Democratic Watchman.

Bellefonte, Pa., September 3, 1909.

WASH YOUR OWN WINDOWS.

A certain woman of censorious mind,
To criticise her neighbors was inclined;
Their dingy houses with discolored paint
And dirty windows, were her chief complaint.
Her righteous soul became at length so vexed,
She called her pastor, Rev. Take-a-Text,
Told him her trouble, and besought advice;
The wise old doctor answered in a trice:
"Get soap and water and remove the stains,
And dirt, and fly-specks from your window panes."
The woman did so, and, to her surprise,
Seemed to be looking out of other eyes;
Her neighbors' houses, now no longer seen
Through dirty windows, all were white and clean.
The moral of this story seems to be:
Who looks through dirty windows dirt will see;
Wash your own glass and then, as like as not,
Your neighbors' window panes will have no spot;
Extract the beam before you vainly try
To take the mote from out a brother's eye.

—[Charles D. Crane, in The Advance.

THE GREATEST OF THESE.

As he stepped off the train Crichton glanced up at the big black clock with the gold hands just as if he had been a commuter from Scarsdale or Mamaroneck. In reality it had been over two years since he had set foot in his native town, but his mind, like that of all good travelers, focused itself unconsciously and immediately upon familiar places. It was already a quarter past three o'clock, so he hurried ever to the telephone booths to call up Curtis before his friend should have left the little glass office down in Wall Street.

A quarter past three is usually a very busy moment in a broker's office, and Crichton was reminded of the fact by the snarl from the office boy who answered his call. Even Brooke Curtis himself spoke somewhat peremptorily until he quite understood who was at the other end of the wire. Then there came: "Well, well, well- that's fine. Arrived in Boston this morning eh? You say you're at the Grand Central. Well, check your stuff right out to the place and take the three-forty train. Try to make yourself comfortable, and I'll be out on the four-forty-five in time for a game of squash. Tell them you have come to stay—don't forget. Stay—sure. Headquarters while you are in this country. It's really great—you've saved my life—this town is dead in summer. I'll telephone them to meet you at the station. Good-by!"

An hour later Crichton was lounging in a deep leather chair in Curtis's billiard-room. He had changed to his flannels and was smoking and reading the time away until the master of the house should return and join him in a game of squash—preceded, of course, by the traditional walk through Curtis's beloved vegetable greenhouses. He dropped his book and blew a long, thin cloud of gray tobacco smoke into the yellow sunshine, which stretched an unbroken path from the open window to the great, empty hearth across the room. The whole place was filled with a golden haze, and through this and the gray smoke Crichton looked out of the broad window on the stretch of deep green sward running down to the water and then beyond to the great heights of the Palisades.

The man smiled at the wonderful beauty of it all, long unchanged. Since his college days, when he used to spend his summer vacations with Curtis, he had looked out on that same scene of green grass, and blue water, and gray rocks, and it was one picture of America that he had always remembered on his travels in strange countries. It came to him at times when he was a little tired, mentally, or when he had been ill in a foreign land and with strange faces about him.

Ever since Brooke Curtis had first become master of Edgemere it had been an unwritten law that, during the summer months, no women folks, not even women servants, should ever enter this wing of the house. Curtis and his younger brother Ned had their rooms here, and so had Crichton one story above them. On the ground floor was the billiard-room, and as there was no danger of feminine intrusion, Curtis and his men guests usually wandered about the whole wing in the most unconventional summer garments. It so happened on this occasion that Crichton was in a fairly presentable condition, although he had already discarded his coat and tie and had rolled up his sleeves in anticipation of the coming contest at squash. When through half-closed eyes he first saw the tall figure with the flimsy white waist and the long, close-fitting duck skirt, it seemed as if some fairy princess had risen from the lawn and was coming to waken him from his dream. And then, as he instinctively pulled himself out of the low chair, he became quite conscious that this was no fancy at all, but a very good-looking girl who was breaking in where she had no right to break in. She certainly was very good to look upon, at least so Crichton thought, as, unconscious of his presence, she came through the high French window, the sunlight falling on a mass of golden brown hair, and lighting up the clear skin, flushed crimson after a long walk over the country roads. It was, however, with a certain amount of unpreparedness, both as to his mental and physical attitude, that Crichton rose to receive his lady visitor.

At the sight of him the girl uttered a low cry of surprise and stepped back toward the window.

"It's all right. I assure you, it's all right," urged Crichton. "Just let me get into my coat and I'll introduce myself."

"It's all right if you don't get into your coat," said the girl. "It's rather becoming. Ned told me I must never come in here, but I was quite sure no one was at home."

"Ned told you?" asked Crichton.

"Yes, I'm Miss Ferguson; Ned and I are stopping over at the Ellisons'."

"Delighted," and Crichton bowed. "I'm Jim Crichton—you may have heard—Brooke and I—"

"I'm afraid not," interrupted the girl, and she held out her hand as if Crichton had been her oldest man friend. "You see I've only joined the family very recently, and I really don't know any one in New York. I'm from the Golden West."

"Really," said Crichton, "and did I understand you to say that you had joined the family?"

"Oh, you don't know, then?" And the suggestion of a blush heightened the girl's color.

"I'm afraid not," he answered. "I, too, have been away for some time."

"Well, you see," said the girl, "I'm engaged to Ned. Yes, I am, regularly engaged. Announced and everything. Would you like to see my ring?"

The girl laid her hand in his, and Crichton examined, with much solicitude a splendid cabochon ruby.

"Do you like it?" she asked.

"Perfect!" he said, and released her hand.

"That's what I tell Ned; it's quite perfect. It's really the only engagement ring I ever saw that wasn't tagged with an apology. Every girl friend I ever had when she showed her engagement ring said that is wasn't what Billy or Tommy or Harry really intended to give her, but just as he was going to buy is the market went up or down, or a rich old aunt who ought to have died didn't. You know all the sentiment really went out of engagement rings with tam-o-shanters and kissing games. What do you think of Ned, really? You must know him pretty well—you seem so much at home here."

Crichton started to pull down his sleeves.

"No," said the girl, "that's all right. Leave them up. I didn't mean that, really. Why don't you take some Scotch? There it is back of you on the table—club soda and everything. Please don't mind me. Ned says I drive him to drink. Queer effect to have on a man, no?" Crichton got up and moved in the direction of the little table with the bottles and high glasses and a big bowl of ice.

"To be quite candid," he said, "I don't think that Ned is good enough for you. Ned's a nice, good looking lad, at least he used to be, but he's not in your class at all."

"Now you're making fun of me. Don't think I always talk so much as I have just now, because I'm really rather a serious person. I was a little nervous. You see it was against the rule to come in here at all, but it was a short cut to the library."

"Where's Ned now?" asked Crichton.

"I left him on his way to the stables. There's something the matter with his riding horse. How long have you known him?"

"Always," answered Crichton. "You see I was a kid friend of Brooke's even before we went to college together. Ned sort of grew up at our knee."

Crichton poured out his drink and, carrying his glass, walked over to the empty hearth.

"It must be fun," said Miss Ferguson, "to go to college for four years with men one really cares for."

"Yes," said Crichton, "there were three of us. There was Brooke and Willie Sherman and myself. We were always together for those four years—four long, beautiful years, when we never knew a care or had a doubt that the world had been made for our especial benefit."

"And then—?"

"And then came the awakening—the *debacle*. The winter after we had taken our degrees we had learned of what very little account we really were. Curtis became an uniformed messenger boy in his father's office by day and a cotillion leader by night; Willie Sherman conceived a lively up-to-date interest in people who had lived a few thousand years before and spent his livelong days digging up mounds where it seems they had carelessly left their bones and foolish trinkets."

"And what became of you?"

Crichton straightened up and looked fairly into the girl's eyes. In his glance, it seemed to Miss Ferguson, there was a certain look of surprise and wonderment that she really did not know what had become of him.

"I went to Paris," he said.

The girl smiled. "Ah, that wicked city."

"Yes, it is wicked, I suppose," he said, "for women and boys just out of college. They rob you women at the dressmakers' by day and the boys at the cafes and jardins by night. Still, it's a well-lit city and it seems rather cheery after a few months in the desert, or a winter with the the faded yellows and pinks of Spain and Italy. There is so much there for the old ones who have dug deeper than the veneer that the tourist loves. Why Paris is as full of us dead ones as the catacombs of Saint Calixtus. I just came from there."

"How lonely the other dead ones must be," said the girl. "What were they doing?"

"Oh, just about the same thing—watching the Seine boats and feeding the sparrows in the Bois and sharing the ignominy of Alsace-Lorraine by plastering her statue with tin wreaths."

"And the live ones?" she asked.

"*Le monde du sport?* Oh, they were beating each other's brains out at polo, at Bagatelle and climbing up Montmartre every night to hear a man sing at a new cabaret. Rather amusing he was, too, sort of a Fragson chap. He really had one great song." Crichton walked over to the piano, carefully put down his cigarette and glass of Scotch, and ran his fingers lightly over the keps.

"Do you speak boulevardier Frenck?"

The girl nodded. "Pretty well. Ned takes 'La Vie Parisienne,' and a girl I know who lives over there sends me most of the cafe-concert songs. I send her the new coon songs—sort of musical exchange. Please go on." She put her elbow on the piano and rested her chin between the palms of her hands. Crichton swung the piano-stool half around toward the girl and partly sang and partly recited the song to her.

"My, but you do speak good French," said Miss Ferguson when Crichton had finished and had begun feeling his way through the introduction of another song. "That song is really quite wonderful, isn't it? It's so direct and simple, and there is such a hopeless tragedy under the apparent humor of it all. Who wrote it?"

"I don't know the gentleman's name. I imagine it was the swan song of one of the dead ones. Probably wrote it on a marble table at a cafe, dressed in a slouch hat, a black cape, and a black flowing tie, and a large glass of absinthe in front of him."

"And all Paris," she added, "is singing the story of a man's life while the man is starving in a garret?"

"Probably," said Crichton, "and no doubt we will learn later that he sold that very song for five francs, while the publisher with his illegitimate proceeds built a dirigible airship that was the talk of all Paris. Did you ever hear that French song of the airship and the automobile? No? Well, then, I'll sing it to you, but in the absence of a chaperon I think we will omit the last two verses."

When the song was finished Critchton got up and bowed to the girl and waved his hand in the direction of the piano stool.

"My first number," she said, "is rather a showy piece, even a little theatrical. It's called 'A Bark at Midnight.'"

Half an hour later Ned Curtis found his fiancee still at the piano and Crichton deep in an armchair sipping his Scotch and looking straight ahead at the girl's brown hair, which the soft rays of the dying sun streaked with gold. The two men shook hands warmly.

"Did you ever hear Miss Ferguson sing 'A Bark at Midnight?'" Crichton asked.

Curtis said he really didn't know and left it to Miss Ferguson, but the girl, coloring a little, admitted that he had not, and continued to run her fingers lightly over the keyboard.

"I think it's the most wonderful thing I ever heard," said Crichton. "I really believe she would have played it for me the third time if you hadn't interrupted."

And then Brooke Curtis, the master of the house, came hurrying in with a very boisterous welcome, and the song and even Miss Ferguson and her fiance were forgotten in the greeting of the two old friends.

"Come on," said Curtis; "we'll take a walk around the grounds. I want to hear all about yourself, and these two young lovers would be in the way."

"Good-bye, Mr. Crichton," said Miss Ferguson; "we won't be here when you return. Thank you so much for the songs. I wish you would send me the one the Montmartre poet wrote if you can get it for me. Good-bye."

They shook hands and then Crichton and Curtis, arm-in-arm, went out and left the girl and Ned together. The young man crossed the room and leaned over the deep lounging chair in which she sat. Mechanically she raised her hand, which he took in both of his, and, raising it to his lips, lightly kissed the tips of her fingers. The girl's eyes followed the figures of the two men crossing the lawn.

"What an unusual person your friend Crichton is," she said. "How is it that I never heard you speak of him before?"

The young man, still holding the girl's hand, sat on the broad arm of the chair. "I don't know," he said, "except that he has always been Brooke's particular friend. He is a good deal older than I am, but I rather thought pretty much every one had at least heard of Jim Crichton."

"What would one hear," she asked, "good things?"

Ned got up and crossing to the table slowly began to prepare himself a drink. "Yes and—no," he said. "He is and always was one of the finest men God ever made, but Jim made one mistake."

"What kind of mistake?" she asked. "It must have been serious."

"It was," he said, "one of the kind people never forget, though in a way they forgive. I might as well tell you, because somebody will sooner or later, and I'll tell you the true story."

The girl settled deeper in the low chair, her eyes still following the two men, who, far across the lawn, had stopped to examine a wall covered with old English ivy.

"When Crichton had finished college," Ned began, "he went over to Paris and settled down. One way and another he spent a good deal of money, at least Jim's father thought so, although the old man was very rich. However, for a long time he kept on sending Jim remittances far beyond his allowance, but he didn't fail to tell him what he thought of his extravagance. Finally, Jim got in with a pretty quick crowd and he used to play poker and baccarat with them at one of the clubs. Well, one morning he woke up and found himself very much in debt. The men whom he owed weren't the kind he could ask for time, and it was just a plain case of pay. He cabled his father exactly how things stood, and in a few hours he got a pretty rough answer, absolutely refusing the money and telling him he would have to live thereafter on his regular income. Of course, Jim needed the money, but the old man's wire was what did the business. I honestly believe, just out of spite and to show his father that he couldn't down him he signed a check with his father's name for twice the amount he had asked for. The rest was easy, because the people at the bank knew Jim and knew his father was good for any amount. But when the check reached New York the old man denied it. I suppose it was because he loved Jim better than anything else in the world, and because he had done everything he could for him all his life, he lost his head completely and denounced Jim as a forger all over his old office. Half an hour later he tried to deny everything he had said and insisted the check was all right, but it was too late. Every clerk in the office hurried uptown and told the story at some tea or dinner or club, and, although they kept the story out of the papers, it was all over with Jim."

"And then?" asked the girl.

"Oh, then? Well, Jim came home and the two of them started in to spend years trying to undo the harm they had both done in a moment of anger. It almost killed the old man, and Jim took him from one health resort to another, trying all kinds of cures, but there was no cure for that kind of trouble. The old man died in Jim's arms, asking the boy's forgiveness with his last breath. I guess Jim would have been willing to quit then too, but he had the young machinery the old man lacked, and so he kept on going."

"And some of him lived, but the most of him died," the girl interrupted.

"No, hardly that," the young man said. "As a matter of fact, Jim never was any good until he signed that check. He was a crazy, wild kid before that, but the trouble made a man of him absolutely. He couldn't turn to individuals any more, except a few like Brooke who loved him better than anybody in the world, because he knew they knew the story, and that it was always being told behind his back—just as I am telling it to you. So for lack of individual friends he made a friend of the whole world. He devoted himself to ideas and places and books and races of people. There is hardly a settlement where any white man has been that he doesn't know well, and I think he has read more, and more intelligently, than any one I ever heard of. Of course, the tragic part of it all is that Jim is at heart terribly social; he has the heart of a woman and he loves his kind more than any man I know. But instead of friends made of flesh and blood, he has to shut himself up in his library with only his books about him, or go out and look for companionship in some South African forest or along the rocks of some God-forsaken coast where white people don't even get shipwrecked."

"But he told me he often went to Paris," the girl interrupted.

"Oh, yes, he does. He slips back there just as he does over here sometimes. But it don't last. He can't go to the houses of the only kind of people he wants to know, or he can't be a member of a decent club. You would have hard work to find any individual who says he does not feel about Jim Crichton just as Brooke or I feel, but there is always that intangible force fighting against him. He is the very best in the world, but the world hasn't forgotten and never will forget that he once forged a miserable bit of paper. Now, that's Crichton's story, and I don't know what that song of yours is about that you sang to him, called 'A Bark at Midnight,' but, judging from the title, I'm not surprised that it interested him."

Miss Ferguson got up and crossed the room to the broad window which looked out on the river, turned pink and gray in the last rays of the evening sun.

"It's not a very happy story," she said. "And yet somehow it seems as long as his father forgave him the rest of the world might forget. Was there no practical way for him to get back? Couldn't Brooke, for instance, or you?"

"Ned shook his head. "I don't think so," he said, "because if there had been any way Brooke would have discovered it long ago. I always had a theory that a woman could have done it. If he had married a girl of sufficient position and strength, I think she might have won back his place for him."

"And no woman ever loved him enough for that?"

"I suppose not," he said. "That is, no woman he cared for. It would be asking a good deal of a girl to share that kind of a life, and, besides, most men would rather drown than be thrown a life-preserver by a woman."

"And yet," answered Miss Ferguson, "the world is really very full of charity."

"In a way it is, but I think most people feel a good deal about it as they do about their securities; they prefer investments in several baskets. It would take a good deal of nerve for a woman to constitute Jim Crichton her favorite charity."

"I wonder," said the girl. "Ring for the cart, won't you, Ned? It's time we were starting for the Ellisons'."

A few minutes later Crichton and Curtis stopped in their walk through the formal gardens long enough to wave to the young people who passed them on their way out of the grounds.

"Lucky boy, Ned, I must say, even if he is my own brother," said Curtis. "She'll make a wonderfully fine woman."

"Wonderful," added Crichton. "It was such fun to talk to a girl like that even for half an hour. I mean a girl who didn't know and just met you on your own."

Crichton stooped and kicked at a weed on the edge of the walk which the gardener had overlooked. "Do you suppose she knows now?" he asked.

Curtis put his arm through Crichton's and turned him in the opposite direction from the road down which the cart was fast disappearing.

"Dear old Jim," he said, "I suppose she does by now."

Crichton's stay in America was very short. He decided quite suddenly one day that he must return to the Far East. A letter from Paris ten days later to Brooke Curtis, and then he disappeared entirely. Summer passed and winter and summer again, and then one day, late in November, Crichton turned up once more in New York. He went to his hotel and asked for a letter which was awaiting his arrival. Once in his room he tore off the envelope and reread the short note many times. This was all it said:

"DEAR MR. CRICHTON—I shall be glad to see you any afternoon after five, as I am nearly always at home then to give my friends a cup of tea. It is good to know that you are about starting in this direction.

"Indeed, I have often thought of the day I broke into the billiard-room and insisted on singing to you.

"Sincerely yours,
"MARGARET FERGUSON."

Late that afternoon he was standing in front of the fire in the drawing-room of the Ferguson home, and Miss Ferguson was sitting behind the teacups, looking, at least so Crichton thought, much more beautiful than she looked that day he had first met her almost two years before.

"But this time," she said, "you have come to stay for a long visit?"

Crichton looked down into his teacup and smiled. "I fear not," he said. "I am going away very soon."

"You're so disappointing. Can't you possibly stand us for a few weeks? Where are you going this time?"

"I haven't an idea," he said, "not the faintest, believe me."

"That's even less complimentary to us. What does Brooke say to this plan?"

"I haven't seen Brooke yet. You know I only arrived this afternoon. I wanted to see you first; in fact, it was to see you that I came back to this country. Not that I don't want to see Brooke, bless his soul, but—"

"You wanted to see me?" the girl interrupted him. "Me?"

The light from the fire shone full upon her face, and Crichton noticed that her color was very high and that her eyes seemed to avoid his.

"Yes," he repeated, clasping his hands behind him, "to see you and to ask you a favor. I am not going to ask it because I think you owe me anything or because I can ever possibly repay you, because I can't. It's a favor you would do for an utter stranger, because I think you are naturally charitable and because it really don't amount to much anyhow—at least to you."

"You really are most mysterious," the girl said. Crichton noticed that the color had left Miss Ferguson's face and that she was smiling up at him quite pleasantly, and so he smiled back at her.

"It really isn't very amusing, as a matter of fact," he said. "It happened about this way. You remember that very soon after I first met you two years ago I went abroad?"

The girl nodded.

"My inclination was to think about you a great deal, but I did my best not to do so. You see you were engaged to Ned, and for that and other reasons I tried to keep my mind on other people and other things. And then one day, when I was down on the west coast of Africa, I got a letter from a man who writes me sometimes and he told me you were not engaged any more. So you see there was no particular reason why I should not think of you all I wanted to, was there?"

Crichton hesitated, but the girl did not notice him. She was looking into the fire, her chin resting between the palms of her hands.

"And soon after that," he continued, "I booked back to civilization, and when I reached Paris I got some very important news."

"Good news?" the girl asked without looking up.

Crichton shook his head. "I imagine most people would call it bad news, he said, "and I do, too, in a way. It seemed I had taken some sort of fever on the trip, and that had rather complicated matters in my system. I went to see a lot of doctors, and it was quite wonderful how they all agreed about me—one of them was quite hopeful. He said I might live a couple of months, but the best the rest could do was thirty days."

Her chin still resting in her hands, the girl slowly turned her eyes to his. She looked at him slowly from his feet, as if she were trying to verify his words.

"I can't quite believe you," she said. "You don't look like a dying man, and you certainly don't talk like one."

"If I should step into the firelight," he said, "I would certainly look like one, with not even thirty days ahead of him; and as for the manner of my speech, it seems to me that my way is the only sane way to talk about it. It's wonderful how a big piece of news really affects one. The first doctor who told me was an old fellow in a frock coat and a Legion d'Honneur button, and his silk hat was on the desk in front of him in his office. I think he must have had a lunch engagement, for he was forever glancing at his hat, and when he told me about how things stood he grabbed his hat and hurried out of the office ahead of me."

"And then?" asked the girl.

"Then—oh—then? I went out, too, although rather slowly. It was a wonderful morning, just like spring, and I walked over to Laurent's and had lunch in the glass room. I was trying all the time to think just about how long it took thirty days to pass, and the only thing I could judge by was the monthly bills, and that made the time seem very short, because it always seemed to me that monthly bills come in at least twice a week. I had a very good lunch and enjoyed it, too, just like the men you read about in the papers the morning they are going to be hanged. And I sat some time smoking—long after the other people had left the place. Did you ever read that people who are drowning think of all their past sins?"

The girl nodded and leaned back in her chair, looking full into the shadowed face of the man silhouetted against the fire in the broad hearth.

"Well do you know it never occured to me," Crichton went on, "to think of one single sin. I thought of all the happy hours I had ever spent. There were certain people and certain places and certain things that it just seemed as if I had to see before I quit. But, Lord, it was absolutely impossible. One of them, for instance, was a little stretch of beach on an island I always say I discovered in the South Pacific. At sunset the water is pink as coral and it runs up on the pebbles, and the stones look like great white pearls—it's quite wonderful. I have spent a great many happy days there. Another was a native girl I used to know in a little town just beyond Misda in Tripoli. She was very sweet and good to me when I was sick once, and I think she would really have been willing to marry me, too. She had a smile that I have traveled a great many miles to see several times, and there was a sheen to her copper skin. And then of course there were certain theatres in London and Paris, and there was a path in the Cascine at Florence I wanted to see again very much. The trees grow over it and after a shower, when the sun breaks out and shines through, the dripping leaves glisten like beautifully polished silver against the patches of gold sunshine. There were two or three Russian dishes I wanted to eat again, too, and I should have liked to hear that Hungarian band at Budapest. You know I never could understand good music. There is a place on Rhode Island where I should have liked to go to. It's a queer, old-fashioned little place by the water, and I don't suppose it really means anything to most people, but I spent my summers there as a kid, and I like to go back and wander along the hard beach, and take long walks through the pines where we used to play at Indian massacres. It's a nice old place, and all the distances seem so absurdly short compared to the old days, but it's terribly filled with ghosts—little ghosts of laughing children.

"There were lots of other things I wanted to do and see, but of course I couldn't run all over the world in thirty days very well, could I? I worked it out pretty well that day at Laurent's, and I argued and fought it out with myself for a long time. But gracious! I knew all the time what I wanted to do and what I was going to do, and that was to come back and see you and perhaps ask you to sing for me again."

As Crichton finished the girl looked up at him questioningly, but the man's face was still in the shadow.

"There is no hope?" she asked. "Doctors have given up many men for dead years and years ago and the men are alive today. We all know of such cases."

Crichton shook his head. "I'm afraid I'm not one of them," he said. "A month is the most I could have, and I had to beg for that. Just think, only a month left of the sunshine and the sweetness of life. And I tell you it is sweet, Miss Ferguson, and it is fine and good—even if there are fogs, we learn in time that at some old place there is always a sun shining back of them."

"But it is a long while before the sun breaks through sometimes," she said. "I don't know just what to say to you, Mr. Crichton, because I really don't know you at all, and yet I feel that I never knew any one quite so well. I didn't break with Ned on account of you, but I did do it on account of your type, or rather on account of his. He was a good, sweet soul, but he was just like the rest of them here—the men, and the women too, for that matter, are pretty much all made in the same mold. I have to go back to my father's ranch three months every year to keep near the earth and see all of the sky at once. You were different, and I wanted to know you very, very much. I was going to write you to come and see me in town before you sailed, and then—"

"And then?" he asked.

"Then? Well, why not? It can't make any difference now."

"None."

"I didn't send for you because I thought I cared too much."

"But you knew you were not going to marry Curtis?"

"Yes," she said, "I knew that from the first day."

"Then there must have been another reason?"

The girl nodded up at the dark figure. "Yes, there was another reason."

"Not the old reason—the reason of every dull fool that sits in a club window, the reason why every debutante is told to keep away from me?"

Miss Ferguson nodded.

Crichton, still standing with his back to the fire, clasped his hands behind him and slowly laced and unlaced his fingers.

"I judged," he said, "from what I saw of you before that above all you were charitable. I am sorry that I could not have gone away still thinking so."

"Charity?" she asked. "Do you call that charity? I mean the kind of charity that begins at home. It mayn't have been charitable to you or to me, but the world wasn't made for you and me. We might as well try to dam a flood as to hold back what the world wants to think of us. And don't forget, Crichton, that the world isn't going to stop with us, any more than it began with us. Is it charity to cut the albatross from your own neck and tie it about another's?"

"And yet," the man interrupted, "our happiness would have made up for much. I don't pretend to be unselfish—the Lord knows I have suffered enough to want a little pleasure and peace before I die."

"I know," she said, "I know all of that. I know that we could have been happy, because we could have been content with each other and we could have gone away. But how do we know that those who came after us would have the strength to take up the burden? Do you know that they would have been satisfied, as you and I could have been, with only each other—happy with the heat of the sun over our heads and the smell of the ground under our feet? Do you know that those who might follow us would not choose to live with their kind, and do you know that they would be brave enough to hold up their heads in the crowded places?" The girl rose from her chair and, laying her hand on Crichton's shoulder, half turned him about, so that the red glare from the fire shone fairly in his face.

"I know it doesn't make very much difference now," she went on, "but I have told you what my own mother will never know. Is there anything else I can tell you before you go?"

The man and the girl stood for a moment looking into each other's eyes, and then Crichton shrugged his shoulders very slightly and smiled pleasantly into her face. It was a smile such as he might have vouchsafed a wayward child. He to took the hand, which still rested on his shoulder, in both of his, and gently touched the tips of her fingers with his lips.

"There is nothing else," he said, "except to say good-bye."

"Good-bye," she whispered, "and God help you."

Crichton hailed a passing hansom and took his place in the long row of carriages moving slowly down the avenue. He glanced up with half-closed eyes at the many changes which had taken place since his last visit; narrow towering hotels and broad square banks had apparently grown up overnight, and the brownstone houses of the friends of the early days had been turned into decks of shop windows. But of the crowds on the sidewalks, the faces of the men and women in the passing carriages, he saw nothing—his thoughts were still of the firelit room he had just left and the girl who had told him "good-bye." When he reached the hotel he found his servant waiting for him in his room. "We are going to take a long trip this time, Lawrence," he said. "I don't want to reach Paris before the late spring or early summer, so I think we had better go by way of Yokohama. Find out, to-night if possible, when the next boat leaves 'Frisco, please."—By Charles Bemont Davis, in *Collier's*.

——Do you know where to get the finest canned goods and dried fruits, Sechler & Co.

The beautiful water liily roots in the mud below the stream. All the fragrance and fairness of the flower are affected as the root is affected. If the root is injured the flower droops and its whiteness is marred by blot and blemish. A woman's beauty is intimately related to the health of the delicate female organs. No woman who suffers constantly from female weakness can retain her good looks. One of the facts noted by women who have been cured of diseases of the delicate womanly organs by Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, is the return of the color to the cheek and the brightness to the eye when the cure has been completed. "Favorite Perscription" has been well named by women who have been healed by its use, "A God-send to women." It dries debilitating drains, cures inflammation, ulceration and female weakness, and re-establishes the ailing woman in sound health. Sick women are invited to consult Dr. Pierce, by letter, *free*. All correspondence private. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo. N. Y.

Evidence That Penguin's Pinions Were Once Used For Swimming.

Ornithological puzzles are the penguins, with their curiously shaped wings and odd, unbirdlike, upright carriage. The peculiarities of their wings suggest that the penguins are descendants of birds which used their wings rather than legs in the pursuit of prey under water, and as the struggle intensified between the competing individuals the most expert at this sort of swimming would get the most food and oust less successful rivals. The winners gained advantage over their neighbors in proportion as their wings improved as swimming organs and inversely and of necessity became less suited to perform the work of flight.

In all other birds the feathers, though shed annually, are more or less gradually displaced. But in the penguins the new feathers all start into being at the same time and thrust out the old feathers upon their tips so that these come away in great flakes. Whereas in all birds save penguins the new feathers as they thrust their way through the skin end in pencil-like points, formed by investing sheaths, in the penguins these sheaths are open at the tips and attached by their rims to the roots of the old feathers, and hence these are held to their successors until they have attained a sufficient length to insure protection against cold.

The curious device for retaining the warmth afforded by the old feathers until the new generation can fill their places is apparently due to the fact that penguins are natives of the antarctic regions, although some now inhabit tropical seas.—Chicago Tribune.

Lincoln as He Knew Him.

Asked under the civil service rules to write what he knew about Abraham Lincoln, an applicant for the police force of New York wrote:

"Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky at a very early age. His father moved the family to Ohio, floating down the Mississippi. If he had not been killed by a murderer he might be living today. He was an intelligent man and could easily have been president of New York city."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Needed Airing.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Borem hotly. "I've got a right to air my opinions, haven't I?"

"Oh, of course," replied Brightly. "They're so stale and musty they certainly need something of that sort."—Philadelphia Press.

Suspended.

"I have decided to suspend your sentence," the judge began.

"For the Lord's sake, judge, you don't mean to say lifting a few chickens is a hanging matter!"—New York Herald.