



THE GUEST OF QUESNAY

By Booth Tarkington

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CHAPTER IX.

MISS ELLIOTT'S expression, when I turned to observe the effect of the intruder upon her, as found to be one of brilliant delight. With glowing eyes, her lips parted in a breathless ecstasy, she gazed upon the newcomer, evidently fearing to lose a syllable that fell from his lips. Moving closer to me, she whispered urgently: "Keep him—oh, keep him!" To detain him, for a time at least, was my intention, though my motive was not merely to afford her pleasure. The advent of the young man had produced a singularly disagreeable impression upon me, quite apart from any antagonism I might have felt toward him as a type. Strange suspicions leaped into my mind, formless—in the surprise of the moment—but rapidly groping toward definite outline, and following hard upon them crept a tingling apprehension. "Now, about how much," he asked slowly, "would you expect to get for a pitcher that size?" "It isn't mine," I informed him. "You don't tell me it's the little lady's—what?" He bowed genially



"The name you'd see on 'em is Oil Policy," and favored Miss Elliott with a stare of warm admiration. "Pretty a thing as I ever see," he added. "Oh," she cried, with an ardor that choked her slightly, "thank you!" "Oh, I meant the pitcher," he said hastily, evidently nonplused by a gratitude so fervent. The incorrigible damsel cast down her eyes in modesty. "And I had hoped," she breathed, "something so different!" I could not be certain whether or not he caught the whisper. I thought he did. At all events, the surface of his easy assurance appeared somewhat disarranged, and perhaps to restore it by performing the rites of etiquette he said: "Well, I expect the smart thing now is to pass the cards, but mine's in my grip, an' it ain't unpacked yet. The name you'd see on 'em is Oil Policy." "Oil Policy," echoed Miss Elliott, turning to me in genuine astonishment. "Mr. Earl Percy," I translated. "Oh, rapturous!" she cried, her face radiant. "And won't Mr. Percy give us his opinion of my art?" He turned again to the easel, and as he examined the painting thereon at closer range amazement overspread his features. However, pulling himself together, he found himself able to reply and with great gallantry: "Well, only I think them little hands cud 'a done all that rough work!" I saved the girl's feelings by entering into the conversation with a question, which I put quickly: "You intend pursuing your historical researches in the neighborhood?" "Them fairy tales I handed you about ole Jeanne d'Arc an' William the Conqueror," he said, "say, they must 'a' made you sore afterwards!" "On the contrary, I was much interested in everything pertaining to your too brief visit," I returned. "I am even more so now." "Well, m' friend"—he shot me a side-long, distrustful glance—"keep yer eyes open." "That is just the point," I laughed, with intentional significance, for I meant to make Mr. Percy talk as much as I could. To this end, remembering that specimens of this kind are most indiscreet when carefully engaged, I added, stimulating his own manner: "Eyes open and doors locked; what?" "I guess they ain't much need o' lockin' your door," he retorted darkly; "not from what I saw when I was in your studio." He should have stopped there, for the hit was palpable and justified, but in his resentment he overdid it. "You needn't be doin' anybody's business," he cried, "if you

young Teller; Whoosh! An' 'm the licks of the clo'es I saw hangin' on the wall," he continued, growing more nettled as I smiled cheerfully upon him. "I don't b'lieve you got any worries comin' about them neither." "I suppose our tastes are different," I said, letting my smile broaden. "There might be protection in that." His stare at me was protracted to an unseemly length before the sting of this remark reached him. It penetrated finally, however. "As I tell the little dame here," he said, pitching his voice higher and affecting the plaintive, "I make no passes at a friend o' hers—not in front o' her, anyways. But when it comes to these here ole, ancient curiosities"—he cackled again loudly—"well, I guess them clo'es I see that day kin hand it out 'n' anything they got in the museum. 'Look here,' I says to the waiter, 'these must be's left over 'm ole Jeanne d'Arc herself,' I says. 'Talk about yer relics,' I says. 'Whoosh! I like 'r died!' He laughed violently and concluded by turning upon me with a contemptuous flourish of his stick. "You think I d'know what makes you so raw?" The form of repartee necessary to augment his ill humor was, of course, a matter of simple mechanism for one who had not entirely forgotten his student days in the quarter, and I delivered it airily, though I shivered inwardly that Miss Elliott should hear. "Everything will be all right if when you dine at the inn you'll sit with your back toward me." To my shamed surprise this roustabout wit drew a nervous, silvery giggle from her, and that completed the work with Mr. Percy, whose face grew scarlet with anger. "You're a hot one, you are!" he sneered, with shocking bitterness. "You're quite the teaser, ain't ye, 'long's yer lady friend is lokkin' on; I guess they'll be a few surprises comin' in your way before long. I praps I cudn't give ye one 'now 'f I had a mind to." "Pshaw!" I laughed and, venturing at hazard, said, "I know all you know." "Oh, you do?" he cried scornfully. "I reckon you might set up an' take a little notice, though, if you knowed 'at I know all you know!" "Not a bit of it!" "No? Maybe you think I don't know what makes you so raw with me; maybe you think I don't know who ye've got so thick with at this here Pigeon house; maybe you think I don't know who them people are?" "No, you don't. You have learned," I said, trying to control my excitement, "nothing. Whoever hired you for a spy lost the money. You don't know anything." "I don't!" And with that his voice went to a half shriek. "Maybe you think I'm down here fr my health; maybe you think I come out fr a pleasant walk in the woods right now; maybe you think I ain't seen no other lady friend o' yours besides this'n to-day, and maybe I didn't see who was with her—yes, an' maybe you think I d'know no other times he's be'n with her; maybe you think I ain't be'n layin' low over at Dives; maybe I don't know a few real names in this neighborhood! Oh, no, maybe not?" "You know what the maitre d'hotel told you, nothing more." "How about the name—Oliver Saffren?" he cried fiercely, and at that, though I had expected it, I uttered an involuntary exclamation. "How about it?" he shouted, advancing toward me triumphantly, shaking his forefinger in my face. "Hey? That stings some, does it? Sounds kind o' like a false name, does it? Got ye where the hair is short that time, didn't it? Your side's where the trouble is. That's what's eatin' into you. An' I tell you flatfoot you're gittin' rough 'ith me and playin' Charley the Show-off in front o' yer lady friends 'il all go down in the bill. These people ye've got so chummy with—they'll pay fr it all right, don't you shed no tears over that!" "You couldn't by any possibility," I said deliberately, with as much satire as I could command—"you couldn't possibly mean that any sum of mere money might be a salve for the injuries my unkind words have inflicted." He seemed upon the point of destroying me physically, but, with a slight shudder, controlled himself. Stepping close to me, he thrust his head forward and measured the emphasis of his speech by his right forefinger upon my shoulder as he said: "You paint this in yer pitchers, m'dear friend—they's just as much law in this country as they is on the corner o' Twenty-third street an' 'R' avenue! You keep out of the way of it or you'll git runned over!" Delivering a final tap on my shoulder as a last warning he wheeled off upon his heel, addressed Miss Elliott briefly, "Glad to know you, lady," and, striking into the bypath by which he had approached us, was soon lost to sight. The girl faced me excitedly. "What is it?" she cried. "It seemed to me

you incited him deliberately. "I did." "You expected to make him angry?" "Yes." "Oh, I thought so!" she exclaimed breathlessly. "I know there was something serious underneath. It's about Mr. Saffren." "It is serious indeed, I fear," I said and, turning to my own easel, began to get my traps together. "I want you to go to see Mrs. Harman at once and tell her not to leave Quesnay for at least two days. As for myself, I must go now to look up Kersey and Oliver Saffren." The girl started manfully upon her journey. I stared after her for a moment or more, watching the pretty brown dress flashing in and out of shadow among the rattled groceries. Then I picked up my own pack and set out for the inn. As I went through the woods that day, breathless with haste and curious fears, my brain became suddenly, unaccountably light with a dream I had had two nights before. I had not recalled this dream on waking; the recollection of it came to me now for the first time. Yet I had been thinking so constantly of Mrs. Harman that there was nothing extraordinary in her worthless ex-husband being part of it. But, and yet, looking back upon that last, hurried walk of mine through the forest, I see how strange it was that I could not quit remembering how in my dream I had gone motoring up Mount Pilatus with the man I had seen so pitifully demolished on the Versailles road two years before—Larabee Harman.

(To be continued.)

Hotel Arrivals.

The Nash—D. H. Griswold and family, Gordon, Neb.; C. H. Carr, Portland; F. W. Bureh, Pueblo; J. C. Shafer, Portland; A. B. Cole, C. A. Specher, Artesia, N. M.; G. W. Morris, Marietta, O.; Dr. B. F. Howell, W. Barnes, Oakland; H. C. Crane, New York; G. N. Whitecraft and wife, Spokane; O. T. Woodruff, W. Moran, C. M. Lobbert, San Francisco; J. G. Kleiner, H. C. Stevens, C. A. Malbone, J. D. Vincent, Jr., C. R. Arundell, Portland. The Moore—A. J. Jones, Portland; W. Barnes, Dr. B. F. Howell, Oakland; Mrs. Queenie Fer Don, New York; R. O. Whitney, Central Point; S. S. Churchill, San Francisco; E. W. Anderson, Blue Lodge; L. J. Courie, Seattle; H. E. Weeks, Santa Paula; D. T. Mitchem, Los Angeles; J. A. Bothwell, city; L. J. Starr, Delta, Idaho; W. J. Thompson, Jr., Medford; J. W. Lees, Portland; W. A. Wright, Spokane; K. P. Nimp, Ashland.

TWO LIVES SAVED. I wish to certify that my husband was suffering for a long time from stomach trouble and a complication that various physicians declared to be fatal. He then consulted Dr. T. Wah Hing at No. 725 J street, Sacramento, who cured the trouble entirely. This was seven years ago and there has been no return of the complaint. My little boy, Virgil Strickland, was shot through the stomach and intestines and the doctors said he could not live unless he was operated on, and Dr. Hing cured him without a knife. That was in September, 1907, and the little boy is enjoying good health ever since. We formerly resided at No. 215 18th street, and have since moved to No. 3307 East avenue, Oak Park. I cheerfully recommend Dr. Hing's services to anyone needing medical attention. (Signed) MRS. S. E. STRICKLAND. I verify the above statement. L. STRICKLAND. January 14th, 1910.

EMPLOYMENT and Business Chances

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