

# THE SPENDERS

A TALE OF THE THIRD GENERATION

By HARRY LEON WILSON

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with the traditions, and brave the scandal of going to him in that common way. With all I felt for him I should have been more than satisfied. But I came in time to see that he was not as earnest as I had been. He wasn't capable of feeling what I felt. He was more cowardly than I—or rather, I was more reckless than he. I suspected it a long time; I became convinced of it a year ago and a little over. He became hateful to me. I had wasted my love. Then he became funny. But you see—I am not altogether what you believed me. Wait a bit longer, please.

"Then I gave up, almost—and later, I gave up entirely. And when my brother was about to marry that woman, and Mr. Shepler asked me to marry him, I consented. It seemed an easy way to end it all. I'd quit fondling ideals. And you had told me I must do anything I could to keep Fred from marrying that woman—my people came to say the same thing—and so—

"If he had married her—if they were married now—then you would feel free to marry me?"

"You would still be the absurdest man in New York—but we can't discuss that. He isn't going to marry her."

"But he has married her—"

"What do you mean?"

"I supposed you knew—Oldaker told me as I left the hotel. He and your father were witnesses. The marriage took place this afternoon at the Arlington."

"You're not deceiving me?"

"Come, pardon me!—girl!"

"Oh, pardon me! please! Of course I didn't mean it—but you stunned me. And papa said nothing to me about it before he left. The money must have been too great a temptation to him and to Fred. She has just made some enormous amount in copper stock or something."

"I know, she had better advice than I had. I'd like to reward the man who gave it to her."

"And I was sure you were going to marry that other woman."

"How could you think so?"

"Of course I'm not the least bit jealous—it isn't my disposition; but I did think Florence Akemist wasn't the woman to make you happy—of course I liked her immensely—and there were reports going about—everybody seemed so sure—and you were with her so much. Oh, how I did hate her!"

"I tell you she is a joke and always was."

"It's funny—that's exactly what I told Aunt Cornelia about that—that man."

"Let's stop joking, then."

"How absurd you are—with my plans all made and the day set—"

"There was a knock at the door. He went over and unlocked it. Jarvis was there."

"Mr. Shepler, Miss Avice."

They looked at each other.

"Jarvis, shut that door and wait outside."

"Yes, Mr. Bines."

"You can't see him."

"But I must—we've engaged, don't you understand?—of course I must!"

"I tell you I won't let you. Can't you understand that I'm not talking idly?"

She tried to evade him and reach the door, but she was caught again in his arms—held close to him.

"If you like he shall come in now. But he's not going to take you away from me, as he did in that jeweler's the other night—and you can't see him at all except as you are now."

She struggled to be free.

"Oh, you're so brutal!"

"I haven't begun yet—"

He drew her toward the door.

"Oh, no that—don't open it—I'll tell him—yes, I will!"

"I'm taking no more chances, and the time is short."

Still holding her closely with one arm, he opened the door. The man stared impassively above their heads—a graven image of unconsciousness.

"Jarvis."

"Yes, sir."

"Miss Milbrey wishes you to say to Mr. Shepler that she is engaged—"

"That I'm ill," she interrupted, still making little struggles to twist from his grasp, her head still bent down.

"That she is engaged with Mr. Bines, Jarvis, and can't see him. Say it that way—Miss Milbrey is engaged with Mr. Bines, and can't see you."

"Yes, sir!"

He remained standing motionless, as he had been, his eyes fixed above them. But the eyes of Jarvis, from long training, did not require to be bent upon those things they needed to observe. They saw something now that was at least two feet below their range.

The girl made a little move with her right arm, which was imprisoned fast between them, and which some intuition led her captor not to restrain. The firm little hand worked its way slowly up, went creepingly over his shoulder and bent tightly about his neck.

"Yes, sir," repeated Jarvis, without the quiver of an eyelid, and went.

He closed the door with his free hand, and they stood as they were until they heard the noise of the fr-

for another five minutes, thinking intently. "Come, time's up."

She arose.

"I'm ready. I shall marry you, if you think I'm the woman to help you in that big, new life of yours. They meant me not to know about Fred's marriage until afterward."

He kissed her.

"I feel so rested and quiet now, as if I'd taken down a big old gate and let the peace rush in on me. I'm sure it's right. I'm sure I can help you."

She picked up her hat and gloves.

"Now I'll go bathe my eyes and fix my hair."

"I can't let you out of my sight, yet. I'm incredulous. Perhaps in 75 or 80 years—"

"I thought you were so sure."

"While I can reach you, yes."

She gave a low, delicious little laugh. She reached both arms up around him, pulled down his head and kissed him.

"There—boy!"

She took up the hat again.

"I'll be up in a moment."

"I'll be up in three, if you're not."

When she had gone he picked up an envelope and put a bill inside.

"Jarvis," he called.

The butler came up from below, dressed for the street.

"Jarvis, put this envelope in the inside of that excellent black coat of yours and hand it—afterward—to the gentleman we're going to do business with."

"Yes, Mr. Bines."

"And put your cravat down in the back, Jarvis—it makes you look excited the way it is now."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir!"

"Is Briggs ready?"

"She's waiting, sir."

"Go out and get in the carriage, both of you."

"Yes, sir!"

He stood in the hallway waiting for her. It was a quarter past ten. In another moment she rustled softly down to him.

"I'm trusting so much to you, and you're trusting so much to me. It's such a rash step!"

"Must I—"

"No, I'm going. Couldn't we stop and take Aunt Cornelia?"

"Aunt Cornelia won't have a chance to worry about this until it's all over. We'll stop there then, if you like."

"We'll try Doctor Prendle, then. He's almost sure to be in."

"It won't make any difference if he isn't. We'll find one. Those horses are rested. They can go all night if they must."

"I have Grandmother Loekermann's wedding ring—of course you didn't fetch one. Trust a man to forget anything of importance."

His grasp of her hand during the ride did not relax.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE NEW ARGONAUTS.

Mrs. Van Geist came bustling out to the carriage.

"You and Briggs may get out here, Jarvis. There, that's for you, and that's for Briggs—and thank you both very much!"

"Child, child! what does it mean?"

"Mr. Bines is my husband. Mutterchen, and we're leaving for the west in the morning."

The excitement did not abate for ten minutes or so.

"And do say something cheerful, dear," pleaded Avice, at parting.

"You mad child—I was always afraid you might do something like this; but I will say I'm not altogether sure you've acted foolishly."

"Thank you, you dear old Mutterchen! and you'll come to see us—you shall see how happy I can be with this—this boy—this Lochinvar, Junior—"

In sure Mrs. Lochinvar always lived happily ever after.

Mrs. Van Geist kissed them both.

"Back to Thirty-seventh street, driver."

"I shall wait at 7:30 sharp, to-morrow morning," he said, as they alighted. "Will you be here, sure?"

"Sure, boss!"

"You'll make another one of those if you're on time."

The driver faced the bill toward the nearest street light and scanned it. Then he placed it tenderly in the lining of his hat, and said fervently:

"I'll be here, gent!"

"My trunks," Avice reminded him.

"And, driver send an express wagon at seven sharp. Do you understand, now?"

"Sure, gent, I'll have it here at seven, and be here at 7:30."

They went in.

"You've sent Briggs off, and I've all that packing and unpacking to do."

"You have a husband who is handy at those things."

They went up to her room, where two trunks yawned open.

Under her directions and with her help he took out the light summer things and replaced them with heavier gowns, stout shoes, golf capes and caps.

"We'll be up on the Bitter Root ranch this summer, and you'll need heavy things," he had told her.

Sometimes he packed clumsily, and she was obliged to do his work over. In these intervals he studied with interest the big old room and her quaint old sampler worked in colored worsteds that had faded to grays and dull browns: "La Nuit Porte Conseil."

"Grandma Loekermann did it at the convent, ages ago," she told him.

"What a cautious young thing she must have been!"

She leaned against his shoulder.

"But she eloped with her true love, young Anneke Van Schouke; left the home in Hickory street one night, and went far away, away up beyond One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street, somewhere, and then wrote them about it."

"And left the sampler?"

"She had her husband—she didn't

need any old sampler after that—Le marriage porte conseil, aussi monsieur. And now you've married your wife with her wedding ring, that came from Holland years and years ago."

It was after midnight when they began to pack. When they finished it was nearly four.

She had laid out a dark dress for the journey, but he insisted that she put it in a suit-case, and wear the one she had on.

"I shouldn't know you in any other—and it's the color of your eyes. I want that color all over the place."

"But we shall be traveling."

"In our own car. That car has been described in the public prints as a suite of palatial apartments with all modern conveniences."

"I forgot."

"We shall be going west like the old 49-ers, seeking adventure and gold."

"Did they go in their private cars?"

"Some of them went in rolling six-horse Concord, and some walked, and some of them pushed their baggage across in little hand carts, but they had fun at it—and we shall have to work as hard when we get there."

"Dear me! And I'm so tired already. I feel quite done up."

She threw herself on the wide divan, and he fixed pillows under her head.

"You boy! I'm glad it's all over. Let's rest a moment."

He leaned back by her, and drew her head on to his arm.

"I'm glad, too. It's the hardest day's work I ever did. Are you comfortable? Rest."

"It's so good," she murmured, nestling on his shoulder.

"Uncle Peter took his honeymoon in a big wagon drawn by a mule team,



SHE SLEPT.

200 miles over the Placerville and Red Dog trail—over the mountains from California to Nevada. But he says he never had so happy a time."

"He's an old dear! I'll kiss him—how is it you say—'good and plenty.'"

"By the way, I forgot to ask, and it's almost too late now, but do you like cats?"

"I adore them—aren't kittens the dearest?"

"Well, you're healthy—and your nose doesn't really fall below the specifications, though it doesn't promise that you're any too sensible—but if you can make up for it by your infatuation for cats, perhaps it will be all right. Of course I couldn't keep you, you know, if you weren't very fond of cats, because Uncle Peter'd raise a row—"

She was quite still, and he noted from the change in her soft breathing that she slept. With his free hand he carefully shook out a folded steamer rug and drew it over her.

For an hour he watched her, feeling the arm on which she lay growing numb. He reviewed the day and the crowded night. He could do something after all. Among other things, now, he would drop a little note to Higbee and add the news of his marriage as a postscript. She was actually his wife. How quickly it had come. His heart was full of a great love for her, but he could not quite repress the pride in his achievement—and Shepler had not been sure until he was poor!

He lost consciousness himself for a little while.

When he awoke the cold light of the morning was stealing in. He was painfully cramped, and chilled from the open window. From outside came the loud chattering of sparrows, and far away he could hear wagons as they rattled across a street of Belgian blocks from asphalt to asphalt. The light had been late in coming, and he could see a sullen gray sky, full of darker clouds.

Above the chiffonier he could see the ancient sampler.

"La Nuit Porte Conseil." It was true.

In the cold, pitiless light of the morning a sudden sickness of doubt seized him. She would awake and reproach him bitterly for coercing her. She had been right, the night before—it was madness. They had talked afterward so feverishly, as if to forget their situation. Now she would face it coldly after the sleep.

"La Nuit Porte Conseil." Had he not been a fool? And he loved her so. He would have her anyway—no matter what she said, now.

She stirred, and her wide-open eyes were staring up at him—staring with hurt, troubled wonder. The amazement in them grew—she could not understand.

He stopped breathing. His embrace of her relaxed.

And then he saw remembrance—recognition—welcome—and there blazed into her eyes such a look of whole love as makes men thrill to all good; such a look as makes them know they are

men, and dare all great deeds to show it. Like a sunrise, it flooded her face with dear, wondrous beauties—and still she looked, silent, motionless—in an ecstasy of pure realization. Then her arms closed about his neck with a swift little rushing, and he—still half-doubting, still curious—felt himself strained to her. Still more closely she clung, putting out with her intensity all his misgiving.

She sought his lips with her own—eager, pressing.

"Kiss me—kiss me—kiss me! Oh, it's all true—all true! My best-beloved dream has come ad true! I have rested so in your arms. I never knew rest before. I can't remember when I haven't awakened to doubt, and worry, and heart-sickness. And now it's peace—dear, dear, dearest, dear, for ever and ever and ever."

They sat up.

"Now we shall go—get me away quickly."

It was nearly seven. Outside the sky was still all gloom.

In the rush of her reassurance he had forgotten his arm. It hung limp from his shoulder.

"It was cramped."

"And you didn't move it?"

They beat it and kneaded it gaily together, until the fingers were full of the rushing blood and able again to close warmly over her own little hand.

"Now go, and let me get ready. I won't be long."

He went below to the library, and in the dim gray light picked up a book, "The Delights of Delicate Eating." He tried another, "101 Sandwiches." The next was "Famous Epicures of the Seventeenth Century." On the floor was her diary. He placed it on the table. He heard her call him from the stairs.

"Bring me up that ring from the table, please!"

He went up and handed it to her through the narrowly opened door.

As he went down the stairs he heard the bell ring somewhere below, and went to the door.

"Baggage!"

The two trunks were down and out.

"They're to go on this car, attached to the Chicago express," he wrote the directions on one of his cards and paid the man.

At 7:30 the bell rang again. The cabman was there.

"Seven-thirty, gent!"

"Avice!"

"I'm coming. And there are two bags I wish you'd get from my room." He let her pass him and went up for them.

She went into the library and, taking up the diary, tore out a sheet, marked heavily upon it with a pencil around the passage she had read the evening before, and sealed it in an envelope. She addressed it to her father and laid it, with a paper weight on it, upon "The Delights of Delicate Eating," where he would be sure to find it.

The book itself she placed on the wood laid ready in the grate to light, touched a match to the crumpled paper underneath and put up the blower. She stood waiting to see that the fire would burn.

Over the mantel from its yellow canvas looked above her head the humorously benignant eyes of old Anneke Van Schouke, who had once removed from Maspeth Kill on Long Island to New Harlem on the Island of Manhattan, and carried there, against her father's will, the yellow-haired girl he had loved. His face now seemed to be pretending unconsciousness of the rashly acted scenes he had witnessed—lest, if he betrayed his consciousness, he should be forced, in spite of himself, to disclose his approval—a thing not fitting for an elderly, dignified Dutch burgher to do.

"Avice!"

"Coming!"

She took up a little package she had brought with her and went out to meet him.

"There's one errand to do," she said, as they entered the carriage, "but it's on our way. Have him go up Madison avenue and deliver this."

She showed him the package, addressed: "Mr. Ruion, Shepler, Personal."

"And this," she said, giving him an unsealed note. "Read it, please!"

He read:

"Dear Ruion Shepler: I am sure you know women too well to have thought I loved you as a wife should love her husband. And I know your business too well to believe you will feel harshly toward me for deciding that I could not marry you. I could of course consistently attribute my change to consideration for you. I should have been very little comfort to you, if I should tell you just the course I had mapped out for myself—just what latitude I proposed to claim—I am certain you would agree with me that I have done you an inestimable favor."

"Yet I have not changed because I do not love you, but because I do love some one else with all my heart; so that I claim no credit except for an entirely consistent selfishness. But do try to believe, at the same time, that my own selfishness has been a kindness to you. I send you a package with this hasty letter, and beg you to believe that I shall remain—and am now for the first time, sincerely yours,

"AVICE MILBREY BINES."

"P. S.—I should have preferred to wait and acquaint you with my change of intention before marrying, but my husband's plans were made and he would not let me delay."

He sealed the envelope, placed it securely under the cord that bound the package, and their driver delivered it to the man who opened Shepler's door. As their train emerged from the cut at Spuyten Duyvil and sped to the north along the Hudson, the sun blazed forth.



"I WON'T LET YOU."

"There, boy—I knew the sun must shine to-day."

They had finished their breakfast. One-half of the pink roses were on the table, and one from the other half was in her hair.

"I ordered the sun turned on at just this point," replied her husband, with a large air. "I wanted you to see the last of that town under a cloud, so you might not be homesick so soon."

"You don't know me. You don't know what a good wife I shall be."

"It takes nerve to reach up for a strange support and then kick your environment out from under you—as Doctor von Herzlich would have said if he'd happened to think of it."

"But you shall see how I'll help you with your work; I was capable of it all the time."

"But I had to make you. I had to pick you up just as I did that first time, and again down in the mine—and you were frightened because you knew this time I wouldn't let you go."

"Only half-afraid you wouldn't—the other half I was afraid you would. They got all mixed up—I don't know which was worse."

"Well, I admit I fooled my approach on that copper stock—but I won you—really my winnings in Wall street are pretty dazzling, after all, for a man who didn't know the ropes—there's a mirror directly back of you, Mrs. Bines, if you wish to look at them—with a pink rose over that kissy place just at their temple."

She turned and looked, pretending to be quite unimpressed.

"I always was capable of it, I tell you—boy!"

"What hurt me worst that night, it showed you could love some one—you did have a heart—but you couldn't love me."

She did not seem to hear at first, nor to comprehend when she went back over his words. Then she stared at him in sudden amazement.

He saw his blunder and looked foolish.

"I see—thank you for saying what you did last night—and you didn't mind—you came to me anyway, in spite of that."

She arose, and would have gone around the table to him, but he met her with open arms.

"Oh, you boy! you do love me—you do!"

"I must buy you one of those nice, shiny black ear trumpets at the first stop. You can't have been hearing at all well. . . . See, sweetheart—out across the river. That's where our big west is, over that way—isn't it fresh and green and beautiful?—and how fast you're going to it—you and your husband. I believe it's going to be a good game . . . for us both . . . my love."

### THE PRINCIPAL QUESTION.

"I know, old chappie," said Dobbs, "she has her faults, and a temper, and all that; but I—love her and can't live without her."

"Just so," calmly replied his friend; "but the question isn't that. Can you live with her?"—*The Bits.*

### SEQUEL.

Smith (who has been abroad)—is young Higgins still paying attention to your daughter?

Jones—No; they are married now.—Chicago Daily News.

### ECONOMY.

On a subject so mothered Desdemona.

"Thou art ejaculated. I guess that'll settle the alimony question, anyhow."—*Judge.*

### ANCIENT CRINOLINE.

In the World of Fashion of 1830 is a reference to "the new stuff called crinoline." Crinoline was partly thread, partly horse-hair, its name being compounded of the French "crin," horsehair, and "lin," flax. Hats, skirts and all sorts of things that were wanted to possess a certain stiffness were made of this material.

### OSTRICH TAX.

The exportation of ostriches from South Africa has practically been prohibited by an export tax of \$487 each, intended to preserve to that country, as far as possible, the monopoly of the lucrative trade of ostrich farming.—*N. Y. Post.*

(Continued Next Week)