

"It was nothing to be proud of," she flashed.

"Oh, you prefer them like this—I see. But pray go on; I'm interested."

"After you went away"—she didn't turn her head again, but looked past him—"I'm afraid I flirted a little."

"After? Yes. I am glad I was spared the pain of it."

"I made a lot of people mad, so finally I decided it was best to be just honest, you know."

"No, I don't know, but I accept the amendment. And pray how did this new deal work, may I ask?"

"That's the trouble: I told them all the exact truth. It was really best," in a tone of eager defense.

"Truth! How much is done in thy name!" he quoted. "And the truth—and may I hear what particular form it took?" He shot at her a sharp scrutiny, but her guileless serenity remained unbroken.

"I simply said to each one: 'I don't love you—but then I don't love anybody else.'"

"And was that true?"

"Certainly. Didn't I tell you I decided on the truth?"

"Beg pardon," he murmured, "did it develop properly, according to specifications?"

"How do you mean," suspiciously.

"Oh, not at all. Go on, I'm all attention."

"Then each one asked me to take time, and I did. I made no difference at all between them," virtuously. "I set the same day for each."

"Great heavens! to marry them? Wasn't that a rather heavy investment for even such a reckless speculator as yourself?"

"To answer," she added composedly.

"To answer?" he echoed.

"Yes," she said; "yes or no."

"Well, did you?"

"Not yet."

"Oh, it isn't settled, then?"

"No, that's where the trouble comes in."

"I don't understand," he said, puzzled. This was growing distinctly interesting—to him.

"It's the uncertainty," she explained. "I wish it were over. It's very wearing not to know which of them—there are five—is to be my fate."

"One is bound for the post, is he?"

"Yes, indeed. I can't go through with it again. I have concluded to choose one of the present applicants." Still that look of seraphic innocence.

"Well," he interrogated impatiently.

"Well, I simply can not make up my mind. They are all so irreproachable." A long sigh. "If only you could help me! You offered, you know."

"Have I the honor of their acquaintance? When is the time up?"

"Today," desperately; "so you see—" with a gesture of utter abandonment.

Consulting his watch, he rose hurriedly. "Awfully sorry, I'm sure, but I must go. Accept sincere condolence," with sarcasm, "in this crisis. I would be charmed to discuss it further, but the truth is, this stop-over is pleasure and business combined. My train goes at two, and I must see a man. Good-bye."

"After all, she's just a common-place flirt," he thought, irritably; "and I simply pitched into her trap. Of course, her mind is already made up, and she is just playing me for another catch."

As she watched the erect figure disappear she thought: "He's just a cold, heartless man. I'm glad—yes, glad—I found him out in time."

All of which goes to show that we had undermined reason, since that chapter was closed two years before.

"I'll go right now and write answers to all of them, but I shall say 'Yes' to somebody," she concluded, viciously.

A swift river turned to a path of gold under the Westering sun. A bridge,

broad and long, with the strength of all time in its iron-locked frame, spanning the stream—the present, bridging past and future.

On it a girl silhouetted, like a white cameo, against the luminous West. She leaned fair arms on the old gray parapet and gazed wistfully into the sunset.

A ringing step, coming nearer, nearer. She did not look. Life was over for her, and with life, necessarily interest and curiosity.

A pair of masculine arms appeared on the rail beside hers. Listlessly she turned.

"You! I thought you were going at two?"

"So I was, but I didn't. I waited to find out." His head bent, while masterful eyes, like steel, held hers. "Which is it to be?"

"Nobody," she answered drearily, with total disregard of grammar. "This morning you saw a millionaire in love. This evening, alas! finds her bereft of ready cash, stock going down, no chance to redeem her bankrupt capital or to make a new investment." She shook her chestnut head dolorously. "Nobody."

"Yes, one body," drawing her hand through her arm. "I've come back to advance for you, to prove the value of a 'Back Number.'"—Town Topics.

No Zest to It.

Miss Summit—He is too enormously rich for you, dear.

Miss Palisade—What do you mean?

Miss Summit—Why, with a man like that, there would be no fun in being extravagant.—Town Topics.

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Reminders.

Crawford—How was it you didn't have any fresh vegetable at the farm house where you were boarding?

Crashaw—I fancy the old farmer was sensitive and didn't like to have any green good around.

A Close Call.

"A hear Dick was chased by a dog—how is he now?"

"He's all right, but his clothes are a little bit off."—Town Topics.

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A Definition—A satirist is a man who discovers things about himself, and then says them about some one else.—Life.

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