

THREE GRACES That LOVE MALE TWO



Jessie Wilcox Smith, as
sketched by Violet Oakley.

'Twas Perfectly Idyllic the Way These Women Lived in a Lonely Retreat, Till One of Them Indulged in a Real Romance

ONCE there were three artists, all beautiful of spirit, all inspired of dreams, who were able to live together—and they were women.

There are many things in the world that have been held unbelievable, and this is the first of them. The prosperity of artists is the second; and fairy tales are the third.

The name of one of the three artists was Elizabeth Shippen Green; the name of another is Violet Oakley; the name of the third is Jessie Wilcox Smith.

This is the fairy story about them, and it is, of course, entirely unbelievable; but any unbeliever who, up to and including June 3, 1911, had possessed the hardihood to brave the mystery of the enchanted wood in which those three princesses of dreams had buried themselves, would have seen with the eyes of conviction the blissful and undeniable fact.

After June 3 things would have been different—indeed, were different to all intruders in the shy domain of their secret Arcadia. For the most startling climax possible in fairyland had occurred on that very day. The fairy prince, who is always rearing and charging around in the environs of the Sleeping Wood, getting acquainted, came right in, and walked right up, and carried right off the first of the three charming hermits. So that Miss Green's name now is Mrs. Huger Elliott, which is the appellation the fairy prince goes by in Providence, R. I., where he hails from; and the pair of them are off to Europe, while the other two princesses of fancy's most real domain are left alone, to mingle rejoicings with their mourning.

THIS being a fairy story, which happens also to be very real, one can't surrender the charming items of detail to the impertinent fictions that are so often interwoven with plain fact. The two who have been left behind have rejoiced and have mourned, both at once. It would have been much easier and far more convincing to depict them as mourning and chagrined only. But it isn't so. They grieved over their loss of their sister Beauty of the Wood, because they felt that she was lost to the life that had been perfect in trinity and must be maimed in mere duet. Yet they rejoiced, for her sake, that she had found her fairy prince and was to live as a woman, including artists, has always longed to live it. You see, human nature is born to be selfish; but when you let it loose in fairyland, it can be a little unselfish, too. But the quiet, old-fashioned, brick-edged lawn, at Coggesla in the exquisite Cressheim valley near Philadelphia, did look forlorn after the wedding was over, and the bridal couple had gone, and the three hammocks under the little group of trees stretched taut and empty where once they had been occupied, every one and all at once. Amid the blooming scene of flowers and bending boughs, those hammocks almost looked the desolation of broken home ties. And within the house—where the dignified old mahogany stood formal and severe as mahogany should in fairyland and the Cressheim valley, and the homely fireplaces stared white as if on parade, which is the way fairyland fireplaces ought to stand—everything was very quiet and subdued, as though the fairy prince had made off with more than his share of the life and gaiety of that quaint corner



Mrs. Huger Elliott, Miss Violet Oakley and Miss Jessie Wilcox Smith.



Violet Oakley, as drawn by Elizabeth Shippen Green Elliott.

that can abide with a woman under her own roof-tree.

They were all for their art, in those earlier days; and they are all for their art still. Marriage need not take the newly wed Mrs. Elliott from her brushes and her pencil. But they were so much for their art that none of them admitted man as presenting even the possibility of proving a disturbing factor.

So they adopted no harsh rules toward this menace to celibacy. They tolerated him as part of the natural order of things; but, each in her own ambition, they relegated him to the level where he belonged, filling his picturesque and hair-raising place in creation and often qualified to sign checks in payment of illustrations for profitable magazine engagements.

Meanwhile, as they worked with a heart and a half apiece amid the surroundings they were making so congenial, every one of them adhering faithfully

to her peculiar line of work, their reputations grew apace, and incomes that might almost be called riches flowed into their coffers.

It was a ménage based on eminent common sense, with an adjustment of expenses that fell fairly on individual shoulders and a copartnership in comforts that let no one feel discrimination. Some day, when all mankind is composed of artists over whom some fairy godmother has waved her wand of altruism and fraternity—and sorority, too, of course—socialism will discover its model in the household at Coggesla in the enchanting Cressheim valley.

They were so united and so happy that, in spare hours—artists who are earning real money do have spare hours, like the rest of us; but not too many—they made sketches of one another. That was one of the delightful avocations of fair sisters in the olden days, when there was so much sisterly love in well-to-do families, and so little art that we wonder the sitters didn't scratch out the crooked eyes of their fond portrayers. With real artists, it becomes a truly thrilling task.

Think of having for your subject your dearest girl friend, whose innumerable charms of nature you know, down even to the seraphic magnanimity that is willing to let you wear her new earrings, if you want to; and then, of realizing that you can, and ought to, depict all those admirable attributes of her soul in the one, composite expression of her face. Only a woman artist can appreciate the idyl that

"Princess Cutup," a Flirt by Birth



Princess Elizabeth of Roumania

ELIZABETH is a Roumanian-Anglo-Saxon-German peach, with large wads of British wealth back of her, still belonging to her mother, the crown princess of Roumania, but certain to come to her in the ordinary course of royal events.

She is only 17, the prettiest princess in Europe—as pretty as her mother was at her age; and that saying has power still to stir the imagination of every connoisseur of beauty across the Atlantic.

She just budded, and went ahead blooming. In the picturesque backwoods of Roumania while the sons of the officers who had given their hearts for a smile of her mother's almost broke their necks to get a similar smile from exquisite little Elizabeth. She wasn't stingy with them, for life is rather simple there; but they all knew the smile could mean nothing more, even as their handsome fathers knew her mother's arch badinage and gay laughter when she came as a bride from England permitted no trespass beyond the bounds of respect, subject homage.

She was one of those pearls in a golden setting that were passed over by more ambitious royalty until young George, only 22, grasped the momentous fact that he was of an age, a rank and a kingdom precisely suited to her. He made a dive for the pearl and won her in a breath. Now they're to be married, and if the king business only keeps on a paying basis in irritable little Greece they ought to be happy ever afterward.

Maybe it won't. Every other year or so the restless Greeks, who seem to have wholly forgotten the fables of their Aescop, run up and down the streets, as a midshipman, I was being punished for stealing prunes, and all you're paying me for the work of being royal figurehead here is \$200,000. But it's twenty-eight years since I took a short chance for big money in the American grain markets, and I salted down a few millions then which I've invested in American stocks and bonds, and those industrious democrats sweating out the dividends and interest. As soon as you can arrange to elect your friend president I'll move out and start a Greek wine business in Paris, for I've got a large family and I'm willing to earn my living, although out of practice now.

Then the heroic patriots perceive that their king doesn't care a hoot for them, and respects him accordingly. He is the son of the late king of Denmark, and his wife is a granddaughter of Emperor Nicholas of Russia. They have five sons and one daughter, and grandchildren tumbling up as fast as prolific nature can provide them. So King George has never been altogether in fun when he declared he was going into the wine trade, if need arose. And young Prince George, although his rank in Greece is precisely what that of the present prince of Wales was in Great Britain when King Edward VII was alive, isn't so sure of having a



Prince George, heir presumptive to the Greek throne.

large patrimony for all the American investments of the king. But he is blood cousin to nearly every ruler and prince in Europe, as his promised bride is on her own account.

Pretty Elizabeth's mother was Marie of Edinburgh, her father being the immensely wealthy duke of Edinburgh. She is a cousin of the kaiser's and of King George of England, and the puzzle maker who tried to decide which royalty she isn't related to would go crazy within half an hour.

Her private fortune was so immense that she could bear costs of entertainment that flattered the vanity of her subjects, and Elizabeth, her daughter, grew up in an atmosphere of brightness and good cheer that might have spoiled the daughter of any other mother. As it is, Elizabeth has only had a chance to peep into the romances that can surround a princess when she is whisked into the responsibilities of marriage and under conditions of rank that make her only one remove from being a crown-princess herself.

And that, as her shrewd mother observed while arranging the match with young Prince George, is the best thing that can happen to both of them.



Mrs. Huger Elliott as seen by Violet Oakley.

comes of an existence affording episodes like that.

Miss Oakley's portraits of Miss Green and Miss Smith were remarkable triumphs of the art that can seize the inmost spirit and put it honestly to the stranger eye. Miss Green's achievement in picturing Miss Oakley seemed to convey the remarkable faculty for concentration and the reserve of mental power that have characterized Miss Oakley's life and work.

These incidents are only hints of the life the happy trio led amid their beautiful seclusion, irradiated by checks little and big, as their work earned them from week to week and from year to year.

All three of these women artists had, from the very beginning of their careers—before even their careers had been more than hoped for—the tie that binds together those whose instruction has been gained in the same studio, for they have all been students at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and, later, they all studied under Howard Pyle.

Miss Oakley received some early instruction under Carroll Beckwith, at the Art Students' League, but soon went to France and studied under Raphael Collin and Aman Jean in the Academie Montparnasse. The next summer found her at Rye, in Sussex, England, at work under the direction of Charles Lassar; and the following winter brought her to the Pennsylvania Academy, for a full working year under Miss Beaux and Joseph De Camp, while she owes to Henry Thurn there her first work in composition. After that academy training, she had the courage to open her studio.

But, even then, she felt the need of the technical knowledge that comes out of the experience of practical illustrators. She became a student of Mr. Pyle, and it was he who urged her to try her hand at stained glass. Her decorations of the Church of All Angels, in New York, were the seal of success upon her career.

COLLABORATORS IN ILLUSTRATION

Miss Oakley has been always conspicuous for her grasp of color, and her talents have led her naturally to a number of artistic triumphs in the designing of windows, the decoration of interiors such as make a masterpiece of the great hall in the residence of Charles Karam, in Philadelphia, and the magnificent paintings which ornament the Pennsylvania State capitol at Harrisburg. There is a splendor and a force of conception in her compositions that would belie the sex of their creator if it did not show the grace and exquisite taste of the woman in every thought behind them and every line of their execution.

Miss Smith studied in the School of Design for Women in Philadelphia and worked hard, for two years, in the classes of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. She plunged at once into actual advertising with the illustrations of the big magazines, and her range of work has been very broad. Her style is even more careful and vigorous than Miss Oakley's, although it has been remarked that she does not display more solidity of treatment.

Of late years her peculiar ability has been displayed in the design of children's books, and she who most of all, has given to the modern world the pictures of fairyland as children ought to know it, and no one can surmise, better than she and her friends at Coggesla, how many of those fairies and children of lovely fancy and reality have grown right up there in the mysterious shadows and lovely sunlight of the Cressheim vale.

Miss Green's favorite medium was long the pen and ink that makes for so much freshness and accuracy in all artistic development. She, too, has been a favorite illustrator of the stories children love, and was the hand that depicted the exquisite scenes in Carmen Sylva's "Fairy Tales."

QUICKLY EARNED SUCCESS

Three years were spent by Miss Green in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, one in the classes for the antique and two in the life classes. She learned much from her teacher there, Thomas P. Anschutz, and was more than qualified to reap riches of instruction from the lectures she attended afterward, by Mr. Pyle, on the work of the illustrator. She had just six weeks of a trip abroad and came back to do such work as she could obtain, in advertising and in magazine illustration. She found that her individuality and her range of observation rapidly brought her work into extensive demand, until she was overworked with orders from publishers, which left her all the happier until the time arrived when the greatest happiness of all comes into a woman's life, the time when she is married to a man who is a man, and who long and long for the fairy prince to turn up, ever casts eyes upon his gallant figure; and equally strange how liable he is to appear when she doesn't expect him, and how quickly she is able to turn her crocheting. The Coggesla trio didn't care a single pin; and when the admirers did arrive, they were always taken on suspicion as to their true right and title to the rank qualifying them to recognition.

But when Mr. Elliott appeared there was a realization that he surely did have valid claims, which were proved to be completely genuine when he turned out to be director of the Rhode Island School of Design. There, indeed, was a fit suitor for a woman artist, one who could understand, sympathize and appreciate.

The engagement was formally announced last autumn, and everybody wondered how Miss Oakley and Miss Smith would take the romance that was to remove to Providence one of their close-hearted trio. Well, the good fairy who had watched over them all those other years never quit her duties, she inspired them to be the bride's attendants, when the ceremony was performed that took her from them. And so the impossible tale of happiness reached its natural, charming end as such stories do in the books the girls make pictures for, with love in plenty and with every one happy as can be.

But it is a curious story to happen in the realities of the twentieth century, isn't it? Can it be that we are actually making real the fair romances our hearts have only imagined?