

A POSTER ROMANCE.

She posed within a poster gown
Beneath a poster tree;

HIS SPANISH GIRL.

I wondered why Barry should be sitting alone in the garden at 10 o'clock on a fine midwinter night.

It was six years since I had last seen him. We had been boys together, just out of college, and I had visited him for a summer in the southern part of the state.

After that visit I had gone back to San Francisco and to a truly San Francisco system of work.

I had chosen this delightful quiet hotel in the hope that I might not have my peace disturbed by any of my numerous acquaintances.

For a moment longer I let my gaze follow a girl in white satin, who had fascinated me. She was very young and brilliant and erect.

A high, unnaturally white forehead, with very black and very straight, thin brows, eyes long and flashing and cruel, a large nose, suggestive of the Hebrew.

It was not a beautiful face. In repose it was far from beautiful, but it was rarely in repose, and her laugh was the most bewildering thing imaginable.

We had already met in the office, but had not had time to exchange a dozen words. I wanted to talk over old times and new times, so when I drew near him, I scraped my feet and coughed, as being the approved method of breaking in upon a tete-a-tete and meditation.

"What are you doing, mooning under a pepper tree? It seems to me dancing more in your line, or doesn't the madam dance?"

"Yes; she dances." "Oh!" I said, and feeling slippery ground, proceeded to avoid it.

"Well, there's one girl there, by Jove, that makes up for a country of mediocrity—that witch of a flirt with the black hair and the very bare shoulders who is dancing with Thornton. If I didn't happen to have some one I like better in the city, I think I'd go in for her."

"You don't say? Since when?" "Since five years ago nearly."

"Well, it's a little late, but permit me to congratulate you. She is superb."

"Do you know," he went on, "I had a romantic meeting and parting on this spot once, right under this very tree. It was just after I left you, six years ago—the meeting I had ridden out from town on Nocturne. You remember her, the little black mare? I was walking her along a road which ran about six feet from here, just about where that Bon Silene bush is (it was before the days of the hotel), when all of a sudden she shied at what looked like a bundle of old clothes under this tree. No, no; I wasn't thrown, and I wasn't rescued by the heroine. It was not much of a shy, just enough to make me look

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