

A Letter From the Sky.

[By Sarah Baxter.]

Mme. Benkard, the wife of Major Benkard of the —th regiment of the line of the French army, was in the habit of appropriating any good looking second lieutenant whom she could induce to be attentive to her.

One day a young lieutenant, Louis Detaille, reported at the garrison for duty, and the moment Mme. Benkard saw him she determined to appropriate him. He was a rosy cheeked boy scarcely out of his teens and before his departure to join his regiment had proposed to and been accepted by his cousin, Delphine Dumont. Mme. Benkard was double his age and had lost whatever beauty she had possessed. The lieutenant desired to give all his spare time to writing love letters to his sweetheart and had no inclination to devote himself to the major's wife. Unfortunately for him, he was too young, too unsophisticated to know the danger of refusing advances from such a woman and frankly told the lady that he was engaged to a girl he dearly loved and had neither time nor inclination to devote himself to her.

Mme. Benkard's eye flashed, but Detaille's eyes were modestly cast down at the time, and when he ventured to raise them he saw a sympathetic smile. "You dear boy!" she exclaimed. "Tell me all about her. Is she dark? Is she fair? Is she very young and does she love you as you love her?"

Disarmed, Detaille became garrulous about the girl he loved, and before the end of the interview madame had got her name and address.

Detaille had not been in garrison a month before Germany declared war upon France and French troops were rushed northward into Belgium. Before his departure, while there was yet peace, Mme. Benkard received an anonymous letter warning her against her lover, who was devoting himself to the wife of one of the officers.

Mme. Benkard, after listening to Detaille's rhapsodies concerning his fiancée, did not relinquish her grip upon him, and so marked were her attentions to him that he fancied her husband was becoming jealous of her. Besides, he had become suspicious of her. As soon as he came to a halt on his way to Belgium he wrote her a letter which was designed to set himself right in the matter, putting in writing what he had told her—that he had a sweetheart to whom he was devotedly attached and had no interest whatever in any one else. This letter he copied and inclosed the duplicate in a letter to his sweetheart, explaining why he sent it to her.

The epistle to Mme. Benkard he sent first, and it reached her in due time. By the time he dispatched the one to Mme. Dumont the Germans were pushing the French back upon Paris. The courier who carried the mail was captured by the Germans and was sent to the headquarters of the German army.

Meanwhile the anonymous letter which was written by Mme. Benkard to Mme. Dumont had reached the latter and nearly broke her heart. She was too young and innocent to know the difference between the work of a friend and a fiend and supposed the warning had come from one who did not wish to see her injured. She kept her secret locked in her breast, where it burned and burned until it seemed to her that she could endure it no longer, but she did not write to her lover reproaching him for having so soon forgotten her. At first Detaille thought nothing of this, for every day there was a battle, and as for mails, if one came through from Paris it was not likely to be distributed.

For a time after the war opened Paris was attacked by dirigibles, which sailing over the city, dropped bombs upon it. One day when considerable damage had been done by one of these air craft, a street gamin who was gazing at it with more curiosity than fear, saw slowly circling down toward him through the air a bit of paper. It fell near him, and he picked it up. It was a letter. The gamin, not being able to read the superscription, showed it to a gendarme, who read, "Mlle. Delphine Dumont, No. — Rue —, Paris," and handed it back to the gamin.

Now, the boy was not bright enough to make a guess as to where the letter came from; but, thinking to make a few sous, he took it to its address.

When Mme. Dumont heard that a boy wished to see her with a letter she went to him and on seeing it and reading the superscription asked him where he got it.

"From the sky, mademoiselle," was the reply. The girl had never seen the writing before. Tearing open the envelope, she found a letter addressed to her in German and bearing the signature of a lieutenant in the German aviation corps and an inclosure addressed to her in her lover's handwriting. The latter she opened feverishly. It was the duplicate of the one Detaille had sent to Mme. Benkard and which had been captured by the Germans. The letter inclosing it read as follows:

"Dear Mademoiselle—I send bombs down on your city in the line of my duty. It gives me pleasure to send also to you personally a letter the nonreceipt of which may have been troubling you.

Delphine ran upstairs to a glove box where she kept her pin money and, selecting a gold piece, gave it to the boy, who looked at it in wonder.

A few days later Delphine received word that her lover had been brought to Paris wounded, and she nursed him back to health.

VARIETIES OF APPLAUSE.

But There is No Mistaking the Genuine, Spontaneous Offering.

With nearly every successful address applause plays a leading part. There are several varieties of applause. The common variety is the perfunctory handclap—a poor, weak contribution which makes a butterfly look long lived in comparison. A second variety is the charity offering of an audience to the oratorical beggar.

The speaker ends a profound declaration with a pause which is next door to an open declaration of war if the audience doesn't come across, or he works himself up in a series of mental paroxysms which impel the auditors to rush to his rescue before it is too late. All spellbinders pocket this variety of applause as real coin. Of course it is nothing of the kind.

The genuine issue in laudation is a spontaneous and volcanic eruption of approval and delight. It blows out violently from the subterranean fires of folk, and when it has reached its climax there comes suddenly and gorgeously from the midst of it a second and more terrific explosion, and as this is reaching its highest point a third and seismic spasm rockets up through bedlam and overwhelms everything and everybody. This is the real thing. It cannot be made to order, and it cannot be counterfeited. The prearranged outbursts at national political conventions following the nominations are pitiable attempts to manufacture it. Claque and coteries of devotees try occasionally to produce it mechanically. They never do successfully.

All veteran speakers know it, and having experienced it, live on in the bright expectancy of the golfer who has accidentally driven 275 yards and believes that any minute it is liable to be done again. There are many communities which have never witnessed such a scene. They never will. For there are some communities that are strangers to all manner of response.—Victor Murdock in Collier's Weekly.

EMOTIONAL ACTRESSES.

Temperament on the Stage and the Task of Managing It.

You hear a lot about the artistic temperament in and out of the theatrical trenches. There's only one way to manage a temperamental woman on the stage, said a well known leading man the other day, and that is to be in love with her. I was never so fortunate myself, but I have seen it work out with others again and again. They hate the man who won't admire them, and they laugh at the man who does. Their nerves are always thumping them into action till their hearts are bursting and their brains are in a whirl.

One of our emotional actresses in her prime was the most febrile, fearless, radiant witch of a woman the stage ever had. She was always on fire, intellectually and every other way. During one engagement in New York she wasn't on speaking terms with any one in the front of the house, except one man, and he was always telling her how wonderful she was. No one else dared go near her for fear she'd kill them with the first thing handy. They're just like angry leopards, some of them. They must be humored, conquered with patience, firmness and kindness.

A well known English star, who has always been famous for being difficult to manage, used to hate the sight of a manager. She could wither any man who was not her mental equal till he literally crumpled to pieces, and she loved nothing better. There were so many who were not her equal too. She knew most men were afraid of her, and she kept them in that delicious state of dread. They called it "temperament." She called it something more fitting—brains.—Theater Magazine.

One of London's Seven Curses.

There are in London thousands of poor folks whose principal meals come from the fried fish shop which, because of its evil smell, has been described as "one of the seven curses of London." Yet to a hungry man the smell of fried fish is a most enticing odor. George Gissing has described how maddening it was to him in his darkest days "to smell the fish he had no money to purchase," and how, when affluent to the extent of a few coppers, he "eagerly bought and devoured the crisp golden colored slices of fresh cooked fish—surely the food of the gods."—London Chronicle.

Her Pride Hurt.

"Your fashionable friend seems to be threatened with palpitation of the heart."
"Yes; she just received a dreadful shock."
"And what happened to fortune's favorite?"

"She was sitting in an employment office waiting for a chance to look at a cook when a haughty dame swept up and offered her a job."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

An Extremist.

"What in the world does old Kloseman want with more money? He hasn't any near relatives, and he doesn't begin to spend his income now."

"That's just the point. He wants to economize on a larger scale."—Boston Transcript.

He Had Painted Too.

"My dear fellow," said the artist, "you can't imagine how much work there was in painting that picture."

"Oh, yes, I can," said the young country lad; "my father made me paint the barn one summer."—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

MILITANCY IN NEW GUISE

Mrs. Pankhurst Now Aiding Government She Fought.

Reading of Mrs. Pankhurst's standing with Lloyd George to review the great procession of 50,000 women which her society had organized—a procession to show the women's enthusiastic willingness to make munitions, or to render war service in any way in their power—bring to mind irresistibly the pictures which show a group of the most incongruous animals driven to stand together on the highest point of a rock by a rising flood. It is the rising flood of patriotic feeling that has brought about this strange conjunction. For years Mrs. Pankhurst and the British government have been at swords' points. Now she is one of the government's most powerful allies, and is in constant demand to speak on the same platforms with the highest dignitaries, civil and military. Her present attitude is a disappointment to some of her friends, a joy to others, and a surprise to many. It is natural enough, however, Mrs. Pankhurst is inherently a fighter. She thinks it imperative for the welfare of the world that her country should win in this war, and she has thrown herself into the struggle, heart and soul.

COTTON STALKS HAVE VALUE

Hitherto Regarded as Waste, They Are to Be Turned into a Marketable Commodity.

Considering the fact that in the neighborhood of 75,000,000 tons of cotton stalks have been destroyed annually as worthless and only in the way, the possibilities of a plant capable of converting them into paper and artificial silk are readily comprehended. A plant is now being erected at Greenwood, Miss., which will be devoted to the preparation of pulp from cotton stalks, and it is said that owing to the stronger fibers of the cotton stalk pulp, paper manufactured from it is considerably stronger in proportion to its thickness and weight than that produced from the usual wood pulp. It has been the custom to cut and burn the stalks, after the cotton-picking season has ended, at a cost of about a dollar a ton. The use of cotton pulp is not limited to the making of paper. The stalk fibers have been found capable of withstanding the nitrating process involved in the making of gun-cotton. The fibers also produce an artificial silk, motion-picture films, and such chemicals as pyrocellulose, alcohol and acetone.

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- New crop California Walnuts and New Nuts at 20c per lb.
- Fine Nut Meats—Pecans, Walnuts and Almonds—all full pieces, none broken—Try them.
- California Naval Seedless Oranges—all sizes—fancy fruit.
- Fancy Cranberries, 15 cents per quart—dry measure.

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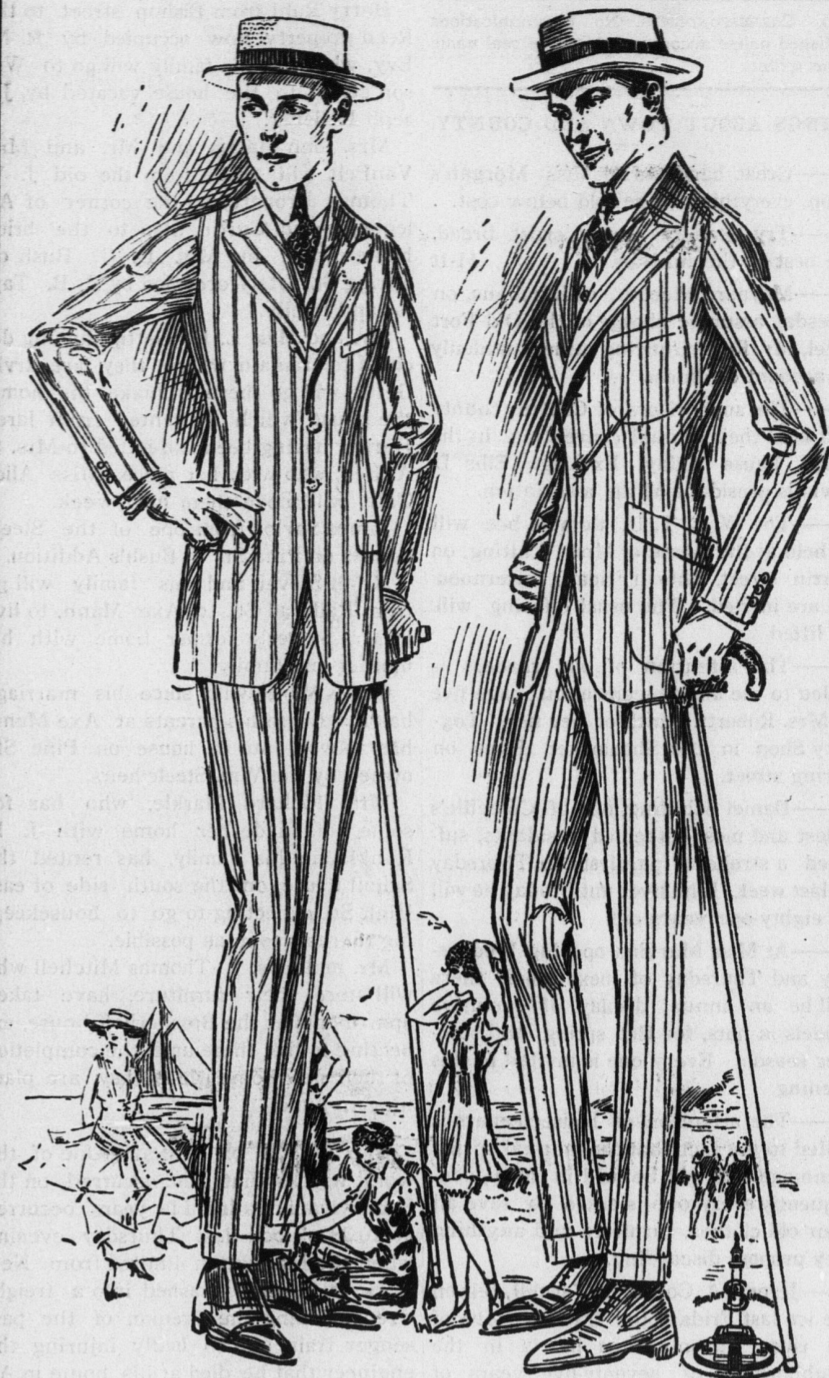
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