse. Be as kind as you can—and firm—and show her that she'll have to behave herself for her own sake, or leave Hollywood."

"What's the matter with her now?" Malcolm asked of nobody in particular at the table, and it was Pauline Fordham who answered:

"She was accusing you in a loud voice that everyone heard, about heaven knows what, and saying she'd leave all her money away from you to Lopez! That means it's quite true, of course, that she's going to marry him!"

"She shall do nothing of the kind!" said Malcolm, between his teeth. "She'd be better off dead!"

As he spoke he pushed back his chair, conscious of, but in his anger indifferent to, the fact that every eye in the restaurant was on him. He walked over to Lady Gates' table and stood with his hand on the back of the chair where Madeleine had sat.

"If you intend to make a fool of yourself and me, you had better not do it here, Aunt Kate, but let me take you to your hotel," he said in a tone which people strained their ears in vain to hear.

"I'll not let you take me anywhere, now or ever!" came the shrill answer which no one missed. "What *you* had better do, is to sit down and listen to what I've got to say. If you don't I'll have you arrested."

"I think I could more easily have you shut up in an asylum," Malcolm was goaded by anger to reply. But Lady Gates began to wave a sheet of paper in the air—a sheet of paper which looked familiar to Malcolm. It seemed to him that the quickest way to end the scene was to take the old virago at her word and sit down.

It was a delightful entertainment for everybody, even the least malicious; everybody, that is, with two exceptions: Pierre, the proprietor of Montparnasse, who feared violence, especially if Marco Lopez came in; and Madeleine Standish, who was quivering with shame and in-

dignation for Malcolm, as a few minutes before she had quivered for herself.

If only he could control his temper! She felt—she knew—that he had strength of character. If he could keep his head now, he would be able to master this foolish, ridiculous old woman. He might be able to get her away before Lopez appeared, and even to talk her out of the error of her ways.

The girl tried to eat her lobster à la Newburg, and to answer when Sonnenberg and the Landises spoke to her; but she could not detach her mind from the other table. Out of the corner of her eyes and from under lowered lashes she saw all that went on there.

At first Lady Gates gesticulated hysterically, her breast heaving. She threw down the anonymous letter and ordered her nephew to read it, thumping on the table with her (for once) ringless hands. Then it was evident that, somehow, Malcolm contrived to dominate her. He was looking straight into her eyes and speaking emphatically, though slowly, in a low tone. Madeleine wondered what he was saying! But, whatever it was, it seemed to have a powerful effect upon Lady Gates. She began suddenly to cry, and to fumble with shaking fingers in her gold-mesh bag, apparently for a handkerchief. She turned ghastly pale under her pink rouge, and looked suddenly deathlike, ghastly! Leaning back, she said or gasped something to Malcolm in an imploring rather than

an angry tone. He opened her bag, found the handkerchief, and passed it to her. Then he slipped the sheet of blue-grey paper into an inside pocket of his dinner-jacket, and, to Madeleine's surprise, produced from somewhere a silver flask. Malcolm Allister, who drank so little, and in all the weeks she'd known him had never been seen to bring a flask into the restaurant, as most of the other men did every night!

However, apparently he had one with him this evening—rather providentially, it seemed.

There was also a tiny bottle which had come, whence Madeleine didn't know, though she thought that she had missed very few happenings at that table. It was one of those miniature phials which homeopathic doctors use. Malcolm hastily extricated something small, almost invisible, from it, dropped the little object into a glass half full of water, and poured in some of his flask's contents, enough to turn the water in the glass to a golden yellow. He pushed this towards his aunt, who drank the contents eagerly.

"Go now. I want to be alone," she said in a strained yet audible voice, and Malcolm rose.

Madeleine no longer thought about the tiny phial, though she had been curious for an instant, wondering whence Malcolm had produced it, but she had a vague impression of seeing him slip something—perhaps the bottle—into his pocket. Evidently he thought that he

had mastered his aunt's hysteria and that she might safely be left, for he did as she requested. Having risen, without another word or glance at her, he walked away from the table to rejoin the Sonnenberg party. But he remained standing.

"I must beg you all to excuse me," he said. "I want to find that swine and have it out with him before he gets here."

It wasn't necessary to mention the "swine's" name. They all mentally supplied it; and certainly in this young man's present mood it would be better that the two should meet outside Montparnasse rather than in the crowded restaurant.

"Don't beat him up till my picture's finished!" warned Sonnenberg.

"That's right, my boy," added Landis. "We've shot thousands of feet of him. Don't *you* do any shooting till ours is over!"

"Do—do be careful, Malcolm!" Madeleine pleaded gently, while Pauline's immense eyes flashed with excitement as if in her heart she hoped that something—almost anything—might happen to wake up Hollywood.

"Please don't any of you worry," Malcolm reassured them. "I don't intend to forget myself. Good night."

With one glance at Madeleine that said she knew not what, Allister went out, not noticing Pierre as he passed through the restaurant door. He had still to pick up his

hat and coat, but nothing was heard outside by those within, and it could be taken for granted that Lopez had not appeared before Malcolm got into the street.

Madeleine, and perhaps others, now had time to glance again at Lady Gates. She was leaning limply against the high carved back of her more or less Spanish chair, her eyes half closed, her lips slightly apart. One hand still clasped the glass from which she had drained every drop of the golden fluid.

"What could he have said to her?" Madeleine wondered. Whatever it was, it had been effective!

"The old dame looks sick," said Sonnenberg.

"She deserves to be sick," said Pauline.

"Hell's bells!" Landis made use in a whisper of a favourite expression of his. "Now for ructions—maybe!"

He was looking not at the principal entrance of the restaurant, but at a door in the distance, partly covered by a tall screen. It was there that the musicians came and went; and now from behind the embossed leather screen issued the immaculately dressed form of Mr. Marco Lopez.

There was nothing abnormal for him about this way of entering. More often than not he used the musicians' entrance. He glanced at the couples Charlestoning on the dancing floor, and saw that his understudy, who continued his afternoon work into the early evening if desired, was on duty. He then went straight to Lady

Gates' table with a hurried, apologetic air, as if ready to excuse himself for having kept her waiting. But her head was bent down and she did not raise her eyes as he leant over her. He murmured something, paused, stared, touched the hand that loosely held the empty glass, then started stiffly upright.

"*Dios!*" he exclaimed, turning with a frightened roll of the eyes to stare wildly about him as if for help.

Almost instantly Pierre was at his side, for Allister, who had doubtless learned from the negro doorkeeper below that Lopez had arrived, appeared once more in the restaurant.

"What is it, Lopez?" Pierre asked in a quiet and soothing tone. "Is Lady Gates ill? Has she fainted?"

"Yes—yes—that must be it. She has fainted," echoed the Argentino.

"Have you your car outside?" Pierre inquired.

"Yes. It is a small car, as you know," stammered Lopez. "Do you think——?"

"I think her ladyship had better be got away as soon as possible," Pierre said.

Malcolm came quickly over and joined the two men as they talked.

"I see that my aunt has fainted," he said. "She was very excited a few minutes ago. I have my motor outside, and I prefer to use it rather than she should be put into Mr. Lopez's car."

"Lady Gates is my promised wife," broke in Lopez. "I have the right——"

"No right whatever." Malcolm shouldered Lopez aside and picked up Lady Gates in his arms. It was lucky for him that she had lost at least forty pounds in the last few weeks, or she would have been an awkward burden. As it was, he carried her without too much effort, though she lay in his arms absolutely limp. As Allister bore her out of the restaurant, followed by an assiduous waiter ready to help, there was something grotesque about the dangling figure in the peach-bloom and diamanté gown. It looked, with head and arms flopping over Malcolm's shoulder, and pink silk legs hanging straight down, like a huge doll.

"Good heavens! I suppose the woman can't be dead?" breathed Pauline Fordham.

CHAPTER XX

THE HOSPITAL TELEPHONE

MARCO LOPEZ had rushed down after the little procession, protesting violently in a wild mixture of English and Spanish. Allister paid no more attention to him than if he had been a dog yapping at his heels; but, reaching the street where the tall doorman stood aghast, Malcolm saw that Pierre had unobtrusively descended.

"Monsieur Allister," he said, "may I offer a word of

advice? Do you not think it best to take her ladyship to the Wallace Reid private hospital which is close by, rather than drive her in the state she is in, to her hotel, half-way to Los Angeles? I have seen many people faint; and I do not like her ladyship's looks at all. I feel sure a doctor should see her at once."

"Perhaps you're right. I will take her to the hospital," said Malcolm. "Could you come along, Pierre, and hold her on to the seat? I have no chauffeur now. I'm driving myself."

"I intend to come and hold Lady Gates," announced Lopez. "If I cannot have her in my car, I will go with her in yours."

"Not if I know it," said Malcolm. "What about it, Pierre?"

"I regret I cannot possibly go," the Frenchman explained. "I must return and make sure that all is well with my patrons after this unfortunate scene. I—but here is Mees Smith! She will help you."

"I'm here for that. I made them let me come to you alone," Madeleine said.

Assisted by the young waiter who had looked after Lady Gates since she became a regular patron of Montparnasse, the limp form was got into Malcolm's car, Madeleine holding the head and shoulders in her arms.

Even when Malcolm was in the driver's seat ready to start, Lopez would have opened the door of the Rolls

Royce and jumped in, but, with a ferocious "Keep off, you dog!" Allister wheeled his car away by a quick turn.

Lopez had to spring back to save himself a fall, but he flung up his arms, waving them about und swearing strange oaths.

"You will repent this, my fine sir!" he yelled after the vanishing Rolls Royce. Then, with a final shake of his fist, he dashed to his own car, parked near by, and followed the Rolls.

Their destination was a new private hospital, small but expensive, which had been named in honour of the dead young star, Wallace Reid, ever remembered and lamented in Hollywood. As a rule, a room at the Wallace Reid Sanatorium had to be engaged long in advance, but this was an emergency case and an interesting one. The largest and best room in the place was free for the night, though a patient was due next day. Lady Gates was carried there by order of the Matron; and a leading physician of Hollywood, the chief man at the sanatorium, Doctor George Nelson, was sent for. He lived only round the corner and arrived to find Lady Gates lying in her peach-blossom dress on the immaculate white bed, her nephew with the late cigarette seller of Montparnasse standing near, and Marco Lopez, the dancer, olive pale und burning-eyed, at a distance from the pair, his back against the wall.

"Matron," as everyone called the youngish but stately woman who directed the sanatorium, ushered in Doctor

Nelson whom she had received downstairs. A nurse, left in charge by her at the bedside, moved away in respectful silence.

"This lady is dead!" pronounced the doctor decisively, after a moment's examination. "She must have been dead at least half an hour."

"I feared it," murmured the Matron. "Heart failure!"

"Heart failure, yes," repeated Doctor Nelson. "But what caused heart failure?—that's the question. Her appearance is peculiar—and I'm afraid this will turn out to be a peculiar case. I believe, Mr. Allister—I know you very well by sight—that the lady was a relative of yours?"

"She is—she was—my aunt," Malcolm answered. "I was talking with her at her table at Montparnasse, not much more than half an hour ago. She seemed perfectly well then—except that she was upset and annoyed."

"Doctor!" exclaimed Marco Lopez. "Don't listen to anything this man may say. In my opinion he is a murderer! It will be proved that he killed Lady Gates."

"Take care!" Doctor Nelson warned him. "You are making a terrible accusation."

"It is the truth," sputtered Lopez. "I accuse Malcolm Allister as the murderer of his aunt. She loved me. We were to marry. He killed her because he knew she was going to change her will. But murderers are barred from inheriting. He——"

"You really must be silent," the doctor ordered. "This is no place for accusations. If you intend to make them, go to the police."

"The man is either mad or a devil!" said Malcolm. "It's not only damnable, it's absurd to say I killed my aunt. I couldn't have done it if I'd wished to! Why, everyone in the restaurant saw us talking together at her table. I didn't touch her."

Madeleine Standish did not speak, but her body was chilled as if by an icy wind while in silence, with cast down eyes, she reconstructed the scene at Montparnasse: Malcolm had come to Sonnenberg's table by invitation. Then Lady Gates had furiously beckoned. His last words as he rose to join her had been that his aunt would be better off dead than married to Marco Lopez. He had gone to Lady Gates' table. He had sat down. In some way he had quieted her, Madeleine did not know how. The two had talked together in lowered tones. Malcolm seemed able to dominate the angry woman. She had looked frightened. She had begun to weep. Malcolm had opened her gold-mesh bag, found her handkerchief, and given it to her. She had patted her tear-stained face carefully in the hope of saving complexion and eye-lashes. While she was thus engaged, Malcolm had poured some liquid, presumably brandy or whisky, into a glass already half-filled with water, and had dropped into the golden fluid a tiny tabloid. This he had taken from a

very small bottle, and the bottle he had slipped into the pocket of his dinner-jacket. Also he had possessed himself of the anonymous letter which, no doubt, Lady Gates had accused him of writing, as she had previously accused Miss Smith.

If it should be discovered that Lady Gates had died of poison (Madeleine prayed this might not happen), there would be strong circumstantial evidence against her nephew. The girl hoped to heaven that she alone had seen the little tabloid produced from the phial and dropped into the glass! Nothing on earth would ever make her bear witness against Malcolm Allister!

For a moment the nurse, left in charge by the Matron and superseded on the latter's return, listened to the strange conversation. Then, unnoticed, her very existence forgotten by all in the room, she slipped out. Already her mind was made up what to do.

Her name was Maggie Turner. She was young, not yet twenty-five, but she was already disgusted with the profession of nursing. She had no vocation for it. She wanted to marry; and she was almost engaged (though not quite) to a young reporter on a Los Angeles paper.

"If I could give him a scoop," she thought, "it would just make the difference. He'd be wild about me. He'd think I was It!"

She ran to the telephone on the first floor. It stood

on a table in the white corridor, and almost opposite were two elevators, one used for guests, the other mostly for the doctors, surgeons, nurses and patients going to, or returning from the "theatre" or operating-room. Usually a nurse sat at the table, ready to send and receive messages, but this was a slack time and for the moment no one was there.

Nurse Turner's heart beat fast, for at any moment somebody might come up or down in the elevator and she would be caught. Still, for her own sake and Dick Samson's sake, she would run the risk! She knew the telephone number of the newspaper and called it. In a few seconds the answer came.

"Is Mr. Richard Samson, one of your reporters, in the office?" she inquired breathlessly. "Well, say it's Maggie Turner with important news to give him. Get him here quick, will you, or it may be too late?"

The time of waiting seemed interminable. If anyone came she was lost, for she couldn't possibly say what she wished to say, with a listener at hand, no matter who that listener might happen to be. She had almost given up hope when she heard Dick Samson's voice at the other end of the line.

"Hello, Mag! That you? What's the good news? Out with it, girl, for I'm on a job, and——"

"I've got a job for you, Dick, that ought to *make* you!" she cut in. "It's a scoop, if you'll get over here

—I'm speaking from the sanatorium, of course!—before the thing leaks out.”

“Listens good!” answered the reporter jovially. “But I know you girls too well. If you think a row between your head doctor and Matron, or any little thing like that is front page news for the biggest paper in Los Angeles, why, you'd better think again, kid! You little nurses get narrow-minded. To you, your small-sized sanatorium is the whole universe. But I'm assigned to a hold-up case, and——”

“Would you say the murder of a titled lady by her own nephew, a well-known writer, in a smart restaurant, was better news than some measly hold-up, like we have two of every day?” Miss Turner ungrammatically and indignantly wished to know.

“Good Lord! You bet!” yelled Samson over the line. “Have you got a scoop for me like that—honest injun, hope to die?”

“You bet I have, if you hurry!” the girl gasped.

“And you bet I will!” rapped out the reporter.

“For heaven's sake don't let anyone dream how you got on to the thing!” Maggie Turner warned. “It would cost me my place, and worse. Say you heard something at the restaurant.”

Samson didn't answer. He had already hung up, and was on his way.

The nurse slapped the receiver into place and darted down the corridor in the direction of the room she had left.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CASE AGAINST ALLISTER

WHEN Oscar Sonnenberg heard that Malcolm Allister had been arrested for the murder of his aunt, Lady Gates, his first coherent thought was:

“Well, what’s this going to do to my picture?”

His second reflection was more detailed and long drawn out.

“One good thing, anyhow,” the producer reminded himself, “is that the guy’s not *in* the film! That would bust up the show. After all, he only wrote the scenario—not even the continuity—I guess he couldn’t have run to *that*, the poor fish! What’s a scenario? And praise the Lord the picture ain’t called after his book, ‘Red Resurrection.’ If I find the name of Allister’s going to hurt the picture, why, I’ll take it off. I guess contracts with murderers don’t hold. But you never know! All this notoriety about an author, and he murdering a person of title related to himself, may give us some international boom and turn out a fine ad. You never *can* tell with pictures, once you get a thing past the censor!”

Sonnenberg puzzled over the fact that one of the

Los Angeles newspapers (a particularly enterprising one, it was true!) had virtually got a "scoop" on the case, while its big rival had in an early edition little more than a huge headline with a few paragraphs underneath.

He himself had been approached by reporters from the principal dailies, morning and evening. But it had seemed to him that the producer of Allister's scenario would earn the wrong kind of publicity for himself and his picture through remembering accurately any scene that might have taken place at Montparnasse. He had, therefore, disguised his reticence under an air of genial stupidity. He had sat, he said, with his back turned to Lady Gates' table in the restaurant. All he knew was that her ladyship had been there when he and his party came in, dressed up to the nines in a sort of peach-coloured gown, looking like a million dollars.

Miss Mary Smith, who used to be employed at Montparnasse, as everyone knew, and was now in the film "Black Sleeves," had gone over and spoken to Lady Gates, whom she seemed to know pretty well. Afterwards, Mr. Allister had arrived and had been invited to his, Sonnenberg's, table, though he hadn't been expected or asked beforehand. Then Allister also had gone to talk with the lady, who was his aunt or a relative of some sort, and later there had been a row. Maybe it had been partly Mr. Allister's fault, partly that of Mr. Lopez (also acting in Mr. Sonnenberg's picture): Ossie really couldn't

say as to that, because he was no dirt-disher and knew nothing about the rights of the affair. Anyhow, Lady Gates had been taken queer and, naturally, Mr. Allister looked after her. As the poor lady's friend, Miss Smith offered to help, and the two had carried Lady Gates off in a car; yes, possibly Mr. Allister's car, to some private hospital. Beyond this information, which was common property, Mr. Sonnenberg could give none at all.

But the luckier of the two big Los Angeles newspapers had much more to tell. It even knew more about Mr. Sonnenberg's business than he knew himself. It announced that, after the dramatic arrest of Malcolm Allister on the charge of killing his aunt, Lady Gates, Oscar Sonnenberg had offered to go bail for the well-known author of "Red Resurrection" and other novels.

This didn't happen to be true, but on the whole Ossie rather wished it were, as it would have been a generous gesture on his part and good publicity for "Black Sleeves." He determined to take the hint, and did thereupon do what he could after reading the interview with himself which had not taken place. As the newspapers all assumed next day, however, circumstantial evidence was so strong against Allister that bail was refused.

The story in the mysteriously well-informed journal was this (and Sonnenberg suspected Lopez of having unloaded his venom upon the reporter):

The much-talked-of Mary Smith, late of cigarette and

harem dress fame at Montparnasse, had come to the restaurant in grand style as a movie actress and patron of the place where she had worked. Sitting with the well-known Oscar Sonnenberg, alias "Big Ossie," and the famous picture star, Pauline Fordham, also Pauline's equally famous director-husband, John Landis, the beautiful Mary had been summoned to the table where Lady Gates sat alone—for a wonder, without the jewels which had helped to make the titled Englishwoman more celebrated than she would have been less splendidly adorned. Mary and her ladyship had apparently indulged in a little back-chat, not overheard, but concerned with a letter displayed to the girl by Lady Gates. Not long after this, the copper-haired Mary went back to her own party, and presently Malcolm Allister joined it. It was understood in Hollywood that Lady Gates had come from England to visit her nephew, whose book, "Red Resurrection," had been a best seller. But lately the two had not seemed to be as friendly as at first. The changed relations were attributed to jealousy on Allister's part of the handsome Argentino dancer at Montparnasse, lately promoted to the movies in the film from Allister's own pen. Allister appeared to disapprove of his aunt's renewed youth, smart dress and juvenile behaviour, especially her fondness for dancing with Lopez and for his society in general. Aunt and nephew were on speaking terms, but no more, and so the diners at Montparnasse (mostly well-known moving

picture people) were surprised to see Lady Gates call her nephew to her table. Going reluctantly, he was overheard to make the remark that she would be better off dead, or words to that effect.

No sooner had Malcolm Allister sat down at his aunt's table in the place reserved for a late arrival, supposed to be her dancing partner, than a quarrel began over the same letter shown by Lady Gates to Mary Smith. Presently, however, Allister said something which subdued his aunt suddenly and surprisingly. What it was, had been overheard in part only by a young man named Henri Gault, a waiter employed at Montparnasse and accustomed to attend Lady Gates at her table. According to Gault, Allister had told his aunt that if she went through a form of marriage with "that damned swine Lopez," her dead husband would certainly haunt her. This, and other things not overheard, had upset Lady Gates to such an extent that she became hysterical. Allister produced a flask, afterwards found to have his monogram on it, and to have been a gift to him from the president of Paragon. Allister's story later was that he had presented the flask to his aunt by her request some time before, and had on several occasions bought brandy from a bootlegger whose name he refused to give, to refill the flask for Lady Gates. He stated that she had had this flask in her possession at dinner and had drawn it cautiously, not to be observed by others,

from a pocket in the lining of her ermine cloak, which she had thrown off on the back of her chair. So far as anyone had seen, however, Allister had himself produced the flask and poured brandy from it into a tumbler partly full of water which stood near Lady Gates' plate. He had then dropped a small tablet into the glass. Henri Gault, the waiter, had noticed this, and had not seen Allister take the phial containing it and one other tablet, from Lady Gates' gold bag, as Allister insisted that he had done. When Lady Gates had drunk the whole contents of the tumbler, her nephew got up and had moved away when Marco Lopez, the dancer, arrived. It was Lopez who discovered the serious condition into which Lady Gates had fallen immediately after swallowing the liquid which absorbed the tablet. A violent scene ensued and was partially hushed up by Pierre, the proprietor of Montparnasse, assisted by friends of Allister.

Despite protestations from Lopez, Lady Gates—apparently fainting—was carried out of the restaurant by Allister and the waiter, Gault, followed by Mary Smith. Her ladyship was driven by her nephew in his car, accompanied by Mary, to the new Wallace Reid Private Sanatorium. Lopez was close behind in his automobile, in which he had wished to drive Lady Gates, supposed to be his fiancée. Doctor George Nelson, leading physician of the private hospital, arrived and pronounced that the Englishwoman was dead. Her appearance was peculiar,

and after Lopez had accused Allister of murdering his aunt by poison to prevent her marriage with him, the coroner was sent for and a post mortem promptly performed. The presence of poison was discovered, a poison lately introduced from Mexico, known to the medical profession as granil. In very small doses it was occasionally prescribed as a stimulant for weak heart action; but enough was found in the stomach of the dead woman to kill two persons. Instead of stimulating the heart, so powerful a dose would stop it almost instantly, or, in the case of a strong person, such as Lady Gates apparently was, it would take effect in from three to five minutes.

Malcolm Allister, questioned by the police summoned to the sanatorium after the autopsy, volunteered the information that his aunt had had a small phial containing a couple of tablets, in her gold-mesh bag. She had asked him to open the bag and give her a handkerchief. In doing so the tiny phial had fallen out and rolled across the table. Lady Gates, seeing it, had then stealthily taken the silver flask from her cloak pocket, asked her nephew to pour out some brandy and drop in the tablet. He had obeyed and absent-mindedly slipped the phial into his own pocket instead of returning it to the bag. His aunt, according to him, had said in a faint voice: "That's a pick-me-up my wonderful doctor prescribed." But the only doctor she was known to have consulted, called by telephone at his home,

denied having prescribed for Lady Gates a tonic, or any medicine whatever.

The one remaining tablet in the phial had proved to contain an enormous quantity of granil. And the letter which had caused sharp words between Lady Gates and first Mary Smith, then Malcolm Allister, had also been absent-mindedly pocketed by the author of that dramatic and tragic novel "Red Resurrection." It was an anonymous letter to Lady Gates prophesying dire consequences if she kept to her purpose of marrying the professional dancer, young enough to be her son. It accused Lopez of concealing a marriage, not dissolved, with a woman at Buenos Aires; and Allister, while insisting that he was not the writer, acknowledged the similarity of the paper with some he had been in the habit of using. He had been taken to gaol on the accusation of Lopez and the evidence against him. Part of this consisted in the fact that all of Lady Gates' jewels had disappeared from her hotel. It seemed possible that Allister might know where they were.

Late though it then was, after ten o'clock (Lady Gates having died at seven-thirty or thereabouts), Mary Smith had shown her interest in the case by calling a Hollywood lawyer of her acquaintance and inducing him to visit Allister at once.

It was this part of the newspaper "scoop" which pleased Sonnenberg least. It remained to be seen what

effect on the public an accusation of murder against an author would have. So far as Oscar knew, the thing had never been tried out yet at Hollywood or elsewhere. But he had felt, in reading of Allister's trouble, that anyhow the guy was erased from Mary Smith's life. She might have been smitten with him, and he with her. But girls who wanted to succeed in pictures didn't marry accused murderers even if the latter happened to be acquitted. It simply couldn't be done! It was the wrong kind of publicity for a girl. The right kind was to marry a big producer.

CHAPTER XXII

MADELEINE'S PLANS

"BUT we are engaged to be married!" Madeleine Standish surprisingly protested when those in authority saw no reason why Miss Mary Smith, late of Montparnasse, should be allowed an interview with the "prisoner."

"Prisoner!" . . . Horrible word!

Madeleine flung herself against it as against a wall that has been built up in a night by some devilish magic and must be destroyed.

It was not true, in the more obvious sense, that they were engaged to be married. But it was true in the girl's heart, and she believed it to be true in the man's heart also. They loved each other, had loved almost

at first greeting of eyes! From the first evening when Malcolm had come to her rescue and had given her the name of "Mary Smith," Madeleine had known that he was "her man." At least, if Life parted them, she would never love any other, she had told herself.

And then it had seemed as if Life did mean to part them. Madeleine had her mission to accomplish, and more easily than not its accomplishment might stain her name with scandal. She had determined not to let Malcolm Allister's career be injured because of his chivalry to her. But now, everything was changed. Black shadow had fallen upon him, while no one not in her secret, could see as yet that the same darkness lay across her path.

Evidence was strong against Malcolm, but it was all circumstantial evidence, and Madeleine felt that she alone of all people in the world could bring out its falseness.

"Not the greatest detective in the world, coming into this case without knowing my story, could do for Malcolm Allister what I can do—what I *will* do!" the girl thought. And she knew that it was not a vain or boastful thought.

To Malcolm, who had been latterly jealous of Lopez with Mary Smith, her rush to his rescue at the expense of a lie about their relations brought such a shock of joyful amazement that for a little while he forgot his trouble.

They were not permitted to be alone together for their interview, but Madeleine had reached a stage of recklessness that for her turned witnesses into blocks of wood.

Malcolm, of course, wouldn't "give her away" by disputing the alleged engagement. She was sure of that in being admitted to see him, and the rest didn't matter.

"Dearest one," she said, "I'm going to help fight for you. And I know just how I'm going to do it."

"But, you adorable child, you mustn't mix yourself up in this sordid business," Malcolm said, worshipping her. "Just to know you do care for me and not for anyone else, is enough to keep up my courage. I'm not guilty. What with this good lawyer you've found for me and—well, what they call the 'force of innocence,' I ought to get out of this mess without your going down into the depths for me."

"Wherever you are, I'm with you," Madeleine said. She realised exactly what he meant in saying, "You care for *me*, not anyone else." The image of Marco Lopez was in his mind, as it was in hers, at a different angle. "Of course I don't care for *anyone else*, and never did, except to loathe the person you think of. Now I loathe him more than ever if possible. I'll be doing my own work as well as yours, you blessed boy, if I can help you out of this snare. It *is* a snare, and

I'm going to prove it! There's no 'if' about that, really."

The lawyer Madeleine had engaged for Malcolm on the night of his arrest was a young man named John Barrett. He had gained a certain amount of fame through winning a case for a client accused of theft, and as the client was a moving picture actress, a pretty Cinderella in the ranks of "extras," the affair had made more of a sensation than it would have done had Kitty Carson remained a stenographer. A singularly unpopular woman star had taken the girl up during the making of a picture, and had her constantly in her dressing-room. Then a hue and cry had been raised over the loss of a string of pearls. Kitty Carson had been traced pawning pearls, and these were identified by the star as belonging to her stolen string. The extra girl's defence was simple. The star had asked her to pawn the pearls, retaining one for herself, and keeping the secret. Just at this time the star's husband had aroused her jealousy by flirting with other women, and pretty Miss Carson was one of the women. The girl claimed that the accusation had been made through spite, and that, in fact, the whole business of the pearls was a plot. Evidence had been exceedingly strong against her. She had no money to engage competent counsel, but John Barrett had come forward after seeing the girl's picture in a newspaper, and offered his services. He had proved Kitty Carson innocent, and,

after the unpopular star had left Hollywood in the midst of a picture, he had piled a new sensation on the first by marrying his client.

The newspapers were still booming the case when Mary Smith became a cigarette-seller at Montparnasse. She had heard people talk of John Barrett, and had even seen him come in to dine with his bride. The affair had struck her, as it had struck all Hollywood, and she had decided without an instant's hesitation that John Barrett was the one man to defend Malcolm Allister from the charge of murder.

"In a way it's just such another case as Miss Carson's," Madeleine had explained to the busy man with too much to do already: "*your* kind of case—all circumstantial evidence." And later, when Barrett had consented to act, the girl went to his office for a confidential talk.

She had not meant to tell anyone of her own secret business in Hollywood, and even now she would have preferred to keep silent, but she saw that by doing so she would hinder rather than help Barrett.

The lawyer who, according to American custom, was barrister and solicitor in one, listened in silence to the story of Madeleine Standish's coming to Hollywood, and transformation into Mary Smith of Montparnasse.

"Yes, I see just why you travelled such a long way to Hollywood," Barrett said thoughtfully, when she

paused. "You were a brave girl to go in for such an adventure! No money except what you'd scraped together for the journey. Practically not a red cent over to start you with, out here. Yet you didn't hesitate."

"I'd very little to lose and a great deal to gain," Madeleine answered him. "At worst it was a good gamble, I repeated to myself; and I had to repeat it again and again at first! 'There's nothing to fear, but fear.' Well, I got just where I wanted to be, thanks to Mr. Allister. And if I haven't gone ahead as fast as I hoped at first, I know—I absolutely *know*—I'm on the right track. *They're* even cleverer than I thought they were—which is saying a good deal; but I shall beat them in the end with you to help me, and Malcolm to work for. I'm a thousand times keener now, when I see that his affairs and mine are tangled together in this strange way."

"You see the connection," said John Barrett, "or think you do. But there is, on the face of it, I must point out to you, no proof whatever against Lopez and company. He had nothing to gain by Lady Gates' death. On the contrary, he could gain only by her continuing to live at least till they'd gone through a marriage ceremony. Allister is the one person who had a compelling motive for removing Lady Gates before she could marry, or change her will. And every detail of the murder appears—on the surface, mind you—to

have been planned by Allister alone. There's the anonymous letter——"

"We know Malcolm didn't write or send it!"

"You think you know so. I know *I* think so. But he had the motive. And he had had the stationery. As for the handwriting, it was disguised, and several experts may all pronounce differently on it when the case comes to trial."

"I don't want it to come to trial!" exclaimed Madeleine. "I want to get a confession from the killer before the time comes for that!"

"You'll have to be a quick worker," said Barrett, with rather a grim smile on his keen, lantern-jawed face, so eminently the face of a born lawyer.

"I mean to be," Madeleine answered, with perhaps a little more confidence than was in her heart. "I shall try to find specimens of that writing-paper in a place where somebody, not Malcolm Allister, had it to play with!"

"If you mean in Lady Gates' suite at her hotel," Barrett warned, "you must realise that it has been thoroughly gone over already."

"I don't mean there. Why should I?" the girl asked.

"Well," Barrett argued, "the murderer might have pilfered a little from her, if she'd got hold of some while her nephew was living in the bungalow."

"That's just what I think happened," agreed Made-

leine quickly. "But I wouldn't look for it in her rooms now."

"Don't you intend to tell me where you would look for it?" the lawyer wanted to know.

"Wherever *She* is—or has been—*that woman*," Madeleine replied.

Barrett had listened carefully to the girl's story, and understood without explanation who was indicated.

"There are worse things against our friend Allister than the anonymous letter of which he denies knowledge," Barrett said. "There's the silver flask with his monogram on it, given him as a present so lately and by such an important person that it doesn't seem probable he would so soon have given it away—as he says he *did* give it, to his aunt," Barrett went on. "Oh, I know! His explanation is that he seldom drinks liquor of any kind. But he did buy liquor. That's proved by his own confession. And it has to be proved in future that he didn't buy it for himself, but by request, for Lady Gates. No one has been found yet who ever saw her use the flask which Allister vows she handed him at the table, just before she died."

"Somebody *will* be found who saw her use it," Madeleine doggedly insisted.

"And then the poison tablets themselves!" Barrett went on remorselessly. "Forgive me for dwelling on the dark side. We must face facts in order to sort them

out and know just where we stand. No prescription was given Lady Gates for the granil, so far as we can learn. And even if she had had one from a doctor, the dose would have been about fifty per cent. less strong. If she had had those tablets, each containing more than a fatal dose of poison, who could have given them to her and induced her to carry them about as a tonic or 'pick-me-up' to use when she felt 'down'—according to Allister's statement?"

"That's one of the things," Madeleine said, "that I'm going to devote myself to finding out."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE JIGSAW PUZZLE

AT Hollywood there is no excuse except sudden death—and that your own—for dropping out in the midst of a picture. Your honour, your wife, your husband may summon you from the ends of the earth. You will stop your ears and finish the film. On the stage you may have an understudy, but not on the screen, except for long-distance shots. Once you have begun, on you must go, if it costs your life's happiness.

Consequently Mary Smith went on.

She worked all day, but often she thought all night; and sometimes she got a free evening when no scenes of hers were being shot.

It was much the same with Marco Lopez, who now confined his dancing activities to the studio, having terminated his engagement at Montparnasse on the night of Lady Gates' murder.

Pierre would gladly have retained the services of the handsome Argentinian. There was not a breath of suspicion against Lopez, as he had lost a fortune through the death of Lady Gates. Whether or no Malcolm Allister proved eligible as heir to the woman he was accused of killing, the will in his favour had been found in a wall safe in his aunt's hotel sitting-room. This document, which Katherine Gates had intended to change, left her collection of jewels also to her nephew, so that nothing—not even the brooch pinning his orchids to her peach-blossom dress—could be claimed as a souvenir by the man she would have married.

As for the much talked of jewels, though they had vanished, and their disappearance seemed to be more of a mystery than her death, Lopez had certainly not got them. Many people suggested that Malcolm Allister had contrived to spirit them away in order to be sure of reaping some advantage from Lady Gates' death, in case he failed to inherit by the will. How he could have robbed the poor lady of her beloved treasures during her life was not clear to anyone, and perhaps might never be explained, since he wouldn't tell and Lady Gates could not. But, in any case, the fact that the

dancer had failed in his bright expectations made Marco Lopez a centre of interest, if not of sympathy.

It was thought that he had done the right thing in resigning his position at Montparnasse, though Pierre had offered him a tempting "raise" in salary. Perhaps he had really cared for the dead woman, not only for her money, but for herself! Since her "rejuvenation," she hadn't been so bad when you came to think of it, people remarked, and those who had met Lady Gates praised her good nature, her kindness, her unassuming, simple manner. It looked well for Marco Lopez that sentiment prevented him from yielding to the temptation Pierre dangled before him. These Latins *had* feeling, you know! The man couldn't bear even to enter again the room where he had seen his promised wife die.

And then that bungalow of his, where he had lived so quietly! He could no longer endure that either, it seemed. He was bent upon "beginning all over again" in order to chase away haunting memories. A day or two after Lady Gates' death, her heart-broken fiancé advertised the bungalow for sale, moving out in haste and taking such furniture as had been his own to a small and quite humble flat near the studio where he was at work.

Having made a few debts in the expectation of becoming Lady Gates' husband (he explained to his fellow-actors in "Black Sleeves"), he felt bound to economise

in order to settle up as soon as possible. Immediately after the film was finished he would shake the dust of Hollywood off his feet for ever. The place was a place of sadness to him now, and no prospects of future film-fame could induce him to stay. Yes, altogether he was behaving very properly!

The first one to learn that Marco Lopez was moving from his bungalow was Madeleine Standish. It had occurred to her that he might have serious reasons for a move, and even as early as the second morning after the murder at Montparnasse, the girl took her exercise (before starting for the studio) in the street which interested her beyond all others in Hollywood.

"For Sale, Inquire Within," she read on a big card, amateurishly printed and tacked on to the front door. He had lost no time, that one! Doubtless, the girl thought, he was feverishly packing. She was intensely excited, but she did not "inquire within." Instead, she instructed someone else to do the business for her: an employee of Mr. John Barrett's. She wanted that bungalow, and intended to have it. What was more, she wished to move in the moment its tenant moved out.

The man sent post haste by Mr. Barrett at Madeleine's request, was the first to "inquire within" at the little Spanish-built bungalow. He introduced himself as James Jones, a bond salesman lodging in the neighbourhood, who thought of marrying and wanted to buy a bungalow

cheap. He had often passed this one, he went on to explain, and had now seen the notice "For Sale."

Lopez, who answered the door himself, looking haggard and red-eyed, very far from his well-known immaculate self, said that for cash he was ready to part with the house at an absurdly small price. Supposing the prospective buyer to be ignorant of his circumstances, he told much the same story he had told Lady Gates, leaving out the detail of an artist's suicide in the house. No use in frightening away a timid "prospect!"

"I will sell for exactly the purchase price, eight thousand dollars," he went on, "though I have made several improvements, such as a second bathroom and so on. You see, I thought I might want to let the studio to an artist, and in that case I would not have wished him to make use of my part of the house. Well, I never did let, but I have had a friend visiting now and then. You will profit at my expense. But I cannot promise you the option if you are uncertain. I expect many offers. You are the first caller. To get away quickly, I will let you have the place almost as a gift. But if I must stay on, I shall bargain, and I will sell to the highest bidder."

Mr. Jones timidly said that, before deciding definitely, he would like to look over the interior. If the inside of the house suited him as well as the outside, he would make his decision at once. He would give five hundred

dollars down, and pay the balance by certified cheque that same night.

"Come, then," replied Marco Lopez. "I will show you everything, but I am in a hurry, for I have taken up moving picture work, and one of my scenes is to be shot at eleven o'clock. You must excuse disorder here. I am using all the time I have to get on with my packing."

He rushed Mr. James Jones from room to room, apologising for the hurricane effect in the studio and a large adjoining bedroom with its own bath. The only other bedroom was greatly inferior, and the owner of the bungalow explained that, of course, he had himself occupied the larger and better of the two.

"Of course," echoed Mr. Jones, but observed quietly at the same time that the room claimed by Mr. Lopez as his own had been decorated more according to a woman's taste than that of a man. The other bedroom was as plain and simple as that of a professional soldier.

The timid young Jones made no comments, however, and asked few questions. When he had visited all the rooms and peeped into every closet and cupboard, he professed satisfaction. He had the five hundred dollars "on him" in five yellow-backed notes; and it did not strike Marco Lopez as particularly strange that a little bond salesman should have come out in the morning provided with such a sum in cash. The man had already seen the bungalow, admired it and wanted it. Naturally,

if he and the owner did business he would come prepared to pay a certain amount down to clinch the bargain.

That night the whole affair was legally and financially concluded, and Mr. Lopez was kindly assured that he need not trouble to have the house cleaned for the new tenant. The tenant would see to the cleaning himself.

John Barrett wasn't "in business for his health," and he would not have undertaken to help Malcolm Allister unless he had seen a reasonable prospect of being paid. But the story told him by Madeleine Standish and the way in which it dovetailed with the murder-case interested the lawyer extremely. If he and Miss Standish (still known in Hollywood as Mary Smith) succeeded in springing the sensational *coup* suggested to him by the girl, there was likely to be money enough. He was willing to take the chance; but giving Madeleine Standish eight thousand dollars with which to buy a house would have been a different matter had not the bungalow, in his opinion, been worth considerably more than that sum.

Had Lopez been willing to wait, he could easily have got ten thousand dollars at least for his property, but he had been more impatient than mercenary. Madeleine had explained to John Barrett just why she was so anxious to move into the place, and for how short a time she needed it. Afterwards he could dispose of the property advantageously, at his leisure.

A few minutes' thought had decided him on this

second gamble in the girl's favour. Mr. James Jones would lend the pretty Spanish bungalow to Miss Smith for a few days, and later expect to sell it with two thousand dollars profit or more.

"One of the things that puzzles me in this affair, though," Barrett said to the girl, "is (if your theory's correct) how did Lopez, when he came out here, get the money to buy the bungalow and make the improvements he put in? He took his job at Montparnasse soon after he arrived, which looks as if he hadn't been very flush at the time."

"His having the money then—just about the sum he gave for the house—helps to prove my theory," Madeleine answered. "The money I have told you about that disappeared, was just over ten thousand dollars. Lopez was obliged to have a house—a certain kind of a house. He must have spent about all he had on this one, and so he was forced to earn a living for himself and—the other."

"According to your story, however, Lopez and 'the other' had got away with a quantity of jewels, very valuable jewels," argued Barrett.

"Yes!" the girl stopped him. "But I *counted* on their not daring to sell the jewels for a long time, till they could feel more or less safe. I was afraid they'd go out of the country to do it, when they were able to make their 'get-away,' so I strained every nerve to come

here. I had to work all alone. Now I have you to help me. And together, you and I will fit this jigsaw puzzle together. When we find *my* jewels we'll find Lady Gates' missing jewels, too."

"You're an optimist!" smiled Barrett.

"I have to be," said Madeleine. "And," she added quickly, "I have the right to be, too."

CHAPTER XXIV

INSIDE THE BUNGALOW

MADELEINE could have borrowed money from Oscar Sonnenberg. She knew that. He would not only have been willing, he would have been glad, to advance her ten or more thousand dollars on the contract he wished her to make with him for future pictures. He had a jealous presentiment that she would receive offers from all the studios in Hollywood and Culver City, on the strength of her beauty and amazingly good acting in "Black Sleeves." Even her director, John Landis, was more or less of that opinion, and Madeleine could have bought the bungalow without any complicated transactions with John Barrett.

She didn't wish, however, to make a contract covering the future, with Oscar Sonnenberg. She would have asked him a financial favour only if she had been des-

perate. Thanks to John Barrett's smart arrangements, she was not desperate. And there was another reason why it would not have been well to accept an advance, large or small, from Sonnenberg. He would have spared no pains to find out what she wished to do with the money; and Madeleine desired no one to know about her transactions over the bungalow. Lopez was not a fool. Though he had no suspicion that Mary Smith had come to Hollywood for his sake, he had most likely learned that John Barrett was retained by her for Allister's defence. If Lopez guessed that she was moving into his bungalow, he would "smell a rat." He would want to know why. He would find out why!

Marco Lopez had bought the dead artist's bungalow with its furniture, and now he had sold it to Mr. James Jones in much the same state it had been in at the time, its chairs and tables and other objects being little the worse for his months of occupancy. But the studio, and the large bedroom adjoining (for which Lopez had installed a new bath) had been refurnished and redecorated by him.

John Barrett's clever employees had discovered where the new furniture had been bought, and who the decorator had been. But Lopez had said nothing about a second occupant of the bungalow, "an invalid lady." Not even the butcher, the grocer, the milkman, who had supplied his wants during his residence there had an idea that the

dancer from the Argentine had not lived alone. The amount of food consumed in the bungalow had never seemed excessive for one person. As for the beauty doctor, the facial surgeon and his uniformed, stenographer-nurse, the smart dressmaker and milliner to whom Lady Gates had been recommended by a mysterious lady, it was impossible to learn anything from them about the existence of such a person.

If moving picture stars had consulted a veiled fortune-teller in the studio of Marco Lopez the dancer, none came forward now, or could be found, who would tell of their experience with her.

When Madeleine went to the bungalow she had bought, as stealthily as she suspected Lopez's mysterious companion had moved in, the girl had gained no actual proofs that there had been such a companion.

It was evening when Madeleine took up her residence, walking in alone after dusk with no luggage except a suitcase not too large to carry with her own hand. She let herself in with the latchkey which Lopez had turned over to Mr. James Jones, shut the door behind her without noise and, with a slight sigh of relief, put the heavy suitcase down on the floor.

The sound of that small sigh seemed to echo through the little hall, or vestibule. It was almost dark there, the only light being that from outside, filtering through the glass panes of the front door, and Madeleine longed to

switch on a flood of electric light. But she would not do this. First she would feel her way through the dimness and draw curtains over windows, so that lights in the house should not be seen from the street. She didn't wish anyone to know or suspect that the bungalow was not empty that night.

It was only with a strong effort of will, however, that the girl kept her finger from the switch.

"Stupid!" she scolded herself. But she was afraid. The sound of that ghostly sigh which imagination persuaded her had echoed her sigh, sent a shiver through her veins.

What if *that woman* were here—what if she had secretly stolen back to find some forgotten thing? Or what if Marco Lopez had, after all, suspected a hidden motive behind the quick sale of his house and were hiding in it to watch—to see what would happen?

John Barrett hadn't wanted Madeleine to go alone to the bungalow after nightfall as she proposed to do. He had said that though there was no real danger of Lopez or another spying there, still, when a girl found herself alone in the night in an empty house, she was certain to suffer all sorts of nervous terrors.

Madeleine hadn't believed him. "Haven't I proved that I'm no coward?" she asked; and he had agreed, while maintaining his point. Miss Standish would find this ordeal a strain. Of course, as she argued, she was

less likely to be seen going into the house after dusk than at any other time, even early dawn, for then workmen and milkmen might possibly be about. All the same, Barrett persisted, it was easy to watch one's chance even by day, and let oneself into a house in a quiet street without being noticed.

Madeleine had refused to take chances of any kind, so here she was, and hardly had she closed the front door with a click when she wished that she had listened to Mr. Barrett's advice.

"I can *feel* someone here," she thought. "Or maybe the place is haunted!"

Lady Gates had never mentioned to her or anyone else that the previous owner had committed suicide, and Lopez had kept silent on the subject when selling; but the detective known to Lopez as James Jones had ferreted out that fact from another source. The thing hadn't happened long enough ago to be forgotten by tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Jones had carelessly passed on the gruesome titbit of information and Madeleine was ashamed of her superstitious fears.

She took up the suitcase again after a minute's rest and groped her way into a room whose large north window suggested that it must have been the dead artist's studio. Jones had told her that Lopez had left the thick curtains of dark blue velveteen, and when the girl had pulled them across the window she ventured

to flash an electric torch she had brought in her handbag.

By means of the tiny light she discovered a switch by the door and produced a bluish glow in two hanging lanterns. There were other switches, but the less light to risk glimmering around the edge of the dark curtains, the better, Madeleine thought.

She stood still and looked around her. Everything was blue here—blue and mysterious, except the few pieces of furniture, and a divan covered with a piece of faded purple velvet. The carpet was blue, the walls and ceiling were blue, of a lighter shade than the thick curtains, and the glass in the hanging lanterns was blue as a pale sapphire.

"This isn't like the colouring an artist would be apt to want for his studio," Madeleine reflected. "Lopez could have painted the walls and ceilings himself—for someone he loved. And he *must* have loved her—once, anyhow, if not now. I'll have to grant him so much credit! Maybe he grew tired of her—and of hiding her for so long. Maybe he meant to marry Lady Gates and get all that money for his own. Or maybe it was all a scheme worked out with the *woman* to benefit her in the end. Whichever way it was, he loved the woman and did his best for her when he brought her to Hollywood.

The big window looking on the patch of lawn and

the street, faced north. Opposite, on the southern wall of the room, another window only slightly smaller, was set. Madeleine had not been in such haste to cover this with its blue curtains because, even had Jones not described the interior of the house, she was able to see that the second window looked into a little courtyard or patio. A door placed near led into a short passage with a wall of glass running along this patio, and beyond, Madeleine knew by Jones's description, she would come to the room decorated "more to please a woman than a man."

It seemed to the girl that she smelled a faint fragrance of incense which, somehow, made the house "come alive" in a frightening and sinister way.

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE ASHES

CALLING up all her reserves of courage, Madeleine walked through the glass-walled passage and opened a door at the other end.

The rose perfume of incense was stronger. Jones hadn't mentioned it. He couldn't have a keen sense of smell! No doubt—no doubt at all—was left in the girl's mind now, that this had been the woman's room.

It had only one window, a wide one, which was a door as well, opening on to the small garden-court. No

wonder Lopez had been able to conceal the existence of a second occupant in this house! No wonder the bungalow suited his purpose so well that he had spent an inconvenient sum in order to buy it, despite the suicide which would have frightened most purchasers away!

This room had been almost completely stripped of its furniture. "Too like a woman's room for Lopez to dare leave traces," Madeleine thought. "Even the walls tell the story of a woman's presence. But he wouldn't have worried too much about such trifles. No one can prove anything definite from a wallpaper. Lopez doesn't dream that somebody here in Hollywood is on the track of the *woman*. If he did, he'd have been extra careful, even in his hurry to get her away. As it is, he's almost sure to have forgotten something—something for me to find! Whatever there is, will be in the studio, or here in this room where she must have lived."

The wallpaper had a dull gold ground splashed irregularly with black, and was thickly patterned with huge roses of every shade from palest pink to deepest red. The floor was painted black, but it was easy to guess from the brighter, cleaner patches here and there that several rugs had been removed. The curtains, too, had gone from the large French window door. But fortunately for Madeleine, this opened on to the garden-court, so that she could work by electric light without having her activities seen from the street.

Sockets in the wall revealed the fact that there had been two portable lamps; but the one remaining lamp hung from the ceiling: a basket of alabaster, stained rose-colour.

“He studied her beauty in his scheme of decoration!” Madeleine told herself. She had never seen the woman whom—with that woman’s lover—she had followed to Hollywood, but she had in her possession a torn photograph found by the side of a dead man, and she could picture such a face as had launched a thousand ships and brought about the fall of Troy. Pale, it would be, that face, and faded perhaps by illness, but lovely to look on still, in the rose-coloured dusk of this hidden room.

Each nerve in Madeleine’s body was a-quiver, like the string of a violin under the bow. But she was too tensely excited now to shudder with vague fears at each sound and shadow, as when she had crept alone into the darkness of this deserted house. In the soft rosy light she wandered here and there, examining the walls for any sign of a secret safe masked by the pattern of the paper. There was no such sign, however, and the woodwork, modern and new, apparently had no concealments.

But the girl was not surprised at this. The man and woman who lived in this house would have been wise to keep their valuables in something portable, something that could be snatched up and run away with at an instant’s notice!

"And now it *has* been snatched up and run away with!" she said, half aloud, glad to hear the sound of her own voice.

When she had peeped into the bathroom with its rose-coloured tiles on walls and floor, and looked out into the patio with its bird-bath, its roses and its marble-seat under orange trees, Madeleine returned to the dismantled bedroom. No furniture was left in it except a large divan deprived of its cover, a card-table, and an armchair stripped to white cotton nakedness.

In this chair, wheeled to the centre of the room, Madeleine sat down to think.

She had made up her mind before coming into the bungalow that some very urgent motive had prompted Marco Lopez to move. And what motive could be more urgent than the hidden woman's sudden, serious illness?

She had been out of health for months. That was why the two had come to California. Lopez had planned their flight from the east cleverly so that, in case the theft of important jewels and maybe even a murder should be traced to the woman, she would be safe from pursuit. But no crime had been traced to her. The proof had not been clear enough except in the mind of a girl; and after all this time the pair must have felt themselves comparatively safe. They might have continued to live in this bungalow as they had lived for months, until the

woman died or grew well enough to go with her lover to another land where stolen jewels might be turned into money with little danger. Yet they had left their snug hiding-place, Marco Lopez to remain in Hollywood, quietly finishing his part in the film "Black Sleeves," the woman to go—whither? The pair had moved from the bungalow directly after the death of Lady Gates, though no suspicion attached to Lopez. He had offered a simple excuse for wishing to be rid of his house, and if he intended, as he said, to turn his back on Hollywood as soon as "Black Sleeves" was finished, the excuse was quite a good one for wanting to sell. It was not, however, any kind of an excuse for the man's haste to move.

Why couldn't he have stopped comfortably in the house and done better business for himself, since John Barrett felt sure the bungalow was worth ten thousand dollars instead of eight? Of course there was a reason: and Madeleine had been busy for many hours struggling to fasten her mind firmly upon it.

She, who alone knew of the woman's existence, connected the sudden sale, the sudden move, inextricably with her.

The woman had found it necessary to separate herself from her lover-slave. Why? . . . Had she broken with him through insane jealousy of poor Lady Gates? Had she run away in a storm of rage?

327 Madeleine could not wholly accept that theory, though human nature being what it was, anything might happen between a man and woman who had loved. But whatever had happened in this case, the girl told herself the woman could not have travelled far.

If she and Lopez were still on good terms he had most likely driven her to her present hiding-place in his car, and was keeping in touch with her, at least through the post. Probably it had seemed wise to both that, as Lopez would soon be freed from the film, she should be safely out of Hollywood before he was ready to go. Then he could join her secretly, and somewhere far away—with a fortune in jewels—they would begin a new life under new names.

“The woman could pass as a Russian Princess in Paris or London,” Madeleine thought, “for nobody would be surprised there that a Russian *réfugié* should have lots of jewels to sell. Lady Gates’ things are handsome, but not historic like mine. Broken up they ought to be safe to dispose of, so far from the place where they disappeared.”

But, still, there remained the big question: How could the pair have possessed themselves of Lady Gates’ jewels?

So far as clues to the mystery might be hoped for in this house, the almost frantic haste with which Lopez had got his few belongings out, favoured Madeleine’s

theory. And the girl hoped for several new clues: for one in particular.

There was a fireplace in this room; and Mr. Jones's permission to leave without cleaning the house excused in Lopez the untidy jumble of half-consumed eucalyptus-logs, white ashes, cigarette-stubs, match-ends, and other rubbish. When a man has no cause to suppose himself watched or suspected, he sometimes becomes a little careless, even when it would be wiser to take precautions. Thinking thus, Madeleine began delicately to stir the ashes with a small steel-poker.

A bronze hair-pin was her first clue; proof of a woman's presence; a woman with dark, unbobbed hair. Next came a broken bottle which had evidently contained scent. It was of a well-known shape associated with a famous French perfumer. Madeleine herself had used the stuff, and vowed now that she would never touch it again.

These finds were not of much use to her, nor was the half-burnt metal container for lipstick. Lopez might have had many women visitors in his bungalow, Barrett would remind her if she brought him such objects to prove her sensational theory. But suddenly a pile of ashes at the back of the fireplace yielded something of greater interest; a riven ball of crystal such as fortune-tellers use. The fire had first cracked, then broken it in two pieces which lay together on top of a partially con-

sumed wooden stand. Near by lay a pack of cards, evidently tossed on to the logs in its case, which had preserved many of the cards intact.

"Her old game!" Madeleine said bitterly; for the sight of the crystal and the cards brought back dark memories.

John Barrett should see these things just as they lay. He should come here to look at them. That would be better than taking them to him. It seemed to the girl that considering what she had told Barrett of the woman's profession, these half-destroyed records of a hidden presence in the bungalow ought to interest the lawyer. Surely they were of value; but the girl couldn't disguise from herself the fact that so far she was deeply disappointed.

She hadn't yet, however, exhausted the possibilities of the fireplace from which she had hoped so much.

The remaining ends of black-charred eucalyptus-logs were too heavy for the small steel-poker, so Madeleine, on her knees, began lifting out the bits of burnt wood with her hands. She laid the pieces one by one on the hearth-stone, and began ransacking a mixture of ashes, charred rags, broken china, and all sorts of rubbish, or what Lopez in his haste must have considered rubbish. In a corner at the back under a pair of almost unrecognisable bedroom slippers of Chinese make, the girl came at last upon a box of heavy cardboard.

Its thickness had saved it from being consumed. Having been pushed under the logs, the fire had risen, leaving the box almost intact. Madeleine gave a little cry of excitement, and once again started at the sound of her own voice in this empty, echoing house. The box was of the sort made to hold stationery, and Madeleine's eager fingers could hardly wait to tear it open. Was she to be disappointed again, or was she to reap the reward she'd hoped for when she played the bold *coup* of buying the bungalow?

CHAPTER XXVI

UNDER THE SCARF

Mr. and Mrs. John Barrett had just come home from the Hollywood Stadium when their Filipino butler made an announcement in the soft, singularly young-sounding voice of his race.

"Lady bin call you up all evenin', suh. Miss Ma'y Smit. She say ve'y impo'tant you come bungalow, you know whe'h."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the beautiful Mrs. Barrett, still a bride. "I never heard of such a thing! Calling you up at your own house—and this time of night. What did you tell her, Angelino?"

"I tell her, don' she know it is Friday night, an' all gen'men always at Stadium fo' prize fights? He not

home till late, I say. But Miss Smit, she almost cry. She say, 'Not too late fo' me. Beg him come.'"

"It's absurd, Jack," protested Mrs. Barrett, not long ago Kitty Carson. "Of course you won't stir a step! And anyhow I've got the duckiest little supper waiting for us. I made the chicken-salad myself."

John Barrett looked at his watch. "It's only eleven," he said. "I think I must go, darling. I know it's not the right thing for the girl to call me at my house, but she's no dumb-bell. She wouldn't have done it if there weren't some pretty good reason or one she believes to be good. If you don't mind too much, I'll be off now. But I promise not to be long whatever has happened."

"If it was any other client except this girl you wouldn't budge," pouted Kitty Barrett. "I wish you'd never accepted the case! There's so much terrible evidence against Allister. I don't see how even you can pull him through, and if you can't he'll be your first failure. As for the girl, I never heard of such cheek! Just because all Hollywood has taken her up as the newest sensation, she imagines she can do anything!"

Barrett looked steadily at the pretty blonde creature he had married. "Mary Smith came to me because of you," he said.

Kitty stared. "Because of me! I never saw her except at Montparnasse."

“No. But there were people who prophesied when I took your case, my dear, that there was so much evidence against you, I would fail. Mary Smith’s theory is that Malcolm Allister has been ‘framed,’ just as you were ‘framed.’ She thought because I brought you through and saved an innocent young woman from going to prison I might be able to save an innocent man from going to his death. Won’t you, little girl, tell me to go to this other girl whose need is even more desperate than yours was? Won’t you sacrifice the chicken-salad for her, even though you did make it yourself?”

“You wouldn’t want to go if she wasn’t so pretty,” said the bride.

“I’ve got the reputation of fighting for the prettiest girls in Hollywood,” smiled Barrett. “I must live up to it.”

Kitty accepted the compliment, and in another moment he was starting his car, whose engine was still warm.

He did not drive into the street where the Lopez house stood, but left his automobile parked in a dark, quiet, no-thoroughfare close by, where many people unable to afford a garage left their small cars more or less safely locked, for the night. Barrett knew that Madeleine Standish (whose real name he hadn’t mentioned even to his wife) intended to steal unobtrusively into the bungalow she’d bought, and now he approached it cautiously, as

he knew that she would wish. As he came near, meaning to knock softly, a figure rose from the tree-shadow that darkened the front steps.

"I was sure you'd come!" Mary whispered. "When I thought it was almost time for you to get here, I slipped out to wait and let you in."

"Wouldn't to-morrow morning at my office have been soon enough?" asked Barrett. "I may as well tell you my wife wasn't too pleased."

"But she knows what it is to suffer and be anxious," said Madeleine. "I thought she'd be just the one to understand. And as for you—you're human, though a lawyer! That's why I counted on you, Mr. Barrett."

"Well, here I am," he reminded her.

They passed through the door she had left ajar into the vestibule, dark as a pocket until she flashed the light of an electric torch. "In the studio and *her* room where I've been working," the girl explained, "lights can't be seen from outside. In the vestibule there are no curtains, and—I'm not taking chances! I'm surer than ever to-night that Lopez didn't dream her existence was suspected. If he had, he wouldn't have been careless enough to leave the things I've found—the things I wanted you to see on the spot, and couldn't—just *couldn't!*—wait till to-morrow."

"You talk about '*her*' room, as if you'd made sure

of a good deal," Barrett said, as Madeleine led him into the studio.

"I have," the girl answered. "At least, it seems a good deal to me. I had to know to-night, and in this place, what you thought about it."

She led him through the blue-lit studio and the glass-walled passage, to the room beyond.

"Do you remember the name I told you the woman gave herself in the east?" the girl asked abruptly.

"Yes. I've trained myself not to forget easily," Barrett answered. "She gave herself the rather fantastic name of Rosamund Rosenkrantz. You didn't believe it to be her real name, but you never discovered any other."

"That is right!" said Madeleine. "She'd signed the letters I found, 'Rose,' you know; and there was a golden rose under the monogram 'R R' on the writing-paper I showed you."

"I remember. Why are you reminding me of that now?" Barrett inquired.

"Look round you at this room!" the girl exclaimed. "Roses all over the wallpaper: rose light: evidently all the decorations were rose. I know the curtains were rose-colour, because a few threads of rose-coloured silk are caught in one of those glass roses made to hold the curtains back. And don't you smell the rose incense?"

It's in the studio, too, but it's much stronger here. Everything to celebrate the beauty of the rose!"

"Lopez was a romantic lover—something of a poet. We must grant him that," said Barrett.

"She made all men romantic," Madeleine answered bitterly. "See! I brought this bridge-table in here from the studio. I've put my 'exhibits' on it. That's what you lawyers would call them, I suppose!"

"You've covered some of the things with a scarf," Barrett remarked.

"My scarf. I wanted you to concentrate on the least important finds first, and then—then spring the others on you. I wouldn't have dared call you up if I hadn't found the things I've hidden under the scarf!"

"Bronze hair-pin: long-haired darkish woman," mumbled Barrett. "Lipstick cover. Black safety-pins. Red silk Chinese bedroom slippers. Hm! Not much there, my dear young lady. Lopez posed as a bachelor in Hollywood. He may have had many visitors."

"I knew you'd say that!" broke in Madeleine. "But—look at the crystal and its stand! Look at the cards! I've told you how, long ago, the woman began getting in her deadly work with men, by reading the crystal and telling fortunes by cards!"

"Yes, those are points in your favour—so far as proving the woman's identity is concerned," granted the lawyer. "But—it has nothing to do with the case in

which you and I are even more interested now, than in the past—because we've got a man to save or lose."

"*Has* it nothing to do with that case?" Madeleine challenged. "You remember, I told you that Lady Gates spoke of a woman, someone who'd advised her to consult that plastic surgeon, and be rejuvenated. It was when she complained of being afraid to go to him alone. I asked why the 'lady who advised her' couldn't go. She said that was impossible, and froze up when I tried to ask a few more questions. Then she suggested taking me as a paid companion, and I accepted—not for the money, though I needed it all, goodness knows!—but in the hope I might learn something about Marco Lopez and Rose Rosenkrantz. I never did. Lady Gates was as close as a clam, and of course she'd been warned not to speak of the *woman*. I asked her once, quite suddenly, hoping to surprise the secret out of her, if she'd ever heard of a Mrs. Rosamund Rosenkrantz. She said 'no,' and I could tell by the blank expression of her face that she was speaking the truth. Now, here's the proof of how that wretch wormed herself into the poor old lady's confidence! She did it by the old tricks that began the breaking up of my own home. I can almost see what happened here; how the 'future' was read in that crystal, and told by cards: how Lady Gates was led to believe she could become young and beautiful and win the love of a man years her junior. I don't

know whether Rosamund Rosenkrantz sent Lady Gates to the most expensive jewellers and dressmakers and milliners and furriers in Hollywood, or whether Lopez did that. But someone did it, and earned huge commissions. The two probably managed that business together. I've overheard vague whisperings between women lunching at Montparnasse: 'My dear, the creature's too marvellous with the crystal and cards! The most mysterious person! No one knows even her real name.' And once or twice, when they were women who didn't put on airs with me, the poor cigarette girl, I've tried to find out where this wonderful female was. But they shut up just as Lady Gates did. I expect Lopez chose only just the right ones. And if he thought they might talk, why—what's the use of being a fortune-teller and having people bare their inmost souls if you can't hold blackmail over them?"

"You're probably right about the women and Lady Gates," said Barrett. "But though it may be illegal, it's not exactly a crime to tell fortunes by crystals or cards. And, my dear Miss Smith, as I'm here I'd better break to you what otherwise would have kept until to-morrow: two pieces of news that reached me just before I went home from my office. One came by word of mouth, one by cable from South America."

"Pieces of *bad* news?" Madeleine asked, steadying herself.

"Not so good! The police have come across among Allister's things a bracelet identified at her hotel as having belonged to Lady Gates. They would have found it before, had it been elaborately concealed. But you know Edgar Allan Poe's receipt for hiding a thing—to put it in a place where everyone could see it. Then nobody would. This bracelet, an old-fashioned but expensive one, made like a snake of diamonds, was in the top drawer of Allister's desk in his room at the Hollywood Hotel, among a lot of writing-paper. So he had one jewel in his possession. The argument is that he took the rest."

"We know he didn't take any! And I'm sure he can explain why he had this thing!"

"He has explained. The snap in the snake's mouth which holds the tail is broken. Allister says his aunt asked him to get it mended for her before they had their row—and he forgot it."

"If he says that, it's true. What was the second piece of bad news?"

"From Buenos Aires. That Lopez did have a wife there who stuck to him like a leech. But she died a few months ago."

"You call this bad news? I call it good!"

"Why?"

"Because if Lopez knew, and Rose Rosenkrantz found out that he knew and was hiding the truth from her,

she'd realise he was deceiving her. Then—then it might be her object to deceive *him!*”

“In what way?” Barrett asked.

“Look!” the girl exclaimed, throwing back the scarf that covered her chief treasures.

Barrett saw a partially burnt box of heavy cardboard, whose blackened cover had been removed to show the contents, a sheet of creamy paper decorated with a golden rose, and the monogram “R R”; also another sheet of paper with an envelope to match. These last were of a blue-grey tint, marked in dark blue with the name of the Paragon bungalow—the bungalow where Malcolm Allister had known his first, brief triumph at Hollywood.

“That’s what I wanted to find!” said Madeleine. “What I took the house hoping to find! She—Rose Rosenkrantz—put this box into the fire when she was going. She didn’t want Lopez to know she had it. Now, Mr. Barrett, do you see what I mean?”

CHAPTER XXVII

THINKING ALONG THOSE LINES

JOHN BARRETT did see what Madeleine Standish meant. He saw each point to be made from her discoveries, without waiting for her to make it, and if he had been slow to agree with her theory he was ready

now to accept it in full. But the next step was: Find the woman.

"That oughtn't to be so difficult after all," the lawyer said, when he and the girl had gone through the bungalow and returned to the "rose room." "We'll keep this house till we have no further use for it, of course. Plenty of time to sell when we've done with the place for good. I shall put a good man in as caretaker, to see that nothing is disturbed, and I'll put a better one on to the job of running our fox to earth. Already I'm having Lopez shadowed, as you know. He can't send a 'phone message or a wire or a letter without being spotted. If he's in touch with Rose Rosenkrantz, sooner or later he'll give himself away."

"But it may be later than sooner," Madeleine cut in. "I've lost faith a bit in detectives since they failed to trace the woman all those months and months ago, when the first mystery was fresh. Do you blame me for losing faith when you stop to think? It's nearly two years since it all happened. The police called the death 'suicide.' As for the jewels, they'd hardly believe that any had ever existed. Then, the little money I had I spent on private detectives. They 'bled me white'—as the horrid saying is—and they did nothing for me. I had to go on waiting, eating my heart out, while I earned enough money to bring me West. I sold everything—even my clothes. Why, the dress and cloak I wore that night I

told you of, when I went to Montparnasse without a cent to pay for my dinner, were nearly four years old! Women stared at me as if I were something out of the ark! But I didn't care. I'd learned enough to reward me for any struggle and humiliation I'd endured, because I'd heard one woman say to another, 'What a pity this isn't Marco Lopez's night to dance!' Then I knew that my long trek had brought me to the right place, and somehow I meant to stay. Malcolm Allister helped me do that. I hadn't known such chivalry from a man since I'd begun to need it most! . . . I loved him, I believe, from that very minute. And now that our two destinies are linked together, his and mine, I feel inspired to do more for his sake than I ever did for my own. I want to be my own detective, please, Mr. Barrett, where finding that woman is concerned."

"But your time by day, and often at night as well, is taken up at the studio, isn't it?" the lawyer reminded her. "You don't want to let the scent get any colder than it is, by waiting till you finish that film, do you? Whereas, with a professional, we could get to work at once on these new lines. Your idea of being your own detective is rather more sentimental and romantic than practical, I'm afraid. All right in a story-book, but——"

"What are our lives but story-books written by our Creator?" Madeleine cut short Barrett's objection. But her smile won the man, if her words left the lawyer

unconvinced. "Oh, do help me find this woman in my own way! I've worked so long, and I don't trust anyone to do what I want done—except *you*, of course. And you can't give me all your time. I know that. But you can go on encouraging me as you have done. I feel that my instinct's right about this thing! Don't you, honestly, feel it too?"

Barrett gave her a smile in return for hers, though he shrugged his shoulders. "In my profession we try to rise above—or maybe you would say, fall below!—mere 'instincts' and 'feelings.' All the same we succumb to them sometimes as I did when I had a 'hunch' that I could make the world see Kitty Carson's innocence better than any other man could do it. I understand exactly what's in your mind and heart, old-fashioned as it is to have a heart nowadays. And if I dared permit myself the luxury of a 'hunch' about somebody else's business I'd have one that your instinct will somehow carry you to success. But I'm bound to point out the objections and stumbling-blocks."

"I know, and I'm grateful really, for your interest, no matter how you show it," Madeleine said. "My film-work *is* an objection, of course, and I don't mean to let Mr. Sonnenberg down—though I would even do that rather than Malcolm's cause should suffer. But Malcolm wrote 'Black Sleeves.' I intend it to succeed for his sake! Still, even if Hollywood lynched me and Mal-

colm reproached me I would let the world down to save him! I've thought it all out, though, since I found those proofs in the fireplace, while I sat waiting and hoping for you. It's no use my being modest and pretending not to know that I'm the queen in Mr. Sonnenberg's production. Within reason I can do what I like there——”

It was Barrett's turn to break in. “You'll find yourself up against a big snag if Ossie thinks you're sacrificing him for Malcolm Allister. The man's jealous already. He half suspects that you're too deeply interested in the Allister case, and one straw more on his load of trouble is likely to be the straw too much. Don't hope to get favours from him to help you help Allister.”

“All I hope to do before ‘Black Sleeves’ is finished,” Madeleine explained, “is to get away from the studio by six o'clock every night. I'm as strong as steel really. I'd have to be, to come through what I have. But I'm supposed to be delicate, because I go pale and get a die-away look when I'm more bored than tired, and Mr. Sonnenberg is quite fussy about my being overworked. My time will be my own after six every night from now on, I promise you, Mr. Barrett. And a lot can be done between six p.m. and an hour or so after midnight in this warm, sweet country, where most people think it's a waste of time to go to bed. I see what you're thinking!

You imagine that Mr. Sonnenberg will be wanting to claim his share of my society in the evenings. Perhaps he even deserves a little of it, for making me practically a star in 'Black Sleeves,' which is bound to be a 'sure fire' success. But success will be as good for him as it will for me, won't it? And my duty to Malcolm comes miles ahead of my duty to him—though that's a secret between you and me. I've learned to be very 'hard-boiled,' Mr. Barrett, since Rose Rosenkrantz first broke into my life. Oscar Sonnenberg wants his pound of flesh. Well, he won't get it! But I'll grant him an ounce or two by lunching instead of dining with him. I know all about giving 'sops to Cerberus,' when I'd far rather give nothing at all. Now you understand something of my programme. Are you going to do what I beg, and help me?"

"Of course," answered Barrett. "But you haven't told me yet, what you want me to do. Is it something like to-night—out of office hours?"

"I'm afraid it may be," the girl confessed. "If I think I'm on the right road and need you to see me through, will you come if I telephone?"

"Well, that's rather a large order!" said Barrett. "I hinted to you how my wife felt about my being called, at home, and——"

"Make her forgive me. You can! It's only for a few nights. I may fail. But I hope not. Oh, do keep your-

self free to answer a 'phone message at your house till —till anyhow the end of this week. Something may have happened even before then."

"I've told you that you're an optimist," said the lawyer. "But I'll give you the promise you want."

"Thank God I *am* an optimist," cried Madeleine. "And I thank you for the promise!"

They locked up the bungalow, after the girl had made a parcel of her treasure-trove to take away, fearing that Lopez might have a flash of intuition—and a spare key. Then John Barrett walked home with Miss Standish and advised her to go to bed.

"I will," she agreed, "but not to sleep. You reminded me to-night of Edgar Allan Poe's story, 'The Purloined Letter.' Well, I'm going to lie in bed, with this parcel under my pillow—where superstitious people put wedding-cake—and think—and think—*along those lines.*"

"I don't quite see what you mean by 'those lines,'" said Barrett.

"Neither do I—exactly—yet," the girl told him. "But I'll see better—and further—as I go—along the lines!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PAST

THERE was another story of Poe's which came to Madeleine's mind a few hours later, as she lay wide-eyed

in her narrow bed. Its title she could not recall, for she'd read the tale at school, years ago. But it was all about a man who discovered how crimes had been committed, by hypnotising himself into the mood of the suspected person. He made himself feel as the criminal must have felt, and even tried to copy with his own the other's facial expression. This, the girl thought, was a good example to follow. It had worked well in Poe's story. Why not in this story of hers which, as she had said to Barrett, the Creator was writing with Madeleine Standish, Malcolm Allister, Marco Lopez and Rose Rosenkrantz as the principal characters!

In one way it was a point of advantage for her in the game she played that she and Rose Rosenkrantz had never met. When the woman had been busy breaking the heart of Madeleine Standish's sweet, silly French mother by stealing the heart of the man whom that mother loved—Madeleine's artist-stepfather—the girl had been away from New York at a convent school in the country. It was only after the supposed suicide of Lester Arnold was followed the same day by the death of his wife, that the girl was sent for by the married sister of Arnold, a severely religious woman who would not believe in the story of her brother's folly. By this time, the woman in the case (of whose existence and tragic influence Madeleine learned from her mother's devoted maid) had disappeared, taking with her the last relics of

Hortense Arnold's squandered fortune: jewels which had been the French heiress's great heritage. Once they had belonged to the Empress Josephine, had been left to Josephine's daughter, and so at last, after more than a century, had come into the hands of Hortense de Revigny, later Hortense Standish for a few happy years; last of all Hortense Arnold, to suffer a tragic betrayal.

Madeleine, who could scarcely remember her own father, had admired without respecting his handsome, talented, weak-willed but charming successor, Lester Arnold. She had been fourteen when her mother married the artist who had painted Hortense's portrait and won her almost childlike worship. Hortense looked young, even if she wasn't, and she was almost a beauty. Why shouldn't a man love such a woman for herself even though she happened to be rich and he poor, with fame yet to make? So Madeleine argued to herself, trying not to be jealous of her mother's happiness. Four years later Hortense was dead, having died literally of shock and a broken heart. Her money was gone, and her famous jewels were gone. Madeleine had not a relative in the world, nor a dollar she could lay her hands on except by the sale of a few bits of jewellery remaining, and such trinkets as her mother had given her on Christmasses and birthdays. Some time before, when Arnold was supposed to have made unfortunate speculations with his wife's money, the Standish house in Washington

Square had been sold, and Hortense had moved with her adored husband into an apartment leased by the year. There were debts, which the sale of some rare old furniture scarcely more than paid; but it was not the plain fact of poverty which killed the joyous youth in Madeleine Standish's heart: it was the tragic tale told by her mother's French maid, Jeanne Laboris.

Nobody save dead Hortense Arnold's daughter believed this tale. Lester Arnold's prim sister said that Jeanne had always hated her mistress's second husband, and tried to prejudice his wife against him in every way during the four years of their married life. Others admitted that they had met Rose Rosenkrantz at the Arnolds', but had seen no sign of infatuation on Lester's part. He had admired Rose, of course. What man with eyes in his head could help admiring such beauty? And Lester Arnold was an artist. Madame Rosenkrantz had posed to him for a picture which had been his greatest success, but they had been introduced to each other by Hortense.

Madame Rosenkrantz was quite a romantic figure and a pathetic one, because she'd come to New York from—well, no one quite knew where. It might have been England: it might have been Chicago!—anyhow, she had begun her career as a dancer soon after the war, and then, having taken the town by storm in a big revue, had fallen desperately ill. She had come near dying of

influenza at a time when it was like the black plague, and had never fully recovered her health. She hadn't been able to dance again, but had, in rather a mysterious way, begun to achieve a new sort of fame. Not exactly as a fortune-teller. Oh, no, it was illegal to tell fortunes, and Madame Rose Rosenkrantz was too clever a woman to risk prison! . . . She was an astrologer, and cast wonderful horoscopes. She did crystal reading too, and studied your character from the lines of your hand. Well, yes, there *were* a few cats and hounds who went whispering it about that Madame Rosenkrantz black-mailed her clients in a delicate, refined way, or else stole their husbands. But there had never been anything definite said against her. Women of such Helen-like beauty always excited jealousy, and were storm-centres for scandal, especially if they had to earn their own living!

Lester Arnold's sister was sure that there had never been anything more than friendship between her brother and Hortense's protégée, Rose Rosenkrantz. Jeanne Laboris's story that Lester's "bad speculations" had mostly been in the shape of money gifts to Madame Rosenkrantz, and that he had become her slave, was all malicious nonsense. As for the famous jewels—who had ever seen them? Hortense talked now and then of the things ("boasted," Lester's sister said), but she kept them in a bank, and confessedly wore imitation copies. Who

could tell that she hadn't herself secretly disposed of the originals when, as her banker stated, she removed them from the bank's custody a year before her death?

It was true that Jeanne Laboris, maid to Hortense since the French heiress's girlhood, did hate Lester Arnold, and had implored her mistress not to marry him. But that was one more reason, Madeleine thought, why the disapproving Frenchwoman should watch her *bête noire* as slowly he destroyed the happiness and trust of his wife.

Jeanne told how Hortense had first suspected, then discovered without room for doubt, her husband's love-affair with her late "friend": how Hortense had reluctantly yielded to an appeal from Lester and taken her heirlooms from the bank so that he might pawn them and tide across a financial crisis: how the jewels had never been redeemed and how at last, eavesdropping in jealous anguish, Hortense had overheard a conversation between Rose and Lester one night when she (Hortense) was supposed to be at the opera. She had got the whole truth then, in a few words. The jewels had not been pawned by Lester. He had lent them to Rose and, importuned about them daily by his wife, implored his mistress to give them back. This the woman refused to do. They were her pride and glory, she freely announced. Just to gaze at them, alone in her room on wakeful nights when without them she would have tossed in

feverish misery till dawn, was a tonic for body and soul. Lester had threatened to tell his wife the real fate of the jewels, and let her call the police if she chose, and the impulse of Hortense at that moment had been (as she confessed to Jeanne) to interrupt the pair, to let both know she had overheard everything. Fear of her husband's fury had held her back: and two days later he had been found at morning dead in his bed, a tiny bottle of prussic acid in his hand, the room scented with the wicked perfume of bitter almonds.

The detectives whom Madeleine engaged when she had sold a pretty string of birthday pearls, saw no good reason to believe Arnold's death was murder, not suicide, even though Jeanne Laboris stoutly insisted that Madame Rosenkrantz had been with him in the apartment till midnight, and that he hadn't been seen after her departure till his body was discovered late next morning. There was no proof that the lost thousands of dollars had passed to Madame Rosenkrantz, other than his wife's certainty of the fact, confided to her maid. The wife was dead, and couldn't speak for herself! The maid was prejudiced. Still, the detectives consented to take Miss Standish's money and do their best to prove that her theory, not theirs, was right.

They unearthed certain seemingly unimportant facts concerning Madame Rosenkrantz's life, and a few of more obvious importance. The names of visitors to her

small apartment in East Ninth Street were discovered, among others being that of a comparatively unknown dancer named Marco Lopez. One of the detectives engaged by Madeleine brought to light the fact that Rose had been seen several times dancing with him at a second-rate night club where Lopez was a professional. A few days after the death of Lester Arnold and his wife Marco Lopez had resigned his position, telling the manager of the club that he had been called home to Buenos Aires. No news of him could be got from the police there, however, except the story of a post-card, received by a friend, with a coloured picture on it of the Indian Museum at Albuquerque, on the Santa Fé line. This card had been destroyed by the recipient, its date forgotten, and had contained only the word "Greetings" in Spanish, signed "Marco."

If Lopez had anything to conceal, the detective argued, he would have been unlikely to send this post-card, even to an old friend. And there was nothing whatever to support Miss Standish's conviction that Rose Rosenkrantz had gone with Lopez, or joined him. She had left her apartment the morning after Arnold's "suicide," before the death had been discovered; but it appeared that her departure had been decided upon a week or so beforehand. She had been ordered by her doctor to Switzerland for a cure, as she was threatened with consumption. She had sub-let her flat, which she

had taken furnished, and her name had been on the passenger-list of a French ship which sailed from New York on the day she left her apartment-house with a load of luggage. She had not gone in a taxi but in a private car, and who was the owner of this car had never been learned.

By the time Madeleine had arrived on the scene from her convent school, had recovered sufficiently from the shock of the double death to form a theory and obtain money to pay detectives, the ship on which Rose Rosenkrantz was supposed to sail had finished its voyage. A "Madame R. Rosenkrantz" had been on board as a second-class passenger, but her appearance did not entirely agree with the description of Rose Rosenkrantz. Madeleine Standish could not afford to have this person tracked all over Europe. Besides, she and Jeanne Laboris together were convinced that the woman's journey and announced plans were a blind. Jeanne (sent once by her mistress on an errand to Madame Rosenkrantz) had seen in the latter's bedroom a silver-framed photograph of a handsome, dark young man who had signed himself "Thy Marco."

"Marco" had passed through Albuquerque, New Mexico. Both that state and California, just beyond, were favourite health resorts, and Madeleine had obstinately made up her mind that, somewhere in the mild and sunny West Rose Rosenkrantz and the Empress

Josephine's jewels were in the keeping of Marco Lopez the dancer.

Months had passed, and there was no news of Lopez obtainable from New Mexico or California, yet Madeleine's theory had remained unshaken. Some day Lopez would come out into the open (fearing to change his name lest he should be recognised, and seeing no real need of it) as a professional. With him, perhaps in hiding, would be Rose Rosenkrantz. Southern California would attract a man of Lopez's profession; and Madeleine had imagined him dancing in some Los Angeles café. She had decided that, if he were to be found, she must be the one to find him. And so at last she had reached the goal of her desire, with little money left. At Los Angeles she had heard of a smart new restaurant lately opened at Hollywood, where a Spanish or South American young man had been engaged as a dancer. She had gone to Hollywood, only to find that the man was not Lopez. But rumour said that the proprietor of Montparnasse was dissatisfied with his professional. Another had been engaged on the strength of some slight success at a less important place. Madeleine had waited and, at last—starved.

Her great advantage had been, at Hollywood, that neither Marco Lopez nor Rose Rosenkrantz had ever seen her. But now, as she lay awake recreating the past and picturing the future, she faced a disadvantage. How

was she to put herself in Rose Rosenkrantz's place according to the Edgar Allan Poe method, when her only acquaintance with the woman's features was through a photograph? Also, how was she to find a person never seen, doubtless changed greatly through illness, since that photograph had been taken?

Still, the girl did not despair. She called up a vision of dark, exotic eyes and a beautiful discontented mouth with a tragic droop of the full lips. That woman could hate as well as love! Madeleine saw her hating the ingenuous, rejuvenated Lady Gates; saw her fearing that Marco would deceive her after she had given him all her help, and marry the rich widow.

"She'd work in secret, and then, if he found her out, she would throw herself on his mercy," the girl thought. "She'd either pretend to be ill, or she would be really ill. He'd *have* to help her, for his own sake as well as hers. She'd have to be got out of the bungalow and hidden somewhere else. But not too far away. She couldn't *go* far! And besides, they'd need to keep in touch with one another. Nobody in California had seen her face closely. Those dark curtains in the studio! And she could have added to her mysteriousness by wearing a veil or mask. She would be safe under a new name at any hotel—any sanatorium. But better outside Hollywood or Los Angeles; better at some place where Marco Lopez wasn't well known."

Then the word "Pasadena" seemed to be whispered in Madeleine's ear. She imagined it, she knew it. That was the queer way in which inspirations often came to her.

Pasadena was no farther away from Hollywood than Los Angeles, but it was, somehow, a place in a different world. A plan began growing in the girl's mind. It had to do with Pasadena, but first it would begin to unfold at the Ambassador Hôtel where Lady Gates had stayed.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE HOTEL CHAMBERMAID

It was through the influence of John Barrett that Madeleine got a "job" as chambermaid at the Hôtel Ambassador, on the floor where Lady Gates had lived in her much-mirrored suite. But it was the girl's own idea, and she had said "Watch my smoke!" in answer to Barrett's fear that she would be unable to disguise herself.

Her copper hair hidden under a neat dark wig topped by an equally neat cap, her dazzling fairness dimmed with brunette powder which seemed to dull the natural redness of her lips, her rounded slimness unbecomingly draped in cheap black, she was unnoticeable and hardly pretty. No one would have looked at her twice, or, looking twice, would have recognised in the

meek maid with cast-down eyes, the radiant creature who, as the "mysterious cigarette girl of Montparnasse," had provided a new sensation for Hollywood.

Her hours at the hotel were governed by work at the studio. But this complication was simplified by the fact that her real identity and object were known to the hotel management. And luckily, she was the "spoiled darling" of the studio. The infatuated Ossie was only too glad to grant the girl favours, hoping to be rewarded in the fullness of time, and Landis, directing "Black Sleeves," was more or less in Miss Smith's confidence. He and his wife, Pauline Fordham, had always liked Malcolm Allister, and now they were loyal champions of his innocence. No one else could have killed Lady Gates, except by a miracle. But they believed in the miracle, and having been told the secret of Miss Smith's devotion, Landis was delighted to help as far as he could. It was understood between them that "Serena Robins" scenes in "Black Sleeves" were never to be shot earlier than eleven a.m. or later than six p.m., and that Oscar Sonnenberg, of all people, was never to learn why. Madeleine went "on duty" at the hotel at seven in the morning, and at half-past ten was free; free again, also, at six in the evening to go where she would.

Thus her secret activities were made possible, and the hardest thing she had to do was to let herself be touched by Marco Lopez in their "big scene" together.

The girl's one consolation came from stealthily watching the Argentinian's dark face. It had become strained and anxious. Make-up could not wholly hide the haggardness of his eyes.

Madeleine kept the name of "Mary," which had been hers since the first night at Montparnasse: just "Mary," without a surname, for her maid's work at the hotel. It was her special business to start a friendship with the girl who had cared for Lady Gates' rooms before the murder, and still looked after them since their occupation by newcomers, a family from New York.

Madeleine didn't wish to be mysterious for Charlotte, her new chum, so to her she was "Mary Sinnett," and the briefness of her time on duty was explained by the fact that she was getting "practice" before being sent by the housekeeper to another hotel owned by the same management.

She and Charlotte went to a movie together at Mary's expense on the first night of their acquaintance. Mary brought a box of chocolates whose contents were mostly devoured by Charlotte; and next day Mary presented her pal with a smart hat which, she said, didn't become her and she'd worn only once. The following night the two went out again together, much to Charlotte's joy, she being plain of face, fat of figure, and unprovided with a "beau."

By this time her reticence on the subject of Lady

Gates was broken. At a little supper in a modest restaurant which seemed luxurious to her, Charlotte confessed that her knowledge of a few details in the "Lady Gates affair" had troubled her by day and kept her awake at night. "I'm not one of the gushing ones, anyhow," she said, "and it's just downright made me sick the morbid curiosity of some folks because a poor body has been murdered! You're different, of course. Me and you's friends. But the way people on my floor has pestered me with catechisms about that old lady, just because I did her rooms and used to give her a bit of help gettin' dressed, you wouldn't believe! And the reporters. I might of talked a bit to them, if two of 'em hadn't tried bullyin'. That finished them gents with me! And I'm afraid of newspapers, anyhow, the things they say about a girl. Call you by your last name, as if you was a man, and make fun of your looks like as not. Besides, I don't want to be summonsed as a witness when that Mr. Allister comes to his trial. It wouldn't do me no good. And you see, it wasn't as if I knew enough to help him get free. He may have had the flask they talk so much about for all I know. It may not of bin the one I seen. But I *did* see a silver flask lyin' on Lady Gates' dressin'-table among her other silver things—brushes and bottles and that sort of stuff—more than once when I went in mornings. I ain't noticed no monnygram on it, so you see my word

couldn't help or hinder, could it? What—you think it could? . . . Well, of course, if the trial comes on, rather than see a nice-lookin' feller like that condemned to death, I s'pose I'd come forward. I guess one or two of the folks who pestered me with questions till they give up in despair, may of bin detectives on one side or the other. They asked about the darned flask, and they asked about writing-paper; whether I'd ever noticed any that was different from the hotel stationery in the old lady's rooms. Well, I had. But if I'd got lockjaw, I couldn't of shut me mouth tighter about everything till this very minute. It was more as if they was trying to spin a web around me. Because you see I couldn't describe the other paper for certain, no more than I could the flask. And they'd get me all tangled up in criss-cross statements. I know their kind! And maybe put me through a third degree. There was such a little bit of different writin'-paper anyhow, and the only way I noticed it was like this: one day not long before she was murdered, poor old girl, Lady Gates was dressed to go out. She had that gold-mesh bag in her hand, there's bin so much fuss over. I was dustin' the writin'-table, and she says, 'Oh, Charlotte!' says she, 'just fish me out a bit o' paper from that drawer, will you, because I need to make notes of somethin' important, and I forgot to buy me a notebook.' I opened the drawer, and on top lay a few sheets and envelopes of a sort o'

blue colour. 'Will these do, ma'am?' says I; and she says, 'Yes! That paper'll fit into my bag, I think. Never mind the envelopes.' But there was three or four inside the sheets as I handed her the lot, and she didn't throw 'em out. I remember noticin' her stuff the paper into the gold bag, and what a tight fit it was, though that bag was the biggest mesh one I ever seen. I only wish she'd of willed it to me! But they say if the jury pronounces the nephew innocent he gets the lot. I s'pose even the bag too!"

"I don't believe he'd care much about keeping that bag for himself," said Madeleine at last. "It would have painful associations. I shouldn't wonder, Charlotte, if you came forward and told these things you've told me—maybe you could identify the writing-paper and the flask if they were shown to you—Mr. Allister would be glad afterwards to make you a present of the gold bag as a reward for helping him."

"You *don't* think so!" almost gasped Charlotte. "That beautiful bag! It must of cost hundreds and hundreds of dollars with all them diamonds along the top. I never admired anything in my life so much."

"I believe he'd do it if it had cost a thousand!" answered Madeleine.

"My Gawd!" breathed Charlotte. "Well, I'm glad I've kept my mouth closed till now, if you say I could

get such a present for opening it. Gosh, I'd open it so wide for that bag I'd risk never shuttin' it again."

"This is just between you and me, Charlotte," Madeleine said confidentially. "But the last lady I lived with is a friend of Mr. Allister's. She liked me a whole lot. And she knows his lawyer too. You just be sensible when the right time comes, and I've got a hunch that gold bag's as good as yours!"

"You squeezed out of that girl what my men couldn't," John Barrett praised Madeleine Standish when she told him. "And I'm dashed if I think anyone else could but you!"

Madeleine's mission at the Hôtel Ambassador was over. Rather than risk exciting suspicion in Charlotte, however, she returned to work next morning. About nine o'clock she received a telegram calling her to the bedside of an invalid aunt. She said good-bye to Charlotte, and whispered a promise not to forget the gold-mesh bag.

Madeleine wasn't a vain girl, but she had hated herself in that brown wig and dusky powder! They were not to be abandoned for ever, alas, for they had their part in the plan she hoped to carry out when her film work finished. She wouldn't say, even to herself, "I'll carry it out *if* I find Rose Rosenkrantz." She said, "*when* I find her." And both she and Barrett were

encouraged by her brilliantly quick success with the reserved Charlotte.

The evening after the affectionate farewell between the two maids, Miss Mary Smith, beautiful as usual, left the studio at six-twenty precisely. She had hurried out of her make-up, and here and there under a hasty dusting of powder a touch of cold-cream showed on the girl's lovely skin.

Pauline Fordham had also finished for the day and had been released by her director-husband. Mary wanted to go to Pasadena for some reason, she hadn't very clearly explained what, and perhaps she had hinted faintly to Pauline that she didn't want to be disengaged if Mr. Sonnenberg invited her.

"I'll take you!" Pauline had promptly offered, much amused at the comedy being played in and out of the studio by "Big Ossie" and his reluctant "sweetie."

The star had gone through such experiences herself before she married her director. She knew how it was, when a girl needed to keep on a producer's "good side," yet was anxious to "hold him off." It would be all right with Ossie if she took Mary Smith driving in her car, especially if they two consented to join Landis and Sonnenberg for supper at Montparnasse about eleven.

"If you hadn't told me, my dear, that you were mad about Allister and working for him," said Pauline, turning the nose of her smart roadster towards Pasadena, "I'd

believe you had a date with some sheik, on the side. As it is—well, you don't need to confide in me! But why Pasadena at this hour of the day? It's a lovely place of course, but not as lively as our own happy hunting-ground after dark."

"It's a woman, not a man, I'm interested in at Pasadena," Madeleine answered. "She mayn't be there. It's just my 'hunch' that she is, and I've learned to follow my 'hunches'! Look here, Pauline, you and Mr. Landis are being awfully good to me. I know I can trust you!"

"You bet you can!" Pauline assured her with emphasis.

Madeleine then told her why she wished to go to Pasadena that night.

CHAPTER XXX

WHEN THE FILMING FINISHED

ANY detective could have taken the photograph signed "Rose," which Madeleine Standish possessed, visited various hotels, pensions and private sanatoriums, flashed his badge under the eyes of a manager or director, and (if the original of the portrait were to be found in such a hiding-place under another name) have stood a good chance of unearthing her. But no detective could have followed up a first successful move as Madeleine hoped

to do. Madame Rosenkrantz was not "wanted" by the police, for the simple reason that there was nothing against her on their records. No echoes of the Arnold affair over a year ago in New York had reached Southern California, at least no echoes such as those which had for so long haunted Madeleine Standish. The girl had not yet been able to "put over" her far-fetched theory of betrayal and murder and theft; and as things stood at present, Rose Rosenkrantz could not easily be dug out of any shelter she had obtained. She would have to be got at, if at all, in a subtle way; and Madeleine's practice in Edgar Allan Poe's method had helped to suggest that way. She had put herself in the other woman's place, and had become almost sure "on those lines," of what the woman had done, and would do.

"Unless she's very ill, I don't see her going to a sanatorium," the girl said thoughtfully, more to herself than to Pauline Fordham, as they drove through the blue dusk over a road of velvet smoothness. "She'd be more conspicuous there. Nurses talk and gossip a lot about interesting patients, and Lopez would be terribly noticeable as a visitor. I think she'd choose a large, but fairly quiet hotel, where she could have a room with a view over a lovely garden. She'd stay in her room, you know, except that, if she could have got on the ground-floor, she might steal out after dark sometimes to walk or sit in the garden. Wouldn't that be a

wonderful way for Lopez to meet her, without anyone knowing? Hotel gardens aren't as a rule locked up at night."

"This is a real thrill!" said Pauline. "I feel as if I were helping Allister too—and I love that. Did Barrett actually get you a police badge to show?"

"He did. That was easy for him," the girl answered. "The rest's up to me."

"I feel as if we were in an exciting detective story," exclaimed Pauline.

"We are," said Madeleine.

There are several hotels in Pasadena such as Madeleine described: new hotels, middle-aged and old hotels, all with gardens attached; smooth, green-plush lawns; olive trees of soft jade-grey with a glitter of silver; orange trees in bloom and fruit, scenting the warm air with fragrance which mingles with the perfume of roses; fashionable hotels, unfashionable hotels, and hotels that strike a happy mien for families. How many of these was Madeleine to try before coming to the right one? Or—did "the right one" exist in this town of charm and culture which half despised its gay neighbour, Hollywood?

Well . . . there was that "hunch"!

And then, suddenly, Madeleine had a new inspiration.

"What if we take my own tip, and try a few gardens?" she suggested to Pauline.

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Fordham wanted to know.

"Well, the photograph may not be enough like the woman now for the hotel people who've seen her to be sure. And if she does go prowling in a garden at night, why shouldn't we find her there without all the fuss about badges and things? It's hardly dark enough yet, though, to hope for her to be out of her room. Let's stop at some soda-fountain and get coffee and sandwiches. By that time we can begin a garden tour."

They parked the car and had the food. Then they visited four hotel gardens within the radius of a mile. In the fifth they saw, sitting under a tree, a white, ethereal figure.

"There's room on that seat for three. Let us be two of them," whispered Madeleine.

"If it's the right woman she'll jump up and rush away the instant we intrude," said Pauline.

"Why? She can't know us from twin Eves—and she can't get up before I've seen her. My eyes are trained. I think they're like a cat's eyes since I began this business! They can see in the dark."

Chatting and laughing, their arms linked together, two well-dressed and pretty women paused before a rustic seat under an olive tree wreathed with wistaria. The seat had one occupant, a woman in white, with a Spanish scarf pulled over her shadowy dark hair: the eyes that

glanced up at the approaching pair were dark with shadow too. The white face was as dim as that of a beautiful ghost, yet the figure moved, hesitated, and made as if to go away.

"Oh, I hope we don't disturb you? If we do we won't sit down!" exclaimed Pauline, feeling instinctively that it would be wiser for Madeleine not to speak. Later she might need a new voice, never heard by these ears, to match a new face.

"Not at all. You're not disturbing me!" replied a low contralto, hiding vexation. As the woman in white stirred, a perfume of roses floated out from her veil.

The two availed themselves of the grudging permission, but in a few moments removed their hated presence. Madeleine had already learned what she wanted to know.

"She hasn't changed so terribly since the photograph was taken, after all," the girl whispered, when they were out of earshot from the seat under the olive tree. "Now my way is clear."

In three more days Mary Smith's part as Serena Robins in "Black Sleeves" would be finished, though odds and ends of work would keep the director, the man star and leading woman (Pauline Fordham) at work with some of the extras at the studio, completing this super "quickie." Meanwhile, by Barrett's orders, the Pasadena

Park Hotel was watched. Rose Rosenkrantz could not leave without being followed and traced. Marco Lopez could not visit her, even in a dark night-garden, without being under observation.

On the fourth day Mary Smith was free—except for the inconvenient attentions of Oscar Sonnenberg. He had now been driven by his love and the girl's dignity to propose marriage, using (rather pathetically for a millionaire) the classic bribe of a new play with a star part in it. Except for giving him and the film (she thought of it as Malcolm's film, not Sonnenberg's) her best services, Madeleine felt that by leading Ossie on as she had, she'd been acting meanly. Still, what will you? All is fair in love and war, and Hollywood is a battlefield. She had been acting for Malcolm, not for herself. "Black Sleeves" *had* to be produced, and Sonnenberg, who was "in her pocket," had at the time been the best if not the only bet. Madeleine's conscience was not painfully sore, and therefore she continued to encourage "Big Ossie"; she would give him an answer soon, she said. Meanwhile, she absolutely *must* go away alone and think things over. He mustn't try to follow her. The whole future was at stake!

John Barrett got in touch with the management of the Pasadena Park Hotel, and obtained a place as maid for Madeleine Standish (under the Ambassador name of Mary Sinnett), to take care of the suite on the ground-

floor occupied by that beautiful invalid lady, Mrs. Richard Rendel. (Remarkable, thought Barrett, the tendency of people disguising their names, to keep their own initials!) Anyhow, there was no doubt that Madame Rose Rosenkrantz and Mrs. Richard Rendel were one. Barrett consoled the maid who attended the suite by giving her a bribe of a hundred dollars to take a holiday of a week. She took it, married, and never came back!

A girl with dark hair, dusky skin, and dull pink lips took the place of the departed one, and laid herself out with a supreme effort to please Mrs. Richard Rendel. The shock of seeing that beautiful face which had destroyed her home, reduced her to poverty, and might bring Malcolm Allister to death, was such a shock—an actual, physical shock—to the girl who had waited so long, that for an instant, and perhaps the first time in her life, she felt inclined to faint.

Mrs. Rendel's breakfast-tray was in her hands, however, and she controlled herself with an effort.

The window curtains were drawn, but they were green, not rose colour, and the woman propped up in bed looked pale as a drowned creature under the sea. Yet even deadly pallor could not dim her strange, exotic beauty.

"You're a new maid, aren't you?" asked Mrs. Rendel, with a slight show of interest.

"Yes, Madame," Madeleine answered, putting forth all the natural charm that was hers. "The girl you've seen has been sent for from home, I believe, but I do hope I shall be able to please you. I've not been in service very long. I'll do my best, though! And I'd love to do all I can to make you happy. If you'll excuse the liberty, Madame, I think you're the most beautiful lady I ever set eyes on."

Rose Rosenkrantz had always been very susceptible to compliments, and during her association with Marco Lopez had kept him busy paying them. She had hated the necessity for covering her glorious face from her Hollywood clients lest they should gossip about her and about Marco because of her. But she was not hiding in Marco's bungalow now! She had no clients! She hoped never to have any again. Marco was free, and in a few days they would be on board a ship together, having started separately for prudence's sake. They would be on their way to love, and safety and riches, in the Far East. There seemed no possible danger in letting herself be admired by this girl. Compliments—such sincere ones!—even from a chambermaid, were better than nothing to one who starved for them after living on flattery all her life.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LETTER

NEVER had Madeleine Standish worked so hard to win the liking and confidence of a woman as she worked now to win both from her bitterest enemy.

At her convent before the stormy winds of life had chilled her soul, "Mado" had been the pet of her teachers, and the most popular girl in school. To gain affection had been the easiest thing she did. Then, however, she had beauty to aid her. Now, in dark wig and cap, her fair skin duskily powdered, the charm of lips and smile lost, her loveliness was blotted out. But, had she known it, this lack of physical attraction was a point in her favour with the ailing, neurotic woman whose heart ached with the knowledge that her glory was passing with her youth.

If this humble adorer, this servant who asked only to be a slave to her fascinations, had been a strikingly pretty, fresh young girl, Rose Rosenkrantz might have been subconsciously stirred to jealous dislike. As it was, in her loneliness and the feverish *malaise* which her physical cowardice exaggerated, she turned gratefully to Mary Sinnett, the abjectly devoted maid.

Rose had loved all the pleasures and gaieties of life. She had sinned to make them hers. In Berlin where

she had been born, and danced, and loved, and been loved by, many men, the scandal of a young officer's forgeries and suicide for her sake had sent her flying from Germany to a kingdom in the Balkans. There she had been the favourite of a young prince till another outburst of scandal drove her to France. In Paris she had been suspected, and perhaps not without reason, of spying; and New York had been her next objective. There, too, her beauty far more than her talent as a dancer had brought success, but in New York she had been struck for the first time by illness. Her career as a dancer ended. For excitement and consolation she took to gambling. The money she made by her fortune-telling crystal and her cards was a drop in the bucket. She had wheedled thousands from Lester Arnold, and all she could get from others. To Arnold she had been Circe. She had changed his whole nature, and had squeezed the sponge till it was dry. To kill a man who had lost his manhood and dared to threaten revenge was *not* murder! It was self-defence. But Rose had been alarmed by the hue and cry made by the schoolgirl stepdaughter; and the one man she had ever loved for himself alone (there is always such a man in such a woman's life!) had warned her to caution. In her illness and anxiety he had rescued and taken her away into safety. But his worship, though meat and drink to her, hadn't in all moods consoled Rose Rosenkrantz for losing

the adoration of many. She had begun to starve for the admiration which had always been hers; and then, while she fretted in secret, and told herself that she was like a woman entombed while life was still in her body, had come the shock of Marco Lopez's confessed intention to marry that rich old woman. He had explained. He had sworn that, having a wife in Buenos Aires who had prevented his marriage with Rose, a wedding with Lady Gates would be no more than a means to get hold of her money. Rose had believed this at first, aiding Marco as he asked, by her crystal and card reading for his lovesick Katherine. But a voice had whispered in her ear, "Are you sure he isn't tired of being your doctor and nurse as well as lover? How do you know he doesn't mean to get rid of you and your complainings, and calmly travel to Europe as the husband of Lady Gates? He'd think you would never dare to give the secret of his former marriage away, because of your own guiltier secrets that he could tell."

She, Rose, had been almost maddened then by her own fears and suspicions. With no one to help or advise her she had done a deed which, it seemed, must bind Lopez to her while she lived. He had guessed her part in that deed when his card-castle crashed, and she had confessed in her first hysterical emotion, that it was through her he had lost the old woman and the old woman's money. But she had not told all the details.

There was little time, for one thing, and what time there had been she'd spent mostly in consoling Marco by the tale of her *coup* with the jewels. She had managed that business well, and it had been meant to make up to him for the money loss caused by Lady Gates' death. Marco had spoken not one angry word. But he had been strange in his manner—sullenly secretive or stunned, Rose wasn't sure which. And that was the chief agony—not being sure! Marco Lopez was the one chance of love and life left to her out of a lurid past, and the thought of losing him had been a taste of death. Rose had had a hæmorrhage. Blood had poured from her mouth. She had forgotten everything but physical fear. Marco had insisted, when ice and all the remedies he knew so well how to use had restored her, that she must be taken out of that hiding-place at once, into sunshine and freedom. She must go where she could be seen by a doctor without terrors and tremblings lest Rose Rosenkrantz be discovered by her enemies. She had consented. Quickly the two had made plans, and Marco had rushed her away from Hollywood to this hotel in Pasadena, where she was the beautiful invalid, Mrs. Richard Rendel. He had been her "chauffeur," with his cap pulled over his eyes. She had murmured something to the manager about having visited a friend in Los Angeles, and wishing to try Pasadena, where people told her the air was so tonic!

But each day had been more of a living death than the worst days of the "veiled lady," hidden in her room that faced on a court, venturing out no further than the studio to tell silly women's fortunes, her beauty covered. Marco had not come, though he had promised to visit her some evening in the hotel garden. He had written only twice, and told her not to answer yet, as he had become suspicious that detectives were watching him since he had left the bungalow. Luckily, he had burned everything which might "give her away" in the old quarters, and the place had been quickly sold. But he worried over the status of the purchaser, when he had time to think things over. And at present it was safer not even to rent a post-office box for letters. You never knew what that smart lawyer of Allister's might be up to—and on to!

The woman's heart was bursting in her isolation, and the maid's slavish admiration was balm of Gilead.

Mary brought her fruit and flowers, inexpensive, but still a tribute. Mary chose for her books from the lending library. Mary begged to do her nails, and proved quite a skilled manicurist. Mary brushed her beautiful hair, and exclaimed at its magnificence. Never had there been such hair on a woman's head, never had there been such a woman!

Mary encouraged her to believe that soon she would be well; and Mary seemed about to weep on being told

that before long her adored lady would be leaving Pasadena. "But if you really do like me so much and want me to be happy," Mrs. Rendel said, "you ought to be glad. Because I'm going to meet someone I love and who loves me better than anything on earth—at least, I *think* he does! Only——"

Yes, there was a fly in the ointment, a crumpled rose-leaf under the down mattress. The beautiful lady confessed that she had difficulty in communicating with this man. She wished—she needed—to write, but there were reasons why she couldn't send a letter addressed to him out of this hotel. People who were jealous of their love might be watching.

"Oh, Madam, couldn't I post a letter for you?" begged the maid. "You know I'd do anything—and that's so *little!*"

The person who could have suspected this devoted, rather stupid and utterly unsophisticated little servant, must have been a monomaniac on the subject of suspicion! The thought did pass through Rose's weary brain, "Could she be a detective?" But the notion seemed ridiculous, and she dismissed it at once. "Why, yes, I'd trust you," she said, "but you must swear not to post the letter I'll give you, in the hotel."

Mary gave her word; and kept it.

The girl had often heard of sly wretches who steamed

open the envelopes of letters and read their contents. Now she herself was one of those sly wretches! And she didn't like it! But—she was working for Malcolm as well as for herself. Everything now was for Malcolm. And she believed that the woman was a murderess twice over.

Rose Rosenkrantz had written to Lopez at his new address:

“MY OWN DARLING MARCO,—At last I have found someone I can trust to post a letter. (Madeleine suffered a faint qualm.) I have heard from you only twice. Why? Surely there is no danger in your addressing an envelope to Mrs. Richard Rendel at Pasadena Park Hotel! I have been as careful as you warned me to be, and no one suspects that I am anyone but Mrs. Rendel. I never leave my room except after dark, for a little walk in the garden, and even that I have done only a few times, in the hope that you might come, as you said you surely would do. But no! I have suffered so in my disappointment that I have cried myself into coughing-fits and have lain awake all night. I miss you horribly!—your love, your never-failing care. I always did appreciate both, though I complained sometimes of living in prison! But I realise now that the only prison for me is being shut away from you. I torture myself in the night with dreadful questions. Does he still love me? Can it be that

my putting that foolish old woman out of the world, where she was ruining all my hopes of our future together, has killed the adoration he vowed would last for ever?

"Oh, no, Marco, that *can't* be, unless you lied to me as I fear sometimes, and meant to leave me, to pose as that rich old hag's husband. If so, I realise that you couldn't forgive me—because her money meant more to you than my love, and I couldn't let you have both.

"Remember, you forgave me for Arnold, when you guessed what I had been forced to do to save myself and keep the jewels which meant so much for you and me! Why not forgive me this Gates woman? I ask myself. Her jewels we have. With both lots we shall be rich. Are you going to keep your promise? Are you coming to me soon, with all our plans perfected, to tell me when I am to meet you never to part again, and on what ship you have taken our passage? Oh, I would pray, if I could pray, that you have not changed for me! If you have, I shall be lost, and I will live no longer!

"Your too much loving

"ROSE.

"P.S.—Try to come to the garden to-morrow night, soon after nine."

There it all was—all that Madeleine had hoped for in black and white. But she did not know what to do

with the letter, now that she had it. Afraid of making some fatal mistake, just as the game seemed coming into her own hands, she telephoned to John Barrett, not from the hotel, but from a public booth in a drug-store. It was her afternoon "off duty," as she had explained to "Mrs. Rendel" in offering to post a letter outside; and there was time to take a taxi for a rush over to Hollywood and back, after making an appointment with Barrett.

"The woman has given herself away pretty completely with this," Barrett said, when he had read the letter Madeleine brought him. "A little taste of the third degree would get all the details of both murders out of her now—your stepfather, and Lady Gates: to say nothing of the anonymous letter, and how she managed to 'collect' the old lady's jewels. This document I must keep. But if you're good at that sort of thing, you might just copy the beginning, and the postscript with the signature, on Pasadena Park Hotel paper. You have the stamped envelope that you steamed open ready and——"

"Oh!" said Madeleine, pale and quivering. "This is what I've longed for, worked for, almost starved for, these last fifteen months. And yet when Fate has played into my hands, I feel like Judas! That woman's a murderess, and worse. She broke my mother's heart, stole her husband, her money, and her jewels. She killed my stepfather when she'd ruined him and he threatened her. She murdered poor Lady Gates, and she's letting

the guilt rest on Malcolm Allister. She's a fiend, and I hate her. But—that look on her face when she said she trusted me! I can't get it out of my head!"

"It's her stock-in-trade," said Barrett. "Don't be a baby, after all your pluck and courage, and these strokes of genius where you've out-manceuvred all the detectives! . . . Here, give me the letter, and forget it, child. I'll deal with it. Thank the Lord, I am hard-boiled!"

"I thought I was!" sighed Madeleine. "But—tell me this: you'll try to bring about that meeting in the garden to-morrow night, and—and you'll be there?"

"I'll do more than that," said Barrett. "Mrs. Richard Rendel is going to get a telephone-call from Hollywood to-morrow morning at—er—what time will you be busy in her room?"

"From nine till nearly ten," the girl answered shakily. "I bring her breakfast at nine. She doesn't like a waiter to come in."

"Good! Then she'll receive the message before she's had time to brace up on a cup of hot coffee."

"What are you going to say to her?" Madeleine gasped.

"Wait and see. You're a good actress, I know. But it will be just as well to have you as much surprised as she is."

"Is that all you're going to tell me now?" the girl pleaded.

"Every word," John Barrett said.

CHAPTER XXXII

AT LAST!

"YOUR breakfast, Madam, and a few roses I gathered for you in the garden early, with the dew on them," announced Mary the chambermaid, in the room of the drawn green curtains.

The lady in bed murmured gratitude. Even in the under-sea light the newcomer could see that the fading beauty had made herself up to inspire admiration. She could not let even the eyes of a servant behold her at her worst!

Scarcely had the tray been placed on a tiny table drawn up at the bedside, when the telephone sounded. The instrument stood on a writing-desk at some distance from the bed, but with a movement of surprise or fright the slim figure in pink chiffon and lace would have sprung up to answer the unexpected summons, if the table hadn't been in the way. As it was, the safety of the tray was endangered, and the maid rushed to rescue it.

"Do let me answer the 'phone, Madam," she begged. "I'll hold it for you to come if it's anything important, but probably it's a message from downstairs; or someone has got the wrong number."

Rose Rosenkrantz sank back on her pillows. Mary's offer and explanation seemed sensible!

The girl in cap and apron ran to the 'phone and stopped the persistent ringing. "Yes?" she answered. Then, as if in bewilderment after listening a moment: "What—*what's* that? Hold on a second, please."

She turned to the lady in bed. "Madam, it's someone calling from Hollywood. But it must be a mistake, for the person—it's a man's voice—says, 'Mrs. Rendel is to tell Rose Rosenkrantz that her friend from Buenos Aires has known for six weeks that his wife was dead there.' Now, does that make any sense to you, Madam, and do you know anyone of the name of Rose Rosenkrantz?"

No answer came. The chiffon-clad form lay very flat and still.

"Madam!" exclaimed the maid.

Still no answer.

The girl put her lips to the instrument again. "What's the rest of the message for Mrs. Rendel, please?" she asked. But the telephone was dead. After an instant of waiting she hung up the receiver, and went quickly to the bedside. The woman's dark eyes were half-closed, her lips parted, and on her beautiful white face an expression of horror lingered.

Madeleine Standish turned pale under the dusky powder. This woman deserved to die, and in her sensible moments the girl felt little false pity for a soul so selfish and debased. But she did not want Rose Rosen-

krantz to go safely out of the world without leaving a confession that would save Malcolm Allister. She touched the left wrist. It was cool and pulseless beneath her fingers. Then her hand flew to the thinly covered breast, and found a faint, just perceptible fluttering.

"Thank heaven!" she said, and running to the dressing-table with its litter of silver, she found a bottle of eau-de-Cologne. Desperately she sprinkled the cold forehead. Soon the eyes opened, and stared into hers.

"I'm afraid you fainted, Madam!" the maid murmured. "I hope that message didn't bring you bad news?"

Rose sighed deeply, drawing in a long breath. "No," she answered, just audibly. "It—wasn't for me. If I fainted it had nothing to do with the message. I couldn't sleep last night: I often faint like that—lose consciousness for a minute when I'm very tired. Did the—person say who he was, or——"

"No, Madam," replied the maid. "I inquired, but there was no answer. The man had rung off—probably found out he'd made a mistake."

"Yes. Most likely," said Rose. "I'll have my coffee now. Pour it out for me, please. Thanks! Yes, it's still nice and hot. Go to the left-hand drawer of the dressing-table, will you? Look for a little cardboard box with a chemist's name on the cover and bring it to me."

Madeleine obeyed, with a leap of the heart. There was the box, and on it a Spanish name, "Guadalera,"

with an address of a shop doubtless, followed by the name of a town, "Tia Juana."

Tia Juana, as everyone in Hollywood knows (especially those interested in racing), is in Mexico, just over the Californian border. Madeleine remembered well that the poison which killed Lady Gates had been officially analysed as a new drug made from a plant found in Mexico. It was named granil, and some doctors were supposed to prescribe it in small doses as a heart-stimulant. The girl could have cried with hysterical joy as Rose removed the lid of the box and revealed, lying in cotton, several tiny phials exactly resembling the one found in Malcolm Allister's coat-pocket after the death of his aunt at Montparnasse; the phial which, he stated, Lady Gates had had in her gold-mesh bag and from which she'd asked him to drop a tablet into her glass.

"I must get one of those phials!" Madeleine resolved. And when at Mrs. Rendel's request she returned the box to the dressing-table drawer, she was able deftly to extract and palm one of the three miniature bottles. She knew that when leaving the room, its tenant invariably locked this particular drawer; knew for the best of reasons, for more than once when the invalid stole out to the garden at night, Mary, the devoted maid, had entered the room with her pass-key and experimented in all directions. Not that she expected to find the stolen jewels, for she knew from Barrett that on her

arrival Mrs. Rendel had confided a tin box to the hotel safe. But she had hoped for letters or some other clue to connect Mrs. Richard Rendel with Madame Rose Rosenkrantz.

The lady in bed, whose hands and voice were tremulous, dropped an infinitesimal tablet into the last few drops in her coffee-cup. "That is wonderful stuff!" she volunteered. "It acts on the heart in less than a minute. But a big dose is poison. You may think me morbid, Mary—you who are so kind and affectionate!—but I don't mind telling you I've made up a few of these little things into bigger tablets, to have ready if life should grow too sad, too difficult and I should want to die. No doctor or druggist would give one a fatal dose; so I had to do my best for myself! It would be an easy way to die. Instead of stimulating the heart, a big dose just stops its beating, quite soon, without pain."

"Oh, Madam, you wouldn't do such a dreadful thing as to kill yourself!" moaned the maid. "You, so young and beautiful!"

"Not so young as you seem to think," said the other, "and, ah, *so* weary of this world and its deceptions! But don't worry for the present. You needn't be afraid to leave me alone; I have an appointment which I hope to keep to-night. After that I may be happier, or—but I won't think of the future now, or I'll not be able to go through the day!"

"She's dressed and up, and that white Spanish lace mantilla she puts on when she's going out in the garden is hanging over a chair," Madeleine whispered to John Barrett. They had met according to appointment in a rustic summer-house not far from Mrs. Rendel's favourite seat under an olive tree. "Almost any moment she may come, now, for she'll want to be waiting for Lopez. We'd better not stop where we are. She must have noticed this summer-house. Very likely she'll make Lopez come inside it for so private a talk as they're to have. Or in any case, she wouldn't begin to talk, and he wouldn't let her, without looking into such a hidie-hole to see that no one was there."

"I was going to suggest that very thing," answered Barrett. "This hedge of *arbor vita* will do for us. We can see where they station themselves, and if they do choose the summer-house, we can listen under this tiny window near the roof."

Six seconds later the summer-house was empty.

Moments passed. Five; ten; fifteen. There was little danger that any flirtatious couple from the hotel might seek this spot, because, except for its isolation, it was one of the least attractive in the garden. A dog-kennel and the gardener's tool-house were situated near by, and there was a slight air of neglect such as was not permitted near the house. Doubtless Rose Rosenkrantz had selected this seat under a somewhat ragged

olive tree because she was likely to have it to herself.

At last the two screened by the hedge saw a white figure glide ghost-like to the bench under the tree. But it was not alone. Beside it walked the form of a man of about the same height, and gracefully slim. Though there was no moon the sky was silver-bright with countless stars, and Madeleine Standish did not need to hear the voice of Marco Lopez to recognise him. Evidently the ex-lovers had just met.

"I was coming to-night even if thou hadst not written," Lopez said in Spanish. "Yes, it's true we finished the film a day or two ago. But I had arrangements to make. Of course it's all right about our going away. There's a good ship sailing next week, and——"

"Wait! I must speak of something else first," Rose cut him short. "Something more important to me even than the ship."

"Well, wait till I've had a look into the summer-house," Lopez warned her. "Good! no one there. Let us sit inside!"

The two voices came clearly through the tiny window near the roof of the rustic building, though it was half-choked with bougainvillia.

"Somebody in Hollywood knows I am here," the woman announced abruptly. "He—it was a man—telephoned this morning."

"*Dios!*" exclaimed Lopez. "One of those detectives!"

"Perhaps. But whoever it was, knew as much about you as about me. Marco, is it true that you heard from Buenos Aires of your wife's death six weeks ago?"

She flung the question at him, and taken aback he drew in his breath with a kind of gasp before answering. Then he said sharply, "Certainly it is not true. Who could have——"

"I know by your voice, and see by the look on your face even here in this darkness that you're lying to me!" Rose cried. "You meant to marry Lady Gates legally."

"Thou wilt regret not trusting me," answered Marco. "But even had this been true, what matter? Thou art the wife of my heart. All I do or have done is for thee."

"If you knew she was dead so long ago, and if you'd loved me as you did long ago, you would have married me then, not waited till you could wind that old woman round your finger! . . . I thank God, if there is a God, that I killed her. As for her jewels which I saved for you, to make you forgive me for the loss of her money, you shall never have them—nor the others."

"What dost thou mean, Rose?" Lopez challenged her. "Art thou quarrelling with me after all we have been to each other?"

"I am parting from you," the woman answered in a toneless voice as of one dying. "If I had seen truth in your eyes when you answered my question I would have been so happy! I would have gone to the world's end with you. The jewels would have been yours——"

"Part of them are mine," Lopez cut in sharply, speaking in terse English for the first time. "You got them from Lady Gates by a trick. You confessed it to me yourself, that night when I came home and told you we had lost everything because she was dead with her will not yet changed. No doubt you would have lied then as you say I lie now, if I had not been sure it was you who sent her that anonymous letter about me. You confessed that she had some writing-paper with the address on it of the Paragon bungalow where Allister had stayed. She had brought it in her bag to take notes of the horoscope you cast for her. You cut away the address, but anyone who knew could recognise the paper. Out of sheer jealous spite, to turn the woman against me, you wrote that stuff while you pretended to be helping me win her. And worse, I had no chance to defend myself if she accused me. You gave her poison which she took without knowing, a few minutes after she read that letter. She was dead before I reached the restaurant——"

"That was a mere chance her dying then," Rose broke in. "I've told you I gave her a number of the

granil tablets, like those I have been taking myself. The ones with the death-dose—there were only three of them—looked much the same as the rest. Fate decided that all three should be at the bottom of the phial. I suppose you're not unhappy because of the evidence against Allister? You never liked him."

"Allister, and what happens to him means nothing to me," Lopez answered, all the softness of his accents gone with his native language with which hitherto he had expressed his love. "It is myself I think of, and what I've lost through your damned jealousy. You have tried to excuse yourself to me, by telling me how clever you were to get Lady Gates' jewels in your hands. How you persuaded her with that hypnotic power you have, to let you keep the jewels a few days and 'enchant' them to bring the owner luck in love and marriage. But it was the money I wanted. What have the other jewels done for us, except to give us the trouble of watching, always fearing they might be taken from us? And now—after I've given up my whole life for you, been your lover, your servant for nearly two years, hidden you, protected you as no man ever protected a woman before, you coolly tell me we are parting; that you'll keep for yourself the jewels this old woman would have given me with all she had on earth if you'd let her live. Do you imagine you'll get away from me like that? If you do you make a mistake. I've loved you with passion and

devotion. But when you killed Katherine Gates and my hopes of a rich future you killed my love for you at that moment. You've been guilty of murder before—a man who adored you and was desperate. But you did that because he menaced you, and because you loved me. This murder of a poor old woman you committed because you loved yourself, and cared not in your jealousy how you hurt me. No! You'll not take from me what's left from the wreck. Don't you understand that you're in my power?"

"As you are in mine," Rose said with a new quietness.

"You have no longer any power over me at all," Lopez told her. "Not even the power of love. *I* have committed no murders. My one crime is protecting a sinful woman who would have died if I'd abandoned her. I have not stolen anything. I have worked to support you and myself. What would a jury find against me? Nothing. The newspapers would paint me not a criminal but a hero. That is the truth. That's the way you and I stand. Think it over, Rose."

"Yes. I'll think it over—now," she answered, in so hushed a tone that it scarcely reached the ears of the two listeners outside.

For a few seconds all was still in the summer-house. Then Rose cried out shrilly, "I've thought it over. And—I'm not in your power—not in anyone's power in this world!"

Madeleine clutched Barrett's arm. Instinctively she guessed what the woman had done, but it was not till after a stifled oath from Lopez, and a subdued scuffle, that Barrett guessed also.

"She's taken the poison!" whispered the girl. "He'll leave her there, and save himself. Quick—or he'll be gone! We'll need his confession."

"Stick 'em up, Lopez!" ordered Barrett, blocking the summer-house door and pressing an automatic against the dancer's graceful waistline. "You're going to get a chance to tell your story and see how much of a hero you'll be to your friends the journalists!"

Free! Malcolm was free, and he owed his freedom, perhaps his life, to the courage, the intelligence and love of "Mary Smith, the mysterious cigarette-girl of Montparnasse."

It was in that way the newspapers spoke of her, though the secret of her real name and her real mission in Hollywood was no longer a secret now that the mission had been accomplished.

There was no doubt that Allister would inherit his aunt's money, since without waiting for a trial his innocence had been proved.

Her jewels, part of the legacy, were in the deed-box placed in the Park Hotel safe by "Mrs. Richard

Rendel," and surrendered after her suicide to the police. With them were the historic heirlooms which had belonged to Madeleine's mother, and were therefore Madeleine's property.

If Mary Smith had created a sensation in Hollywood Madeleine Standish raised a cyclone.

One might have thought, from the fuss made by the newspapers (said Pierre of Montparnasse), that his late employee was the eighth wonder of the world! But after all, he shared her kudos because she had sold cigarettes in his restaurant. Never had Montparnasse been so popular. It was jammed day and night not only by stars of the studios but by tourists who had seen a hundred newspaper snapshots of Mary Smith, Malcolm Allister, and Marco Lopez.

The strangers wanted to know which had been the table where Malcolm Allister, the author, had sat, and which had been that favoured by poor Lady Gates? Was it true that Mary Smith (no, Madeleine Standish, or rather Mrs. Malcolm Allister as she must be called now since the wonderful wedding the day after her lover left prison!) had worn the same spangled green harem dress that other pretty girl was walking around in now? And would Marco Lopez be allowed to go back to Buenos Aires? Well, well! But after all, as he announced every day in sensational interviews, he wasn't a criminal! He even appeared to be a somewhat sympathetic figure,

especially in the eyes of silly girls, and would probably end by marrying some rich South American widow to console him for the poor English lady he had lost! . . .

A good thing for herself, that the Rosenkrantz woman had committed suicide at the right moment: and a kind of poetic justice, you might say, that she'd taken the same stuff she used for the killing of Lady Gates! . . . Disappointing that the police kept the secret of where she'd been buried. It would have been interesting to see her grave. Judging from the photograph some reporter had got hold of, and published, she must have been one of the great beauties of the world.

Even Oscar Sonnenberg became a cynosure for the eyes of visitors to Hollywood, not because of any personal pulchritude, but because he had had the luck to produce "Black Sleeves," Malcolm Allister's film, at this time.

Everyone called it "luck," not knowing Ossie's private grievance against the girl who'd "let him down" by marrying the writer. Not only was the film a whirlwind success everywhere because of its topical interest in connection with author and leading characters; but Mary Smith as Serena Robins was, on her own merits, the surprise of the Hollywood season.

"Big Ossie" stood to pile up a fortune from the quickly made and hastily released picture, so no one save himself dreamed that he was to be pitied. He

had the sense to see that if he tried to take revenge upon the girl who had (he continued to tell himself) "vamped him just to get all she could and then give him the gate," not only would he disgust his public, but he would betray his own secret. Instead, he decided upon a "grand gesture."

He gave Madeleine a diamond pendant as a wedding present, and invited Malcolm Allister, his "hated rival," to write another story at a huge price with Mary Smith as the star.

"Make up your minds while you're on your honeymoon," he graciously said.

But their minds are still to be made up, for they haven't finished their honeymoon yet.

THE END

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2 v. — His Little Mother, and other Tales and Sketches 1 v. — Plain Speaking 1 v. — Miss Tommy 1 v. — King Arthur 1 v.

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Mr. Isaacs 1 v. — To Leeward 1 v. — A Roman Singer 1 v. — A Tale of a Lonely Parish 2 v. — Saracinesca 2 v. — Paul Patoff 2 v. — With the Immortals 1 v. — The Three Fates 2 v. — Marion Darche 1 v. — Adam Johnstone's Son 1 v. — In the Palace of the King 2 v. — Marietta, a Maid of Venice 2 v. — The Primadonna 2 v. — The White Sister 1 v.

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The Raiders 2 v. — The Dark o' the Moon 2 v.

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Cushing, Paul.
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An Incomplete Etonian 2 v. — Let the Roof fall in 2 v.

Dane, Clemence.
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Davis, Richard Harding (Am.).
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De Foe, Daniel, † 1731.
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Deland, Margaret (Am.).
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Dell, Floyd (Am.).
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The Pickwick Club 2 v. — Oliver Twist 2 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 2 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock; Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — *Vide* also Household Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

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Letters from High Latitudes 1 v.

Duncan, Sara Jeannette: *vide* Mrs. Cotes.

Dunton: *vide* Th. Watts-Dunton.

Earl, the, and the Doctor.
South Sea Bubbles 1 v.

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Elbon, Barbara (Am.).

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Adam Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. — Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix Holt 2 v. — Impressions of Theophrastus Such 1 v.

"Elizabeth": *vide* Elfinor Glyn and "Letters of her Mother to Elizabeth."

"Elizabeth and her German Garden," Author of.

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Felkin, Alfred Laurence: *vide* E. T. Fowler.

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Fitzgerald, Edward.

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Forrest, R. E.

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Will and a Way, and The Handkerchief at the Window 2 v. — Eliane 2 v. (by Mrs. Augustus Craven, translated by Lady Fullerton). — Laurentia 1 v.

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The Country House 1 v. — Fraternity 1 v. — Villa Ruben 1 v. — A Man of Devon, tec. 1 v. — A Motley 1 v. — The Patrician 1 v. — Justice, and Other Plays 1 v. — The Silver Box, and Other Plays 1 v. — The Inn of Tranquillity 1 v. — The Island Pharisees 1 v. — The Dark Flower 1 v. — A Bit o' Love, and Other Plays 1 v. — A Family Man, and Other Plays 1 v. — Captures 1 v. — The White Monkey 1 v. — The Forsyte Saga 3 v. — The Silver Spoon 1 v. — Beyond 1 v. — Castles in Spain, and Other Screeds 1 v. — Two Forsyte In-ludes 1 v. — The Forest, and Six Short Plays 1 v.

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- Goldring, Douglas.
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- Goldsmith, Oliver, † 1774.
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- Goodman, Edward J.
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- Gordon, Julien (Am.).
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- Gore, Mrs., † 1861.
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- Guthrie, F. Anstey: *vide* Anstey.
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Bellard's Inspiration 1 v.

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all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Pasives Crime,
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Hunt, Mrs.: *vide* Beaumont.

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Hutten, Baroness von (Am.).

Julia 1 v. — Candy, and Other Stories 1 v.
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Huxley Aldous.

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Barren Leaves 1 v. — Point Counter
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Berenger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

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Mahomet 1 v. — Life of George Washing-
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1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v. — A Master of
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Holy Wedlock 1 v.

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2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg
1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. —
Russell 2 v. — Sir Theodore Broughton 2 v.

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 Daisy Miller; An International Episode;
 Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson
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 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v.

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 The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow
 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v. —
 Tea-Table Talk 1 v. — Tommy and Co.
 1 v. — Idle Ideas in 1905 1 v. — The Passing
 of the Third Floor Back 1 v. — The Angel
 and the Author—and Others 1 v. — They
 and I, 1 v. — All Roads Lead to Calvary
 1 v. — Anthony John 1 v.

Jerrold, Douglas, † 1857.
 History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v.

"John Halifax, Gentleman," Author of:
vide Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow: vide Mrs. Henry Wood.
Jolly, Emily.
 Colonel Dacre 2 v.

"Joshua Davidson," Author of: *vide*
 Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

Kavanagh, Miss Julia, † 1877.
 Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. —
 Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A
 Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies
 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v.
 — French Women of Letters 1 v. —
 English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen

Mah 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dora 2 v. —
 Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien
 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-
 nots 2 v. (*vide* p. 27.)

Kaye-Smith, Sheila.
 The End of the House of Alard 1 v. — Iron
 and Smoke 1 v.

Keary, Annie, † 1879.
 Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.

Keary, C. F.
 The Mount 1 v.

Keeling, D'Esterre: *vide* Esterre.

Kennedy, Margaret.
 The Constant Nymph 1 v.

Kimball, Richard B. (Am.), † 1892.
 Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student
 Life Abroad 1 v. — Was he Successful?
 1 v.

Kingsley, Charles, † 1875.
 Two Years ago 2 v. — Hereward the Wake
 2 v. — At Last 2 v.

Kingsley, Henry, † 1876.
 Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v.
 — The Hillyars and the Burtons 2 v. —
 Leighton Court 1 v. — Reginald Hethe-
 rage 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.

Kinross, Albert.
 An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.

Kipling, Rudyard.
 Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The
 Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven
 Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous"
 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet
 in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From
 Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful
 Night 1 v. — Kim 1 v. — Just So Stories 1 v.
 — The Five Nations 1 v. — Traffics and
 Discoveries 1 v. — Puck of Pook's Hill 1 v.
 — Actions and Reactions 1 v. — Rewards
 and Fairs 1 v. — Land and Sea Tales 1 v.
 — Debits and Credits 1 v.

Laffan, May.
 Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor 1 v.
Langdon, Mary (Am.).
 Ida May 1 v.

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 (Miss Piddington).
 The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The
 Gain of a Loss 2 v.

Łaszowska, Mme de: vide E. Gerard.

- Laurence, George Alfred: *vide* "Guy Livingstone."
- Lawless, the Hon. Emily, † 1913.
Hurrish 1 v.
- Lawrence, D. H.
England, My England 1 v. — The Woman Who Rode Away 1 v.
- Mrs. Lean: *vide* Florence Marryat.
- "Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands": *vide* Victoria R. I.
- Lee, Holme: *vide* Harriet Parr.
- Lee, Vernon.
Pope Jacynth, etc. 1 v. — Hortus Vitae, and Limbo 1 v. — Vanitas 1 v. — Louis Norbert 1 v. — The Tower of the Mirrors 1 v. — The Golden Keys 1 v.
- Le Fanu, J. S., † 1873.
Uncle Silas' 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.
- Lemon, Mark, † 1870.
Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetters 2 v.
- Author of "Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son": *vide* George Horace Lorimer.
- Author of "The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth": *vide* Trowbridge.
- Lever, Charles, † 1872.
The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of Gwynne 3 v. — Arthur O'Leary 2 v. — Harry Lorrequer 2 v. — Charles O'Malley 3 v. — Tom Burke of "Ours" 3 v. — Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. — The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The Fortunes of Glencore 2 v. — Davenport Dunn 3 v. — Confessions of Con Cregan 2 v. — One of Them 2 v. — Maurice Tiernay 2 v. — Barrington 2 v. — A Day's Ride 2 v. — Luttrell of Arran 2 v. — Tony Butler 2 v. — Sir Brook Fossbrooke 2 v. — The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly 2 v. — A Rent in a Cloud 1 v. — That Boy of Norcott's 1 v. — St. Patrick's Eve; Paul Gosslett's Confessions 1 v. — Lord Kilgobbin 2 v.
- Levett-Yeats, S.
The Honour of Savelli 1 v. — The Chevalier d'Auric 1 v. — The Traitor's Way 1 v. — The Lord Protector 1 v. — Orrain 1 v.
- Lewes, G. H., † 1878.
Ranthorpe 1 v. — The Physiology of Common Life 2 v.
- Lewis, Sinclair. (Am.)
Babbitt 1 v. — Our Mr. Wrenn 1 v. — Arrowsmith 1 v.
- Linton, Mrs. E. Lynn, † 1898.
The true History of Joshua Davidson 1 v. — Patricia Kemball 2 v. — The Atonement of Leam Dundas 2 v. — The World well Lost 2 v. — Under which Lord? 2 v. — Todhunters' at Loanin' Head, and other Stories 1 v. — Ione 2 v.
- Lockhart, L. W. M., † 1882.
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- Loftus, Lord Augustus.
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- London, Jack (Am.), † 1916.
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- Longard, Mme de: *vide* D. Gerard.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth (Am.), † 1882.
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- Lonsdale, Margaret.
Sister Dora 1 v.
- Loos, Anita (Am.).
"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" 1 v.
- Lorimer, George Horace (Am.).
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- "Lost Battle, A" 2 v.
- Lowndes, Mrs. Bolloc.
Studies in Wives 1 v. — The Lodger 1 v. — The End of her Honeymoon 1 v. — Why They Married 1 v. — The Territor Mystery 1 v. — Some Men and Women 1 v. — Bread of Deceit 1 v. — What Really Happened 1 v. — "Thou Shalt Not Kill"

1 v. — The Story of Ivy 1 v. — Cressida: No Mystery 1 v.

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"Lutfullah": *vide* Eastwick.

Lyall, Edna, † 1903.

We Two 2 v. — Donovan 2 v. — Knight-Errent 2 v. — Wayfaring Men 2 v. — Hope the Hermit 2 v. — In Spite of All 2 v. — The Hinderers 1 v.

Lytton, Lord: *vide* E. Bulwer.

Lytton, Robert Lord (Owen Meredith), † 1891.

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Maartens, Maarten, † 1915

The Sin of Joost Avelingh 1 v. — An Old Maid's Love 2 v. — God's Fool 2 v. — The Greater Glory 2 v. — My Lady Nobody 2 v. — Her Memory 1 v. — My Poor Relations 2 v. — Dorothea 2 v. — The Healers 2 v. — The Woman's Victory, and Other Stories 2 v. — The New Religion 2 v. — Brothers All 1 v. — The Price of Lis Doris 2 v. — Harmen Pols: Peasant 1 v. — Eve 2 v.

McAulay, Allan (Am.): *vide* Kate Douglas Wiggin.

Macaulay, Lord, † 1859.

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Macaulay, Rose.

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McCarthy, Justin.

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St. Michael 2 v. — The Marquis of Lossie 2 v. — Sir Gibbie 2 v. — Mary Marston 2 v. — The Gifts of the Child Christ, and other Tales 1 v. — The Princess and Curdie 1 v.

Mackarness, Mrs., † 1881.

Sunbeam Stories 1 v. — A Peerless Wife 2 v. — A Mingled Yarn 2 v.

Mackay, Eric, † 1898.

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Mackenzie, Compton.

The Old Men of the Sea 1 v.

McKnight, Charles (Am.), † 1881.

Old Fort Duquesne 2 v.

Maclaren, Ian, † 1907.

Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush 1 v. — The Days of Auld Langsyne 1 v.

Macleod, Norman, † 1872.

The Old Lieutenant and his Son 1 v.

Macquoid, Mrs.

Patty 2 v. — Miriam's Marriage 2 v. — Pictures across the Channel 2 v. — My Story 2 v. — Diane 2 v. — Beside the River 2 v. — A Faithful Lover 2 v.

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Mademoiselle Mori 2 v. — Denise 1 v. — Madame Fontenoy 1 v. — On the Edge of the Storm 1 v. — The Atelier du Lys 2 v. — In the Olden Time 2 v.

Mahon, Lord: *vide* Stanhope.

Maine, E. S.

Scarschiff Rocks 2 v.

Malet, Lucas (Mrs. Mary St. Leger Harrison).

Colonel Enderby's Wife 2 v. — The History of Sir Richard Calmady 3 v. — The Far Horizon 2 v. — The Score 1 v. — Adrian Savage 2 v.

Malmesbury, the Earl of.

Memoirs of an Ex-Minister 3 v.

Mann, Mary E.

A Winter's Tale 1 v. — The Cedar Star 1 v.

Mansfield, Robert Blachford.

The Log of the Water Lily 1 v.

Mark Twain: *vide* Twain.
 Marlowe, Christopher, † 1593.
 Doctor Faustus; Edward the Second; The Jew of Malta 1 v.

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"Marriage," the Authors of (Am.).
 Marriage. Short Stories of Married Life by American Writers 1 v.

Marryat, Capt., † 1848.
 The Privateer's-Man 1 v. — The Children of the New-Forest 1 v. — Valerie 1 v. — Mr. Midshipman Easy 2 v. — (*Vide* p. 27.)

Marryat, Florence, † 1899.
 Love's Conflict 2 v. — The Confessions of Gerald Estcourt 2 v. — Nelly Brooke 2 v. — Veronique 2 v. — Petronel 2 v. — Her Lord and Master 2 v. — The Prey of the Gods 1 v. — Life and Letters of Captain Marryat 1 v. — Mad Dumaresq 2 v. — No Intentions 2 v. — Fighting the Air 2 v. — The Poison of Asps, and other Stories 1 v. — "My own Child" 2 v. — A Harvest of Wild Oats 2 v. — A Little Stepson 1 v. — Written in Fire 2 v. — Her World against a Lie 2 v. — The Root of all Evil 2 v. — The Fair-haired Alda 2 v. — With Cupid's Eyes 2 v. — My Sister the Actress 2 v. — Phyllida 2 v. — Facing the Footlights 2 v. — A Moment of Madness, and other Stories 1 v. — The Ghost of Charlotte Cray, and other Stories 1 v. — Peeress and Player 2 v. — Under the Lilies and Roses 2 v. — The Heart of Jane Warner 2 v. — The Heir Presumptive 2 v. — The Master Passion 2 v. — Spiders of Society 2 v. — Driven to Bay 2 v. — A Daughter of the Tropics 2 v. — Mount Eden. A Romance 2 v. — Blindfold 2 v. — A Bankrupt Heart 2 v. — The Beautiful Soul 1 v. — At Heart a Rake 2 v. — The Strange Transfiguration of Hannah Stubbs 1 v. — The Dream that Stayed 2 v. — A Passing Madness 1 v. — The Blood of the Vampire 1 v. — A Soul on Fire 1 v. — Iris the Avenger 1 v.

Marsh, Mrs. Anne, † 1874.
 Ravenscliffe 2 v. — Emilia Wyndham 2 v. — Aubrey 2 v. — The Heiress of Houghton 2 v. — The Rose of Ashurst 2 v.

Marshall, Mrs. Emma, † 1899.
 Mrs. Mainwaring's Journal 1 v. — Benvenuta 1 v. — Lady Alice 1 v. —

Dayspring 1 v. — Life's Aftermath 1 v. — In the East-Country 1 v. — No. XIII; or, The Story of the Lost Vestal 1 v. — In Four Reigns 1 v. — On the Banks of the Ouse 1 v. — Alma 1 v. — Under Salisbury Spire 1 v. — Winchester Meads 1 v. — Eventide Light 1 v. — Winifrede's Journal 1 v. — Bristol Bells 1 v. — A Lily among Thorns 1 v. — Penshurst Castle 1 v. — Kensington Palace 1 v. — The Master of the Musicians 1 v. — An Escape from the Tower 1 v. — A Haunt of Ancient Peace 1 v. — Castle Meadow 1 v. — In the Choir of Westminster Abbey 1 v. — The Young Queen of Hearts 1 v. — Under the Dome of St. Paul's 1 v. — (*Vide* p. 27.)

Mason, A. E. W.
 The Broken Road 1 v. — At the Villa Rose 1 v. — The House of the Arrow 1 v. — The Winding Stair 1 v. — No Other Tiger 1 v.

Mathers, Helen (Mrs. Henry Reeves).
 "Cherry Ripe!" 2 v. — "Land o' the Leal" 1 v. — My Lady Green Sleeves 2 v. — As he comes up the Stair, etc. 1 v. — Sam's Sweetheart 2 v. — Eyre's Acquittal 2 v. — Found Out 1 v. — The Fashion of this World (80 Pf.) — Blind Justice, and "Who, being dead, yet Speaketh" 1 v. — What the Glass Told, and A Study of a Woman 1 v. — Bam Wildfire 2 v. — Becky 2 v. — "Honey" 1 v. — The New Lady Teazle, and Other Stories and Essays 1 v. — Tally Ho! 2 v. — Pigskin and Petticoat 2 v. — Gay Lawless 1 v.

Maugham, W. Somerset.
 The Trembling of a Leaf 1 v. — The Painted Veil 1 v. — Ashenden or the British Agent 1 v. — The Casuarina Tree 1 v.

Maurice, Colonel.
 The Balance of Military Power in Europe 1 v.

Maurier, George du, † 1896.
 Trilby 2 v. — The Martian 2 v.

Maxwell, Mrs.: *vide* Miss Braddon.

Maxwell, W. B.
 The Ragged Messenger 2 v. — In Cotton Wool 2 v. — The Day's Journey 1 v. — Children of the Night 1 v. — Fernande 1 v. — Spinster of this Parish 1 v. — The Case of Bevan Yorke 1 v. — Gabrielle 1 v. — We Forget Because We Must 1 v.

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- Melville, George J. Whyte, †1878.
 Kate Coventry 1 v. — Digby Grand 1 v. — Good for Nothing 2 v. — The Queen's Maries 2 v. — The Gladiators 2 v. — The Brookes of Bridlemere 2 v. — Cerise 2 v. — The Interpreter 2 v. — The White Rose 2 v. — M. or N. 1 v. — Contraband 1 v. — Sarchedon 2 v. — Uncle John 2 v. — Katerfelto 1 v. — Sister Louise 1 v. — Rosine 1 v. — Roys' Wife 2 v. — Black but Comely 2 v.
- Mencken, H. L. (Am.).
 In Defence of Women 1 v.
- Meredith, George, †1909.
 The Ordeal of Richard Feverel 2 v. — Beauchamp's Career 2 v. — The Tragic Comedians 1 v. — The Egoist 2 v. — Rhoda Fleming 2 v.
- Meredith, Owen: *vide* Robert Lord Lytton.
- Merrick, Hope.
 Mary-Girl 1 v.
- Merrick, Leonard.
 Cynthia 1 v. — One Man's View 1 v. — The Worldlings 1 v. — When Love flies out o' the Window 1 v. — Whispers about Women 1 v. — The Man who Understood Women, etc. 1 v.
- Merriman, Henry Seton, †1903.
 Prisoners and Captives 2 v. — From One Generation to Another 1 v. — Flotsam 1 v. — Roden's Corner 1 v.
- Mill, John Stuart. * 1806, †1873.
 On Liberty and The Subjection of Women 1 v.
- Milne, James.
 The Epistles of Atkins 1 v.
- Milton, John, †1674.
 Poetical Works 1 v.
- "Miss Molly," Author of.
 Geraldine Hawthorne 1 v.
- "Molly Bawn," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Hungerford.
- Mon'ague, C. E.
 Rough Justice 1 v. — Right off the Map 1 v.
- Montgomery, Florence.
 Misunderstood 1 v. — Thrown Together 2 v. — Wild Mike 1 v. — Colonel Norton 2 v.
- Moore, Frank Frankfort.
 "I Forbid the Banus" 2 v. — One Fair Daughter 2 v. — Nell Gwyn — Comedian 1 v. — A Damsel or Two 1 v. — Castle Omeragh 2 v. — Shipmates in Sunshine 2 v. — The Original Woman 1 v. — The White Causeway 1 v. — The Artful Miss Dill 1 v. — The Marriage Lease 1 v. — An Amateur Adventurer 1 v. — Priscilla and Charybdis 2 v. — The Food of Love 1 v. — The Laird of Craig Athol 1 v.
- Moore, George.
 The Untilled Field 1 v. — Confessions of a Young Man 1 v. — The Lake 1 v. — Muslin 2 v. — The Coming of Gabrielle 1 v. — Celibate Lives 1 v.
- Morgan, Lady, †1859.
 Memoirs 3 v.
- Morrison, Arthur.
 A Child of the Jago 1 v. — To London Town 1 v. — Canning Murrell 1 v. — The Hole in the Wall 1 v. — The Green Eye of Goona 1 v. — Divers Vamties 1 v. — Green Ginger 1 v.
- Mulock, Miss: *vide* M's. Craik.
- Murray, David Christie.
 Rainbow Gold 2 v.
- Murray, Grenville: *vide* Grenville.
- "My Little Lady," Author of: *vide* E. Frances Poynter.
- New Testament, the.
 The Authorised English Version, with Introduction and Various Readings from the three most celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Text, by Constantine Tischendorf (vol. 1000, published 1869) 1 v.
- Newby, Mrs. C. J.
 Common Sense 2 v.
- Nicholls, Mrs.: *vide* Currer Bell.
- "Nina Balatka," Author of: *vide* Anthony Trollope.
- "No Church," Author of (F. Robinson).
 No Church 2 v. — Owen;—a Waif 2 v.
- Noel, Lady Augusta.
 Hithersea Mere 2 v.
- Norris, W. E.
 A Bachelor's Blunder 2 v. — The Rogue 2 v. — Miss Shafto 2 v. — Mrs. Fenton 1 v.

— Misadventure 2 v. — Saint Ann's 1 v. — A Victim of Good Luck 1 v. — Clarissa Furiosa 2 v. — Marietta's Marriage 2 v. — The Fight for the Crown 1 v. — The Widower 1 v. — Giles Ingilby 1 v. — The Flower of the Flock 1 v. — His Own Father 1 v. — The Credit of the County 1 v. — Lord Leonard the Luckless 1 v. — Nature's Comedian 1 v. — Nigel's Vocation 1 v. — Barham of Beltana 1 v. — Harry and Ursula 1 v. — The Square Peg 1 v. — The Perjurer 1 v. — Not Guilty 1 v. — Paul's Paragon 1 v. — The Triumphs of Sara 1 v. — Tony the Exceptional 1 v.

Norton, Hon. Mrs., † 1877.

Stuart of Dunleath 2 v. — Old Sir Douglas 2 v.

"Not Easily Jealous," Author of (Miss Iza Hardy).
Not Easily Jealous 2 v.

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"Nursery Rhymes," 1 v.

O'Conor Eccles, Charlotte (Hal Godfrey).
The Matrimonial Lottery 1 v.

Oldmeadow, Ernest.
Susan 1 v.

Oliphant, Laurence, † 1888.
Altiora Peto 2 v. — Masollam 2 v.

Oliphant, Mrs., † 1897.
The Last of the Mortimers 2 v. — Mrs. Margaret Maitland 1 v. — Agnes 2 v. — Madonna Mary 2 v. — The Minister's Wife 2 v. — The Rector and the Doctor's Family 1 v. — Salem Chapel 2 v. — The Perpetual Curate 2 v. — Miss Marjoribanks 2 v. — Ombra 2 v. — Memoir of Count de Montalembert 2 v. — May 2 v. — Innocent 2 v. — For Love and Life 2 v. — The Story of Valentine and his Brother 2 v. — Whiteladies 2 v. — The Curate in Charge 1 v. — Phoebe, Junior 2 v. — Mrs. Arthur 2 v. — Carità 2 v. — Young Musgrave 2 v. — The Primrose Path 2 v. — Within the Precincts 3 v. — The Greatest Heiress in England 2 v. — He that will not when he may 2 v. — Harry Joscelyn 2 v. — In Trust 2 v. — It was a Lover and his Lass 3 v. — The Ladies Lindores 3 v. — Hester 3 v. — The Wizard's Son 3 v. — A Country Gentleman and his Family 2 v. —

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"One who has kept a Diary": vide George W. E. Russell.

Oppenheim E Phillips
Prodigals of Monte Carlo 1 v.

Orczy, Baroness.
The Scarlet Pimpernel 1 v. — I will Repay 1 v. — The Elusive Pimpernel 1 v. — Eldorado 2 v. — Nicolette 1 v. — The Honourable Jim 1 v. — Pimpernel and Rosemary 1 v. — Unravelling Knots 1 v. — The Celestial City 1 v. — Sir Percy Hits Back 1 v. — "Skin o' My Tooth" 1 v.

Osbourne, Lloyd (Am.).
Baby Bullet 1 v. — Harm's Way 1 v. — The Kingdoms of the World 1 v.

Ouida, † 1908.
Idalia 2 v. — Puck 2 v. — Folle-Farine 2 v. — Cecil Castlemaine's Gage, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Madame la Marquise, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Pascarel 2 v. — Two little Wooden Shoes 1 v. — Signa 3 v. — Ariadne 2 v. — Friendship 2 v. — Moths 3 v. — A Village Commune 2 v. — In Maremma 3 v. — Wanda 3 v. — Frescoes and other Stories 1 v. — Öthmar 3 v. — A Rainy June (60 Pf.). Don Gesualdo (60 Pf.). — A House Party 1 v. — Guilderoy 2 v. — Syrlin 3 v. — Santa Barbara, etc. 1 v. — Two Offenders 1 v. — The Silver Christ, etc. 1 v. — Le Selve, and Tonia 1 v. — An Altruist, and Four Essays 1 v. — Helianthus 2 v.

"Outcasts, the," Author of: vide "Roy Tellet."

Parker, Sir Gilbert.
The Battle of the Strong 2 v. — The Seats of the Mighty 2 v. — The Judgment House 2 v.

Parr, Harriet (Holme Lee), † 1900.
Basil Godfrey's Caprice 2 v. — For Richer, for Poorer 2 v. — The Beautiful Miss Barrington 2 v. — Her Title of Honour 1 v. — Echoes of a Famous Year 1 v. — Katherine's Trial 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of

Bessie Fairfax 2 v. — Ben Milner's Wooing 1 v. — Straightforward 2 v. — Mrs. Denys of Cote 2 v. — A Poor Squire 1 v.

Parr, Mrs.

Dorothy Fox 1 v. — The Prescotts of Pamphillon 2 v. — The Gosau Smithy, etc. 1 v. — Robin 2 v. — Loyalty George 2 v.

Paston, George.

A Study in Prejudices 1 v. — A Fair Deceiver 1 v.

Pasture, Mrs. Henry de la.

Master Christopher 2 v.

Paul, Mrs.: vide "Still Waters."

"Paul Ferroll," Author of (Mrs. Caroline Clive), † 1873.

Paul Ferroll 1 v. — Year after Year 1 v. — Why Paul Ferroll killed his Wife 1 v.

Payn, James, † 1898.

Found Dead 1 v. — Gwendoline's Harvest 1 v. — Like Father, like Son 2 v. — Not Wooded, but Won 2 v. — Cecil's Tryst 1 v. — A Woman's Vengeance 2 v. — Murphy's Master 1 v. — In the Heart of a Hill, and other Stories 1 v. — At Her Mercy 2 v. — The Best of Husbands 2 v. — Walter's Word 2 v. — Halves 2 v. — Fallen Fortunes 2 v. — What He cost Her 2 v. — By Proxy 2 v. — Less Black than we're Painted 2 v. — Under one Roof 2 v. — High Spirits 1 v. — High Spirits (*Second Series*) 1 v. — A Confidential Agent 2 v. — From Exile 2 v. — A Grape from a Thorn 2 v. — Some Private Views 1 v. — For Cash Only 2 v. — Kit: A Memory 2 v. — The Canon's Ward (with Portrait) 2 v. — Some Literary Recollections 1 v. — The Talk of the Town 1 v. — The Luck of the Darrells 2 v. — The Heir of the Ages 2 v. — Holiday Tasks 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (*First Series*) 1 v. — A Prince of the Blood 2 v. — The Mystery of Mirbridge 2 v. — The Buried Million 2 v. — The Word and the Will 2 v. — A Modern Dick Whittington 2 v. — A Stumble on the Threshold 2 v. — A Trying Patient 1 v. — Gleams of Memory, and The Eavesdropper 1 v. — In Market Overt 1 v. — Another's Burden etc. 1 v. — The Backwater of Life, or Essays of a Literary Veteran 1 v.

Peard, Frances Mary.

One Year 2 v. — The Rose-Garden 1 v. — Thorpe Regis 1 v. — A Winter Story 1 v.

— A Madrigal, and other Stories 1 v. — Cartouche 1 v. — Mother Molly 1 v. — Schloss and Town 2 v. — Contradictions 2 v. — Near Neighbours 1 v. — Alicia Tennant 1 v. — Madame's Granddaughter 1 v. — Number One and Number Two 1 v. — The Ring from Jaipur 1 v. — The Flying Months 1 v.

Pemberton, Max.

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Percy, Bishop Thomas, † 1811.

Reliques of Ancient English Poetry 3 v.

Perrin, Alice.

Government House 1 v. — Rough Passages 1 v.

Philips, F. C.

The Dean and his Daughter 1 v. — Lucy Smith 1 v. — A Lucky Young Woman 1 v. — Jack and Three Jills 1 v. — Young Mr. Ainslie's Courtship 1 v. — Extenuating Circumstances, and A French Marriage 1 v. — More Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Constance 2 v. — That Wicked Mad'moiselle, etc. 1 v. — A Doctor in Difficulties, etc. 1 v. — "One Never Knows" 2 v. — Of Course 1 v. — Miss Ormerod's Protégé 1 v. — My little Husband 1 v. — Mrs. Bouverie 1 v. — A Question of Colour, and other Stories 1 v. — A Devil in Nun's Veiling 1 v. — A Full Confession, and other Stories 1 v. — The Luckiest of Three 1 v. — Poor Little Bella 1 v. — Eliza Clarke, Governess, and Other Stories 1 v. — Schoolgirls of To-day, etc. 1 v. — If Only, etc. 1 v. — An Unfortunate Blend 1 v. — A Barrister's Courtship 1 v.

Philips, F. C., & Percy Fendall.

Margaret Byng 1 v. — Disciples of Plato 1 v.

Philips, F. C., & C. J. Wills.

The Fatal Phryne 1 v. — The Scudamores 1 v. — A Maiden Fair to See 1 v. — Sybil Ross's Marriage 1 v.

Phillpotts, Eden.

Lying Prophets 2 v. — The Human Boy 1 v. — Sons of the Morning 2 v. — The

Good Red Earth 1 v. — The Striking Hours 1 v. — The Farm of the Dagger 1 v. — The Whirlwind 2 v. — The Human Boy Again 1 v. — From the Angle of Seventeen 1 v. — The Bronze Venus 1 v. — The Grey Room 1 v. — The Red Redmaynes 1 v. — A Human Boy's Diary 1 v. — Cheat-the-Boys 1 v. — A Voice from the Dark 1 v. — The Marylebone Miser 1 v. — The Jury 1 v.

Phillipotts, E., & Arnold Bennett.
The Sinews of War 1 v. — The Statue 1 v.

Piddington, Miss: *vide* Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers."

Poe, Edgar Allan (Am.), * 1849.
Poems and Essays, edited with a new Memoir by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Tales, edited by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Fantastic Tales 1 v.

Pope, Alexander, † 1744.
Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Poynter, Miss E. Frances.
My Little Lady 2 v. — Ersilia 2 v. — Among the Hills 1 v.

Præd, Mrs. Campbell.
Affinities 1 v. — The Head Station 2 v.

Prentiss, Mrs. E. (Am.), † 1878.
Stepping Heavenward 1 v.

Prince Consort, the, † 1861.
Speeches and Addresses 1 v.

Pryce, Richard.
Miss Maxwell's Affections 1 v. — The Quiet Mrs. Fleming 1 v. — Time and the Woman 1 v.

Pym, H. N.: *vide* Caroline Fox.

Quiller-Couch, Sir A. T. ("Q").
I Saw Three Ships 1 v. — Dead Man's Rock 1 v. — Ia and other Tales 1 v. — The Ship of Stars 1 v. — Fort Amity 1 v. — Shakespeare's Christmas, and Other Stories 1 v. — The Mayor of Troy 1 v. — Merry-Garden, and Other Stories 1 v. — Brother Copas 1 v.

Quincey: *vide* De Quincey.

Rae, W. Fraser, † 1905.
Westward by Rail 1 v. — Miss Bayle's Romance 2 v. — The Business of Travel 1 v.

Raimond, C. E.: *vide* Elizabeth Robins (Am.).

"Rajah's Heir, the." 2 v.

Reade, Charles, † 1884.
Hard Cash 3 v. — Put Yourself in his Place 2 v. — A Terrible Temptation 2 v. — Christie Johnstone 1 v. — A Simpleton 2 v. — The Wandering Heir 1 v. — Readiana 1 v.

"Recommended to Mercy," Author of (Mrs. Houstoun).
Zoe's "Brand" 2 v.

Reeves, Mrs.: *vide* Helen Mathers.

Rhys, Grace.
Mary Dominic 1 v. — The Wooing of Sheila 1 v. — About many Things 1 v.

Rice, James: *vide* Walter Besant.

Richards, Alfred Bate, † 1876.
So very Human 3 v.

Richardson, S., † 1761.
Clarissa Harlowe 4 v.

Riddell, Mrs. (F. G. Trafford).
George Geith of Fen Court 2 v. — Maxwell Drewitt 2 v. — The Race for Wealth 2 v. — The Earl's Promise 2 v. — Mortomley's Estate 2 v.

Ridge, W. Pett.
Name of Garland 1 v. — Thanks to Sanderson 1 v. — Miss Mannering 1 v. — The Lunch Basket 1 v. — Just like Aunt Bertha 1 v.

"Rita."
Souls 1 v. — The Jesters 1 v. — The Masqueraders 2 v. — Queer Lady Judas 2 v. — Prince Charming 1 v. — The Pointing Finger 1 v. — A Man of no Importance 1 v. — Calvary 2 v. — That is to say— 1 v.

Ritchie, Mrs. Anne Thackeray: *vide* Miss Thackeray.

Roberts, Miss: *vide* Author of "Made-moiselle Mori."

Elizabeth Robins (C. E. Raimond) (Am.).
The Open Question 2 v. — The Magnetic North 2 v. — A Dark Lantern 2 v. — The Convert 2 v. — The Florentine Frame 1 v. — Way Stations 1 v. — The Secret That Was Kept 1 v.

Robinson, F.: *vide* "No Church."

- Ross, Charles H.
The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London Romance 2 v.
- Ross, Martin: *vide* Somerville.
"Roy Tellet."
- The Outcasts 1 v. — A Draught of Lettice 1 v. — Pastor and Prelate 2 v.
- Ruck, Berta.
Sir or Madam? 1 v. — The Dancing Star 1 v. — Lucky in Love 1 v. — The Clouded Pearl 1 v. — The Immortal Girl 1 v. — Kneel to the Prettiest 1 v. — The Pearl Thief 1 v. — Her Pirate Partner 1 v. — Money for One 1 v. — The Youngest Venus 1 v. — One of the Chorus 1 v.
- Ruffini, J., † 1881.
Lavinia 2 v. — Doctor Antonio 1 v. — Vincenzo 2 v. — A Quiet Nook in the Jura 1 v.
- Ruskin, John, * 1819, † 1900.
Sesame and Lilies 1 v. — The Stones of Venice (with Illustrations) 2 v. — Unto this Last and Munera Pulveris 1 v. — The Seven Lamps of Architecture (with 14 Illustrations) 1 v. — Mornings in Florence 1 v. — St. Mark's Rest 1 v.
- Russell, W. Clark, † 1911.
A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — The "Lady Maud" 2 v. — A Sea Queen 2 v.
- Russell, George W. E.
Collections and Recollections. By One who has kept a Diary 2 v. — A Londoner's Log-Book 1 v.
"Ruth and her Friends": *vide* p. 27.
- Sala, George Augustus, † 1895.
The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.
- Saunders, John.
Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — The Shipowner's Daughter 2 v. — A Noble Wife 2 v.
- Saunders, Katherine (Mrs. Cooper).
Joan Merryweather, and other Tales 1 v. — Gideon's Rock, and other Tales 1 v. — The High Mills 2 v. — Sebastian 1 v.
- Savage, Richard Henry (Am.), † 1903.
My Official Wife 1 v. — The Little Lady of Lagunitas 2 v. — Prince Schamyl's Wooing 1 v. — The Masked Venus 2 v. — Delilah of Harlem 2 v. — A Daughter of Judas 1 v. — Miss Devereux of the Mariguita 2 v. — Checked Through 2 v. — A Modern Corsair 2 v. — In the Swim 2 v. — In the House of His Friends 2 v. — The Mystery of a Shipyard 2 v.
- Scott, Sir Walter, † 1832.
Waverley 2 v. — Ivanhoe 2 v. — Kenilworth 2 v. — Quentin Durward 2 v.
- Seeley, Prof. J. R., † 1895.
Life and Times of Stein 4 v. — The Expansion of England 1 v.
- Sewell, Elizabeth, † 1906.
Amy Herbert 2 v. — Ursula 2 v. — A Glimpse of the World 2 v. — The Journal of a Home Life 2 v. — After Life 2 v. — The Experience of Life 2 v.
- Shakespeare, William, † 1616.
Plays and Poems (*Second Edition*) 7 v.
Shakespeare's Plays may also be had in 37 numbers, each number sold separately.
- Sharp, William, † 1905: *vide* Miss Howard, Fiona Macleod and Swinburne.
- Shaw, Bernard.
Man and Superman 1 v. — The Perfect Wagnerite 1 v. — Cashel Byron's Profession 1 v. — Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant (The Three Unpleasant Plays 1 v. — The Four Pleasant Plays 1 v.). — Getting Married & The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet 1 v. — The Doctor's Dilemma & The Dark Lady of the Sonnets 1 v. — Three Plays for Puritans 1 v. — John Bull's Other Island etc. 1 v. — Androcles and the Lion; Pygmalion 1 v. — Misalliance 1 v. — Fanny's First Play, etc. 1 v. — Heartbreak House, etc. 1 v. — Back to Methuselah 1 v. — Saint Joan 1 v.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, † 1822.
A Selection from his Poems 1 v.
- Sheppard, Nathan (Am.), † 1888.
Shut up in Paris 1 v.
- Sheridan, R. B., † 1816.
The Dramatic Works 1 v.
- Shorthouse, J. Henry † 1903.
John Inglesant 2 v. — Blanche, Lady Falaise 1 v.
- Sidgwick, Mrs. Alfred.
The Lantern Bearers 1 v. — Anthea's Guest 1 v.
- May Sinclair.
Arne Severn and the Fieldings 1 v. — Uncanny Stories 1 v. — A Cure of Souls 1 v. — Arnold Waterlow: a Life 1 v. — The Rector of Wyck 1 v. — Far End 1 v. — The Allinghams 1 v. — History of Anthony Waring 1 v.

- Snath, J. C.**
An Affair of State 1 v. — Time and Tide 1 v. — Thus Far 1 v.
- "Society in London," Author of.
Society in London. By a Foreign Resident 1 v.
- Somerville, E. C., & M. Ross.
Naboth's Vineyard 1 v. — Dan Russel the Fox 1 v.
- "Spanish Brothers, the," 2 v.
- Stanhope, Earl (Lord Mahon), † 1875.
Reign of Queen Anne 2 v.
- Steel, Flora Annie.
The Hosts of the Lord 2 v.
- Sterne, Laurence, † 1768.
Tristram Shandy 2 v. — A Sentimental Journey 1 v.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, † 1894.
Treasure Island 1 v. — Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and An Inland Voyage 1 v. — Kidnapped 1 v. — The Black Arrow 1 v. — The Master of Ballantrae 1 v. — The Merry Men, etc. 1 v. — Across the Plains, etc. 1 v. — Island Nights' Entertainments 1 v. — Catriona 1 v. — In the South Seas 2 v. — Tales and Fantasies 1 v.
- "Still Waters," Author of (Mrs. Paul).
Still Waters 1 v. — Dorothy 1 v. — De Cressy 1 v. — Uncle Ralph 1 v. — Maiden Sisters 1 v. — Martha Brown 1 v. — Vanessa 1 v.
- Stirling, M. C.: *vide* G. M. Craik.
- Stockton, Frank R. (Am.), † 1902.
The House of Martha 1 v.
- "Story of a Penitent Soul, the," 1 v.
- "Story of Elizabeth, the," Author of:
vide Miss Thackeray.
- Stowe, Mrs. Harriet Beecher (Am.), † 1896.
Uncle Tom's Cabin 2 v. — A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin 2 v. — Oldtown Folks 2 v.
- "Sunbeam Stories," Author of: *vide* Mrs. Mackarness.
- Swift, Jonathan (Dean Swift), † 1745.
Gulliver's Travels 1 v.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, † 1909.
Atalanta in Calydon: and Lyrical Poems selected, with an Introduction, by William Sharp 1 v. — Love's Cross-Currents 1 v. — Chastelard and Mary Stuart 1 v.
- Swinerton, Frank.**
The Three Lovers 1 v. — The Elder Sister 1 v. — Summer Storm 1 v. — Tokefield Papers 1 v.
- Symonds, John Addington, † 1893.
Sketches in Italy 1 v. — New Italian Sketches 1 v.
- Synge, John M., † 1909.
Plays 1 v. — The Aran Islands 1 v.
- Tagore, Rabindranath.**
The Home and the World 1 v. — The Gardener 1 v. — Sāhanā 1 v. — The Wreck 1 v. — Gitanjali; Fruit-Gathering 1 v.
- Tallentyre, S. G.: *vide* H. S. Merriman.
- Tarkington, Booth (Am.).
Women 1 v. — The Plutocrat 1 v. — Claire Ambler 1 v. — The World Does Move 1 v.
- Tasma.
Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill 2 v.
- Tautpoeus, Baroness, † 1893.
Cyrilla 2 v. — Quits 2 v.
- Taylor, Col. Meadows † 1876.
Tara; a Mahrratta Tale 3 v.
- Tellet: *vide* "Roy Tellet."
- Templeton: *vide* Author of "Horace Templeton."
- Tennyson, Alfred (Lord), † 1892.
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- Testament the New: *vide* New.
- Thackeray, William Makepeace, † 1863.
Vanity Fair 3 v. — Miscellanies Vol. 2, 3, 5. — The Newcomes 4 v. — The Virginians vol. 1, 2. — The Adventures of Philip 2 v. — Roundabout Papers 2 v. — The Paris Sketch Book 2 v.
- Thackeray, Miss (Lady Ritchie).
Old Kensington 2 v. — Bluebeard's Keys, and other Stories 1 v. — Five Old Friends 1 v. — Miss Angel 1 v. — Fulham Lawn, and other Tales 1 v. — From an Island. A Story and some Essays 1 v. — Da Capo, and other Tales 1 v. — Madame de Sévigné; From a Stage Box; Miss Williamson's Divagations 1 v. — A Book of Sibyls 1 v. — Mrs. Dymond 2 v. — Chapters from some Memoirs 1 v.

Thomas, A. (Mrs. Pender Cudlip).
 Denis Donne 2 v. — On Guard 2 v. —
 Walter Goring 2 v. — Played Out 2 v. —
 Called to Account 2 v. — Only herself
 2 v. — A Narrow Escape 2 v.

Thomson, James, † 1748.
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"Thoth," Author of.
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Thurston, E. Temple.
 The Greatest Wish in the World 1 v. —
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 sense 1 v. — The Garden of Resurrection 1 v.
 — The Apple of Eden 1 v. — The Antago-
 nists 1 v. — The Open Window 1 v. —
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 1 v. — Achievement 1 v. — May Eve 1 v.
 — The Green Bough 1 v. — Charmeuse 1 v.
 — Mr. Bottleby Does Something 1 v. —
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 ment.

Tomlinson, H. M.
 Gallions Reach 1 v.

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Trollope, Anthony, † 1882.
 Doctor Thorne 2 v. — The Bertrams
 2 v. — The Warden 1 v. — Barchester
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 Framley Parsonage 2 v. — North America
 3 v. — Orley Farm 3 v. — The Belton
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 La Mère Bauche, and other Stories 1 v.
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 Man's Love 1 v.

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 — A Siren 2 v.

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 The Letters of Her Mother to Elizabeth
 1 v. — That Little Marquis of Branden-

burg 1 v. — A Dazzling Reprobate 1 v.
 — The White Hope 1 v.

Twain, Mark (Samuel L. Clemens)
 (Am.), † 1910.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1 v. —
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 Pilgrims' Progress 2 v. — A Tramp Abroad
 2 v. — "Roughing it" 1 v. — The In-
 nocents at Home 1 v. — The Prince and
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 1 v. — Captain Stormfield's Visit to
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 — The Yard 1 v. — Quinney's Adventures
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 Nigger Heaven 1 v. — Spider Boy 1 v.

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"Virginia." 1 v.

Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred.
 With Zola in England 1 v.

Walford, L. B.
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Wallace, Edgar.
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Souls 1 v. — The Missing Million 1 v. — The Face in the Night 1 v. — The Door with Seven Locks 1 v. — The Avenger 1 v. — Terror Keep 1 v. — The Traitor's Gate 1 v. — The Feathered Serpent 1 v. — The Ringer 1 v. — The Squeaker 1 v.

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Ben-Hur 2 v.

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Ward, Mrs. Humphry † 1020.
Miss Bretherton 1 v. — Marcella 3 v. — Bessie Costrell 1 v. — Fenwick's Career 2 v. — Diana Mallory 2 v. — Daphne; or, "Marriage à la Mode" 1 v. — The Case of Richard Meynell 2 v.

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Aylwin 2 v.

Wells, H. G.
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the Heart 1 v. — The Country of the Blind, and Other Stories 1 v. — Christina Alberta's Father 1 v. — The Undying Fire 1 v. — Meanwhile 1 v. — The World of William Clisso'd 2 v. — Mr. Bleitsworthy on Rampole Island 1 v.

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The Story of Francis Cludde 2 v. — The Man in Black 1 v. — From the Memoirs of a Minister of France 1 v. — The Red Cockade 2 v. — Shrewsbury 2 v. — Sophia 2 v. — In Kings' Byways 1 v. — The Abbess of Vlaze 2 v. — Chippinge 2 v. — Laid up in Lavender 1 v.

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Whiteing, Richard.
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Imperial Germany 1 v. — The Realm of the Habsburgs 1 v. — Teuton Studies 1 v. — Reminiscences of the King of Roumania 1 v. — Conversations with Prince Bismarck 1 v. — Life of the Emperor Frederick 2 v. — German Memories 1 v.

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Whyte Melville, George J.: *vide* Melville
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Penelope's Irish Experiences 1 v. — Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm 1 v. — Rose o' the River 1 v. — The Old Peabody Pew, and Susanna and Sue 1 v.

- Wiggin, K. D., M. & J. Findlater, & Allan McAulay.
 The Affair at the Inn 1 v. — Robinetta 1 v.
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 Williamson, C. N. & A. M.
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 Woodroffe, Daniel.
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 Woolf, Virginia.
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 Wraxall, Lascelles, † 1865.
 Wild Oats 1 v.
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 Land at Last 2 v. — The Forlorn Hope 2 v. — Black Sheep 2 v. — The Rock Ahead 2 v. — Wrecked in Port 2 v. — Dr. Wainwright's Patient 2 v. — A Waiting Race 2 v. — The yellow Flag 2 v. — The Impending Snow 2 v. — Two, by Tricks 1 v. — A Silent Witness 2 v. — Recollections and Experiences 2 v.
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 Yeats, W. B.
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