THE GUEST OF QUESNAY

By Booth Tarkington

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It was one of those days when nature throws herself straight in your face and you are at a loss to know whether she has kissed you or slapped you, though you are conscious of the tingle—a day, in brief, more for laughing than for painting, and the truth is that I suited its mood only too well and laughed more than I painted, though I sat with my easel before me and a picture ready upon my palette to be painted.

No one could have understood better than I that this was setting a bad example to the acolyte who sat, likewise facing an easel, ten paces to my left; a very sportsmanlike figure of a hunter, indeed, in her short skirt and long coat of woodland brown, the fine brown of dead oak leaves; a "devastating" selection of color that, being much the same shade as her hair, with brown for her hat, too, and the veil encircling the small crown thereof, and brown again for the stout, high, laced boots which protected her from the wet tangle underfoot. Who would have expected so dashing a young person as Anne Elliott to do any real work at painting? Yet she did, narrowing her eyes to the finest point of concentration and applying herself to the task in hand with a persistence which I found on that particular morning far beyond my own powers.

At her request I inspected her work. I stepped back several yards to see it better, though I should have had to retire about a quarter of the length of a city block to see it quite from her own point of view.

"Juries my unkind words have inflicted."

He seemed upon the point of destroying me physically, but, with a slight shudder, controlled himself. Stepping close to me, he thrust his head forward and measured the emphasis of his speech by his right forefinger upon my shoulder as he said:

"You paint this in yer pitchers, m'dear friend—they's jest as much law in this country as they is on the corner o' Twenty-thoid street an' Fif' avenoo! You keep out of the way of it or you'll git runned over!"

Delivering a final tap on my shoulder as a last warning he wheeled deftly upon his heel, addressed Miss Elliott briefly, "Glad t' know you, lady," and, striking into the bypath by which he had approached us, was soon lost to sight.

The girl faced me excitedly. "What is it?" she cried. "It seemed to me you insulted him deliberately."

"I did."

"You wanted to make him angry?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I thought so!" she exclaimed breathlessly. "I knew there was something serious underneath. It's about Mr. Saffren."

"It is serious indeed, I fear," I said and, turning to my own easel, began to get my traps together.

"I want you to go to see Mrs. Harman at once and tell her not to leave Quesnay for at least two days. As for myself, I must go now to look up Keredec and Oliver Saffren."

The girl started manfully upon her journey. I stared after her for a moment or more, watching the pretty brown dress flashing in and out of shadow among the ragged greeneries. Then I picked up my own pack and set out for the inn.

As I went through the woods that day, breathless with haste and curious fears, my brain became suddenly, unaccountably busy with a dream I had had two nights before. I had not recalled this dream on waking; the recollection of it came to me now for the first time. Yet I had been thinking so constantly of Mrs. Harman that there was nothing extraordinary in her worthless ex-husband being part of it. But, and yet, looking back upon that last, hurried walk of mine through the forest, I see how strange it was that I could not quit remembering how in my dream I had gone motoring up Mount Pilatus with the man I had seen so pitiably demolished on the Versailles road two years before—Larrabee Harman.

CHAPTER X.

KEREDEC was alone in his salon, extended at ease upon a long chair, an ottoman and a stool, when I burst in upon him. A portentous volume was in his lap and a peaceful pipe, smoking up from his great cloud of beard, gave the final reality to the likeness he thus presented of a range of hills ending in a volcano.

"I feel that you know me at least well enough," I began rather hesitatingly, "to be sure that I would not, for the world, make any effort to intrude in your affairs or Mr. Saffren's."

"You are our friend. We know it," he answered.

"Very well," I pursued; "then I speak with no fear of offending. When you first came to the inn I couldn't help seeing that you took a great many precautions for secrecy, and when you afterward explained these precautions to me—well, I could not help seeing that your explanation did not cover all the ground."

"It is true—it did not." He ran his huge hand through the heavy white waves of his hair and shook his head vigorously. "No; I knew it, my dear sir. This much I can say to you: We came here at a risk, but I thought that with great care it might be made safe."

"It was in connection with the risk you have mentioned that I came to talk," I returned, with some emphasis, for I was convinced of the reality of Mr. Earl Percy. "I think it necessary that you should know"—

But the professor was launched. I might as well have swept the rising tide with a broom. He talked with magnificent vehemence for twenty minutes, his theme being some theory of his own that the individuality of a soul is immortal and that even in perfection the soul cannot possibly merge into any Nirvana.

"And so I is with my boy," he proclaimed, coming at last to the case in radiant. "And won't Mr. Percy give us his opinion of my art?"

He turned again to the easel, and as he examined the painting thereon at closer range amazement overspread his features. However, pulling himself together, he found himself able to reply and with great gallantry:

"Well, on'y t' think them little hands cud 'a' done all that rough woik!"

I saved the girl's feelings by entering into the conversation with a question, which I put quickly:

"You intend pursuing your historical researches in the neighborhood?"

"Them fairy tales I handed you about ole Jeanne d'Arc an' William the Conker," he said, "say, they must 'a' made you sore afterwoids!"

"On the contrary, I was much interested in everything pertaining to your too brief visit," I returned. "I am even more so now."

"Well, m' friend"—he shot me a sidelong, distrustful glance—"keep yer eyes open."

"That is just the point," I laughed, with intentional significance, for I meant to make Mr. Percy talk as much as I could. To this end, remembering that specimens of this kind are most indiscreet when carefully enraged, I added, stimulating his own manner:

"Eyes open and doors locked! What?"

"I guess they ain't much need o' lockin' your door," he retorted darkly; "not from what I saw when I was in your studio." He should have stopped there, for the hit was palpable and justified, but in his resentment he overdid it. "You needn't be scared of anybody's cartin' off them pitchers, young feller! Whoosh! An' f'm the luks of the clo'es I saw hangin' on the wall," he continued, growing more nettled as I smiled cheerfully upon him, "I don' b'lieve you got any worries comin' about them neither."

"I suppose our tastes are different," I said, letting my smile broaden. "There might be protection in that."

His stare at me was protracted to an unseemly length before the sting of this remark reached him. It penetrated finally, however.

"As I tell the little dame here," he said, pitching his voice higher and affecting the plaintiff, "I make no passes at a friend o' hers—not in front o' her, anyways. But when it comes to these here ole, ancient curiosities"—he cackled again loudly—"well, I guess them clo'es I see that day kin hand it out t' anything they got in the museums. 'Look here,' I says to the waiter, 'these must be'n left over f'm ole Jeanne d'Arc herself,' I says. 'Talk about yer relics,' I says. Woosh! I' like t' died!" He laughed violently and concluded by turning upon me with a contemptuous flourish of his stick. "You think I d'know what makes you so raw?"

The form of repartee necessary to augment his ill humor was, of course, a matter of simple mechanism for one who had not entirely forgotten his student days in the quarter, and I delivered it airily, though I shivered inwardly that Miss Elliott should hear.

"Everything will be all right if when you dine at the inn you'll sit with your back toward me."

To my shamed surprise this roustabout wit drew a nervous, silvery giggle from her, and that completed the work with Mr. Percy, whose face grew scarlet with anger.

"You're a hot one, you are!" he sneered, with shocking bitterness. "You're quite the teaser, ain't ye, s'long's yer lady friend is lukkin' on! I guess they'll be a few surprises comin' your way before long. P'raps I cudn't give ye one now 'f I had a mind to."

"Pshaw!" I laughed and, venturing at hazard, said, "I know all you know."

"Oh, you do!" he cried scornfully. "I reckon you might set up an' take a little notice, though, if you knowed 'at I know all you know!"

"Not a bit of it!"

"No? Maybe you think I don't know what makes you so raw with me; maybe you think I don't know who ye've got so thick with at this here Pigeon house; maybe you think I don't know who them people are!"

"No, you don't. You have learned," I said, trying to control my excitement, "nothing. Whoever hired you for a spy lost the money. You don't know anything."

"I don't!" And with that his voice went to a half shriek. "Maybe you think I'm down here f'r my health; maybe you think I come out f'r a pleasant walk in the woods right now; maybe you think I ain't seen no other lady friend o' yours besides this'n today, and maybe I didn't see who was with her—yes, an' maybe you think I d'know no other times he's be'n with her; maybe you think I ain't be'n layin' low over at Dives; maybe I don't know a few real names in this neighborhood! Oh, no, maybe not!"

"You know what the maitre d'hotel told you, nothing more."

"How about the name—Oliver Saffren?" he cried fiercely, and at that, though I had expected it, I uttered an involuntary exclamation.

"How about it?" he shouted, advancing toward me triumphantly, shaking his forefinger in my face. "Hey? That stings some, does it? Sounds kind o' like a false name, does it? Got ye where the hair is short that time, didn't I? Your side's where the trouble is. That's what's eatin' into you. An' I tell you flatfoot you're gittin' rough 'ith me and playin' Charley the Show-off in front o' yer lady friends 'll all go down in the bill. These people ye've got so chummy with—they'll pay f'r it all right, don't you shed no tears over that!"

"You couldn't by any possibility," I said deliberately, with as much satire as I could command—"you couldn't possibly mean that any sum of mere money might be a salve for the in-

She moved with me, both of us walking backward. I began:

"For a day like this, with all the color in the trees themselves and so very little in the air"—

There came an interruption, a voice of unpleasant and wiry nasality, speaking from behind us.

"Well, well!" it said. "So here we are again!"

I faced about and beheld, just emerged from a bypath, a fox faced young man whose light, well poised figure was jauntily clad in gray serge, with scarlet waistcoat and tie, white shoes upon his feet and a white hat gayly beribboned upon his head. A recollection of the dusky road and a group of people about Pere Baudry's lamplit door flickered across my mind.

"The historical tourist!" I exclaimed. "The highly pedestrian tripper from Trouville!"

"You got me right, m'dear friend," he replied with condescension, "I rec'leck meetin' you perfect."

"And I was interested to learn," said I, carefully observing the effect of my words upon him, "that you had been to Les Trois Pigeons, after all. Perhaps I might put it, you had been through Les Trois Pigeons, for the maitre d'hotel informed me you had investigated every corner—that wasn't locked."

"Sure," he returned, with rather less embarrassment than a brazen Vishnu would have exhibited under the same circumstances. "He showed me what pitchers they was in your studio. I'll luk 'em over again fer ye one of these days. Some of 'em was right gud."

"You will be visiting near enough for me to avail myself of the opportunity?"

"Right in the Pigeon house, my friend. I've just come down t'put in a few days there," he responded coolly. "They's a young feller in this neighborhood I take a kind o' fam'ly interest in."

"Who is that?" I asked quickly.

For answer he produced the effect of a laugh by widening and lifting one side of his mouth, leaving the other meantime rigid.

"Don' lemme int'rup' the conv'sation with yer lady friend," he said winningly. "What they call 'talkin' high arts,' wasn't it? I'd like to hear some."

(To Be Continued.)

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Rich Wisconsin Land opened to settlement. The American Immigration Company has secured 500,000 acres of Round Lake Wisconsin farm lands, which is being offered and sold to settlers and investors at bargain-counter prices. Over 100,000 acres in the Round Lake country, Sawyer county, the choicest of all, offered in farms to suit at $6.50 to $20 per acre, on 10 years' time. In the heart of richest dairy section. Abundant rainfall. Purest of water. Country filling up rapidly. Investigate! Address J. B. Bates, Woodbury Bueilding, Marshalltown, Iowa.

SOUTH DAKOTA.

For Small and Large Tracts or good farm and grazing land in alfalfa and corn belt of Charles Mix county, South Dakota. Write for list or come and see for yourself. John Fritz, Platte, South Dakota.

Bargains in Lyman county land—We have a large list of the finest farms and ranches in Lyman county. Write for lists. Clark & Kenton, Reliance, S. D.

A well improved half section in Hamlin county, S. D.; all fenced and cross fenced; never failing supply of good water; in a prosperous German and Holland community; 2½ miles from county seat town; price and terms reasonable. W. B. Shaw, owner, Castlewood, S. D.

For Sale—One quarter section deeded land. Every foot can be broken; small building on it; good well, fence posts every two rods apart. Will sell reasonable to a cash dealer. Reason for selling, my wife is unable to stand farm life. Charles Edward Lammon, Meadow, S. D.

South Dakota Corn and Alfalfa Lands—The rush is on for Stanley county. Buy lands near the new railroad and double your money in the next year; 20,000 acres to select from; $10 to $19 per acre. Call or write, Felland Realty Company, 531 Palace Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

Homesteaders—Are you going to the White Owl, Brushie, Marcus, Tama, Stoneville, Fairpoint country, or any of the neighboring points? If so ship your car to Wasta, S. D., on the P. R. C. line, the closest and most accessible point. For full particulars write Wasta Commercial Club, Wasta, S. D.

FOR RENT.

For Rent—Furnished rooms, 410 East State street.

For Rent—Furnished rooms, 104 South Third avenue.

For Rent—A 5 roomed house, 206 South Fourth street.

For Rent—Suite office rooms, corner West Main and First streets, Binford block. Six room house, 205 North Sixth street rent or sale, see J. A. Cook.

For Rent—A large well furnished front room for gentleman; modern. 309 North First street.

For Rent—A No. 1 farm for March 1, 1911. Would like for term of years. Best of references. H. O. Eldridge, St. Anthony, Iowa.

For Rent—Tents. A. R. Dodge, 36 South First avenue.

For Rent—Front office rooms over 7 West Main street. W. A. Wasson.

For Rent—Convenient rooms for light housekeeping, modern, 331 South Third avenue.

For Rent—Furnished upstairs front room, suitable for two gentlemen. 12 East State street.

For Rent—Furnished room for one or two gentlemen. Modern. 202 North First avenue.

For Rent—One brick house on south side. I. S. Finkle.

LOST.

Lost—Pair of glasses at Riverview park. Leave at T.-R. and receive reward.

Lost—Hair pin set with brilliants and amethysts, between A. H. Simon's store and 104 North Center street. Return to A. H. Simon's store.

STRAYED.

Estrayed or Stolen—Western black pony mare, branded on right hip, bob tailed. Inform Thomas Collins, Eldora, Iowa.

MISCELLANEOUS.

For Homesteads near new railroad in South Dakota, write for information to L. R. Edso, Ferguson, Iowa.

Anyone Wish Rock removed from farm lands address T.-R., L-26, for dates.

If You Love Flowers, our special money saving collections will interest you. Nothing but the best—for the yard, the home and the garden. Write at once for catalog. Joseph Bancroft & Son, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Would You Marry If Suited?—Matrimonial paper containing hundreds advertisements marriageable people from all sections, rich, poor, young, old. Protestants, Catholics, mailed sealed free. O. X. Gunnels, Toledo, O.

Old Carpets Made into Rugs—Hepner Rug Works, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Write for booklet. Do this immediately.

The American Seating Company, the largest house of this line in the United States, have just opened up headquarters for Marshall, county, Iowa, over 103 East Main street, Marshalltown, Iowa. Anyone desiring seats, chairs or other seating, or desks or supplies in this line will do well to consult Manager F. H. Houghton, "The Insurance Man."

CUT RATE SHIPPING.

Cut rates on household goods to Pacifics coast and other points. Superior service at reduced rates. The Boyd Transfer Company, Minneapolis, Minn.

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Over 101 East Main Street.

Stenographers and all other kinds of help furnished on short notice. Try us.

T. M. WEST, Office Manager,
'Phone 783. Marshalltown, Iowa.

For Sale

Two store buildings that rent for $146 per month; well located on Main street. A full lot with seven room house on paved street, within one and one-half block of court house, at a bargain. Other bargains that will bear investigation.
H. J. ALLARD W. R. MOON