schemes—charities and gold-mines and copper-mines and oil-wells and I don't know what all—came down there to see me: down there to the little farm, where I wanted to be alone. Of course, I could be out to them; but even then I was conscious that they were around. Some of them even waited until I ventured from the house, and waylaid me on the road.

"Then there were others—people I knew and couldn't refuse to see without being rude. I felt," she said, looking up at Monte, "as if the world of people had suddenly all turned into men, and that they were hunting me. I couldn't get away from them without locking myself up, and that was just the thing I did not want to do. In a way, I'd been locked up all my life. So I just packed my things and took the steamer without telling any one but my lawyer where I was going."

"It's too bad they wouldn't let you alone," said Monte.

"It was like an evil dream," she said. "I didn't know men were like that."

Monte frowned.

"Then on the boat I met Teddy," she went on. "It was difficult not to meet him."

He nodded.

"I didn't mind so much at first; he was interesting."

"Yes, he's that," admitted Monte.

"And he was very pleasant until—he began to make love to me."

If Monte knew Teddy Hamilton, this happened about the third day.

"That was very annoying," she said reminiscently. "It was annoying not only because of Teddy, but in itself. In some ways he did it very nicely—especially when he sang in the moonlight. I suppose it was my fault that I gave him the opportunity. I could have kept myself in my state-room, or I could have played bridge with the elderly ladies in the cabin. But, you see, that's what Aunty always made me do, and I did want to get out. I did enjoy Teddy up to that point. But I did not want to fall in love with him, or with any one else. I suppose I'm too selfish—too utterly and completely selfish."

"To—er—to fall in love?" he questioned.

"Yes. Oh, as long as I'm making you my father confessor, I may as well be thorough." She smiled.

Monte leaned forward with sudden interest. Here was a question that at odd moments had disturbed his own peace of mind. It was Chic Warren who had first told him that in remaining a bachelor he was leading an utterly selfish life.

"IT isn't that I want to do anything especially proper or improper," she hastened to assure him. "I haven't either the cravings or the ambitions of the new woman. That, again, is where I'm selfish. I'd like to be"—she spoke hesitatingly—"I'd like to be just like you, Monte."

"Like me!" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Free to do just what I want to do—nothing particularly good, nothing particularly bad; free to go here or go there; free to live my own life; free to be free!"

"Well," he asked, "what's to prevent?"

"Teddy Hamilton—and the others," she answered. "In a way, they take the place of Aunty. They won't let me alone. They won't believe me when I tell them I don't want them around. They seem to assume that, just because I'm not married— Oh, they are stupid, Monte!"

Henri, who had been stealing in with course after course, refilled the glasses. He smiled discreetly as he saw her earnest face.

"What you need," suggested Monte, "is a sort of chaperon or secretary."

She shook her head.

"Would you like one yourself?" she demanded.

"It would be a good deal of a nuisance," he admitted; "but, after all—"

"I won't have it!" she burst out. "It would spoil everything. It would be like building one's own jail and employing one's own jailer. I couldn't stand that. I'd rather be annoyed as I am than be annoyed by a chaperon."

SHE was silent a moment, and then she exclaimed:

"Why, I'd almost rather marry Teddy! I'd feel freer—honestly, I think I'd feel freer with a husband than a chaperon."

"Oh, see here!" protested Monte. "You mustn't do that."

"I don't propose to," she answered quietly.

"Then," he said, "the only thing left is to go away where Teddy and the others can't find you."

"Where?" she asked with interest.

"There are lots of little villages in Switzerland."

She shook her head.

"And along the Riviera."

"I love the little villages," she replied. "I love them here and at home. But it's no use."

She smiled. There was something pathetic about that smile—something that made Covington's arm muscles twitch.

"I wouldn't even have the aid of the taxis in the little villages," she said.

Monte leaned back.

"If they only had here in Paris a force of good, honest Irish cops instead of these confounded gendarmes," he mused.

She looked her astonishment at the irrelevant observation.

"You see," he explained, "it might be possible then to lay for Teddy H. some evening and—argue with him."

"It's nice of you, Monte, to think of that," she murmured.

Monte was nice in a good many ways.

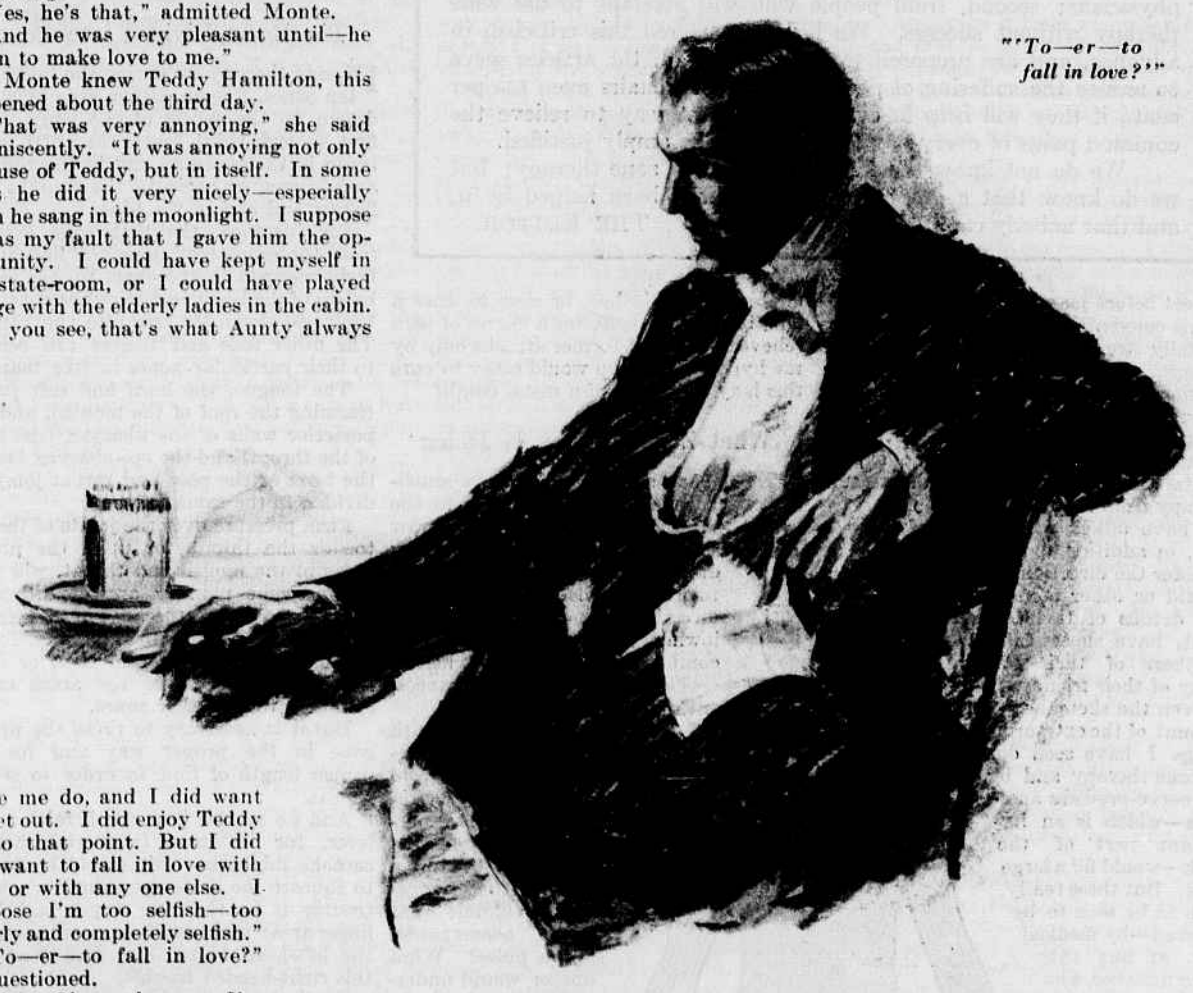
"The trouble is, they lack sentiment, these gendarmes," he concluded. "They are altogether too law-abiding."

MONTE had sometimes been accused of lacking sentiment; and yet, the very first thing he did when starting for his walk the next morning was to order a large bunch of violets to be sent to number sixty-four Boulevard St. Germaine. Then, at a somewhat faster pace than usual, he followed the river to the Jardin des Tuileries, and crossed there to the Avenue des Champs Élysées.

Monte's objection to sentiment was not based upon any of the modern schools of philosophy, where it is deplored as a weakness. He took his stand upon much simpler grounds: that, as far as he had been able to observe, it did not make for content.

It had been his fate to be thrown in contact with a good deal of it in its most acute stages, because the route he followed was unhappily the route also followed by those upon their honeymoon. If what he observed was sentiment at its zenith, then he did not care for it. Bridegrooms made the poorest sort of traveling companions; and that, after all, was the supreme test of men. They appeared restless, dazed, and were continually looking at their watches. Few of them were able to talk intelligently or play a decent game of bridge.

Perhaps, too, he had been unfortunate in the result of his observations of the same passion in its later stages; but it is certain that those were not inspiring, either. Chic Warren was an exception. He seemed fairly happy and normal, but Covington would never forget the night he spent there when Chic, Jr., had the whooping-cough. He walked by Chic's side up and down the hall, up and down the hall, up and down the hall, with Chic a ghastly white and the sweat standing in beads upon his forehead. His own throat had tightened and he grew weak in the knees every time the rubber-soled nurse stole into sight. Every now and then he heard that gasping cough, and felt the spasmodic grip of Chic's fingers upon his arm. It was terrible.



"'To—er—to fall in love?'"

At the end of an hour Covington turned back, wheeling like a soldier on parade. There had never seemed to him any reason why, when a man was entirely comfortable, as he was, he should take the risk of a change. He had told Chic as much when sometimes the latter, over a pipe, had introduced the subject.

The last time, Chic had gone a little farther than usual.

"But, man alive!" Chic had exclaimed. "A day will come when you'll be sorry."

"I don't believe it," Monte answered.

Yet it was only yesterday that he had wandered over half Paris in search of something to bring his schedule back to normal. And he had found it—in front of the Opera House at eleven o'clock at night.

Monte strode into his hotel with a snap that made the little clerk glance up in surprise.

"Any mail for me?" he inquired.

"A telephone message, m'sieur."

He handed Monte an envelop. It was not often that he received telephone messages. It read as follows:

Can't you come over? Teddy was very angry about the taxi, and I think I shall leave Paris to-night. The flowers were beautiful.

Monte felt his breath coming fast.

"How long has this been waiting for me?" he demanded.

"A half hour, m'sieur."

He hurried out the door and into a taxi.

"Sixty-four Boulevard St. Germaine—and hurry."

Leaving Paris? She had no right to do that. Edhart never left. That was the beauty of Edhart—that he remained stationary, so that he could always be found. He was quite sure that Edhart was too considerate even to die, could he have avoided it. Now Marjory was proposing to go and leave him here alone. He could not allow that. It was too early to quit Paris, anyway. It was only the first day of spring!

SHE came down into the gloomy *pension* reception-room looking as if she had already begun to assist Marie with the packing. Her hair had become loosened, and escaped in several places in black curls that gave her a distinctly girlish appearance. There was more color, too, in her cheeks; but it was the flush of excitement rather than the honest red that colored his own cheeks.

She looked tired and discouraged. She sank into a chair.

"It was good of you to come, Monte," she said. "I don't know why I should bother you with my affairs. Only—Teddy was so disagreeable. He frightened me, for a moment."

"What did he do?" demanded Monte.

"He came here early, and when Marie told him I was out he said he would wait until I came back. So he sat down—right here. Then, every five minutes, he called Madame Courcy and sent her up with a note. I was afraid of a scene, because madame spoke of sending for the gendarmes."

"Why didn't you let her?"

"That would have made still more of a scene."

She was speaking in a weary, emotionless voice, like one who is very tired.

"So I came down and saw him," she said. "He was very melodramatic."

It seemed difficult for her to go on.

"Absinthe?" he questioned.

"I don't know. He wanted me to marry him at once. He drew a revolver and threatened to shoot himself—threatened to shoot me."

Monte clenched his fists.

"Good Lord!" he said softly. "That *is* going a bit far."

"Is it so men act—when they are in love?" she asked.

Monte started.

"I don't know. If it is, then they ought to be put in jail."

"If it is, it is most unpleasant," she said; "and I can't stand it, Monte. There is no reason why I should, is there?"

"No, if you can avoid it."

"That's the trouble," she frowned.

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