

FROM WINDOW TO WINDOW

By CICYLY ALLEN

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The woman who writes was not obliged to go to the office every day. She went principally because she liked the great, noisy building, with its rush of hurrying feet, the dramatic entrances and exits of newsgatherers and even the hammering of the stereotypers. This was her life, and it helped her to forget.

She lived far up on the heights in a white stone apartment house, whose entrance was gorgeous in upholstery and palms and whose windows overlooked the glistening river. The elevated trains whirled her through the tenement life of the great city, and she always laid down her morning paper when she reached the point where the windows of the dull brick houses almost touched the iron railing of the road.

So it happened that there came a morning when the woman who writes leaned forward in sudden wonder. In one of the dullest, dingiest tenements a window shone out like a solitary star in an overcast sky. It had been washed



SHE TOSSED INTO THE WINDOW A BULKY, OBLONG PACKAGE.

and polished till it gleamed like French plate, and between the prim ruffles of an old fashioned dimity curtain peered a face in whose soft, blue gray eyes hopefulness and homesickness struggled for supremacy.

The train had slowed up for a curve, and she studied the quaint picture hungrily till the cars swept round the bend. The next morning she watched for the clean window, the dimity curtains and the sweet English face and the next morning and the next.

The figure in the window was not always idle. Once the supple hands were polishing tinware, which, to the woman who writes, recalled a faraway farmhouse, where rows of milk pans once gleamed in the sunshine. Following an unaccountable impulse, she nodded cheerily. The blue gray eyes opened wide in friendly surprise, the flush on the fresh English face deepened, and from that day the morning greeting was exchanged regularly.

The summer quivered and shimmered into fall, and fall tossed its smart colors and sparkling hours into the outstretched arms of winter. The winds howled and the storms raged at

the tenement window, now closed and stuffed about with bits of rags. The blue gray eyes still smiled their greeting across a row of scarlet geraniums to the woman behind the car window, who, after the train had swept round the curve, would lean back half wearily and weave romances of the life behind the white curtains and crimson blossoms. She could see the English husband coming in from his work. He would be strong and straight and young, of course, very gentle and tender with the girl who had come to him from across the seas. Wherefore the happy lovelight in the blue gray eyes if all these things were not so? Then a frugal supper, smoking hot, would be placed on the table. The teapot would be of brown and yellow stone, like the one at the farm. But the woman who writes never mounted the narrow stairs leading to the tenement room. She had been disillusioned so often.

One morning in early spring she caught her breath as the train slowed up before the window. No face peered between the ruffled curtains. A friendly hand had bowed the shutters to the glaring sunlight. That afternoon she hurried to a shop where all sorts of dainty baby garments are sold. When she had selected a piece of flannel richly embroidered and a robe of sheer linen, edged with filmy lace, she actually felt angry at the careless fashion in which the clerk tossed the small garments to the wrapper. It seemed almost like a desecration. As she carried her package to the waiting hansom she said to herself:

"It is perfectly absurd, considering their station in life. But how her eyes will shine!"

She could not send her gift, for she knew neither name nor exact address, but she waited and watched. At last one morning the shutters were thrown back, and in a high backed rocking chair, close to the window, sat the little English wife, her blue gray eyes shining proudly above a long roll of white flannel, topped by a very small and very red face.

Then the woman who writes did a remarkable thing. She took deliberate, careful aim and tossed into the tenement window a bulky, oblong package. For more than a week she had carried that package back and forth every day, waiting for this very opportunity, and yet her arms felt strangely empty.

All day long between the woman who writes and her work came the proud mother light in those blue gray eyes. Wherever she turned it haunted her till her pen lost its cunning and her heartstrings thrilled with a vague longing and unrest.

When night came to her brilliantly lighted parlors, where clever men and women gathered to laugh at her witty sayings and to drink the punch she brewed with cunning hand, she was the gayest of them all. Never had she looked more queenly in her clinging gown of scintillating jet; never had the clever words come so easily to her smiling lips. She would forget it all—the narrow, pinching life in the tenement, the red geraniums, the ruffled curtains—yes, even that tantalizing mother love in the other woman's eyes.

But when they had all gone, the men who admired her and the women who feared her, the memory of the blue gray eyes came back with insistent strength. She turned out the lights, leaving only the dull crimson glow from the tulip shaped lamp, and under that she sat long and silently, her broad, white forehead resting on her jeweled hand.

When she rose, a pink flush was creeping over the pearl gray heavens. The other woman was doubtless awake, too, intent on her husband's early breakfast. The woman who writes glanced round the room. Here were drooping roses, there three or four empty punch glasses and yonder a small bronze tray piled high with dull

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white ashes. Then she crossed to her desk and wrote:

My Dear Robert—It has all been a wretched mistake, this thinking that we could get along without each other. I have been a little slow in finding it out but now I am sure. Do not think I have scored a failure and then have turned to you. My work never looked so promising; but, oh, the emptiness of it all! You said once I must come to you. Well, I am coming, dear—coming because I can't stay away any longer. I am writing to mother to send Rob—your Rob and mine. Just think! I've not seen him for six months, and you've not seen him, oh, it must seem like years. I've been selfish, Robert, but I never saw it that way—until today. Cable me just one word—"Come." I will understand. Yours,
EMILY.

She addressed the letter with a feverish hand to Paris.

When she threw open the window, she saw a workman in overalls and blouse hurrying toward the city. Perhaps the little Englishwoman was standing in her doorway watching her stalwart husband off to work, with his kisses fresh on her lips and her babe cradled in her arms. And on the lips of the woman who writes trembled a happy smile.

Some Prices in 1815.

From an old journal that was kept in 1815 by a merchant of Oswego it would appear that it cost the citizens of that city something to live in those days. Anthracite coal was unknown, and for illuminating purposes candles and whale oil were used. Salt in those days was as much a necessity as now, but it cost \$1.25 per bushel, or \$5.38

per barrel. Whisky was worth \$1 gallon, rum \$2.75 per gallon, tea \$2 pound, corn \$1 a bushel, tobacco 26 cents a pound, sugar 26 cents a pound, loaf sugar 31 cents a pound, cambric \$1 a yard, dimity \$1 per yard, molasses \$1.44 per gallon, raisins 38 cents per pound, shirting 38 cents a yard, potatoes 44 cents per bushel, and wheat \$1.50 per bushel, red flannel 88 cents per yard, oil \$1 per gallon.

The drinker and the smoker had good time in those early days, and the family man had it not nearly so good. Now, happily, whisky and tobacco are more and necessities cost very much less. Dress goods and foods can now be used freely by those who, living in 1815, would have had a call dress once in several years and sugar but very seldom. The "old days" were not as good as these.—Retail Grocers' Advocate.

A Philosopher.

Rivers—What do you do when you wake up in the night with jumping toothache? Brooks—I try to be thankful it isn't galloping consumption.

Trying to Forget It.

Mifkins—Hello, old man! What do you think of that cigar I gave you last night? Bifkins—Don't ask me to think I'm trying to forget it.

Let those who complain of having work undertake to do nothing. If it does not convert them, nothing will.