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THE HOUSE OF MOHUN
 By GEORGE GIBBS
 Author of "Youth Triumphant" and Other Successes
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WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY
CHERRY MOHUN, up-to-date girl, rich and charming, at once irritated and attracted by **DAVID SANGREE**, young American ethnologist and war veteran, amazed changes in manners and customs brought out by the war, but interested in Cherry. His modest funds are invested with her father.
JIM MOHUN, a self-made Ansonia leader. Too busy to think of his children he leaves them to **MRS. MOHUN**, who has successfully cultivated the social side of life.
BOB MOHUN, son, is a typically reckless youngster.
GEORGE LYCETT, elderly Chorus, philosophizing as the story develops.
JOEY CHICHESTER, whom Mrs. Mohun would like to call son-in-law.

ON THE whole, Cherry behaved very well, in spite of the fact that the somber magnificence was very depressing. And though no word had been uttered by her mother as to the motives which lay behind this hospitality, Cherry was not too stupid to realize that she was there to be inspected by the old lady as the object of John Chichester's matrimonial intentions. Her first impulse was to say something shocking which would break the ice of this glacial atmosphere—or forever congeal it; but, with a generous impulse, she considered the dilemma in which she might place her poor mother, whose attitude during the preliminaries of the conversation filled her with a bewildered if slightly amused admiration.
 And so in a moment she became absorbed in a contemplation of Mrs. Chichester's three chins, and in the not unkindly glances of her small eyes which flashed this way and that, like little green midges in the sunshine.
 Fortunately, John Chichester entered at this moment, luncheon was announced and they went into the lofty room with its huge gray fireplace which had been brought from Italy of the Renaissance. The food, Cherry realized, was not nearly so good as that she could get at the Ritz, but to Alicia Mohun it was nectar and ambrosia. The service was as perfect as three men could make it, two in livery and a third, the shadow who had placed the chairs, in black. Now that Chichester was seated, she definitely determined to be upon her good behavior. Cherry talked gayly enough with her hostess and host, submitting even to Mrs. Chichester's questioning with a demureness which was very charming. It was in Cherry's head that, if all the others were to play a game, why shouldn't she? During that luncheon butter wouldn't have melted in her mouth. But her reward came across the opening in grateful glances from her mother, who knew that when Cherry chose to make them so, her manners could be quite top-form.
 After luncheon they saw the pictures in the ballroom gallery, one of the first, as Mrs. Chichester explained, that had been built in New York. And then, the old lady took Cherry back into the drawing-room and bade her sit beside her while she questioned. She was not such a terrifying old lady after all when one got behind the crust of her reserve. Cherry even felt a little sorry for her, with her mountains of flesh, her aching hermatism and her game leg, lumbered for the remainder of her pampered existence in this sumptuous tomb, which from the moment she had entered it had gotten on Cherry's nerves.
 Altogether it may be said that Cherry made an excellent impression upon the great lady, though she had suffered something in the accomplishment. For the Mohun ladies in their machine were hardly beyond the shadow of the luncheon portiere when Cherry threw open the windows of the car and fell back in the cushions.
 "Gee whizz! Muzzy. Give me air!" she gasped.
 "Cherry!"
 "I'm suffocated with the odors of sanctity. Why don't they open the windows and let some of the royal purple out into the blue sky?"
 Her mother's favorite inventive, but now it found her daughter calmly lighting a cigarette without even drawing a curtain.
 "Muzzy, I'd perish in a place like that. Don't you feel sorry for the poor old thing? I wonder if she has a cork leg. And the chins get bigger as they go down."
 "My dear child, you mustn't be so critical. Mrs. Chichester was hospitality itself, and I think she admired you very much. I was so afraid you'd ask for a cigarette."
 "I wanted to, Muzzy. But you did look so pathetic—I hadn't the heart. But five minutes more and I'd have exploded!"
 Alicia Mohun sighed. "I wish you would look upon the larger aspects of life with more soberness," she said.
 "I will when I have to, darling," said Cherry, patting her mother's gloved hand playfully. "But I did believe nicely, didn't I?"
 "Yes, my dear. Very nicely."
 "I tried very hard. But it's used me up. Phew! I feel like 'going on the loose.'"
 "Please, Cherry."
 "Oh, just a drive with Bruce."
 "I wish you wouldn't."
 "I've promised."
 "Can't see how you can go to a luncheon in a house like that and then go out with a person like this Mr. Cowan—a nobody—"
 "Oh—Muzzy. You mustn't call Bruce a nobody."
 "Cherry! When will you learn reason?" she gasped.
 Cherry looked straight at her, frowning.
 "I've made a martyr of myself to please you. Now you mustn't object to my doing something to please myself."
 Alicia Mohun did not reply. Already they had had one disagreement upon the subject of Mr. Cowan and the mother had emerged from the conflict second best. Cherry had picked a huge fight from Alicia Mohun's own book. For it was Cherry who had rounded out the discussion by first going to the door. Mrs. Mohun, however, that coercion was not the way to be used successfully with her daughter, so she said nothing more.
 They reached the house in silence and Cherry flew before her to the stairs and in a moment, from her own room, she heard Cherry phoning to the odious Cowan.
 With a sigh Alicia Mohun took off her gloves and hat, laid aside her coat, and sank into a chair by the fireplace, as she reflected upon this latest and greatest social triumph of her career. Of course the purpose of the luncheon had been perfectly understood, except perhaps by Cherry herself, who had merely accepted the invitation because her mother had insisted upon her going so, and there was not the slightest doubt that Mrs. Chichester had given her approval of Cherry. She had shown it in the delicate snowed-out of her



"Why don't they open the windows and let some of the royal purple out into the blue sky?"

Jeweled hand and the gracious smile that she had bestowed upon Alicia, a confident smile, almost familiar, as though to say, "Cherry is lovely, I am sure that she will grace my name. We understand each other. Let us keep this secret."
 Gone, the consequential air with which she had greeted them, Alicia felt her fortunes under the majestic shadow of the great lady's patronage and protection. The match was already a thing accomplished. All that remained was to bring Cherry to the point of agreeing with her.
 The smile faded at Alicia Mohun's lips and a tiny shadow appeared at her brows, fed before the recurrence of the smile and then definitely remained. Cherry would have to be reckoned with and at once. Of course she was almost too young to understand what a marriage with John Chichester would mean to her. Child of nature, she gave thought only to the instincts of youth for joy and pleasure. Mrs. Chichester meant nothing of this to her. It was perhaps going to be more difficult than her mother had supposed, to educate Cherry to the point of appreciating all the benefits that a future such as Alicia planned could have in store. But the time had come for a definite change in Cherry's point of view with regard to the great issues of life. She would have to learn about her prospects and of her obligations to her family.
 The frown on Alicia Mohun's brows deepened, though she rubbed it away again and again, with her fingers. She didn't like Cherry's friendship with this Bruce Cowan, who was, as far as she

could learn, a person of no importance. But Cherry could be obstinate when she chose. How dull of her! And at such a time! It was a part of the demoralizing influence of the war, which had worked and was still working incalculable harm. Cherry had even gotten 'Genie and some of the other girls to take Cowan up—just because he had looked so well in uniform.' The friendship was rather maddening in a way, especially as it could have no real importance.
 But now that Cherry's plans for the afternoon were made, her mother dared not bring the matter to an issue. Another day would be better for that—tomorrow perhaps. And so dissembling, her pretty voice called softly to Cherry

as she went down the stairs for her drive.
 "Are you quite warm, darling? You know, there's the Carringtons' dinner dance tonight. The dinner's at eight; be sure to be home in time to dress."
 "All right, Muzzy—good-by," Cherry was down the stairs, skipping gayly, and out at the door.
 Dear child! No real harm in her of course—nor in this curious friendship which had assumed an unpleasant if only momentary significance in the light of the greater story of her opportunities. Alicia Mohun closed and locked the outer doors of her room and, slipping on a pink silk peignoir, sat before her round-bottomed mirror and, taking several round boxes of salts from a drawer of her dressing table, began that intricate process of facial regeneration to which she turned whenever she had a doubt or a difficulty.
 But the tiny wrinkle which had made its appearance between her eyebrows refused to be diminished. She smiled at it, pleaded with it, grimaced gently, but all to no effect. The wrinkle remained. Its imperviousness to blandishment annoyed and then startled her.

She didn't want a husband!
 He didn't want a wife.
 Yet they married.
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It was dark when she awoke. Through the partly open window she was aware of street sounds, the rattle of a taxi, its loose chains playing a sort of rag-time down the street; the roar of the distant L. newsboys calling. Hastily she tried to make out what it was that they called, but the gibberish was unintelligible and she dropped off to sleep again, to be awakened by the knock of her maid on the door telling her that it was time to dress for dinner. The maid entered, switching on the lights and Mrs. Mohun arose from her couch, blinking sleepily at the pink enameled clock.
 "Has Miss Cherry come in?" she asked.
 "No, Madam."
 "It's getting late. There is hardly time to dress even now."
 Mrs. Mohun dressed slowly—she had no engagement for the evening—with anxious glances at the clock. It was already nearly half-past seven and the Carringtons' dinner was at eight. Cherry frequently came home late and dressed in a rush, but had never committed the unpardonable sin of cutting

a dinner engagement. She had been sitting at the table, gazing in her absent-minded way at the tiny wrinkle at her brows, appearing deeper, more prominent every day. Cherry was with Bruce and quite oblivious of the passing time. Perhaps...
 "One moment, Lillie," she suddenly turned to her maid, "I must pack my trunk. I'm going to the Mohuns. In succession she got the Mrs. Mohun's intimates, the Marcelline Armitage, the Townes, but they had seen Cherry or heard of her.
 Slowly Mrs. Mohun turned, trying to conceal her anxiety, with the hands of the clock indicating minutes to eight, became very restless. Cherry was thoughtful, nervous, gay, but she had always a sense of obligation in her social engagements. At eight o'clock Mrs. Mohun began to fear that an accident had happened—always a possibility when one considered the speed which Cherry drove. But surely one would have phoned...
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