

The Younger Set

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS,
Author of "The Fighting Chance," Etc.

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There came a blinding flash, a stunning, clear-cut report—but what the others took to be a vast column of black smoke was really a pillar of dust—all that was left of the rock. And this slowly floated, settling like mist over the waves, leaving nothing where the rock had been.

"I think," said Edgerton Lawn, wiping the starting perspiration from his forehead, "that you have made good, Captain Selwyn. Dense or bulk, your chaotic and impact primer seem to do the business, and I think I may say that the Lawn Nitro Powder company is ready to do business too. Can you come to town tomorrow? It's merely a matter of figures and signatures now, if you say so. It is entirely up to you."

But Selwyn only laughed. He looked at Auslin.

"I suppose," said Edgerton Lawn good naturedly, "that you intend to make us sit up and beg, or do you mean to absorb us?"

But Selwyn said: "I want more time on this thing. I want to know what it does to the interior of loaded shells and in fixed ammunition when it is stored for a year. I want to know whether it is necessary to use a solvent after firing it in big guns. As a bursting charge I'm practically satisfied with it, but time is required to know how it acts on steel in storage or on the bores of guns when exploded as a propelling charge. Meanwhile," turning to Lawn, "I'm tremendously obliged to you for coming—and for your offer. You see how it is, don't you? I couldn't risk taking money for a thing which might at the end prove dear at any price."

"I cheerfully accept that risk," insisted young Lawn. "I am quite ready to do all the worrying, Captain Selwyn."

But Selwyn merely shook his head, repeating, "You see how it is, don't you?"

The matter of business arrangements apparently ended then and there. Lawn's company sent several men to Selwyn and wrote him a great many letters—unlike the government, which had not replied to his briefly tentative suggestion that chaotic be conditionally examined, tested and considered.

So the matter remained in abeyance, and Selwyn employed two extra men and continued storage tests and experimented with rifled and smoothbore tubes, watchfully uncertain yet as to the necessity of inventing a solvent to neutralize possible corrosion after a propelling charge had been exploded.

Everybody in the vicinity had heard about his experiments. Everybody pretended interest, but few were sincere, and of the sincere few were unselfishly interested—his sister, Eileen, Drina and Lansing and maybe one or two others.

However, the younger set, now predominant from Wyossett to Wonder head, made up parties to visit Selwyn's cottage, which had become known as the Chrystals, and Selwyn good naturedly exploded a pinch or two of the stuff for their amusement and never betrayed the slightest annoyance or boredom. In fact, he behaved so amiably during gratuitous interruptions that he won the hearts of the younger set, who presently came to the unanimous conclusion that there was romance in the air. And they sniffed it with delicate noses uptilted and liked the aroma.

One man, often the least suitable, is usually the unanimous choice of the younger sort where, in the disconcerting summer time, the youthful congregate in garrulous segregation.

Their choice they expressed frankly and innocently. They admitted cheerfully that Selwyn was their idol. But that gentleman remained totally unconscious that he had been set up by them upon the shores of the summer sea.

On the sunlit sands dozens of young people were hurling tennis balls at each other. Above the beach, under the long pavilions, sat mothers and chaperons. Motors, beach carts and victorias were still arriving to discharge gayly dressed fashionables, for the hour was early, and up and down the inclined wooden walk leading from the bathing pavilion to the sands a constant procession of bathers passed with nod and gesture of laughing salutation, some already retiring to the showers after a brief ocean plunge, the majority running down to the shore, eager for the first frothy and aromatic embrace of the surf rolling in under a cloudless sky of blue.

As Eileen Erroll emerged from the surf and came wading shoreward through the seething shallows she caught sight of Selwyn sauntering across the sands toward the water and halted, knee deep, smilingly expectant, certain that he had seen her.

Gladys Orchil, passing her, saw Selwyn at the same moment, and her clear ringing salute, and slender arm aloft arrested his attention, and the next moment they were off together, swimming toward the sponson canoe which Gerald had just launched with the assistance of Sandon Craig and Scott Innis.

For a moment Eileen stood there motionless. Knee high the flat ebb boiled and hissed, dragging at her stockings feet as though to draw her

seaward with the others. Yesterday she would have gone without a thought to join the others, but yesterday it seemed to her as she stood there that something disquieting



Something disquieting had come into the world.

had suddenly come into the world, something unpleasant, but indefinite, yet sufficient to leave her vaguely apprehensive.

Somebody threw a tennis ball at her. She caught it and hurled it in return, and for a few minutes the white, felt covered balls flew back and forth from scores of graceful, eager hands. A moment or two passed when no balls came her way. She turned and walked to the foot of a dune and seated herself cross legged on the hot sand, her serious, beautiful eyes fixed steadily on a distant white spot—the sponson canoe where Gladys and Selwyn sat, their paddle blades flashing in the sun. How far away they were! Gerald was with them. Curious that Selwyn had not seen her waiting for him, knee deep in the surf—curious that he had seen Gladys instead! True, Gladys had called to him and signaled him, white arm upflung. Gladys was very pretty—with her heavy, dark hair and melting, Spanish eyes and her softly rounded, olive skinned figure. Gladys had called to him, and she had not. That was true, and lately—for the last few days or perhaps more—she herself had been a trifle less impulsive in her greeting of Selwyn—a little less sans facon with him. After all, a man comes when it pleases him. Why should a girl call him—unless she—unless—unless—

Perplexed, her grave eyes were fixed on the sea where now the white canoe pitched nearer, close on now.

When the canoe suddenly capsized, Gladys jumped, but Selwyn went with it, boat and man tumbling into the tumult over and over. As Eileen looked she saw a dark streak leap across his face—saw him stoop and wash it off and stand, looking blindly about, while again the sudden dark line crisscrossed his face from temple to chin and spread wider like a stain.

"Phillip!" she called, springing to her feet and scarcely knowing that she had spoken.

He heard her and came toward her in a halting, dazed way, stopping twice to cleanse his face of the bright blood that streaked it.

"It's nothing," he said. "The infernal thing hit me. Oh, don't use that!" as she drenched her kerchief in cold sea water and held it toward him with both hands.

"Take it, I—I beg of you," she stammered. "Is it serious?"

"Why, no," he said, his senses clearing. "It was only a rap on the head, and this blood is merely a nuisance. Thank you; I will use your kerchief if you insist. It'll stop in a moment anyway."

"Please sit here," she said—"here where I've been sitting."

He did so, muttering: "What a nuisance! It will stop in a second. You needn't remain here with me, you know. Go in. It is simply glorious."

"I've been in. I was drying my hair."

He glanced up, smiling; then, as the wet kerchief against his forehead reddened, he started to rise, but she took it from his fingers, hastened to the water's edge, rinsed it and brought it back cold and wet.

"Please sit perfectly still," she said. "A girl likes to do this sort of thing for a man."

"If I'd known that," he laughed, "I'd have had it happen frequently."

She only shook her head, watching him unsmiling. But the pulse in her had become very quiet again.

"It's no end of fun in that canoe," he observed. "Gladys Orchil and I work it beautifully."

"I saw you did," she nodded.

"Oh! Where were you? Why didn't you come?"

"I think it has almost stopped bleeding," she remarked as he laid the cloth against his forehead. "You frightened me, Captain Selwyn. I am not easily frightened."

"I know it." "Did you know I was frightened?" "Of course I did."

"Oh," she said, vexed, "how could you know it? I didn't do anything silly, did I?"

"No; you very sensibly called me Phillip. That's how I knew you were frightened."

A slow, bright color stained face and neck.

"So I was silly, after all," she said, biting at her under lip and trying to meet his humorous gray eyes with unconcern. But her face was burning now, and, aware of it, she turned her gaze resolutely on the sea. Also, to her further annoyance, her heart awoke, beating unwarrantably, absurdly, until the dreadful idea seized her that he could hear it. Disconcerted, she stood up—a straight, youthful figure against the sea. The wind, blowing her disheveled hair across her cheeks and shoulders, fluttered her clinging skirts as she rested both hands on her hips and slowly walked toward the water's edge.

"Shall we swim?" he asked her. She half turned and looked around and down at him.

"I'm all right. It's stopped bleeding. Shall we?" he inquired, looking at her. "You've got to wash your hair again anyhow."

She said, feeling suddenly stupid and childish and knowing she was speaking stupidly: "Would you not rather join Gladys again? I thought that—that—"

"Thought what?" "Nothing," she said, furious at herself. "I am going to the showers. Goodby."

"Goodby," he said, troubled. "Unless we walk to the pavilion together—"

"But you are going in again—are you not?" "Not unless you do."

"What have I to do with it, Captain Selwyn?" "It's a big ocean and rather lonely without you," he said so seriously that she looked around again and laughed.

"It's full of pretty girls just now. Plunge in, my melancholy friend. The whole ocean is a dream of fair women today."

"If they be not fair to me, what care I how fair they be?" he paraphrased, springing to his feet and keeping step beside her.

"Really, that won't do," she said. "Much moonlight and Gladys and the Minister twins convict you. Do you remember that I told you one day in early summer that Sheila and Dorothy and Gladys would mark you for their own? Oh, my inconstant courtier, they are yonder! And I absolve you. Adieu!"

"Do you remember what I told you one day in early summer?" he returned coolly.

"Don't talk this way!" she said, exasperated under a rush of sensations utterly incomprehensible—stinging, confused emotions that beat chaotic time to the clamor of her pulses.

"Why do you speak of such things?" she repeated, with a fierce little indrawn breath. "Why do you—when you know—when I said—explained everything?" She looked at him fearfully. "You are somehow spilling our friendship," she said. "And I don't exactly know how you are doing it, but something of the comfort of it is being taken away from me, and don't, don't, don't do it!"

She covered her eyes with her clinched hands for a moment, motionless; then her arms dropped, and she turned sharply, with a gesture which left him alone there, and walked rapidly across the beach to the pavilion.

Drina was wild to go and furious at not having been asked, but when Boots offered to stay home she resolutely refused to accept the sacrifice.

"No," she said; "they are pigs not to ask girls of my age, but you may go, Boots, and I'll promise not to be unhappy."

Mrs. Gerard gave the rising signal, and Selwyn was swept away in the rushing herd of children out on the veranda, where for awhile he smoked and drew pictures for the younger Gerard. Later some of the children were packed off for a nap; Billy with his asserted puppies went away with Drina and Boots, ever hopeful of a fox or rabbit; Nina Gerard curled herself up in a hammock, and Selwyn seated himself beside her, an uncut magazine on his knees. Eileen had disappeared.

(To be continued.)

JAPANESE JOKERS

How the Mikado's Polite Ministers Got One on the French Ambassador.

The Japanese are a very polite people, but they sometimes like to play a joke, in a roundabout oriental way, upon the men of the west. In the days of the second empire, Baron Gros was sent to Japan to demand the opening of certain ports to French commerce. Among the rest he named to the Japanese ministers a certain city. The Japanese functionaries smiled so broadly when he preferred the request that the French ambassador asked them to tell him what gave them so much amusement; but, instead of answering, the Japanese ministers said:

"We will open the port in question, my lord, if France in her turn will open a certain port to us."

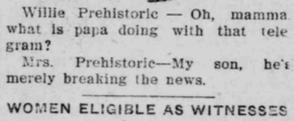
"What port is that?" asked the Frenchman.

"The port of Liverpool." "But, your excellencies" (laughing), "Liverpool is not a French port, but an English one."

"Yes," answered the Japanese. "And the port you named is not in Japan, but in Korea."

The French ambassador was compelled to admit that the joke was against him.

PHRASE ORIGINAL.



Willie Prehistoric—Oh, mamma what is papa doing with that telegram? Mrs. Prehistoric—My son, he's merely breaking the news.

WOMEN ELIGIBLE AS WITNESSES

The women of Louisiana have been declared legally eligible as witnesses to wills and other legal papers. When the constitutional convention of Louisiana in 1898 gave taxpaying women the right to vote on questions of taxation it provided that they might vote either in person or by proxy. A woman wishing to give a friend a proxy to cast her ballot must have the document signed by two witnesses. It was then that it was discovered that a woman in Louisiana could not witness a legal document. The women raised a protest, but it took ten years to have this anachronism remedied by the state legislature.

NAMING AUTOS.

Clyde Fitch has introduced a new idea to the motoring class. It is naming the car, which it is to be hoped will safely carry the owner on his way. Mr. Fitch calls one of his own automobiles Pauline and another Lizzie. The latter diminutive is a favorite name with him for animate objects which are not quite up to the mark. It has been suggested if people must travel at the rate of 125 miles in three hours, that the Annihilator might be a picturesque name for the car's christening.

BEAUTY AND COMFORT.

"Don't talk to me about sensible clothes," announced the pretty girl. "I am never comfortable unless I know I look nice, and sensible clothes are not pretty. I yielded to persuasion this summer and bought a pair of so-called common sense slippers with low heels and broad toes—simply hideous! And do you know something? My feet were never so uncomfortable in my life."

ENGLAND'S PRIZE PULLETS.

In nine months six hens and pullets kept in an inclosed run by a Tottenham resident laid 853 eggs and hatched and reared three broods of chickens. The best nine months return in the Utility Poultry club's competition was 826 eggs.—London Letter.

HEIGHTENED THE COLOR.

"She is eternally disgraced, and nothing short of a divorce will do her now."

"What has happened?" "She was giving a girl tea, and her husband came home and painted it red."—Nashville American.

A MEMORY OF THE PAST.

The Unalloyed Joy That Came With the Little Red Scarf.

"I was wondering the other day what one thing had given me the most pleasure in the world," said the village deacon. "I had to go back a long way—clear back into the blessed Santa Claus days—but I recalled it. It was a scarf I found in my stocking one bright Christmas morning. I got a red one, and my brother got a blue one. I was a mighty proud boy that morning as I trudged downtown with that red scarf around my neck. I wore it every day until the birds began to sing in the springtime and the kids were hunting up their marbles. I don't now remember who gave it to me nor what became of it, but I do know that the memory of it still clings like a benediction."

"Since the days of that little red scarf I have had things of far more intrinsic value. I have worn lodge emblems of high degree; I have had a gold watch and chain; I once had a pair of shoes that cost \$5 and a necktie that cost twice as much as the little red scarf. Nay, more, I once tackled a plug hat. But among these things do I recall none that gave me such genuine and unalloyed pleasure, such a swelled up feeling, as did that little red scarf way back in the days when the wolf sat out in the road and howled. 'Tis the little red scarf days that stir the memory with 'It might have been.'—Osborn (Kan.) Farmer.

PLAIN JOHN SMITH.

How His Name Changes in Various Parts of the World.

John Smith—plain John Smith—is not very high sounding; it does not suggest aristocracy; it is not the name of any hero in die away novels, and yet it is good, strong and honest. Transferred to other languages, it seems to climb the ladder of respectability. Thus in Latin it is Johannes Smithus; the Italian smooths it off into Giovanni Smith; the Spaniards render it Juan Smith; the Dutchman adopts it as Hans Schmidt; the French fatten it out into Jean Smeat, and the Russian sneezes and barks Jonloff Smitovsk. When John Smith gets into the tea trade in Canton he becomes Jovan Shimmitt; if he clambers about Mount Hecla, the Icelanders say he is Jahnne Smithson; if he trades among the Tuscaroras he becomes Ton Qa Smitia; in Poland he is known as Ivan Schmittweisk; should he wander among the Welsh mountains they talk of Jihon Schmidt; when he goes to Mexico he is booked as Jontli F'Smitt; if of classic turn and he lingers among Greek ruins he turns to Ion Smitkon, and in Turkey he is utterly disguised as Yoe Seef.—Phrenological Journal.

Mystery of a Cookbook.

Somebody mentioned cookbooks. "It takes a good deal to make me wonder," said the publisher, "but I received a jolt in the culinary line the other day that set me thinking. In looking over the manuscript of a cookbook that had been submitted for my approval I was struck by this introduction to many of the recipes, 'Good for boarding house table.'"

"Now, why that discrimination? Isn't anything that is good enough for a boarding house table good enough for any other table, and isn't anything that is good enough for any other table good enough for a boarding house table? Judging by the way those particular recipes read, they may result in some rather tasty dishes. Then why limit them to boarding houses?"—New York Globe.

His Successor.

Shortly after the death of one of England's greatest poets a devoted admirer of his visited the little Westmorland villages where the poet had lived and died to gaze reverently at his house, the little church and at some of his favorite haunts where some of his immortal poems were composed.

Seeing an old man a native of the village, the stranger entered into conversation with him, remarking sadly on the death of the poet, to which the old man answered kindly and encouragingly:

"Aye, aye, still I mak' na doob but ' wife 'll carry the bizness on."

Brief and Pithy.

An American law journal has quoted the charge to a jury delivered by a certain Judge Donovan as the shortest on record. The judge said:

"Gentlemen of the jury, if you believe the plaintiff find a verdict for plaintiff and fix the amount. If you believe the defendant find a verdict for defendant. Follow the officer."

But an English periodical caps this brief charge by quoting a shorter one delivered by Commissioner Kerr. He said to a jury:

"That man says prisoner robbed him. The prisoner says he didn't. You settle it."

Plagiarism.

At the literary club a sympathetic crowd surrounded the humorist, whose house had been robbed.

"They cleaned out everything," said the man—"everything, but, thank goodness, they didn't swipe from my desk the manuscript column of jokes for next week's paper."

"Perhaps they knew," suggested a sonneteer cynically, "that the jokes had already been swiped."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Liberality.

Little Jimmie, who had just received a box of mixed candy, passed it around to treat the family, saying: "Help yourself to all the chocolate you want. I don't like them."—Exchange.

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HOME PHONE

Chapter 20
LUNCHEON being the children's hour, Miss Erroll's silence remained unnoticed in the jolly uproar. Besides, Gerald and Boots were discussing the huge house party, lantern fete and dance which the Orchils were giving that night for the younger sets, and Selwyn, too, seemed to take unusual interest in the discussion, though Eileen's part in the conference was limited to an occasional nod or monosyllable.
Drina was wild to go and furious at not having been asked, but when Boots offered to stay home she resolutely refused to accept the sacrifice.
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