

THE CHAPERON.

There were plenty of girls who thought they would give youth for Evadne Rosevere's distinction. She was 45, and made no sort of secret of the fact, though she was single. But that to be single and a celebrity at least puts an old maid upon a level with a wife who is nobody, is one of the best results of the way we live now.

To see Evadne at a ball was rather an event; her hostess saw her there with distinct satisfaction and a feeling that her name would look well in the printed accounts of it. Also the description of the beautiful pansy-colored velvet gown she was wearing. She had come to chaperone a pretty, newly engaged niece, knowing that the task would be easy enough. The newly engaged only asked a rarely secluded corner, and there she remained, and in encompassing themselves behind a big palm. They talked there for three hours, for they were bad dancers. What they said would have been dull enough if any one else had overheard it. To themselves it was a veritable epitome of wit and wisdom.

Miss Rosevere had many friends, but, rather to her relief, they were not largely represented there that evening. She, too, wanted isolation, and after a time managed to secure a solitary seat in the rear of the many crowded tables. She was thrown open for sitting out, dimly lighted with shaded lamps, and fragrant with soft yellow roses. It was the first time for years that she had been away from home on June 18th. It was one of the many splendid adventures that she dedicated to a time before she had become famous or lonely. Since the death of her widowed mother, when she was 25, she had lived and worked independently. The world at large seemed to express a wonder she had never married, till it grew tired of the subject. There were two or three men who privately acknowledged her as their reason for being bachelors, but people had never linked her name with theirs. There are a few women who insist this kind of respectability is not to be theirs. They are apart and aloof, for reasons that are too subtle for exact analysis. Yet these reasons are so forcible that they are strongly felt by the most unselfish persons brought into their proximity.

She was content, even happy. Except now and then, when June came back with her warm sun and the air which is full of voices. Her story was simple to baldness. Not in the least fitted to make a novel, far less a poem, in its hucknabed lack of fresh features. She had taken a friend for lover. Then just as she gave the first faint but unmistakable signs, the news came to her that for years he had been bound to another and an inferior woman. She had treated her love with stern decision. She had snuffed the steen of their friendship, broken it asunder without a word of explanation. Better any pain to herself than the perpetual remorse of having blighted another woman's life. That she dared not face. Her firmness had the natural result. Stephen Babere had married and she had slipped below her natural level to that of his wife. It so often happens, and it happened in this instance. He had been a painter of singular power and promise when Evadne was but a hard-working art student who betrayed small signs of future eminence. "A man who was sure to succeed, a girl who was unlikely to do much." That was the verdict of the world when they were young. Fate had reversed the judgment. Babere retrograded; Evadne, taught by art, love and sorrow, triumphed.

But there had been one night of utter happiness for her before she knew the truth. There had been one ball, one only, when they had danced together for the first time and the last. She had worn heliotrope from the time of her youth. She wore it now, among her flashing diamonds. The scent wafted her back to that other June. Long ago? There is no long ago for a woman's heart. She could recall every incident of that night as if it were yesterday. The perfume of flowers. She sat there alone with only the throbbing pulse of the vase rising and falling with melancholy cadences. Susan Prothero's alert, long-sighted eyes were upon her, and through the open door she made a sketch of the well-dressed head with its faultlessly arranged masses of gray hair, so that its picturesqueness was not quite wasted.

Evadne was not thinking of herself. She was wondering if Stephen were still alive—no, if he were. It had been so much changed. She had no idea that sorrow and renunciation had put into her own face something rarer than beauty. She who had not been called pretty in her girlhood was much more so now. Gray hair, fashionable, and perfect dress, such an important help to a reputation for good looks. She thought that those quiet evenings in her own studio she had tenderly dedicated to gentle remembrance of a dead joy had had none of the bitterness that gave the old pain a new quality tonight. Perhaps she had been too much with the silly young lovers who had rushed in a particularly hopeless engagement which really ought to have been frustrated. It was her punishment for being too lenient to her needs. By and by she would be discovered and sent in to the supper, for which she had no inclination; then she would go home. It was so hot and so over-perfumed, a disease of scents for free flowers and a heart strangled by too much perfume. The evening seemed endlessly long, and there was no clock in the room. The band was playing an air that, though it did not date back to her past, had a decided resemblance to one she had come to remember. She had never danced since that ball to which Stephen had accompanied them. Her mother's death had the pathetic advantage of giving her an excuse for withdrawing from society for a very long time. When she came back it was as a quiet spectator. She said good-by to youth amid the whirling waltzers and the wax light. Dead flowers and dead hopes were the next morning. The wealth of it, in a heart framed for only one, and as it were, stealthily on children and even animals. She dared only to let her

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self go when she was painting and the utter sadness of two or three pictures she had first exhibited had been very marked. Yet she had led a useful and cheerful existence. She was very sensitive to music, and the string orchestra played well. They were singing the refrain, now—a pretty fashion enough. The words of "Bid Me Goodby" were utterly commonplace, mere jingle strung together, and yet they touched the fastidious, critical listener. Ask me no more if I regret; you need not care to know; A woman's heart does not forget—

She heard no more for her hostess had rustled into the room with a gilt of emeralds and a frou-frou of the costliest of specially designed brocade. There was a man with her, pale and gray headed, with an indomitable air of unaccustomedness about his dress and bearing. He looked like a gentleman, and yet there was something awkward in his demeanor, as of one ill at ease and out of his element. He had, in fact, come back to society after a long absence, and found that both he and it had drifted hopelessly apart. An impulse just to glance again at what he had left years ago had made him accept a chance invitation. He regretted it. His wife had not been dead many months. He had imagined that death would have come to him first. It had come to the woman he had learned to mate because of the sordid pithiness of nature that had at last almost ground him down to his own pattern. Illusion, ambition, had fallen away like flowers nipped by the chilling frost of dead-level mediocrity. He who, at 25, had been full of faith in the future, had stepped out of the ranks at 30. At 35 he was an old man, and, what was infinitely worse, had no past worthy the retrospect, no achieved work worth showing.

Mrs. Thesiger, who was too good-natured ever to be likely to climb very high on the social ladder, had found him vaguely wandering among the palms, and suggested that he should take some one in to supper. "Mr. Babere—Miss Rosevere," that is how these meetings occur today. Evadne had in former years been expectant of such a chance encounter. It had never come, and she had not for a long time regarded it as likely. She had known him once, and had seen with a sense of pain, more poignant than any she had ever cost her, that the young lover of her girlish dreams was as dead as the roses she had worn once upon a time. Failure was written on his face. The eyes that had flashed with hope and passionate determination to do something that should be remembered were quiet and dull now. It was the face of a not very much interested spectator in the comedy of errors we call life. The thought of

her own busy world, her art, her fame, her many friends, smote her with a bitter sense of contrast. He had had such a start in the race, yet she had so entirely distanced him. They loved in silence—Evadne with a grace that had become natural to her, Stephen with a touch of eluminate. A moment later they were alone. Evadne rose from her seat and stood under the warm radiance of a tall shade lamp. She was beautiful as she spoke, and her voice had always been her chief charm. "Have you forgotten me in all these years?" Then, and not until then, he recognized her. He held out his hand; her own trembled as she took it. "Strange that we should meet at a ball." He spoke in the most matter-of-fact tone possible, but it was an assumption. It deceived Evadne. She put an air of reserve into her next question. "I hope your wife is well and your child—er, perhaps, you have others now?" Her voice, her smile, her delicate distinction hurt him. It made him feel that a gulf of well-spent years rolled between them and set up a barrier. "My wife has been dead ten months. My one child died years ago." "I am sorry. Such sorrows as those must be terrible." She had resumed her seat and he stood beside her, ill at ease. Then he said, with a touch of satire that had wounded her sometimes when it touched her unsuccessful work. "Do not waste your compassion. My marriage was not fortunate. I suppose I deserved my fate." He scopped short. "You loved her once," she said wistfully, pained by the laugh with which he ended. "For a little while, perhaps. I gave my word. I kept it. It cost me nearly twenty years purgatory. You, perhaps, never guessed it, but there was a time you might have delivered me."

"By tempting you to dishonor; ruining another woman's happiness to my own. You did not understand me well enough to know it was impossible." "Something in her dignity brought him back an echo of youthful eagerness. He had once been bold. His awkward reserve fell away before her clear gaze. "Then, perhaps, you loved me once after all?" She looked up at him without flinching. "Yes, I loved you with all my soul." She had never thought to speak the words aloud, though they were as smartly familiar to her heart. She spoke them now as if her dead self were speaking to another ghost.

"And yet you let me do that thing, knowing all the while my heart was yours." Evadne drew herself proudly up. "You forget. You never spoke of love to me." "She was miserable. I was miserable, you suffered, and all for the sake of a few prim womanly scruples. Three lives lost for a boy's hasty promise. How much better to have taken the gifts the gods gave, if you cared to claim it, that is." "If I cared! Stephen, you knew I loved you from the first, but I dared not do this thing, I measured her love by mine." Stephen laughed contemptuously. His had always been an exacting nature, and now that he almost felt his feet for this woman with her rich velvet and her jewels bearing witness that she had stormed the citadel he had deserted. Tonight the music and the youth about him made him kick against the pricks. It might have been so different. He did not say it might have been otherwise if Stephen Babere had not bartered art for a pair of blue eyes. But if Evadne Rosevere had acted otherwise she might have made him great if she had sat at his feet and done him homage. He was angry with her, and his apathy had kindled a little. "To be disillusioned now, to be robbed of the hero she had worshipped so long; it capped the climax of her misfortune. This selfish railer against the fate he had courted was not the Stephen of her girlhood. He had laughed at her conceptions of art, told her she was charming, but not a painter—and now?" She did not speak angrily, but very sadly when she broke a painful silence. "You paint still?" "Paint! I have not touched a brush for years. I live in a cottage was not at all my wife's ideas. Her uncle had a concern. He was patron of the Emerin variety. I got a desk in his office and, in time, a junior, very junior, partnership."

There were tears in Evadne's eyes when she spoke next. They were for the artist that was lost, not for the man who had bartered fame for a share in a concern. She had struggled, wretched starved; difficulties and barriers had met her at every turn. Yet she had attained; nay, more than that, she had awakened. Suppose the had married Stephen and given up her art? Thanking for the work done, the

work to be done yet, checked speech. She stood in quiet thought. In Stephen's unaccountable eyes she was beautiful, and a sudden mad eagerness to try to retrieve his wasted days overcame him. "We have changed places," he burst out. "When we parted you were only a struggling student; I was a man whose two or three pictures had their admirers. People laughed at me for an impressionist, but they all said I had a future. You had no encouragement. You were such a silent girl—not even very pretty in other men's eyes. Now you are beautiful and gently and famous. You are some one; I am no one." The waltz music filled the pauses with its dreamy sweetness. Two happy young people passed the doorway laughing. The pair within glanced at them involuntarily. Evadne was in a reverie, and Stephen's words sounded vague and far off. No appeal could touch her. "Have you no pity for me, no regret that an old friend has drifted back to your feet a failure? Evadne, say again that you loved me once. I love you now." There was passion in his voice; yet it was scarcely real love, this aftermath of the harvest of other years. Only he longed to be again in the bright world he had left so long ago, and her hand held the key. "It is too late, Stephen; I have no heart to give you now. My love for the man that was is sacred still; it is not for you nor for any other."

"Amie, are you ready to go yet?" Jack's train leaves early, and I must get up to see him off." The interruption was sudden, and the rosy, dark-haired newcomer had Jack with her. Evadne held out her hand, that was quite steady now, without a word; the chorus of the band spoke for them. "Did me good-by and go." She swept away with that regal air he had not seen before. There were some dead heliotrope flowers where she stood and Babere stooped and picked them up. He looked very grave and old. The last spark of fire had burned out of his eyes; they were dull and sunken again. His companion, the pale spirit that whispers "it might have been," had taken Evadne's place beside him. The waltz was over, and he went out into the white dawn—black and white.

WHAT THE GRIPPE IS. Each Nation Tries to Shift the Responsibility for It Upon Some Other. From the Albany Argus. People who have never been in love are apt to doubt the existence of that passion. "He jests at scars that never felt a wound." And so, people who have never had the grippe are inclined to think it is merely a new name for a common cold. One writer playfully suggests that "evidently the thing to do is for everyone to become a Christian scientist and firmly believe that no such disease as the grippe exists." The fact is, however, that the disease has been known and described from the time of Hippocrates who was born in the year 460 B. C., and, though its name has been changed at various periods, it has always been a form of epidemic catarrh, more or less severe, according to circumstances. In 1700 it was called "coqueluche," because the sick wore a cap close over their heads. Afterward the Italian physicians named it "influenza," and in later years the French doctors gave it the name of "la grippe," though it seems best to retain the French spelling of the word when meaning this disease, so as to distinguish it from other gripes. It is known all over the world, and there is a disposition in every nation to shift the odium of it upon some other country. Thus the Russians call it the Chinese catarrh, the Germans often call it the Russian pest, the Italians name it the German disease, and the French call it sometimes the Italian fever and sometimes the Spanish catarrh.

The occurrence of grippe, as well as of most other epidemics, is apparently connected with some particular condition or contamination of the atmosphere, but what that condition is, or what may be that kind of contamination, no one knows. The poisonous influence, whatever its nature may be, wings its way with greater celerity than the speed of human intercourse, while its progress seems influenced by the season of the year, whether hot, cold, damp or temperate; it is said to travel from east to west, and it seldom stays in one district more than six or seven weeks. Some visitations have proved more severe than others. One in 1782, which extended over the whole of Europe, was very fatal; but at another time when it raged all over Europe, and was said to have not missed a family, and scarcely a person, none died, except some children. When it broke out in London in 1847, it appeared in a single day over every part of that great city, and affected upward of 500,000 persons. In December, 1889, there was an epi-

demic of grippe in the city of New York, said to have been "caused by germs conveyed in a letter from Russia which was received by a patient of an eminent uptown physician." That epidemic lasted six weeks and was extremely severe, resulting in hundreds of deaths. In March, 1891, it broke out again, and continued eight weeks, and the Registrar of the Board of Health says: "While it was less impetuous in its attack and less speedy in its culmination, its more protracted duration made it the most fatal of all the epidemics we have had. Since 1891 the severity of the disease has been gradually declining, although more or less prevalent every year. The largest number of deaths from influenza in New York in any one year since 1891 was in 1895. In 1896 there was a decided remission, but an increase again in 1897. In 1898, up to the present time there have been fewer deaths than in any previous year since the disease first appeared."

Professor Northagel, of Vienna, who made a special study of the grippe, made a report in 1892, in which he said that the maldy was miasmatic, infectious and contagious, and declared that no specific remedy was known, though the sufferers might be relieved somewhat by various drugs. As to treatment, the New York Board declined to make any suggestions, not deeming it safe to give any general prescription, because "the disease takes many different forms, and each form should be treated specifically." One physician is candid enough to say frankly that "while drugs may help to relieve the suffering, the best cure is a week spent in bed."

AT HIS EXPENSE. He told her that it was impossible to find words to tell her how much he loved her. The next day he received a present of a dictionary.—Boston Transcript. "Does your husband ever go to church, Mrs. Badger?" "Oh, yes, he goes quite regularly in the winter time and not at other times?" "Why does he go in the winter time and not at other times?" "Well, you see, he generally has the quinsy when the weather is raw, and thinks he is going to die."—Chicago News. "Does your husband ever say anything about his mother's cooking?" "What was the result?" "I understand that the family lawyers are now in secret session."—Brooklyn Life.

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