

Simone

By COUNT EDUARD KEYSERLING. (Translated, with introductory comment, by William L. McPherson.)

No. 15.

The story which follows—by Count Eduard Keyserling, the well known Bavarian author, may or may not embody an actual experience. The author does not commit himself specifically on that point. Nor was it at all necessary that he should do so. In the recollections of a convalescent, trying to recall the happenings of the battlefield, it is not always possible to draw a clear line between imagination and reality. But whether the story is or is not literally true, its truth in the larger figurative sense is incontestable.

Simone is more than an individual. She is a type. She symbolizes the spirit of womanhood, whose instincts of pity and compassion survive even amid the hideous derangements of war. Hatreds, however natural; resentments, however just, cannot altogether extinguish woman's humanity, her elemental craving to spare and to succor.

As Simone puts it: "When we ought to be kind, we can't be, and it's the same way when we ought to be unkind. It is our nature." A new exemplification—and yet a very old one—of the Eternal Feminine.

It is a pleasant thing to find this tribute to French womanhood written by a Bavarian and published in a leading Vienna newspaper, the "Neue Freie Presse."

THE first days—the first weeks—during which I lay wounded in the hospital are a blur in my mind. I remember that I was tormented by violent dreams—the thunder of artillery, the tumult of battle, blanched faces with wide-open eyes, everywhere slime and blood. Then again I sank back into the sombre shadows of a merciful unconsciousness.

One day everything seemed bright and clear around me. I felt the burning of my wound, the pitiful weakness of my limbs. I saw the cheerful room in which I lay, the bit of pale blue sky cut into squares by the panes of my window. I recognized the face of the Sister who brought me broth—the round face, with laughing brown eyes, set in the broad flaps of the snow white cap. I heard what she said to me and I could answer. Slowly I drifted back again into life, and life seemed to me an effort—a dull and dreary labor.

One night I lay there motionless. I could not sleep, but a wonderful sense of tranquillity came over me. I no longer felt the burning of my wound. I could stretch my limbs with ease. It was as if life was gently rocking me on its softest billows.

Around the hospital all was still. Once in a while a clock struck or there came the sound of light footsteps hurrying past my door, with a whirring like the flapping of the wings of the big candle moths. That was the shaking of the flaps of the white caps which the sisters wore. A delicious feeling of security warmed my heart.

And as I lay thus a recollection awakened in my mind—a recollection as clear, as vivid, as rich in color and detail as many of those dreams are in which we reproduce our past experiences.

It was the day of my last battle. We were creeping forward through thick underbrush. At last we charged. It was the sort of a charge in which ideas and consciousness are submerged in action. I felt a sharp blow underneath my shoulder.

"This time it hit me," I said; and I raised my hand to the place where the bullet struck. "It is not so bad," I thought, at first. I

wanted to go on; but my legs refused to do their duty. I sank to the ground.

The tumult of the battle still raged, but its vortex seemed to be moving away from me. I had, however, but one thought, but one wish. I saw at a little distance a thick copse of oaks. I wanted to get there, for there I knew I should be safer. It was the instinct of the stricken animal, seeking to hide in the thicket. Painfully I crawled forward on all fours. The way seemed without end, and when I reached the copse it was a blessing to lie down in quiet. The wound began to give me great pain.

"You must bind it up." The thought ran through my mind, but I was too weak to move. Over my head I saw the green and brown oak leaves fluttering in the wind. I saw the sky, too, blue and dotted with quickly travelling white clouds. I rested my head on a clump of grass and lay on my side.

Then I noticed that very near me lay another soldier. An arm in a blue sleeve, a back, a head with dark hair. And from the posture of the head, the relaxation of the arm, I knew that this comrade was going to be a very quiet and silent comrade.

"Did he also crawl here to die?" I thought. I envied him his untroubled rest.

"Yes, to die, to die," I kept saying to myself. "Is it coming now? Is this death? Is this the way it happens?" And I sank into unconsciousness.

A cold shudder running through my body awakened me out of my stupor. For a while I lay quite still. It seemed to me that I could move neither hand nor foot. Finally, I opened my eyes. Darkness reigned, yet now and then a pale light penetrated the darkness. All about me I heard a gentle rustling.

Where was I? I lifted my head a little. Was this merely an uneasy dream that I was dreaming? Then a sharp pain in my side made me drop back. I felt a burning thirst and began to grow cold all over.

This cleared my mind a little. Now I knew where I was and what had happened to me. It was night. The moon was in the sky. Black clouds passed over its face. The leaves on the trees made the rustling sound which I had noticed. Beside me lay the motionless Frenchman, his arm stretched out, in the inert posture of death.

Yes, now I knew that it was not all over yet—that the bitter ordeal of death was still ahead of me.

Then I thought I heard steps cautiously coming and going. Was it some wild animal on his nightly prow? I lifted my head again and saw a small dark form moving slowly in and out among the bushes.

It was a woman, enveloped in a black cloak, her head bent down as if she was searching for something. With a shudder I gazed at this phantom, black and sinister, which stole through the moonlight. Now she came quite near. She stopped at the dead man beside me, bent low over his body; then I heard a cry of grief, short and shrill, such as a wounded animal might make. She knelt down, then threw herself on the body of the dead man and began to sob heartbreakingly. With the sobs were mingled words, spoken in a youthful voice, which was full of the strange vibration which tears cause in the voices of weeping women. She talked the broad French dialect of the border lands.

"Alfred, my darling, how I have searched for you! Everywhere I have searched for you! I knew that you were in need, that you were waiting for me. You knew that your Simone would come. You are wounded, Alfred? Say that you are wounded, not dead! Oh, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!"

She seated herself on the ground, lifted the head of the dead man, placed it in her lap, stroked the dark hair and, bent deep over him, began again to sob and to talk plaintively to him.

"The Boches have killed you. They have made this black hole in your forehead. They

have robbed me of everything. The mill is burned; and now you, too, are taken. Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! what is to become of me?"

Her lamentations died away in a new outburst of weeping. This listened breathlessly; now I sank back. This misery affected me too much. A sharp pain in my wound made me groan.

Simone raised her head and listened like a startled fawn. In the moonlight I saw clearly the sharp profile, the delicate brow, over which some crisp dark tresses fell. As my pain forced from me another deep sigh she turned toward me, bending forward.

"Who is there?" she whispered. But as the moon came out of the clouds and threw its rays full on me she shrank back as if overcome by disgust and repugnance.

"It is one of them, one of the accursed Boches," she exclaimed. And her voice became deep and scornful.

She bent again over her dead lover, and for a while everything was still.

I suffered an intense pain and was obliged to groan softly. Then Simone straightened herself up and said in her deep, angry voice, without turning her head toward me:

"Are you dying?" "I don't know; perhaps I am dying," I answered.

"Oh, yes, you are dying," she returned, with something like triumph in her voice. "You must die. Why shouldn't you die? Alfred is dead; all our men are dead. You burn our houses and kill our people. And still you wish to live? No, God is not so unjust! I shall pray God to let you die—and to let you die a bitter death."

"Yes," I answered, weakly, "pray to Him to let me die!"

She turned again to her dead. I heard her whisper something. A longing overcame me to hear her voice again, to feel once more the propinquity of something human. So I began to speak.

"You loved him?" "Yes, I loved him," the girl answered proudly. "One had to love him—him whom you have murdered."

"You were going to marry him?" "I would never have married any other man," answered Simone. "Whatever my parents might have said, I should have married him and him only. And now he is dead. But why? Why he? Why my lover? When he went away he laughed. He said he was glad

to go hunting the Prussians. He was so fond of laughing!"

"And the mill is burned?" I said, in order to prolong the conversation. "They shelled it and then burned it," answered Simone, bitterly. "It was a beautiful mill—the best in the neighborhood. It belonged to my parents and Alfred was our miller's apprentice."

While she told me this her voice grew quieter. It seemed as if the mere fact of talking relieved her.

"Up on the granary floor the planking of the walls was all yellow like honey, and at noon-time, when the sun shone in, everything glittered like gold. I used to go up to see Alfred at midday when 'all was quiet below, for I didn't want my parents to know. He stood there in the golden glitter, himself all white, only his eyes showing dark."

"We sat side by side; the mill rattled, flour dust was all around us, and my hair and face also got white. When I came downstairs I could not show myself at once to my mother, for she would have known where I had been. But up there we were undisturbed. Only once I met him in the garden; and that was the last evening of all. I stole with naked feet past the doors of my parents' room, and because I wanted to get to him quickly I ran right through the salad bed. The leaves were so wet that it seemed as if I had waded through water. On the other side of the bed Alfred took me in his arms and said, 'You are as wet as a water mouse.'"

Tears made her voice tremble, and finally silenced her.

"I see all that," I began. "How clearly I see it! The mill yellow with sunshine and him standing there inside of it, all white from the clouds of flour dust."

"Oh, no; you cannot see it," said the girl angrily; "you have nothing so beautiful in your savage land. You can only destroy. If you die now, will a girl over there in your country weep for you?"

"Yes, one will weep for me," I answered. "Let her weep; let all the German women weep; for we—we also weep."

"Back in my country," I began (and I spoke as in a dream), "there stands a white house. Little pale red roses grow around it. At the window sits an old woman. When dusk comes she puts her glasses in the big book in which she has been reading and gazes down the road with dim and weary eyes."

"In the garden by the house are apple trees,

whose boughs bend under the weight of the apples. Beneath them stands a blond maiden, who also gazes wistfully down the road. She writes me and she knows I cannot come up that road just yet. Still she must stand there every evening and look down the highway."

"She, too?" exclaimed Simone. "It is strange. When Alfred was gone I couldn't keep out of sight of the highway. I stood there always and kept my eyes fixed on the road by which he would return to me."

"It is strange," I sighed.

"And why didn't you stay back there in your white houses and with your blond maidens? Why must you come and take everything away from us? What has one, then—a little happiness, and even that is taken away?"

"I don't know," I groaned. "Perhaps that the white houses over there and the old women in their cosy corners and the maidens under the apple trees might be a little safer."

"And we can perish!" said Simone gloomily. The moon had again emerged from the shadow of the clouds and shone brightly on us. "Oh, now you can see him," she cried. "How beautiful he is, and how calmly he sleeps!"

With an effort I raised myself a little and saw a round, pale, boyish face. The eyes were closed, the white lips a little relaxed, as though they smiled. On the lower part of the brow was a black spot. Simone wept. Her tears fell on the white cheek of the dead youth and sparkled there.

"How beautiful he is!" Simone went on. "He looked like that the last night I saw him. I couldn't sleep. I was tortured by the thought that I should never see Alfred again. I stole out of my room and up the little staircase to Alfred's room. I was afraid. The moon shone so bright, the steps of the staircase creaked and on the wall a shadow followed me, a black, silent figure."

"Up in his room he lay in his bed asleep. The moonlight fell on his face. It seemed to me as calm and pale as I see it now. I did not dare to waken him. I stood there, gazed at him and wept, and I felt as if my heart would break. Then I stole down again to my room."

"Yes, he is beautiful," I said, in order to please Simone.

She lifted her eyes and looked sharply at me. "How young are you?" she asked. "As young as Alfred and as pale as Alfred."

I sank back wearily and made no reply. Then she asked softly: "Is it hard to die?"

"No," I answered, "I don't think it is hard. It takes us off quickly enough—if only there was no pain and no freezing and no thirst."

Simone fumbled at her dress, drew out something and handed it to me.

"Here!" she said. "I brought it for Alfred. Now it doesn't matter. Alfred will pardon me."

I saw a small wine bottle. I took it, put it to my lips and drank the sourish wine greedily. When it was empty I handed the bottle back to her and said:

"I thank you. You are very kind."

"Kind!" exclaimed Simone in her deep but now less irritated voice. "When we ought to be kind we can't be, and it's the same way when we ought to be unkind. It is our nature."

The drink had refreshed me. Yet I felt suddenly a great weakness. The moon overhead seemed to grow dim. Black shadows flitted over the moonlit ground.

"Is that death?" I thought.

I tried to speak, but could utter only disconnected, meaningless words: "Bitter—bitter—we are—young and pale—some day the others—they will be happy—white houses—sunlit mills—the green country with the yellow roads."

Everything grew dark before my eyes. My senses left me. I only had an indistinct feeling as if something warm was being spread about me.

The next morning the ambulance corps men found me there, wrapped in Simone's black cloak.

Brothers All

By DEEMS TAYLOR.

THE mouse should have known better, of course. Nassau Street on a Saturday afternoon is no proper place for any brown mouse, let alone a young one, who isn't much over an inch and a half long and can't run very fast. But there he was, and would have to make the best of it.

Two youths spied him first as he ran along the gutter, and their joyous shouts soon attracted other spectators. People on the opposite sidewalk stopped and stared and then crossed over to see the fun.

The mouse came to a puddle, tried to cross it, found it too deep, and so climbed up the curbstone and scurried across the sidewalk until the wall of a building stopped him. The crowd formed an interested ring around him. He should have been well satisfied, for already he had drawn a larger crowd than a hilarious drunk or an automobile blowout would have attracted.

But the mouse wasn't thinking of that, apparently. He was desperately trying to crawl up the side of the building. This was foolish of him, for the wall offered no hiding place. He soon gave it up and dropped back, for he was young and had not strength enough to climb very far. He ran over and tried to hide under the sill of a shop door. Even that afforded him no concealment, and the best he could do was to huddle close to the pavement and make himself as small as possible.

The crowd grew restless. It is no fun to watch a mouse that won't move.

"Kill him," some one suggested.

"Anybody got a cane?"

"Step on him."

A stout, cheery looking individual, who might have been a broker, had a sudden inspiration.

"Watch this!" he chuckled.

He stepped warily forward and trod upon the tip of the mouse's tail. The mouse made no sound, but flashed around faster than the eye could follow, and crouched facing the crowd. It was not defiance. He merely wanted to face the point of greatest danger. He made no attempt to escape, but huddled there motionless—or nearly so. If you bent down and watched him closely you could see that his heart must be beating very fast, for his whole body shuddered—regularly, like the tick of a watch.

The shopkeeper came to his door.

"What's the trouble?"

Then he saw the mouse, and grinned delightedly.

"Got a cat?" eagerly asked one elderly man.

"No. Gee! I wish I had!"

The stout, cheery looking individual had another inspiration. He put out his foot and playfully kicked the mouse into the street. The crowd laughed delightedly.

"Atta boy!"

"Good shooting!"

"Right in the corner pocket!"

"Some drop-kick!"

From under the wheel of a passing pushcart there came a thin, high squeal. A horse dashing in front of the shop pricked his ears inquiringly, and then drowsed off again.

The crowd broke up and the spectators drifted away. Some of them went back to their offices, some went to luncheon, and some just strolled; for the day was perfect—sunny, and not too warm. It was good to be alive.

On the way to his luncheon club the stout, cheery looking individual stopped to buy an afternoon paper.

"Hello, Joe," he called affably to the news-dealer, "what's new?"

He hastily glanced over the headlines.

"Well, I'll be —! Another neutral steamer sunk by the Germans. Fifty drowned." He clenched his fist and scowled.

"The damned brutes!"

"THE ART OF LIFE"

By HENRY B. FULLER.

Courtesy of "The New Republic."

Before Horace Tripp had been married A year and a half He began to suspect That "the art life"— As he handsomely called it— Was rather beyond his technique; His powers in sleight-of-hand Were slight indeed. Too many balls to keep in the air: His wife, his baby, his grocer, His landlord, his publisher, His friends and enemies, And all the rest of them. He made many a sad slip, And came to feel petulantly That perhaps he was more or less A dud.

So he bent himself over his desk All the harder. If he could not coordinate and control The various people who made up The elements of his daily existence, All the more would he take a high hand With the brain-folk Who people his books. These had to behave— Had to do as he wanted. Sometimes they dashed through adventures, Calamities and contortions In kingdoms remote and imaginary; Sometimes they grubbed in the slums; Again, they were clever and elegant criminals In "society"—whatever the mode of the hour. But, anyhow, All jumped through the hoop At his lightest command; And each work came out in the end Just as the author had planned it— No bit in the teeth, and no balking. 'Tis the weak man, of course, Who makes the best tyrant; And Horace was ruthless. Soon he came to look on himself As a species of minor creator, Grandiose and omnipotent In a world of his own.

It was not, however, the world With which one perforce Has everybody dealings. Things listed and twisted, His publisher carped— Returns for them both became meagre; And his father-in-law Began to scowl his reproaches; And all the next summer Bettina, with little indifferent Wilfrid, Spent at her parents' cool cottage High in the pine woods of Michigan, While Horace, left quite behind, Just boarded. Next year He gave up a flat— The butcher had shown some impatience; His wife was now dressed by her mother; Few rent and club dues were far in arrears— So the three went to live Under the roof and the eyes of the elders, Who looked with great coldness On what they called "scribbling." And begged him to drop it For something more useful— And profitable.

But Horace, he said, was an "artist." Trained to his one line of work, Stubborn and proud. He declared that a man Who could scheme an elaborate novel, Shake it, clew it around, And push it through to a suitable climax. Was a deal of a chap, after all. He heartily scorned Those "real-estate operations" On commissions from which He and Bettina and Wilfrid Were now kept a-going. What need to put art into one's daily life And its manifold problems? No; he would place it high and dry

In vacuo, In a row of symmetrical, well-finished novels, Set in due order on the towering shelves Of immortality. Another lean year. His writings Seemed to fall in with the whims of the day Less than ever. He was a humbug; the public, Not knowing the fact, and yet feeling it somehow, Gave him the go-by. Bettina now added her prayers To her parents' reproaches, And Horace, a martyr, "Gave up literature"—in a measure. Drugging his deadly aversion To business, He found him a place With his publisher— Yes, with his own; For he had knack of a kind That gave him a limited value In certain practical fields; He could proof-read and edit. He became, then, a salaried cog In a big and a busy machine.

His new chief had begun As a publisher of wallpaper, Uttering fields, friezes and dados. Next he had added stationery; Next, books and periodicals; And now he was bringing out sparsely, each season, Volumes of prose and of verse In numbers sufficient To gild and to dignify What choice ones called "trade."

Horace, at first, was quite lofty, And often said, "Pooh!" But he had, after all, Some slight inklings of sense; And before his first year was over He hummed in a different measure. He now saw "the business" As a great feat Of imagination and technique, A towering, well-knit structure Of many fine cantos; And Theophilus M. Decker As a high creative spirit, Strong and compelling; A man of mark, of poise, and of breadth; Prompt and able in all his relations; A prestidigitator Of twenty times poor Horace's own power; Deft at home with his wife and his family, Agile and stout 'gainst his fellow-paladins, Dextrous indeed with his hundreds of helpers, Prompt with his royalties, A pillar of the church, A staunch column in the politics of his ward, Keen and wary with the assessor, And annually gathering in, Despite difficulties and competition, Eighteen and three-quarters per cent For self, family and the clan of the "house"; Doing it easily, lightly, And jocularly. . . . "He's a magician!" cried Horace, Elate with a promised promotion; "Yes, he's an Artist!"

Horace advanced. His wife can dress in high feather From husband's own purse; Her father smiles on him at last, And little Wilfrid and Imogene Are allowed to respect Their immediate progenitor. Horace now sits at a roller-top, Twiddling his thumbs And knitting his brows at young authors Who, flighty and over "artistic," Might, with a few slight concessions, Do better, Both for the "house" and themselves, If only . . .

HOW TO MAKE MONEY

By Robert J. Widhack



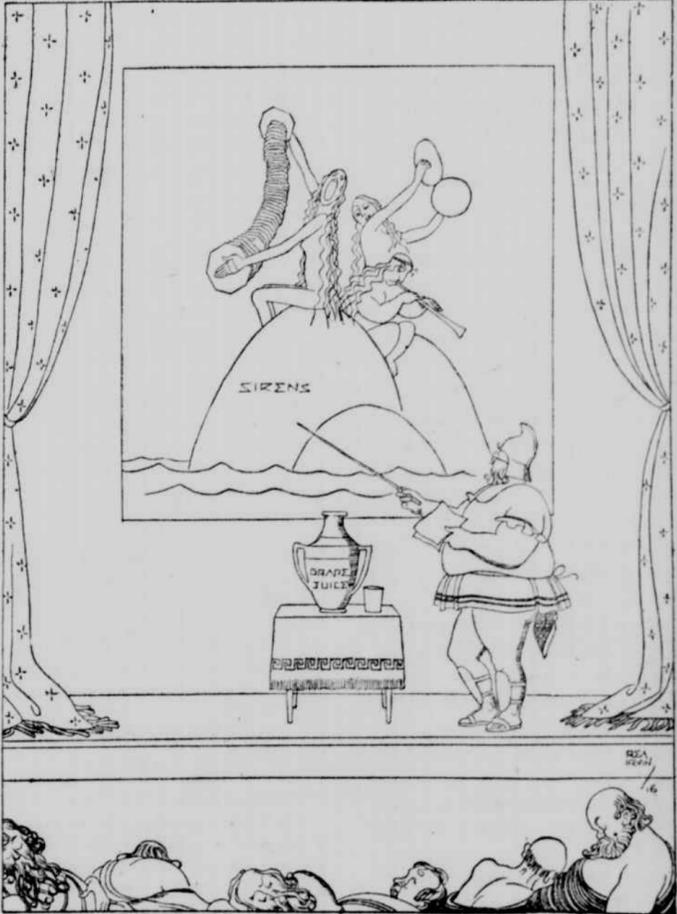
IX—MARRYING IT

There's a way of getting wealthy that is often spoken well of; The initial cost is all there is; and the rest is just clear gain; Buy a wedding-ring, and flowers for the bride-to-be to smell of, And her money then is yours by right of eminent domain.

1—Orange blossoms.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

By Rea Irvin



ULYSSES INTRODUCES THE TRAVELOGUE, JUNE 11, B. C. 1916.