Elya's Chaperon

By Virginia Leila Wentz

Mrs. James Dix was looking out across the Rue de Rivoli at the morning's brightness of the Tulleries gardens when the boy in the hotel lift brought her a cablegram.

It was a message from her lord and master in Chicago declaring that her immediate presence was required. At once all the brightness faded out of the Tulleries, for the frivolous gayety of Paris had been especially attractive to this portly, easy going, good natured matron of the west.

"But, mother, you'll have to go alone. It'll be a whole month before my singing lessons are finished, you know," broke in Elya, who was having her flaxen hair shampooed by a real Parisian hairdresser.

Mrs. Dix clasped her ring bedecked, pudgy hands. She always clasped her hands when she agreed about anything.

"You'll have to have a chaperon, of course, dear," she added. "Now, who can we get on such a little notice?"

There was silence for a moment, while the deft fingers of the hairdresser ran through the flaxen hair with a soothing touch. Then Elya's girlish voice sounded in a delightful treble:

"Oh, mother! I know the very person. She's terribly nice and awfully ladylike" (Elya always emphasized her adverbs and used indiscriminate ones at that), "and she's an American, and that's the best of all—ouch!" In her eagerness she'd turned her head a bit too suddenly, and some soap had got in her sapphire eyes.

"Oh, I know who you mean," helped out Mrs. Dix, while her daughter struggled with the soap. "You mean Miss Clemmens, the governess to that little English boy who died last week? Yes, she's looking for another engagement, that's true. And she certainly is a lady."

So Miss Dorothy Clemmens of New York was engaged to chaperon Elya Dix for a month in Paris and then bring her back to America.

To console herself for her mother's departure, Elya had Miss Clemmens secure tickets for that night's opera. She sat in a box in her young beauty set off by a $200 Paquin gown and serenely allowed the audience to stare.

Already she was learning that the mission of the beauty is to support modistes and to be stared at. Behind her, robed in some soft, inexpensive gray stuff, with a narrow white lace collar, sat her chaperon.

The opera was "Siegfried," the scherzo of Wagner's great symphony, as Lavignac has called it. Upon Miss Clemmens' music parched soul (she'd not heard an opera for over a year) it fell like gracious dew and fetched a sweet refreshment. When the orchestra tells the mood of Siegfried in the second act, feeling the first fret of awakened passion, her eyes shone like stars, her lips parted slightly, and just at that juncture a man in the audience caught her perfect profile as she leaned slightly forward.

That same look, downward and sidewise and smiling! That exquisite head in its cloud of wavy dark hair! Paul Demarest brushed away the years that had blurred it all, and then suddenly he remembered. Yes, he remembered. Oh, it was so long ago, so many years ago!

And she was in the same box with that gay little butterfly, that American flirt, Elya Dix. Bless Elya Dix! It was the first time he had ever felt grateful to her. He would make his way to her box at the end of the second act.

"Why, Mr. Demarest! I'm awfully glad to see you—I honestly am! Thought you'd forgotten me. And I'm all alone now—mother sailed unexpectedly for home this morning—and I'm all alone now." Elya greeted him in her young untamed effusiveness as he entered the box.

"All alone?" he questioned gravely.

"Well, there's Miss Clemmens here, my chaperon. By the way, she's an American too. Miss Clemmens, Mr. Demarest. You've heard mother speak of him, I'm sure. Oh, here come Dickie Marston and Bob Sawyer! How terribly jolly!" Elya reached out her daintily gloved hand to greet two newcomers.

They were of the aggressive type, these two English chaps, and in a few seconds Demarest made his way to Miss Clemmens in the rear.

"Do you know, Miss Clemmens," he began curiously, "the last time I saw you you wore your hair in two braids, and I wrote a poem and dedicated it to the curls at the end."

His voice and mouth were grave, but there was a smiling gleam in his eyes.

Miss Clemmens glanced rather blankly from beneath her heavy lashes at this man well under forty.

"I think," she began, with a calm dignity befitting her position—but just then, on the very second word of reproval, a flash of understanding radiated over her tired, lovely face. "You—surely you're not Prince Paul?"

"The very same—princess."

Paul Demarest bowed very low.

"But—but why Demarest"—pursued Miss Clemmens, with puzzled uncertainty.

"A grand-uncle over here without any closer issue left me his money and estates, providing I'd take his name in the bargain. I took them all." The light raillery in the voice changed to seriousness. "But I'd have known you, princess, if you went by any name under heaven."

"For pity's sake!" dimpled she. Then she added with a wistful dignity: "But I must have changed a deal since then. That was nearly twelve years ago. Just fancy!"

"I don't see the changes," said he gallantly "To me you're just the same."

But, oh, how tired she looked—his gay, light hearted little princess! And how he longed to fold her protectingly in his arms! The wide divergence in that moment between what this man wished to do and what he did do stands for civilization.

"Do you remember those glorious sails we used to have on Long Island sound?" he asked constrainedly, picking up the fan which she had dropped.

Remember? The Parisian opera house and the hum of chattering voices faded away. In their place came the big, blue sound covered with white sails, and no voice save that of "Prince Paul" teaching her the "Marseillaise" in French. Oh, what a voice he had! And the salt spray was again on her tanned cheek, the wind blowing through her hair—

"Once upon a time," began Paul Demarest, "there was a young chap with a lot of ideals and ambitions and that sort o' thing who went to spend a summer in a quiet little place on Long Island. It seemed absurdly, irritatingly quiet to him until he met—a princess. She didn't wear a crown, except her glorious dark hair, whose thick tendrils the wind was always blowing awry, and she wasn't followed about by a court chamberlain, but she had the dearest, most loving father I ever knew. Well, the princess was quite five years younger than the man, but they read together and sang together and sailed together, and when he was suddenly called away to France he purposed coming back one day when he was an independent person and claiming the little princess. He didn't get back as quickly as he had hoped. When he did, he found that she had flown, and he could find no trace of her."

When the low, mesmeric voice had finished, Dorothy Clemmens looked up with startled eyes. The lambent flame in them met an answering flash in his.

"Father died the year I graduated," she said unsteadily. "We had to give up our old home, and ever since I've been putting what little learning I'd gained to use—'teaching the young mind,' etc. Incidentally now I'm chaperoning, as you see." She gave a vague, graceful little motion with her slim hand, which included Elya, the two English chappies and part of the stage.

"Back in that little spot on Long Island," went on her companion eagerly, "the sea is just as blue as ever, I'm sure. And the white sails are there, and—don't you think, princess, if we went back we might find fairyland?"

Just here the orchestra took up the superb stretto of "The Decision of Love," and there was the general stir in the house of people getting ready for the third act.

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When at the end of the month Elya Dix sailed for America, Miss Dorothy Clemmens sailed with her as Paul Demarest's fiancee.

"But isn't it terribly funny, mother," said Elya as she unpacked her Parisian finery, "to think of my coming back from gay Paris quite unengaged and my chaperon with a prize on her string?"

And Mrs. James Dix clasped her ring bedecked, plump hands in acquiesence.

UMBRELLA AND SHOES.

Their Importance In the Eyes of the Indian Native.

India is so vast that different etiquettes prevail in different districts. We have no standard etiquette, no standard dress. We mostly copy European etiquette while with Europeans. Even a Bengalese shakes hands with a Bengalese, speaks in English for a few minutes and then breaks forth into the vernacular. We shake hands with a European on parting, but by mistake again touch the hand to the brow in a salaam, so we both shake hands, salaam and do the like, and no sober minded European ever cared for the anomaly.

The umbrella is the emblem of royalty, the sign of a rajah, so natives generally fold their umbrellas before a rajah and not before anybody else, however great. It is not a part of the dress, but a protection from the rain or sun, a necessary appendage, just like the watch and chain. You might as well ask a European to take off his waterproof coat. A cooly is not bound to fold his umbrella when a brigadier general rides past. But a menial generally closes down the umbrella on seeing his master, whom he considers his king. But no Indian, however humble, ought to fold up the umbrella, even before a magistrate, because he is neither the master of the humble passerby nor his superior officer, nor is he bound to salaam him. But if he does, no harm. In a word, natives generally fold the umbrella before a master or a superior officer and not any other citizen, however great, and this is no insult.

While going to see a native chief in his palace the native visitor or official takes off his shoes if the reception room has a farash and the rajah is sitting on his musnud. But if he is received in the drawing room, furnished after the European style, the shoes are allowed. In some states no natives can go to a rajah without a pugree. In others the pugree is taken off and tossed at the feet of a rajah.

It is ridiculous in a European (from the Hindoo point of view) to order a native to take off his shoes. This is what we ask our priest to do, so that we may touch the dust of his feet. A munshi when mildly rebuked by his sahib took off his shoes, but recounted the whole scene to his better half, saying, "Sala hamara gor ka gurda lenay magtna!" ("The brother-in-law wants the dust of my feet.")—Indian Military Gazette.

Company.

Curious 'bout my Uncle Jim.
Trouble kind o' clung to him;
Had most every kind there is
From the mumps to rheumatis,
But he says he don't complain
'Bout the bother nor the pain;
Says that trouble's got to be
Kind o' sort o' company.

Says that he kin allus find
Subjects to divert his mind;
Never feels the slightest doubt
As to what he'll talk about;
Remedies must be applied.
An' that keeps him occupied.
"Troubles ain't so bad," says he;
"Kind o' sort o' company."
—Washington Star.

Many business men are shortsighted in not looking into things. They are daily losing money by not adopting the great Hollister Rocky Mountain Tea system. Makes them well and keeps them well. 35 cents.