

THE WORLD'S BEST SHORT FICTION

THE OTHER MAN, By Sarah Cone Bryant

"WISH you would tell me about that other man," he said suddenly. "You know all about the other woman?"

"The other woman?" Her eyes met his, as she let the white sand trickle through her fingers.

"No, no; there never was another woman; I dreamed her! But—I told you even my dreams, Honora!"

"I had no dreams to tell."

"You mean it was so real? But you have forgotten it now?"

"That is since a week ago to-day?"

"I only know it was the one moment that counted in all our lives; time ceased then; say you have forgotten, since then."

"I have forgotten all the pain."

"No, not that; you have forgotten HIM?"

"Have it?"

"Say it!"

"Do you care so much? A little fortnight ago you did not care at all. Two little weeks ago I was just Honora. Two weeks ago or two years ago, what difference since the miracle is wrought? Besides, I did care; I must have cared always, without realizing it." The girl shook her head. "Well, if you come to that, what did you care for me? I was just an old friend, was I not? The best of friends, perhaps, but only that. Friends! But what matter now? Only—I want to hear you say that you have forgotten all that went before, as I have!"

"Have you altogether forgotten? It was only two years ago, Maurice. And her eyes were so black—so black, I can see such a pretty picture when I think of what you told me; the center of it is a wounded soldier, opening his dazed eyes on a vision of black-eyed angels, with cups of water, and red roses in their hair—what have you done with the rose, Maurice? The man's tongue put a fascinating Spanish velvet edge on everything she said. Have you forgotten that? Ah, me, but there was romance and midsummer madness for the young Rough Rider in Cuba!"

"Yes, there were a few little things like that," drawled the man easily; "but there were others. There was trickery and pretense, for one thing; and cold calculation masquerading as coy hesitation, for another. And all the while—his voice changed—"up in God's country was a woman true as steel and fine as gold, the staunchest and a winning Jackanapes who wanted what was bad for him ever had!"

"Poor little Jackanapes," the girl said whimsically; "it was an honest white while it lasted; don't let us try to change that."

"I don't deny it, Honora. You saw me all through the thing, from the time I came home, with my head full of black-eyed dev-angels, to the grand catastrophe. You know exactly how much of a fool I was, and I am glad you do. I must have bored you unmercifully with my rambling. I ought to have had more sense; but you were so sympathetic you encouraged me."

"The girl smiled slightly, looking far out to sea.

"Do you remember how you used to think of ways to cheer me up during the great uncertainty? You always said everything would come out all right."

"I remember," said the girl simply. "And then—afterward—well, you rather kept me from mourning on the world, Nora. There is something so essentially wholesome about you—and besides, you wouldn't have it! I say, dear, how did you know enough? What makes you such a wise woman, anyway?"

A reflection of that past wisdom fell on the girl's face, as she answered slowly: "Oh, I knew—perhaps I read it somewhere—that pain is not a corrosive until it is mixed with gall; then it is. I didn't want little Maurice eaten up blood and bones, you know, so when I could I just tried to eliminate the gall from the poison. I have often wondered since if you knew what you were doing. I did often feel as if the poison had been drawn off, when I had been with you. You even found extenuating circumstances for the lady."

"Yes, I believe I tried to be a gentleman," said the girl, nodding.

"The man laughed at the unexpected phrase. He drew one of the straying hands within reach, and leaned his cheek on it caressingly. "Dear, you are a gentleman and a scholar," he murmured, "and DON CARLOS, DE BURGOS, the bargain; there is no one like you."

The girl looked at his bent head with a passion of tenderness in her eyes which did not reach her voice as she answered, "Good comrades all the way through, eh, Maurice?"

"Comrades—my dear," he added very low, his eyes dominating her. "Not always that," she objected, moving rather restlessly from the pause which followed. "For a long, long time just comrades."

"But lovers now—what are you trying to say? Oh, no, I won't let you go, nobody will see, and if they do you may. Makes you too warm? You were much too cool before. Well, then, say 'please' prettily—no, THIS way—and I will—no—there!"

The girl tucked back a straggling lock and settled her collar deliberately. Her cheeks were very pink. She looked hard at a sailboat, a long way off; the man looked at her. Presently a dimple began to grow slowly near the corner of her mouth.

"The other—man never did that," she murmured.

Maurice jumped. "D—hang the other man!" he exclaimed. "I should hope not. Look here, Nora, who was he? Were you engaged to him?"

"No."

"Is he—did he die, dear?"

"No! Oh, no. What made you think of such a thing?" She shivered.

The man looked at her. "Then I don't understand," he said slowly. "What was the trouble; did you quarrel?"

"Curiosity is an evil trait I never thought you possessed."

"I am not curious. How can I help wanting to know? That day, two years ago, you told me that you understood because you had—felt that way yourself; you remember? I have never forgotten it. I cannot help wondering why—and who—if he treated you badly?"

"No, he did not. I have—nothing against him."

"Then tell me about it; it wasn't

anything more than a girl's fancy, was it?"

"I can't say that quite."

"Well, perhaps not a fancy; but a sentiment, an affair of imagination—you did not really care, Honora?"

"You would like to know just how much I cared? Really?"

"Yes."

"Then I will tell you. I have so often wanted—in this last week—to tell you. There was something wild, yet humorous in her eyes. "I will tell you the whole story. It will be a relief to have you know. And yet, after all, there is nothing to tell."

The man sank down again in an easy posture and rested his head on his hand, watching her face as he listened.

"He was some one I knew when we were scarcely more than boy and girl,"

rate, it was something hard to bear—"The man stroked a fold of her skirt as it lay near him.

"As had as a Mauser hole?" half jealously.

"I don't know as well as you do how bad that is Maurice, but I should say this was as bad, even as that. We'll call it a Mauser hole if you like—it will serve as well as another term. At any rate it was a misfortune. And I heard about it. I knew, then, that I cared. I gave up trying to fight it. Nothing seemed to be of any importance except the fact that he was suffering. And the worst part of it was that I had no right to help him. If I could have gone to him, if I could have nursed—served him, given my life for him! But I had no right even to grieve openly; I was only one of his friends."

"You poor little child. What an egoist he was."

"There was quite a new kind of pain in it all; I did not find out what it was until long after he had gone, and I was alone. I was jealous. I always thought jealousy was ridiculous, till then. Well—that's all about that part of it. I had plenty of time to get used to it in, because it was a long—engagement; you know, Maurice, I am calling things by different names, and I understand in a smothered tone. "I saw him a great deal while he was—waiting; things did not go smoothly; there was a difficulty, and he was anxious, and depressed, and I suppose I am what you would call sympathetic."

The man groaned and laughed together. "Faintly," he said. "Were we ALL selfish beasts, Honora, or do your friend and I stand alone in our

before; but I am not ashamed!" Her head went up proudly.

"It was like this. As the weeks went by, and I grew nearer—to him—by some little trouble, I stopped caring about anything for myself. I wanted him to be happy so much more than I wanted to be happy myself, that I came to think tenderly of the other woman, even, because he thought she could make him so happy; and at last I stopped thinking about myself and my hurt at all. I am not a bit masochist naturally, but I can honestly say that that one thing in my life has been perfectly free from the taint. Do you understand what I mean? It is a kind of miracle, I suppose; the commonest heart is great and good and generous when that love comes. Do you see why I am telling you? There is nothing to regret in having loved that way, even when one is not loved back again, for it brings no hurt to anybody; and it teaches one a great many things. Do you see, I feel as if I were a little more like the woman I really loved you—because I—could love so. Her voice fell away on the last words.

The man's head was on his arm. He was very still. After a heavy pause he said, in a choked tone:

"You loved him well?"

"Yes," very softly, "well."

"He was a lucky fellow."

"I don't think he thought himself so," with a rather sad smile; "he did not appreciate his merces—then." The last word was almost inaudible.

"Fool," the man said bitterly.

"The girl turned her head away to hide a quick, irrefragable smile. "I do not like to have you abuse him," she said.

"I suppose not. Would you mind telling me if I ever knew him?"

"You were—at the house when he was there."

"Often?"

"Quite often, Maurice."

The man frowned darkly at his hands. His face was full of pain and uncertainty. "What stagers me," he said finally, "is that all the men I used to meet there—were anything but indifferent to you, Nora? I cannot remember one who was not a worshiper at your shrine."

"I can."

The man moved restlessly. Suddenly he groaned aloud.

"What is it?"

"Oh, I found the man! I shall never be rid of the thought of him. I wish I had not asked you."

"Do you?"

"I can't bear it, Honora! The thing is like a specter. Why did you show me what you are—only to take yourself away from me?"

"AWAY from me? Oh, no."

"It is the same thing; all that—belonged to him; how can it ever belong to me?"

"There is not one fiber of me which does not belong to you."

"If he came to you to-day, and asked you to marry him—would you?"

"I should marry you."

"Ah, but I want all of you, your past—all!"

"My past was—his—yours."

"How? What do you mean?"

"I mean—oh, dear boy—perhaps I mean that I loved him as I love you. In the present, all the love I ever learned I loved you with, to-day."

"Dearest, you are too good for me; too good to me; I ought not to be jealous—but I am! I cannot bear to think—oh, I hate him for teaching you to love me!"

The girl flushed, and her face quivered in all its lines. "I'm not an angel," she said, very low.

The man took her face between his hands wistfully. "But you are," he sighed.

"Oh, no, I'm not," she cried half weeping. "I don't want to be—do you?"

His eyes questioned her, seeking hungrily for a sign, which was granted him. The warm color flooded her face from chin to brow, as he took her into his arms with a swift, strong motion, holding her where he could search her look. "Oh, dearest, dearest, no one else! Love me wholly, or I shall die of want. I will make you forget the other when you are mine; only love me; I'm not worthy of it, but you must, you must!"

Her eyes answered him. His face lost its strained appeal, as it sank against hers. "Ah," he murmured, "I can forgive him for teaching you to be an angel!" His voice dropped to a caressing triumph. "He never taught you THIS."

It was with the gaiety of a great reaction that he said afterwards: "Is there any place in the Bible where it says, 'Blessed are the foolish,' Nora? There ought to be. If that man had had a grain of sense you would not be here; therefore, bless him!"

Her eyes answered him. "You don't know how funny you are," she said. "But bless him, you like?"

"You may laugh; I don't care NOW. Only never dare tell me the fool's name! I might go out and kill him some day when I forget—now thank you to tell me the name!" The girl laughed again bubbly. "Yes, I shall," she whispered. "I shall tell you his name some time."

"When?"

"Some time."

"Perhaps we are married, Honora?"

"On—our wedding day, sweetheart?"

"Yes?"

"Perhaps; yes, then. Oh, Maurice, dear, dear foolish Maurice, I'll tell you his name on our wedding day."

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glory? Did all the men you knew envy their sorrows to your keeping?"

"Not at all, to an equal extent," the girl answered with a slight twist at the corner of her mouth. "Perhaps I am sympathetic in different degrees with different people."

"According to the amount you like them?"

"Probably."

"Then I can lay a little flattering unction to my soul; you must have liked me some to be so good to me."

"Oh, yes, I liked you."

"But you liked him better; I suppose it is simple enough; confound him! Tell me the rest quick; I want to hear how you got over it!"

"How I got over it?"

"Yes; when it came to an end, you know. Did you stop—when the chap got married?"

"The girl bent her head so that he could not see her face. She was silent till he fretted for her answer. At last she said gently, "There is no end; never any end." The man started—"Nothing REAL ever ends—"

"Do you mean to tell me," the words came with a harshness born of a sharp hurt, "that you—went on—caring for the fellow, while he was courting the other girl?"

"Yes."

"Good God! You mean, then, perhaps—speaking with difficulty—"that you never stopped caring for him; that you care for him—still?"

The girl leaned down to him and put her hand on his cheek, with a touch that turned his face more fully to her. "You do not understand," she whispered, a questioning smile quivering on her mouth. "No?"

His face softened to all that was best in it. "I only understand that I love you," he breathed.

She took her hand from his face, softly, and enclosed one of his strong brown hands in both her own. "Listen, dear," she said impulsively. "I want to tell you all this because I have loved you since the day when I forgot—now thank you to tell me the rest; it is a little secret of mine—but, somehow, I can't tell you quite all, not QUITE, even now; but I—I will tell you—oh, I wanted to tell you that I am not altogether unworthy to be so happy now. It is because of something I learned then. In those months when—the man I cared for—was in trouble. If I had not learned it, if I had spent all this time just craving something—could not have, I should be ashamed, ASHAMED to let you love me—now, and ashamed to have you know that I cared so much

for you, but I am not ashamed!" Her head went up proudly.

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3493

Salaries Raised

April, 1906 - 288
May, " - 284
June, " - 281
July, " - 193
August, " - 230
September, " - 173
October, " - 266
November, " - 243
December, " - 219
January, 1907 - 277
February, " - 246
March, " - 463
Total, " - 3,493

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Shorthand Writer	Surveyor
Wrecking Engineer	Telegraph Engineer
Commercial Law	Civil Engineer
Illustrator	Building Contractor
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That is why there is scarcely a family in the United States that has not at least one member who suffers from disorder of the functions that should be performed by the bowels. And no matter how good the digestion or circulation may be, no matter how strong heart or lungs may be, they cannot fight constipation. When waste matter is not expelled from the body at the very moment that it should be, THAT MOMENT the system begins to get POISONED.

The best heart in the world, the strongest lungs, the soundest stomach, are all powerless against the effect of constipation.

It is wonderful how immediately such things as over-work or over-worry will check the action of the bowels. It is still more remarkable, if one neglects to attend to the functions at the right time, how soon the bowels become torpid and cease to act automatically.

If these two facts were understood more generally, the American people would be saved from much distress and illness. Our children should be taught the grave dangers of neglect at an early age.

Of course every one knows the bad effect of eating too much meat and not enough fruit and vegetables. We are learning more every year about the importance of flushing the system by drinking plenty of water each day. We know that sedentary lives are sure to lead to disorders of this necessary function and that exercise is vitally necessary to health. But for all that we still do not realize the full danger of either occasional or chronic constipation.

We Americans are a nation of meat-eaters. We boast that in the United States everybody can afford to eat meat three times a day. This is too much. Meat once a day is enough for any person, except those who do the hardest kind of physical work.

Vegetables and fruit are vital to bodily health. At least one kind of fresh vegetables should be eaten with luncheon and two or even three vegetables with dinner. Lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, rhubarb and cabbage should be eaten at every opportunity. Of them all, spinach is one of our greatest blessings and will save many an ill and

GOOD HEALTH

A Few Simple Hints on Simple Ways to Remain Well

By Cousin John.

ARTICLE No. III.

The most simple of all the functions of the body is the discharge of waste matter after the digestive process has taken from the food all that is valuable for nutrition. Yet this simple function seems to be least understood and most neglected; perhaps for the very reason that it is so simple.

The human body that is not abused, performs this vital function automatically and perfectly. It requires no mental impulse.

But there are very few human bodies that are not abused in one way or another. Almost every one of us is

guilty of errors of diet. Or else we neglect things because we are pressed for time. Or we allow ourselves to get all worked up into a state of high-strung nervousness. Or we take so little exercise that we become really unnatural so far as physical life is concerned.

All or any of these errors may react on the body so as to cause one or more of many common ills, such as headache, lassitude, biliousness, indigestion, etc. On the other hand, many persons are so healthy, that they can over-eat or get bad food with impunity without getting indigestion; they can over-work without getting nervousness or headache. But there is one thing that is sure

to be affected by any error of living, whether the person is strong or not. That is the function of discharge of waste matter.

This simple function which is so perfect in the healthy human body, is still so sensitive to disturbances that it becomes irregular or ceases altogether as soon as the balance of the physical system is affected.

Scientific experiments with delicate and ingenious recording instruments have shown recently how all the bodily secretions are either changed for the worse or suppressed entirely the moment the patient is tired, or excited beyond a certain point, or frightened, or fed with the wrong kind of food or drink.