

# THE SPENDERS

## A TALE OF THE THIRD GENERATION

By HARRY LEON WILSON

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On the farther side of his closed door Baron Renault de Pallac swore—once. But the oath was one of the most awful that a Frenchman may utter in his native tongue: "Sacred Name of a Name!"

"But the baron wasn't done eating," protested Mrs. Bines.

"Ah, yes, madame!" replied Philippe. "Monsieur le Baron has consumed enough for now. Paul, mon enfant, ne touchez pas la robe de madame! He is large, is he not, madame, as I have told you? A monster, yes?"

Mrs. Bines, stooping, took the limp and wide-eyed Paul in her arms. Whereupon he began to talk so fast to her in French that she set him quickly down again, with the slightly helpless air of one who had picked up an innocent-looking clock only to have the clanging alarm go suddenly off.

"Madame will honor our little son," urged Philippe, opening the door and bowing low.

"Quel dommage!" sighed Céline, moving after them; "la seule chemise blanche de Monsieur le Baron. Eh bien! il faut lui en acheter une autre!"

At dinner that evening Mrs. Bines related her adventure, to the unfeigned delight of her graceless son, and to the somewhat troubled amazement of her daughter.

"And, do you know," she ventured, "maybe he isn't a regular baron, after all!"

"Oh, I guess he's a regular one all right," said Percival; "only perhaps he hasn't worked at it much lately."

"But his sitting there eating in that—that shirt—" said his sister.

"My dear young woman, even the nobility are prey to climatic rigors; they are obliged, like the wretched low-born such as ourselves, to wear—pardon me—undergarments. Again, I understand from Mrs. Cadwallader here that the article in question was satisfactory and fit—red, I believe you say Mrs. Terwilliger?"

"Awful red!" replied his mother—and they call their parlor a saloon.

"And of necessity, even the noble have their moments of deshabille."

"They needn't eat their lunch that way," declared his sister.

"Is deshabille French for underclothes?" asked Mrs. Bines, struck by the word.

"Partly," answered her son.

"And the way that child of Philippe's jabbered French! It's wonderful how they can learn so young."

"They begin early, you know," Percival explained. "And as to our friend the baron, I'm ready to make book that sis doesn't see him again, except at a distance."

Some time afterward he computed the round sum he might have won if any such bets had been made; for his sister's list of suitors, to adopt his own inebriated phrase, was thereafter "shy a baron."



"THAT'S IT"

"I'm just telling Psyche that this breakfast fad is hurting your health, my son. Now do come and eat like you used to. You began to look bad as soon as you left off your breakfast. It's a silly fad, that's what it is. You can't tell me!"

The young man stared at his mother until he had mastered her meaning. Then he put both hands to his head and turned to the sideboard as if to conceal his emotion.

"That's it," he said, as he busied himself with a tall glass and the cracked ice. "It's that 'no-breakfast' fad. I didn't think you knew about it. The fact is," he continued, pouring out a measure of brandy, and directing the butler to open a bottle of soda, "we all eat too much. After a night of sound sleep we awaken refreshed and buoyant, all our forces replenished; thirsty, of course, but not hungry."

He sat down to the table and placed both hands again to his head—and we have no need of food. Yet such is the force of custom that we deaden ourselves for the day by tanking up on coarse, loathsome stuff like bacon. Ugh! anyone would think, the way you two eat so early in the day, that you were a couple of cave-dwellers—the kind that always loosed up when they had a chance, because it might be a week before they got another."

He drained his glass and, brightened visibly.

"Now, why not be reasonable?" he continued, pleadingly. "You know there is plenty of food. I have observed it being brought into town in huge wagon loads in the early morning on many occasions. Why do you want to eat it all at one sitting? No one's going to starve you. Why stupefy yourselves when, by a little nifty self-denial, you can remain as fresh and bright and clear headed as I am at this moment? Why doesn't a fire make its own escape, Mrs. Carstep-Jamwuddle?"

"I don't believe you feel right, either. I just know you've got an awful headache right now. Do let the man give you a nice piece of this steak."

"Don't, I beg of you, Lady Ashmorton! The suggestion is extremely repugnant to me. Besides, I'm behaving this way because I arose with the purely humorous fancy that my head was a fine large accordion, and that some meddler had drawn it out too far. I'm sportively pretending that I can press it back into shape. Now you and sis never get up with any such light poetic notion as that. You know you don't—don't attempt to deceive me."

He glanced over the table with swift disapproval.

"Strawberries, oatmeal, rolls, steak three inches thick, bacon, omelette—oh, that I should live to see this day! It's disgraceful! And at your age—before your own innocent woman-child, and leading her into the same excesses. Do you know what that breakfast is? No; I'll tell you. That breakfast is No. 78 in that book of Mrs. Rorer's, and she expressly warns everybody that it can be eaten safely only by steep-climbers, piano movers and sea captains. Really, Mrs. Wrangleberry, I blush for you."

"I don't care how you go on. You ain't looked well for months."

"But think of my great, big heart—a heart like an ox—he seemed on the verge of tears—and to think that you, a woman I have never treated with anything but respect since we met in Honduras in the fall of '93—to think you should throw it up to my own face that I'm not beautiful. Others there are, thank God, who can look into a man's heart and prize him for what he is—not condemn him for his mere superficial blemishes."

"And I just know you've got in with a fast set. I met Mr. Milbrey yesterday in the corridor."

"Did he tell you how to make a lovely asparagus shortcake or something?"

soul; if you've got the copper handy. If that man was a woman he'd be a warm neighborhood gossip. He'd be the nice kind old lady that starts things, that's what Hoddy Milbrey would be."

"And you said yourself you played poker most of the time when you went to Aiken on the car last month."

"To be honest with you, ma, we did play poker. Say, they took it off of me so fast I could feel myself catching cold."

"There, you see—and you really ought to wear one of those chamois-skin chest protectors in this damp climate."

"Well, we'll see. If I can find one that an ace-full won't go through I'll snatch it so quick the man'll think he's being robbed. Now I'll join you ladies to the extent of some coffee, and then I want to know what you two would rather do this summer than."

"Of course," said Psyche, "no one stays in town in summer."

"Exactly. And I've chartered a steam yacht as big as this hotel—all but— But what I want to know is whether you two care to bunk on it or whether you'd rather stay quietly at some place, Newport perhaps, and maybe take a cruise with me now and then."

"Oh, that would be good fun. But here's ma getting so I can't do a thing with her, on account of all those beggars and horrid people down in the slums."

Mrs. Bines looked guilty and feebly deprecating. It was quite true that in her own way she had achieved a reputation for prodigality not inferior to that acquired by her children in ways of their own.

"You know it's so, ma," the daughter went on, accusingly. "One night last winter when you were away we dined at the Baldrige's, in Eighty-sixth street, and the pavements were so sleety the horses couldn't stand, so Col. Baldrige brought us home in the Elevated, about 11 o'clock. Well, at one of the stations a big policeman got on with a little baby all wrapped up in red flannel. He'd found it in an arway, barely covered with snow—where some one had left it, and he was taking it down to police headquarters."

She made him undo it, and then she insisted on holding it all the way down to Thirty-third street. One man said it might be president of the United States, some day; and Col. Baldrige said: 'Yes, it has unknown possibilities—it may even be a president's wife—just like that. But I thought ma would be demented. It was all fat and so warm and sleepy it could hardly hold its eyes open, and I believe she'd have kept it then and there if the policeman would have let her. She made him promise to get it a bottle of warm milk the first thing, and borrowed \$20 of the colonel to give to the policeman to get it things with, and then all the way down she talked against the authorities for allowing such things—as if they could help it—and when we got home she cried—you know you did, ma—and you pretended it was toothache—and ever since then she's been perfectly daff about babies. Why, whenever she sees a woman going along with one she thinks the poor thing is going to leave it some place; and now she's in with those charity workers and says she won't leave New York at all this summer."

"I don't care," protested the guilty mother, "it would have frozen to death in just a little while, and it's done so often. Why, up at the Catholic Protectorate they put out a basket at the side door, so a body can leave their baby in it and ring the bell, and run away; and they get one twice a week sometimes; and this was such a sweet, fat little baby with big blue eyes, and its forehead wrinkled, and it was all puckered up around its little nose—"

"And that isn't the worst of it," the relentless daughter broke in. "She gets begging letters by the score and gives money to all sorts of people, and a man from the Charities Organization, who had heard about it, came and warned her that they were impostors—only she doesn't care. Do you know, there was a poor old blind woman with a dismal, wheezy organ down at Broadway and Twenty-third street—the organ would hardly play at all, and just one wretched tune—only the woman wasn't blind at all, we found out—and ma bought her a nice new organ that cost \$75 and had it taken up to her. Well, she found out through this man from the Organization that the woman had pawned the new organ for \$20 and was still playing on the old one. She didn't want a new one because it was too cheerful; it didn't make people sad when they heard it, like her old one did. And yesterday ma bought an Indian—"

"A what?" asked her brother, in amazement.

"An Indian—a tobacco sign."

"You don't mean it? One of those lads that stand out in front and peer under their hands to see what pale-faces are moving into the house across the street? Say, ma, what you going to do with him? There isn't much room here, you know."

"I didn't buy him for myself," replied Mrs. Bines, with dignity; "I wouldn't want such an object."

"She bought it," explained his sister, "for an Italian woman who keeps a little tobacco shop down in Rivington street. A man goes around to repaint them, you know, but hers was so battered that this man told her it wasn't worth painting again, and she'd better get another, and the woman said she didn't know what to do because they cost \$25 and one doesn't last very long. The bad boys whistle him and throw him down, and the people going along the street put their shoes up to tie them and step on his feet, and they scratch matches on his face, and when she goes out and says that isn't right"

they tell her she's too fresh. And so ma gave her \$25 for a new one."

"But she has to support five children, and her husband hasn't been able to work for three years, since he fell through a fire escape where he was sleeping one hot night," pleaded Mrs. Bines, "and I think I'd rather stay here this summer. Just think of all those poor babies when the weather gets hot. I never thought there were so many babies in the world."

"Well, have your own way," said her son. "If you've started out to look after all the babies in New York you won't have any time left to play the races. I'll promise you that."

"Why, my son, I never—"

"But sis here would probably rather do other things."

"I think," said Psyche, "I'd like Newport—Mrs. Dremler says I should not think of going any place else. Only, of course, I can't go there alone. She says she would be glad to chaperone me, but her husband hasn't had a very good year in Wall street, and she's afraid she won't be able to go herself."

"Maybe," began Mrs. Bines, "if you'd offer—"

"Oh! she'd be offended," exclaimed Psyche.

"I'm not so sure of that," said her brother, "not if you suggest it in the right way—put it on the ground that you'll be quite helpless without her, and that she'd oblige you world without end and all that. The more I see of people here the more I think they're quite reasonable in little matters like that. They look at them in the right light. Just lead up to it delicately with Mrs. Dremler and see. Then if she's willing to go with you, your summer will be provided for; except that we shall both have to look in upon Mrs. Juzzebragg here now and then to see that she doesn't overplay the game and get sick herself, and make sure that they don't get her vaccination mark away from her. And, ma, you'll have to come off on the yacht once or twice, just to give it tone."

It appeared that Percival had been right in supposing that Mrs. Dremler might be led to regard Psyche's proposal in a light entirely rational. She was reluctant, at first, it is true.

"It's awfully dear of you to ask me, child, but really, I'm afraid it will be quite impossible. Oh—for reasons which you, of course, with your endless bank account, cannot at all comprehend. You see we old New York families have a secure position here by right of birth, and even when we are forced to practice little economies in dress and household management it doesn't count against us—so long as we stay here. Now, Newport is different. One cannot economize gracefully there—not even one of us. There are quiet and very decent places for those of us that must. But at Newport one must not fall behind in display. A sense of loyalty to the others, a noblesse oblige, compels one to be as lavish as those flamboyant outsiders who go there. One doesn't want them to report, you know, that such and such families of our smart set are falling behind for lack of means. So, while we of the real stock are chummy enough here, where there are only us in a position to observe ourselves, there is a sort of tacit agreement that only those shall go to Newport who are able to keep up the pace. One need not, for one season or so, be a cottager; but, for example, in the matter of dress, one must be sinfully lavish. Really, child, I could spend three months in the Engadine for the price of one decent month at Newport; the parasols, gloves, fans, shoes, 'frillies'—enough to stock the Rue de la Paix, to say nothing of gowns—but why do I run on? Here am I with a few simple summer things, fit enough indeed for the quiet place we shall reach for July and August, but ab-so-lute-ly impossible for Newport—so say no more about it, dear. You're a sweet—but it's madness to think of it."

"And I had," reported Psyche to her mother that night, "such a time getting her to agree. At first she wouldn't listen at all. Then, after I'd just fairly begged her, she admitted she might because she's taken such a fancy to me and hates to leave me—but she was sensitive about what people might say. I told her they'd never have a chance to say a word; and she was anxious Perce should know, because she says he's so cynical about New York people since that Milbrey girl made such a set for him; and at last she called me a dear and consented, though she'd been looking forward to a quiet summer. To-morrow early we start out for the shops."

So it came that the three members of the Bines family pursued during the summer their respective careers of diversion under conditions most satisfactory to each.

The steam yacht *Viluca*, chartered by Percival, was put into commission early in June. Her first cruise of ten days was a signal triumph. His eight guests were the men with whom he had played poker so tirelessly during the winter. Perhaps the most illuminating log of that cruise may be found in the reply of one of them whom Percival invited for another early in July.

"Much obliged, old man, but I haven't touched a drop now in over three weeks. My doctor says I must let it be for at least two months, and I mean to stick by him. Awfully kind of you, though!"

CHAPTER XV.  
THE SIGHT OF A NEW BEAUTY, AND SOME ADVICE FROM HIGBEE.

In from the shining sea late one afternoon steamed the *Viluca*. As her chain was rattling through the hawse-hole, Percival, with his sister and Mauburn, came on deck.

"Why, there's the Chicago—Higbee's yacht."

"That's the boat," said Mauburn, "that's been piling the white water up in front of her all afternoon trying to overhaul us."

"There's Millie Higbee and old Silas, now."

"And, as I live," exclaimed Psyche, "there's the Baron de Pallac between them!"

"Sure enough," said her brother. "We must call ma up to see him dressed in those sweet, pretty yachting flannels. Oh, there you are!" as Mrs. Bines joined them. "Just take this glass and treat yourself to a look at your old friend, the baron. You'll notice he has one on—see—they're waving to us."

"Doesn't the baron look just too distinguished beside Mr. Higbee?" said Psyche, watching them.

"And doesn't Higbee look just too Chicago beside the baron?" replied her brother.

The Higbee craft cut her way gracefully up to an anchorage near the *Viluca*, and launches from both yachts now prepared to land their people. At the landing Percival telephoned for a carriage. While they were waiting the Higbee party came ashore.

"Hello!" said Higbee, "if I'd known that was you we was chasing I'd have put on steam and left you out of sight."

"It's much better you didn't recognize us; these boiler explosions are so messy."

"Know the baron here?"

"Of course we know the baron. Ah, baron!"

"Ah, ha! very charming, Mr. Bines and Miss Bines; it is of a long time that we are not encountered."

He was radiant; they had never before seen him thus. Mrs. Higbee hovered near him with an air of proud ownership. Pretty Millie Higbee posed gracefully at her side.

"This your carriage?" asked Higbee; "I must telephone for one myself. Go—"

ing to the Mayson? So are we. See you again to-night. We're off for Bar Harbor early to-morrow."

"Looks as if there were something doing there," said Percival, as they drove off the wharf.

"Of course, stupid!" said his sister; "that's plain; only it isn't doing, it's already done. Isn't it funny, ma?"

"For a French person," observed Mrs. Bines, guardedly, "I always liked the baron."

"Of course," said her son, to Mauburn's mystification, "and the noblest men on this earth have to wear 'em."

The surmise regarding the Baron de Pallac and Millie Higbee proved to be correct. Percival came upon Higbee in the meditative enjoyment of his after-dinner cigar, out on the broad piazza.

"I s'pose you're on," he began; "the girl's engaged to that Frenchy?"

"Well, I'll tell you one thing plain, if you was my son, you'd fade right back to the packing house along with Henry-boy. It's a pity you ain't got some one to shut down on you that way. They tell me you got your father's capacity for carrying liquor, and I hear you're known from one end of Broadway to the other as the easiest mark that ever came to town. They say you couldn't walk in your sleep without spending money. Now, excuse my plain speaking, but there are two reputations that are mighty hard to live up to beyond a certain limit. They've put lots of good weight-carriers off the track before they was due to go. I hear you got pinched in that wheat deal of Burman's?"

"Oh, only for a few hundred thousand. The reports of our losses were exaggerated. And we stood to win over—"

"Yes—you stood to win, and then you went 'way back and set down,' as the saying is. But it ain't the money. You've got too much of that, anyway. Lord knows, it's this everlasting hula-balo and the drink that goes with it, and the general trifling sort of a dab it makes out of a young fellow. It's a pity you ain't my son; that's all I got to say. I want to see you again along in September after I get back from San Francisco; I'm going to try to get you interested in some business. That'd be good for you."

"You're kind, Mr. Higbee, and really I appreciate all you say; but you'll see me settle down pretty soon, quick as I get my bearings, and be a credit to the state of Montana."

After they had gone away Percival sat revolving the paternal warnings of Higbee. He considered them seriously. He decided he ought to think more about what he was doing and what he should do. He decided, too, that he could think better with something mechanical to occupy his hands. He took a cab and was driven to the local branch of his favorite temple of chance. His host welcomed him at the door.

"Ah, Mr. Bines, a little recreation, eh? Your favorite dealer, Dutson, is here to-night, if you prefer bank."

Passing through the crowded, brightly-lighted rooms to one of the faro tables, where his host promptly secured a seat for him, he played meditatively until one o'clock; adding materially to his host's reasons for believing he had done wisely to follow his New York clients to their summer annex.

CHAPTER XVI.  
HORACE MILBREY UPHOLDS THE DIGNITY OF HIS HOUSE.

In the shade of the piazza at the Hotel Mayson next morning there was a sorting out of the mail that had been forwarded from the hotel in New York. The mail of Mrs. Bines was a joy to her son. There were three conventional begging letters, heart-breaking in their pathos, and composed with no mean literary skill. There was a letter from one of the maids at the High-tower for whose mother Mrs. Bines had secured employment in the family of a friend; a position, complained the daughter, "in which she finds constant hard labor caused by the quantity expected of her to attend to."

There was also a letter from the lady's employer, saying she would not so much mind her laziness if she did not aggravate it by drink. Mrs. Bines sighed despairingly for the recalcitrant.

"And who's this wants more help until her husband's profession picks up again?" asked Percival.

"Oh, that's a poor little woman I helped. They call her husband 'The Terrible Ice-man.'"

"But this is just the season for ice-men!"

"Well," confessed his mother, with manifest reluctance, "he's a prize-fighter, or something—"

Percival gasped.

—and he had a chance to make some money, only the man he fought against had some of his friends drug this poor fellow before their—drug meeting—and so of course he lost. If he hadn't been drugged he would have won the money, and now there's a law passed against it, and of course it isn't a very nice trade, but I think the law ought to be changed. He's got to live."

"I don't see why; not if he's the man I saw box one night last winter. He didn't have a single excuse for living. And what are these tickets—Grand Annual Outing and Games of the Egg-Candlers & Butter Drivers' Association at Sulzer's Harlem River Park. Ticket Admitting Lady and Gent, One Dollar. Heavens! What is it?"

"I promised to take ten tickets," said Mrs. Bines. "I must send them a check."

"But what are they?" her son insisted; "egg-candlers may be all right, but what are butter drivers? Are you quite sure it's respectable? Why, I ask you, should an honest man wish to drive butter? That shows you what life in a great city does for the morally weak. Look out you don't get mixed up in it yourself, that's all I ask. They'll have you driving butter first thing you know. Thank heaven! thus far no Bines has ever candled an egg—and as for driving butter—" he stopped, with a shudder of extreme repugnance.

(Continued Next Week)  
A Habit To Be Encouraged.  
The mother who has acquired the habit of keeping on hand a bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, saves herself a great amount of uneasiness and anxiety. Coughs, colds and croup to which children are susceptible are quickly cured by its use. It counteracts any tendency of a cold to result in pneumonia, and if given as soon as the first symptoms of croup appears, it will prevent the attack. This remedy contains nothing injurious and mothers give it to little ones with a feeling of perfect security. Sold at Kerr's Drug Store.