

# Quiet Luncheon



**A** CUP of chocolate and some rolls, please," she said to the attentive waiter behind her.

"Yes, madam. Would you like to see this morning's paper?" He led it at her elbow, as he spoke, and walked off to fill her order.

She had never been at Marrini's before, although his culinary marvels were known to fame, so she looked around her with some curiosity. It was all exquisitely neat and clean, but there was little in the way of decoration to claim one's interest, so gradually her gaze wandered to the occupants of the different tables. Directly in front of her was a motherly-looking woman, accompanied by two young girls who had cast many surreptitious glances in her direction, since her entrance, about five minutes before. They had, in fact, conceived for her one of those sudden and violent admirations with which school-girls are frequently assailed, and their enthusiasm was divided between her pretty face and her tasteful, well-fitting costume.

Ahead of them were some ladies, who had evidently been out shopping, and a little way off, a party of three or four middle-aged, gentlemanly-looking men eating their lunch together.

Was this really more stupid than most restaurants, she wondered, or did it seem so because she was a stranger and did not know any of these people? It used to be such a pleasure to her to have a meal down town. What fun she had thought it to watch the people around her! And then, too, there was always the delightful possibility of seeing some celebrity dining.

She continued her survey of the large apartment. A few months ago, no doubt, she would have been absorbed in contemplation of the couple near the door. Probably the conjectures that would have arisen in her mind concerning them would have filled a volume. Now, alas, they seemed commonplace in the extreme. Was she growing old, or more welcome though, blase?

It was plain that those two girls felt just the way she had, in days gone by. This was a great treat to them, and she actually believed that she was the one who had succeeded in concentrating their attention. Well, they were very young, so she could not become unduly conceited thereby. Perhaps, having come from so far, her gown had a different cut, or her hat was of a new shape; or—oh, horror!—could it be crooked?

She leaned back a little and looked over her shoulder to where a large mirror was suspended. Then, probably attracted by the intent gaze of a man seated alone, in a corner diagonally opposite her, and whom she had not noticed before, she turned, and her eyes met his.

The thought that she had met him somewhere at once flashed through her mind. Surely it could be no chance resemblance to some friend that made his face so familiar to her. Very likely he had been at the reception given for her the previous night. How had she failed to see him in her survey of the room? He was a striking-looking man; indeed, remarkably handsome. How long had he been looking at her? She flushed. He was regarding her with an interested expression, as though he knew her—nothing impertinent or rude about it, and—yes, of course she must have been introduced to him.

She inclined her head, a little hesitatingly, but with a charming, if fleeting, smile. It was so uncomplimentarily to a man not to recognize him. It must make him feel so cheap; and if she should make a mistake it would be far better to err on the side of over-politeness. A bow never could hurt her, and any one brought up in good society would be sure, at least, to return it and save her the humiliation of a rebuff.

From his cordial salutation, he evidently had no doubts as to her identity. She was glad she had not cut him, particularly as she was determined to be popular here, as she had always been in the city she had just left. And now there were all the more reason for—

Her thoughts came to an abrupt conclusion. The subject of them had risen from his seat and was advancing towards her. Certainly this was a trifle embarrassing, as she had no idea of his name; still, he need not discover that, and perhaps in a few moments it would come to her. "Ah!" she said, as he reached her side. "And how are you today?"

This might imply that she had seen him yesterday and perhaps the day before, or it might be merely to avoid the hackneyed "How do you do?"

"That is a question I do not have to ask you," he replied, with an admiring glance, "but I must acknowledge I'm rather fagged out this morning."

Of course he had been at the reception, and he probably had not reached home until the "wee sma' hours."

"As we both seem destined to a solitary meal, may I venture to join you?" he continued, deprecatingly.

She blushed. Really he was presuming; but he was probably some intimate friend of the Penningtons.

"Certainly," she murmured.

"Allow me, madam," said a voice over her shoulder.

She moved her hand, and the waiter placed her chocolate and rolls before her and received the order of her vis-a-vis. While he was explaining that he had changed his seat and wished to be served at her table, she had a chance to study him unobserved.

She wondered that she could have stopped to conjecture whether she knew him. She was surprised that his face could be so familiar, and yet his name escape her. Although she could recall some of the men she had met last night and at other times since her arrival about a month before, still, how and under what circumstances she had made the acquaintance of this one was eluding her with tantalizing persistency. It must have been at some large entertainment where he was one among many. Well, he would be easy to describe, and then she would hear who he was, if by that time she had not remembered.

Tall, and with a splendid carriage. Dark hair, slightly gray at the temples, with one lock falling over the middle of his forehead in a careless curl, that yet savored of training. Fine and expressive eyes. No moustache, in which he was justified, as his mouth was well cut, although it was a trifle too sensitive for a man. An indispensible nose.

But her train of thoughts was interrupted as he turned suddenly towards her and caught her inspection of him. It did not seem to disturb him, however. He simply smiled a little, and brushed an invisible speck from the lapel of his coat.

Really it was very hard to talk to a man whom one could not quite place. Who were his relatives? Had he a father? Had he a mother? But this would never do. She must collect her thoughts.

"Er—very warm day, unusually warm for April—that is— Overcome with the original tendency of her remark, she allowed it to die away unfinished and hastily took a generous swallow of her chocolate. It was painfully hot. Clearly, she was paying for her aspirations after popularity.

"Yes, I like warm weather, though," he replied. "I think it agrees with me. I find that I seldom catch cold during the spring and summer months. But going from the heated air into the cold nights is what plays havoc with me. Always makes me hoarse."

She glanced at his chest. It was broad. Still, he might be a consumptive.

"Ah! and at last you saw me." She opened her eyes wide. His tone expressed a sympathetic pleasure with the satisfactory conclusion of her inspection. A wild desire to laugh seized her. But she must restrain herself and be dignified. Perhaps he merely had little ways. Men often had little ways.

"Yes, and then I saw you," she said, with a rapturous inflection.

She glanced at him in the pause that ensued. After all, she must not be sarcastic; but his expression reassured her.

"I suppose I was a little presumptuous in coming over to you," he said, looking at her with his beautiful eyes, "but you have such a sweet smile that it encouraged me. I think a great deal can lie in a smile. Perhaps you have never tried to express different sentiments through its medium, while you watched the result in a mirror. It is quite an interesting study. There is

"Excuse me a minute," he said, hurriedly. "I think, if you don't mind, I will sit at the head of the table. That door is not very near, still,

when it opens I feel the air on the back of my neck." He changed his seat as he spoke. "Ah! this is decidedly better," he exclaimed, with contentment. She raised her eyebrows. Really he was very egotistical.

"I can see the people better, too," he added, throwing his head back and taking a survey.

"Ugh! this was too much. She did not care for compliments, but no man she had ever talked to before would have even intimated that her society was not enough.

"Do you know," he said, leaning towards her, "I noticed you as soon as you entered; but you did not look in my direction for ever so long."

Did he actually realize that she was there at last? "And yet I thought I had seen almost every one here," she said. "I had been gazing around most attentively."

apparel and allowing herself to be drenched to the skin; Henry III, of France, loved to masquerade as a woman, with painted cheeks and frills and furbelows; Charles IX, was ideally happy when he introduced ten young things to the Louvre and watched them rob his guests of their jewelry and swords; while Charles II, of Spain, a curious contrast to his successor of today, found a morbid pleasure in going down into the vaults of the Pantheon and having the coffins of his royal predecessors opened so that he might look on their faces.

Charles VI, of France, was a great lover of adventures and practical jokes. On one occasion, when the Queen was making a public entrance into Paris, "he himself went to see the procession in disguise, mounted behind one of his servants, his eagerness to enjoy the spectacle bringing upon his back many a blow from the sergeants who cleared the way for the pageant. The King boasted of having received these blows as a good joke."

Peter the Great once attended a masked ball in London disguised as a butcher, and thoroughly enjoyed the novel experience; while on another occasion he joined a party of carol-singers and pocketed the contributions of his subjects with much satisfaction. Charles III used to wander about the country in the dirtiest of disguises, accompanied by a retinue of equally ill-clad bullies. He would "assail all he met in the coarsest terms, and when some person assailed, more impatient than others, fell upon him in return with tongue or cudgel he would laugh till he was sore, and then his escort came to the rescue."

When Joseph II, Emperor of Germany, visited Moscow it was as an avant-courier to his own royal carriage, in order to avoid the pomp and ceremony which he hated; and when in Paris he used to frequent the most obscure cafes, playing chess and hobnobbing with his humble habits.

Of Charles V, another unconventional monarch, it is told that when in Brussels once he took his own shoes to a cobbler to be mended. It was St. Crispin's Day, and the cobbler was making merry with his friends. "Was it Charles himself," was his greeting to the stranger, "I would not do a stitch for him now, but if you'll come in and drink to St. Crispin, do, and welcome; we are as merry as the Emperor can be." Charles accepted the invitation, and spent a right jovial evening with the hospitable cobbler and his humble guests.

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has so much more chance than a man. I often find myself envying you. I do get so tired of this sameness; no variation in fabrics; no change from the tiresome old patterns. It's hard on a fellow. One can be neatly and well clothed, but one must be conventional, or submit to being ridiculed."

"It's an outrage?" she said, with suspicious warmth.

"Yes, isn't it? I sometimes wonder if I will live to see the day when the men will wear broad-cloth coats in all sorts of exquisite shades, and satin vests, and those dear little lace jabots—you know."

"I wonder—" she began, breathlessly. But he was gazing far away into an ecstatic and imaginary future, and he did not see the sparkle of mirth in her eyes.

"Well," he sighed, "after all, it is better to enjoy seeing lovely things on a pretty woman. One can appreciate them more. They are set off, as it were."

"Oh, you flatter my sex," she rejoined, gayly. "I was thinking only of one member of it just then," he said, pointedly.

"I would like very much—" she began, then hesitated, and was lost.

The two young girls at the next table, who still felt an interest in her, had at that moment communicated their latest impressions to each other.

"Lovers!" "A regular flirtation!" "She half heard and half divined by the motion of their lips what they were saying. She blushed scarlet. Vulgar, badly-brought-up little wretches! She would hurry and finish her chocolate and leave this place. She—

"Does their staring annoy you?" asked her companion, following the direction of her eyes. "I am quite used to that sort of thing. They have been watching me ever since I came in. It is a miracle to me how people can be so rude. Now, if I were attired as my fancy would dictate, there might be some excuse for them."

She rose to her feet. "I was too astonished. I went to have my pictures taken one day last week," he continued, after a short pause.

"Did you?" she murmured.

"Yes; it was an awful bore, too. The photographer kept me, posing me in different positions, for over an hour. I would not have stayed so long, as I must acknowledge I am not of a particularly obliging nature, but on my way there I became aware of the fact that I was being followed by three young ladies. When I got in the elevator I lost sight of them, but I had not been in the waiting room more than a minute when they came. One of them asked the girl in charge what the price was for cabinets, panels, etc. And no doubt she thought I was being deceived as to her real object in coming upstairs. But I knew they just wanted to see me, and, as I had taken care they should not have one really good look at me, I was sure they would wait until I came out again. Of course, I was mean, but there is no reason why I should submit to being persecuted by every girl who happens to take a fancy to my eyes, or my walk, or my profile, or what ever it is in me that attracts them. So, when shortly I was ushered inside and Mr. Jureau proceeded to make a martyr of me, I allowed him to enjoy himself while I cherished the vision of the expectant damsels. When I was released I went out a side door, and I do not know what became of my three admirers." Probably they stayed there until dinner-time.

"Are you troubled very often that way?" she asked, faintly, wishing that she had avoided bowing to him. "Did he think she too was a victim to his charms?"

"Oh, no," he responded. "I am so unresponsive I am not bothered much. By the way, if you would care to have my likeness I should be pleased to give you one. I have two different styles with me, and you can take your choice."

met so many people since we reached here," he continued, "that, I must acknowledge to you, your name has completely escaped me. When you came in I was interested in you at once, and I immediately realized that you were among the many who had been introduced to me since my arrival, and so I joined you. But now, as I am still stupid enough to be unable to recall our former meeting, will you not enlighten me?"

A cold chill ran down her back? Who could this man be whose face was so well known to her? She had been confident that he, at least, knew to whom he had been talking, and, after all, he was as much in the dark as she. Could she have been mistaken? Had she been lurching informally with perhaps some hard character—a gambler, maybe, or—she caught her breath—a prize-fighter? What, oh, what would Jack say! And it had all been for his sake. She had always heard that a professional man's wife should make herself agreeable to everyone and endeavor to impress all his friends with her charm of manner—that if she were not popular it certainly would injure his prospects; that—

"Er—why—do you don't remember me?" she said, with an attempt at playfulness she knew must be ghastly. "Oh, here is the pencil," she added, in a tone of relief. "You don't mind if I look over you?"

"Not at all," he assured her. "Let me see!" drawing his handsome brows together in a thoughtful frown. After an instant's hesitation he wrote, in a firm, clear hand—

"In memory of a luncheon with Loris Pierre Leville."

She felt dizzy. Everything danced before her. She, a bride in her honeymoon, had been taking a tete-a-tete meal in a restaurant with the leading man of Scarby's "Famous Comedy Company." She had seen them in all their plays. How could she have failed to identify this celebrated Adonis? Did he suspect her position, or—oh, sickening thought!—think it intentional?

She rose to her feet. "I—I—have an engagement for half-past two," she stammered. "I am late."

"But your name?" he cried. "To whom am I indebted for these pleasant and all too short minutes?"

She gasped. The situation was desperate. She looked at him in silence, while the seconds slowly passed.

"I have no name," she said, at last. "What matter whether it be Smith or Jones? it is not, like yours—illustrious."

She cast an impressive glance over her shoulder into the lovely eyes fixed upon her, caught his beatific expression, and in another instant she was gone.

"Corkers" of the Thames

**A** LL down the course of the Thames as far as Southend, millions of old corks may be found at certain stages of the tide, and especially in "backwaters" above Gresend, and the writer has spent many an hour in talking to the old men and women and young people who are engaged in the business.

There is one old man, a pensioner from the army, who lives at Greenwich, who is allowed by publicans and refreshment contractors, at outdoor fetes and the like, to take their old corks, but he spends most of his time with a net near the river side, fishing up corks of all kinds. Anyone who has not carefully marked the state of the river at low tide, would be surprised at the immense quantity of this species of foetus.

When found, the corks are sorted and, according to quality, sold; the general dealers, who buy vast quantities, existing by the river-side and doing out a scanty pittance to the gatherers. Without going into a hundred odd uses for comparatively small quantities of the better quality, it may be said that most of the corks are used by the manufacturers of linoleum and floor cloth.

A great number are also used for packing between the armor plate in iron ships and in connection with the setting of boilers. However many of these small articles the searchers may pick up, there is always a market for them.

## Women Gamblers

**T**HAT the gambling spirit is abroad among women is not open to question; it is, furthermore, the opinion of many students of modern manners that it will increase its hold on our sex. Why?

There are two main causes. The rush and tear of twentieth-century life is partly responsible; and we want excitement and want it always, and gambling supplies it. Mind, "gambling" is a blunt name which includes speculation and "taking chances" of all kinds; it does not mean simply betting or playing at card games for high stakes.

The other cause is the participation of our sex in all varieties of business. It probably does not occur to the majority of people that to be in business for oneself, or to earn one's livelihood by working on commission, as a "free lance," or in any other way in which the remuneration is uncertain, is something in the nature of a gamble. We are naturally addicted to speculation—that is, not women only but all human creatures.

We all like to do a little speculation; there is a prospect of a good result, greater than one might expect from steady work, so we are eager to take the risk. We never stop to think overmuch about the failures; we try to shut our eyes and we tell ourselves that we are sure to be among the fortunate! The probability is that we should be happier if we took a fixed weekly salary; at the end of a given number of years, if we were to add up our uncertain earnings as a "free lance," we should most probably discover that we had not received so much as the one with fixed remuneration, but we always believe that it will be otherwise and we go on.

Remembering this fact, and noting the further fact that women are taking a larger share in the business of the country, we find a clue to the increase of the gambling spirit in our sex.

It requires a very level head to prevent one from yielding to this spirit. Men, who are supposed to be stronger-minded, are falling victims to a far greater extent than the ordinary person supposes. It is all speculation; they embark in this or that scheme because it appears to offer good results, and they prefer to take great risks rather than plod patiently along the safer paths. There are signs that women are treading in the same direction, with ever-quickenng footsteps. There is more need than ever for inculcating the virtues of patience and self-restraint.

## A City of White Stone

Valetta, the capital of Malta, is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The whole of the buildings are of white stone, and there being no smoke or fog to discolor them, they are as fresh now as they were the day they were erected.

## Frolicsome Kings

**A** MONARCH who, like Alfonso of Spain, leaps gates like a schoolboy, turns somersaults out of sheer light-heartedness, chases his hat along a crowded Coves street, and revels in playing practical jokes on his grandees has no difficulty in making good his claim to be the most frolicsome sovereign in Europe, although there are several kings, old enough to be his grandfather, who would be glad to be able to emulate his ability and high spirits.

But there are few sovereigns who do not love at times to forget their rank and to indulge in pranks when the mood seizes them, although these royal vagaries are not always as innocent as those of the youthful King of Spain. Very different were the pranks played by another Alfonso, King of Portugal, who found his chief pleasure in roaming the streets of his capital at night with low companions, "assaulting passengers, firing into the coaches of the nobles, and routing religious processions at the point of the sword." Ivan IV, Emperor of Russia, took delight in letting loose wild bears in the streets, shrieking with laughter at seeing his subjects fly for their lives, and at setting children to kill one another; and if one survived, "the amiable monarch, if he was not too weary, would slay him himself, and would laugh at this conclusion to so excellent a joke."

Edward II once went picnicking on the Thames in a fagot-barge with some boon companions, and with his own hands prepared the soup from cabbages which he bought from a gardener on the river-bank. Henry V saw the inside of two prisons, one in London and the other in Coventry, for riotous conduct when the wine was in and the wit was out; and Edward I, when hunting one day, set a laundress on a horse and waggled forty shillings with her that she would not be in at the death of the stag—a bet which the lady won handsomely.

Peter III, of Russia, had such a craze for war that he used to give orders for a hundred cannon to be fired simultaneously, so that he might enjoy the sensations of battle. Christina, Queen of Sweden, used to dress in male attire, and make love to her own subjects incognito, shocking them not a little by the boldness of her wooing; and on one occasion she rode into Hamburg habited as a knight and wearing a red scarf in Spanish fashion.

Marie Casimire, Queen of Poland, found a curious pleasure in putting on her most gorgeous

## Least Said, Soonest Mended

**I**T is quite impossible to go through life without being annoyed and ruffled, but it is quite possible to keep the annoyance to oneself. As a rule nothing is gained by talking about it. The best thing is to try and remedy the grievance, and then to forget it as quickly as possible.

A very little injury will be magnified into a trouble or a tragedy, if discussed in all its bearings. If on some Saturday evening, when you are all prepared to follow the usual course and go to the theatre, your husband surprises you by remarking that he doesn't want to turn out to a club smoking concert, the very worst thing you can do is to call him unkind and neglectful. You may during the first few moments of disappointment feel he is both, but don't say it if you value your domestic peace and happiness.

If you are of a passionate nature, go away to another part of the house and reason it out sensibly. Remember that the artistes who attend smoking concerts are very clever, and that there are times when a man is the better and brighter for masculine society; and, most important of all, that men are but children of a larger growth, and that the wife who wishes to exercise a good and nice influence must be an adept in the difficult virtue of self-control.

Go back calm and smiling, make the evening pass pleasantly, and when eleven o'clock comes, and you suggest it is time he changed his coat and walked round to the club, do not be surprised if he says, "I don't think I'll bother to turn out tonight; another time will do as well."

Then silence is indeed golden when the courier has changed into the critic. When the "What a clever girl it is!" has given way to "I wish you'd arrange things differently." It needs heroic self-repression to keep back the stinging "You thought everything I did was right once, and now I'm always wrong." But it can be done, and it quickly brings its reward, in renewed serenity.

There must be friction now and then in the best-regulated household. Nerves will get overstrained and tempers "short" as long as people are human beings instead of angels. But the real trouble comes when weariness vents itself in reproaches, and annoyance prompts the outbreak of cross or cruel words.

## A Jury of Birds

**C**URIOS case of trial by jury amongst birds was recently reported from India. A great number of scarlet flamingoes were observed in a marshy field near the Ganges. They were standing in a very regular circle and screeching violently. In the middle of the circle stood one solitary bird, and it seemed it was against this individual all the wrath of the rest was directed. For some minutes the palaver went on, and then with one accord all the circle pitched upon the unfortunate in the centre and pecked him to death.

More than one similar case has been seen elsewhere, particularly amongst rooks and starlings. Near Norwich, England, some years ago, a doctor, driving along a quiet country road, had his attention attracted by a cawing from an open grass field nearby. Many hundreds of rooks were settled in two rings, the inner consisting of about fifty, seemingly the veterans of the flock. As before, in the centre of all was the criminal, looking quite perky and pleased with himself.

The deliberation went on for some time, and the spectator noticed in the manner of the accused gradually changing—his head bowed, his wings drooped, and he cawed faintly, as if imploring mercy. Then there was silence for a moment, when suddenly the inner circle closed, and rose a moment later, leaving only a mangled carcass on the grass. It is well known that rooks punish thieves when caught by pulling their nests to pieces.

Ravens, a species well known for their wonderful sagacity, have been watched in Switzerland doing exactly the same thing. A curious part of the proceeding is the inevitable formation of a ring round the culprit.

Then there is the old but perfectly true story of the sparrow which, having stolen the mud nest of a house martin, was by them literally broken up and the offender suffocated.

A French surgeon at Smyrna wanted some young storks, but the Turks entertain such veneration for these birds that he could not get any. So he abstracted the eggs from a stork's nest on the top of his house and put them under a hen, replacing them with fresh hen's eggs. In due time the young chickens came to light in their elevated position. The surprise of the storks may be imagined. The male stork speedily disappeared and was not seen for a couple of days, when he returned with a large number of other storks, who formed a rude circle on the surrounding roofs. The poor female stork was then brought into the middle of the circle and, after a lengthy discussion, attacked by the whole flock and torn to pieces.

## Tu Quoque

Mistress—Lucille, ask my husband what he wants for dinner. I haven't spoken to him for a week.

Maid (tearfully)—Neither have I!—Le Journal.