

OUTWARD!

BY W. J. CAMERON.
The sun's high and the moon's high;
The bay's a crescent of blue.

-From "Poems."

His Western Cousins.

Horatio King Vantine Meets the "Three Most Charming Things That Ever Happened."

(W. L. ROSE, in Cleveland Plain-Dealer.)

There is no doubt that Horatio King Vantine took himself seriously. He was a Boston youth, well educated, well mannered, his family was one of the oldest, and his prospects were excellent.

Into this regular and well ordered life a bombshell suddenly dropped. It took the form of a letter that was laid on his desk by the office messenger.

Horatio read the letter through, and then read it through again.

"Our dear cousin," it began, "we want to know you and know you right away. Aunt Emeline Glover wrote to us that you were in New York, and we've been looking for you ever since. We are your second cousins, you know, Jane and Ann and Susan Wallace. Your father and our mother were first cousins, and that's what gives us a claim on you.

Horatio thought so too. There was a scramble and a wild clatter on the stairs, and three young women rushed into the room and shook Horatio's hand vigorously and greeted him effusively, and wound up by joining hands and circling about him in time to a barbaric chant. They then stopped breathless and laughed merrily.

"That makes you one of the tribe, cousin," cried the tallest girl. "It's the Pawnee adoption song—at least it's all we know of it. Isn't he chic, girls?"

They laughed again. "This is Jane, cousin," said the other girls. Then Jane and Susan introduced Ann, and Ann and Jane introduced Susan. And they shook hands again, and tea being announced by the maid the three girls with much laughter drew Horatio to the dining room.

It was not until they were seated at the table that Horatio had time to look at his cousins. His first impression was that he had never seen such hair. Jane wore curls that draped her face, Ann had pulled her heavy tresses over her forehead and ears, and Susan—Susan was the youngest—had the most disordered coiffure Horatio thought he had ever seen. As far as the faces of the girls were concerned, he didn't feel qualified to judge—all he could see was their hair.

He was dimly conscious that the girls were not tastefully dressed, at least there was a flaunting of bright ribbons on their gowns that he didn't like.

"Ever West, cousin?" Jane suddenly demanded. "West of Hoboken?" Ann added. "No," Horatio admitted. "Noo Yawkers never dare go West," said Susan, who had a funny little lip. "They might like it too well."

"We have planned to take you home with us," said Jane. "We want you to see the country just as God made it."

"You can't see any of it here, child," said Ann. "There's nothing in New York but rocks and elevators and skyscrapers and subways and graft."

"Say," cried Susan, "wouldn't the folks round up when they saw us leading Horatio down the trail?"

"Susan!" cried Jane. "You mustn't mind Susan, cousin. She's as wild as a Siwash colt."

Horatio stirred himself uneasily. "Then you don't like New York?" he managed to return.

"We like New York well enough," said Jane, "but of course it isn't like the Skioory bottoms."

"Sincerely yours, Horatio King Vantine."

Then he made a formal acknowledgment of the invitation of the hostess, and called a messenger boy.

"Jane and Ann and Susan!" he muttered as the boy turned away. "Sir?" said the boy.

"Nothing," replied Horatio. At 6 o'clock he presented himself at the substantial home on West Eighty-sixth street. As the maid opened the door he heard a gust of hastily-checked laughter. The maid took his card and his hat and coat, and ushered him into the little reception room. Here the hostess, with a delightfully cordial manner, met him and bade him welcome.

"Your cousins will be down in a moment or two," she explained. "If they were not so mischievous they would be more prompt. I understand you have never met them?"

No, Horatio had never met them. "I think you will be surprised," Horatio felt sure of it. "They are charmingly unaffected." This, of course, was a neat way of characterizing their disregard of decorum. "I've known them since they were little girls. Ah, I think they are coming!"

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Every time anything is said that reminds her of Oregon she gets homesick and cries. She wants to go back there to her tame bear and her crooked burro.

"It's no such thing," said Susan, sharply. "I'm going to give my bear away."

"Susan," said Jane, in a deep tone, "remember where you are, miss. Look at Cousin Horatio and see how shocked he is."

"They all looked at Cousin Horatio, who appeared very uncomfortable. He felt that he must say something.

"I'm afraid," he remarked, "that you haven't seen enough of New York to offset your Western prejudices."

"I think we have," said Susan, promptly. "We were on top of the Metropolitan tower."

"You are not a real New Yorker, are you, cousin?" Jane demanded.

"I was born near Boston," Horatio answered. "I came to New York four years ago."

"I'm glad of that," said Ann. "I'm glad you are not a real New Yorker. New Yorkers are so cold and offish, and so lacking in everything genial and friendly."

Horatio remembered his letter with a little twinge, and his face flushed. He wished he hadn't sent it. He wished he had hurried out of town instead of consenting to meet these dreadful Westerners.

But before he could reply the voluble Jane came to his relief. "Have you been abroad, cousin?" she asked.

"Once for a brief stay," he answered. "We have been to Japan twice," said Susan, "and three times to the Philippines, and twice to Honolulu. You must get Jane to dance the hula for you. She does it awfully well, only you have to take all the furniture out of the room."

"Why, Susan!" cried Ann. "There was a sudden laugh from the hostess. They all looked at her.

"Excuse me," she said with a little effort. "I was just faintly wondering how that dance could be done in a Harlem flat."

Even Horatio was forced to smile, but it was a painful effort. He was never more uncomfortable in his life. His Western cousins with their dreadful hair and flaunting ribbons were fully as uncultured as he anticipated. It was an unsatisfactory repast. And there was all the evening at the reception ahead of him!

But at last the tea came to an end. They went back to the reception room, but the three girls paused in the doorway.

"You must excuse us for a little while, cousin," said Jane. "We have to do some extra fixing up, you know."

"Paint and feathers," added Ann.

And then they trooped up the stairs with much laughter, the irrepressible Susan bringing up the rear with a few sharp "yip-yips" and a prolonged whoop.

A little later the hostess, who seemed ill at ease, excused herself on the plea that the girls might need her, and followed them to the upper floor.

It was not a pleasant quarter of an hour for Horatio, but it finally ended and he heard the girls coming down. They wore long wraps and hoods, and he could not discern the changes they might have made in their costumes.

"Hope you didn't find the wait long?" said Jane.

"We are considered quick dressers," added Ann.

"Susan giggled. "Susan!" cried Jane, warningly. Horatio took his hat and coat.

"And may I ask where we are going?" he said.

"We are going to Colonel Abner Stow's home," Jane replied.

"Colonel Abner Stow?" repeated Horatio. "The railway man?"

"Yes. He was our father's partner for twenty years. The reception is just for us, you know, and not a big affair at all. The colonel's house is only a block away. We can walk."

Horatio didn't say much during that brief walk. He was glad the girls were going to the home of an old friend—and a Western man at that.

And the very eminent captain of finance had been their father's partner? He wished to know more about them.

The colonel and his wife met the little party at the doorway and gave them a warm greeting.

"Don't wait for the girls, my boy," he said to Horatio in his bluff way. "Come right down and talk with me."

So Horatio hurried down and the colonel shook hands with him again.

"You're a lucky lad," he said. "You've got the three finest girls on the Pacific Coast in tow to-night. Oh, I've known them since they were kids. They're dearer to their father than his eyes. There's nothing money would buy that he hasn't lavished on them, and they are as fine ladies as their mother—and I couldn't say more."

And then Horatio heard a rustle behind him and there stood his three cousins.

He gave a little gasp. What they wore he didn't know, but it was something shiny and fascinating, and their hair was beautiful to behold. It was a magic transformation, and he gasped again.

"The three Western graces," cried the colonel. "Dare you say which is

the fairest, my boy? Jane has the poise, and Ann the eyes, and Susan is my heart's delight."

The three girls playfully shook their heads at the gallant host.

And when they looked at Horatio he knew he was flushing to the very roots of his hair.

A little later he found himself alone with Jane. She suddenly smiled.

"Cousin," she said, "did you write that letter with an icicle?"

He flushed again. "Jane," he answered, and it was wonderful what a nice sound the name had suddenly assumed. "I was a fool and a snob. But you paid me for it in your bitter medicine."

"It was just the medicine you expected to take?" laughed Jane. "And you don't entirely disapprove of us?"

"Disapprove!" cried the young man. "Why, you are the three most charming things that ever happened. I couldn't be more proud of you! Will you be my uncle's guests at luncheon to-morrow?"

Jane laughed. "If you think he will approve of us," she answered. "We are absolutely dependent on our only New York relative, you know."

And the glance she gave Horatio thrilled him through.

SOCIETY AND THE OPERA.

In Harper's Bazar, Ralph Pulitzer, son of the great editor of the New York World, continues to hammer New York society with the relentless brilliancy shown in his December article in the same periodical. Among other things he says, discussing the opera:

"The dinner being leisurely completed, the hostess remarks dubiously to her husband that she supposes the men might perhaps smoke their cigars on the way to the opera. This is probably more from a kindly desire to free the women from one another's society in the drawing-room than from any desire to reach the opera earlier, but the men always acquiesce, and pile into one carriage or automobile and with their cigars and cigarettes, while the ladies enjoy one another's company in another vehicle."

"They quickly reach the opera, and walk up one flight of stairs, to the distant muffled murmurs of the orchestra and an occasional high note from one of the singers, loud enough to force its way out to them. These solitary and sudden notes, robbed of all musical quality by the inaudibility of their context, sound as if some sublimated butcher shop within were being operated to slow music. But one of the guests, at some unusually penetrating scream, is sure to breathe 'Ah!' (as she hastens her steps up the stairs); 'Ah!' in tones of tender and preposterous appreciation. Why she does it she could not herself explain, for she has not the least intention of listening to the music when she reaches the box. It is probably done from the same instinct that would make her honestly declare, if questioned, that she was devoted to music or to children, although she might not know a fugue in one from a whirling cough out of the other. A curious traditional attribute of her sex, this devotion to music and children, which she still feels it seemly to subscribe to in theory."

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Cows and What They Earn.

The returns from cows, when expressed in dollars and cents, stand out much more vividly than they do when expressed in pounds of milk and butter fat. Therefore, if every dairyman would keep a yearly record of the amount of milk and butter fat produced by his individual cows, and from this calculate, according to this table, the profit or loss on the individuals, he would be astonished at the wide variation in earning capacity of the different cows in his own herd and the results would be of untold value to him.—Illinois Farmers' Institute.

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