

## MAN IN HIS TIME

By HELENA SMITH  
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Alphonse bowed low.

"If Mademoiselle and M'sieur will come this way—there is a certain table petite among ze palms." An expressive shrug of French shoulders and again Alphonse had proven himself a man of rare intuition and tact. Never did he make a mistake in the placing of guests. He was a sentimentalist, was Alphonse, and had a regard for the fitness of things. He could tell at a glance what table to seat anyone who entered the fashionable restaurant where he was one of the white-aproned contingency.

Upon this occasion Alphonse excelled himself. Pride in his art made him ambitious to show these people what he could do, for it's worth an extra effort, aside from the tip, to be appreciated. He had rejoiced that the alcove table was unoccupied when he caught the first glimpse of Margaret Alden and Kimberly. Alphonse was a bit fussy about that alcove table.

"It was good of you to come," said Kimberly, when they were comfortably ensconced in the pretty nook.

"But it is the last time," said the girl. "It really must be the last." She had a piquant face and her attractiveness was accentuated by an unusually smart gown.

"Margaret! You cannot mean that, dear. Why, the very least we can do is to continue to meet."

"Only makes it worse," she said in a tone of weary finality. "We must both marry money. That's the situation reduced to lowest terms, is it not? And haven't we been over it all before and settled it up nice and comfortable as the only thing to do?" Her manner was cold and a hard little line replaced the usual curve in her mouth.

"If you could only be contented with the little I have," he said regretfully.

"And ruin your career at the very start?" she demanded. "You'd hate it as much as I would after a time. All the miserable little economies would be insufferable and the everyday demands would make your work degenerate into pot boilers. Oh, it is so impossible." She leaned her pretty elbows on the table and glanced at him tragically over the pink-shaded candles.

"It might not be so very bad," he argued in a low voice. "We would be ripping happy. A little flat, modest, perhaps, but in the best of taste, and you—"

Their eyes met. The girl's face softened.

"Dear boy," she said.

"Peggy! You will, won't you, dear?" His earnestness was compelling. She flashed a dazzling smile across the little table and Alphonse caught it just as he was approaching with the clams.

"I could manage splendidly on a very little," she admitted. "One can be so artistic inexpensively nowadays. Don't you just love a living room in dull green—quite simple, you know, but harmonious? And for the—" Suddenly she stopped, and her mood changed.

"We are going to be very practical and sensible—and modern," she said.

"And miserable, you might add." His tone was bitter.

"I must marry money," she explained briskly. "There are the girls and mother. I am to play lamb to Mr. Appleton's wolf with dutiful meekness. Quite like the old-fashioned novel!"

Kimberly's face turned white.

"You are going to marry me," said the man through stern lips.

"You promised not to talk about this," said Miss Alden.

There was a violet near her plate that had fallen from the bunch she was wearing. Alphonse picked it up thoughtfully, sighed, and put it in his pocket.

Margaret Alden stood at the window looking into the avenue where smart

turnouts were whirling by. Now and then she turned her face toward the older woman who was speaking.

"You must decide to take him, Margaret. We can keep this house only a short time longer—a few months at most—then what is to become of us all? Think of Mildred and Clare. Of course it doesn't matter about me, as I shall only be here a short time anyway."

"Mother! Don't talk like that," said the girl sharply. "I shall accept Mr. Appleton. He is coming to-day for his final answer."

"My dear child! Why didn't you tell me before? You have made me so happy, dear." Mrs. Alden swept across the room and kissed her daughter in a perfunctory manner.

"There is Mr. Appleton now," said Margaret coldly.

"In his new Panhard! Isn't it a beauty?" exclaimed Mrs. Alden proudly.

Mrs. Alden watched her daughter take her place in the automobile with a smile of triumph.

As Margaret dashed along in the sunshine beside the white-haired man, the breeze fluttered her veil and brought the vivid color to her cheeks. She began to think perhaps a future shared with Appleton might not be without its moments. She sought to forget the distasteful personality of the man as she listened to him asking her again to be his wife.

"As you already know, Mr. Appleton," she said when he paused for her answer, "I love somebody else. You say you can overlook this detail. Still you need someone to preside over your home. I need—" She stopped in confusion, for the chauffeur had turned deliberately around in his place and stared straight at the girl. Recognition struggled in her face.

"What do you mean, Alphonse?" demanded Appleton, red with anger at the man's presumption.

"Pardon. I thought Mademoiselle spoke," said the man on the driver's seat. After that he gave his undivided attention to the management of the car.

"I—I—cannot marry you," said Margaret in a strange voice. "It is quite impossible. I have suddenly realized what a mistake it would all be. No, I shall not change my mind. I would like to go home, please."

"Back to Miss Alden's, Alphonse," commanded Appleton, in a perplexed rage.

"It's cowardly," said Kimberly, as he gazed meditatively at the eight-chambered revolver he turned over in his hand.

A slight noise made Kimberly raise



Comfortably ensconced.

his head and listen intently. The apartment was quite dark save for the glimmer that came from the street. Arising cautiously, he went to the door of the adjoining room. A man was going through his possessions by the aid of a dark lantern. Kimberly stood for a few seconds watching the deft fingers at work. His first sensation was one of surprise that he had anything that another man wanted.

"You'll be disappointed," he said confidentially. "Now, you couldn't

lend me a million or so, could you?"

The intruder dropped a silver-backed brush with a clatter.

"You've broken my Dresden tray," said Kimberly reproachfully. "However, it doesn't matter, so don't apologize."

Kimberly was holding the revolver in his hand and when the burglar drew one in defense he laughed lightly and tossed his on the dressing table.

"Smoke?" he asked pleasantly, drawing out his case and passing it to the man who stood undecided what to do. "Now, don't let me interrupt your work. I never like to have people dropping in when I'm busy, and perhaps you are like that. That stick pin on the cushion, by the way, is better than it looks. Quite an interesting story connected with it. Sorry there isn't time to tell you about it, for it's a mighty good story. I think there are some other interesting things over in that little Chinese box. The head unscrews." Kimberly was puffing his cigar and swinging his feet, perched on a tall clothes hamper.

There was a certain wild elation at being able to enjoy this encounter with a burglar, absolutely without fear of the consequences. A man about to commit suicide would prefer to have it neatly done by a professional; nor does he fear for his possessions who is about to leave them all behind. The burglar threw down his weapon and stood stupidly staring at Kimberly.

"A thousand pardons, M'sieur! I did not know these were the apartments of the M'sieur." The intruder bowed obsequiously. "Perhaps you recognize me?"

"No," said Kimberly. "I have never seen you before. Still—"

"Does not M'sieur remember a little dinner at the Adelphi with a charming mademoiselle? Ah—he does. Tres bien! I will tell to M'sieur something. It was intended for me, Alphonse, to make ze happiness of the M'sieur and la belle Mademoiselle."

"Sit down," said Kimberly with eager hospitality. "Now, what is this wild idea you are telling me?"

Alphonse sat down gingerly on the edge of a chair.

"M'sieur has pardoned the intrusion?" demanded the original burglar.

"That's all right," said Kimberly cordially. "Glad you dropped in. Is your's a case of evolution in which you have come to take the coin of the realm in a lump sum instead of by bits, as at the Adelphi?"

The man smiled appreciatively.

"Oui, M'sieur."

"You said you had something to tell me?" said Kimberly seriously, his bantering tone quite gone.

"It was this way," began Alphonse impressively. "I was, after I left the Adelphi, a chauffeur a very small time, for a man named Appleton. He bought ze automobile as he thought it might please ze mademoiselle whom he would marry. I recognized her when she came down ze steps, and I, M'sieur—I remembered. A pity it was for one so young to marry ze old one. Pardons, but a garcon hears much he is not meant to hear. Monsieur Appleton asked ze mademoiselle to marry him. Me, Alphonse would not let her forget the fine M'sieur who loved her. I turned and looked at her before she answered. She knew me. Ah, no woman ever forgets Alphonse." The man who listened was perfectly white, and his eyes were fiercely bright.

"Go on, man, go on," he cried wildly.

"Ze petite table—ze palms—ze soft music—ah—she remember all. Then she told him no. The next day the old one sold his new Panhard," concluded the waiter-chauffeur-burglar.

Kimberly came over to his midnight caller and extended his hand.

"You don't know what you've done for me," said Kimberly slowly, at last breaking the silence. "If there is anything I can do for you—"

"Merci, M'sieur. You can do much if you keep my little visit entre nous."

"Don't mention it," said Kimberly. "I only regret that you found business so dull. Better luck next time."

Alphonse shook his head and chuckled softly as he slipped over the window sill.

Kimberly and the new Mrs. Kimberly entered the car in a hailstorm of rice.

"For the life of me, I can't figure out how they found out about us," said Kimberly.

"Since you came into that fortune so unexpectedly, you forget you are a personage," she answered cheerfully. "If we hadn't decided to try it on nothing a year, before it happened, you'd think I married you for your money, wouldn't you, dear?"



"You'll be disappointed," he said confidentially.

"Fate and her understudy, Alphonse, have done a lot for us," said Margaret.

"Why! By all that's wonderful—look across the aisle! Is it possible, or is this frequent bobbing up of Alphonse getting on my nerves until I see him where I look?"

"It is," whispered Margaret excitedly. "What a coincidence!"

Kimberly strode across the aisle and grasped the man's arm.

When Alphonse realized it was indeed the two who had first attracted his romantic fancy, his delight was unbounded and his congratulations elaborate.

"What are you doing now, Alphonse?" they demanded.

"I go to accept a position as valet to a M'sieur who has just bought a fine place at Blue Bay. But I do not know what he is called." Alphonse shrugged his shoulders.

Margaret and Kimberly began to laugh and continued to do so until the Frenchman gazed at them in alarm.

"Why, Alphonse, I am the man!" said Kimberly, shaking with merriment. The humor of the situation was lost on Alphonse.

"Then I ask no greater happiness," he said solemnly. "But, if M'sieur will pardon me—I'm Charles, now, thank you."

Kimberly nodded.

"In all the roles you have played, Charles," he declared, "you never have missed a cue."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Charles, alias Alphonse, as he took a small whisk broom and began to brush the rice from Kimberly's overcoat.

### Logical Reasoning.

Some years ago when the Democratic convention was held in Chicago, all hotels were crowded; hence the waiters were somewhat pushed and could not wait on the guests as promptly as the latter desired. One of the delegates, after waiting an hour or so, bawled out:

"Here, I ordered only a cup of coffee, and I've had to wait for nearly an hour."

"Hit's your own fault, sah," replied the colored waiter; "you could ha' waited for beefsteak, fish, pertatoes and almos' everything else, ef you had only ordered 'em. De reason you only waited for coffee am becase you didn't order nuffin' else."