

THE EMANCIPATION OF MISS SERENA.

By A. M. Davies Ogden.

Miss Serena Bradford, sitting in thought, perplexity before the pretty rosewood desk in her sunny den, and accustomed from her infancy to the for-ward still smooth and white as a girl's, still the coronet of silvery hair which added a touch of distinction to the erect little figure, looked tentatively up at the portrait which hung just above. Should she?

The portrait stared back in dignified disapproval and Miss Serena hesitated. Invite an artist, a mere painting man to her house? It was against all the traditional early Victorian ideas with which her youth had been imbued. Hitherto, during Miss Serena's narrow, well-ordered life, never had she dreamed of questioning the propriety of those ideas. Yet—Eleanor.

Eleanor, wayward, teasing lovable Eleanor, whose arrival, fluttering the innocent household had brought to it a new element at once disturbing and inspiring, a sense of wider possibilities, of more vivid perceptions, Eleanor cared for this man. Indeed, it was because of her caring that the girl had been sent to Miss Serena now, her people hoping that perhaps a change of scene might effect a cure.

But what complicated matters was that Lyttleton himself was also here. Only yesterday Eleanor had come to her aunt and told her that he had taken a studio up town. "I did not know that Bert was intending to live in New York," the girl had said, loyal gray eyes gazing straight into Miss Serena's blue ones. "It was last summer at the Page's that I met him. His home is in the West. Of course I shall not try to see him. But if I should —" and for a second the clear eyes dropped, then she lifted them again. "I certainly cannot promise that I will not speak," she ended, honestly. Her aunt gave a throb of sympathy.

"Do you—do you care so much, then," she questioned timidly. "Care!" flashed back the girl. Meeting Miss Serena's tender, wondering gaze, the brave little mouth quivered. "Yes," she said simply. "I care."

And now in the morning's mail had come a note leaving vacant a man's place for next week's dinner, and Miss Serena, the memory of that wistful quiver still upon her, was thrilled to a daring impulse.

Why not ask this Lyttleton and judge for herself? Her opinions carried great weight with the girl's people. Was it not indeed her duty to invite him? And, all the while, under these reasons, with which she thought to convince herself, deep down in the gentle heart glowed, newly stirred, the old primitive, unquenchable flame of desire for romance, color, passion; the instinct which leads all mankind to love a lover and to help him; and, deeper, obscurer yet, the vivid curiosity of the lonely woman to whom the priceless revelation had been denied. Miss Serena, took a sheet of paper, wrote her letter, stamped it and sent it off before she could change her mind.

The deed once accomplished, reaction set in, and for a week Miss Serena shivered at the thought of the awful thing she had done.

But when, on the night of the dinner, Eleanor, straight and slim in her white frock, a green wreath set among the masses of her bronze hair, entered the fragrant, flower-filled drawing-room, Miss Serena all at once felt herself abundantly justified. Manifestly it was but the child's due. Miss Serena clad herself in a dainty brocade, her soft cheeks pink with suppressed eagerness under the girl's quick little kiss, was fairly quivering with excitement. What would he be like?

The guests were arriving. They were mostly elderly married couples, friends of Miss Serena's; Eleanor, graceful and smiling moved among them, striving dutifully to be entertaining. Suddenly the sound of a man caused her to start. Could she have heard aright? Miss Serena's voice summoned her.

"Eleanor, my dear, I have just been telling Mr. Lyttleton how good he was to come to us thus informally," her aunt was saying.

The girl, flushed and confused, came forward looking from her aunt to the man. Miss Serena smiled. "You know Mr. Lyttleton, I think," she said, gently. Surprises were odious, was her reflection; she had not realized how hard it would be for the girl. Eleanor, murmuring something inaudible, held out a hand, which the man took awkwardly enough. Miss Serena watching, felt her compunction deepen.

"He is embarrassed, too. And quite natural," she thought, benevolently surveying the long, lean figure clad in ill-fitting evening clothes. A red carnation decorated the lapel of his coat. Miss Serena put down her lorgnette with a sigh. "Curious-looking person. Dresses like an artist, I suppose. One could

hardly be surprised that Eleanor's people are not pleased. Well, I must try and discover wherein his attraction lies. Eleanor, why, where is Eleanor? noting the girl's disappearance. But Eleanor, her eyes brilliant, her lips parted, had already slipped back into the room, and the next moment the butler had flung back the portieres.

The laws of curiosity demanded it, and for some time Miss Serena listened patiently to the great—but dull—scientist seated at her right hand. It was for him that the thoughts were all with the man whom she had contrived to place on her left. He sat there, quietly gazing about him in evident admiration, making no attempts to converse with the woman whom he had taken out. Miss Serena felt rather discouraged. He might be a rising artist, but he was to her an entirely new type. How could she effect a sympathetic relation with him, find the real man; on what common ground could they meet? Yet for Eleanor's sake she must try. She turned to him with her kindest smile.

"I see that you are watching Miss Hull," she began, "but I want to take you to myself this evening." The man smiled back.

"I am mighty glad to get the chance to talk to you," he answered sincerely, and his voice had a pleasant ring that suited Miss Serena's ear. "You see," indicating the glittering, pink table, the multiplicity of forks, "this kind of thing is kind of new to me. But I think it's great," he added, with a whimsical appreciation of his own frankness. Miss Serena looked at him with more approval. She liked honesty and candor. But what was she to talk about?

"How do you find the United Workers?" she said at a venture, mentioning the fine, newly completed building, where Lyttleton had taken his studio.

"I understand that you have just come there,"

Never had Miss Serena so enjoyed herself.

For years her principal interest had been the United Workers. Time, money and thought had been lavishly poured upon it, and the success wrested from adversity was to her as a personal, dear triumph. And here at last was someone to whom the subject was equally familiar; who knew its branches and ramifications in other cities; here was sympathy, co-operation. Miss Serena's eyes shone, her pretty color grew pinker with excitement. And there had been people like this in the world all the time and she had never known it! Then, as her glance met Eleanor's, she smiled. Who would have given the child credit for such an intelligent choice? The girl, yet with rather a worried

expression, returned the smile, and Miss Serena laughed to herself.

"She does not know how well we are getting on," reflected the aunt, fondly. "Poor child, I can see what a hard time she has had. But, after all, the only objections to him are his not belonging to their special set, and his lack of wealth. The first, perhaps, is not important, after all, and as for the second—might not I—"

Dinner over she drew Eleanor into the den for a moment.

"Dear, I like your Mr. Lyttleton so much," she whispered. "He was asked as a surprise for you, but I am the one to be delighted. No, we have not time to discuss it now. As the girl endeavored to speak."

"But later we will, and possibly I can find some way to help you both"—tenderly. The girl, deeply moved, caught the little hand.

"Auntie—dearest," she said, "how good you are! But listen,"—hurriedly—"you see—"

There was a slight stir without the door. The butler appeared again, then stood aside to admit a tall, impatient young man. Eleanor sprang forward.

"Bert!" she cried, softly. "Oh, Bert!"

"Eleanor!" responded the young man, rapturously, eager gladness apparent in every line of the dark, handsome face "Eleanor!"

And for a moment they stood

there, oblivious, enchanted, swept beyond Miss Serena and all the world. Eleanor, womanlike, recovered herself first.

"Auntie," she said, and a shy pride overspread her happy eyes, "this is Bert, my Bert. I saw there had been some mistake, so I sent him word to come at once," explaining as Miss Serena only stared blankly, "This is my Mr. Lyttleton."

"But then—who?" leaped Miss Serena, hopelessly. "Yours—I don't understand—"

"Nor I. There must be some mistake," repeated the girl.

Miss Serena, her hands shaking pitiously, snatched a letter from her desk and held it out.

"Read it," she managed, "read it—yes, it's typewritten," as the girl uttered an amazed sound. "But read it—see if it means anything to you."

"Dear Madam," began Eleanor, obediently. "Yours of the fourteenth just received and I write to say that I will be happy to accept informal invitation for dinner on Tuesday, twenty-eighth inst., at eight o'clock."

Yours truly, "W. A. Lyttleton."

The letter was written on United Workers paper, the envelope was addressed plainly to Miss Serena Bradford. His straight young brows drawn close, the newcomer scrutinized the signature.

"It's most extraordinary," he commented perplexedly. "You say your note was directed to Mr. Lyttleton, care the United Workers. Did you—"

He paused as the man with the red carnation appeared in the doorway. The man halted a moment, then stepped forward quickly.

"Why, Mr. Lyttleton," exclaimed the man. "You here! Why—"

A sense of something wrong made him glance hastily from one perturbed countenance to the other. Then as his eyes fell upon the open letter, the vague doubts which all the evening had been mistily hovering on the brink of his consciousness, crystallized into certainty. He flung out a protesting hand.

"You here?" he repeated. "Then wasn't that invitation for me after all? I sort of misdeeded from the first it couldn't be. But Jim Hallday told me that New York folks were so hospitable, a sudden whispering entreaty trembling beneath the spoken word. Had it all been a mistake then? Was this wonderful glimpse into another world only a cheat—a bit of experience to which he personally, had no right? The tall young man, whose keen regard had been gradually clearing, interposed.

"Why, I know you," he said impulsively. "I have seen you in the United Workers building," his somewhat stern young face irradiated by a friendly flash of white teeth, "haven't I?"

"Sure, I am William Lyttleton, the new secretary," was the steady response. "I got the place two weeks ago, just after you came. But it was my name, too—I never thought." His voice was grave.

"Didn't you know?" he demanded, turning swiftly upon Miss Serena. "You seemed to. Didn't you?"

For one terrible moment Miss Serena hesitated. Be kind to such a person, yes; send him a check in the morning, by all means. But receive him socially, present him to her friends! Her former intertidy shrank to mere commonplace before what this implied. Instinctively she glanced up at the portrait, the very embodiment of ancient lineage and pride of race. Offend that? Ah! this time deliberately, irremediably. Miss Serena caught her breath, overwhelmed for a moment with doubt.

Then, as her gaze encountered the two troubled eyes fixed upon her own, across the inherent womanliness of her nature swept a revelation of feeling that shook the inmost centres of her soul. Here was a man, simple, sincere, shrewd, even if not cultured in the worldly sense and—her guest. Offend him! Miss Serena flung up her head with a generous scorn. The seed of revolt planted a week ago, quickened by interest, guarded by expanding sympathies, now at this crucial instant burgeoned forth into broad triumphant bloom.

"No; there has been no mistake," she said, and her voice rang out clear and sweet as she laid her hand upon this man's arm. "My invitation reached the right person. And there will have to be many more dinners before we can successfully carry out all the plans which we have concocted to-night. Eleanor, my dear," for a moment her kindly look resting upon the two breathless young people, "do not stay here too long with—Bert. Now Mr. Lyttleton, will you kindly take me back to my guests?"—Leslie's Weekly.

Not Always. Sufferer—Do you extract teeth without pain? Dentist—Not always. I sprained my wrist on one a couple of days ago, and it hurts yet.—Answers.

Zoological. "Johnny," said the Sunday school teacher, "can you tell me what animals were the first to enter the ark?" "Car-seat hogs," replied Johnny.—Chicago Daily News.

TRAMPS IN NORWAY.

New Laws Regarding the Treatment of Men Who Won't Work.

The Norwegians have passed a special act which enables the authorities to deal in a wholesome way with able-bodied loafers, beggars, tramps, aliens and drunkards who shirk their financial duty to their dependents. An able-bodied man who will not work can now be warned by the police against his manner of life and told where he is to apply for employment. Thus direct official action is taken against idling and idlers. He is to be prevented coming on the community for support, or so acting that his family becomes a charge on the poor law—the interpretation clause to include even a man's divorced wife and his illegitimate children. This of course involves the providing of work, a task beset with difficulties, but probably easier in that country than in England, as they have immense tracts of available land which could be brought into cultivation, and this it is affirmed would conduce to the prosperity of the country.

That the country means business can be further inferred from a suggested method of preventing escape through the possibility of work being irregular and intermittent. A person may be ordered by the police to go to the labor bureau but not do so; and on the other hand there may not be any work. Both these contingencies are realized, so the idea is to give an unsuccessful applicant a card which will be evidence of obedience and also state when the next visit must be paid. This is a detail that may be varied, but it indicates the size of the meshes of this official net. Suppose a person refuses to do the work assigned, or leaves it without reason, or is dismissed through bad conduct and within a year either he or his dependents come on the poor law, for relief in consequence of the return to lazy habits, then the authorities can send him to the workhouse for eighteen months, or for three years if it is a second offense. The workhouse is an institution between a prison and an English workhouse, and the chief points are that liberty is forfeited, begging is impossible, and they must face either work, hunger or punishment.

The provision with regard to tramps is most stringent. A person found roaming about and endangering the safety of others is liable to detention in the same establishment for three and up to six years. The course is clear and effective. The individuals are first watched by the police and then warned that they must get a fixed residence within a given time, and if they do not they are taken in charge. Some option is reserved to the police as to whether they will send a lazy person to the workhouse or to his legal home, should they find out where it is; but the decision rests with the police. In this connection it is important to know that the police have certain judicial functions unknown to such officers in this country. It is quite possible, and even probable that some will be found who are unable to settle because too poor and in these circumstances they are to have a house found for them the funds for this purpose being provided from money set apart for the purpose. The place in the first instance is considered by the police. But there is reserved the right of appeal to a higher court.

"Old" Peabody Banquet Hall. A famous and historic landmark in Salem is soon to disappear. With the remodeling of the old Peabody house on Essex street the beautiful old banquet hall built by the owner, Colonel Francis Peabody, in 1870 for the purpose of tendering a banquet to Prince Arthur, representative of Queen Victoria, at the funeral of George Peabody that year, will disappear.

The room was finished in the style of the stalls of the Knights of the Bath in Westminster Abbey, being probably one of the finest pieces of architecture in this country. The light in the room is obtained by opening panel doors in the walls, which lead to long windows, not easily discovered by the stranger. The effect is that of a chapel, and a central chandelier adds to the subdued effect of this unique light from without.

The woodwork is carved English oak, and the furnishings are rich and heavy.

Aide-de-Camp to the King. Extraordinary enough, Col. J. E. Gough, the son of Sir Charles, who was recently appointed aide-de-camp to the King wears the coveted decoration. Four years ago he was at the head of a little force of 200 men at Darateleh, in Somaliland, which ran short of ammunition and had to retire, fighting bravely, before a host of natives. Capt. Bruce, one of the four officers, was mortally wounded; but Capt. G. M. Rolland ran 500 yards, under a fierce fire, to bring a camel for him, and Col.—then Capt.—Gough and Capt. W. G. Walker stood over the wounded man and kept the enemy at bay until it was possible to remove him on the camel out of danger. Each of these three officers received the V. C.—Tit-Bits.

There are two women undertakers in Oakland, Cal., while another is an articulator of skeletons.

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Candy Output. Eighty-two million dollars worth of candy is made and eaten in America every year, most of it appearing on the market during the holiday season. In addition to this expensive French bon-bons are demanded by our people, a pound or so per capita, and the American sweet tooth calls for maple sugar besides, utilizing every grain that is made in this country and then getting only a pound and a half each year. In some form or other, the American gets 70.4 pounds of sugar for his individual annual consumption. It is an increased prosperity as well as an increased fondness for sweets that allows this, and it is interesting to contrast 70 pounds per capita with Italy's seven.

Gentlemen, recently said a German professor, who was showing to his students the patients in the asylum, "this man suffers from delirium tremens. He is a musician. It is well known that blowing a brass instrument affects the lungs and throat in such a way as to create a great thirst, which has to be allayed by persistent indulgence in strong drink. Hence, in the course of time, the disease you have before you."

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