The Self-Bidden Guest.

By Emeric Hulme-Beaman.

Lady Featherstone enjoyed, not unjustly, the reputation of being one of the most eclectic hostesses in London, and had for some years occupied that position in society to which her birth, her wealth, her accomplishments, and, last but not least, her undoubted beauty entitled her. At Lady Featherstone's house—at her little social assemblies, her soirees, her occasional dinner parties—one might be sure of meeting only those people upon whom the cachet of unquestioned breeding had been set.

A woman herself of unerring taste, of the most delicate ethical discrimination, and of a fastidious fancy, she was never able to tolerate in others the least deflection from her own high standard of criticism and culture. She was clever enough to admire clever people, yet not stupid enough to pass for being clever herself; she was a widow with two young daughters, a large income, and, as it seemed, a considerable capacity for enjoying it; and people said—those people who always "say" things—that the fact of this large income ceasing on her remarriage explained the other fact of Lady Featherstone remaining a widow. To give up several thousand a year, an assured position in society, and her liberty would be much to expect of a woman in return for the questionable advantage of a second husband. So people said. They knew that Lady Featherstone had made a brilliant marriage at an early age; that she was enviable becuse she was rich, and happy because she was enviable. But, oddly enough, Lady Featherstone was not always happy; and on a particular afternoon in January she sat alone in her drawing room, with a look of singular sadness upon her beautiful face; her chin rested on her hand, her gray eyes were bent wistfully on the fire, and now and again she sighed softly to herself, as though a mood of memories were on her.

She sat alone. Perhaps this consciousness—this consciousness that she was "alone"—had something to do with the stirring of those secret emotions which the retrospect of the past will often evoke;perhaps it was this retrospect itself that made the consciousness more acute; but, at least, the burden of solitude seemed to weigh heavily on her soul. Her children were too young to be companions to her—too young to fill quite that void in the heart of a woman of thirty-five, which looks for some other and fuller source of repletion; her friends—but a woman's friends, what are they?

Yet it was not usual for Lady Featherstone to indulge a morbid train of fancies, and in this very evening, the evening of one of her darge dinner parties, it seemed curious that her thoughts should have carried her into so melancholy a groove, that the faint, far off chord of early memories should have been suddenly struck by the sound of a French name—the name of a stranger, the name of one of her guests, the Count de Serillac, whom the French Ambassador was bringing with him to her dinner party.

Except that he was a distinguished diplomatist, Lady Featherstone knew nothing of M. de Serillac and cared less; but that he was a Frenchman awakened in her heart the sudden memory of another—a compatriot—a Frenchman, poor and obscure, but of noble bearing and an exquisite manner, tender and gallant, handsome and debonair, who once had loved her. Once, fifteen years ago, when she was twenty, and he had been her— drawing master! He had loved her, this French artist with the earnest face and the inexpressible air of nobility so oddly at variance with the nature of his calling—he had loved her, this drawing master; and yet what in another similarly situated would have seemed the acme of arrogance, in him seemed but the assertion of a natural prerogative, carrying with it nothing bizarre, nothing presumptuous, nothing inappropriate. He had loved her, and she had loved him; so there was but one thing to do, and the drawing master did it—he went from her presence forever, for he was a genleman. Only this he had said on parting:

"Mademoiselle, I go, but I leave my heart here—with you. Treat it as you will, Mademoiselle, keep it or cast it away, think of me or forget me, but remember that, if ever the day comes when I may return to you, I shall return; and then, Mademoiselle—then, if it is in your power to bestow what it may be in my power to ask, I shall demand of you the happiness which only you can give me. I live now for that day—for that day alone!"

And, with tears in her eyes, she had pleaded, girl like, that he should not leave her, and for reply, he had taken her hand very tenderly and pressed it to his lips.

"Mademoiselle," he had murmured, "I must! Farewell!"

M. Gressioner never returned, and four years afterward Miss Maxwell married Lord Featherstone, a man of considerable social attainments and some political influence, who had fallen desperately in love with the beautiful girl whom he had met at a country house.

So, in course of time, Gressonier was forgotten, and the one romantic episode of Lady Featherstone's life lay buried deep down in the dim recesses of a woman's memory.

Her reverie was suddenly interrupted by a ring at the front door bell. Lady Featherstone started, for she was not expecting visitors—nor, as a rule, did visitors arrive so late—and, rising abruptly, looked with a woman's instinct into the large mirror above the mantelpiece. The reflection of her image showed nothing en mal—not a tress of hair disarranged, not a ribben awry, no trace of disorder in feature or dress—the image, indeed, of a very beautiful woman, clothed with the perfection of simplicity that made her seem scarce more than a young girl still. Half-smiling with a satisfied consciousness of this fact, she sat down again as the servant entered the room and handed her a card on the salver.

Lady Featherstone glanced at the card, and suddenly her face turned pale. She looked at the servant interrogatively.

"A gentleman, you say—to see me?"

"Yes, your Ladyship."

It was not customary for Lady Featherstone to question her servants on the subject of a visitor's appearance but she could not at this instant forbear from asking,"What kind of a gentleman?"

"A tall gentleman, your Ladyship," the servant answered; "elderly, with gray hair—a foreign gentleman, I think, your Ladyship."

Lady Featherstone glanced again at the card in her hand—"Paul Gressonier."

Unconsciously her pulses quickened, the color returned to her cheeks, her breath came oddly fast. What did it mean? What could it mean? Paul Gressonier! The man who had loved her fifteen years ago and left her; the man whose name but five minutes since had crossed her thoughts—whose face had risen so strangely vivid out of the mists of long departed years, whose voice had rung but now upon her fancy with half-forgotten echoes of her girlhood's days—Gressonier! It must be some mistake, some singular illusion, or else some curious coincidence—no more.

The servant coughed apologetically.

"I told the gentleman, your Ladyship," he went on, "that your Ladyship was not receiving and could not see visitors at this hour, but he wouldn't take no refusal. 'Take up my card,' said he, 'to Lady Featherstone, and say I wish to see her particular. Does your Ladyship desire me to say that you are indisposed?" he inquired, gravely.

"No!" said Lady Featherstone, speaking with sudden effort. "Show the gentleman up."

There was little time in which to adjust her mental attitude to an adequate conception of the emotional possibilities that this quite unexpected incident seemed likely to create. It had happened with so complete a suddenness that the effect of it upon Lady Featherstone's mind was considerably lessened by the difficulty of reducing the utterly improbable to the practically existent, the abstract to the actual, in the brief space of two minutes.

There was, in short, a strong sense of unreality still upon her when the door again opened and the visitor was ushered into her presence.

A gentleman, tall, with grizzled mustache, strong, aquiline features, keen earnest eyes and gray hair brushed back from a high, wide forehead, entered, took a step forward, paused, then silently bowed.

A sharp surprise, a certain disappointment, a troubled gladness, a singular embarrassment—all these sentiments were fused into the consciousness that before her stood, at last, after long years, the lover of her youth; and Lady Featherstone's eyes drooped before the gaze of M. Gressonier.

Fifteen years had changed him from a young to a middleaged man—a man handsome still, but in whose appearance seemed manifest the buffets of adverse fortune. His clothes were shabby—so shabby that, when he had divested himself in the hall below of his rich fur coat, the footman had looked at him askance, half doubting the propriety of conducting such an ill-dressed person into the presence of his mistress, and marvelling not a little at the strange discrepancy between the stranger's costly, sable lined overcoat and the threadbare garments underneath it; for they were threadbare and ill fitting; his boots were even patched, his collar frayed, his necktie a mere cheap ribbon. Yet even the disadvantages of such attire were unable to conceal in the wearer a certain aspect of dignity, a nobility of bearing which seemed natural to him and independent of all extraneous aids.

"M. Gressonier!" said Lady Featherstone, after a brief, awkward silence, and held out her hand.

"Lady Featherstone—ah, Madame, permit me!" With a grave reverence, M. Gressonier raised the outstretched hand to his lips.

"Madame," he murmured. "It is long—so long—since last time!"

Lady Featherstone withdrew her hand somewhat hastily; her cheeks were suddenly crimson; what magic was there in a voice that could set her heart beating so at the first musical vibration of its tones? Yes, it was the voice of her girlhood's days; the same low, tender, passionate, pleading voice that fifteen years ago had thrilled her, stolen its way into her heart, lingered so long after in her memory and now again was sounding in her ears—the voice of the man she had loved.

"Then, Madame," went on Gressonier, still with his eyes upon her face—"fifteen years, is it not, the last time?—then I said, one day, perhaps, I would come back. Madame, I have come; I am here. Alas, you find me changed but you—you, Madame, are the same, more beautiful—no older—than the girl whose face has lived treasured in my heart and memory, so fresh, so radiant, so vivante, day and night since that last time. Madame—fifteen years ago, is it not?"

"Yes," was all Lady Featherstone could find to say in that moment of supreme emotional retrospect; "yes, fifteen years ago, M. Gressonier, I think. It is a long time, truly," she added, with an odd little laugh, "and you see, I am no longer a girl, young and romantic, but a woman—a widow with children. People change, M. Gressonier. Old feelings change."

"Ah, Madame—you say?" broke in the Frenchman, pleadingly. "No, no; it is not so! The love of a man's life changes not. But yet, it is true—a young girl soon forgets!"

"Not soon," she corrected. "You went away. You did not return. I married—as all girls in society must do. I never expected to see you again, M. Gressonier. Surely you do not wish to reproach me—after all these years!"

She gave another little laugh endeavoring to place their interview upon a more commonsense and conventional footing. The tension of this high level of sentiment oppressed her as something bizarre—almost theatrical; and yet her heart responded like a sensitive instrument to the touch of a musician, to every word, to every tone of M. Gressonier. He perceived her embarrassment, and, with quick adroitness, adapted his attitude to her unspoken wish.

"Let me explain," he said. "I to reproach you? No! I went from you—for there was no other course open. Then, when I would have returned, I heard you were married. Madame, I learnt but a week ago that you were a widow—and I am here! But why? To see you once again, to hear your voice, to feel—it may be for the last time, Madame—the pressure of your fingers upon mine! And, Madame, for something else—to learn whether the heart of a maiden can remain true for fifteen years. Regard me, Madame! I am not young. I am poor—alas, your eyes are eloquent; they tell me much. It is true. I am a poor, shabby old man. I should not have come. You have forgotten all—all. It is well. I will leave you, for I have learned what I wished to learn."

He turned to go. Then a sudden veil seemed lifted from Lady Featherstone's eyes. She saw before her no longer an illdressed, middleaged man, sunk, as it seemed, in poverty and failure, but the handsome, gallant lover of her youth, the man who had loved her so long and faithfully, whom once she had loved—ah, whom in her heart she had never ceased to love—whom she loved still!

Yes, the truth came on her in that instant with the thrill of an electric shock—she loved him still. With a quick, shy gesture, she turned to the shabby figure and held out both her hands.

"Do not leave me," she said simply. "I love you!"

M. Gressonier turned too, and a light leaped into his eyes. He became suddenly erect, he looked ten years younger, he seized her extended hands and carried them again and again to his lips.

"Ah, Madame," he murmured, "it is too much. My love—my own true love."

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"If I marry you, said Lady Featherstone, a few minutes later, "I lose all my money—you know that, Paul?"

"Money!"—he stretched out his hands, deprecatingly. "What of it? It is not your money—no it is you yourself that I want, that I have wanted ah, so long!" Then he looked at her with a sudden anxiety. "But you?" he added. "It is a great sacrifice! I am so poor. You do not love me well enough to give up your money?"

Lady Featherstone sighed. It was a great sacrifice, certainly. But she loved him. After all, so long as they had enough to live upon—. She turned her soft eyes upon Gressonier's face.

"Yes," she said, "I will give up everything for you!"

There was a curious smile upon Gressonier's face as he drew her toward him and kissed her reverently upon the forehead.

"Mon ange!" he whispered. "Mon ange! . . . Mon ange!"

The sudden striking of the little clock on the mantelpiece awoke Lady Featherstone the next instant to a rude consciousness of the realities of life once more, and she recollected that in two hours she would have to receive her guests.

"I—I am giving a dinner party tonight," she began, and then stopped, in some confusion, glancing at M. Gressonier's clothes. He noticed the glance, and the smile on his lips flickered oddly.

"Ah," he said, "a dinner party? That is so nice. I will come, too, is it not?"

"Of course," said Lady Featherstone, travely; "if you wish it."

"But," added M. Gressoniers, a sudden expression of doubt crossing his features, "my—my clothes. I fear—I—it is in effect that I have not any dress clothes, he stammered. "But if I may come—just as I am—"

"There will be some distinguished guests," faltered Lady Featherstone. "The French Ambassador is coming, and the Count de Serillac—"

"Ah, the French Ambassador and De Serillac ma cherie," said Gressonier, "that is bonne chance. To meet two such men—what pleasure! Then I may come?"

Lady Featherstone drew a deep breath. "As you are?" she inquired, nervously.

Gressonier drew back as though he had been stung.

"Madame — you — you are not ashamed of me?"

"Ah, Paul!" she murmured.

"Then—as I am?"

"Yes," said Lady Featherstone.

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It was not without certain qualms of anxiety that Lady Featherstone awaited the arrival of her guests two hours later; her courage faltered not a little at the prospect of the effect likely to be produced upon the rest of the company by the appearance of one of their number clothed not only in morning dress, but in very shabby morning dress; and she wondered in what possible way she could condone what might not unreasonably be construed into an offence against good taste and the respect due to her other guests. Why did Paul Gressonier insist upon being present under such circumstances? He had never in the early days of their acquaintance shown himself deficient either in breeding or in a knowledge of the usages of society, so that there seemed the less excuse for his present strange want of tact.

The drawing room was already half full of guests when the footman, throwing open the door, announced "His Excellency the French Ambassador and the Count de Serillac."

Lady Featherstone turned as the two gentlemen entered the room, took a step forward, then paused.

M. Chambord advanced with a bow and a smile. But Lady Featherstone scarcely noticed the ambassador. Her color went and came, her heart beat violently, her eyes remained fixed with a bewildered wonder upon the Count de Serillac—clad in faultless evening dress, the Order of the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor upon his breast, a smile upon his handsome face.

"M. Gressonier!" she stammered.

"No, Madame," he answered, bowing over her hand; "but your most humble, your most admiring, your most devoted slave—Paul de Serillac! Do you think," he whispered in her ear, "that I should really have come to you like that—a poor broken down man—and asked you to marry me—I? No, no, mon ange—it was to try you; a little ruse, that is all. And you would have sacrificed everything for me! You would even have sacrificed your pride! You were willing for me to come here—even in rags—and disgrace you before the French Ambassador and the Count de Serillac, is it not? Ah, dear one, but I am not a poor man—no, I am rich. You shall sacrifice nothing for me—not even your pride of name, for Serillac, too, that is a good name in France; yes, a good name for my dear one to bear!"

"So, Lady Featherstone," said the Ambassador, smiling, I see that you and M. de Serillac are not, after all, total strangers? You have met before?"

De Serillac placed his hand on the ambassador's shoulder with a good natured laugh.

"Forgive me, my friend," he said. "I have already the honor of Lady Featherstone's acquaintance. We have met before. And now that we have met again, I do not intend that Lady Featherstone shall ever part from me—no, not any more!"—The Sketch.

To the Aid of Angelique.

Three of the four Archambeau sisters were graceful and comely. The fourth was decidedly unprepossessing, yet it was the unlovely Angelique whom widowed Victor LaPlant led to the altar. His neighbors did not hesitate to ask the reason for so strange a choice.

"Why," demanded Denise Malotte, "do you tak dose soch ugly Angelique w'en you have honly to ask to get T'eresa, Marie or Babette?"

"Sh! I tole you," confided Victor. "You obsairve cette jolie Marie? You see her hon dance, maybe? Fi—seex boy behin' her hall de taime. You tank she got some bedder for get marry? Non, Denise. She can get 'usband seven taime evr' week eef she ees weesh to.

"You see dat T'eresa? You eat som't'ing she ees cook, hey? She ees cook more better dan som' chef hon beeg hotel. All dose widow mans hon dese town go crazy to got marry by T'eresa, she can cook so moch to excel. Plainty good man ever'w'ere for dose so smart T'eresa.

"Now look you, madame, on Babette. How ees she go for strike your eye? Pooty good, hey? W'at you tank about hees two leetle hands? Pooty smart, hey? Mak dress lak modiste, chapeau lak millinaire. Mak plainty money, too. Pooty good femme for somebody, hey? Lots garcon be proud for got dose so clevaire Babette.

"Oui, madame. I tole you w'y I am pass by dose odder t'ree. Consider now cette pauve Angelique. Behol' how she ees de one laig more longer dan de odder. Behol' how she ees squint hon his eye. Behol' how she ees los his hair. Behol' how she ees t'ick hon his waist. Not moch for look at, hey?

"Som'taime you have eat de biscuit of Angelique. Pooty good for bullet for shoot caribou! Som'taime you see de sewing work of Angelique? Maybe som' day she ees fall out between de stitch!

"You tank, madame, som' gal lak dat find eet easy for hobtain som' 'usband? Non. Denise, for Angelique eet ees halmost imposseeble to mak de marr'age. W'erefore I tak her; I save her dose trouble'.

"W'at! You say I hask hall dose odder gal first? Taisez-vous, Denise. Eef Angelique ees hear you speak da; she ees rose all dose shingle off ma shainty."—Youth's Companion.

Flying Machine Problems

Aeronauts Should Profit by Earlier Experiments.

By E. W. Roberts.

I SPENT nearly a year in 1894 and 1895 with Mr. Maxim on his flying machine experiments. I also saw Lillienthal's experiments in Germany and have talked with quite a number of partially successful experimenters in this country. Flying with the bird for a model is just about like trying to model a locomotive after a horse. If we built a machine after that fashion we might get a speed of five miles an hour rather than about 120 miles or more, which has been accomplished by the modern passenger locomotives.

One of the greatest troubles with the self-styled aeronaut is that he will not profit by the experience of others, but goes off at a tangent and thinks that he knows it all and will not take a lesson from any one. There is a peculiar condition of affairs in aeronautics at present and one that few appreciate; that is, practically every phase of the problem has been solved but never has been combined in one machine. For instance, on the 31st of July, 1894, Maxim raised his machine up from the ground by its own power with three men aboard and fuel and water sufficient for two hours' run. Unfortunately the centre of gravity was too far ahead of the centre of lift. Maxim solved practically every phase of the problem with the exception of that of equilibrium, or, to use a more homely phrase, "right side up with care."

The problem of equilibrium has, however, been solved by various inventors, Lillienthal being the first of whom there is an authentic record. Octave Chanute of Chicago and his so-called "man machine" made a number of flights without power. The Wright brothers of Dayton, Ohio, have also made many free flights, and, with the exception of Lillienthal, all without serious accident. Among these Lillienthal's machine alone was fashioned after the bird, and it was the most difficult of all to manage. The problem of aerial navigation as it stands today is already solved. When we find one aeronaut with sufficient means to make a practical series of experiments and who at the same time will subdue self sufficiently to profit by the experiments of others, it will be but a short time until we have a practical machine.

Is the Horse a Coward?

By F. M. Ware.

IMPRIMIS, the horse is a coward—nature made him so—an unreasoning coward, who fears everything with which he is unfamiliar; nothing, however horrible, to which association has accustomed him; a creature given over to sudden and uncontrollable panics, and, in their paroxysms, stopping at no injury to self, or to those who cherish him. His overpowering instinct in such cases is flight; frequently, but not always, associated with a determination to clear himself from any hampering surroundings. He has no feelings of revenge, unless trained to cunning by the abuse or the mistakes of mankind, and, when these prevail, he rarely wreaks his vengeance upon any particular individual, but upon humanity in general, with no regard for age or sex.

The sentiment of revenge is so usually associated with cowardice that it may almost be classed as a phase of that instinct. Cowardice manifests itself in equine connection in many ways—with one it is terror of the dark, which will make him kick his stall all night, doing himself possibly serious injury; yet in nine cases out of ten, a light left in the stable will so completely reassure him that he will not lift a foot. Another is alarmed at blowing paper, yet stands yawning while cannon are fired in his face. It is this very attribute of cowardice which enables us to handle the animal as we do; to train him to our will and for our purpose; which makes him, once he is thoroughly deceived and intimidated, the useful servant we find him; not a willing slave, but one who fears again to tempt reprisals which have always proved effective; and who labors for us because he has been made to do so, and fears to rebel. Give to the most docile the idea that he may successfully disobey, and presto! you shall discover another attribute of the coward—for your steed forthwith becomes a bully, and a very dangerous one; since each little act of rebellion which succeeds awakens him to the idea that he need not obey and that in power and will he is superior. Forthwith disaster impends.—The Outing Magazine.

..A.. Fool and His Money

By Frank Fayant.

THE credulity of a multitude of more or less thrifty people, who, in their mania for money, are ready to believe that they can amass fortunes overnight, makes them the easy prey of a swarm of parasites who infest the financial districts. The gospel of the parasites, who build air castles for their victims and real castles for themselves, is terse:

I. "A fool is born every minute."

II. "A fool and his money are soon parted."

Posing as bankers and brokers, the financial parasites scour the country for the fools and then exercise their nimble wits in devising schemes to accomplish the partition. How many millions of dollars are parted from the fools every year may be conjectured from the millions of dollars spent by the pseudo-financiers in advertising. The bulk of the financial advertising in the leading newspapers of the country is intended for the fools. Another index of the richness of the harvest of parting money from the fools is the occasional exposure of some particularly glaring and bungled imposture, when the calculable "swag" runs into the hundreds of thousands, if not into the millions. But these frauds are seldom exposed, for the victims are usually as anxious as the victimizers to escape the limelight of publicity. Most men prefer to lose their money rather than hear their neighbors quote from the parasites' gospel, "A fool and his money are soon parted."—Success Magazine.

Why Our Generals Have No Opportunity For Field Practice

By Capt. T. Bentley Mott, U. S. A.

AT present our major-generals command a number of detached posts, chiefly coast artillery. They have no way of practicing themselves in handling their troops in the field, and when war comes on they invariably leave them to command other units assembled for the first time, while new men are sent to take charge of the coast defences, departments, etc. Does such an arrangement seem in any way intelligent? Its only excuse is the present dissemination of our garrisons and the necessity of giving our generals something to command. These officers are at present the innocent victims of a system which ordains that they may not practice themselves in the duties which would fall to them in war; so that just in proportion to the length of time a man has been a general officer, just in that proportion is he unfitted to command troops in the field. The brilliant suffer with the stupid, for rust attacks bright surfaces as quickly as dull ones. The higher up we go the more we find ourselves organized for peace and unprepared for war. —Scribner's Magazine.