

SOME ODD SIGHTS OF LONDON TOWN

Miss Kaiser Tells of Her Journeyings To and Fro.

THE ORIGINAL CURIOSITY SHOP

Something About the Fine Old Cathedral Town of Canterbury, Its Wonderful Crypt, the Shrine of Thomas a Becket and Other Notable Sights. Words of Advice to Pupils in Voice Culture.

Special Correspondence of The Tribune.

London, Nov. 20.—I was down in that part of town the other day, when the gentlemen of the law most do congregate, and what do you think I saw? Well, just the cutest, sweetest little thing in all London, I believe. Was it the baristers and solicitors, for about in their gathered gowns and their funny wigs? you ask. Well, some of their fussy, old gowns can hardly be called cute, nor do the keen, sharp faces and eyes as bright as their chests as pink as they ever were in her first youth.

I am rather an explorer, whenever I have any time for it, and having my friends are kind enough to say, the bump of locality very largely developed. I often, when in a strange locality, try to determine whereabouts in London I am, and then essay some original short cuts to where I wish to go. Sometimes I am successful, and emerge into the thoroughfare I hoped to find quite untroubled and with my own powers of finding my way; but there are times I blush to have to say so—when the kindly offices of a policeman are necessary for my successful extraction from the confusing maze of slums into which I have blundered, out into the king's highway once more.

HOW ONE FINDS IT.

But to proceed, I was down in Holborn the other day as I said when I started telling you this, and had another errand which took me over to the Strand. Now, instead of taking buses and trams, and going in a roundabout way, I thought I would strike through Holborn, and see "where I was at." So in I went at little Parrot street, through the famous old Lincoln's Inn Fields, and down an inviting looking little street, when, behold! before me stood a low, little corner shop, cabined inside in pale pink, and surrounded by the curious curved Dutch thing that is still left on some of the oldest London houses in the city or thereabouts. On the front of it, in letters of old English script ran this legend: "Ye Old Curiosity Shop, immortalized by Charles Dickens." It was so sweet and tiny and quaint, consisting of only two stories and both of them low, possessing three or four windows only. It snuggles close up to the largest houses next it for a bit of protection.

I looked inside, fondly hoping that perhaps there might be a replica of the dear old Granfather there, to remind one of the times when Little Nell played at its doorstep, a happy and careful little one, before the poor, homeless wanderers fled out into the world only to find their weariness and sorrow and death. But I might have known better, for a very matter of fact and up-to-date

shopman came forward inquiring what I wanted. As I had no desire for any of the balls of string, sealing wax, pens, or pencils with which the little place was choked, I retreated, and fell again to worshipping from afar out in the little cobbled street.

But time pressed, and I hid me away to the settling strains, and I am going down there again upon the first opportunity and pry about to my heart's content. Till I see every room in the little place.

IN CANTERBURY.

I had the good fortune to be engaged for a concert in the city of Canterbury not long since, and enjoyed the fleeting glimpse I had of that historical old place immensely. Canterbury, you know, dates back to before the Roman occupation of England, and veritably seems with quaint old landmarks, one of the city gates, the west gate, is, they tell me, the finest existing gate in the United Kingdom. It was built in the troubled times of the Peasants' war, about 1290, is yet in excellent preservation, and still stands, an impressive memorial of the times of old. There are also several buildings here, which are shown to the traveler as the shrines of Thomas a Becket, used to sleep and be provided for.

Canterbury also re-echoes in the possession of some very ancient thoroughfares, Buttery Lane and Nursery Lane among them. Both of these streets still retain much of the business from which they originally derived their names. Nursery Lane is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque streets in England. It happily affects all modern layers of building, and is narrow; it is delightfully crooked, and the houses project almost to the proverbial proximity at which the hurrying and scurrying of the old days, when it was possible to shake hands from the upper windows across the street. The occupants, my kindly guide informed me, are fully aware of the reputation they have to maintain, and at times of festival combine with equal taste and public spirit to decorate their old-fashioned dwellings in the "good old-fashioned way."

IN THE CATHEDRAL.

Of course the great cathedral is the objective point in Canterbury, and though you may not think it of me, I sometimes betimes on the morning after the concert, where I had sung, and "did" it all under the chaperonage of a dear old gentleman who knows every stone in its wonderful old pile, before I manage the train up to town again. This delightful guide of mine is no less a personage than the librarian of the cathedral, which possesses a magnificent collection of the old church works, and is also the distinguished primicerius of the cathedral choir, one of the finest bodies of its kind in the kingdom. In which this gentleman has occupied an honored position for over fifty years.

I cannot tell at length all the wonderful beauties of this fine old place; let it suffice to say that I was shown over it most thoroughly and took an appreciative look at the interesting points of the most noticeable parts. The great electric organ; the exquisitely beautiful choir; the old and decaying looking tomb of Edward the Black Prince; the shrine of St. Becket; the tomb of the late archbishop who decorated their old-fashioned dwellings in the "good old-fashioned way."

There was shown to me, just before descending with the crypt, a small, square hole in the stone floor, filled in with another exactly fitting stone, or concrete. This is in a part called the Martyrdom, and my guide pointed it out as the exact place where tradition says that Thomas a Becket "and his man" were slain by one of the knights. His saintly blood is said to have stained the floor there where he fell, with an ineradicable stain, and the place in which they was chiseled out and sent to the Vatican, the concrete put here in its place. The treasury was another interesting part of the

precincts. The original treasury door, still here, has three locks, the keys of which were in the hands of separate officers of the old monastery, and the consent of all three was necessary before the treasury could be opened. Here in the eastern aisle is the old Bible desk with a chained Bible restored to its place by the late Bishop Parry.

THE BECKET SHRINE.

The shrine of Thomas a Becket is known to every one, and the extent of the former railed space around it may be readily received by examining the floor, on which the depression made in the stone by the feet of the pilgrims is plainly visible. Stairs there are, too, worn into ruts by the feet of pious pilgrims to this shrine. In the center of the long past, in connection with the shrine also my attention was called to the windows of rich thirteenth century glass, which, in spite of the fact that they represent so "Popish" a circumstance as the miracles performed at the tomb of St. Thomas, remain one of the most priceless treasures of early glass coloring in England, and, indeed, in all Europe. There are several places in the cathedral, or rather, recesses where chapels once were, and the cloisters outside, where the monks were wont to pace up and down and meditate, are beautiful, indeed. Tombs, old, older and oldest meet the eye, the remotest date being that of 1109, in the time of Anselm. About the last look I had was a peep into Cathedral library, where the vulgar eye of the usual tourist is not permitted to intrude, and even I had to content myself with a rapid journey around the room, owing to shortness of time. I saw a collection of exquisite cameos—rows and rows of old vellum manuscripts. I was particularly attracted by the first volume of the first Bible actually printed in English (the queer old script it looked, too), and the first English translation of the New Testament as well. Fat musty, smelling old skin-covered tomes they were, brown with age and ragged with time, the creamy old vellum leaves as soft to the touch as velvet.

ANOTHER CURIOSITY.

But Canterbury is the seat of not only one of the finest of old English history-making cathedrals, but of also quite the very oldest Christian church in all the kingdom of England. This little old house of worship came into existence as early as 333 A. D., as nearly as can be reckoned, and was the first to be founded, probably devoted to the Blessed Virgin, and afterward to St. Martin, or England, and is unexcelled in its acquaintance with historical literature, has been engaged for more than half a score of years upon this work, which, as has been said, will be his monument. Never before has there been an attempt to enter upon the field in which he has so courageously harvested that is worth harvesting in the field of historical literature.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT.

I am sure that every one interested in voice development, or singing, or both, has heard and read of the famous teacher, Marchesi, of Paris. He is no doubt the most important of French teachers, probably the most expensive, and certainly the one most talked about. By some of his prizes are loudly sung, and it is certain that her best known pupils, such as Melba, and a few others, are indeed lovely and would be a credit to any one. By some, also, she is most horribly "talked down" as having ruined their voices, neglected them for other richer pupils, and so on to no end of uncomplicated

any remarks. Praises and blame can alike be taken with a grain of salt, and an approximate idea of the woman's rough he arrived at by listening to numbers of her pupils, which I have done, for an occasional idea of Parisian training, in the dim future, of course, for the benefit of my French accent, has once in a while fitted through my brain. As I say, I have studied over her pupils and have heard scores. I have arrived at the conclusion that she has one Melba and dozens of mediocre and bad voices. Not bad style, but bad voice-use. Well, her daughter, Blanche Marchesi, has been giving a number of concerts and appearances in London, and, in order to hear the very best sample of Marchesi work, I have invented my hard-earned cash in tickets, and gone. The singing is a treat, a positive joy to listen to, so lovely and effective the style of delivery, but the voice is no better developed, brought out or even than the voice of many an ordinary singer teacher's pupils in the provinces. Mme. Blanche's voice was breathy; she rejoices in two or three distinct notes, a most lamentably sharp; so that I have come to the conclusion, after two years' study in the matter, that for voice culture, tone development and getting the best work your throat is capable of giving, English masters are far superior to the others. I should advise future singers who wish to study with Mme. Marchesi to first study with some one who makes that subject a specialty and afterward go to her for coaching in style, which it is evident she can teach beautifully, and she occupies, no doubt, in France, the same exalted position in the profession as do Randegger and Henschel, in England.

Sadie E. Kaiser.

SOME NEW BOOKS.

Larned's History for Ready Reference and Topical Reading.

It would seem that the genius of book makers has reached its limit, and that it would be difficult for the inventive mind to hit upon any new and great departure in this line. But here we have, in Mr. J. N. Larned's "History for Ready Reference," a work that is truly "suu generis." This accomplished author who is, and has been for nearly a score of years, the efficient superintendent of the Buffalo public library, and is unexcelled in his acquaintance with historical literature, has been engaged for more than half a score of years upon this work, which, as has been said, will be his monument. Never before has there been an attempt to enter upon the field in which he has so courageously harvested that is worth harvesting in the field of historical literature.

To be able to find in a moment the choicest gems from the great recorders of the past, upon all topics of historic interest, and thus to have, what has never been attempted before, the fascination, interest and charm of our great historical writers at the same time with the authoritative information which they have presented in their writings, this, it seems, would naturally belong to a literary millennium, the dawn of which we would scarce expect to behold. But here it is, and we are compelled to wonder that a single individual, however excellently equipped for the purpose, should have the courage to enter upon such a vast field of laborious thought, that required the exercise of such discrimination and the acquaintance with such a vast amount of the world's best literature.

It is the cream of history in this respect, that it gives in the very language of the best historians, biographers and specialists, their finest utterances upon all topics of history. It is not an encyclopedia, for that is supposed to treat of everything. Besides, the history that is in encyclopedias, Herbert B. Adams, of John Hopkins University, rightly calls "dry bones" when compared with the vivid descriptions from

first hands which it is the province of Mr. Larned's work to give. The work comes in between the encyclopedia and the dictionary, and occupies a field never before occupied. There have been poetical compilations, and collections of American and English literature, and there is now coming out a large library of universal literature, but nothing but this to cover the literature of history, and this was therefore both history and literature.

When we see such an array of prominent men that have expressed themselves so emphatically in behalf of this great work we congratulate not only the author but the publishers that this unique production has received its just deserts.

We cannot begin to tell the merits of the work. It would fill all the columns of any of our issues to attempt to reproduce the favorable criticisms that have appeared in the most prominent periodicals in the country, which have spoken of this work as no other, says for the family, the busy business man, for the overworked student or pastor, for the lawyer, and especially for the teacher and the school this work comes to hand, to inform to save labor and at the same time delight as no other has ever done. Quotations from some 5,000 volumes are given therein and references to some 7,000 more, and all are so arranged that items in history can be found as quickly as a chapter and a verse in the Bible. The work is published by The C. A. Nichols Co., of Springfield, one of the oldest and most reliable subscription book publishers in the country. The volumes, it should be stated, are issued from the Riverside press, a guarantee of most excellent work in printing and binding.

We give herewith the opinions of some of our readers who say that we generally speak of this work with admiration, or allowed our enthusiasm to pass beyond the bounds of the strictest truth with regard thereto. Dr. John Fluke says: "I am quite sure that this is the most valuable reference book in existence." Albert Shaw, editor of the Review of Reviews, speaks of "the incomparable usefulness" of the work. Scores of librarians have testified to its great value. Charles Orr, of Cleveland, saying it is "the best book ever published in the country by subscription." Professor Moses Coit Tyler says: "It stands alone." Rev. Mr. Meers says: "Whoever canvasses for it is a public benefactor." Bishop John H. Vincent says: "where the dictionary goes this history should go. The two books come nearer making a complete library than any other two books in the world." Mr. Henry J. Ford says: "Fortune has favored me by an acquaintance with Mr. J. N. Larned, the compiler of 'History for Ready Reference' and 'Topical Reading' through the past fourteen years. During that time I have had occasion to learn a good deal regarding his exceptional qualifications and marked abilities for the production of such a work. Therefore I speak understandingly in rating it as one of the monumental compositions of present times, and do not feel it can well be too highly commended. As a work touching every possible phase of history, both for reference and reading, it bids fair to become one of the best reference works of the age. In fact, other than for recreative or scientific reading, I believe that the volume, Mr. Larned's 'History for Ready Reference,' comes nearer taking the place of a full library than any other one literary production accessible."

The Boston Transcript, after several extended criticisms upon the early volumes, had the following upon the issue of the last volume: "This monumental work, in its completed form, will take its place in the homes and libraries of the country as the quickest, most convenient, and most authoritative book of historical reference ever yet made available to readers of the English language."

We note with satisfaction that the work is receiving the large patronage it deserves among the discriminating people of Scranton and we venture to express the hope that the students of all our schools where history is taught may have placed within their reach

the incomparable advantages which it affords for their history students. The representative of the publishers of this work, Mr. A. G. Lund, is now taking orders in the city; and we commend him to the favorable consideration of all lovers of good books.

Two slightly volumes of short stories are received from Way & Williams, Chicago, and found to merit more than passing attention. One of them, a collection of fifteen stories and sketches of Kansas life and manners, entitled "The Real Issue," is the work of a "country editor," William Allen White, proprietor of the Emporia Gazette. Mr. White sprang in a day into political prominence during the last campaign by the publication in his paper of a breezy, slashing rejoinder to Populism under the heading "What's Wrong With Kansas."

This was copied the country over and finally made into a circular and distributed by the million. In that editorial Mr. White was the cause and yet humorous partisan battling against surrounding idiosyncrasy. But in these fifteen stories we have him revealed in less bellying attitude, with really humor softened by equally ready sympathy and both dominated by vigorous, virile masculinity. "The Real Issue" is the story which gives its title to the book—is only a sketch, the picture of a congressman in momentary revolt from the hollow mockeries of politics, but it shows in the part of its author an incisive insight into the workings of the soul. "The Story of Aqua Pura" is a Kansas variation of Mrs. Peattie's "The Waterloo." The difference being that it is done in bolder strokes and by a man. It explains why Kansas, like Nebraska, is a hotbed of Populism. But the most enjoyable product of Mr. White's fancy in the collection before us is his story of "The King of Boyville," which well deserved titular honors. It, too, is a slight thing, but when we see how we have had the real article of boy limned in such unpretentious, kindly accuracy? There are plenty of technical faults in Mr. White's fiction, but the great element of human interest, and more of it will be welcome.

The second volume, "The Lucky Number," by I. K. Friedman, carries us into a decidedly different atmosphere. It is a study of the slums of Chicago and not an attempt to photograph squanders in the manner nowadays abominably overdone, but rather an attempt to catch the romance of it and to picture in little studies the effect of environment upon character. Mr. Friedman, we are informed, is a novice in letters. By occupation he is a florist; the last thing one would think of while reading his stories is that of an old Jew, and a graduate of Ann Arbor. Natural interest in human peculiarities took him as a student into Chicago's ghetto, and his present endeavor to reproduce some of the fruits of his observations there are his first published literary work. We have read honestly and at times enthusiastic interest, and we find it fit to recommend. Mr. Friedman has a singularly effective narrative style and is possessed to a notable degree of the dramatic instinct. He does not write stories in the conventional sense; he rarely takes the pains to rig up a plot, counterpoise his characters and his scenes in the last proper equalization of rewards and punishments, and to those who have grown to expect that kind of thing he will prove disappointing. His method is rather to throw his picture on the screen, just as it appears in real life, but with more attention to character, human motive, and the essence of things than to photography, and with dramatic propriety which escapes monotony and shuns the non-essential. It may be charged that his art is somewhat impressionistic, but the main thing is that it is effective, that it commands attention, excites sympathy and leaves afterward no more than the faintest regret. We shall await Mr. Friedman's next literary work with expectancy, for he seems capable of something far beyond the ordinary.

Reduced Rates to Washington via Pennsylvania Railroad.

For the benefit of those who desire to attend the ceremonial incident to the inauguration of President-elect McKinley, the Pennsylvania Railroad company will sell excursion tickets to Washington March 1, 2, 3, and 4, valid to return from March 4 to 8, at the following rates: From New York, \$5.00; Philadelphia, \$5.40; Baltimore, \$1.60; Harrisburg, \$5.00; Williamsport, \$8.75; Buffalo, \$11.25; Rochester, \$10.48; Altoona and Pittsburg, \$10.00; and from all other stations on the Pennsylvania system at reduced rates.

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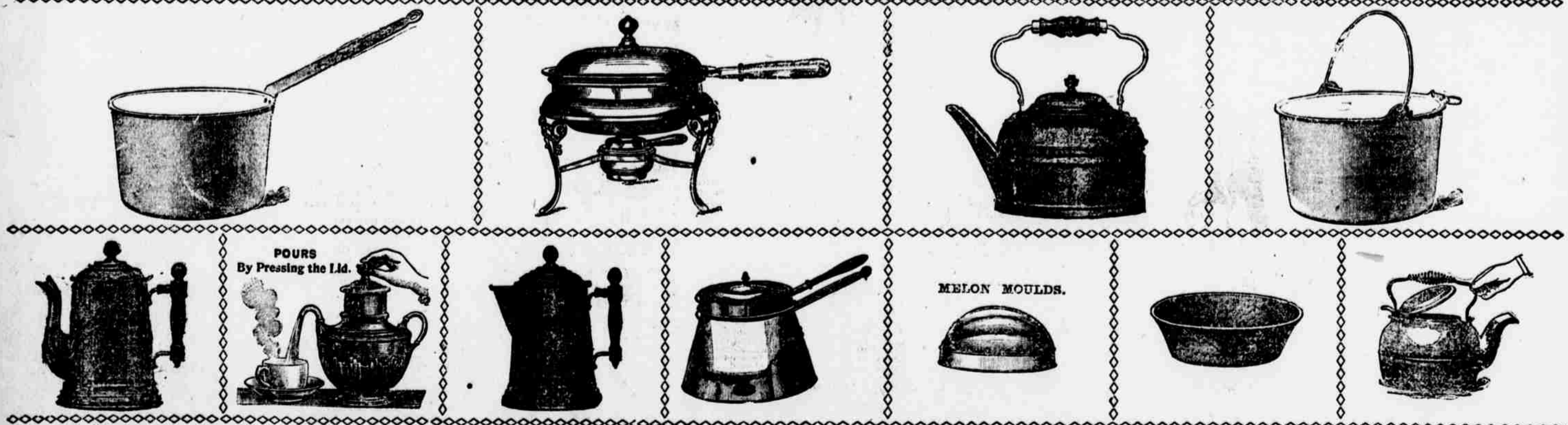
of the year." If sales are an indication, our verdict is being sustained. "Carissima" has already exhausted several editions. But this does not answer the main question—"Who under the heavens is Lucas Malet?" "Lucas Malet" is the nom de plume of a woman—Mary Kingsley, daughter of the famous Chester Grosvenor and now the wife of the Rev. William Harrison, rector of Clavelly, in Devonshire. Mrs. Harrison has demonstrated in her literary career at least two things. First, that it is possible for an author to be widely read, keenly appreciated by the best critics, besieged by offers from publishers and yet refrain from rapid writing, eight years having elapsed between the publication of the "Wages of Sin" and that of "The Carissima," while there were long intervals between other works from the same pen. Secondly, that one may be a novelist of the first rank and yet avoid individual publicity. Mrs. Harrison herself would be the last to quarrel with misconceptions as to her identity. Whatever her methods—and one is tempted, with apologies to Mrs. Burnett, to believe she has a negative in character—she has hiterto almost altogether escaped the paragraphist ad even in England little is known about her outside of the circle of her intimate friends. One of the dearly loved and carefully educated daughters of Charles Kingsley (christened after his mother, Mary Louisa) she shared in the delightful household at Eversley, pictured by Mrs. Kingsley in "Letters and Memoirs," and after her father's decease, for a friend, William Harrison, afterward rector of Clavelly, that picturesque Devonshire village so well known from the readers of "Wives and Daughters." Mrs. Harrison's husband was a village of a single street—a winding, rocky pathway, pitching headlong into the bluest sea in the world. Last year in "A Romance of Clavelly," Kate Douglas Wiggin herself believes she had the quaint and charming village, not built like unto other towns, but "fingering from the sea into a narrow rift between wooded hills," and surrounded by 800 years. In spite of her quiet and beautiful surroundings, however, it is not the aspects of nature but the urgent, compelling problems of human life which have most deeply impressed Mrs. Harrison. There are few touches of description in her books, little of the ornate, but a novel, "The Carissima," published in the early '90s, dealt with the marriage of a middle-aged colonel to the brilliant, golden-haired Enderby's wife, and the pathos of the hero's awakening to a knowledge of the fact that "contact is not fusion." Then came "Mrs. Loring," and "A Counsel of Perfection," two years ago, in which we have had the pathos of the hero's awakening to a knowledge of the fact that "contact is not fusion."

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