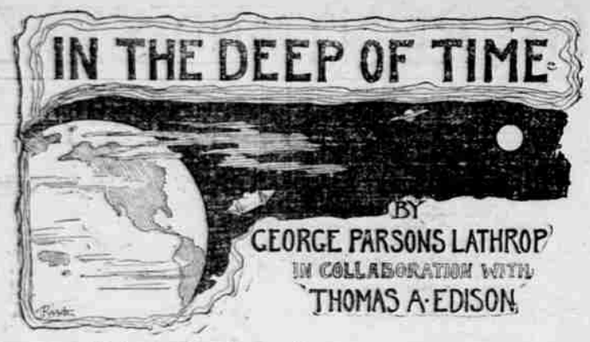

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SYNOPSIS.

The story, as told by the author, is the result of conversations with Thomas A. Edison, the substance of which Mr. Edison afterwards put into the form of notes written for the author's use. Mr. Edison's suggestions as to inventions, etc., are understood to be simply hints as to what might possibly be accomplished. For the story itself the author is responsible.

Gerald Bemis, at the end of the nineteenth century, having been unsuccessful in his suit for the hand of Eva Pryor, allows himself to be "vivificated" by the Society of Futurity. By a newly-discovered process, animation is suspended, and Bemis is placed in a hermetically sealed cylinder. Three centuries later the cylinder is opened by the chiefs of the society then in control and Bemis is revived. Among many wonderful discoveries he finds that telegraphic communication with the planet Mars has been established. Word comes from Mars that one Bronson, who had started for that planet in an anti-gravity machine, has not arrived there, and later that a messenger from Mars is on his way to the earth. Meanwhile Bemis discovers that Eva Pryor, who really loved him, was also "vivificated." He meets her and finds that his love for her has vanished. He falls in love with Electra, a beautiful twenty-second century girl, who is in turn loved by Hammerfleet, a man of her own period. The messenger from Mars, Zorlin, arrives with Bronson, and all travel in an airship to Chicago. There Bemis proposes to Electra. She explains that she is a "child of the State," and has been affianced to Hammerfleet. The latter overhears the conversation, but represses his jealousy. He invites Bemis to make an excursion with him to see the country, and lures him into a vast plant of motived machinery near Buffalo. Hammerfleet then escapes, leaving Bemis in great danger in the midst of a network of wheels, levers and cranks. Bemis is rescued by Zorlin and Electra, who stop the machinery, and Hammerfleet is banished from Electra's presence. Bemis again urges Electra to marry him. She will not consent to this, but agrees to take a trip with Zorlin and Bemis in an airship around the world. After they have started from Fire Island, Bemis discovers that Eva Pryor has been smuggled aboard by Electra.

PART IV.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

It was a magnificent and impressive sight; and so absorbed were we in gazing at it that only at the moment when we were escaping the tail of the cyclone did we observe that Hammerfleet's airship had sailed into the main body of it, was spun around like a top in the swirl of mist and wind, and then was broken and thrown down, a wreck, to the ocean below.

Although I was rather exultant over his disaster, I made a prayer for him; for I did not think that he could come out from the ruin alive, and certainly did not wish him any evil either in this life or beyond it.

It turned out that he did escape whole; but we did not know of this until long afterwards.

At Cuba we stopped to renew our batteries, take in provisions, and rest. We found the island peaceful, happy and prosperous under a limited republican government, and free from all nightmares of tyranny, either white or black. From there—believing that we were now quit of Hammerfleet, and having decided to convert our journey for a while into a tour of observation—we started over sea and land down to the Amazon country. We were received at Para by a branch of the Darwinian Society, and, on their extensive plantations, were attended by apes whom they had developed to an extraordinary degree. These apes had arrived at a fair imitative proficiency in human language, were skillful in agriculture, under proper direction, and made very good servants for the rougher and simpler kinds of housework, or for carrying baggage and the like.

One of the most interesting things in the Amazon region was the fact that large tracts of country had been sterilized by saturation with petroleum. This prevented excessive vegetable growth, and enabled the inhabitants, with the aid of great syndicates, to carry on a normal and highly profitable production of rubber trees and of forests, the wood fiber from which was turned into food and various useful tissues. All sorts of food were manufactured here from wood and cellulose, with the inorganic salts of potash and sulphuric acid, and by the action of bacterial ferments.

Here at Para, also, is made a large part of the world's supply of artificial silk. The disintegrated cellulose of the food factories, after being thoroughly bleached to dazzling whiteness, is dissolved in one of the chlorinated alcohols, under pressure, to a glossy mass. This is afterward put into a cylindrical hydraulic press and forced through plates filled with innumerable small discs of sapphire, through every one of which a hole one-thousandth of an inch in diameter is bored by diamond dust. The fiber, when it reaches the hot air of the room in which the press is situated, shrinks immediately by the evaporation of the alcoholic solvent and is put at once on to reels. The entirely amorphous character of the material, and the perfect surfaces of the sapphire die produce a fabric far more dazzling and beautiful than the silk formerly obtained from the silk worm.

Not knowing what had become of Graemantle, whom we had lost sight of when we were dodging the cyclone, and not wishing to be overtaken and interfered with by him, we had to hurry away from Para and the Amazon. Travelling mostly in the early evening or the early morning, when we were less likely to be observed or followed, we zig-zagged through the air over Brazil, crossing the Andes two or three times from east to west and back, and then bearing down to Chili and the Argentine Republic. Everywhere in those regions we found the same system of building in use which had aroused my admiration in the United States. This is the "plastic" system of moulding edifices, still more effective than the fusing of bricks into solid masses, which I have mentioned before.

By the plastic method, immense palaces are reared for the ordinary dwellings of the rich, with miles of terraces and raised gardens, towers, domes, and long vistas of pillars, surpassing in grandeur even the imaginative conception of ancient Carthage, as depicted by the old English painter, Turner. State capitols and all government or municipal buildings and numerous vast churches filled with gorgeous chapels are built on even a greater scale of magnificence and massive proportions, in designs of exquisite beauty. Large corporations erect these structures, by means of iron moulds of every variety, all capable of being assembled like parts of a machine, and producing unitedly the total architectural effect desired. These moulds are set up in position to form the whole house—the walls, doors, partitions, pillars, ceiling, and with the aid of iron beams the roof. The moulds are faced with beautiful figures and also, where appropriate, with sculpture in bas-relief. They are made from models supplied by the very best artists, working in harmony to secure the finest result; and therefore the effect of the building, when created, has nothing cheap or mechanical about it. When the moulds are all in place great iron tanks are brought to the spot, containing a stone-like semi-fluid mixture, which is pumped through pipes into the moulds. In three days this mixture becomes perfectly hard; the moulds are taken away, and a complete house or immense palace or cathedral stands revealed. Whole mountains are crushed to powder by gigantic machines, to furnish material for the plastic mixture; and many of the superfluous buildings in the formerly overcrowded cities have been ground up for the same purpose. A palace, which would formerly have bankrupted the richest of men, or even a prosperous State, is now put up and finished—except for the interior decorations, which must be done by hand—at an expense which among the ancients (of whom I was formerly one) would hardly have paid for the modeling and chiseling of a single great statue.

We extended our journey, with various pauses for rest, and frequent trips by electric trains on land, and then by ocean shutter-vessels to the Antarctic continent, where the greatest surprise of all awaited me, in the large and flourishing community of two or three million beings inhabiting the interior of that ice-girt region and rejoicing in the genial warmth diffused by its central volcanoes. But now I must speak of a thing which had worried us more or less all along, and eventually brought our curious escapades to an end.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEA SIGNALING—THE FINAL FLIGHT.

We had noticed at times when the sky was cloudy, both by day and by night, certain periodic flashes of light appearing on the clouds in quick succession. Electra told me that these were caused by the system of cloud-telegraphy now in use, and to any one familiar with the Morse alphabet, as I was, it was easy to read the messages so flashed about the heavens, though I could not understand those which were in cipher. Most of them were of a general nature, and had nothing to do with us. But at intervals we observed that telegraphic inquiries were being made on the clouds about our party, and that certain persons whom we were not able to identify—most of them signing their communications with numerals instead of names—were answering those inquiries. I may as well jot down in this place the information I gathered as to the mode of signaling by cloud-flash and by other new methods.

Powerful electric rays are, by means of lenses, brought to thin pencils of intense light. A single one of these is then projected upward against a cloud. A controlling shutter in the path of the beam of light interrupts it at will, so that it may be made to show long or short flashes on the clouds. Words are thus illuminated in the sky, and made to shine in the zenith repeatedly, until an answering reflection is obtained. The chief use of this cloud-telegraph is, of course, on the sea, between ships and "steamers"—as they are still called, notwithstanding that they do not use steam—or for air boats. Conversation may be carried on in this way between vessels many miles apart, and a message received by one can be transmitted to others, so that inquiries and replies fly all around the globe and to remote parts of the ocean. The system was found useful in those later voyages to the North Pole, which have not been followed up since a general exploration of the open Arctic Sea was effected. It has also saved many lives, prevented collisions, and caught many fugitive criminals. Sailing vessels are provided with a water paddle to drive the necessary electric generating mechanism for signaling when the ship is in motion.

In some of the much traveled sea regions another method of communication is used, for the daytime. A sail cloth woven with metallic wire is hung between the tips of two masts, and is connected to a special electric generating apparatus producing waves of extreme sharpness and great intensity, that follow each other at the rate of 700 per second. An electric stress thus propagated to infinite distance is, at moderate distances, strong enough to be collected by the metalized sail of another vessel. One ship, for example, wishes to know whether there is another within the area of signaling, but out of sight. The musical note formed by electric inductive waves is set going, and by means of a key is stopped and started again at two sets of diaphragms on opposite sides of the ship, connected telephonically.

Made Very Good Servants.

Still another contrivance for preventing collisions, or giving notice of the nearness of icebergs or of derelicts, impresses me. This is "the automatic pilot," a small cigar-shaped copper vessel some fifteen feet long and twenty-four inches at its greatest diameter, having within it an electric motor which drives a screw propeller at its end. From the masthead a reel passes two insulated wires, which run from the ship's dynamo electric engine down to the cigar-shapped "pilot," to which they are joined side by side, about two feet apart. They not only carry electricity to the motor of the pilot, but also cause the pilot to move in harmony with the steamer's course. As soon as a fog appears the "pilot" is launched; and the current passing to it through the wires from the masthead revolves the motor in the little pilot-craft and sends her shooting ahead of the ship or steamer. If the pilot tends to veer from a straight line one of the wires becomes more taut than the other and so affects the steering apparatus as to bring the copper boat back to the right course. I forgot to say that these wires or cables, although having only about the thickness of a knitting-needle, are twisted together from a number of very fine steel wires; and, as the speed of the pilot is greater than the ship's and keeps her about half a mile ahead of the latter, the wires always tend to become taut. If the pilot strikes any obstacle, the fact becomes known at once to the man at the dynamo, and the engine is stopped and reversed without loss of time. Many serious accidents have been avoided by this precaution. The automatic pilot boat is taken on board again, of course, when the fog clears.

It will be evident to anyone who reads this little sketch of my first experiences and impressions that, with such means of cloud flashes and sea signaling—besides, which, it must be mentioned, the construction of ocean cables was now very cheap and great numbers of private cable-lines were in use—it would not be possible for our party to escape indefinitely from vigilant and determined pursuers. A good pursuer, by means of the omnipresent telegraph wires and signal systems, could tap the whole earth as a woodpecker taps a tree for his prey; and, moreover the French Submarine Society for mapping the bottom of the sea had its under-water boats and observers in all parts of the world, liable to bob up to the surface of the deep anywhere, so that, if these were to be utilized, one of them might locate our position on or over the ocean at any instant.

However, we led our friends and enemies a pretty good chase, and kept it up many weeks. On our return from the Antarctic Commonwealth to Patagonia (now an important manufacturing country), we ascertained that Hammerfleet had survived his cyclone wreck—having, in fact, been picked up by a submarine geographical boat—and that he was using the wires, the clouds and metalized sail telegraph to trace us. We therefore concluded to run quickly over to China and Japan, and were well repaid by the evidences of immense progress which we saw there; the same improvements that I have already described having been introduced in those countries. English, now the universal language, has been pretty well domesticated in China, though it still cuts some pigeon wings in the dance of rustic lips. What interested Eva and me greatly, among other things, was the simple plan of making ice here, as in India and all hot countries, by hoisting balloons which carry water-tanks 20,000 feet into the air, freeze the water and bring it down again; a constant relay of balloons steadily renewing the supply.

As we passed on through Turkey, a peaceful, flourishing Christian country, through strong and rehabilitated Greece and Italy, to Germany, France and England, we were pleased to observe the wonderful effects obtained by the particular societies, each devoted to a specific fruit or flower, which now produced fruits of a lusciousness beyond belief, and had so changed flowers that the mysterious something in them called harmonic grouping gave us an indescribable sensation of beauty totally wanting in the flowers known to the ancients. In art, also, the Society of Harmonic Curves has brought about great changes. The human form, in this day, is—through wise cultivation—much more beautiful than the average of old times, besides which, painters and sculptors, owing to an improved knowledge of curve harmony, develop from the living model an idea of loveliness and perfection formerly approached only by the Greeks and even by them approached but partially.

This development of beauty seems to have come from a radically altered, more restful mode of life, a purer application of supernatural religion to existence, and a better realization of the laws of natural science as in accord with religion.

So, too, and from similar causes, the great changes in manufacturing systems have benefited the race. Owing to systems for the electric distribution of power over great areas, the industrial economy of very early times has been restored. Now among the countless homes of the people, those of the mechanics are each provided with its little workshop where only one operation in any particular manufacture is carried out. A single part of any machine is passed from house to house until finished, and is then returned to the great assembling shop to be gathered into the complete machine. The profound change in the moral, mental, and social condition of the working people effected by a return once more to occupation in the home, instead of the promiscuous association in large factories, has been one of the most potent agents in improving the state of the population, lessening crime, drunkenness, and other evils; stimulating true education, and restoring to labor its natural poetry and idyllic character.

Thanks to the plastic process of building, even the poorest worker has his own home. With the children of mechanics learning their trade at home from the earliest years, highly trained workmen have been developed, who produce mechanisms and fabrics once thought to be impossible and of a cheapness that is surprising. In those branches of the mechanic arts where labor cannot be subdivided, great factories still hold their place. But they are automatic—like that in which Hammerfleet had tried to entrap me—and need the attendance of only one watcher; so perfected are the science and art of automatic action, by the higher type of intellect of the modern mechanic and artisan.

There are many other things of which I would like to speak, but I must bring this memorandum to a close before leaving earth, as I am about to do, for a voyage and an absence which may be permanent.

With all the improvements in machinery, inventions and modes of life, human nature, also, has somewhat improved, but it has not radically altered. Its passions, good and bad, remain much the same, together with its weakness, fickleness and treachery. Noting this, and having seen so much of the world even in our rapid journeys, I began to grow a trifle tired of it all and to yearn for something new and for a rest. Moreover, Zorlin had stirred up so much controversy by his private and public talks wherever he went, regarding his large cosmic views in religion, philosophy and science, that he, also, longed for return to his native planet.

It was when we had arrived at this state of mind that Graemantle suddenly came up with us, just as we alighted from an airship in Norway. After getting us under thorough observation by a number of emissaries, he had obtained from the World Committee of Twenty an order for Electra, as an American "Child of the State," to return with him; and he now put her under a mildly paternal sort of arrest. A day or two later Hammerfleet arrived; surprising me while I was taking a walk in a quiet spot outside of Christiania. He looked haggard, vindictive and terrible. I nerved myself to resist whatever attack he might make; but I was not prepared for the particular weapon he produced. He unrolled in front of me a peculiar glittering curtain that uncurled from a rod in his hand, dropping thence to the ground; and in a moment I recognized that it was something I had heard of but had not seen before—nothing less than a hypnotizing machine!

These machines are used medically, for the investigation of nervous disorders and weak organisms; and they are also applied officially to the examination of candidates for the civil service and for high office; but the laws of the world and all the nations forbid their use in any other way.

I gazed helplessly at the glittering thing; and it was evident that my enemy was putting it in operation. The next moment I lost all consciousness of myself, as myself. What would have happened, I do not know; for I came almost immediately back to myself, and found that Graemantle, Zorlin, and Electra had come to my rescue in the nick of time; having been guided by Zorlin, whose Kurol mind had enabled him to divine from a little distance what was going on.

This episode settled Hammerfleet's fate. He was promptly sent back to the United States in irons, and isolated in one of the penal districts. His mere using the hypnotizing machine was sufficient reason for this, and when he saw the game was up he confessed that his object had been to hypnotize me back into the nineteenth century, into my glass chrysalis in Gladwin's laboratory, then seclude me personally and keep me permanently hypnotized under this delusion, which would have been practically the same as death, for this world.

All through our journeyings, I had been more and more impressed with Eva Pryor's gentleness and winning qualities; and, from wondering at first whether I had not made a mistake as to my real feeling toward her, I came to the positive conclusion that I had done so. Now that we had completed our globe voyage, and Zorlin was pining for his home on Kuro, or Mars, I had a candid little conversation with her and wound up by asking her: "How would you like to carry out actually what you once said you would do—go to Mars with me? The Kurols don't marry; and we can act with entire consistency, by being brother and sister, up there."

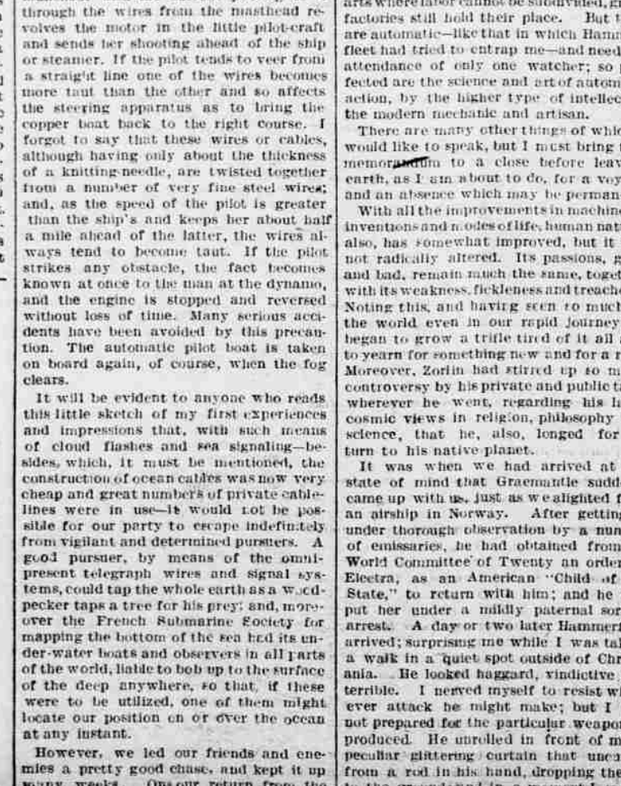
"Delightful," she cried, grasping my hand. "Will Zorlin take us?"

A Stellar express car was ordered immediately; and I have barely time now to jot down here that we are about to depart. Whether I shall ever come back I do not know; but my mind is quite made up that I will not come back alone.

POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITOR.
A. D. 2201.

Bemis has returned to earth, and married Eva. "It is worth while," he says, "to have been vivificated for three hundred years and to have gone to Mars, in order to find out a woman's mind—and my own."

(The End.)



Drew moulds of every variety all capable of being assembled together in any design are owned by these Corporations. After a plan is settled upon these moulds are set up in position to form the whole house, the walls doors partitions pillars ceiling and with the aid of iron beams the roof. The moulds are faced with beautiful figures and also where appropriate with sculpture in bas relief.

Facsimile of One of Mr. Edison's Notes.

COLETTE.

(Copyright, 1896.)

One summer's evening, after supper, Monsieur La Rose, the village notary, came out upon the veranda of the Hotel Castor, his hat in his hand, his smoothly shaven face ruddy and pleasant to look upon. Brabon, the drummer, who came up from Montreal to Saint Pyx occasionally on business, sat smoking quietly in a chair that was tilted against the wall.

"Good evening," said M. La Rose.

"Good evening, Monsieur le Notaire," answered Brabon, indolently.

Then there followed a little spell of silence that was intensified by the clatter of distant cow bells.

Presently there appeared in the street immediately before the hotel, a sort of living fantasy—a singular, dark-faced old man, who strode slowly past clad in a loose robe of many bright colors. His eyes had the unmistakable and restless look of the daft. On his head was a crown of buttons; brass, silver, bone, pearl, presumably sewn together on card board, and making a head-gear of remarkable brilliancy. Behind him walked a gray-haired, gray-eyed woman in ordinary garb. Her look was clear and steady; her demeanor in every way sane. Yet though it was plain to see she was a commonplace, rustic woman, there was something august in her carriage, unaccountably so, perhaps, but as natural as the studied pose of the other was constrained and unnatural. Her eyes were set fairly upon the fantastical figure before her with a meek, patient look and an evident interest beyond his ludicrous pomp and preoccupation.

It was not surprising then to the notary that this apparition, emphasized in the magic atmosphere of the summer twilight, should have made Brabon to cry out with astonishment:

"Allons! What is this, monsieur? I have been in Saint Pyx many times before; but, I declare, this is new."

"A very pathetic affair it is, Brabon," said the notary, taking a chair and looking at his watch, to be assured he had time to tell the tale before going for his customary evening chat with M. Le Cure in the presbytery rose garden.

"There is a tale?"

"Well, as you will; a history, nothing absorbing, but very human, very touching. Old Cesaire Moisson a man with a large family, a thrifty, sober, God-fearing man once owned the mill by the River of Angels—"

"Yes. I see it from here; the squat white building near the cluster of willows yonder."

"Exactly. Well. He was a man with a considerable family I said, did I not? And when the epidemic of smallpox occurred in the village—that was many years ago, monsieur—poor Moisson's family was attacked and one after another his wife and children passed away, and he himself indeed, till there was only left his son Zephrin whom you saw go by a moment since—"

"It left him so—the smallpox?"

"No. He was not at home when the epidemic occurred; he was at college. Old Cesaire managed to put up enough silver to educate his lad—the brightest of his brood—and M. Le Cure also contributed; for he had hopes that Zephrin would become a priest."

"Then, I presume, the shock of this great calamity unbalanced the youngman's mind."

"That may be pretty true, monsieur, though for a long time after the affair he was thought to be perfectly sound mentally. Well, Zephrin was obliged to leave college and take up the business of the mill—a lonely task it must have been for one who had but just tasted the sweets of knowledge. Then every dusty timber of the mill must have seemed to him like a ghost of the happy days when the place was brimming with laughter and good cheer.

"He was not liked by the villagers on account of his silent and arrogant manner. He was unlike any miller who had ever been known. When the inhabitants came with their grist he received them with the grand air of a seigneur of the old days who, amid his courtly entourage, received the fiefs of his dependents. 'It's like that always,' grumbled the crones, 'poor parents fill their children's minds with foolish notions of greatness! Poor old Cesaire himself—rest to his bones—was not like this peacock. Cesaire knew his place bon vieux! A miller is a miller if his head be crammed with Latin or flour-dust!'

"Everyone pitied Zephrin, of course, on account of his great bereavement and the business of the mill suffered no serious retrogression in consequence of his singular demeanor. This exclusiveness, this hauteur, however, was taken lightly by the young folk of the village and often of a summer's evening, like this one for instance, they passed up the mill crying up at Zephrin, who invariably pored over his books in the little dormer-window: 'Behold the king of the mill! Then with gestures of mock gravity, 'Think of his mighty empire of rats!'"

"Quite so," said Brabon. "They taunted him into insanity with these gibes. The crown! the robes! I see now how they came!"

"Indirectly these taunts may have have affected his mind, monsieur. His curious attire and mien are obviously suggestive of the fact; but it is my opinion his sad derangement is only partly due to them.

"Night after night the little dormer-window of the mill was light till dawn; yet the earliest comer did not fail to find Zephrin up and about. No one could understand, for not another light save the miller's might be found in all Saint Pyx, not even at the presbytery, after 10 o'clock. At length the tongues of the gossips began to wag. It went abroad that he was closeted each night with the Old Man—the evil one—debating upon the sale of his soul for riches and power to satisfy his sinful pride. Again, others said it was not Zephrin's light at all; but only the glowing of the ghosts of his family who came to entertain him. Indeed, taken all in all, the miller was become a fantastic individual and the neighborhood of the mill a place to be shunned after dark; unless one had no fear in his heart. If by any unfortunate concurrence of sorceries a person should chance to meet a fire-fly while passing the mill, no plunging of steel into wood might save him from the evil spirits. Even to bless himself and utter a pious invocation, perhaps, might not avail!

"In the midst of Zephrin's ill-repute a singular thing occurred. He was known to have fallen into conversation with a customer. It was this way: Colette Dion came often to the mill with the grist of her mother—a poor widow with thirteen children, of whom Colette was the eldest. One day when she came down along the dandelion-dotted pathway leading to the mill, with her mother's grist in a bag upon her head, Zephrin watched her with much interest. If common report may be believed, she was certainly, in those days, a picture not to be blinked at casually. She had the figure of a nymph, and a face, for all it was commonplace at points, something unusually fine for a villager. But the step, the carriage; it remains to this day, as we have seen monsieur, dignified, distinguished, majestic! At first glance, it is said, there was some remarkable resemblance between Colette and Zephrin—and who can tell? it may have been some vague suggestion of congeniality—some thin ray, as from one distant planet to another, which inspired the miller's interest.

"When at length she arrived at the door of the mill and deposited her burden beside it, he said:

"'You have a meaning step p'tite and a pretty one.'

"'True?' questioned Colette, with something finely scornful in her eloquent lips. She was piqued, let us believe, since he had not noticed her pretty face; for, though a woman may be conscious of her subtlest grace and charm, homage to the features is the thing—the real joy. Isn't it so, Brabon? Well,' said the miller, 'I doubt not there is more in your mind than the mere grinding of yonder grist, eh?'

"'It is my mind now,' said she. 'It was my step lately!'

"'It is the mind which regulates the step p'tite. I always watch the step when I would know the mind,' he responded.

"'Now, there is much in these fragments which reveals the clearness of Zephrin's mind at that period and also the real character of the man and the bent of his spirit. You see, it was the gesture, the carriage, the aspect that interested him most. Why? We shall see. Though Colette, it may be presumed, did not realize the true significance of his words, she remembered them—every one—and repeated them to her mother, who in turn told everything to the cure, Langlois, from whom I have the story. The girl confessed also to her mother that she was much surprised regarding the ill-reputed miller. 'Monsieur Moisson—Zephrin,' she declared was not at all a weird man, but, on the contrary, very sensible and good natured. Yet her mother warned her she must be wary; such fine qualities oftentimes screened the worst souls. Colette, however, maintained stoutly not a word of the village gossip was true. 'Indeed,' said she, 'they say almost as naughty things of me, because they think I am proud. And you know maman I am not proud nor wicked.' So every time Colette fetched the grist to the mill, she returned radiant and full of praise of the miller. At length one day said he to her, so she reported:

"'Colette, I am going to ask you something.'

"'If it is one thing I know what my answer will be,' she responds, with much piquancy.

"'Well, if I should ask you to marry me?'

"'Then I should answer: 'no!'

"'Why?' says the miller, his heart sinking to his boots, no doubt; but rising again very quickly when he catches the twinkling of mischief in her eyes.

"'Because a common miller could never win my heart,' says she coquettishly, yet with something truly dramatic in her pose. 'That is only for a great man.'

"'A seigneur?' ventured the miller.

"'Higher.'

"'A governor?'

"'Nay, higher.'

"'A prince?'

"'Even higher.

"'A king?'

"'Yes, a king.' Then, after a pretty pause: 'And that is thou, my dear king of the mill!'

"Now he draws her hands across the door of the mill and kisses her fair head that is fallen against his breast—and that is all. Let us suppose they simply looked out in a day-dream, across the little River of Angels, to the pleasant daisied meadows and green fields about her.

"'Well,' says Zephrin to her, very gravely and with a new, strange look in his eyes—a look that frightens her not a little.

"They call me, in contempt, 'The King of the Mill,' but they shall bow before me yet as before a king. And indeed I shall wear the robes of a king and speak the noble words of a king, which I am getting by rote each night where they see my lamp burning in the dormer-window. Hein! They shall sit like rats, the rats whose emperor they say I am now, while I hold them in my spell with the brave lines of Molière! Of Corneille! Of Racine!'

"'The good Saint Ann protect us! 'Who are they all?' cries Colette, now much perturbed. But the miller continues without noticing the interruption.

"'And I shall come to you then with my triumphs in my fine royal robes of purple and gold and ermine; with my glorious jewelled crown. And I shall kiss your hand in homage to your beauty and lay these laurels, these triumphs at your feet, my queen! my Colette!'

"Just then appears a farmer with his grist and the happy, frightened girl flits away like a startled bird

"'Bon Dieu!' said Brabon. "I see—the stage was his vagary!"

"Yes!" said the notary, bowing his head as before some great mystery. "At the college entertainments, while strutting through the plays of these great masters in the little hall, with its small stage and crude scenery; before the common village audiences, he first heard the siren voice of Art. And it is as a siren's voice, to some, you know, Brabon. Eh bien!! What is the difference? He is playing a new role now—how tragic a role!—"

"But about Colette?" interrupted Brabon, with some impatience. The gentle sentimentality of the notary escaped, to an extent, the bluff, practical drummer.

"Ah, there is the role—the role of beauty and distinction! Think of it! All along she has believed in him vaguely. From the day he had frightened her with his strange talk, seemingly so irrelevant to her happiness, her poor, small mind was filled with visions of mysterious greatness and joys to be in the future—such as are our visions of life to come. He asked her to wait. She must never be the wife of a common miller, but of a great man, whom the whole world applauded. And so she waited; trusting, loving, believing in him infinitely, and even when her reason is fallen into decay—see the devotion!

"Each day all these years she goes to the mill and attends upon him, performing the household duties, conducting the business of the mill, detailing the work and instructing the men hired to do the milling. Thus has she cared for him as no one would care for a child and, in all, save the matter of this vagary, he is obedient to her slightest whim."

Barbon touched the notary's arm.

"See! They come again!"

Once more the bizarre figure strolled past, followed by the woman. They had walked to the church where Colette was making a novena for Zephrin's recovery.

To look upon the notary one would suppose an angel passed, but there was on the face of the drummer only the look of perplexed incredulity.

When they had gone a little way the notary arose, looked at his watch and made as to set forth. Barbon detained him.

"One word, monsieur. They are married now?"

"Oh, no! That could not be," he answered, with something like a sigh. "They are still courting and looking forward to a day of greatness and making ready for the wedding. Mon Dieu, Brabon! That is love, eh?"

Cloud-Telegraphy.

NIPS HORACE ELLIOTT'S WATCH.

Young Reporter Gives the Detective Chief a Rude Shock.

Chicago Chronicle.

Capt. Horace Elliott, chief of the Chicago detective force, is the owner of an unusually fine and valuable gold watch, which was presented to him some years ago by a little group of admiring friends. The veteran thief taker is justly proud of the timepiece, which he exhibits to all inquirers, coupled with the information that he would about as soon have his good right arm cut off as to lose it. Knowing the hard company into which his business throws him at times some of Capt. Elliott's intimates have volunteered the advice that he should take precaution against the watch being stolen, but it has always been ignored. Last week, however, a little incident occurred at the central station, as an outcome of which the captain now wears a steel safety chain attached to the watch, passing through an opening in the vest lining and then around his neck. Elliott had been showing the watch to a young newspaper man and the latter said:

"You're stacking up against all kinds of tough people, captain, and you're liable to lose that watch one of these days."

"Not on your life," replied the captain, confidently. "I'd like to see the dip that could touch me for it under any ordinary conditions."

"Well, I'd be careful, all the same, if I were in your place," retorted the scribe, as he walked away.

Five minutes later Inspector Fitzpatrick had occasion to call Elliott into his office, and the first thing he saw was the head detective's watch chain swinging loosely from the vest buttonhole.

"Where's your watch?" was the inspector's first query.

Elliott jammed his left hand into his watch pocket, and, sure enough, the timepiece was gone. With flushed face he rushed into the squadroom to put the fly coppers on the trail, and there was the newspaper man exhibiting the watch to the crowd and telling how he had "touched a sucker" for it. Elliott recovered the treasure, and now whenever the young reporter visits the station two detectives follow him around to see that he doesn't steal the office safe.

A Deferred Wash Day.

"They must have had a great Christmas at the Spurges'."

"What makes you think so?"

"I saw twelve pairs of stockings hanging on the line Saturday morning."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Nothing Less Than a Hypnotizing Machine!