Woman Hater

[A SHORT STORY.]

the regiment as Stonewall. From |-if she had only met him before! this it may be gathered that he was not an impressionable or impulsive men. He had never been in love fair share of attention. -"honest Injun," as his brother officers would have said. They would mit that folly, he would go in pretty deep. En revanche, he was a hardworking officer, who got plenty of work out of his Tommies, and contrived at the same time to be popular

with them. He was not so popular with the fair sex. No man really is who persistently holds aloof from them, and, without being impolite in their presence, shows that he can do thoroughly well with their absence. Captain Tunstall was, from their point of view, no use at all. matter to any wearer of a petticoat peer one day, with comfortable accessories-except that it was exasperating for it all to be out of reach.

It was one time when his battalion was quartered at Windsor on guard duty that the great event happened Ascot races were just over, and by way of finish to the week the Guards had arranger a big day on the pretty polo ground just outside Datchet. The clite of Windsor and the two counties gathered in state to see the sport, and the place was gay with flowers, frills, frecks and fashion. Captain Tunstall, of course, was playing in his own team. He was one of its strongest pillars, and when victory fell eventually to his side it was largely due to his rapid runs up and skilful shots at goal.

"Oh, who is that man-the man who made most of the goals?" cried a girl with enthusiasm. She was seated in Lady Philiston's carriage, which stood at the side of the ground. Captain Tunstall, riding in at the close of the game, came almost straight at the carriage, and the girl was able to see on closer inspection what a fine man he was. They exchanged glances.

"That is Captain Tunstall," replied Lady Philiston. "He is good to look at, isn't he? but you would be disappointed if you knew him. They call him a woman-hater-which, I suppose, means that he is too stupid to be able to make himself agreeable to any woman. Not that he seemed stupid on the only occasion that I ever met him, But if he is really a woman-hater, he must be a fool. Think what he misses!

"He evidently doesn't hate you," said the girl in a discreet whisper, "for he is obviously coming to speak to you." But in her heart she wondered whether it were true that the pony's course had altered just a fraction since the exchange of that glance.

"Dear me, so he is," replied Lady Philiston in the same tone. "He has not forgotten me then." She was obvi-

usual brightness. Usually he was grave with ladies. Lady Philiston, who liked big, good looking men, and knew well that Tunstall was not lavish in even these small attentions, rattled on for some time in a lively manner, taking all the compliment to her own fading attractions, and pluming herself on their effect. It was only as an afterthought that she introduced her friend Miss Certis.

The intelligent reader has probably divined by now that it was Miss Certis' face, and not Lady Philiston's attractions, which had drawn Stonewall Tunstall out of his ordinary groove as if with some magnetic power. In truth, it was a wonderful face-not altogether regular, yet charming in its irregularity. What fixed the attention at once was the eyes-large, dark and lustrous. They might have belonged to an oriental sultana but for the expression, which spoke of the active brain of the west, not of the soulless torpor

She spoke to Tunstall about the polo, and he replied with zest. He had sufficient sense not to neglect Lady Philiston; but how great would have been her pique had she known that he regarded her as but the stepping stone over which a man must pass each time he comes and goes to the Happy Land? It does not do to kick it away into mid-stream.

He was so sincerely delighted with the encounter, so really anxious to please, that both ladies were captivated with him.

"You must come and see me," said Lady Philiston. "Oh, I know you are not a calling man, but you must make an exception. Write and say when you will come to lunch. Or, better still, come on Tuesday—if you don't mind a short invitation. We have a few people coming, and Miss Certis will still

Now, Tunstall always refused luncheon invitations. People who had had any experience of him in this way had accept this invitation readily, nay, with gratitude.

Captain Tunstall went to that lunchcon party and enjoyed it. Miss Certis charming to talk to. Opportunities came in his way, and he used them. Nor was the language of the eyes wanting. Again and again the twain drew together, and by manner and glance declared the pleasure that they felt in each other's society. Curtis Tunstall, who was not, as a rule, of an idealistic temperament, found himself talking fluently on the affinity of souls and the natural rapprochement ried out his programme. He had inwhich, on some rare and beatific occasions, one feels for another at the first her that he had fallen in love with her friendship, however. She exercised an at first sight, nor did he intend to. It attraction over him which in his cool was too early. Miss Certis, however, moments struck him as simply unperceived it, and she was not blind. Her own feelings-well, she liked to hear it, she wished that he would go hate her and leave her. There were on, realized only too well that he was moments when he thought that she not that kind of man, and felt that life was deliberately leading him to a flirwas very hard. The worse of it all tation of the kind that he had always

TURTIS TUNSTALL was known in was that she was leaving so soon, and Captain Tunstall did not forget the stepping stone. He gave her quite her

"Yes, I can't tell you how I shall miss her," she said with reference to also have added that when he did com- Miss Certis, in reply to some remark of his. "She is a dear gi?". I would keep her by force if I could. But the fact is that there is another who has better claims. That is the worst of dear girls. They are always, snapped

> "Snapped up?" observed Tunstall, somewhat bewildered. "Engaged, of course. And she is to

up soonest.

be married next month, so she won't be available at least for some time." His house of cards had fallen about his head with such a snock that it He could not be relied on except for might have been built of sheets of barren courtesy. What, then, did it iron. He thought he had found an angel, and he had merely taken the whether he was a popular officer and false bait of a heartless flirt. On the

had earned the D. S. O. or not? It eve of being married she would let the mattered just as little that he was most casual stranger make love to her, Lord Amershan's son, and would be a and return it with her eyes and manner. If that was the kind that women were, the Lord deliver him from them for the future! He would go back to his first love, the regiment. There was no fear of treachery there.

The result of this little adventur was that he became more of a Stonewall than ever, and that as soon as the general call to arms was issued for South Africa, he volunteered for active duty, and was given it gladly by a war office which was beginning to feel the need of earnest officers. There he managed to distinguish himself, earned official approval and mention in dispatches, and returned invalided at the end of a year and a half or so-but with a fixed determination to go out again as soon as possible.

As he was advised not to spend the winter in England, mid-autumn found him in the south of France. One day, as he was slowly descending the staircase of the hotel, he encountered suddenly a face that made his heart bound even after what had happened and the lapse of time. It seemed perfectly unchanged since the day when he first saw it on the polo ground in distant Datchet. And yet, stay, was it quite the same? A little difference, perhaps -due to the lapse of time itself and natural development of course. But its beauty was unchanged, the glorious eyes were lustrous as every, the witchery of their glance seemed to draw his soul out as it had-. Was it only an effect of shadows, or was the expression a trifle harder? He must have stared unduly, for the lady drew back obviously in surprise and disapproval, and without recognition.

"I beg your pardon," said Tunstall with haste and contrition. "But are you not-perhaps I should say were you not, Miss Certis?"

"That certainly was my maiden name," returned the lady doubtfully. "But I don't think we have met be-

"I am Captain Tunstall. I dare say ously much pleased. "He can't really you won't remember the name, but I met you when you were staying at She welcomed him cordially, and Lady Philiston's, just before you were Tunstall responded with (for him) un- married-at least I was told that you were going to be married shortly.'

The lady glanced at him with a keen, inquisitorial glance. Certainly she had developed in self-confidence since

"Oh," she said. "Lady Philiston. At Dropless, of course. Yes-I see. Now that was about two years and a half ago, or thereabouts, wasn't it? And you have remembered me all that time? Very complimentary, I am

Captain Tunstall was slightly bewildered at the thin acidity which ran through this speech, also at the affectation of obliviousness with which she spoke of the date of her marriage. Certainly matrimony had altered her. He remained silent, at a loss what to

"Have you seen Lady Philiston lately?" she continued eastly. "No, not since then," he replied, bitterly. "I mean," he added, in explanation, "I have been out at the front

The lady made a hasty mental calculation that some six months must have elapsed between the date of that visit and the outbreak of the war. Then her eyes softened somewhat towards him.

"You have been wounded?" she said, sympathetically. He carried the outward and visible signs about him. "Yes. That is why I am here; otherwise I should be still at the front. But

I hope to go back soon." She gazed at him with enigmatic. inquiring eyes, and there was a momentary silence. She was the first to

break it. "As it seems that we are old friends and are staying at the same hotel," she said gravely, "I hope we shall see something of you. I should like to introduce you to my husband, Sir Henry Verdright, I am Lady Verdright now.

Captain Tunstall murmured som suitable inauities. He did not feel the slightest desire to renew the acquaintance which had already cost him so given up sending them. Great would dear. Still less did he desire it in view have been their surprise to hear him of the change in her which had become so apparent. Then at least she seemed sweet, fresh, adorable. Now she seemed openly hard, cool, sarcasticthorough woman of the world. No was not only pretty to look at, but doubt she wished to amuse herself by

dissecting his feeling, or perhaps in other ways that he knew of and hated. Several times the idea occurred to him-why not remove to another hotel? But he always decided that that would be cowardice. Better remain, trouble not at all about her, and show her that

her influence was completely broken. At the end of a week he was disgusted to realize that he had not quite carsensibly drifted into an intimacy with Lady Verdright instead of keeping her He did not actually tell at a distance. It was a queer kind of would have been blind if she had not canny, and yet all the time she was so repellent to his nature that at times he simply wondered why he did not

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His face became as if transfigured. 'Oh tell me. I must see her again." London World.

vowed he would never descend to, and at others there was a sarcastle glitter in her eyes as if she thought that at last he was falling into some snare which she had eleverty laid for him, and rejoiced in his approaching disaster. Looking back, he could not see a trace in her of the girl whom he could have loved—except the face. And the face itself was so different, though just the same! To think that so short a space of time could have effected so great an alteration! Yet, stay, that girl, though to outward view an angel, was merely a heartless deceiver. Perhaps the inner flend had worked through at last.

It must be understood that he did not think so of Lady Verdright when he was with her. Had that been the case. would have been easy to break away. It was only when he was alone that he could criticise her coolly and total up her defects. When he was in her presence he was like a person hyp-

notized. One day they were sitting out in the front of the hotel watching the polyglot crowds that swayed to and fro. It happened that there passed by a certain Lady FitzPallon, who had nade herself notorious by the peculiarly cynical and heartless way in which she had thrown over a man to whom she was engaged in order to marry another of higher rank.

"Now, that woman is a heartless wretch, if you like," said Lady Verdright vehemently.

Captain Tunstall glanced at her and shrugged his shoulders. He remembered the proverb which advises abstinence from any discussion of hempen manufactures in a house where a member has died of oversuspension. "Don't you think so?" demanded Lady Verdright

"Perhaps she began as a flirt and clipped by easy stages into what she is," replied Tunstall cynically.

Oh.as to flirting-just ordinary flirting-human nature tends to it. But this woman was much worse than that.'

"I agree with you that for an engaged woman to flirt with another man is the worst of all," said Tunstall, eyeing her with meaning.

She bubbled over with laughter. "Excuse me. I could not help it Really when you look at me in that severe way you amuse me-dreadfully. Now, I suppose the meaning of it all is that you think that some engaged woman has been ffirting with you and you resent it."

This was bringing the war into the nemy's country with a vengeance Tunstall did not feel equal to charging her formally with that offenseespecially as it seemed likely that she would laugh at him. On the other hand, she really was not worth a lie. While he was reaching this polite conclusion, she struck in abruptly.

"Suppose a case," she said. "Oh, know of one, in which a young girl who knew hardly anything of the world or her own mind, and had never seen any man who moved her heart at all, became engaged to a man chiefly because he proposed and her parents approved, and she thought it was a fine thing to be engaged, just as, a few years before, she had thought it a fine thing to have her hair put up. And then suddenly she met a man who opened her heart and showed her what was in it, and the hopelessness and heartlessness of the union she had

contemplated-"And when she had derived sufficient amusement and instruction from the contemplation of it, she shut it up again, and, like a sensible girl, married the original man, salved the wickedness, and saved the scandal. Do lake you right?"

"Oh, for goodness sake don't look at me like that," cried Lady Verdright with a ripple of laughter. I must laugh if you do, and I want to cry. But she didn't marry the original man. She broke it off-

"Broke it off" This was unexpected. Then the lady was not talking about herself. "And married the oth-

"They have not met again. "Really, what a pity! Do you know, I like the idea of your friend. seems to me to be rather a noble girl. One of the few, I suppose?

"You are exceedingly rade," said Lady Verdright betwixt anger and mirth. "I will not pretend to misunderstand you any longer. You have been digging at me all the time, and it is most impolite. If my husband wasn't such a bad shot, I would tell him to call you out. And the best of it is that you are quite mistaken."
"Mistaken!" cried Tunstall. "What

m earth do you mean?" "You don't deserve to be told. fact, if I did what you deserve I should leave you to flounder as you are. But I am very good-natured, so if you like to come to our room I will show you something that will interest you.

Almost mechanically Tunstall folowed her to the private room on the His thoughts were in a first floor. whirl. Mistaken? What did she mean by that? Was it possible that -. But there was no coherence in it all. He expected mystery, but there was none Once arrived, she merely pointed to one of the many photographs that adorned the over-mantel.

"Do you recognize that?" "Of course," he replied, in amagement; "it is you-and a good like-

"Look again. Don't you see any dif-

"Well, since you press me," he said not without malicious enjoyment. "It is you at your best. Perhaps it is a pity that you don't always look like that, and do your hair like that. You had it so when you were at Lady Philiston's.'

She uttered a harsh strident laugh "Well, all through life I have been given to understand that I am not as pretty as my sister, but never so plain-

"Sister?" he gasped. "Twin sister. Oh, we are very much alike, and have been taken for each other before. Now, don't you understand? And I never stayed with Lady Philiston in my life, or saw you before that day on the staircase here. "Then why did you pretend you

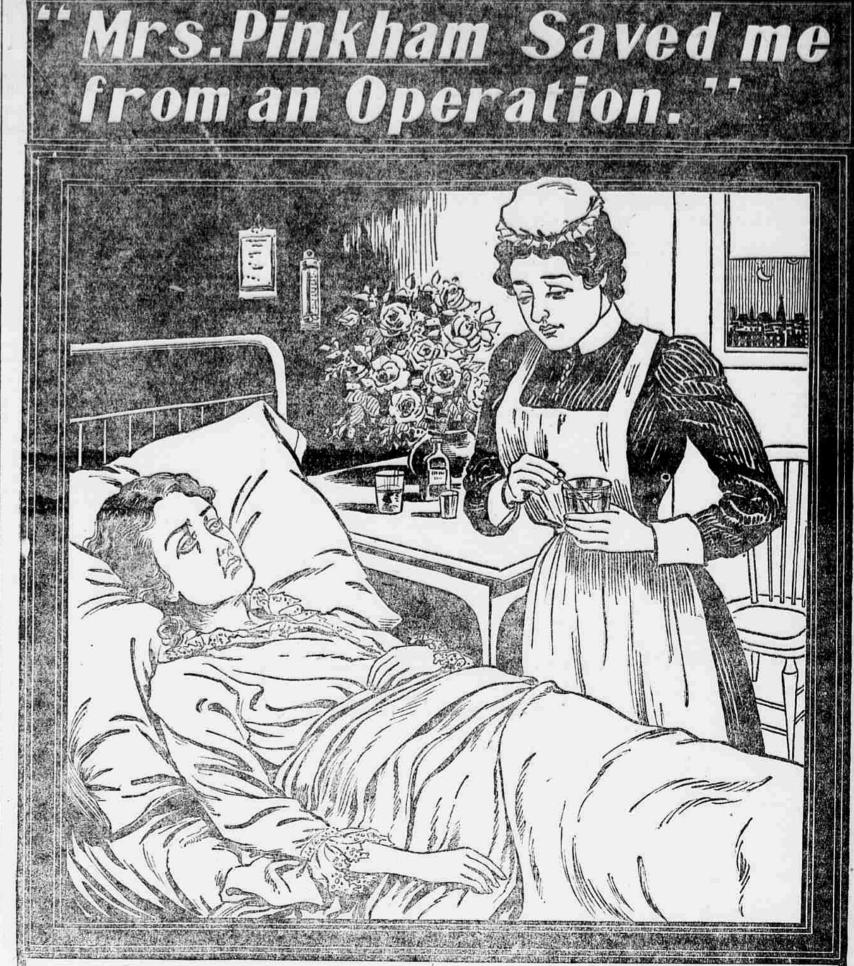
You insisted on it. knew, of course, that you were mistaking me for my sister, and I thought t would be fun-

had?

"But what does it matter." he struck in, bitterly, "The facts remain." Ha tones spoke volumes to Lady Verdright's quick ears. She eyed him closely-inquisitorially, for a moment. She knew that what she contemplated was dangerous thing to do, but she thought she knew this man within and without, so she decided to risk it.

'You forget one thing," she said, slowly. "She did not marry the original man."

"Where is she now?" he panted.



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PALMS IN VOGUE.

Palms are today among the most ashionable household decorations, the eye on entering the half, the draw-Their popularity represents the growth ing room, the dining room of a fashchiefly of the last ten years. Thousands of palms are purchased outright in this part of the country every year are apt to contain each one or more at an enormous outlay of money, and handsome paims,

their place having been taken by the

ionable house, is a palm, and the bou-doir, sleeping fooms and nursery even coked after. Except on special oc- expensive of the family of decorative outs flowering plants are not much foliage plants, and has aristocratic un-

seen in the houses of the well-to-do. Itality of constitution which makes the now propagated very successfully in uncertain dispositions."

s that nowhere in this country can the common. Many varieties, though, are good market.

purchase of one take on the alluring this country under glass, and there are phase of a speculation. "Palms, like florists who do nothing else. When the some people," said a dealer, "have very | baby plant is about a foot high, it scema, these dealers turn it over to Another reason given for its prestige others, who make a specialty of coaxing it on to stardier growth and getting foreign varieties be raised out of doors, it ready for the retail dealers. In one and the largest and handsomest speci- extensive palm nursery for example, nens must be imported from Madagas- as many as one million infant palms thousands of dollars are spent in hir- some people think, for the vogue of car. Asia, Africa and Australia, thus have been seen under glass at one ing paims and in having them careful- the paim is that it is perhaps the most insuring to their owners the distinction of having something out of the the perils of a first year, is sure of a