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What Is Vacuum?

If the traffic policeman did not hold up his hand and control the automobiles and wagons and people there would be collisions, confusion, and but little progress in any direction. His business is to direct.

The physicist who tries to obtain a vacuum that is nearly perfect has a problem somewhat like that of the traffic policeman. Air is composed of molecules—billions and billions of them flying about in all directions and often colliding. The physicist's pump is designed to make the molecules travel in one direction—out through the exhaust. The molecules are much too small to be seen even with a microscope, but the pump jogs them along and at least starts them in the right direction.

A perfect vacuum would be one in which there is not a single free molecule.

For over forty years scientists have been trying to pump and jog and herd more molecules out of vessels. There are still in the best vacuum obtainable more molecules per cubic centimeter than there are people in the world, in other words, about two billion. Whenever a new jogging device is invented, it becomes possible to eject a few million more molecules.

The Research Laboratories of the General Electric Company have spent years in trying to drive more and more molecules of air from containers. The chief purpose has been to study the effects obtained, as, for example, the boiling away of metals in a vacuum.

This investigation of high vacua had unexpected results. It became possible to make better X-ray tubes—better because the X-rays could be controlled; to make the electron tubes now so essential in long-range wireless communication more efficient and trustworthy; and to develop an entirely new type of incandescent lamp, one which is filled with a gas and which gives more light than any of the older lamps.

No one can foretell what will be the outcome of research in pure science. New knowledge, new ideas inevitably are gained. And sooner or later this new knowledge, these new ideas find a practical application. For this reason the primary purpose of the Research Laboratories of the General Electric Company is the broadening of human knowledge.

General Electric Company
Schenectady, N.Y.

General Office
THEY WHO WALK IN DARKNESS

HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT

The coffee-laden air seemed unable to bear the constant hum of voices and the conversation slipped into corners and seeped out thru the shut windows. The clock in the kitchen belligerently struck three. It was time for the devotional program. Mrs. Wyman, the President of the Ladies' Aid, rose. She tapped on the window sill with her thimble; the hum nearly died away. Mrs. Bragden would tell Mrs. Allen the method
of putting on a smooth bias. A second tap was quite effective.

The President's face was flushed. She cleared her throat several times. Each lady looked to each other lady significantly. Mrs. Wyman must deal with a delicate situation; all knew that.

"The Scripture reading this afternoon is from the fourteenth chapter of Luke." Did Mrs. Wyman purposely pause after the words, "and they all with one accord began to make excuse"? Mrs. Hutchins stirred. Her scissors noisily fell from her steep lap. Mrs. Bragdon began making an octagon with pins in the red flannel tomato fastened securely to her side. Mrs. Wyman closed her Bible. "Is there any business to come before the meeting?" she asked. No one answered her question altho there was an uneasy stirring around the room.

"You know the Sunday School is going to give the usual Christmas concert this year"; Mrs. Wyman sat down, quite breathless; the plunge had been made.

For several minutes only the onyx clock on the mantle dared to speak. In a brazen fashion it ticked on. Mrs. Wyman looked around the room. The water was very cold. It numbed one. Miss Delpha, the artist, was the first to ripple the sullen surface.

"Well," she said, with a slight toss of head, "I could but I ain't. I've done it, time after time and last year I said I wouldn't do it again for nobody. You tear yourself all out and then you get nothing but hits. I washed my hands of it all last year and I'll keep 'em dry this."

"I'd do it in spite of what Delpha says," Mrs. Bragdon's octagon was completed, "but I can't. George and Helen and the family are all coming out over Christmas and that means a big dinner and a tree. Why, George wouldn't be content without chicken and turkey and at least three kinds of pie and five different vegetables." George was Mrs. Bragdon's corpulent son, a self-made business-man.

"I think we're all like Mrs. Bragdon, too busy."

"I'd do it in a minute and I wouldn't care if I got thanks
or not but I’m not going to be here.’” Sarah Carr spoke rather triumphantly.

“’I’ll do it. I trimmed the church home one year and I’d love to,’ Mrs. Watson had spoken. Unobtrusively seated in the corner by the organ she had been silent during the entire afternoon.

Did you ever pick an apple from the tree in midwinter? Coarse skinned and wizened it is, but if should bite into it you would find a subtle flavor remaining.

Like this was Mrs. Watson. Only when one looked into her large eyes did one realize that there still remained from lavishly spent youth a fineness. Then one forgot the coarsened skin with its hard, fine lines, the black ill-dressed hair and the sallow face.

Mrs. Bragdon looked at Mrs. Higgins. The latter’s face was very red. Miss Delpha sniffed. That is, one would think it was a sniff, or perhaps a cough or even a sneeze.

The ladies stirred uneasily. Sarah Carr dropped her glasses. All eyes were centered on Mrs. Wyman. Did she rise reluctantly?

“Mrs. Watson has kindly offered to trim the church,” the voice was low. “Shall we let her choose her own assistants? If there is no other business we will close with the Mizpah benediction.”

Mrs. Bragdon buttered her gingerbread. “For the life of me I can’t see why Mrs. Wyman did it;” she addressed her husband. “If ’twas any place but the church it would be different. Her tone was interrogative. Mr. Bragdon, between spoonfuls of hasty pudding grunted. “I hate to think of a woman like her doing it,” she continued. “They say she don’t even know where her husband is.”

Mr. Bragdon reached for the molasses cup. His wife anxiously watched him pour the viscous liquid into his bowl of pudding. The thread of the story was then resumed. “Mr. Higgins said he was warned by the North Windham grocer not to trust her at all.”
Mr. Bragdon pushed aside his dish. "What's the odds," he said, "as long as the church's done."

"You can't think what's happened," Miss Delpha told her father and mother at their evening meal. "Mrs. Watson's going to decorate the church for the concert."

Delpha's mother sat the tea-pot down abruptly. "My land!" she gasped. "What's the matter with you this year, Delphy?" the father questioned.

"I wasn't going to cast any more pearls before swine," she answered, "but I would have worked all day rather than have a woman with a past decorate the church. "I think it hadn't ought to be allowed," said Delpha's mother.

"What do you think, Pa?" asked Delpha.

But Pa, much to the horror of the two women, had taken a very soiled handkerchief from the inner recesses of his coat and was about to employ it.

"Elijah Goldsby, you drop that right down under the table," Ma quickly commanded, "and Delpha, you run up stairs and get him a clean one."

"I may have done wrong John, but what was I to do?" Mrs. Wyman held the stocking nearer the light. Two little wrinkles were between her eyes. The hole was large, but the needle raced back and forth mechanically. It was the affair of the afternoon that caused those wrinkles. "There was a look in her eyes," she continued, "an almost pleading look and besides we don't know that's she's done actually wrong."

Mr. Wyman took a long puff at his pipe.

"But oh, how those women looked at me, and after they all wouldn't do it themselves. I wonder if it really won't help Mrs. Watson. I don't believe she's all bad even if she did tell the pastor that she couldn't see God's hand in her life."

"Did she say that?"

"So Mrs. Higgins told me but you know how things get twisted in this town. John, dear, tell me, did I do wrong?"

"No."

Mrs. Wyman leaned over and laid her cheek against her
husband's shoulder. "Oh, John, for a church deacon you're such a comfortable man," she said.

The room was growing cold. Mrs. Watson stuffed the rotund stove with wood; the fire-light shone thru the drafts in the door and played around the woman seated in the darkness.

"I'd do it now, just to spite them," Mrs. Watson spoke low but audibly; people living alone acquire this habit. "I really wanted to at first, but, after a look at their faces! Every woman among 'em looked as if they wanted to say no. It's fairly taken the gimp out of me. But I'll do it. I'll trim the church way we did at home, the Christmas 'fore baby was born."

Her speech ended abruptly. For a long time only the snapping of the fire broke the silence. Then the woman moaned, a moan of sorrow and resentment. "God, it wasn't right," the words mounted to a wail, the despair of which filled the room, "to take away baby. We both needed her."

Sobs filled the room now. "Frank wouldn't have kicked at those bills with baby with us. It wasn't right, it wasn't right."

The cheery little stove which had witnessed many such outbreaks stopped its snapping. Slowly the coals peeping out behind the iron bars turned to ashes. All was dark and cold and still when the clock clanged eight. Mrs. Watson rose stiffly from her chair. Trembling, she struck a match and reached to the shelf for a lamp.

"Lord!" she said wearily, "here I've been having another tantrum. I don't see why I keep complaining to God, when there ain't no God. There ain't no God," she sharply addressed the stove, "and there ain't no Christmas and I'm going to decorate the church just for spite."

Christmas eve. Mrs. Watson had worked all day. Her assistants had been boys and girls. Among them she felt not the stigmatism which their elders inflicted upon her. The church was singularly still after their gay laughter. The quiet darkness of a late winter's afternoon filtered thru the unstained windows. Mrs. Watson lit the two lamps of the chancel, then she went to the back of the church and slipped into a pew.
The people would gather in an hour; meanwhile she would have a chance to rest and think.

How pretty was everything. The foot of the pulpit was banked with fir branches. Their fragrance filled the room. "I wonder if frankincense and myrrh smelled sweeter," she murmured. From among glossy boughs peeped crepe-paper poinsettias. For a week Mrs. Watson had cut and pasted poinsettia flowers. This afternoon she and the children had placed the red blossoms. "Gifts for the King," one of the children had hummed as she worked, "Gifts for the King."

At the left of the pulpit platform stood a large tree, a white tree in its shroud of popcorn strings and white tissue paper bundles. At its slender point was a huge tinsel star. Mrs. Watson had debated a long while whether to have a star or an angel. Finally she had asked the minister's son, a willing helper, his opinion. "Oh, have the star," he said, after a little hesitation; "the angels just came once but the star was on the job all the time and did the guiding."

Mrs. Watson leaned forward onto the back of the next pew resting her head on her arms. "I wonder if my star had been on the job all the time I'd be here tonight," she whispered.

Physically she was exhausted but a strange exhilaration seemed to possess her. Perhaps the shepherds as they saw the star on the Judean hillside had a feeling akin to this. Perhaps the wise man journeying to Bethlehem experienced it also. Mrs. Watson was too intent with her own thoughts to hear the door open and a girl walk down the dimly lighted aisle to the chancel. Lucy Edgecomb had arrived early to practise her solo part of the chorus.

To Mrs. Watson it was an angel song that flooded the church. "For unto us a child is born. For unto us a son is given," sang the fresh, clear soprano.

"And the government shall be upon his shoulders." over and over again.

"And the government shall be upon his shoulders." Mrs. Watson raised her head
“And the government shall be upon his shoulders.” she repeated.
“And his name,” the triumphant song continued, “shall be called Wonderful, Councilor, the Mighty God—” the woman slipped to her knees.
“Mighty God, Councilor, Wonderful,” she whispered, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and my government shall be upon his shoulders from this day forth and forever more.”

The concert was over. Tired children with sticky hands full of bundles and candy clung to their mothers. Neighbor greeted neighbor as they went from the church into the crisp air. Mrs. Bragdon put her hand on Mrs. Watson’s arm. “The church looked handsome,” she said.

Mr. Wyman was unlacing his shoes. “It was a good concert,” he yawned.
“Yes,” agreed his wife as she carefully untied the knitted face cloth and cake of violet bath which Mrs. Higgins had hung on the tree for her, “and the church looked real pretty.”

Mr. Wyman reached for his slippers.
“Mrs. Watson looked happy tonight,” he volunteered.
“Yes, I was watching her face as Lucy Edgecomb sang. It was fairly aglow.

Mr. Wyman was not given to fine sentence. He rose abruptly.
“I think,” he said, “that she has seen the hand of God.”

THE POWER OF ART

“Say, Anna, who’s that feller that came home with you this evenin’?” asked her sister Dora.
“That’s Walter Maguire, he’s a friend of mine.”
“Nice lookin’ chap. Stylish and everything.”
“You bet. Style’s all he has got. Ain’t got no initiative a tall.”
“Whaddaya mean, initiative?”
"O, he can't seem to get started anywhere."
"What did he say tonight?"
"He asked me to marry him, that's what he said."
"I sh'd think that was getting along pretty well. Good Gracious, if a feller said that to me—"
"Well, he's all right some ways, but he don't seem to have no push. When it comes to business he ain't there. Can't even get himself a good job."
"Goin' to marry him? Musta told the poor fish something didn't cha?"
"I told him I'd think it over, and I told him it so he knew what I meant too."

Walter was in the depths of despondency when he entered the office of the Society for the Dispensation of Charity to Schools. He had just made a blunder which consummating the train of mistakes that he had already charged to him gave the boss what was considered sufficient excuse for the young man's discharge. The smallness of his position made it all the more embarrassing to his self esteem to realize that he had not been able to hold it. The boss had told him that he might as well go out and beg for a living now as any time that was what he was coming to anyway.

A card in the Society's window reminded him of the advice, and trying to see a joke somewhere in the queer coincidence, he went up to the desk and volunteered his services as a solicitor. The promise of a dinner looked interesting, as he could not draw his last pay until the end of the week, so said the cashier, and Walter had not the energy to argue. His funds were low. Atentions to Anna had cost him a lot of money, but his reward had been next to nothing.

"We should like to have you call at all the offices, that will let you in, on Temple street; and when you get thru with those, please take a try at Jacob Nelson. Every man in our organization has had an attempt to get money out of him. I'm afraid it can't be done. He's the tightest old skinflint in this city, but you might have it in you to get a dollar or so out of him. Personally I think you have," spoke the man at the desk in the
disgusting, patronizing way of men who never do work them-
selves nor give anybody advice of any consequence.

"You bet I will," said Walter, going out to his work of
arousing interest in a cause that contained none for most peo-
ple.

He received two or three niggardly donations, encountered
dozens of peevish merchants and clerks, and at last for want of
anything else to do, he decided to try his wiles on the notorious
Mr. Nelson. All the way to the office he rehearsed with the
tenacity of despair the lines that he thought would be the most
effective upon his intended victim. There had been little op-
portunity to try them before, everybody had been so sure at
the first glance that they did not want to subscribe a cent to
his cause. This time he would keep the paper in his pocket
and approach from a different angle to take his quarry by sur-
prise.

"If I could only make up my mind as quick as these people
I been talking to can, I'd sure be a success. It's the power of
decision that counts. When a man comes around asking for
donations or anything else, answer him up smart," soliloquized
Walter. "Most of them make the same answer too."

With a brave imitation of dashing energy he burst open the
door of Jacob Nelson's private office and entered the presence
of the real estate king of the town.

As the popular rumors had it, Nelson was the most selfish
and grasping man ever heard of. Ordinarily he worked from
six in the morning to nine or ten at night scheming to make
more money for himself and nobody else. He had three hun-
dred million dollars worth of property and more ready cash
than all the Nelson's who ever lived could count if they all
worked together and brought in the aunts and cousins for a
night shift. On this memorable day he sat leaning back in his
chair doing nothing, but contemplating a picture. Sure
enough! Jacob Nelson was taking an interest in art.

The picture was one of those originals that Hoboken fac-
tories turn out by the thousand to sell to guileless suckers who
are not satisfied with the far clearer and less expensive Sunday paper reproductions. It was brought in by the new secretary, a small, inferior looking old man who had let his artistic inclinations lead him will o' the wisp fashion into poverty. Over his little table in a far corner he hung this bleary thing labeled "The Landing of the Pilgrims," to remind himself of the glorious days when he used to buy truckloads of similar trash.

There was no beauty to the monstrosity, and Mr. Nelson would not have seen it if there had been, his eyes were filled with tears. The sight of the picture had carried his thoughts back to his first week in high school—his first, last, and only week. It was with eyes fixed, even as they were this day, upon the motley crowd of freedom seekers that he heard the terrible news of his mother's death. The only friend in his bleak young life had been taken away, and somehow the ridiculous painting staring at him from the walls that he would no longer see, remained in his memory. Then came old Potteryville with his reminder of bygone days.

All thru his life, not a soul had given Nelson a helping hand. He became a misanthrope by the most natural causes possible. Nobody wanted him. All right. He wanted nobody. All thru his sixty stormy years since leaving the shelter of home and school he had fought for himself against everybody in creation. He began to think of his patient, toiling mother who had died working for him, that he might have a better chance to earn a living in the world that had also given her nothing but hardship. She did so want him to be a worthy, honest man. He had never thought of it this way before, but he began to wonder what she had thought of his selfish career, if she could look down upon him. What a lot that schooling which she had intended him to have would have meant to him. It would have enabled him to amass several hundred additional millions. What a boon education would be to other boys even at the present time. The ugly imitation recalled again the day when his dear mother had sent him off to school with a carelessly received kiss and injunctions to be a good boy. The last time he had seen her alive. He had even forgotten now where
her grave was. He really ought to do something to show his tardy reverence.

Then Walter came in and began his harangue.

The multi-millionaire seized his opportunity and with a long speech of congratulation handed his visitor a check for $95,000,000.

Full of self confidence, Walter again presented himself to Anna, and was of course accepted. Who could refuse the suit of a man whose aggressive powers of speech and personality had lured a fortune from the claws of Jacob Nelson? She even wept a few tears on the hero's best tie in token of the mistake she had made.

They were married amid many rejoicings, and received a shower of presents. Only one incident marred the tranquility of their new home. Somebody with an eye rather to economy than to utility sent them a large, gilt-framed picture.

"What you goin' to do with that thing?" gasped Walter.

"I thot I better hang it on the wall, seein' somebody gave it to us. Gosh! It's homely ain't it?" replied his affectionate wife.

Well, don't do it. That doggone trash won't git us nowhere."

So Anna gave the picture to the janitor, and "The Landing of the Pilgrims," 'having done its duty, was exiled forever from the lives of the newlyweds.

Edward G. Stickney.

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"DE COW"

By Dominique Jerome.

(First printed in the Cushing Academy Breeze.)

Pierre Gordeau get firs' class cow,
Was brown an' w'ite an' black,
Was bought it on the poultry show,
"Guarantee you monnaie back."

Edward G. Stickney.
Was sure cos' purty moche expense,  
Was honder ten pieces, 
But geev de twen'y quart du lait, 
Pierre was felt quite nice.

Pierre was tak de cow chez-lui,  
But den commence to tink, 
Ain't got no place for kep de cow—  
"Pete, dere's de kitchen sink!"

So Pete was get som' more argent,  
Was took it off de bank, 
Was build it up de firs’ class barn, 
Wit’ firs’ class silo-tank.

An’ firs’ class lof’ an’ firs’ class stall,  
An’ firs’ class ever’ting,  
By gar, I bet you almos’ tink  
De barn was mean for king.

He’s kep sa vache chez Paul Trodeau,  
Paul’s com’ from Mon’real,—  
Don’ know ver’ moche about dem cow,  
Was fed an’ milk,—dat’s all.

Wan day M’sieu Troudeau was get  
W’at you call de “telegramme.”  
Was say, "Ta soeur, elle se marie."  
Nex’ day Paul’s lef de farm.

Forget all ’bout de gol darn cow,  
Not tole M’sieu Gordeau, 
Was tak’ de train pour Mon’real,  
Was moche excite,—dat’s so.

De poor ole cow was stan’ alone,  
Don’ get to eat an’ drink,
Don' was not'ing he can't do,
Jes' tink, an' tink an' tink.

T'ree week was pass, la grange est prete,
Paul's com' for get de cow,
Was fin 'her,—four feets in de air,
Was dead was week by now.

De barn, she's stayin' em'ty,
De cow,—she's stayin' still,
Troudeau? He's stay on Mon'real.
Voici M'sieu Pete's will:

"Pour Jean—Ma grange vacante."

G. P. D.

A SCENE

I have always been brought up to maintain my dignity and to
avoid scenes. In fact, I have an inborn horror of the latter
and, no matter whether the disturbance be outward or inward,
have been known to ride through the obstacles with an outward
serenity that has always caused much admiration. Then again,
I am practical—extremely practical. My imagination seems to
be able to go no farther than to visualize the exact tint of brown-
ness that my cakes should have when done. These are two of
my outstanding characteristics, and I have dwelt on them, think-
ing that they would explain a scene which occurred—and one
did occur—Once!

Maybe it was Fred's fault, maybe it was because we are of
such entirely different temperaments, but mostly I blame my-
self for it and wonder sometimes if I am the right woman for
Fred—if maybe his wife should not be of the artistic tempera-
ment—one of those sympathetic women who see everything thru
a roseate veil of poetry. Still, when I stop to think of it, what
would dear, dreamy, romantic Fred do if his wife weren't prac-
tical enough to remind him when to put on a clean shirt. Poor Fred is so absent-minded, especially at the table. I will present a picture of our mid-day meal and any efficient house-wife, reading it, will wonder at my patience.

By twelve, of course, my dinner is ready to take up. I look down the hill for Fred, but there is no one in sight. I wait fifteen more minutes, trying to keep up my courage by mending a tear in my kitchen curtain, perhaps. Still no Fred. It is now quarter past, and my potatoes are rapidly cooling. In desperation I put on the dinner. You know—the effect—Fred comes, of course. There is something about the simple act of putting dinner on the table that simply brings a man, not until then will he come, tho the sun set and rise in the interim. Fred comes as I have said, but he isn’t Fred—he’s Professor James. It is almost unceany—I can see Professor James in his rumpled hair, Professor James in his eyes that bore through me straight into the nervous system of an imaginary half-wit, and Professor James in his actually forgetting the plate of steaming sour cream biscuits in front of him—sour cream biscuits like his mother used to make. Wouldn’t that provoke the good nature of any self-respecting cook? However, I have developed the habit of looking on the bright side of things lately, and, you know, Professor James never once discovered that there were onions smothered in the beans! I’ll freely confess it here that that is my one deception on Professor James. It is all exasperating, of course, and sometimes, desperate, I’ve thought of making a map of the table with routes to take to each dish—he always fails to observe something on my menu. You wonder how I stand it? Why, I have known Fred when he wasn’t Professor James and, well, you see,—I love him.

But I wonder. As I said, I did once disgrace myself. It was several years ago. Perhaps that’s why I can write about it now. Fred and I had been married a month and had just returned from our honeymoon to our life in that first cosy little bungalow. Fred, as a young man, was very much like the Fred of today. Absent-minded? Goodness yes! But you see, the contents of his mind were reversed—he was extremely present-
minded about me, but about other things—he’d have forgotten to have gone to his classes, I do believe, if I hadn’t reminded him!
And romantic and dreamy! Shall I ever forget that first year? Mornings when I’d walk to the lane with Fred and no power could make him go until we had heard the chapel bell in the distance—I think he gave twelve cuts that first year. Noons when we’d almost forget to eat the time was so short; and evenings, blessed evenings when we’d sit on the long divan before the fireplace and read Sarah Teasdale’s *Love Songs* and The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. I must confess that I always considered Miss Teasdale a disreputable flirt with all of her Colins, Robins, and Pierrots and that I never could quite get the gist of The Rubaiyat and always felt very much depressed as though my bread, which I set every night, wasn’t going to rise the next morning. But Fred! he fairly glowed with them! Sometimes, really, if I hadn’t known him, I would have thought him intoxicated! He had all the symptoms—his face would get red, his eyes wild, and he’d say the most unaccountable things! He’d seem to like me more than ever and sometimes, I was actually appalled. And he acquired such a vocabulary in names for me! Why, really, I never supposed that there were so many different ways of expressing affection. And that’s where all of the trouble began—those names.

Of course, as I want it distinctly understood, although I permitted such form of affection in private, I absolutely drew the line to public demonstration. I loved Fred, or I never would have married him, but I considered that the world would comprehend the situation from the significance of my wedding ring; and that, I thot, was sufficient.

Well, then finally came that afternoon when down-town to buy a new watch-fob for Fred’s birthday. I hadn’t told him I was going. I remember that I wore a flowered voile run around the neck, sleeves, and waist with black velvet ribbon. It was Fred’s favorite, and I can’t say it was unbecoming. I had just done a little shopping, left the fob to be marked, and was turning the corner of the Main Street when whom should I see but Fred! My own husband! Really! Fred and I meeting on
Main Street and neither expecting the other! I remember I let out a little scream and stepped back, and Fred actually jumped, colliding with a baby carriage at his heels. That didn't matter—we simply stared! It was all so absolutely unplanned! You could not realize the romance of it unless you'd lived with Fred. Then I saw a certain peculiar flush on Fred's cheek, a pathetic fervent longing in his eyes—altogether an expression such as Romeo Montague would have worn in the balcony scene. But I was no Juliet; neither was I staging a drama for the public of Edgewater. I have always been known as a woman of action, and I lived up to it then. Just as my Romeo—Sidney Carton husband leaped forward with a low pulsating cry of, "Oh Lovie-Mine!", I flung my packages into his extended arms and ran!

I can not honestly say that my memory of the rest is absolutely distinct. I know that I knocked over a baby carriage, separated a man from his wife, dodged an auto, jumped a puddle—that I ran—ran anywhere away from my husband and an amorous scene for the greedy eyes of Edgewater. I was just about to stop for lack of breath when I turned, and there, his breath coming fast, his face red with energy, his hat gone, came my husband at top speed—my husband calling in a pathetic surprised wail (it could be heard all over the square), "Rose-bud wait! Honey-sweetie! Oh d-darling wait!"

I—I gasped and—flew!

I recall nothing more for some time until finally I came to in the arms of a motherly middle-aged woman who was holding a glass of water to my lips. I lifted my head and saw that I was on the street—the Main Street—and crowding close around me was a group of men and women. I sat up—"W-what?" I stuttered.

The motherly person patted my shoulder kindly, "The police has the rude fellow who attacked you, my dear. They've taken him to the police station. A very bold fellow indeed! How unsafe it is for——I!"

I heard nothing more. I instantly understood the situation. My dear husband was being borne off to prison supposedly
because he had attacked me but really because of my flight to avoid scenes! I caught my breath. What a good husband he had always been—so patient, so thoughtful, so self-forgetful. Then instantly I had a vision—Fred dragged mercilessly to jail, Fred in prisoner's stripes tottering across his cell to the rattling of the ball and chain dragging at his feet; Fred, blue-gray with discouragement, peering dismally through the prison's grating; and, oh my sins upon my head! Fred staring, dazed, horror struck, setting icy-cold in the electric chair! Something burst somewhere, and I was off!

The lock-up in Edgewater is an extremely simple affair and I had been there once before doing a bit of philanthropic work with my father. It really isn't very clear to me now how I ever got there, but anyway I soon reached my destination and there, just being locked into his cell was Fred—Fred looking very pale, his shoulders stooped—a very dazed Fred who still clung tightly to one remaining package, which unfortunately had come undone, displaying a string of sausages.

I dashed forward, shrieking. The man with the keys stared open-mouthed. As I said, I am a woman of action. Quickly, I snatched the keys from his lifeless grasp. My husband stared, the janitor stared, a group around the door stared—everyone stared. Nevertheless, I, Cynthia Harrison, correct in deportment and never known to compose even the stagings for a scene of any sort, flung myself forward, shrieking, "Oh my poor poor dear Freddie!" and fell into his arms—with the sausages! I had made a scene.

* * * * *

Fred just called me to come while he read Professor James aloud. It really isn't quite so imaginative as some productions we've read in the past, but then, we are older.

Dorothea Davis
Hand Hall was steeped in a deep, unusual silence, for it was Thanksgiving eve. All those who had not gone home to welcoming firesides were enjoying a jolly frolic in Chase Hall across the campus. Rand Hall was empty except for a few presuming mice in the walls and a lonesome, woe-be-gone sophomore on the third floor back.

Had the dean or proctor been passing Lois Mehitable Jameson’s door at that moment, very audible and distressing sniffs, punctuated at intervals with heart-rending sobs would have penetrated to her ears. Had the passer-by yielded to impulse and opened the door, she would have seen a semi-tragic figure, huddled up in the shadow of a friendly lamp whose huge yellow shade sought to shed as kindly and motherly an atmosphere into the gloom as its poor, inanimate soul permitted. Ordinarily, the laugh in Lois Mehitable’s brown eyes and the healthy glow of her complexion transformed a very unassuming maid, typical of New England as to figure and feature, into one of the most attractive co-eds whose trim-shod feet ever twinkled over the Bates campus.

But to-night, all was changed. Her heart hung within her, heavy and hard as a bag of meal. Her eyes and nose were swollen, and shaded into various unbecoming reds. Her hair was pinned untidily with a single pin on top of her head, and stray, disconsolate locks stole down across her neck and temples. A cold little portion of pedal appendage appeared dejectedly from the toe of a worn-out moccasin. Even her jolly little wrapper seemed shabby and desolate, to-night, with its front quite damp where great, juicy tears had dropped, each succeeding one heavier than the last. Finally, Lois very slowly pulled herself together, very slowly smoothed out a wrinkled sheet of paper, and very slowly began to re-read it for the sixtieth time.
Dearest Lois,—

Your jolly note came last night. You’re a gay little sport to eat turkey in a dorm on Thanksgiving. I tried it once, and “Hi’ve’nz, upon us,” as our laundress says, “N’iver again.” I’m very fortunate in that my pet prof. has asked me to dinner at his home on that day, where I shall meet that old friend of mine, whom I must confess is even yet a most formidable rival of yours — — —”

Lois could get no further but threw herself, face downward, on to her couch, buried her head in the cold stiff felt of a Brown pillow, and abandoned herself to tears, quite forgetful of the fateful piece of paper which once more lay crumpled in her hand. “O-o-o, how can I stand it,” she cried, “He promised, he did, O— an’ I loved him so. I know I did now-ow-ow!” At last,—the floods abated, but Lois lay very rigid and quiet. She could hardly deem it possible, but the most delightful little shiver was racing back and forth over her spine. Of course, she dared do it, but she wanted to think it over for a few minutes and collect her wits, ready for action.

She’d written Tommy, a very polite impersonal note, very just and very heartless, in which she’d wished him and her hated rival all kinds of future happiness. As for her, she’d adore being “big sister” to Tommy and his old, “new friend.” “O, the irony of Fate!” she murmured as she went on with her thinking. That part of the matter was well taken care of. Now she must show Tommy that a few whales still swam the briny waters. She pondered over the boys, one might term the biggest fish, and who yet would swallow the bait readily and greedily. At last, she decided on Leland Joyce who looked somewhat like Tommy, although she was now positive that the said young reprobate was banished from her favor forever.

Lois looked at her watch. It was only seven-thirty. There was plenty of time to cast her hook this very night. With her old alacrity, she bounded off the bed, overhauled closets and chests with the careless purpose of youth, started bath and curling tongs simultaneously, and in a surprising brevity of time was
standing before her mirror, putting the last finishing touches to her toilette. She had just eradicated all traces of the recent storm with skilful dabs of an absurdly small powder puff, adjusted an "invisible" in her smooth dark coiffure, and slicked the last ruffle of her lavendar organdy to place, when Burr-r-r, Burr, Burr went her bell.

Catching up a filmy bit of linen, alias handkerchief, she actually fluttered down the stairs. At the landing, she paused. There stood a pair of broad familiar shoulders, "Why Leland," she exclaimed, "How funny, I was just thinking of you." Slowly the shoulders turned around and "Tommy John," Lois gasped involuntarily, then drew herself up to her utmost New England dignity.

"You absurd little spit-fire," Tommy John was saying. "To think any female specimen of humanity could possibly rival you,—why, my dear, what a wretched joke it was to be sure; but it was the turkey Professor Searles was to have at dinner."

Somehow, in the face of those kind, tolerantly amused blue eyes, Lois's dignity melted, and, as the sympathetic proctor vanished up the stairs, even Lois herself melted and succumbed to the magic of strong arms and scratchy, blue serge.

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BETTER LATE

Things had come to a critical stage in the life of Col. Joseph Higgenson, Southern gentleman, bachelor, connoisseur of mint-juleps, and follower of the races. As he sat in his cheap hall-bedroom in a New York lodging house, he presented a picture of drooping Southern chivalry, his finely shaped head with its mane of white hair, bowed, on his chest, his long and nervous hands, the hands of a gambler, placed one on each knee, and his whole attitude that of a man who has reached the very bottom of the pit. He had no clean change of linen for the new day—and that, as all students of the south are aware, was a thing unheard of for a real Southern gentleman, suh! Such a hiatus in the dress of a Southerner was unthinkable.
This low ebb in the tide of the colonel's fortunes was caused by a combination of circumstances. A five-to-one sure thing on Baby Blue in the closing race of the Saratoga circuit had failed to materialize, and when Pride o' Havana nosed into the home stretch and pounded across the line a winner by a rod, the colonel swore softly to himself, felt to see if his last twenty dollar bill was still in his pocket, and departed. Six months before he had just twelve thousand dollars, but a series of wrong tips, coupled with an unprofitable evening with a number of knights of the card pack, during which a popular pastime known as "raising the ante" was indulged in, had resulted in a pronounced drop in the barometer of the colonel's treasury.

For three weeks, he had been seeking a loan from his numerous acquaintances to tide him over his monthly board bill. Up till yesterday the impressive appearance of the colonel, aided by his mellow assurances that "It is only a temporary embarrassment, madam," had served to keep at a distance the sharp-tongued Mrs. Flaherty, the landlady.

Now he faced the future with a twenty-dollar bill and a few worldly possessions. He gazed about the room and his glance fell on his trunk, battered, almost falling to pieces. He rose and crossing the room knelt down to make inventory of its contents. A large daguerreotype of himself in the Confederate uniform, an enormous horse pistol, neatly tied heaps of bills and letters, two massive gold candlesticks retrieved from the fallen fortunes of the house of Higgenson after the death of the colonel's mother, a signed portrait of John L. Sullivan, and various odds and ends scattered in the bottom of the trunk did not serve to bring any gleam of hope to the ruddy face of the colonel. He turned to regard his countenance in the mirror. His mustache retained its same sweep of luxuriant whiteness, the little imperial on his chin continued to lend him that same air of gentility which he prided as an essential part of a Southern gentleman's character. Keeping up appearances! That was it, that was the whole thing in this gamble called Life! He had fooled them for forty years with this assumed hauteur
and polish until he had become the man himself; he had con-
veniently forgotten that during the War of the Rebellion he
was only a mule driver in the makeshift confederate commis-
sary department. Complete from head to foot in his impres-
sive habiliments, his wide sweeping coat and his snowy expanse
of bosom front, he was a striking figure. Alas, however, as he
stated before, that item of dress which every punctilious male
demands and which was the final touch to the colonel’s attire,
namely, a freshly laundered, upstanding, bat-wing collar, was
missing. His laundry had been requisitioned by the landlady
that morning, and dire threats as to further action were even
now being hurled from the foot of the stairs by the long-suf-
fering Madame Flaherty.

True, he had a twenty dollar bill, but once broken, the
colonel knew that the rest would flow from him in short order.
He bethought him of a small haberdashery a few blocks north;
well, he must break it sometime, and it might as well be in a
good cause.

He turned the collar of his coat up around his bare neck
and studied the effect in the mirror. “Disgustin’” he said, and
turned it down again. It was only three blocks; he would meet
no one he knew, and it would be but a moment’s work to pur-
chase a new collar, put it on; then he would indeed be clothed
and in his right mind. Drawing a deep breath, he opened the
door, stepped into the hallway, down the stairs, and out the
street door, his attitude that of studied nonchalance, while he
breathed a prayer of relief and thanksgiving that some circum-
stance had taken Mrs. Flaherty to the rear of the house.

Charlie Burns was in a quandry, or as he would have termed
it, a “helluvamess, bo!” Charlie was a moving picture direc-
tor, who had made good for fair. Be it a spectacle with thou-
sands of extras or a bit of “human interest goo,” as he aptly
expressed it, Charlie could play on his subject’s emotions and
produce results which had made the name “Premier” a symbol
of perfection in movie land.

At the present moment Burns was engaged in the produc-
tion of a "period" picture, dealing with the time of the Civil War. In vain Charlie had told the managerial head that "this costume stuff is the bunk, boss. Give 'em life as it's lived today, something snappy, cows, rural, mill-stream dope, or else N'Yawk from cabaret to Castle Garden. They eat that while this funny-clothes business puts 'em to by-by!" The manager had been firm, and Charles, with woe-begone face had started casting the picture.

The scenario which had been placed in his hands was of that stereotyped variety in which brother fights brother, the sweetheart renounces her lover who fights for the "Yanks," reconciliation, and the rest. Charlie had the leads all picked; the two brothers, the girl, who was starred—every one down to the necessary and important "Old Aunty Chloe" without whom every Civil War picture would be a miserable failure. The war scenes had been "shot" the week previous, and the sets had been completed in the studio two days ago. Everything was ready for commencing the important scenes in the interior of the Confederate home, when the leading character man of the company, to whom had been signed the fairly important role of head of a Southern household, had contracted pneumonia and died. In vain, Burns had telegraphed to various companies for the loan of a character lead; recourse to the files of the company's list of extras had been of no avail; Southern colonels were a minus quantity on the lists of migratory actors in movieland. The overhead charges on the uncompleted picture were a number of thousand dollars a day, no matter whether the cast was working or not, so Charlie clinched his teeth and fists and started on a still hunt thru the streets determined to kidnap or sandbag any one remotely resembling a flower of Southern chivalry. Imagine his state of mind when he observed approaching him the proud and collarless figure of Col. Gregory en route for the clothing store.

Charlie was a man of action, as evidenced by his record and neck-breaking serial (Riot, Revenge, and R) "Drawn and Quartered." Wasting no time, he hastened up to the surprised colonel, seized and pumped vigorously one of the
colonel's arms, and said all in one breath, "I'm Burns, director for Premier. Got to have you in picture. Your scenery is just right for the part. You're hired. Forty dollars a day. Sign here. Congratulations!" and pulled out a contract and fountain pen which he extended to the dazed colonel.

The latter drew himself up stiffly; the habit of years asserted itself; he would crush this insolence which presumed to offer him opportunity for daily labor.

"I'll have you know, suh," he began, then stopped; twenty dollars, no hopes of getting more, a harridan of a landlady, and—his fingers sought his throat, a state of pocketbook compelling him to walk the street collarless!

"Ah'll be delighted to accommodate you, suh," he finished, wondering if Burns observed his shame. The latter, however, was too busy patting himself on the back. The contract was signed, and Burns gave the colonel all necessary details as to time and place for the start on his new undertaking.

Marie Francis, nee Jenny Sullivan, glanced once at her mirror, then leaned closer, as her casual glance changed to close scrutiny of the visage she saw reflected there. Three more white hairs and—yes, a deepening in the wrinkles about her eyes!

"Character leads for me, all right," she thot. "I'll be able to play old ladies without any white wig in about three months, if this keeps up," and she studied the ageing contour of her face and the old look about the corners of her mouth.

Three times had Marie embarked on the sea of matrimony and three times had she failed to find happiness.

Burlesque actress, stock leading lady, always just missing the opportunity of doing big things, her life had been a series of disappointments. At last, finding anchorage in that great harbor for ageing actors of another day, the ranks of moving picture people, she earned an excellent living by her portrayal of all sorts of women from washer-lady to member of the Four Hundred.

As she entered the great glass-domed studio on the morning
following her mirror soliloquy, she observed the straight picturesque figure of the colonel, standing some distance away.

"Well, well," she thought, "the lost is found! Charlie has done it again."

She had time for no further thought, for Charlie himself appeared with the colonel in tow and introductions were quickly made.

And then what happened?

Youth with its eyes looking down the years, ever toward the future, youth with its hot impulses its great heights and depths of emotional feeling, youth which is capable of living ten years in one, to whom forty is aged and decrepit—youth will scoff and shrug its shoulders in laughing disbelief—the elderly gambler, fakir, race-track tout and the hard-eyed actress with her fading charms and her three ex-husbands, fell deep in love.

Thru the many rehearsals which followed, with the Colonel playing opposite the hoop-skirted, old-fashioned transformed Jennie Sullivan, this queer romance grew and flourished. Never was the Colonel more the polished cavalier of Dixie, never did so soft a light creep into the eyes of a mistress of a Confederate mansion as on a certain afternoon when, amidst the crackling flare of the dazzling Klieg lights, with the noise of hammer and saws pounding in their ears from a nearby, half-completed set, in a little out of the way nook, the Colonel proposed and was accepted.

Gazing at him with mist-covered eyes Marie Frances, nee Jennie Sullivan, saw, not a masquerading braggadocio gentleman gambler, but a gentleman, a man if you please, who had fallen on evil days, perhaps, but to whom she could give the love of one who had lived and suffered—and who shall say that she did not see the real Joseph Higgenson?

Sitting beside her, speaking phrases new to his tongue and mind, the colonel saw, not the fading beauty, the lined face, of a care-worn woman, but the star-lit eyes and gracefully-bodiced form of a good and wonderfully sweet being—and did he not see the real Jenny Sullivan?
They were married and are living together at this moment in a little flat in Harlem both working in the studio, where they learn technic, both happy, quarreling, ever and anon, since this is a true story, and growing old together.

Let's take a little peep into their flat as a final scene for this autumn romance.

There is no crackling wood fire before which the colonel and his wife sit dreaming, for, remember, this is a Harlem flat. Rather, the colonel sits at the supper table; the meal is finished, evidently; directly opposite sits his wife. He is leaning across the little table, and his countenance glows with the warmth of some recital; we put an ear to the crack in the door to catch the thread of his tale; he is telling, the old deceiver, of his old war experiences, and the glow of pride in her eyes serves only as wine to urge him on to more vivid details. We chuckle to ourselves as the door swings gently to, leaving (him to his) the two with their happiness, and as we tiptoe slowly away, we catch one last resonant phrase from the colonel's lips,

"'Now befo' the war—'"

D. O. T., 1922.

WE WERE JUST THINKING—ABOUT THE PECULIAR MAN

After all, it's not the surface-grazings we remember—there is always a hopeless sameness to such. The times when by some chance we have forgotten ourselves and have slipped below the topmost current of everyday politenesses are those we never can forget and would not if we could.

On our street in the little corner house, you remember, which is set back with the scraggly hedgerows from the sidewalk, lives the Peculiar Man. He himself says it is a good name for him and that it is really an honor. We would never have called him that ourselves; many of us think privately that it is the rest of us who are peculiar because we are not more
like him. But perhaps you know him, so many people do who never know each other at all. The first time I met him, he was raking up the leaves in his yard and I, a little, lone person in a queer, big world, was transplanting the geraniums in mine into winter pots. We exchanged greetings over the fence and fell to talking of the thots of our trees and the comradeship of tiny, green things. And from that, somehow, I seemed to be speaking aloud what I was thinking to myself. What a supreme compliment to be willing and able to say to another what as yet we have said only to ourselves! The Peculiar Man says that to him Life is really the touching of souls, the turning at the jostle from a shoulder in the crowd to meet beneath an exterior already familiar perhaps, a person never before known. At first I misunderstood him. You see, I had known one before who had made it his purpose to uncover the sensitive places in other men’s lives only that he might put them on paper. I couldn’t but suspect the Peculiar Man until a time when I learned that to him the ultimate art was living itself. Yes, he convinced me long ago, one night when his light etched the outlines from the branches of a tree outside against my bedroom wall opposite all night long, and until the sun rising, came to dispel them. That was the night when the master of the Grey House returned, you remember. Neither of them ever mentioned it to me, but I knew.

After all, the soul of us is the elemental we. It’s the only part of us which can give and not take, which can listen to the sobs of others and not want to fling back its own, which can sense the joy of another’s and forget its own lack. I have followed the Peculiar Man’s teachings, but I have not taken his thots—I have come trailing along slowly, and I have found that he is right.
A PRAYER

God of the East and West—we pray
At Xmas time—
Under the purple blackness of the night,
Under the eyes of heaven’s quiet light,
Thy comforting:
Weary, Thy world, with heart worn thin with care,
Looks toward the eastern star of promise there—
Under the faith that centuries have told,
We hunt the secret that the ages hold.
God of the East and West—we pray
Thy sympathy.

WHAT THE OTHER FELLOW SAID:

"Friendship is neither a formality nor a mode; it is a life."
—Grayson

"It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not,
I am with you, men and women of a generation, or ever so many generations hence.
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt;
Just as one of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd.
Just as you are refreshed by the gladness of the river and the bright flow, I am refreshed.
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift current, I stood, yet was hurried."

"Is it not marvelous how far afield some of us are willing to travel in pursuit of that beauty which we leave behind at home?"
—Grayson

"The Moods have laid their hands across my hair;
The Moods have drawn their fingers thru my heart:
The Moods have loosed the winds to vex my hair,
And made my heart too wise.''

—Davis.

"You have made the cement of your churches out of tears
and ashes, and the fabric will not stand."

"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your tears can wash out a Word of it.

—Rubaiyat.
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