THE LATE MR. LAYTON

By Harriet A. Lusk

WHEN Philip Layton left his home in the east to seek an extension of life in the dry climate of Arizona he had no heart in the going. It would have been easier for him to let his light flicker out among friends in civilization than to rustle health and gold in a land where it takes little effort to exist but where to live in an eastern sense is almost an impossibility.

Philip tried to be brave, for the sake of his mother and of one who had more than sisterly interest in him, and after hovering on the border of stagnation for a few years, he awoke one day to find himself possessed of a degree of health for which he had hardly dared hope and a fame which placed him well up on the list of natural scientists in more branches than one. An out of door life, he realized in the first day of his exile, was the one for him, so with gun in hand, a small box of tools strapped around his shoulder, and a bit of luncheon in the big pocket of his hunting jacket, he tramped the plains and mountains day after day, week in and week out.

His love for birds which led him as a boy to study the robin and the blue jay, took him, in his new field, into the haunts of those which from time to time, like the Mexican Indians, ignore the boundary line between the two republics. One day, when a rare avis from the land of Aztecs challenged him to a close acquaintance, he began the study of the new subject with an interest which made him forget, for the time his chief errand in the lonesome range He watched its habits, learned its call, and finally followed it to an all but inaccessible place in a deep canyon. There the bird found its mate guarding a nest of beautiful, dainty eggs. Philip captured the whole establishment and sent it to the Smithsonian, where he was already known as a promising young naturalist. This latest find gave him a distinction sufficient to make him a member of the National Ornithological society. Next he found a weird cactus, a species which had been overlooked by the botanists, and it was named for him in their new classification. Thus he took another step up the ladder of fame.

In the mining camp which he called home, he found little to interest him. Money flowed freely, but he had neither the miner's wages nor the stockholder's income, and then, too, these were not earned or spent according to his tastes. He was late or early as he liked, he took his meals when and where he pleased at a public eating house, while the classification of a specimen meant more to him than the grand march at a reception, or the opening piece by the poor orchestra in amusement hall. And so he earned the title of "The Late Mr. Layton."

"You'd be late at your own wedding, I believe," remarked an acquaintance one day. "You wouldn't get there until it was all over."

"Wouldn't I, though," retorted Philip. "You just wait and see."

Meanwhile his letters to his mother and sweetheart were curious mixtures of hope and despair, but he held true to his one object in life—the making of a fortune with which to provide well for his mother and to warrant him in marrying the girl who had so long been his fiancee.

Another nesting season found him at the Tip Top cabin watching a pair of rare warblers build their home, but incidentally his thoughts ran to other things and he observed to himself: "I ought to have struck gold long ago in these mountains. Now that I'm away from that maddening camp maybe I can come to myself and think the matter out. Surely I must not be too late to get Susan."

One twilight when he sat reading in his doorway, there trailed into his camp a tall man on a burro followed by two pack animals. "Good evening," and a few other pleasantries were exchanged by the men and the traveler was invited to spend the night at the cabin.

"Thanks," said the man, "don't mind if I do, pardner; the animals is plumb petered out. That last five mile were sure a hard pull, well nigh straight up." So, while he slid the packs from the little beasts, Philip kindled the camp fire and began the supper and the study of a new specimen.

"A sure enough prospector, I swear," he soliloquized, "with the regulation outfit—mescal and all."

"What might yer callin' be, young man?" asked the specimen. "Looks like ye're one of them infernal bug-hunters from Californy. There's a high-falutin' name they call theirselves—I disremember it just now."

"Yes," replied Philip, "I'm a bug-hunter or a naturalist, whichever suits your fancy, but I'm not from California. I came out from the east several years ago."

"That so? I done the same, pardner, but long before yer time—an' my name's Tom Conway. It were Thomas back in the states, but here 'Tom' or 'Tall Tom' is what I goes by mostly, an' what might I call you?"

"Phil, for short," replied the naturalist, falling into the ways of the country. "Philip Layton's my name, if you want it all. And now just try to feel at home—and the grub's ready."

The sun had long since disappeared behind the big rock on the western peak and the early moonbeam slid down the tall pines to the little clearing where the two men sat at an improvised table refreshing themselves with strong coffee and red beans.

"Ye 'pear to be pretty well fixed," began Tom, "for a man without no regular callin'. To come right down to principles, young feller, I'm 'bout as nigh broke as I've been fer many a year, an' if I don't make this deal go, may the devil take me."

Philip looked puzzled.

"Which brings me to recollect," went on Tom, "that I hain't been none too confidin' 'bout my own callin' 'ceptin' as how I ain't no bug-hunter. Lordy, I don't scarce know a hummer from a buzzard. Well, an' I ain't no smuggler, nor no rustler, either."

"I take it from yer outfit," began Phil——

"Ye're dead right, young man," he interrupted, "I ain't nothin' on God's earth but a bloomin' prospector. Have a drink, Phil, to wind up on?" asked Tom, offering his host a big bottle which he drew from under the table. "'Tain't nothin' but mescal," and Tom never knew, so busy was he lighting his pipe at the camp fire, that Phil merely moistened his lips.

"Know anything about rock, boy?" asked Tom, taking a small package from his trousers pocket.

SOMETHING WHICH TO PHILIP'S HORROR PROVED TO BE TOM.

"It's as much as ever," replied Philip. "Guess I just do know gold from pyrites of iron."

Tom slowly untied a cord which bound the parcel he carried, unfolded a dark cloth, then a bit of worn tissue paper, and laid a piece of ore in Philip's hand.

"White quartz and free gold, sure's you're born," exclaimed Philip, holding it toward the fire.

"Ye're dead right, pardner, and richer'n any rock ye ever heard tell of."

"Where did you find it, Tom?"

The tall man was leaning over him in the flickering light like a spectre from out of the shadows. The air was strong with mescal, but Philip did not even wince.

"Where?" repeated Tom; "I'll tell ye—just ye—mind ye"—and his voice sank into a horse whisper—"I picked up that rock not a hundred yards from this 'ere cabin."

Phil jumped to his feet with excitement and Tom's eyes glowed like two coals from the fire.

"When?" gasped Phil, with a keen glance at the stranger.

"When? Pardner, I've done packed that there piece of rock in my pocket ever since '84. Hain't been a minute without it," he added, as he put the treasure back in its wrappings. "An' now I'm back on the trail of that prospect to make my little stake, the last one, I 'low, I'll ever strike."

"But"—— began Philip.

"Yes, I know," interrupted Tom, "ye're goin' to ask why didn't I stay with it an' work it out. But that's a long story, too long to spin this evenin'. Them stars is a'tellin' us it's time to turn into blankets."

But sleep, to Phil's eyes, would have been an impossibility and Tom saw it.

"Well, then, fill up agin, old boy," said he, and after passing the black bottle with the same result as before, Tom told his tale. It told of the ups and downs of a prospector's life, of fortunes easily won in many a new mining camp and as easily lost. But of all the prospects, the richest was the one he was about to locate in '84, when the Indians drove him to another field.

"Wasn't quite ready to have my light snuffed out, so I vamoosed and struck for Colorado, and this piece of rock is the only blamed thing I packed with me. I allers 'lowed to come back to it if ever I had time 'tween deals; saved it fer a kind of trump card, so to speak. Reckon they ain't no one in ahead of me on it, an' now, if 'Paches don't bother, it's a go. Ye don't carry no shot for 'em these days, do ye, pardner?"

"No," yawned Phil, "not with the Fort so near," and, he continued, amusingly: "a pretty shrewd man and thinks too much of his bottle; but has withal a kindly face and, I believe, could be a good friend to a fellow."

A few moments later Tom was stretched on his blankets beneath the sky sleeping the sleep of the tired prospector, while Phil, on his bunk, dreamed of white quartz, a big stamp mill, his mother and Sue.

When he put his head out of his cabin door in the gray of the morning he heard the sound of a pick on the hillside, and soon down on the trail came the old miner, his face full of joy and big fists full of beautiful white gold treasure fresh from the prospect which had waited for him fourteen years.

"Young man," he began, "old Tom has changed his tune a heap since he struck this 'ere camp last evenin' and what he said about bug-hunters don't go now. Not meaning' no great compliments nor throwin' no bouquets, old boy, I'm a thinkin' as how ye've treated me white, and if ye're of the same mind we might go halves on this deal. That plunder under the tree yonder is all I own in the world—and the burros. I ain't no ways likely to run out of supplies 'fore I git a little of this 'ere rock assayed, and then anybody'd grub-stake me that had an ounce of horse sense an' a little pile; but if ye'll take up with a grizzly old feller like me ye can throw in a little grub an' powder an' a tool or two an' help me locate, an' it's a bargain that we'll be even pardners."

Here Philip's feelings got the better of him, and he confided the secret of his life to his new friend. It was Tom who was tending the fire now, and he took unusually long turns at the poker with his back toward Philip, and his bandana suspiciously near his eyes.

When the story was done he made a heroic effort to clear his voice, while he reminded Phil that there was one thing in the bargain which he had overlooked.

"Ye're young," he said, "an' the mother an' the gal is enough fer a feller to leave his tin to, but I ain't no spring chicken, an' hain't had no blood and kin, nor sweetheart these many years. I've sure tuk a fancy to yer gal, an' when we have the papers drewed up fer this 'ere deal I'll add this: that if I happens to pass in my checks 'fore ye do, my share is to go to Susan an' her heirs forever, in short, ye two'll have the hull layout."

For weeks the newspapers heralded the great find by an old timer and a young naturalist in the Cochise mountains near the well known Tip Top cabin. Experts came and went, capitalists made them flattering offers and Philip took almost daily trips to the Fort.

"Ben tellin' her about it I reckon. 'Tween you an' the gal looks like Uncle Sam must make a good speck cancelling stamps nowadays, eh boy," remarked Tom in his bantering way upon Phil's return from one of these journeys, and the young man smiled a pitying smile for the old man who had no one to tell. For him the days went slowly. He would have closed a bargain with the first agent on the grounds and hurried east to lay his treasure at the feet of the two he loved best in all the world, but the senior partner deliberated with the compliance of the man who has struck it rich for the forty-second time, and mused:

"Yes, young blood runs swift, but an old coon like me 'druther study his hand a spell 'fore he throws down his last trump. Howsumever, Phil's all right. Was that-a-ways myself once, in them days when I had her to figger fer. Lordy, I wonder what I ever done that I should lose her, an' just a-closin' that big deal. An' 'er name was Susan, too; odd, ain't it? I sure wish 'em luck."

"'An aching, blinding, barren, endless plain,
Sullenly burning back against the sky.'"

quoted Philip, plodding along on his faithful old pony.

"It's sure an endless plain today. Two nights away from the camp and Tom all alone holding down the claim. Ought to have come back yesterday. This being a bug-hunter and a bloated bondholder and in love all the same time is more than I'm used to. Reckon I'll make it by sun down, though."

So they jogged along up the jagged, winding trail, both rider and pony with bent head. Some huge, dark birds, circling above caused Philip more than once to look up, but they sailed on toward the peak and disturbed him little. They were not rare, those things always on a watch for something dead in the mountains, a calf or a burro, and now, in the dry season many were dying from thirst.

They reached the clearing. Suddenly the pony sprang out of the trail pricked up his ears and sniffed the air. By the corner of the cabin the birds of prey hovered over something which to Philip's horror, proved to be Tom. There were bullet holes through him, and all around were moccasin tracks which Phil trailed from the spring above to a big rock a few yards from the house. Behind this their wearer had stopped to speed the fatal charge toward the unsuspecting old man. There were no signs of a struggle. Tom had passed out just as the day dawned, for his blankets were still spread by the cabin door and the morning fire had not been kindled. The place was rifled of all its grub, guns and powder, and the tobacco pouch in which Tom had carried his money, and even his horse were gone.

Philip carefully spread a canvas over the lifeless figure and then he realized with a start what it had meant to him this time to be a few hours too late.

How he carried the news to the world below he never knew, but while the stars kept watch once more over the old man he rode a fresh horse to the fort. The troops went out, but the Apache Kid and his band knew the trails well and were safe in their old haunts in the Sierra Madras.

The prospector was laid away with due respect in the little military cemetery, a military post was established near the mine and Philip closed a bargain with a mining agent whom Tom had most favored. He needed no urging then to rejoin the dear ones. The cactus flaunted its red or yellow blooms before him and the warbler and the thrush tried to lure him as of old, but they had lost their charms. He was glad to leave them to others for his heart was in the east.

EX-COQUETTE TURNS THE TABLES

DOROTHY Millbank was in a very embarrassing position. Here she was a guest at a house party in the Adirondacks, and there was no one in all the large company she could call a friend.

The married women, she knew, had been concerned in a plot against her; she could not bring herself to be more than civil to them. The other unmarried girls were not her sort. As for the men, she had antagonized them, and anyway she had had enough of men's society for the present.

Dorothy knew little about women. In the few years since she had been grown up she had been greatly admired and courted by men, and she fell easily into ways of behavior and tricks of speech that earned for her the title of coquette. Until now there had been no break in her easy dalliance with the serious matters of life.

When you give a woman who has taken life easily as it comes something serious to ponder over, it is dangerous to her peace of mind to bottle her up. She needs the outlet of speech with one she can trust. Dorothy had no such outlet.

Her mother was traveling out west; it was impossible to go to her. She was compelled to remain for some weeks at least among these people she deemed unfriendly. She took to keeping a diary.

A girl's diary is a foolish thing usually. It contains merely the vaporings of the feminine mind. The real thoughts and aspirations of the budding woman are too sacred to be admitted even to herself, let alone to be put on paper where some one might see them.

But to Dorothy it was a very welcome outlet for things she couldn't hold in any longer. That she may not have been entirely frank, even in her diary, cannot be put down as a fault. Women are not to blame for the mental characteristics that distinguish them from men.

How it is possible to record here some extracts from Dorothy Millbank's diary it is unnecessary to explain. People like to see the play without going behind the scenes. She began to write the night Guelph Higgins left the camp.

"Oh, it was cruel," she wrote, "for those women to play such a trick on me. The idea of getting Mr. Higgins up here just to make love to me! I hope they're satisfied.

"I wasn't harming them, or their husbands; simply having a good time in my own way. It seems my way wasn't theirs. I have found men ever so much more interesting than women, so why shouldn't I cultivate them? Why do I have youth and beauty—yes, I am beautiful, and why shouldn't I say so"—if I can't use them to make friends?

"I overheard one of them—it was Cousin Margaret, too—call me a coquette. I don't see any harm in that as long as it isn't serious. But this last affair has upset me. It was lucky for me that I had heard of Guelph Higgins and detected their little scheme, else it would have been serious. As it is I am just a little upset, that's all, and will get my balance again soon."

It may be asked if she was only a little upset. Her demeanor in public showed nothing of coquetry now. She carried herself proudly, even scornfully, among those persons with whom she was so out of key; but if you could have come upon her suddenly when she was alone on the lake or in the woods you would have seen pain and sadness in those dark eyes, which formerly were all light and vivacity.

If Dorothy had but known, any one of those women she denounced would have proved a sincere friend. As they noted the change in the girl they regretted the way their little plan had turned out.

Julia Willson seemed to take the affair most to heart, and she wondered how she could help. She made friendly advances one day but was repulsed. As Dorothy wrote in her diary that night:

"Mrs. Willson tried to be friendly with me today but I couldn't quite see it. I am beginning to wonder a bit, however, if I haven't been hasty.

"These young married women all seem so happy with their husbands. I envy them. I am beginning to think more seriously of some things.

"I wish a man, a real man, would fall in love with me. I know Mr. Higgins did, but no real man would set out to make a girl unhappy. He influenced me strangely and I have been trying to discover just what that influence was. I think I know now. I hate him."

She felt much better after writing that and resolved that she would forget him and mix more freely in the society in which she found herself.

"I can't go on this way," she said to herself as she dropped off to sleep.

She surprised Julia Willson the next day by suggesting they go for a row together. When they got to a quiet nook Dorothy opened the talk.

"I'm not quite sure what I want to say, Mrs. Willson," she began, "but my position lately has been so uncomfortable that I wanted to talk to some one. I have been very angry, not with you or any one in particular. Just with circumstances, I suppose."

"You have a right to be angry," Julia interrupted, "and with all of us collectively and individually. I have been waiting for just such an opportunity to tell you so. Please forgive us right off and I am sure we will have everything straightened out in short order."

"I am not sure that I have anything to forgive," said Dorothy thoughtfully. "I was angry, but I am beginning to realize that maybe I needed a lesson. But it hurts." The girl's eyes filled with tears.

"I know just how you feel," said Julia, "for you may have noticed that I am in love with my husband and so I understand——"

"But it isn't that," Dorothy interrupted. "Please don't think I am in love with Mr. Higgins. I have settled that. I hate him. The hurt is to my pride and my self-esteem. But I don't think it will do any serious harm."

"I hope not," said Julia. "But why do you hate Mr. Higgins? He's a fine, manly chap, even if he is an actor."

"It isn't that he's an actor," said the girl. "I couldn't love a man who pretended to make love to me, even if he did mean it later. You know he did get serious?" Julia nodded. "It was the sham of it that hurt me."

"But don't we all pretend to love?" asked Julia.

Dorothy looked at her in surprise.

"I pretended," she said, "after I knew he was pretending. And I did right."

"Yes you did," Julia said. "But that isn't quite what I mean. Until we find the right man we women are always pretending. Take yourself, for example."

"Me?"

"Yes. We call you a coquette, you know. Maybe we were wrong. But you did play at love."

"Not seriously," said Dorothy, emphatically.

"Neither did he," said Julia, "not at first. And you weren't fooled, were you? Tell me, dear, didn't you know when the actor stopped and the man began?"

"Yes, I did," said Dorothy. "But that doesn't excuse him. Why, you all knew what he was doing."

"It was a mean trick," said Julia, "and we won't try it again. At least I won't. So let's all start afresh."

Julia stretched out both arms impulsively and Dorothy responded by extending hers. They had a double handshake, which between women is as binding as anything can be.

Good feeling was restored in the camp forthwith. Dorothy showed how pleasant she could be to women as well as men. It took tact, plenty of it, which Julia supplied. But though the reformed coquette was as gay as the rest, outwardly, there was at times a forced note in her laughter.

"I ought to be happy," she wrote in her diary, "and I am sure I want to be. It's unnatural for me to hate any one. Maybe that's the trouble. But the person I hate is very far away, I suppose, so why should that bother me? I wish I could forget."

She couldn't forget. Julia Willson, always observant, felt she knew what was troubling Dorothy. The other married women did too. Marriage is a great teacher in some things.

Quite naturally the council of war which had planned the reform of Dorothy Millbank, coquette, assembled again as a council of peace and good will. Really they needn't have bothered. Dorothy could have worked out her own salvation, but woman is a born matchmaker, and these young married women simply had to help out fate. They forgot that they had decided to mind their own business.

"She is simply pining for him," said Julia when the four women met.

She didn't have to define her pronouns. All knew that "she" was Dorothy and "him" was Guelph Higgins, the actor.

"I had almost made up my mind," said Georgianna Lankester, "never to meddle again with other people's love affairs, but in this case it seems as if it were our duty to help. But what can we do?"

"I'll ask him to come back," said Margaret Clarkson, the hostess.

"Which would spoil everything," said Claire Adams emphatically. "You're not subtle enough for this business, Margaret.

"It's got to be done very carefully. These two young persons must be brought together under the most romantic circumstances.

"The man's safe enough of course, but the girl is so temperamental that it's got to be brought home to her very gently that what she thinks is hate is something quite the opposite."

"Maybe Mr. Higgins would suggest something," put in Georgianna.

"Do you think a man wants women to help him make love?" Claire responded. "Not much he does. He is no doubt scheming now how to get her and is waiting until he knows the hurt he gave her has been allayed somewhat."

"I have a scheme," said Julia, "which I am sure would work if we managed it right."

"Out with it," came the chorus.

"You know we've been talking of giving a play here and inviting the other campers and some of the people we know in the hotels. Let us choose a play which has a strong love scene.

"We'll persuade Dorothy to play the heroine, she'll be glad of a distraction that takes lots of work. Most any one of the men may have the opposite part in rehearsals and then right at the last minute we'll arrange for Guelph Higgins to take the part.

"Of course we'll get some role he's familiar with—that one act play he gave last winter as a curtain raiser would be just the thing."

"But that sounds crude," Claire interrupted. "How are we going to get Mr. Higgins to consent?"

"Tell him she's gone away," said Julia. "We don't mind a little lie in a good cause."

"Would you have them meet right there on the stage before the audience," Claire objected further, "and expect them to make real love in public? Why, they would both be angry at each other, and us, and everybody."

"Nothing so crude as that," said Julia. "I hadn't explained fully."

"My plan is to have Mr. Higgins arrive just in time for a final dress rehearsal on the afternoon of the day of the performance. Let the play run along to that thrilling scene where the hero climbs in a back window and catches the heroine in his arms just as she is going to faint.

"I'll manage him. He will be so taken up with the acting that he won't notice who it is he is embracing until he starts to kiss her,' and if she is feinting a faint properly she won't notice him until he actually does kiss her.

"By that time all the rest of us will have faded away. It seems to me that ought to fetch them."

"It's all very pretty indeed," said Margaret, "and very ingenious. How do people think up such clever things? But your plan has got to work perfectly. The least hitch would spoil it."

"I'm sure we could manage," said Julia, "and there's no harm in trying. We mustn't let any one into the secret except the man who is to play the hero at first. One of us has got to lend a husband. Now which shall it be?"

"It requires too much finesse for John to do it," Margaret spoke up.

"William can't act to save himself," said Georgianna.

"You may have Percival," said Claire Adams; "but it's your scheme, Julia, and I guess it's up to you to coach David up to the job."

"He'll do nicely," said Julia, "and I think Dorothy will get along better with him than with any of the others. I'm willing for I'll be so busy with this little scheme that I can spare him. So is it agreed?"

The others assented and the details of the plan were gone over carefully. The date was set for Wednesday of the following week. The idea of giving a play was accepted heartily by every one and Dorothy Millbank seemed pleased over the honor of being chosen for the heroine.

"This will be pretending at love, with no chance of serious results," she confided to Julia. "You're a lucky woman to have such a nice, dependable husband. He could play Anthony to the most alluring Cleopatra that ever was without danger, since he has a wife like you, dear."

The stage was set in the boathouse, which was adapted admirably for the purpose of a small theatre. The audience wouldn't have to sit quite on the stage, but nearly so. Anyway it was big enough for rehearsals and the excouncil of war had an idea that there might be no public performance after all.

That last rehearsal on which they counted so much in one way, might be the last of the play. It all depended on how the real drama entitled "The Actor and the Butterfly" ended.

The day on which the play was to be given came according to the calendar's schedule. Julia had sent a long telegram to Guelph Higgins the day before telling him about the play and saying the leading man had been taken ill and would he please come up that night and be on hand to help them out.

"There is no one here now whom you wouldn't care to meet," was one sentence of the message. Julia didn't consider that even a little lie. It was strictly true, she hoped.

"If you can come," her message ran, "you will arrive at Lake Placid in the morning. Please don't come up to the camp until the afternoon. We want the fact that we are to have a real actor in the play to be a complete surprise. David will meet you at the landing at 1 o'clock."

It was a 200 word message. That a woman should send it was a notable event, for if there is one time when a woman is sparing of her words it is when she has to pay for them. Julia felt that she was dissipating when she sent this telegram.

She didn't get an answer until late that night, and worried over the delay. But the reply was satisfactory. Guelph Higgins said he would come and he would follow instructions.

The young woman against whom this pleasant plot was directed had gone on her way unconscious of the plans others were making for her happiness. She took a deep interest in making the play a success. The others agreed that she made love beautifully, just as they had said about Guelph Higgins before.

The day before the one on which she was to make her debut as a star she went out for a row alone, and was gone so long that her cousin Margaret was afraid that something had happened to her. But she got back just a little late for dinner. She seemed to be so radiantly happy that late that night Julia Willson asked her what had put her in such good humor.

"Why, I have been communicating with nature," said Dorothy; "and art, too, for I went through my part just beautifully up on the shore where that dear little cove is. I feel sure of myself now and will do well tomorrow night, sure."

"You see how easy it is to pretend at love," said Julia.

"I think it would be easy not to pretend," said Dorothy, and she blushed as she said goodnight.

The stage in the boathouse was set for the final rehearsal. The members of the company were all in the improvised dressing rooms waiting for the call. Fortunately the play called for modern dress, so there had been little trouble about costume.

The back of the boathouse and the back of the stage were one and the same, and set right in the middle of this combination background was a real window. Through this the hero was to enter and find the heroine just about to faint.

The little play got under way and passed off with surprising smoothness. There was a lot of life in the acting, especially in Dorothy's.

Julia watched her anxiously.

"How will she take the climax?" she said to herself, and wondered if they had been wise to meddle.

David, she knew, had reached the camp with Guelph Higgins and they were already at the back of the boathouse ready to ascend the few wooden steps and arrive at centre stage dramatically through the window. Only one of them, of course. It had been David—today it was to be the other.

One by one the players left the stage as their turn came. Silently they passed through the wings and through a curtain to the improvised auditorium.

Julia, who had been in front all the time—she was the stage manager and bossed the job from there—motioned to them to move near the one door the place afforded. She backed quietly in the same direction.

Dorothy was delivering an impassioned monologue. As she concluded; "Will he, my lover, never come?" and got ready to faint, Guelph Higgins' head appeared in the window. It was time for all of them to vamoose. Julia quickened her steps. Just then Dorothy's voice, speaking naturally, stopped her.

"Come back here, good people," Dorothy was saying. This was not in the play. "Come back here, all of you."

As they filed back wonderingly, Guelph Higgins climbed through the window and stood beside her on the stage. Dorothy took his hand and marched him up to the footlights.

"Let me introduce you to my real love," she said simply.

Every one was most properly astounded, Julia most of all. None of them had a word to say.

"The joke is on you," Dorothy went on, "and this time it's a pleasant one and there's no hurt or ill feeling anywhere. I'm too happy. Never mind how it happened. That's our business, isn't it, Guelph? But we'll play our parts for you tonight with more sincerity than they ever were played before. It's my real debut too, for Guelph says he'll make a real actress out of me. And now let the play go on."

The rehearsal was concluded, and that night a select audience, gathered from Lake Placid and Mirror Lake and roundabout, saw Guelph Higgins act as he never acted before. And they saw a new leading lady and they acclaimed her with enthusiasm. Few in the audience knew how close art and realism were welded.

There was much curiosity among Julia and her fellow conspirators to learn how the result they had planned had been attained without their aid.

"Clever of them," said Julia, "to let our plot go almost to its culmination and then spring their plot. But all's well that ends well."

"I think it's mean of Dorothy not to tell us," said Georgianna.

"She'll pay us for our first plot against her," said Claire Adams, "and I don't blame her. I would do the same in her place."

"I am so glad it turned out as it did that I don't care how it happened," was Margaret Clarkson's comment.

Dorothy never told, and Guelph was mum, too. What did happen was this:

Guelph Higgins hadn't gone back to the city at all. He went to a hotel at the foot of the lake and stayed there brooding and seeking a way to win the woman who had beaten him at making love.

He hadn't made up his mind just what to do when Julia Wilson's long telegram, forwarded from his New York home, reached him. He knew Dorothy hadn't gone away and welcomed the chance the invitation gave him. His reply was long in arriving, because it had to be sent to New York first. Then on the afternoon of that day he had gone up the lake alone in a skiff to reconnoitre.

He had found Dorothy on the shore of the cove which she had described afterward to Julia as "dear" and "little." She was declaiming her part with unction. He knew the lines, of course, and sensed the situation, even to the friendly plot, in a moment.

He landed unobserved, played Indian through the trees and got to a point near Dorothy from which he could make an appropriate entrance. And when she cried, in the play, "Will he, my lover, never come?" why, just naturally there he was and he had her in his arms before she could say a word. Pretence became reality for both of them. But they played pretence to the end, as we have seen.

OUR SACRIFICE TO CARELESSNESS

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lence ignorantly—shuffling into the shambles almost as though its victims and their families enjoyed it.

"Typhoid, now tiresomely familiar, that notorious word—cost Japan only 187 men out of General Oku's force of [illegible] during the war with Russia, but it cost the reckless, heedless—yes, murderous—United States during its trumpery little squabble with Spain 20,738 cases, with 1580 deaths, out of a force of 107,973 men. Such invalidism in her armies would have defeated Japan within six months of the Russian conflict.

No one has yet dared to accuse Dr. Ditman of misrepresentation in another statement he makes. It is of such overwhelming importance, however, that it should take precedence over every item that is proposed for the increase of the national defense. Here it is verbatim:

"So slight has been the improvement in the principles of sanitary administration in the army, due to lack of proper system and education and suitably trained men, that should the United States engage in another war tomorrow this horrible record of the Spanish war would, without a shadow of doubt, be repeated."

And that calamity of war, crassly indifferent as Americans are to calamities that lie around the corner, is foreshadowed by the constant, slaughtering drain which typhoid makes upon the nation in time of peace—now, today.

The typhoid losses in sickness and death during the past year in New York, Pittsburg, Scranton and Philadelphia represent an economic sacrifice of $1,-758,000. In fact, a chart of the cities of the world showing typhoid cases and water supply pollution furnishes the direct, obvious evidence of their intimate relation. The prevention is ready to hand in every community—has been ready for years. The poisoning, guiltless so long as the cause was unknown, is now murder premeditated as guiltily as though the agents of those persistent deaths were deliberately put into the water the people drink.

More than one-third of the deaths in the United States that occur between the ages of 15 and 35 are due to tuberculosis. We pay a yearly tribute to that pallid Minotaur of 100,000 from the flower of the nation's youth. If the ratio continue, more than 10,000,000 Americans living today are doomed to its ravages.

New York city offers up 10,00 victims a year—a total of economic waste that, in value of citizenry, wages and sick expenses, amounts to $23,000,000. Maryland sacrifices $10,000,000 per year, Illinois $36,551,800 per year, the United States $330,000,000 per year.

Yet the means of prevention have been provided by science. The obligation unfulfilled is their utilization. Since 1886 the death rate of New York city has been diminished by 40 per cent—6,000 lives saved there annually. Popular education on the subject, adequate laws, due isolation, hygiene and the application of discoveries are means immediately available for stamping out the most widespread affliction Americans are heirs to.

In diphtheria, prior to the discovery of antitoxin, the mortality ranged from 40 to 50 per cent, since then it has dropped to 10 per cent. But, with the remedies now at command, no child should die of diphtheria.

Rabies, the most terrifying of diseases, has been practically eradicated from England by the simple preventive measure of muzzling all dogs; it is absolutely unknown in Australia because of the strict enforcement of the laws prohibiting the importation of dogs. And it has been epidemic recently in various sections of the United States because of the non-enforcement of existing laws or the refusal of committees to adopt regulations which shall be completely preventive of danger.

Malaria and its transportation by the mosquito of the genus anopheles are perfectly well understood, yet that painful and enervating disorder remains a constant clog upon society and commerce.

Among children's diseases, so-called, nearly all are absolutely preventable. In New York city in 1882, the scarlet fever death rate rose to 16 per 1,000. Quarantine was inaugurated in 1888, by 1906 that death rate had fallen to less than one per 10,000. Measles—every child must have measles, mothers used to say—claimed more than seven out of 10,000 for death in New York in 1882. Quarantine, begun in 1896, has reduced the mortality to less than three per 10,000.

From one-fourth to one-third of all deaths in the United States are those of children under one year of age. The greater proportion of these deaths, directly attributeable to faulty conditions of food and drink, are preventable. The betterment of city milk supplies has accomplished seeming miracles in the salvation of helpless childhood. In the city of New York where the deaths of children under one year of age was 240 per 1,000 in 1881, it was only 145 in 1903, and where in 1881 the mortality among children under five years was 56 per 1,000, it was lowered in 1903 to 55.

Out of 100,000 New York school children examined recently no less than 66 per cent were found to be in need of better nourishment and medical attention of some kind 40 per cent needed dental care—a consideration usually deemed of minor importance, yet one entailing most serious consequences throughout the nutritions and functions of the body; 38 per cent of the children had enlarged cervical glands; 31 per cent had defective sight; 18 per cent had enlarged tonsils, and 10 per cent had post-nasal growths. Nearly all those drawbacks and handicaps were preventable or removable.

Pneumonia, cerebro-spinal meningitis, trachoma—all of these are preventable under the light shed by modern science. Insanity, with its origins referable mainly to alcoholism and disease, is to a great extent preventable by education, moral reform and the control of causes that can be reached by authority.

There are 25,000 people in the United States who are needlessly blind.

Every year more than 500,000 wage earners—men, women and children—are killed or crippled as the result of accidents incurred in the employments by which they gain livlihood. There were not so many killed and wounded in the whole, terrible Russo-Japanese war. The direct loss to the country, according to the estimate made by George E. McNeill, president of the International Underwriters' association, amounts to $348,000,000 annually—one-third of the value of the entire foreign trade of the United States. And, from the figures available in Europe, more than one-half of all those accidents should never have occurred if only the nation had thrown about its working population safeguards no better than those which prevail abroad.

A partial realization by men and women whose occupations or philanthropy has brought them face to face with the more appalling of the conditions which prevail has led to agitation for the establishment of a national board of health. If it ever come—and if it never come—there still remains in Dr. Ditman's opinion the immediate necessity for the institution of a school of preventime medicine, where students shall be fitted for the administration of all departments required for the conservation of public well-being.

In a school such as he advocates, health officers, physicians, teachers, nurses, social workers, students and even legislators would be enabled to study at first hand the principles, with their application, of modern science as it bears upon school and tenement house hygiene, upon dangerous occupations, slaughter houses, water works, sewage disposal, public nuisances and compulsory sanitary methods.

One partial example of what may be accomplished by such a school is afforded by the British Sanitary institute in London. There may be studied all known devices for the prevention of disease and accident, with exhibits of means for improving sanitary conditions, as well as of other devices which experience has proved to be dangerous to health. The displays range from articles of personal and domestic hygiene to means of sewage disposal and the safeguards adapted to special trades, and even professions. The museum's collection is so widely utilized that 52 schools and institutions of London alone send pupils there to make studies of the exhibits.

In the school which Dr. Ditman proposes he suggests that instruction should be provided for the following groups of studies: Those preparing for the practice of medicine, for officers of health boards and sanitary inspectors; for sanitary engineering—civil, military and naval; for work as school and college teachers, school nurses and school inspectors; for work as officers of charity societies and institutions or as visiting nurses; for the ministry and for the work of legislators. And to that list he adds, significantly, the public.

"When we look around us," observes this profound student of existing and shameful conditions, "when we consider the human race, what it is and what it might be—its capacity for happiness and its cup of sorrow; the boon of glowing health and the thousand diseases and painful deaths—that soul must indeed be lethargic and callous which does not glow with an overpowering desire to elevate the good and annihilate the misery and, by utilizing our knowledge of the cause of all this sorrow for its further prevention, resolve that all these dead and suffering shall not have died and suffered in vain."