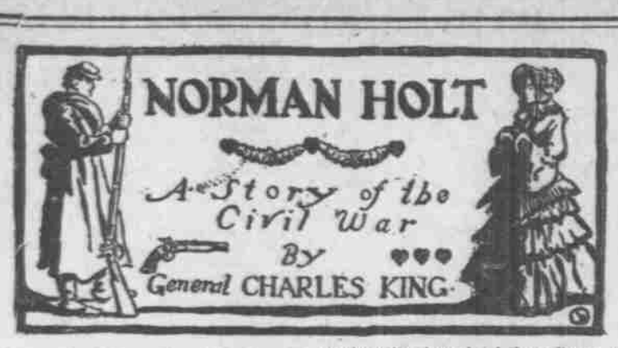

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Norman Holt, favorite son of an old Kentucky family, is reprimanded at West Point for dueling, and is withdrawn by his high-spirited father. His home-coming, in the Winter of 1860, is celebrated by an old-fashioned Kentucky Christmas gathering. Among the guests are Daisy Lane, daughter of Dr. Holt's lawyer, and J. Burnett Malloy, both of Cincinnati. The latter brings letters of introduction from Lane's partner, Mr. McIntyre, and is courteously received, but rouses the jealousy of Norman Holt by his attentions to Daisy Lane. Malloy separates Miss Lane from the main party during a fox hunt, and at the Christmas ball the same evening affects an air of proprietorship distasteful to Daisy and obnoxious to his rival, Norman Holt. But ill feeling is forgotten, when, at midnight, all surround Dr. Holt to drink the Christmas punch, which ceremony is interrupted by a terrific knocking at the door.

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"Friends and kindred," he began, "old friends and new, good friends all; so long as I have lived here in the heart of our beloved commonwealth has it been the boast of Belleview that no living soul, white or black, failed of welcome and of our good cheer on this thrice-blessed anniversary. Peace on earth, good will to men has been the motto over our hearthstone from the day these doors were opened. Peace on earth, good will to men, remains its watchword today, and such, please God, shall be its watchword through generation after generation long after I am laid beneath the sod. We rejoice, my sons and I, in your presence here tonight. We pledge you with full hearts and brimming glasses. We drink to Christmas past, to Christmas present, and to Christmas to come. May another year bring us all—all who are here tonight—again within these walls, then as now, to drink to each other's health and peace and happiness, and to say, in the words of Tiny Tim, 'God bless us, every one.'"

The moment that followed, first of murmurous applause, then of silence as glasses were raised to answering lips, was rudely closed. Sudden and imperative, somebody was knocking at the outer door.

A Midnight Summons.

CHAPTER III.

When Harkless returned it was to summon Dr. Holt to the hall. The chat and laughter seemed to have died away. There is something gruesome in a midnight summons when it breaks in upon a scene of mirth and gladness. A sense of foreboding or at least of constraint had fallen on the company. The negroes glanced at each other with fearsome eyes and fell back, whispering, to the doorway. Henry, with obvious concern in his earnest face, had started as though to follow and support his father. It was Norman who arose to the occasion and who bade black Pomp to strike up at once with his liveliest music. It seemed to recall the many guests to a sense of one's duty to one's neighbor. Kate Ray was foremost in the effort to banish the sudden gloom, and her cordial, joyous tones gave courage. Mr. Lane, with appreciative eyes, nodded smilingly to Norman, as though to commend his generalism, and raised his glass once more to his lips. Then glancing toward his wife and daughter, his eyes fell upon Malloy, who, abandoning his station by Daisy's chair, had stepped to the nearest window, and drawing aside the heavy curtain, was striving to peer into the night. His face had gone suddenly pale, and the lawyer marked and marveled. Then again came the old butler from the hallway, and in spite of themselves, women, and men, too, found it impossible not to look to see whom next he might summon. It was Lane himself, and setting down the glass, half empty, he quietly slipped out into the hallway. It was then that Mr. Malloy was seen to quit the window, and, with strange and unaccountable pallor, to edge his way among the groups and couples reforming for the dance, until he reached the main doorway. There he hung, as though listening for tidings from beyond. Kate Ray, whose bright eyes were active as her blithe tongue, noted it all, even as she chatted—noted that, as for the third time Harkless noiselessly entered, the stranger placed a detaining hand upon the negro's arm and whispered a question; heard old Harkless gravely answer, "I do not know, suh," and with an apologetic bow to his master's guest, saw him pass on, and, meeting the eyes of young Marse Henry, bow again. It meant that the elder son was wanted, and now, as though drawn by some dread or power he could not resist, Malloy followed. In three minutes Henry was back. The situation was becoming strained and he felt it. The guests could not, should not, longer be kept in ignorance of the cause of the midnight summons. In quiet tones he announced to the nearmost group that a dispatch had come from Cincinnati. Judge McIntyre was quite ill and business demanded that Mr. Lane should hasten home at once. Mrs. Lane, bidding Daisy remain, left the room and joined her husband. "Pray go on with the dance," said Henry, though his face, too, had taken on a shade of gray, and obediently Pomp and his satellites fiddled away, and loyally did they strive, men and women both, not to show that they had lost all heart for merriment. Strive as they might, there were men in that room that felt well assured that all had not been told, and that matters of grave import would yet be announced. The doctor himself came in for a moment, as though he felt it due his friends to maintain a semblance of hopefulness and of the old hospitality. But the glow, the radiance, had fled from his fine old face. Even in his smile the lips would quiver almost piteously. There was trouble in the kindly eyes. There was grief in the stout old heart. "Some kind of a stroke," was the next rumor that flitted about from lip to lip, and Mrs. Lane was making preparations to go at once. "Oh, no! Pray keep up the dance," the doctor pleaded. "Come, another sip of eggnog with me, Harrod," he hailed a tall, stalwart young Kentuckian, who had slipped out in search of the family carriage, and whose face was three shades grayer as he returned. "Help keep it going, my boy, for God's sake!" muttered the doctor, as they touched their glasses after the kind old fashion of the day. "I've got to send Norman with Lane. Help Henry all you can." The younger man nodded, clasped the doctor's hand and turned quickly toward the guests. "Some kind of stroke," was the whisper, yet the honored Judge and gentleman was never of apoplectic tendency. He was tall, slender, of nervous, sensitive temperament. What kind of a stroke? Then young Malloy reappeared. Norman, after a few murmured words from his father, had bent over Daisy's chair. "I am going to drive Mr. Lane to the railway," said he. "A train leaves Bardstown for Louisville at daybreak, so I have got to say good night. I had hoped to ride with you to Christmas service in the morning, but—" he stopped irresolute. Her eyes, that had been uplifted to his face, were glancing beyond. He turned to see, and encountered Malloy's. "I, too, must go," was that gentleman's hurried announcement. "I suppose you will change your dress, Mr. Holt. It's what I have to do, and Mr. Lane says you will pick me up at the inn."

Mr. Lane had said nothing whatever to Norman on the subject. There had been no opportunity. It was a 25-mile moonless drive cross country to Bardstown, over the other branch of the railway, and the only point from which a train could be counted on before afternoon. Caesar, the rheumatic old coachman, knew little of the northward roads beyond the Hardin Hills. Norman knew every trail and woodpath for 30 miles around. It was a case, the father confided to his son, almost of life or death. He himself would follow as soon—as soon as he could decently do so. Norman Holt had hoped to say more to Daisy Lane before he started, but no word was possible now with this imperturbable adorer hovering over them. It would be half an hour at least before the start. He would hurry to his room and change his dress. By that time Malloy would have had to go. He choked a bit in the hurried, conventional good-night, as he bowed over her slender, unresponsive hand; then without another glance at Malloy hurried away. In ten minutes he was bounding down the stairs again, and met her, wan and tired looking, going with her mother to her room. "Daisy was so fond of Judge McIntyre and he of her," was the explanation. "And then—she decidedly overdid it this morning." In the big dining-room were obvious signs of breaking up, despite the doctor's pleadings. People seemed to feel they ought to go. There were whispering of two dispatches. One merely said the Judge had been suddenly and seriously prostrated. The other was apparently for the doctor alone, and told of something beyond. The messenger who had ridden out from town was a tall native, a hanger-on about the stables of the inn, a Kentuckian, big of nature and free of speech, and he had not scrupled to say in answer to questions of those who were ministering to his inner man, that the wires had been hot with exciting news from Louisville, mainly from points farther South, where the people were in a ferment over the doings in South Carolina. And though the two messages he bore reached the doctor together he knew they had come nearly an hour apart. "Some kind of a stroke!" Yes, that was the dispatch that came from the editor of the Clarion. Judge McIntyre had been a frequent visitor in the old days of his beloved sister's life, and all the townsfolk knew him and loved him, and there was genuine sorrow among the revelers sitting up at the inn to welcome Father Christmas at the stroke of 12. "I heard," said the messenger, "I misremember who it was told it, that the Judge had been failing nigh on to a year, but this thing came on sudden like when nobody expected it." Later advices sent by post the following day were to the effect that Judge McIntyre was alone at the office, and the last man to see him before they picked him up insensible was Senator Malloy, who was very much shocked—who said he had left him at 4 o'clock apparently perfectly well. At 6 the janitor heard a sound as of moaning in the Judge's private office, forced the door, and found him lying on the sofa unconscious and with froth on his lips and beard. Dr. Welland, whose rooms were in the same building, was summoned instantly, glanced at the stricken man and sent the janitor on the run for the family physician and for other aid. When he returned all save doctors and attendants were excluded from the office. There seemed to be a good deal of moving around, and the janitor said it sounded more like a sparring match than a sick room, but these were particulars only gathered later still.

At least no such particulars were known when at 2 in the morning the stout, Western-built, double-seated spring wagon drove briskly away from Belleview behind a team of Kentucky roadsters that were the boast of the bluegrass country. Norman, with a silent "boy," his body servant, on the front seat; Mr. Lane, warmly bundled up, on the rear. The night was dark and moonless, but crisp and frosty. The stars twinkled in the almost cloudless sky. The doctor had come forth with his guests, whispered a few words in his ear as Lane bent to shake his hand at parting, then nodded to his son, and away went the boys. The inn was still brightly lighted, and a number of curious villagers hung about. Mr. Malloy came forth with valise and bag, and, with hardly a spoken word, took his seat beside Mr. Lane, and in three minutes Asholt was left behind. In low tone and at intervals Mr. Malloy sought to engage Lane in conversation, but the replies of that gentleman were brief and uninviting. Evidently the lawyer preferred his own thoughts, especially as Malloy desired to speak of the stricken Judge and the possible causes of the sudden seizure. Then Malloy essayed some cheery remarks about the finely matched team, speeding like clockwork along the hard-beaten pike, and their driver bowed his head in civil acquiescence to his tentatives, but he, too, seemed to prefer silence. Finally, as they began the ascent of the Hardin Hills and were winding up a steep grade, the young man tendered cigars to his companions, which were civilly declined, and lighting a match on the broad back of the negro in front of him, Mr. Malloy subsided into silence. The road became steep in places and rough and rocky. Evidently they had quit the pike and were on some cross-country track. Thick darkness surrounded them on every side, but Norman drove steadily, confidently on. For ten minutes or so the pace was slow, the road tortuous.

"Short cut, Norman?" asked Lane, in a low tone.

"Yes," was the answer; "Shelby gap." Saves six miles at least. The pike goes clear around the east end of the range."

Dimly, under the starlight as they looked about them and pulled the blankets closer as the air grew keener, they could discern the ghostly shapes of little firs and cedars. Sometimes a scrub oak scraped a branch or swished its leaves along the wheels, showing how narrow was the path—a mere cart track through the gap. There were bends and twists and turns, which they followed at a walk. Thrice on the northward, downward slope they splashed through some swift-running brook, and, at last, turning into a broader lane among black shapes of barns and corncribs, Norman touched up his team and again they bowled swiftly on.

"Shelby gap, you call that, Norman?" questioned Lane. "That's a trick worth knowing when a man's in a hurry and needs the shortest road. What I marvel at is how you can follow it in such pitchy darkness."

"Well, most of my life has been spent, so far, riding through these hills and dales," was the quiet answer. "I think I know every path that leads to Asholt or home, and I love every rod of them. It's all plain sailing now from here to Bardstown, but I believe there are very few men this side of the hills who could guide you through them to our side, a night as dark as this. You see, they have little occasion to come our way. They have their own railway into the Junction and a good broad pike east to Harrodsburg and Lexington. We are round on the other spur of the road with the hills between us. There's as little going to and fro across that range behind us as there is over the Cumberlands."

"You know your state better than most men know their home city," said Lane. "May the Lord keep Kentucky from the blunders they're making farther south!"

"Amen!" said Norman, gravely. "With all his wrath over the result of the election, father says Kentucky will never secede."

There was a moment's silence. Malloy, listening to their driver's words, interested in spite of himself in what this new and unlooked for possibility among his rivals might have to say, was yet thinking how unerringly they had been borne through that tortuous gap to the open skies and beaten roads of the northern side. Now, at the mention of secession and what might be the result, he waited, expectant. There was something he much wished to know, but silence again fell upon the party. Malloy then bent forward and broke it with a significant query.

"And if Kentucky should secede, I suppose every good Kentuckian would go with her?"

There was something perfiously like a faint sneer in the tone, something, at all events, that Lane himself noted with repugnance, and that stirred Norman Holt almost as did the words of the cadet-Lieutenant he had challenged and fought not three months agone, something almost like a "dare," that in boyhood days every lad of spirit so surely resented. Moreover, to the sensitive borderer, southern in temperament, sympathies and mode of life, yet devoted to the Union of States and loyal to the flag, the question meant far more. It involved infinitely graver sacrifices, whichever way the decision went, than was the case with those whose homes were farther north or south, whose associations, therefore, were either one thing or the other, who could be in acts and words either all Northern or all Southern without the loss of a single friend or dollar. It seemed to him, and it seemed to Lane that, in the momentous nature of the question at issue and the solemnity of the situation, only in awe and among intimates should it be discussed. Well and long as Lane had known Dr. Holt, not once during the visit had he permitted himself to hint at the topic that he could not but see was giving his host the keenest, most painful anxiety. Yet here was a young alien, so to speak, a stranger to the soil and, up to within forty-eight hours, to both father and son, who did not hesitate, as he flicked the ashes of his cigar, to call upon the young Kentuckian for an avowal of his intentions. Time had been in the recent past when Lane, journeying in the South, found himself getting hot under the collar when some total stranger on steamboat, train or hotel veranda, would range alongside, and occasionally, with menace in look or tone, demand, "What are your politics?" But this came never from men of education or social standing in the South. Now, a man who mingled, however undeserving, with the best in Ohio society, sought to probe the politics of one whose name and lineage were of the best in all Kentucky. Lane and Holt, Senior, were men who held a man's politics to be as sacred as his religion, so grave, so solemn were the issues of the day. Lane would have checked the questioner could he have foreseen the question, for in no man's eyes was Malloy so eager to appear unimpeachable. But here was opportunity to embarrass, annoy, perhaps damage a rival in the estimate of the father of the girl whose favor he would win, and the eager boxer forgot his guard in the greed to strike a blow.

For an instant there was no answer. The words that would have sprung to Norman's lips— a rebuke to the impertinence of the stranger—were stifled by the instant awakening of the thought that this was still Belleview's guest. The laws of Kentucky hospitality forbade resentment of act or word of him who came accredited to a Kentucky fireside. The silence was so marked, so long, that in a sense of eager triumph Malloy was on the point of persisting in his question when Norman spoke.

"It will be time enough for us to say—when Kentucky has decided, Mr. Lane, can you see the time by your watch?"

"At all events," persisted Malloy, chafing under the implied rebuke, "your state's decision involves yours. That you probably admit," and he turned significantly to the lawyer as though demanding that he note the point. It surprised him to see that Lane busied himself almost ostentatiously with the watch, as though he would not listen.

"Can you strike a match, Mr. Malloy?" asked the lawyer, adding instantly: "How far from Bardstown now, Norman?" and Malloy was again rebuffed. He found and struck a match. "Almost five," said Lane. "We'll make it easily, won't we?"

"By over an hour. There'll be abundant time for breakfast." Then before Malloy could again return to the attack, Holt half turned, looked over his left shoulder and deliberately said: "Kentucky's decision involves rather more than you imagine, Mr. Malloy, so say our elders and advisers, and they also counsel—silence."

There was no handshake between the younger men at the railway station that frosty morning. Lane noted that Norman purposely avoided Malloy, who, for his part, was pondering over the words, treasuring them, and the events of that night ride, for future use against his adversary, even though little dreaming what opportunity that future might speedily bring forth.

CHAPTER IV.

April had come, soft and balmy, over the Kentucky shores. Birds and buds and even blossoms, were everywhere along the Lower Ohio, sweeping, bankful, to its confluence with the Mississippi. Nature spoke in the carol of birds of joy, peace and plenty, yet there came dread and omen in every day's dispatches from the Capital. There were days when no dispatches came from the massive fortress in Charleston Harbor, where the flag still floated, though menaced by scores of hostile guns. All over the South the war spirit was rampant. The seceding states had chosen a President and Congress of their own, and designated Montgomery as their capital. Tennessee and Kentucky were torn with conflicting loves and duties. Brother was divided against brother, wise men prayed and women wept in the fear of the coming storm. It was the matter of but a moment to decide which side to take, save in these fair lands along the dividing line. There were men by hundreds even north of the Ohio, yet close to the Kentucky shore, who could not hide their sympathy for the South, so long had Southern views and leaders dominated. The great political party, almost universal now throughout "the states in rebellion," was omnipotent in the great cities of the North, where were herded the mass of foreign-born voters, untaught, unthinking. It was in the farm, the village, the workshop, the factory, one read devotion as undivided to the cause of union and universal liberty as was the sentiment throughout the South in favor of slavery. No need to go into details! In every town and village throughout the Southern states men were mustering for military duty. In just a few of the larger cities of the North there was renewed activity among the uniformed and organized militia. New companies met with discouragement, however, at the start. "No arms are to be had from the general Government," was the reply from each state capital. It transpired that for long months previous an astute War Secretary, the Virginia Democrat, our peppery Kentucky ex-whig, so longing to perforate, had been shipping Southward cannon, small arms and cartridges by the carload, until Northern arsenals were stripped.

It was in the cities close to Mason and Dixon's line and north of the border that, emulating the activity shown in the Southern States, the young men organized for drill, and as early as February there had been formed in Cincinnati a company of youths not yet 21, who called themselves the Anderson Cadets, and at one of their February meetings there had been inscribed on their rolls the name of Norman M. Holt. All they knew of him at first was that he was a younger brother of Mr. Henry T. Holt, recently admitted to partnership with Mr. Lane, in the old-established firm of McIntyre & Lane. Judge McIntyre, long an honor to the bench, would never sit in judgment on another case. With affairs strangely, some said hopelessly entangled, and after a sudden and serious illness that left him prostrate for nearly a month, the Judge had retired from duty and from all active participation in the affairs of the firm. It was understood that under the care and guidance of his brother-in-law, Dr. Holt, of Belleview, Ky., he had been taken to New Orleans and thence to Havana in the hope that rest and change would at least partially restore him. It was rumored that the master of Belleview had been compelled to make not a few sacrifices to meet the demands that came suddenly upon him, and that McIntyre had managed the affairs of his brother-in-law as badly as he had bungled his own, but, as no word of complaint was ever heard, few men cared to question. Certain fine hunters and road animals had been sold from the Belleview stables. Certain offers had been made for certain of the doctor's "niggers," as the chattels were orally referred to. But Holt had never yet bought or sold human flesh. The law made the negroes of Belleview his property, and thus far it had been lucky for them. It cost him more to feed, clothe and care for them as servants or helpers than they were worth.

There were dozens more than he could ever have used. Neighbors said they were eating the doctor out of house and home and stealing him poor. But they did not say so to him. Life at Belleview had been something almost patriarchal, but Belleview, all but the kitchen and quarters and a portion of the kennel and stables, was now closed to the world. The master had gone with the stricken brother of the woman he had so devotedly, passionately loved. Henry, his first born, was practicing as a junior partner in the old firm, and Norman, glad to be in Cincinnati on any plea, had begun the study of law under Lane's own guidance, with Lane's own son for chum and companion. Belleview had been left to the care of the overseer and his family, to Harkless and a host of triflers. With graver face, yet with hopeful spirit, Norman Holt had begun his work. The dreams of squiredom and luxurious ease in which the fond old father had indulged were all dispelled. In sad confidence he had confessed to his sons that more than half his means had been swept away, and that their allowance would be stinted. Henry was for turning all over to Norman. Even his small interest in the business would be enough for him, but Norman would not listen. They took rooms and board together in a quiet section of the city, and, keeping their own counsel as to the estate, went sturdily to work.

But with his 21st birthday close at hand, Norman Holt was facing more than one most serious problem. When first he looked into the face of Daisy Lane he had every reason to believe that from his mothers' fortune alone there would come to him enough to make him independent. His father had so assured him when he insisted upon his withdrawal from West Point. It was then most assiduously watched and cared for by Judge McIntyre, as it had been for many a long year. Now as the Winter began to wane Norman realized that the fortune was gone, and that his father's wealth was mainly in negroes, horses, dogs and Belleview, property that consumed far more than it produced. It fell upon him with almost brutal force that besides an honored name he would have next to nothing to offer the girl he loved, and love Daisy Lane he did with all the strength of his heart, now torn with jealous dread and sore dismay. Lane, too, had suffered through his partner's ill-starred ventures, and it had made him silent, reserved, even at times morose. There was something more than mere mismanagement behind it all, was Henry's reluctant admission. McIntyre, in the hight of fame and fortune, had taken Lane by the hand, lifted him from the bottom rung of the ladder well up toward the top, and though the later fall had only been a few feet it counted more with Lane against his broken benefactor than the contemplation of the benefits he had received at his hands. Indeed, if Lane had not long begun to think that it was his own brains and energy that made the reputation of the firm, he was a rank exception to the rule. He loved money. He had known what it was to be poor and struggling. He liked the doctor's ads and liked them well, but that was before it dawned upon him that the firm must open its doors to both, and not as clients or contributors.

He was a good husband, a fond father, a "square" man and citizen, a genial friend and companion, too, when there was no special tax on that friendship, but Lane was one of the last men in his line of business whom those keen students of human nature, the would-be borrowers, would think to ask for aid. He had watched with jealous dread the growing ascendency over his senior of that upstart Malloy. He only vaguely dreamed how deeply McIntyre was enmeshed. He never dreamed at all that Holt's fortune could be involved, and, disliking young Malloy, even while impressed and influenced by his father's wealth, he had seen with secret approval the dawn of Norman Holt's regard for his precious child, had shown him especial confidence and cordiality during the few brief days at Belleview, and now felt it necessary to be correspondingly distant, if not, indeed, cold and at times even repellant. This was the more difficult because Theodore, his first born, had become frankly enthusiastic about Norman, and was forever talking of him at table, and would have had him perpetually in the house, where indeed Norman's inclination would perpetually have led him, but unerringly the latter noted the father's change of manner, and although hurt and almost indignant, he was an introspective, sensitive fellow for his years, given to self-examination and to studying both sides of a question. He knew that having as yet offered nothing and having now nothing to offer, he should not stand between her and those who might come laden with love and gifts. Moreover, it was next to impossible to go there in the evening and not find Malloy—Malloy, whose manner conveyed too much of self-congratulation and obtrusive triumph not to be hateful in a rival's sight. And then, again, Henry had spoken. He, too, had disliked Malloy. He had heard Kate Ray and her mother refer to him in terms so guarded that he felt there was something much amiss, and Kate Ray was a girl to win whose good opinion the elder brother would have walked to Lexington often as he longed to ride thither, which was every day of the week. Never doubt she knew it—had seen it for a year or more, but she had known him from her earliest childhood, and girls seldom fall in love with men they know so well. She used to visit Cincinnati for a few weeks every Winter, and now found reason to decline. She had striven to make him understand, but he would not be daunted. She was angry when he stole that kiss, yet it was anger at herself only. She wished him to know he should not have sought it. She had thought twice, thrice of telling her mother she ought not to go to Belleview, even to welcome Norman, but the mother had set her heart upon it. She had heard of young Malloy while in Cincinnati, and heard of associations that made her marvel he could set foot within the doors of Belleview, but here again was the Kentucky code. Malloy was there, and well accredited. He was the doctor's guest, and, even to Henry, who appealed to her, she shut her lips as to anything she knew against him. From her and from others whom he knew in Cincinnati, Henry could learn nothing tangible to Malloy's disadvantage save that he was his father's son, and had sometime since been somewhatwild. Now, with abundant means, he was welcomed in many houses. He would have a luxurious home. He was an undoubted "catch," for whom many mamas were angling. Why shouldn't Lane listen to him as a suitor for his daughter's hand? Henry did not tell Norman he himself was "lassorn," but he gravely bade him look the situation in the face and ask himself if it were not wise to avoid the flame. He was surprised when Norman, though with averted eyes, simply replied, "I have."

(To be continued.)

THE DOCTOR, WHO HAD COME FORTH WITH HIS GUEST, WHISPERED A FEW WORDS IN HIS EAR, AS LANE BENT TO SHAKE HIS HAND.

FASHIONABLE DRESS.

"A Woman" Replies to Strictures of Scientific Writers.

So many articles have been published lately on the subject of scientific dress, and so many reasons have been given as to why any dress at all was undesirable excepting for purposes of protection from the weather and in order to follow the ordinary rules of decency, that it is hard on a woman who is fond of dress and has plenty of money to indulge her taste for pretty things in the way of clothes.

In a recent article the Japanese kimono was advocated as a most desirable garment, graceful and healthful. The usefulness and the gracefulness of the kimono have long been recognized by the fashionable woman, but it has been relegated to its proper place among wrappers and tea gowns. It has, indeed, rarely attained the same position as a tea gown, which in these days is a very smart garment, made of most wondrous materials and so elaborately fashioned as to do duty for a reception gown in which to receive one's friends in one's own home.

Long draperies of any and all kinds are, of course, artistic and most becoming, but they are no less becoming when arranged by the hands of a skilful dressmaker on the lines of some fashionable garment suited to the fashionable figure of today. There is one thing that the mind of man cannot grasp, which is that because a gown looks close and tight-fitting and gives a very slender appearance to the figure, it is not of necessity in the least tight, nor does it compress the figure painfully or harmfully.

Matter of Corsets.

It would be rather trite to go into the subject of corsets, which certainly has been exploited enough the last year. But it is worth while to notice the difference in the figures, and it might be said in the health, of the women of 60 and 70 years today who have worn corsets since they were young. The woman who now complains of failing health and has great difficulty in getting about is the one who, when she first began to grow middle-aged and stout, hated the inconvenience of anything the least bit tight, and at once did away with corsets of all kinds.

As she never saw fit at the same time to give up any food that tended to make her stouter she very soon grew unwieldy and gave up taking much exercise. She drove rather than walked, for she did not want to put on a snug-fitting gown and could wear anything she chose in a carriage, and today looks and feels old enough to be the mother of her contemporary who thought money well spent in securing an expensive corset fitted to any change of figure, but which without compression kept the muscles from becoming flabby. The English woman laces much more than the American, wears much tighter clothes, and would not hear of going without corsets.

Nothing that compresses the body or any part of it is fashionable. Even gloves are more comfortable than they were, for nothing is in worse style than a glove that is too small. Collars may be high, but they are no longer lined with heavy buckram, and sleeves are large enough to enable the most athletic woman to play at any outdoor sport without the slightest inconvenience.

Reasonable Fashions.

After all is said and done there are not so many points where from a hygienic point of view, exception can be taken, and it really would seem as though the present fashions had been evolved from thought and experience. Certainly in this climate there are enough changes of temperature to give a wide range of experience, and the last few hot months have proved that Dame Fashion is a clever taskmistress, as she speedily ordered for her followers the style of clothing best suited to tropical countries.

In support of the so-called scientific dress reform there have been quoted the various phases or epochs of dress, each with its accompanying folly, while a most alarming, if short, list of statistics would seem to be sufficient to induce every woman to remain in her own room in the costume of Lady Godiva. It would be just as well to bring forward, if there were time to do it, a correspondingly long list of the smartly gowned women of today, of say 50 or 60 years of age, who have had money enough always to dress according to the best fashion.

By this is meant never being dressed in the extreme of style. A great deal is constantly said and written (always with a sneering allusion) of there being no old women, grandmothers having all gone out of fashion, etc., but the bright and alert gentlewoman of today, who is well fitted by her health and keen interest in life to be a companion not only to her sons and daughters, but her grandsons and grand-daughters, is in the majority, and certainly does not appear to offer a good example of a victim to dress. —"A Woman," in the New York Herald.

Sobering.

The kiss I stole from Margaret,
By dint of might and malt—
We were not married, then, you know—
Was very like champagne.

The kiss I press today upon
Her willing lips, ah, well, sir—
We're married now, you understand—
Is more like bromo-seltzer.

—Detroit Journal.

Don't Mention It.

Tess—Mr. Pepprey is just hateful!

Jess—What has he been doing to you?

Tess—He gave me his seat in the car today, and then, leaning over, said: "I beg your pardon. I must be getting hard of hearing; but you're very welcome."—Exchange.

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