

AS OTHERS SEE US

BEING THE DIARY OF A
CANADIAN DEBUTANTE

By "GOOSEQUILL"

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: As Others See Us: Being the Diary of a Canadian Debutante

Date of first publication: 1915

Author: W.H.P. (William Henry Pope) Jarvis (as Goosequill) (1876-1944)

Date first posted: Feb. 3, 2022

Date last updated: Feb. 3, 2022

Faded Page eBook #20220206

This eBook was produced by: Iona Vaughan, Pat McCoy & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>



“Oh! the glory of it—to rescue the man I loved.” (See page 298)

AS OTHERS SEE US

BEING THE DIARY OF A
CANADIAN DEBUTANTE

By "GOOSEQUILL"



TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LTD., AT ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE
MCMXV

COPYRIGHT, CANADA, 1915, BY
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED

To

MY MOST PATIENT CRITIC

PREFACE

The purpose of this story is to form some impression of salient facts and tendencies in Canadian life, and to show its strength, and through its strength, its weakness. So I planned before the gods ruled for war, and the soldiers began to write history with the sword which, despite Lytton, is proved infinitely mightier than the pen.

However, here is the book, and I hope the reader will not be sorry to meet again old friends. Elsie has—though she does not intend it—a serious purpose.

The English have never truly understood the Colonial.

In May of last year (1914) a writer in the *Times* said that he had lived in Canada for a number of years, and was satisfied that Canada was becoming Americanized, because the Canadian talked with an American accent. It was possible that what he saw and regarded with alarm is what I have here drawn in gentle satire. Society is our bane; and a new society is certain to be, in many respects, intolerable. The craze for, and hunt after, society is not limited to any country; it is a world-wide weakness. The Snob is—as Thackeray showed us—ubiquitous.

As to my references to the Spread-Eagle citizens of the United States, I have had access to two books, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*, by John H. Stark, Boston, published by himself, and *The True History of the American Revolution*, by Sydney George Fisher, (Lippincott). These are remarkable books; and a knowledge of the contents of either would go far to enable an Englishman to measure the Canadian's attitude towards the United States. The story these books tell parallels that set forth in the press, as shown by the onslaught of German hordes into Belgium. The outstanding difference is that whereas the Germans cry "Kultur" the Yankees yelled "Liberty." The Archives of the United States tell of 30,000 cases of outrage against the Loyalists which, I fancy, is a greater number than can be laid at the door of the Huns.

The books mentioned are significant of a popular move. That this move should have originated in the "Land of the Free" is remarkable. That popular appreciation should have been held from the Canadian so long is deplorable. That recognition has been withheld from Canadians is shown by the after-dinner speech made a few years ago at New York, by a noble Lord. The

gentleman I refer to is reported to have said in effect: "The Revolutionists would have been unworthy of their ancestors had they not taken up arms." The implied inference is that the Loyalists were unworthy of their ancestors.

I do not claim the right to speak for any one but myself, but as all my ancestors were in America before the Revolution, few have a better claim. Canada is peopled by a sound stock, somewhat lacking in philosophy. It is an important asset to civilization and, as has been proved in Flanders, an heroic constituent of the British Empire. But our people need a truer appreciation of proper values; when they have this, they will be second to none among the peoples of the world. But at present we do not lack that virtue which finds reward within itself.

The reader is asked to believe that this book was designed and largely written before August, 1914.

GOOSEQUILL.

Toronto, November 1st, 1915.

AS OTHERS SEE US

BEING THE DIARY OF A CANADIAN DEBUTANTE

DECEMBER 15TH.

Mumsie is a dear, and I am going to put all about her in this diary. Mumsie says I am an old-fashioned girl (how little she knows me!), but I'll be old-fashioned enough anyhow to keep a diary. It will be useful to read about the people, and parties, and things I'm going to enjoy. Yes, enjoy is the word. Dances and afternoon teas, and those things the rich people do, I'm going to have my share of. I'm glad I'm a girl, especially when one has such a good aunt as Mumsie. She was nothing more than a friend of my mother—the mother I never knew. And, I am sure, the best of friends!

Just to think I am really to spend a winter in this great Canadian City! I shall call it the City of Mammon. After my village home that seems the only name for it, and there is evidence of wealth everywhere. I almost gasp when I think of what some things I see must have cost, the silk dresses, the great hats with ostrich plumes, the motors. And I must confess to being dazed when I came out of the station. The bells clanged so loudly and the engines puffed as if they wished to specially frighten me; but they didn't, that is, not much. Perhaps it is that the station held the noises in under its great, glass roof; but the noise and the buffeting, and the many people in a hurry made a strange confusion. At home the station roof is the vault of Heaven, so that we score sometimes in our village. And when we got into the street the cars, the motors, and the lights flashing here and there—it was all so fairy-like and heavenly that—Oh! it is good to be alive.

Mumsie has given me such a big room with an outlook over the street. I feel almost as Cinderella must have felt when at the Prince's Ball before the midnight bell. I wonder if I shall be asked to any balls! But of course I shall. If Uncle should try to be an old fogey—but he won't.

That is enough to write about for the first day. No, I must put down more about Mumsie. When she met me at the station and took me in her arms and kissed me, it seemed as if her heart opened and I fell right in; and when she spoke I felt as if I had known her voice all my life. She had a hundred things to ask about myself: how she thought of them all I can't imagine. She is full of fun, with lots of amusing stories, or at least she seems to make fun out of almost anything. She has reddish hair—a poet would no doubt call it golden—which she does like the Queen, and her voice when she gets talking is

generally loud, though the louder it gets the nicer it sounds, it is so cheery. My uncle, her husband, Mr. George Somers, is a largish man with roast-beef cheeks and gray hair, though he is not the least bit old looking. He has a straight nose, a full and polished forehead, and a cropped, white moustache. He is a lawyer, and has a voice for humbugging with. I like him, and there is a twinkle in his eye.

P.S. I am so happy!

DECEMBER 16TH.

I looked out of my window this morning and the trees glistened prettily in the sunlight. I could not help thinking of the Fairy Godmother. But I mustn't think these thoughts. I am a grown-up person of eighteen. Though it doesn't matter what I write here, as I am never going to show this diary to anybody, not even to the beloved Mumsie.

After breakfast we, that is, Mumsie and I, set out on a shopping expedition. I knew them all by name: Horace's, Lewis's, and Carlisle's; I had at home pored over their advertisements so often. And just to think I was really going to visit them and buy lots of things! Dad had given me one hundred dollars, saying I must dress myself properly. One hundred dollars! I have never before had so much money to spend. Poor Dad! he must find it so dull living in the country, and his patients are such poor pay.

We went to Lewis's first and bought an evening dress and the duckiest little hat that ever was, and after that we went to Horace's. This I knew was really the fashionable shop. Mumsie said we were to buy a suit; she said I would need one. Indeed, I already felt I was shabby, and was sorry I had not put on my new hat at Lewis's and had my old one sent home.

I gasped as we entered Horace's, the dresses were all so grand, and there were so many ladies present. No person paid any attention to us at first; but when they did they looked at Mumsie first and then at me, and their eyes (I think) lingered on me.

After we had made our purchases, Mumsie took me to a ribbon counter, not far away from a most beautifully dressed woman. Her ermine stole did not hide a diamond and sapphire brooch at her throat. Her blue velvet suit was in the latest fashion. She was large and dark. Her face was rounded, and lofty eyebrows made her eyes appear prominent. A cold, deliberate manner gave the impression of absolute control. She bowed to Mumsie and my heart went into my mouth. I am silly to be so fluttered and shy. The strange lady advanced and held her hand out to Mumsie.

“How do you do Mrs. Somers? How is Mr. Somers? I hope you are all well.”

“Quite well, thank you,” replied Mumsie, not too genially I thought.

“You will take a hand in our Ragamuffins’ Feast, won’t you?”

“Certainly, I would not miss for the world,” answered Auntie.

Mumsie’s manner was more formal than I had yet known her use, and it struck me the lady had something on her mind.

“I suppose you are doing your Christmas shopping early out of consideration for the help.”

“No, not exactly,” replied Mumsie, “I am helping my friend here. Elsie, let me introduce you to Mrs. Lien. This is my niece, Elsie Travers, who is to spend the winter with me. She is a debutante.”

Mrs. Lien flashed me a critical glance, and said rather grandly: “I have no doubt Miss Travers will enjoy herself. It must be very interesting getting her outfit.”

When she had gone I wondered whether her manner had wounded or gladdened me. I had received something of a shock.

At dinner I said to Uncle: “Who is Mrs. Lien?”

Uncle repeated the question with a smile growing on his lips and the merriest twinkle in his eyes.

“My dear, one would think you were Mrs. Grundy herself,” laughed Mumsie, “by the severe way in which you asked the question.”

“Mrs. Lien is a Yankee; so we know nothing of her antecedents. She is the wife of Stephen Lien, who on his part,” said Uncle slowly “is the son of his father.”

I suppose I showed I was puzzled.

“Mr. Lien, senior,” continued Uncle, “was an English attorney who came to this country in the forties and accommodated the farmers by lending them money.”

“How very considerate of him,” I claimed, while Auntie looked oddly at Uncle.

“Yes, he used consideration and discrimination also, for he was a master hand at selecting those farmers whose lands were good, and who were

themselves less capable.”

There was now a curious smile, cynical I think it should be called, on Uncle’s lips. I did not know what to say, so I said nothing, which I have decided is sometimes the wisest thing to say.

“He soon owned the farm,” continued Uncle.

“That is a very clever way of making money—” I began.

“Elsie!” cried Mumsie in horror.

What had I said to startle her?

“There was a period of bad crops,” said Uncle, reflectively. “A humane man who would lend money to farmers, a man with a heart and a conscience would be a godsend in a new country, but unfortunately Lien pere was not a humane man, and his son, and his son’s wife, and their bright boy, Charlie _____”

“Hush!” said Auntie.

I wonder why!

“Elsie,” said Uncle gravely, “we owe a debt of gratitude to our forefathers. This land is to-day drunk with prosperity, yet every foot of our broad acres, these miles and miles of fertile fields, have been won by the sweat of toiling manhood, supported by the tears of trusting, oftentimes gentle, womanhood. I am afraid the fruit of all these sacrifices are not falling into the hands of those who are worthiest of them.”

“That might be said of any land,” objected Mumsie. “I suppose all land was wild once upon a time.”

“In Europe the land was cleared two or three thousand years ago; our land has been cleared within the last few generations,” retorted Uncle. “I don’t suppose our ancestors in the British Isles or in Normandy found it much hardship to live in log huts, to do their own washing, or to forego their morning paper.”

“That is where the Lien money came from—from grinding these poor farmers’?” I asked.

“Yes.”

I was not sorry for the reply, because it showed I was not wrong in my instinctive dislike of the good lady.

“And what does the present Mr. Lien do?”

“He’s a stockbroker. When a rich man dies and leaves a son of no particular abilities they make a broker of him. The stock market covers a multitude of sins.” Uncle was smiling again.

“Does it?” I asked innocently.

“Oh, yes, a multitude of sins. Now one may not keep a tavern and sell booze——”

“George!” exclaimed Mumsie with mock horror.

“I wanted to be frank, my dear.”

“You always do,” she complained cheerily.

“One may not keep a tavern or even be a brewer and keep respectability, but it is quite in order to hold stock in a brewery company or hotel.”

“What a cynic you are,” I cried.

“And what we have come to now! Old man Lien was kept in his place in the old days. He was a plain man with a hard fist. They are gentry. The son and his son’s wife lord it to-day. But the foundation of their fortune and proud estate was the life-blood of men and women whose veins ran with better blood, who had truer gentility than they can ever claim with all their social rudeness.”

“But Uncle,” I pleaded, “because the old man was a skin-flint, you would not visit his sins on the son and the son’s wife, would you?”

“‘The sins of the father,’ my young lady. I am no more charitable than my Maker. Without his money old Lien would never have had any notice taken of him; and, if you pay obeisance at his shrine, and drink his claret cup, you may, if your imagination be strong enough, taste the salt of tears shed long ago.”

“George! What a Tory!”

“Thank God!” replied Uncle, and shaking his finger at me: “Remember, Elsie, if Belle takes you to call on Mrs. Lien, you call on her money, on her father’s guilty money, remember that!”

“George, you dear old ass. Why do you put such ideas into the child’s head’?” (Child indeed!) Then turning to me: “Don’t pay any attention to what he says, Elsie. Old man Lien—as your Uncle calls him—may have made his start that way, but the great fortune they now have has grown from wise investment.”

“Exactly, if I sow a kernel of wheat and it produces twenty, it is the same wheat,” retorted Uncle.

“Nonsense!”

That was the end of it for a time, as we rose from the table. Mumsie put her arm about me and said: “Pay no attention to George, to what he says, when in a teasing mood. He’s incorrigible!” and she made a grimace at him which seemed to please him, for he seized her hand and squeezed it.

“I like him,” I said, when she and I were alone, and I think my tribute pleased her.

DECEMBER 17TH.

Last night after I went to bed I thought and thought. At last I am really “in the world.” I had read so often of Mrs. Lien in the society news in the city papers, that to be actually living in the house with one who would dare to attack her is cheering. And Mumsie is so glorious and dignified. Hers is a native dignity. I still feel as if her kindness were all about me like a glorious cloak. I wish I could put my present, overflowing happiness into cold storage, so that I could enjoy it bit by bit in after years.

Immediately after breakfast this morning Mumsie told me she was giving the day to the work of preparing for the Ragamuffins’ Feast. Mumsie is a woman of capacity and makes no false moves.

The first thing she did was to go to the telephone.

“Mrs. Mount, this is Belle Somers speaking. I wish you to give me some lettuce from your conservatories for the poor boys’ feast.”

* * * * *

“Six heads.”

* * * * *

“Oh! I’m sorry. I’ll tell Mrs. Lien,” and she banged on the receiver, and sat on the seat beside me, her face twitching with annoyance.

“What is it?” I asked impulsively.

“Wait a minute.”

The telephone rang again.

“Yes.” Mumsie answered.

* * * * *

“Yes, Mrs. Lien is managing it this year.”

* * * * *

“All right, you’ll send them to the hall to my care.”

* * * * *

And again the receiver was put back on the hook and Mumsie, trembling with agitation, sat again beside me.

“I know how to fix that woman,” she declared. “I told her I would report to Mrs. Lien, and then, my dear, she promised not only to send the six heads of lettuce I asked for, but a turkey and a dozen Charlotte russes as well.” In delivering the last sentence Mumsie’s chin protruded in a manner I judged to be an unconscious imitation of Mrs. Mount.

We went to the hall where a great many ladies were working among hampers of food. They all seemed nice and genially kind as Mumsie introduced me. We all got to work, laid tables, and arranged the food. One of the women who seemed to take a special interest in me was Mrs. Bassett. She has a large nose with prominent eyebrows, her chin is pointed, and her mouth drawn into a perpetual smile. I suppose she is daily described as aristocratic looking. But I know what she will look like at eighty with her teeth gone—a witch. In the old days she’d have hardly escaped burning. She told me she had two daughters; one my age, Ethel, and hoped we would be friends.

I found the good ladies very uninteresting, though Mrs. Bassett, with her sharp eyes, is capable of humour at times. Nothing was said about society—which is growing my chief interest—and they dressed dowdily.

Mrs. Lien in all her grandeur, came in while we worked, asked a few questions and departed. She did not even nod to me, though she must have seen me. I am inclined to believe that to be kind means to be commonplace. Mrs. Lien seems to be *neither*.

I was waiting with impatience to talk to Uncle on the subject of Mrs. Mount, but succeeded in restraining myself until Uncle had finished his first helping of meat. My idea was that, his hunger appeased, I could get him off to a better start. I asked innocently enough: “Uncle, do you know Mrs. Mount?”

His eyes met mine and then settled on his wife.

“Mrs. Mount! Do I know Mrs. Mount? Belle, why do you not introduce Elsie to someone milder than that old battle-axe?”

"I have not introduced her," replied Mumsie promptly. "I asked Mrs. Mount over the 'phone for some lettuce for our feast and had to bring in Mrs. Lien before I could get it."

Uncle roared with laughter.

"Elsie, during your stay with us, you will get an insight into human nature if into nothing else," was his severe comment. "Mrs. Mount" he went on, "is a social-climber; the term is self-explanatory and she and her notions are illuminating. Her past history would make a compendium on the process of social climbing, and the progress of snobbery invaluable to those who have the mean ambition to inflict themselves upon their betters, or, perhaps it were more correct to say, intrude where they are not wanted."

I was surprised and piqued by his harshness. I think that "pique" looks well.

"Is it wrong," I asked "to try and get into society?"

"Not wrong, Elsie, but probably unworthy. Of course much depends upon the society aimed at. Ambition is, as the poets have often taught us, a fruitful source of woe, humiliation, and remorse, and social ambition is to my mind the pettiest of vanities. It is as pernicious to-day as when Greece produced—and slew—Socrates."

I then asked a question which in these new days has often occurred to me.

"What is society? What would a philosopher call it? Let me see! Society is an affiliation of friends mutually acceptable. If it remained so, that would be good enough; unfortunately it has tended to the wealthy gathering into a clique, whose doings are naturally the more spectacular and so attract the weakling, the snob, the social-climber."

Mustering up what I hope looked like world-wisdom, I said: "That Uncle, is also, a natural process."

He laughed at me, quite kindly.

"Undoubtedly, you wise miss, Mammon has always had his measure of worshippers. But the point is that to enter such society was never a worthy ambition. In the days of Charles II, society, as we use the word, meant the court circle, and that was certainly a discreditable institution. Queen Victoria, of course, made her circle one of a high standard; but, society in her day no longer meant the circle nearest the throne, nor does it convey that meaning to-day."

“Of course,” continued Uncle in his kind tones. (He certainly is taking trouble with me—dear man!) “I need not talk about society in England. One may not know all about everything in England and the English after a three month’s visit. But of Canada I do know much: and this—that both this country and the United States are society mad. If there is any greater snob on earth than the average Canadian, it is the average citizen of that particular Land of the Free.”

I do not like the Yankees, or mind hearing them abused; but I object to hearing the supposed failings of my own people set forth.

“Uncle, you are severe.”

“Elsie,” Uncle replied in tones that were low, and I thought bore an echo of sadness, “you are on the threshold of life; your happiness is largely your own to make or break. If you develop the society bug,—the society craze—you kiss good-bye to your peace of mind, and peace is the true foundation of happiness. When you choose your friends, imagine yourself with them alone on a desert island. Under those circumstances what sort of companions would they be? That’s the test.”

“Bosh!” cried Mumsie. “Isn’t the girl down here to see some life, to go to balls and parties, and have as good a time generally as we can give her?”

“I was just telling her—” he began, but was promptly cut short.

“You were just trying to fill her head with nonsense. A desert island. Fiddlesticks!”

There was naturally a pause after this, but I was glad to see Uncle was not completely down. I watched his face, rejoicing at the evident signs of consideration before a new assault.

“I once knew a politician who came from Alberta. He made a lot of money, his enemies said by shady means, but I believe by his native cleverness in land speculation. His was a happy home, the family united by affection. And then all went society mad. Paterfamilias took to horses and the boys followed suit. To make a long story short, with the advent of riches and horses, happiness flew out of the window, and there was ruin.”

Uncle was now cracking nuts; in a minute he would be rising and going to his den, and I had not yet heard about Mrs. Mount. So, I asked again.

“Mrs. Mount, my child, was the daughter of old Bustard, who—how wonderful when we go back to the beginnings—kept a tavern at a crossroads in the country. First he sold butter and sugar openly, and grog on the sly;

then he blossomed into keeping a tavern. He made money fast and speculated. He dabbled in the Chicago wheat pit, and in real estate. He appreciated the lessons of history and got out at the top of several booms. In short, he was a successful money-maker, and collected a pile, and then died. Mount, who was, what out west they call a shyster, married the girl, Miss Bustard. That's all."

"And how did she with those disadvantages manage to climb into society?" I asked.

"Money first; then the Church. She gave to charities, tinted her hair a golden yellow, drove a fine pair of horses before the motor came chu-ing along, carried impecunious dowagers home from meetings of the Women's Auxiliary. Oh, it was all easy, only a matter of persistence. The dowagers had to ask her to tea, and when she was able to pay them back, she took care that the papers made a splash of it. So Mrs. Mount got thick with the old families."

"But," I objected (I can't help asking questions), "if she was so generous to charities, why did she wish to limit Mumsie to two heads of lettuce?"

Uncle was, I think, needlessly scornful as he replied: "You don't feed a fish bait after you have caught him."

That was all.

DECEMBER 18TH.

Only a week from Christmas! Mrs. Bassett's tea was delightful; that is to me. Her house was not very big, being semi-detached and the crowding was certainly dreadful.

I'm sure those present were all such ladies as Uncle would have approved of, but somehow to me, they seemed much alike, some even shabby, and their kindness and graciousness I took (Dear me! am I becoming a weak snob? It looks like it) as an effort to make up for their deficiencies in plumage.

Shortly after breakfast Mrs. Bassett rang up Mumsie and asked if I would care to go.

"A waste of good money," was Uncle's comment.

"But the woman must do something to return the hospitality shown Ethel, and it is out of the question for her to afford a dance," stormed Mumsie.

“But if she did not allow Ethel to know all and sundry, she need not feel it incumbent on her to make this sort of return,” retorted Uncle, nailing his colours to the mast. “Moreover, when I was a boy the full expenses of a dance was some ten dollars and we enjoyed it. To-day the pace is tuned so high that a dance at home costs ten times as much; and, for a flare up at a hotel or public-hall, a thousand dollars is too little. To so-called leaders of fashion, like Mrs. Lien, or social climbers like the Mount woman, the advertisement is no doubt worth the money. But few people in Canada who are truly distinguished can feel it a satisfactory way of spending money.”

“A woman—” began Mumsie.

“There is an old tradition that if a woman wishes to give her daughter a run in the matrimonial market, it is necessary to bring her out. But when I look back on the society belles I have known, the percentage of them who are now old maids, or have become victims of unfortunate alliances is enormous.”

“The crooked stick at last,” I suggested.

“Yes, or the bad egg.”

“Ho,” grunted Mumsie.

“A girl or a young man,” continued Uncle, with a grin, “makes a stab at society for two reasons. One is to have a good time with plenty of excitement; the other is chase and capture a partner in life. But with the average mother it’s the chance at a husband first. And this I’m sure of, that so far as the big game of dances, parties, and so on goes, it is sheer wasted money and often the ruin of a girl’s health.”

“Bosh!” from Mumsie, whereat I laughed.

“Then, too,” went on Uncle, after a mocking bow to his interrupting wife, “when the girl has got her husband, he is nearly always a waster. I am satisfied that the proportion of unfortunate matings made in your dizzy whirl is fifty per cent higher than in more sober circles. There now!”

“You seem to have strong ideas on the subject of matrimony,” I ventured.

“He’s got strong ideas on most subjects,” protested Mumsie, “and he’s poured them into my ears for twenty years. I’m fed up with his nonsense. Now that you’re here, he’s got a new victim. And, when Jack comes it will be worse and worse!” Mumsie pretended to be in despair. Who was “Jack”?

At the mention of Jack I saw Uncle fumble in his pocket and produce a letter.

“Talk of the devil,” he said. “Jack will be here for Christmas.”

“Good! and now you’re in for it, Elsie,” cried Mumsie. “When these men have talked to you for a week, you may consider yourself master of the accumulated knowledge of the ages.”

Uncle made no effort to counter this sally, and Mumsie continued as if she had read the question I had in mind, the most natural question.

“Jack, my dear, Jack Bang, (What a name!) is a railway contractor, miner, prospector, or what not; as strong as an ox, as cheery as a sand-boy, as generous as a sailor on leave, and with a jaw like that of Napoleon.”

“Is he——”

“Yes, very good looking. Jack was the misfit of the family.”

“He is the only one of the six who has any brains,” protested Uncle stormily.

“He came to visit us once when he was fifteen, and he and my Micawber, (Mumsie sometimes speaks of Uncle as her Micawber) became great friends. The result——”

“Leave Jack alone; let the girl form her own opinion of him,” put in Uncle, and Mumsie complied with his request by being silent.

I wonder if I shall like Mr. Bang. Jack Bang! Such an odd name. Mrs. Bang! I don’t think I like westerners; not that I have ever seen any.

DECEMBER 19TH, SUNDAY.

Of course we went to church. The afternoon I put in writing this diary. I often wonder what makes me write it, but write it I will. I believe Mumsie knows already I’m keeping it. If I am forced to confess, I will say I am doing it for practice, that some day I shall publish a novel.

I know Uncle would think more of me if I had such an ambition. Perhaps it would be a good thing to tell him. No, he would cease then to be such “good copy,” as the journalists call it. I do so enjoy getting him and Mumsie at verbal fighting; it’s great fun.

DECEMBER 20TH.

To-day we had the feast—and it *was* a feast. Dirty little ragamuffins!

Of course Mumsie was in attendance early. It was all one wild scramble, food, dirty imps, steam and struggle. I found it hard work and appreciated the reason why the feast was held so early, five days before Christmas. It was that we might get rest in time for our own festivities. I was disappointed that no stylish people came to help. Indeed, Mrs. Lien did turn up, also several other smart ladies, but they merely grinned, tossed their heads, and went away. Virtue is very dull—there is no question of that.

I have made up my mind about one thing. I'm going to get into society. It's the spirit of the age. So why not? I'll be in the fashion so soon, and far, as I can. I'm sure that Uncle's ideas are old-fashioned. Of course I love Uncle and all that, but I know he's wrong. I've used my eyes. I'm sure of it. Times change, fashions change, customs change, don't they? And, people change, nations change, everything changes. The young are as likely to be right as the old, for *they* can't be rid of their old opinions. How nice it must be to go every place and to everything, and to have one's name always figuring prominently in the notices—like Georgie Cochrane, and Mabel Lien, and Doris Mount.

I know now why I am writing this diary! It's partly practice, that some day I may write something good and make a name for myself. It is also to record my passing impressions of the society doings I *am* going to enjoy. For after I get back home again to the country, I'll have plenty of time and it will be dull if I don't employ myself. To-day in town I heard one girl say to a friend: "Good-bye—good luck. Be good and you'll be happy—but you'll have a mighty slow time." Now I wonder!

And I have a right to a place in society. My grandfather was an army officer. So even Uncle could not call me a "social climber." I only wish to see real life and get some enjoyment. The thing to do is to make friends among those who have aspirations and aims similar to mine—true friends, good friends. I wonder if Grandfather had any more joy in being honourable and upright than "old man" Lien, who lent to and ruined unfortunate farmers, and other incapable persons. Of course, old Lien had no friends outside his own class, but then Grandfather's friends borrowed money from him and never returned it,—and drank his port wine. So I wonder which got the greater joy from life.

No doubt Grandfather would have despised old Lien, while Lien would have pitied Grandfather. There is no doubt that Mabel Lien has had a better time than I. And I can quite conceive that old Lien's joy in his wide, rich lands was greater than Grandfather's could be in being comparatively poor,

however respectable. Yes, Uncle doesn't know everything, and I'm not such a little girl as he thinks.

DECEMBER 21ST.

Nothing doing.

DECEMBER 22ND.

I have seen Mrs. Mount.

Mumsie and I were going down Maple Avenue when I saw her. She wore a large, beautiful, black velvet hat, with ermine trimming, and came marching down the street majestically in her seal-skin jacket and ermine stole. Her hair is gold: I don't mean coppery gold or any other kind of gold, but real, brassy, gold-yellow. I had an eye on her some time before Mumsie caught sight of her. I knew it was Mrs. Mount—instinct told.

I grasped Mumsie by the arm and whispered. "Yes, it is she," she said.

From the way Mrs. Mount held her head it was evidently her intention of passing us with a mere bow. But to show how kind Mumsie is, she exclaimed: "Oh, Mrs. Mount, thank you so much for the lettuce, and things."

It was very well done, just as if speaking to her had been an afterthought. We all stopped; Mumsie and she shook hands, and I'm sure I beamed.

Mrs. Mount gazed across the street for a moment ere she replied: "It was nothing, really, it was nothing; I'm always only too glad to help anything Mrs. Lien or you are arranging. What would the poor do without Mrs. Lien? I have my own troubles it is true," she continued without pause in her drawling voice, "chasing around these horrid shops for corsets, corsets! Do you know, really, it is too awful for words. Those I can get here are quite impossible, and the others have not arrived from Paris." Mrs. Mount accompanied her words by protruding her chin after the manner I had observed Mumsie affect.

"Too bad," murmured Mumsie sympathetically.

"Do you know, really it is." She spoke as if every other word were in capitals. "I always get mine from Paris," and with a most pronounced sigh, "but they cost a hundred francs a pair, twenty dollars a pair!"

With the closing of this speech she turned and regarded me, and Mumsie introduced me.

“Nice looking little girl, a bud?” Mrs. Mount was pleased to say. “Well, my dear, you will have a good time, if you make friends with the right people; make it a rule, only the right people.”

“That’s very——” I began. I wanted to let her see I appreciated what she was saying; but she went on in her loud, slow voice:

“Isn’t Christmas a bore? I have just bought some things for some reduced gentle people. One has to look after the unfortunate of one’s own class you know really—old mother and three old maids—so sad you know.”

“I’m sure——”

“Yes, I suppose it is kind, but we all have to do it. But I must go, Sir Thomas and Lady Billings are coming to dinner to-night, and I must call at the florists, and goodness knows what else—Christmas prices too.”

“Your own——”

“My own conservatories don’t seem able to produce the flowers these professionals can; do you know, really, my gardener is supposed to be an expert from England. Now, Miss Travers,” she turned to me, “do take my tip and know only nice people. They are the only people who live, really they are. Good-bye Mrs. Somers. Mr. Somers well? Glad to hear it. We never see him now: I know he is not fond of society, so strange!”

I said: “Good-bye Mrs. Mount. I’m delighted to have met you,” in my best attempt at the proper manner. I wanted to make a good impression. Mumsie seemed amused, I wonder why.

As we walked on I felt I had one foot on the ladder; the position was improved. At last I knew a leading lady in society.

“Well, Elsie, what do you think of her?” Mumsie asked.

“I think she is most interesting,” I replied.

We trudged home.

As we came up the steps the door opened, and a great man seemed to fall on Mumsie. “Here I am again, Auntie, to bother you and shock your friends over Christmas!”

Mumsie beamed more than ever.

“Elsie, this is Jack, Mr. Bang! Jack, this is Miss Travers.”

“Hullo, Little Partner,” he cried. That was his greeting. Familiar I call it. He grasped my hand in his great paw. “I’ve heard of you and your father: I

judge you are in town on a bit of a spree,” and Mr. Bang grinned.

Perhaps my surprise at this remark showed in my face, for he remarked: “There is more than one kind of intoxication, you know,” whereat Mumsie gave him a loving tap on the shoulder, and said,

“Don’t begin lecturing her too soon, Jack,” and turning to me, “Elsie, don’t take what he may say to you too seriously. He is worse than your uncle.”

“Very well, Auntie,” replied the reproved one; “I’ll remember that.” And we entered the house.

Of course, at dinner I told Uncle I had met Mrs. Mount, and, of course, Uncle asked what I thought of her.

“I could not quite make her out,” I replied, which was quite true. With all her mighty ways I did not altogether like her. She was rather too high and mighty.

“Let me tell you something, Elsie,” said Uncle in his fatherly way. “It is my guess that her ladyship was not hunting corsets at all, nor was she making purchases for impoverished ladies; she was really talking for effect.”

“Uncle, how ungenerous of you!” I exclaimed.

“I know for a fact that Sir Thomas Billings is in Toronto to-day, so she is *not* entertaining him this evening.”

“Oh!” I cried, flabbergasted.

“When you know more of the world, little niece—” he said.

“When you know more of the world, Little Partner,” this from Mr. Bang.

“But Uncle how do people tolerate such a fraud?” I put in.

“Tolerate! why people like it: it never deceives: it only amuses. Mrs. Mount and her sayings have amused us for twenty years.”

“Disgusting!” I felt annoyed.

“I suppose your experience has not been large enough to teach you philosophy enough for that,” put in Mr. Bang. Like his cheek to be patronizing me!

“The public taste for cheap notorieties, little people with a big noise, is on a par with its taste for literature and the drama,” said Mr. Bang, and the tone he used was bitter. As I am some day going to write a book, I thought I

might as well find out more of this, so I turned to him and asked: “Do you really think so?”

“Certainly, the fact is plain as the nose on your—er—on my face. The man who cultivates a sound literary style and thinks the public will buy his books because of it, is not very far from the pawn shop.” (How vulgar!) “So, too, the young man or maiden who seeks to impress society with good manners would do better to tie his or her head in a wet blanket and cultivate a knowledge of what’s what.”

“Elsie, Jack thinks all society people fools,” laughed Mumsie.

“So they are!” stormed the young man. “Look how much trash on paper finds a ready market, while genius may be starving. Look at the social columns of our newspapers and see how nonentities find prominence.”

I was annoyed at this tirade, and the tone it was uttered in, the bitterness. “Do you mean to say,” I added, “that no clever people find eminence in society; how about the great Disraeli, is he not supposed to be the original of ‘Vivian Grey’?”

“That was England: this is Canada. Society in England is more catholic than here.”

I felt this was getting a little beyond me, so I doubled back. “Don’t you think,” I asked, “if some of your masters of literary style could produce a ‘best seller’ they would do so, and don’t you also think that some of your bright examples of good manners would be only too glad to occupy outstanding positions in society?”

“Absurd! Absurd!” stormed Mr. Bang. “A man of letters, a master of style, cannot write trash. I’m told that Conrad once tried to do it—and he couldn’t. Also it is impossible for a man of brains and good manners to attain eminence in the rushing society here. There is too little real recompense for the strain required. Vulgarity has no true attractiveness.”

“Don’t good manners count for anything?” I asked meekly. Jack—I mean Mr. Bang—smiled a smile of pitying tolerance.

“I once had an Englishman remark to me that he found the ruder he was to people here the more they esteemed him. He was a man of education and intelligence. I give you his opinion for what it is worth.”

“I can’t believe that,” I exclaimed.

“It is quite in keeping with the bluff of our social-climbers,” said Uncle.

They both were against me. I looked to Mumsie, but she shook her head, as if to say, "Where are they leading the child?"

"I can tell you it is unsafe even to offer a passing civility to a society lady one does not know. I met a girl once carrying golf clubs; we were members of the same club, I politely offered to relieve her of the load. She declined."

"Poor Jack," murmured Mumsie.

"The poor girl thought that if she accepted my civility I would make it the basis of acquaintance, and we had not been introduced. She did not know if I might belong to her set or not. As for the value she placed upon herself one may pity her."

"But, Mr. Bang,—” I began, thinking that something could be said, surely, from the girl's point of view.

"There is no but about it," he interrupted, rudely. "I can read these people like a book ——"

"It's the schools that do it," Uncle cut in. "Our girls' schools are too much under the domination of such monstrosities, fed with those delusions and snobberies. We need to educate our educationalists." I could see that his feeling, too, was strong.

"The world is all wrong," laughed Mumsie, satirically.

"Anyhow, the girls' schools are wrong," retorted Uncle. "Get at the inner workings of those institutions, and you find one or two brats of the *Nouveaux Riches*, at the head of the strongest clique, making life hell for the other girls, who won't toady to them. The result is the school becomes a breeding ground for the society 'bug', as we have it in America. The rich girls have the biggest hampers, extravagant clothes, the most money to spend; and are encouraged to show off to the full. The girls' school is the nursery-bed of worldliness."

"And the boys' schools?" asked Mumsie.

"Much the same: the natural cad once he enters a fraternity house, dons a smoking jacket, sticks a pipe in his mouth and thinks he is a superior being. The whole system—for boys and girls—is rotten and wrong."

"I may say," put in my fellow guest, "that close on the time I asked Miss Fashion if I might carry her golf-sticks I met a poor woman carrying a valise. I took it from her. She was grateful. The moral is that one may help the old and homely, but not the young and gay."

“The old need help more than the strong,” said Uncle.

“That reminds me of the story of the Irishman in the street-car, who gave up his seat to a wizened old maid,” said Mumsie. “‘Thank you very much,’ said she. ‘Not at all, not at all,’ replied Paddy. ‘Some people they gets up only when a good-looking girl wants a seat, but I don’t, sez I to meself sez I, Pat, it’s the sex ye should honour, not the individual. Not at all mum, not at all’.”

The joke was new to me and I laughed. The men creatures brightened up too. So I gained new courage and asked: “The boys and girls of the old families,—what of them?”

“Ah, now, Elsie,” said Uncle, “you are touching upon the really sad phase of the question. The spectacle of the son or daughter of self-respecting people fawning on the vulgar-rich is unspeakably deplorable, and, unfortunately, becoming more common day by day.”

“Agreed, Uncle,” cried Mr. Bang, “and even more apparent in conservative old England.”

“The kingdom of the mind,—that’s putting it briefly—weakens before the spell of the motor and the dizzy whirl,” continued Uncle.

“The only remedy is War,”^[1] said Mr. Bang, and seemed to glare at me.

“War!” I exclaimed, “how awful!” and I glanced from the one to the other.

Mumsie shook her head despairingly and rose from the table. As we left the dining-room Uncle put his arm over my shoulder. “I hope my ideas don’t frighten you,” he said. “You are to enjoy life.” Dear Uncle!

Two experiences I have had to-day, making the acquaintance of Mrs. Mount, and meeting Mr. Bang. Were my relations with them reversed, were I to meet Mr. Bang only occasionally or not at all, and live in the same house as Mrs. Mount, I feel I should be happier. That shows what I think of Jack Bang’s social fears.

I don’t know what to make of Mr. Bang, except that I think I do not like him. Why Uncle and he do not like society is because society does not like them, and society does not like them because—they take life too seriously.

But, I may as well record my impression of this interfering visitor. Mr. Bang is fully six feet tall and his shoulders broad. His hair and small moustache are black; his face square, clean-cut, and certainly powerful. In repose his face is thoughtful, sometimes even abstracted. I will put down

what he says, for what it may be worth, to use his own words. I'm afraid he will be a kill-joy.

I will tell Mumsie confidentially, I am writing a book; and if Uncle learns I am writing, the fact I have already confided in her will save me from embarrassment. Again Mr. Bang called me Little Partner as he said good-night—I suppose I am still a child in his eyes. How dare he!

[1] This passage was written in January, 1914.

DECEMBER 23RD.

Shopping, Mumsie and I went down town. The Christmas rush is on and happiness was abroad. The snowflakes were falling softly. I bought Mumsie a pair of gloves. For Uncle, a box of cigars at \$1.25, and for his nephew a silk handkerchief, of all colours. We met the Bassett girls with their mother in Lewis's. It appears to me that I am always meeting the Bassetts. My mind is fully made up. I'm for society with a big "S". The Bassetts and other good people bore me to death. I feel as if I've burnt my boats. All the better!

Of course, I took Ethel's hand with cordiality: I realize that if I am to be a society success I must be nice to everybody, whatever I feel. But there was a price to pay: she returned my cordiality by asking me to go skating with her in the evening; and before I could invent an excuse Mumsie told me to accept "and take Jack." Heavens!—and all I could do was to smile and say "Thank you, I shall be delighted." Ethel and Mr. Bang! In parting Ethel said she would call for us.

We met Mr. Bang by appointment.

Our cavalier had loaded himself with parcels. He remarked, apologetically, that the delivery men would have enough work to do as it was: and even then when Mumsie made more purchases he insisted on carrying them. "I've done enough hard work to sympathize with any worker," he said. Worker indeed! I could not help wondering what Mrs. Lien or Mrs. Mount would say if they saw us. However, Mumsie seemed indifferent. I suppose Uncle's ideas have had some effect.

After lunch Mumsie and I walked out to deliver presents. I was introduced to many of her friends; all genial, placid, and uninteresting. Dinner passed with nothing said worth recording, and after dinner Ethel Bassett came and gathered up Mr. Bang and myself. We walked to the rink.

As we entered the large, spectral building, Ethel signed our names in a book and there was no charge for admission, which puzzled me. When we

entered the dressing-room there were no young rowdies about as is always the case in our small rink at home. I was still more at a loss to comprehend, the situation when I noticed the boys and girls present were all well dressed, evidently society folk.

The girls were congregated in one section of the large dressing-room, the boys in the other. Mr. Bang, of course, went to the men's section. I took everything in, but still was mystified. Ethel began changing her boots, so I did too. My wonder growing, I whispered: "Why, Ethel, what is this?" The new conditions were so different from anything I had met before.

"Why don't you know? I thought you knew. That is the Skating Club," she whispered in return.

"Oh," I exclaimed, and I almost blurted out—"then I shall see some society people." I wonder if I am really a snob! I'm afraid—

We left the dressing-room and descended to the ice. The immense, arched roof was studded with electric lights. This then was the Skating Club about which I had so often read in the society columns of our paper at home.

At first I skated into a corner with Ethel, and watched the others. The ice was covered with boys and girls, men and women, practising fancy figures: some were evidently adepts, others as evidently less expert. A few found partners and went off in a way I had never seen before. I watched and waited. Mr. Bang skated up and chatted with Ethel. I kept my eye on a girl dressed in green velvet, who with her partner, was performing wonders. All this was new to me and—enchanting!

My dream was suddenly broken; the band struck up and almost every man sought a partner and away they went in the waltz, actually waltzing on ice. Mr. Bang came up and asked if I waltzed. I replied that I didn't. This avowal might under other circumstances have caused me pain.

He and Ethel then went to skate, but were evidently not as good skaters as the majority present. Ethel particularly, did not seem to have mastered the art. She and Jack did not seem to skate so smoothly and confidently as the others. But how I envied the girl in green: I was fascinated by her, enthralled.

The band stopped, and I sighed; my friends came back to me.

"You must learn to waltz, Little Partner," Mr. Bang remarked kindly.

"Yes," I replied without enthusiasm. I did not relish having Ethel hear me addressed as "Little Partner," though she seemed neither shocked nor

amused. I would positively have disliked the girl in green to have been a witness.

“Ethel, who is that girl in green?” I had to ask.

“Doesn’t she skate beautifully—that’s Mabel Lien.”

“Mabel Lien! She does,” I sighed. I thought of her grandfather and mine, the disparity between the girl in green and myself; she sought after, petted and pampered, in fine plumage: and me—! For two pins I’d be a socialist.

A young man came up and engaged Ethel for the next band. He was introduced to me and then they went away skating, hand in hand. So Mr. Bang and I were left together. He amused himself by twirling away at figures, while I resumed my reverie.

Mr. Bang asked me to try and skate with him. We tried and failed. I was counted a good skater among the girls at home. I asked my cavalier who Mabel Lien had for a partner, and was told, “Polly Townsend.” Polly!

Then Ethel came back with her companion, who asked if I waltzed. On answering no, he said, “So sorry,” lifted his cap and skated away. No person asked Ethel for the succeeding “band”—as they call it—so she kindly tried to teach me the waltz while Mr. Bang secured one of the few dowdy girls present, and went away. Ethel may not be a social figure, but is certainly unselfish and kind. I must remember that.

She explained the strokes I should master, and said I should practise with Mr. Bang. Mr. Bang! I’m sick of Mr. Bang. I asked Ethel if any of the good skaters ever asked her to skate and she replied they did not. When I asked her if she knew any of them, she answered “Nearly all.” I do not know what to make of this. I hope I did not hurt Ethel’s feelings. Anyhow it is funny.

Ethel pointed out to me Doris Mount, who did not skate at all well, not nearly as well as she herself did. Polly Townsend was then skating with her. I suppose Polly finds it convenient to do the polite to her; while no person found it necessary to be polite to Ethel; and as for myself I might as well have been “not present.”

One person, at any rate, was pleased with Doris Mount—her mother sat on the promenade and leaning on the rail glued her eyes on her daughter. She was alone, so I left the ice and walked to where she sat. Her greeting was not cordial; but I seated myself beside her, deciding to await her humour. I was pleased to consider her abstracted; she kept dangling her muff over the ice.

At last I exclaimed, “Oh! Mrs. Mount,”—the exclamation was in the idea of leading her to thinking I was suddenly visited by an inspiration from the Heavens. Of course this was in imitation of Mumsie’s greeting when she stopped Mrs. Mount on the street. “I have remembered what you said about meeting only nice people, so I have decided to ask you to introduce me, will you?”

“Who brought you here?” she asked abruptly and coldly. I felt snubbed: but my blood was up.

I would have answered “Ethel Bassett”, but realized that the inference she would draw would be hardly fair to Ethel, so I answered, “Mr. Bang,” feeling a martyr as I did so.

“But he is not a member,” she objected.

There was nothing for it, so I said: “And Miss Bassett.”

“Humph,” she snorted, “I don’t know really: the Bassett girl can’t do anything for you, her father is an old fogey and the mother has no go. They have no money;” reflectively and then more good naturedly, “well all right,” and kept on dangling her muff while she turned her eyes for a moment on me. I cannot say I was proud of myself. As I write this for my own eyes, I confess I am ashamed of myself. However!

The band stopped, the waltz was ended and up skated Doris and Polly. I was introduced to them. “Ask her for a band,” Mrs. Mount commanded Polly, “and ask Jerry Davidson and Leith MacKenzie to be introduced and to give her a band. Doris, my dear, you look lovely to-night. Yes, really!”

Doris beamed, while Polly replied:

“Really, Mrs. Mount, I’m engaged every band; you know I always skate the fifth with Doris.”

“Well, give the girl a show; ask MacKenzie.” Both Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Davidson were therefore brought up and introduced. The latter had all his bands engaged and the smile he wore as he announced the fact was very complacent. I hated him for it, but hid my wrath. Mr. MacKenzie asked me for the seventh band.

“You are very kind, thank you, Mrs. Mount,” I whispered, when the others had departed. “It must be so nice to be able to command kindness for strangers. I’ve heard Uncle speak so loudly (it was no lie for Uncle did speak loudly whenever he discussed Mrs. Mount) of your goodness.”

She looked at me with a penetrating gaze, and then smiled as she returned to contemplate her daughter. However, she added after a few minutes—it was kind of her on the whole. “Now, my dear, you’ll have to learn to skate, if you want the boys to give you bands. Look how beautifully my Doris glides over the shimmering ice.”

The ice was not shimmering, but weather-stained and dull, and Doris skated abominably—by comparison with the other girls.

“Your daughter is very beautiful, more beautiful even than her skating,” I commented. I don’t seem to be able to lie with all the assurance I would wish, but my untruthfulness was sufficient.

“Do you know, really, I think she is. How long is your stay in town?” Mrs. Mount’s voice was kinder still.

“A month or six weeks, Mumsie—Mrs. Somers—asked me for. I should like to live in the city always. So many nice people are to be met in the city.”

Mrs. Mount swung her muff for another minute, and then she said:

“You are a sensible little girl. I have a great mind—”

She paused as if she felt she was liable to say too much. I waited expectantly, eagerly. What was in her mind, what idea was then being discreetly curbed? I could not help but feel she was thinking of taking me under her wing.

There was nothing I could say or do, no prompting I could give, to consolidate her ideas into words. I could only guess. I felt very much as one feels on hearing of a great treasure at the bottom of the sea. It would do Mrs. Mount no harm to give me an opportunity of making friends.

The sixth band came to an end and Doris with her partner, and others, came again to her mother. I took no part in the chattering—for I was yet in doubt as to what had been in Mrs. Mount’s mind and now was likely never to know.

The seventh band struck up, and MacKenzie came for me. We skated away but I told him I could not waltz, so we practised in a corner. He has a funny little face, with a pointed nose, the skin covering of which is tight and transparent. His mouth twitched when he intended to smile and his speech was affected. He followed one question with another. He professed not to know anything of Mumsie or Uncle, and when I inadvertently mentioned Mr. Bang, his jaw dropped. At the end of the band he skated hurriedly away. A nice man!

Soon I hinted to Ethel that I should be glad to go home and she agreed, so we changed our footgear and went. As we passed Mrs. Mount I whispered: "Thank you very much for the introduction, Mrs. Mount. I enjoyed myself immensely."

On the way home I allowed Ethel to monopolize Mr. Bang. They got on well together and seemed to be talking earnestly. But my mind was full of thought. I have decided to make a bold venture. I have, I realize, minted my self-respect; and am doling it out coin upon coin. As yet, I must own to myself, the returns have been nil; no pleasure—rather chagrin: no gratification—rather depression. But still! I'm afraid I'm self-conscious in the presence of Ethel or Mr. Bang. Not that it makes much difference if either of them judges the import of my actions. But let me hope that, after I've paid, and paid, and paid, that I shall some day realize my happiness.

DECEMBER 24TH.

Christmas Eve! I woke this morning with a new fund of spirits—I'm glad to say. I went off into the city to see the crowds. Mr. Bang accompanied me. He said he had a business engagement. We parted in the business section.

I know all the streets now, or most of them, and can find my way about nicely. I did not meet any of my friends, or anybody I knew. While pleasant and interesting, it was an uneventful morning.

Shortly after my return Mr. Bang arrived carrying a bundle which proved to contain a quantity of evergreen wreathing. This he dumped on the drawing-room floor, remarking: "You may help me decorate this afternoon, Little Partner."

After lunch we set to work, festooning the chandeliers and picture frames, and soon I became absorbed in the effort—and in Mr. Bang's conversation. For the time being I forgot society and found myself laughing quite merrily. In fact, I confess I was thoroughly happy.

Mr. Bang, like Uncle, has a tendency to run off into long, confidential dissertations. He began to talk about himself, and I was interested. I will try and reproduce what he said in his own words. He is rather fond of long words, which sometimes are ponderous.

"I'm engaged in driving a tunnel on the Rat River Railway; MacDonald, who is my partner, and I have the contract. This will keep us going for months. It is an important piece of work and he is here negotiating for it.

There is plenty of red-tape in the way, so I am likely to be here a tolerable time. Shall you be glad?"

Fancy asking me that question! "I shall be glad if you have a good time," I said cautiously.

"There is no reason you should be glad if I stay, so far as I can see," he said frankly. "I asked the question simply out of interest in your reply. May I confess that I take an interest in my 'Little Partner,' and am anxious to learn if society is spoiling her? She is too good to be spoiled." He looked at me as if he were looking through me.

"Why?" I demanded, startled by the trend of his conversation.

"You have a conscience and—you have a heart."

"I"

"Yes," and again this man's serious eyes were upon me. Evidently he saw through my motives last night. I thought of last night, of Ethel Bassett's goodness to me and my mental attitude towards her—and the humiliation attending my talk with Mrs. Mount.

"I'm afraid—" I began, and faltered, not quite knowing what to say.

"The fact that you're afraid shows you have a conscience."

"Do you like the West?" I asked, to change the conversation.

"The West! I love the West. British Columbia is the best province in Canada; the climate the best, the scenery the grandest, the people the nicest."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" I laughed.

"But, of course, my ideas of nice people are different from those of say, Mrs. Mount."

"Yes!" I said, somewhat mischievously. He went on:

"Many of us were poor when we went West, but the thing is that we're cosmopolitan and have formed the habit of looking below the surface of things. Remember that! The social side of life out West is different from the East. So are the people. Here the fellows are all the same; were you to throw a dozen fellows into a sack and heave them about, the product of one grab from the bag would be the same as another. You could not tell them apart, all with the same narrow views of life." Mr. Bang then suddenly changed his tone, "I'm ready to admit the fellows here have as much right to hate me as I have to hate them."

“You hate them, hate the East?”

“I hate the East, or rather the hollowness and shallowness of its people, their snobbery, their affectations, silly emulation, mean ambitions and limitations; their patronizing impertinences.”

The delivery of this weighty charge relieved him, for he smiled and proposed a walk.

At dinner I talked of my Skating Club experiences, Uncle opening the way by asking how I had enjoyed myself. I replied, “Nicely, thank you,” and followed up with the announcement that I had met Polly Townsend, Mr. MacKenzie, and Mr. Davidson.

“Ah, so you met Polly Townsend. That was an experience. What did you think of him?”

“I liked him, that is, I think I do, though he did not skate with me. I really——”

“Polly would be a profitable study, if you are seriously interested in such folk. A study of such insects is helpful to establishing an entomological view of society.”

“Well,” I said, “he is the best skater——”

“Pooh! His skating is the least interesting phase of Polly. He is the expression of modern social finesse. He has no brains, no manners, save those that are bad, no money——”

“No money! then that discredits the theory that wealth is necessary in society,” I sang out.

“Therein lies whatever genius the man possesses,” exclaimed Uncle with glee. “Polly has a wealth of impertinence, of self-assurance, and conceit. By birth he should be a gentleman, but a gentleman’s instincts he lacks. Whatever he does, he does well,—tennis, golf, skating. Even his self-adulation is masterly. But of the things that really matter he is a futility. He can be ineffably rude, insolent, contemptible through his contemptuousness.”

“From this one may gather——”

“That the snub is an effective lever with weak human nature. We are jealous of our sensibilities and guard them. When social exigencies compel us to approach such as Polly, we lift our hat to the conqueror. The only self-

respecting way to treat Polly is to leave him alone; but because of his success in sport, at the golf club, and so on, Polly is an unavoidable evil.”

“Poor Polly?” I dared to ask, as Uncle closed his long speech.

“His chin goes in,” he rejoindered, as if he enjoyed it, “his forehead goes back, his nose is squash, and his voice resembles—as you suggest—that of ‘Poor Poll’.”

I realized the resemblance.

“And Mr. Davidson?”

“Davidson? Merely a snob—only that and nothing more.”

“Mr. MacKenzie?”

“A monstrosity,” spoke up Mr. Bang, “yet he taught me a good lesson.”

“How could Mr. MacKenzie teach you a lesson?” I exclaimed laughingly, although I couldn’t help emphasizing the “you.” The emphasis was, however, apparently quite lost on Mr. Bang. His composure and gravity were serene, as he replied:

“Once in early youth I came to this city and hoped to become a member of a tennis club to which MacKenzie belonged. I knew Mac and schemed to improve our acquaintance in order to help me in. I invited him to lunch, filled him with wine, attempted to talk on literature, and finally told him I was a tennis enthusiast.”

Mr. Bang paused, and Uncle asked mischievously:

“Did he respond?”

“He responded by asking if he might insure my life.”

We roared, that is, save Mr. Bang.

“That was a cold douche which drowned my social ambitions. I reasoned that society that would tolerate such a Yahoo as he had nothing to offer worth having.”

“The girls laugh at him,” said Mumsie.

“Possibly,” replied Mr. Bang, who began to unburden himself further.

“The trouble with most of our sports is that they are, as Uncle says, communal and in the hands of devotees who build them up. Cliques are formed which such people as Townsend and MacKenzie run. Golf is somewhat the exception to this general rule, which possibly accounts for the

ever increasing popularity of the game. Golf clubs, generally, make provisions for the admittance of strangers, and, for some reason or other, good-fellowship is more common in golf clubs than in other associations.”

“That’s true,” commented Uncle.

“I generally tell people whom I meet casually,” continued Mr. Bang, “that I have navvied and mined throughout the West, especially if they suggest themselves to me as being a bit snobbish, and I often find myself treated as a tough character. I do this merely to be honest. I daresay this is a mistake, for people ascribe my candour to simplicity.”

“What do you do with the tenderfoot when he arrives in the West?” I asked Mr. Bang.

“We treat him well and give him a show. If he is loaded with nonsense we kindly knock it out of him.”

Was there ever a stranger character than this Mr. Bang? In spite of my dislike for him, I am becoming interested.

“The westerner’s quarrel with the easterner is not unique,” put in Uncle as his nephew ceased speaking. “It is the same with the Englishman who returns home from Australia or Rhodesia. Frontier communities are made up of wanderers; and its social life frames itself to suit the scallywag. Settled communities have no experience in such wanderers, and their prejudices are strong.”

Uncle made this explanation dispassionately, as if he simply wished to further my understanding. I suppose I am still a child in my knowledge of the world. But I’m cleverer than they seem to think. Men are self-satisfied creatures, sometimes.

After dinner we went into the city, walked into the crowded streets. Sleighbells were ringing, here, there, and everywhere. Sleighbells are almost the jolliest thing about Christmas; the automobile horns sounded out of place. There was a great deal of laughing and of merry greetings to be heard.

Mr. Bang is certainly prodigal with his money. He gave a poor boy a dollar and told him to buy a new shirt; and he gave a poor, old woman two dollars. He did not do it secretly, nor ostentatiously, but in an open-hearted, matter-of-course sort of way. I suppose it is the result of his western training.

But if Mr. Bang hates eastern society, I confess the more I see of its movement and brightness, the more I intend to get on. The way will open—I know that—and I am quite rid of the queer ideas that filled my mind last

night. I can make use of Mr. Bang and Ethel Bassett, and possibly—Mrs. Mount, “that old battle-axe,” who is more like, shall I say, a Fairy Godmother. Possibly, we’ll see.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Such a heavenly day, sunshine with ice crystals, no wind.

Mumsie came into my room at peep of dawn, carrying a bundle. There was a letter in it from Dad enclosing another hundred dollars for me to spend. Dear old Dad! And then there was a parcel marked, “From Jack to his Little Partner.” I undid the fastenings and there were four shaggy, hairy skins. I could not make out what they were. And a pair of gloves from Mumsie—women always give gloves. I tried on the gloves and Mumsie suggested that we go to early service.

I jumped out of bed and as I dressed looked at the furs,—I had never seen anything like them, so brown and glossy. What sort of an animal could they have belonged to?

I went downstairs and saw a fire burning in the den and two men standing before it—Uncle and Jack. So I entered the room, and a cheery voice greeted me with “Merry Christmas!” and Uncle gathered me in his arms and kissed me. Mr. Bang, rather dolefully echoed: “Merry Christmas!” It struck me as strange that Uncle had not given me a present, even if only a handkerchief. I shook hands with Mr. Bang and said, “Thank you very much for the skins.”

“They’re nothing,” he replied almost indifferently. “Uncle is going to have them made into a muff and collar for you as his present. I got the skins from an Indian. You see,” continued he in his usual tone, “the British Columbia government has shut down on the destruction of beaver for a number of years to save these animals from becoming extinct, and it is against the law to have the skins in one’s possession.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed, “then you ran chances of being fined for my sake. How good you are!”

“No, not so good, as I did not know of your existence at the time, and could hardly have been concerned with that. What I mean is that they did not cost me much. As the animals were already dead my conscience did not trouble me and I took particular pains to give such small value for the skins, that I don’t fancy the noble red man will think it worth his while to break the law again.”

I do not know how to describe the manner of address used by Mr. Bang to me and I have borrowed Uncle's dictionary to help me out. "Didactic" will hardly do, nor will "pedantic." Perhaps "patronizing" is the only term that I can apply to it, but then "patronizing" is not quite just. Of course, Uncle is equally guilty at times, but only at times; and I love Uncle. And if I am to have a complete set of furs at their hands, I can forgive much! Perhaps "elderly" or "condescending" is the word: but it doesn't matter.

But were Mr. Bang and Uncle serious. Beaver!—I have seen beaver, soft, grey, delicate fur, and this is bristling like a porcupine almost. So I thought I would begin a question and then stammer. If I laughed prettily, I could appear innocent: and I did so successfully, though there is often a doubtful, pitying look in Jack's quizzical, grey eyes.

"Oh! Uncle do tell me, are beavers ever born with—with—Oh, I don't know—something like—first cousin—Porcupine—long hairs—"

"Oh," laughed Uncle, while Mr. Bang grinned broadly, "You are troubled over the shaggy appearance of the skins. They have not been plucked—the long coarse hairs are generally plucked from the beaver, otter, fur seal, and a few others, when the fur remaining is soft and silky."

"And I may have mine made into real beaver—how lovely!"

"I would suggest," put in Mr. Bang, still smiling, "that you leave them as they are, they would become you and not be unfashionable."

"Would they?" I asked, impetuously turning to Uncle.

"As Jack suggests, I think they would be becoming," and Uncle smiled. "You can always trust Jack."

"Then I shall," I said and left them. I meant leave the skins as they were, and if they thought I meant trusting Jack that is their look-out.

After breakfast I saw Bowman, the man who tends Uncle's furnace and clears away the snow, passing out into the street with a cigar box under his arm. I was sure it was the box I gave Uncle. I thought I would investigate so I went into the den where the two men were smoking. They were enjoying cigars, the odour of which seemed fine.

"Oh Uncle!" I cried, "I'm so glad to find you smoking. I noticed Bowman with a cigar box under his arm and I wondered——"

"Bowman takes such things as empty cigar boxes as his perquisites, see!"—and Uncle took a jar off the mantle and removing the cover showed me many cigars. Both of them then laughed. I was very annoyed.

Whenever I am in Mr. Bang's presence he gazes intently at me and I am beginning to loathe his quiet smile. Nothing escapes him, and after Uncle's explanation I'm sure he saw me start as I noticed a half consumed cigar box in the grate. Evidently there were the contents of two boxes of cigars in the jar.

In any case I won't trouble my head about what Uncle did with my cigars. I dislike men very much sometimes.

Dinner came at four and Mumsie had the table looking like a dream, such a sparkle of glass and silver, setting off the roses and carnations nicely. And the holly and mistletoe, which over-shadowed the lamp, and the bon-bons,—the crackers lying on each napkin! Oh, it was delicious! I may say heavenly.

Mumsie was at her brightest, looking the picture of Christmas geniality. Uncle, too, was particularly kind as he welcomed us to the feast. Someway, I was impressed that all and everything were for me. All Uncle's pleasantries were addressed to me or for my benefit. I believe Uncle is becoming fond of me.

His good nature seemed also to affect Mr. Bang, who told us stories of his own, wild life, and incidents in the lives of others; and in his calm way he can be very humorous. Then he told of the many strange circumstances under which he had eaten his Christmas dinner—in camps, in towns and cities, in hotels, in homes, in log cabins, even under canvas. And then I noticed his mouth draw into a smile, as he fixed his eyes on his wine glass which he kept absently turning.

"What have you in your mind, Jack?" asked Mumsie.

"I was thinking of the only Christmas dinner I ever ate away from friends or acquaintances and how in this case, I met poor Tom Dahlmun. It was in Dawson City, Christmas, 1900—"

"Tell us of it," demanded Uncle.

"You never told us how you came to go to the Klondike," said Mumsie; "Please tell us about it."

"To tell you how I came to go to the Klondike and my adventures in getting there would be a longer story than you would care to listen to," he protested.

"Do, do tell us all about it," I cried eagerly.

"Well, I will abstain from frills, and try and not weary you."

“You won’t do that,” I said with assurance.

“With your permission, Auntie, I shall in my telling of my adventures affect the manner of the miner at his camp-fire. Now and again I may mention details that appear inconsequent.”

“Never mind, go on!”

“Well, about September, 1900, I was at Skagway on the Alaskan Coast without money, and with no prospect of profitable employment.

“The Canadian Customs at Skagway gave me short jobs, but by the end of the month they petered out and I was faced with the necessity of finding means even for food.

“There seemed no alternative but to go south. But I harboured the idea of going to Dawson and some fiend nourished it. No more quixotic plan can ever have entered the mind of man, but I went.

“I crossed to White Horse, the port on the Upper Yukon River. The thermometer had sunk below zero, though the weather was mild. I spent some days figuring ways and means of carrying out my mad idea, and spent more dollars than I could afford. I shall always maintain that friendships struck up in a bar-room are productive of nothing but losses and waste of time.

“Possibly I was inspired with a blind faith in fortune or I didn’t care a ——— button. Somebody suggested I should try and work my way on one of the steamers. I tried and failed. A good thing too, for I would have earned little or no money that way and been landed five hundred miles nearer the north pole, and so much further from civilization.

“Then came the voice of destiny; a man called from a scow tied to the dock: ‘Do you want to go to Dawson? Give you seven and a half dollars per day.’ ‘All right,’ said I.

“The wage was high, which is an indication that travel was not northwards. The weather turned wonderfully mild, considering the recent exploits of the thermometer, and the sun shone brightly as we set out to the unknown. Only one of us had been down that river before.

“I was one of a party of six and our craft consisted of two scows lashed together. Each scow contained twenty tons of freight, and three thousand two hundred dollars was to be paid for transporting this to Dawson. My companions consisted of the four owners and a chap who was working his

passage to his camp down the river, where he was engaged chopping wood for sale to the river steamers.

“One of the owners was a Yankee, two were Scotch-Canadians, and one was a Swede. The Yankee had worked all summer as deck-hand on a river steamer and so had knowledge of the currents. One of the Scotchmen was a Salvation Army man and the other just old Mac. The Swede was a decent fellow. All but the Yankee were straight-forward. He, Alec, would never look one in the face, and was of a nature soft and unassertive. I should have felt more comfortable with him had he occasionally lost his temper and sworn a bit. His only qualification was his knowledge of the river.

“I soon gathered the business details. The four owners had built one scow and tried to sell it, but, through the lateness of the season and difficulty in getting men to man it, were unable to dispose of it. So they purchased another scow and essayed to get their money out of both by contracting to deliver freight in Dawson.

“The joy of such a trip is the scenery; and then the appetite one is blessed with! Our trip through the Thirty Mile was somewhat remarkable. This river is a part of the Upper Yukon, and has caused more wrecks than any other portion of the great waterway.

“It was strewn with wrecks of scows which had tried to get through in the day time. We went through at night for the good and sufficient reason that we could not stop.

“The Thirty Mile is very swift, and our Pilot was reluctant to tie up any sooner than was absolutely necessary. In fact, on this occasion it was I who made the suggestion that we moor to the bank ere darkness had completely come.

“Strange to say my advice was acted upon; the pilot grabbed a rope and ordered the scows to be diverted towards the left bank. Then he made a spring, landed, and sought a tree to which he might tie up. There was none, but rather a world of fallen brush. The scows were moving at better than six miles per hour, and with the result that the pilot, trying in vain to keep up with us, was forced to let go the rope. There was only one thing to do, and that was for somebody on the scows to take the dingey we had with us and row back for our mate. This was done with the result that the scows were left with four men only to manage them. The gloom settled over us and the shores were dimly visible, while we swept down the canyon. A heavily-laden scow travels faster than the current that bears it. This explains how we obtained a good lead on the dingey. The light then failed, and the only thing

visible was the reflection of the sky on the water. I began to give orders, or, I had better say, make suggestions. I became frightened of leaving the dingey altogether, or of coming to other calamities, so I told my fellows I would attempt to tie up the scows. Our shouts to the pilot and his rescuer brought response from both up and down the river. There was evidently a scow safely moored below us. Hastily we shouted our trouble, and the crew of the moored scow said we might tie to them. Frantically we worked to get the scows across the current for they were tied to the right bank; it was no use, we passed them. But the impetus we gained was carrying us into the right bank. Vaguely I saw the shadows, jumped, and landed up to my hips in water. I scrambled ashore and ran into a wall of rock. The rope I held tightened, and I followed its lead along the face of the rock till I went in to my middle; and then I, too, let go the rope.

“In due time, the boat picked me up and we set out in pursuit of the scows. We gained on them; finally gathering from the shouting that the woodcutter had gained the shore, had thrice snubbed the scows and the scows three times pulled a tree up by the roots. So Alec shouted to let the scows drift. We pulled the woodcutter into the boat and then regained the scows.

“The moon had risen over the canyon and light and shadow, glimmering water and sparkling skies, ranged themselves in wonderful combination, all weird, some magnificent. I remember that besides marvelling at the sights about me, I remarked the softness of the air. What the thermometer was I do not know, it could not have been much, if at all, above freezing, yet, while I was wet to the middle I have no recollection of being cold.

“In due time we floated into a great lagoon on the shores of which was a settlement. A dozen or so of river men and prospectors, a gambler or two, and a couple of policemen here had their abode.

“The stillness of lone lands is one of their special features. I know I enjoyed it, and my companions had no doubt some rude, unconscious sympathy with the natural beauties. At any rate, as the hoarse laughter floated across the lagoon it sounded a discord, and hearing it men became quiet.

“I have spoken of our capacity for eating. I shall never forget the moose tenderloin steaks we got from Indians at Little Salmon River. The joy of eating! civilization knows nothing like it. The best of fresh meat after weeks of bacon!

“At Little Salmon River, a tributary stream, the heavy frosts came upon us again, and here an interesting development affected our night’s rest. Our beds were made upon the cargo and beneath a great tarpaulin. No poles suspended the canvas; it lay flat against the hay and oats that constituted our load. The vapour arising from the comparatively warm water in the scow, the water that would correspond to the bilge of a ship, condensed upon the canvas. The effect was a coating of beautiful ice crystals, some of them an inch long. In the daylight they showed the most orderly system of spears and shafts, elaborate yet exact.

“As we crawled to our lairs at night the fairy-like ferns tingled joyously and fell upon us in wintry showers. In the morning they melted and drenched us. But we did well enough. Between times through the night we slept, all standing, as the sailors say, warm and comfortable.

“Frost is a most powerful agent in the north land. As you may guess, King Frost is a term used widely and not without reason. Indeed our passage was eminently a kindly dispensation of the monarch. As day succeeded day the ultimate closing of the mighty jaws of the river drew nearer. The owners’ money, my money, all our fortunes, depended on the absence of delays. Delays while inevitable, humanly speaking, were still a matter of chance. We were held at the caprice of winter.

“Jack Frost is indeed versatile. Not only did he commence to throw cakes of ice in the river, but placed a more active, if less tangible hindrance in our way. Over the river in the early mom a billowy, swaying, pink, yellow, purple, orange, blue mantle of mist hung. To guide our craft it was necessary to see, for the Yukon’s stream has many channels, only one of which, as a rule, is navigable for such a vessel as ours. About us were sand bars and islands, and to run aground meant loss of precious time, and possibly destruction.

“Of course, the sun rising would in time dissipate the fog, but while Jack Frost and he had their morning game at tossing cloud banks, we would lose an hour or two. As the days went by, and we lay further towards the arctic circle, the frost became heavier and the daily range of temperature less marked. About three days from our goal we ran into a snow storm and passed a few tributaries throwing out lumps of ice. The presence of floating ice, however, was a blessing, because it marked the more shallow spots and helped us to avoid them. When the air was not filled with snow, the skies were gray and sullen. It was a blessing there was no wind.

“Our last night out from Dawson I remember distinctly. The running ice had filled the river. At dusk we tied up at a woodcutter’s cabin, and learned we had fifty miles still to go. We went to bed, under our tingling tarpaulin; and, I remember, I lay awake just one minute listening to the ice crashing into our craft. Would the planks hold? A moment’s apprehension, and then —sleep.

“We started again at a perilously early hour. The ice had increased enormously during the night. The river was ‘bank full’ as the term is; it was a grinding, mixing lot. Had we struck a bar the rush of ice would have piled us on so tight we never would have got off again. But to offset this, the shore ice had now extended so far out that only the deepest channels were running. We could not have got aground if we had wanted to.

“At six o’clock the night had fallen; we heard the toot of a factory whistle. Five hundred miles behind us we had left Whitehorse, an outpost of civilization. We had travelled by an agency over which we had no control five hundred miles, into a wilderness that ranged beyond the ken of men. Here was an oasis. A whistle, discordant at most times, was music to us then. It sang of dangers past.

“But our danger was not past until we succeeded in stopping. To be carried beyond Dawson would be as great a calamity as to be stranded above it. There was no difference so far as the discharge of our cargo was concerned.

“The lights flashed out and a thousand times winked welcome, irresistibly my mind fell to playing with the fact; here was a world in miniature and I at the heart of it.

“The river before Dawson is broad and there is a deep eddy. Strangely enough the eddy was yet unfrozen and free of ice. We struggled into the still water and so to shore. It took us an hour’s hard labour to get there. It was joy to hear a friendly hand on shore shout: ‘All fast!’

“We went to bed and slept as long as we liked: a luxury. Arising, we found the world a riot of colour. The sun was up, the air was clear save for the steam arising from the water, and the thermometer was twenty below zero. Away out in mid-channel the ice-floes still ground persistently on their way, but round about us was ice clear, black, and resonant. We were frozen in.”

Here Mr. Bang paused and looked enquiringly at Mumsie. Uncle caught the glance and reassured him.

“Go on, Jack, we’re interested.”

“Yes, Jack, indeed we are,” added Mumsie.

“And my Little Partner?” asked he.

“Oh! I am so interested, do go on.”

“I was in Dawson. I had made one hundred and ten dollars in wages on the trip down besides twenty-five dollars, which I earned by bringing a ballot-box in from the police post one hundred miles up the river. Dawson had just enjoyed its first experience of the Franchise.

“Had I been wise I would have stayed with my friends, who prudently secured a cabin and settled down for the winter. Instead of that, I engaged a room at the principal hotel at a cost of four dollars per day, European plan. Meals cost a dollar and a half each. Then instead of borrowing a hand-sled and hauling my trunk up from the scow, as a Dawsonite would have done, I engaged a boy with a dog. The dog’s name, I remember, was ‘Sleepy’ and the youth charged two dollars. The distance, be it said, was only about two hundred yards.

“As a matter of fact, Dawson was at that time remarkably free from convention and prejudice. I had in mind to try for clerical work from the Government. Had I been seen hauling my trunk through the streets or, given my address as such and such a cabin, my chances would have been none the less, while the dollars I might have saved would have represented so much security against starvation. But perhaps my risking an extravagant bid for preferment was supported by the knowledge that I was a Canadian in a city in Canada, where the vast majority of the population was alien; also I built on the hope that as one of my life’s best friends had formerly held high administrative office in the country, but was then in South Africa fighting, I might meet with particular consideration from the authorities. I found, however, that the dispenser of Government patronage in Dawson was the open enemy of my friend. So this source of interest failed.

“A friend of a relative spoke in my behalf to the all-powerful head of the political machine, and I was advised to apply. I did so. ‘How do you vote?’ he asked. I told him I had never voted in my life, but, as he of course knew, my people voted Tory. ‘Well,’ he replied, ‘I won’t do anything for you; we have to get back at you fellows, you know.’ This represents the spirit of the Grit administration in Dawson. Those who ruled, who pulled the wires would, and did assist, and grant favours to Yankees in preference to political

opponents among their own people. And yet the Grits claim they are not pro-Yankee!

“Somehow I made the acquaintance of the ‘old man,’ one of the most remarkable characters in all the world. He was very strong in religion but weak on cleanliness; a slight, grizzled man with a stoop. He had a cabin, I had none. I had some money, he had none. Our duty to each other was obvious.

“There were eighteen hundred men starving in Dawson that winter, yet no word was uttered about the unemployed. Anyway, anyway, we were putting in the winter. We—the old man and I, we joined their ranks.

“The old man’s cabin was larger than usual and divided into two compartments. It had been badly constructed and was in very bad repair. The larger compartment had a window. This was our home; the other compartment serving as wood-shed and lumber-room.

“The first task I set myself after I took my residence there was to tidy up. A number of filthy old rags which I threw into the lumber-room turned out to be the old man’s ‘clothes.’ He was mortally offended.

“The weather was intensely cold, and in our happy home a bucket of water froze solid in a night. On waking in the morning we would find our blankets glued together by our frozen breath. I spilt some water accidentally on the floor in December, and the consequent sheet of ice lasted until February. Our stove was small and of tin; it sat in a corner. The fact that numerous holes in the chinking allowed the wind to enter, together with our very limited supply of wood, and the smallness of the stove, accounted for the coldness of the cabin. We had to haul our own wood from three miles down river, and what we then obtained was poor, as one day’s work would secure only three days’ supply.

“We used to arise at eleven and cook porridge. The old man would prepare it, always of course, after his way. I never summoned up courage to cook it my way. He would bring the water to a boil and then dump in enough oatmeal to drink up the water. The meal was never boiled and came out with the consistency of mortar. Nor was any salt added; the old man did not believe salt was good for the system. He said if the meal were boiled it would become sticky. This disgusting mess was invariably our breakfast. If our dishes were washed, even over long periods, it was I who did it. Of course, there was really no danger in leaving the dishes dirty, for they froze immediately and ill effects were thereby prevented.

“After breakfast we went down town; the old man generally to the Free Library, and I to the gambling saloons, or the shop of a merchant I knew, and then to the library. At six we would come home, cook and eat the heavy meal of the day. It consisted generally of bacon and beans, the bacon of questionable quality. Then we would travel into town again, returning to our cabin at midnight for supper and bed. Supper generally was a repetition of breakfast. Once indeed, I suggested making some slap-jacks and was allowed to carry the idea into effect. We both ate and the old man was laid up next day. Towards evening he managed to disgorge the mass and having a scientific mind, he enquired into it. He found the dough completely undigested. This has always been a wonder to me for I had no trouble with my meal and have always had a weak digestion, whereas the old man had the digestion of an ostrich.

“I don’t know what a student of hygiene would say to our diet and mode of life, but I can say my powers of digestion were never better. And our general mode of life was out of the ordinary. We never took our clothes off in going to bed. I must confess, however, that I sometimes took a bath and changed my underclothing. When I announced my intention of spending a dollar on a bath, the old man would sadly shake his head. Not that he objected to what I did with my money, but rather that he looked upon that expenditure as an insane waste.

“On Christmas day I did not seek out the old man. His philosophy was not satisfied with Christmas—although he was a great churchman.

“I enjoyed the luxury of a dinner, a special turkey dinner, costing me a dollar and a half. I entered the Northern Annex, being the restaurant connected with one of the leading gambling saloons of the city, sat down, and a plate of soup was slammed in front of me. I let it be and gazed about me. I was the only one rejoicing in a table to myself. About me were ranged human hulks and derelicts, most of them in pea-jackets, some with fur collars turned above their ears.

“As I sat musing, a man sat down at my side. His features were good, that is, they were regular. They might have been handsome had their lines been a little stronger, as it was they lacked colour. I tendered a few commonplace civilities and had them returned. I remarked on the weather; so did he. I said ‘I have been reviewing all the Christmases I have memory of’. ‘We all do it, a distressing process.’ ‘Think of the great range of Christendom,’ I said. ‘Is it not well to think that you and I are the exceptions? What joy has England had to-day and Anglo-Saxon America; a joy that would be enhanced did the partakers but view us as we sit and so by

contrast establish a fitting measure of their own good fortune.’ This was of course off at a tangent, but I wished to draw him out.

“‘I have had my mind occupied with my own Christmases my mind travelling over time rather than geography,’ he said.

“‘It is weird, is it not; from the nuts and candies in the stocking hung for Santa Claus and devoured ere the mornings light had well broken, to the well-laid table and the maiden kissed beneath the mistletoe at later hours in later years?’ I’m afraid my advances were hardly tactful and my conversation was rather stilted; but if these were so I was evidently forgiven, for my companion replied:

“‘With me but two Christmases outstand, that of 1907, and the following Christmas. Widely different as they may be I do not know which will live the longer in my memory.’

“The expression of his face told me he was suffering, and I essayed no further remark. Expectantly I waited. ‘Christmas 1908, I spent at Wind City,’ he said. The very name told of horror, Wind City being the place where a number of adventurers had wintered two years before. It is a name at which the strong men who know shudder.

“‘I spent the day digging a grave for the best Pal a man ever had. The tools I used I bought in England, fondly picturing the wealth they would win me.’

“He knew the simple facts would convey to me the story of the grave that covers the body of the one and the heart of the other. As we ate the food that had been served us, I watched my companion’s face and while no twitching disturbed its calm I knew, something told me, the desire to unburden his mind was strong in him.

“He told me of that last Christmas day at home; of old mater who had caught the spirit and shared his optimism. To them the Klondike was—as to all of us—the Promised Land. And there was the girl steady and trusting; the kind that will go through fire and water for her man. She was penniless. You know the old story. ‘Behold the sequel!’ he said of a sudden.” As he spoke Mr. Bang’s face was full of sympathy.

“So ended our dinner. Such too often is life.

“I frequently met Tom Dahlmun afterwards and we became friendly. One day I learned of work at Gold Run Creek, forty-five miles from Dawson, and engaged employment for two.

“Tom and I made an appointment to set out on foot for the scene of our labours. He did not turn up on time; I waited, then went on alone. The next thing I heard he was dead. He had gone to work on Hold Hill and had died of spinal meningitis; but I guess his malady was sheer want. Many a good man has starved. These are hardly thoughts for Christmas.”

We all remained silent.

“This little story of poor Tom has no more moral than that. My only justification for telling it is that when I’m particularly happy at Christmas, it always comes to mind there are so many good fellows just like Tom.”

“It was a strange spirit,” went on Mr. Bang, “that animated Dawson’s legion, an unreasonable, unwise spirit; yet not without beauty. Many of the starving host could have had credit from the merchants, yet they refrained from asking it. Personal pride restrained them. They were good business risks and they knew it. With the return of summer, gold would come from the creeks and wages would be high; yet these rough diamonds of fellows would not run the risk lest fortune’s hazardous there, should intervene and prevent their settling.”

And that was the end of Mr. Bang’s narrative, which made me think.

DECEMBER 26TH.

I have had such a time writing Mr. Bang’s narrative, hours last night and hours to-day. For one thing this writing keeps me from being a burden on Mumsie. Uncle says there will be nothing doing in society between Christmas and the New Year. I wonder why he said this.

Last night as I lay in bed I thought of many things. I certainly don’t wish to go West, where the manhood is of the type of Mr. Bang. Too rough! Too unrefined! This is my world in the East, a gentleworld, where the men instead of struggling for rude wealth, help the girls to enjoy themselves. I must get into society; I’m determined on that. I won’t be put off by Jack’s or Uncle’s prejudices, but I must act discreetly, even covertly. I must make friends with Mrs. Mount and her set. I know such things can be done. Uncle gave me a hint when he said excellence in sport was a qualification. How am I to learn to skate, to waltz? Mr. Bang must teach me.

So this morning, notwithstanding it was Sunday, I started a discussion by saying I wished to learn to waltz. The upshot was as I hoped—Mr. Bang offered to take me skating at Badger Lake.

The cars took us there. The small boy was much in evidence, but this had its compensation in that it lessened the probability of any nice people

being there and seeing me with my cavalier. I know this would sound to another extremely snobbish, but I realize that, as Mr. Bang has been a visitor to this city a number of times, and has not been taken up, my chances will be lessened if I am seen too much with him. If Mr. Bang is an example of manly virtue, if he lacks “side” and affectation, and is guiltless of all those foibles he and Uncle condemn in others, I can’t say much for his success socially.

He was very kind and quite a proficient teacher, and I believe I made progress.

I have told Mumsie I am writing a book and told her not to tell anybody at all, on her word of honour and all that. This minimizes the chances of discovery by the men folk.

DECEMBER 27TH.

This morning at breakfast Uncle passed me over the portion of the paper which contains the social news. As he did so, his face wore a teasing smile and his eyes twinkled. I was unable to with-hold the little cry that sprang to my lips as I read,—“An addition to the coterie of pretty maids (for whom this city is justly famous) who will adorn our society this winter is Miss Elsie Travers, the guest of Mr. and Mrs. George Somers, Iroquois Avenue.”

“Oh! Mumsie, listen to this,” I cried, and read it out. We all laughed; but how proud I felt. I felt myself colouring to the roots of my hair. After such a pretty notice, I hope I shall find social progress easy.

“Elsie,” said Mumsie, beaming, “I congratulate you. My Micawber here and I will be completely outdistanced.”

“Elsie, I’m proud of you,” Uncle endorsed.

I hope he was sincere—he was certainly kind enough.

Mr. Bang said nothing. I dislike him!

My eyes passed down the column and were again arrested. “Mrs. Lien has issued invitations to the younger set to a dance at her home on New Year’s Eve.” No invitation had come for me; my heart sank.

Again I read the notice aloud.

“No doubt a very swell affair,” suggested Uncle, rather cynically.

“I must get you an invitation,” said Mumsie.

“Me! an invitation!” I exclaimed. “Can you get me an invitation?”

"I can ask for one. In the old days——"

"Don't do it, Auntie," cut in Bang.

"Why not?" I demanded. Why should this beast of a man interfere with me and my joys and ambitions?

"Because," and he looked at me with the most exasperating smile I have ever seen on a man's face, "I can arrange it—I can ask Mrs. Malone."

I gasped and then I wilted. I hope I did not display the anger I had felt.

"That would do nicely," agreed Mumsie. "Good idea."

Whatever I had done or whatever misdirected temper I displayed, I must see it through, so I asked, with what I hoped was a sincere smile:

"That would be so kind of you Mr. Bang, but who is Mrs. Malone that she does as you wish?"

"Mrs. Malone happens to be the society editress of the *Telegraph*, and when she suggests a social favour it is generally acted upon." He was certainly frank enough and natural. "Besides, something you may well be excused for not knowing, Mrs. Lien clapped eyes on me the other day. If I mistake not she knows I am your fellow guest, and if Auntie asks an invitation for you, it will carry with it a suggestion for me, which I don't want at any cost. Mrs. Malone will discreetly acquaint Mrs. Lien with the fact that I leave for Toronto on New Year's Eve."

Mr. Bang was more good natured at the close of his big speech, but did the world ever know such another man?

No more was said, and Mr. Bang went with Uncle to town; I to my room. About lunch-time the telephone rang and Mumsie was told by Mrs. Lien that an invitation for me was on the way.

In the afternoon I walked out with Mumsie and we ended up at the Queen Charlotte tea-rooms. Whom should we meet there but Mrs. Bassett and Ethel? Of course we joined them. In two minutes Mrs. Bassett was pouring out a tale of woe about her cook who was Scotch and untidy. The standard topic of respectable society seems to be the servant question.

"Don't talk to me about servants—old country servants, at least the kind we get out here, are exasperating, and the native-born domestic has ceased to exist. I'm all right now, but a month ago I had a terror—English. She wore white, transparent stockings, and tennis shoes about the house and, above deck, low neck dresses. I told her she must alter her attire, and she

used up a bottle of my blacking transforming her tennis shoes. As to rising she was another Elsie Marley. One morning Mr. Somers met her on the stairs late as usual, and told her he was about to take her breakfast up to her. This did not affect her in the least for next day she admired a brooch I was wearing. ‘What a nice brooch,’ she exclaimed, ‘are the stones real?’ ”

This sort of talk went on until in came Mrs. Mount. I was so glad, for although Mrs. Bassett was warming up, she was yet leagues behind Mrs. Mount in her appeal to my interest. Imagine my joy, therefore, when I saw Mrs. Mount making directly towards us. She bounced up to our table and sat down, giving an order to a waitress as she did so. “So glad to see you both,” she gushed, evidently viewing Ethel and myself as nonentities or not viewing us at all, “Doris and I are sailing on the *Carmania* from New York for the Mediterranean on January 15th; and, do you know, really, it is such a fag. There’s Mrs. Lien’s ball on New Year’s Eve. Of course Doris must have a new dress and possibly I may give a dance too, before we sail. I suppose you girls have been invited?” And we were for the first time honoured by her notice.

“They both are going,” replied Mumsie.

“Mrs. Lien is so kind; and, after all, there is nothing like the old families, provided there is go in them.”

I could see however, she was surprised at my being invited.

“What I was going to say is that I will take this opportunity of saying good-bye.”

“You like Italy?” I could see Mumsie was brimming with merriment.

“Yes, I like Italy,” she threw her head back as if to bring her chin into special prominence. “But, now it is so beastly common, full of trippers, German and American. One meets them everywhere and cannot get away from them. Their ways are”—she paused for the word—“uncouth. Naples?—No! Rome?—No! Florence? Yes. Florence has the best tea-room in Europe.”

“Venice must be very interesting,” suggested Mrs. Bassett, with a half sigh that told me she felt her prospects of seeing Italy were remote, and her desire to do so great, “the Palace of the Doges,—the Lion of St. Mark.”

“Venice is no place to go to; most disappointing. There is not a decent tea-room in the place.”

Mumsie seemed amused at this, and Ethel Bassett grinned broadly. After this last delivery the lady with a few more gushes shook hands with us all and beamed upon Ethel and me. Possibly this was by way of recompense for her earlier slight.

Mrs. Mount seems a woman of whims; no doubt is of a nervous disposition. At the rink only two days ago she was, I am sure, on the verge of declaring herself my friend. To-day she announces she is off to Europe and treats me as if she had never seen me before.

I waited until soup was finished at dinner to-night ere I thanked Mr. Bang for his good offices. "Possibly you have more than that to thank him for," suggested Mumsie.

"I have thanked him for the skins," I replied.

"Possibly there is something else," she added.

I looked at my benefactor but his face was inscrutable. He evidently had no desire to have this line of conversation pursued, for he put in:

"Mrs. Malone is one of the few women in this city for whom I have a regard."

"Oh!" I said. I couldn't help it. A man has no right suddenly to make that sort of statement.

"She has had a hard time of it," cried Uncle, "drunken husband—one of the old families—and has been forced to fight her way by writing trash for the society columns,——"

"Mrs. Malone is a good friend, and a good woman, and you know you always read the social columns," asserted Mumsie interrupting her husband.

"Of course, to laugh at——"

"You read it, nevertheless; and therefore justify those columns in the newspaper."

"A newspaper is supposed to tell the news—the news!" he emphasized.

"Isn't the social column news?"

"No. It's a free advertising column for social climbers."

"Which you and everybody else reads, either because of your gaping curiosity, or because you are a cynical old stick."

"Exactly!"

This time Mumsie had downed Uncle beautifully and I was glad. Uncle did not seem to mind, however, for he turned to me and continued:

“Remember, my dear, as your young mind seems set upon these vain things, Mrs. Malone is a woman who can make or break the social future of any boy or girl in this city. That is why she can command almost any invitation she cares to ask for. Our lady society-writers on the whole, and Mrs. Malone in particular, are, anyhow, just.”

“They are, and kindly too,” agreed Mr. Bang. “Of course, they display their personal bias occasionally; they would not be human, if they didn’t. I know one girl at least who first gained a reputation as a belle and then won a rich husband through Mrs. Malone’s good offices.”

“Evidently Mrs. Malone is not as exacting as you are,” I ventured.

“The girl’s mother happens to be an old friend of Mrs. Malone’s,” retorted Mr. Bang with unnecessary severity. “The newspapers as a rule give their society reporters free scope,” he went on, “they being awake enough not to overlook the wives and daughters of good advertisers. But occasionally notices are inspired. I know this because of experiences I gained when I attended a public ball in Toronto. I did not know many of the ladies present, as is to be supposed; but outside the few I danced with, saw a rather pretty girl I knew. I did not ask her to dance for the reason I did not think her people amounted to much. Next day’s paper contained a triumphant account of this damsel’s appearance, etc., etc., and I felt sorry I had not asked her to dance, and then I knew myself to be a snob.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed.

“And you certainly were!” said Mumsie.

“Never mind, Jack,” laughed Uncle, “you have anyhow the strength to confess your old weakness.”

“A day or two later I met the lady who puts together the society news for that particular paper. The ball came up for discussion, and I introduced the subject of the belle. ‘Oh, yes, quite pretty, is she not? I do not know her myself; she is a friend of our general manager’s, who asked me to notice her favourably,’ was my friend’s reply. This actually consoled me,” he went on, “but I could not absolve myself of snobbishness.”

“And a knowledge of the fault in yourself enables you to remark it in others,” I said, not caring much if I offended or not.

“That’s it exactly. Isn’t Little Partner getting severe?” he said. “Snobbery is always disgusting.”

This was not the answer I had anticipated. I could only smile in answer; what else could I do? Mumsie smiled too, while Mr. Bang naively added, “Had I had an English Public School education, I should have had it knocked out of me in my boyhood. Snobbishness is an inherent human failing. It is only the truly Christlike spirit that is free from it.”

This kaleidoscopic character had given himself another turn and presented a new picture. I had never recognized in him religious inclinations, and had gathered from his tirades against people in high places, that his was a democratic nature. Mumsie evidently had a similar impression, for she asked:

“How comes it, Jack, that you have developed such a high regard for the English, and please, when did you take religion?”

“I have not ‘taken’ religion as the cynical call it, but Christ seems to me the perfect man, free from every vice and worldliness and meanness—and looked at in the light of His ideal what a paltry organization your society is.”

“And the Englishman?”

“We Canadians, as boys in the process of ancestor worship, look upon the Englishman as a superior being. As youths we meet the remittance-man and consider ourselves infinitely his superior. As grown men we recognize the salt of the earth to be the English. And”—he paused—“it is the judgment of grown manhood that counts.”

“How is Timkins?” asked Uncle with an aggression that displayed a marked desire to change the subject, “is he a millionaire yet?”

“He is getting on that way.”

“And, who is Mr. Timkins?” I asked, interested in anyone with whom this extraordinary Bang was acquainted.

“Timkins is of Jack’s school of philosophy—Jack, tell your Little Partner about Timkins.”

“Ha! Timkins is a chap, who has been through the mill out West. He reads the news of the stock-market, knows the especial affiliations of each newspaper, broker, and many of the reporters. He works on the theory that all newspaper talk in the stock-market is inspired, and governs himself accordingly—and makes money.” Mr. Bang looked at Mumsie and then at me somewhat defiantly.

“You means he gambles in the market!” suggested Mumsie.

“Auntie,” replied Mr. Bang with mock gravity, (I assume it was affected, though it seemed so real) “I’m afraid you stick to the respectable at any and every cost. This is the great Canadian tendency.” Turning to me, he continued, (and I put down his words as I am able, for I am not used to the phrases of the market, but I think I have it). “According to Mr. Timkins, the tendency people have to cater to the respectable is played upon by those who sell stocks. A purchaser comes to a broker with money he wishes to employ. Nine times out of ten he is a buyer and probably names an issue or two that have suggested themselves to him. Nine times out of ten, the broker has special affiliations, so he hedges the customer about with one objection after another, until he has him on the path he wishes. In this process, if all else fails, the broker intimates that the course the customer would pursue would be gambling, shrugs his shoulders and leaves the old reliable spirit of respectability to do the rest.”

“And—the rest?” asked Uncle.

“Is that the customer buys what the broker wishes him to buy—and loses.”

“Always?” asked Mumsie. “You are much too positive, Jack.”

“Well, Auntie, I think I’m justified. People who follow the advice of those so-called brokers lose nineteen times out of twenty; statistics show it.”

“Why ‘so-called’ brokers?”

“Because the term broker means one who buys and sells on commission, but many of our brokers are really what in England is called a jobber, who speculate for themselves and underwriters.

“And your friend Mr. Timkins?”

“Plays a lone hand and wins. He is the twentieth or the hundredth, as the case may be.”

“I don’t think that is a very respectable way to make money,” objected Mumsie.

“If you take the ordinary broker’s advice, there is no fear of your making money—according to Timkins.”

“Bother Timkins!”

“People make money selling stocks, not buying them.”

“You mean short selling?” asked Uncle becoming interested.

“Either short selling or promoting, and there is really not much difference.”

“I never could get at the bottom of this short selling, do tell me what it means?”

“I have told you often,” Uncle said to his wife. “No woman has ever been able to understand it and not overly many men. In ordinary commerce a man buys and sells later: the short seller in the market, or the bear, sells first and buys afterwards: it is the simple reversal of a simple process.”

“But it’s gambling, I’ve read so in the papers,” protested Mumsie.

“So are lots of things; in fact, it is a rare process in this world that is not a gamble,” replied Mr. Bang with heat. “I know the whole argument, but let me say that anyone who buys a stock because he thinks it will go up is as much of a gambler as he who sells it because he thinks it will go down. In England, where the fundamentals are sought for, and the people are not so much humbugged as they are here, the prejudice against ‘selling a bear’ in the market is unknown.”

“You’re joking.”

“Indeed I am not: our land is filled with milk-fed sophistries and the men who propagate them. The ordinary mind is incapable of matching the processes of the wit of our stock exchanges. Let us examine the processes of one of our millionaires. He buys a water-power for a trifle: organizes it into a stock company, and sells stock to the widow and orphan at an advance of anywhere from a hundred to a thousand per cent. profit. He makes his money not because he holds the stock, but because he sells it—because the public buys it.”

“That sounds reasonable,” grimly asserted Uncle.

“But the interesting study is that of the public. The promoter makes a grant of say, \$50,000 to a charity. The foolish woman in the country, doctor, or lawyer, reasons that one who would give so much to the public must be really very godly and would not cheat a poor body, so he or she puts money into any old proposition such philanthropists advance. This, I fancy, is token of the shallowness of the ordinary mind in financial matters, and such shallowness explains why some men easily accumulate wealth, the result of labour.”

I believe Mr. Bang can see no good in anybody or anything, his is—in spite of his personal kindness, like the gift of the furs—a narrow nature. Mumsie, I am sure, was not convinced, no more was I; probably she remained silent out of weariness.

“Jack, you certainly would not increase your popularity by publishing such statements,” said Uncle.

“I know that well. Timkins tried it with the result that throughout the financial districts every man’s voice was against him. When you cannot refute a man’s statement, the next thing to do is drown it with calumny. The inference the public draws is that a liar cannot speak the truth, or a dishonest man honest, or a fool occasionally wise. So the thing to do is to persuade the public that one’s enemy is a liar, a rascal or a fool.”

“But, what has become of Timkins?”

“He fell into bad ways; he misjudged the limitations of *The Tarbrush*, the sheet to which he contributed, and wrote up the President of a rascally mining promotion. The President of the Mining Company was also President of a social club to which the editor and proprietor were ambitious members. In the process of re-establishing themselves the two jelly-fish wrote a letter of apology to the injured president, promising to receive no more communications from the offender. That illustrates the processes of a certain type of financial newspaper, for, after all, the writer was not responsible, as the article had passed a sub-editor.”

“And Timkins?”

“Timkins will go to London. As a budding author he can establish himself there. All Canadian writers, as soon as they begin to gain a footing in the literary world here, go to England. Canada is a land whose people do not seem to trust their own.”

I am weary—it has been the most difficult job I ever knew—of writing all these expressions of Mr. Bang’s, but doing so is anyhow practice for the book I am some day to write. How agreeable a character he would be, did he say pleasant things, instead of unpleasant; were he constructive, instead of a puller-down. But as I have decided before, he would never do in a novel—never. And now about novels. Mr. Bang appears to have opinions on all subjects. I thought, therefore, I would ask him what he knows about novel writing.

But before I could frame the question, Mumsie began to tell of her gossip in the tea-room and of having related the story of the drowsy

domestic.

“How old was she?” asked Mr. Bang.

“About twenty-five,” Mumsie replied patiently, though apparently not a little surprised at the enquiry.

“It might not have been the girl’s fault at all: extreme drowsiness is often developed in a change of climate, especially in the case of young people, and possibly the girl was not accustomed to hard work——”

“She never did enough around here to keep herself warm,” retorted Uncle. “You can find much more worthy objects for your sympathy, my boy.”

Advancing obscure and outlandish theories is evidently a habit with Mr. Bang.

Mumsie reported Mrs. Mount’s conversation. Uncle and Mr. Bang roared when they heard what she said about the tea-rooms. I’m afraid there is some point in that I don’t quite see: I shall not ask, because to do so would display ignorance, but what could be more natural than that a lady travelling should visit especially those cities with the nice tea-rooms?

“What is your idea of the Mediterranean trip?” Uncle asked, looking towards Mr. Bang. I verily believe Uncle asked the question to draw him out, for my especial benefit. How Uncle could dream of my being entertained by such expressions of ill-nature I don’t know. I hope he is not slyly poking fun at me.

“The Mediterranean trip is a most beneficial experience for a Canadian: it teaches him to value his own country. ‘Thank God I live in Canada,’ is the exclamation of most of us, as we view the filth of Naples, hear its noise, and suffer from its chilling winds, when the weather is mean.”

“See Naples and die,” quoted Uncle.

“Among my grandfather’s papers,” said Mr. Bang, “is a letter from one of his staff when on a visit to Naples in 1823. The writer says he would value the place more, if there was less noise and more honesty.”

“There is Pompeii,” suggested Mumsie. “That’s some compensation.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Bang reflectively, “there is Pompeii. Pompeii will always remind me of Captain Jinks, an English gentleman-guide, who according to his own account, had already gone through two fortunes, and, unsatisfied with past exploits, wanted to go through mine.”

Mr. Bang paused for us to laugh, though my mirth must have sounded hollow, for I merely followed Uncle's example. I could not see anything clever in the remark.

"The vast majority of people," Mr. Bang continued, "who go to Italy in the winter are of the Mrs. Mount type, mere slaves of silly fashion. Jinks told me of a Yankee, who gave him a commission at five hundred dollars, to write a genealogy, tracing his descent from a citizen of Pompeii, who, as a butcher, flourished previous to A.D. 78. The only fact upon which the descent was to be based was a fancied similarity of names."

Now was my chance; I cut in.

"It is a puzzle to me, Mr. Bang, that with all your varied experiences, you have never attempted to write a book."

"He has literary ideas too," seconded Mumsie, evidently approving of my attempt at conversation.

"Perhaps, some day," gravely responded the adventurer, "in the meantime I am supplying Timkins with mighty thoughts."

"Drat Timkins, but if it must be Timkins, what has he to say on book building?"

"Have a story and tell it, use simple language and be consistent, and above all make your characters stand out. That's his gospel. No matter how you do it, make each character announce himself in the first sentence he utters; and maintain it no matter if your character is like nothing on the earth above, and talks a dialect that never was uttered by tongue of man, make him say, 'It is I, Jacques, who says it.' "

"Jack has, as always, the right idea," said Uncle.

"Oh you men!" said Auntie.

"In painting and sculpture it is the same. The great masters, both with the brush and the chisel, formed lines out of proportion and introduced figures in impossible positions, but they told their story, they reached their aim. So with letters."

"And then out West we have the animal fakers. Lord! how the men of the wilds do hate those fellows who hear the dear beasts talk like Sunday teachers."

"They make lots of money," suggested Uncle, ever practical.

"So they do, and so do the chaps who manufacture quack medicines."

I won't write any more of this dialogue; I'm tired and it is all really much the same. I really wonder more and more as the days go by, why I bother over Mr. Bang. I suppose I give him more space than Uncle for two reasons; one, because he says more; secondly, because his aggressive manner impresses itself upon me. I dislike the man exceedingly.

But what he said about writing, I have taken to heart. Let me analyze my diary to date. Of characters I have Mumsie first. Then Uncle and Mr. Bang—one the same character as the other, only more so. I'll leave Uncle out of it as a character, and hold out Mr. Bang. Then there's Mrs. Mount. She is a character certainly. And then I believe I am a character too.

One, two, three, four real, live characters, that would do for a story. If Mr. Bang would only elope, or commit a murder, or flare-up in some way, I might make this into something. As it is there is too much philosophy and talk in this diary and too little action. However, Mrs. Lien's party is coming, and with the passing of New Year's Day society will get under way again. I wonder what Mumsie was hinting at in suggesting that I had something more for which my thanks were due to Mr. Bang. Could it be—did he inspire that notice in the newspaper—ask Mrs. Malone to insert it. Had he wished to please me he could not have done better, but then why is he inconsistent? He condemns social ambition and conceit in others. Why should he encourage it in me?

The furs are to be home to-morrow evening.

DECEMBER 28TH.

"I wish you all to come and see a hockey match with me to-night," said Mr. Bang, at breakfast.

"The Maple Leafs against the Beavers?" enquired Uncle.

"Yes."

"I don't think I should care to go," said Mumsie. "I must do a lot of running round this afternoon——"

"And I have some reading which I must do and which I have put off already too long, but you and Elsie go." This from Uncle. It struck me that he was fibbing and that Mumsie would not have been too tired had she really wished to go, or had not a reason for staying away.

"I don't think I should like to go. Hockey does not interest me," I ventured.

"Have you ever seen a real hockey match?" Mr. Bang asked.

"I have seen the school boys playing it on the ice at home."

"That's not real hockey," said Uncle looking at me over his glasses, with his dear, kindly twinkle. "You had better accept Jack's invitation; it will be a grand sight. There'll be thousands there and the game should be one of the best of the season."

"The first of the Champion series," said Mr. Bang.

"Do go, Elsie, I'm sure you'll enjoy it," persuaded Mumsie.

"There'll be thousands there?" I asked weakly.

"There will be three or four thousand," replied Uncle.

"Anything up to ten thousand," Mr. Bang added.

I agreed to go.

Much shouting seemed to make the great rink shake, as we entered; shout after shout went up. The giant building seemed to vibrate with noise.

Mr. Bang grasped my arm and struggled through the swaying mass of people crowding the entrances; and when I got inside I found myself beneath a great vaulted roof ribbed by arches bearing a myriad of electric lights.

Around the ice a great amphitheatre was ranged, rising till it met the roof; and the whole was drawn on such magnitude and the occupants of the seats were so densely numerous, that in nearly every direction I found it impossible to pick out individuals. I knew those black and mottled masses ranged about me were human beings, closely packed, because they could be nothing else, and the noise was human, but otherwise they were merely a vague, vast mass.

We found our seats, they were behind two young men, who kept up an almost continuous shouting, with frequent gesticulation. I suppose throwing the arms about might be properly called gesticulating.

When not giving vent to their exuberance, they exchanged remarks in voices that were hoarse, from liquor or shouting, possibly from both.

Only vaguely, at first, could I make out the contest. Figures were rushing about at marvellous speed, doubling back, twisting, circling. Sticks were banging, skates were clashing, and men were tumbling.

As my eyes became accustomed to the light I made out the costumes of the players: some were in pale blue with white stripes, the others in red with

black stripes. Mr. Bang volunteered the information that the players in blue were the Beavers, and those in red the Maple Leafs. My eyes began to mark the movements and exploits of two of the players, one was a great fat Maple Leaf, evidently known as Buster; the other a slight, wiry, nimble, scurrying, dashing, eminently agile, fair-haired youth, belonging to the Beavers. "Go it, Lien, well done, Beavers, lean to it," shouted the enthusiasts.

The name struck me, I whispered an enquiry.

"He is Mrs. Lien's son," said my companion.

Instinctively I named the fat man Froggy. Buster might do for the populace, but to me he appeared a great, fat frog. No doubt Buster was a name applied when his present proportions were less. His movements were those of a frog; in skating he held his legs far apart and drew them after him, skate edge to ice. He was "Back" on his side, a sort of outpost to the goal-keeper. His movements were deliberate and seldom hurried, at least they were performed in a matter of fact sort of way, yet they were wonderfully effective.

Clashes between Lien and Froggy were frequent. In fact the game seemed to be carried on through the strivings of these two. The movements of the forwards were too quick almost for the eye to follow, but out of the confusion Lien would dart, manoeuvring the puck. Now he would slam it against the side boards and dodging his opponents, pick it up and on towards the goal and the obtruding Froggy. Again he would carry it down the middle of the rink, feinting, feigning, dodging: he was simply marvellous. Soon I too was breathless with excitement and felt glad the two young men made so much noise, for my enthusiasm matched theirs. Even the infection carried to my companion, as shown by his fixed attention and occasional shout of approval or groan of dismay.

Once the Leafs carried the puck close upon the goal of the Beavers and the raid ended in a grand mêlée. Out of this darted Lien with the puck, with two swift raiders after him. The whole sheet of ice was clear save for Froggy and the goal-keeper. Blows fell upon Lien's stick and bodies bumped against him, but he managed to worm his way through. Then he was forced against the right side of the rink, and it looked as if he would be either checked or compelled to resort to the dangerous expedient of bumping the puck into the boards. His opponents closed in, and he manoeuvred his club to dash the puck against the boards.

But it was a feint. So quick that eye could scarce follow the move, he twitched the puck into the middle of the ice, jumped over an opponent's

club, and picking up the puck again, was off. The cheer that went up seemed as if it would lift the roof, friend and foe seemed to combine in frenzy. In a second he was upon Froggy, my heart stood still. For the first time he eluded him and shot the puck at goal. The cheering was frantic, evidently anticipating a victory. But not yet. The puck was met by one of the goal-keepers and although young Lien threw himself against the goal-keeper, as if to carry puck and man together in the onslaught, the desperate recourse was of no avail. With his skate the goal-keeper knocked away the puck and a friendly stick sent it spinning behind the goal. Everybody, including myself, cheered.

“A fast game,” murmured my companion. “How do you like it?”

“It’s grand, Oh! I adore it—the excitement,” and I smiled. It was the first time I had felt cordial towards him.

Almost at once after the unsuccessful try the puck was at the Beavers’ goal, threatening it—occasion for more shouting. What a fast game hockey is! How exhilarating to watch! How I envied those boys. What excitement, what exhilaration it must be for them! Here was fame spontaneous, overwhelming, real. This was their world, much what the social world would be to me,—I hoped.

Time was called and the cheering fell to a subdued murmur. The players left the ice for their dressing-rooms. The first period was over—no score.

The interval, of course, was devoted to conversation, but I used the opportunity to look about me.

I could see people, no doubt in society, women well and fashionably dressed, men prosperous-looking and intelligent. But my opportunities of observation were extremely limited, extending only to right and left of me a small distance, in front of me and behind. Of course, it would not be good form to stare over my shoulder too often. The opposite side of the amphitheatre and the ends were too far distant for exact observation.

“Say, I tell you, this is some game,” I heard one flashy young man say to the other.

“That ain’t no lie,” replied his companion.

“First period gone, and no score!”

“That’s going some.”

“Lien is right up to the mark; say that fellow could get five thousand dollars a season if he turned professional.”

“That ain’t no lie neither, but say, what’s the use of money to a guy like that, his father’s got lots.”

“They say his father’s father stole it from the ‘boobs’.”

“I guess that ain’t no dream. Most fellows what get money steals it anyway one way or another.”

“Cornering hockey tickets is stealing money I say, or makin’ a feller stand in line all night to pay two dollars and a half each for them ain’t no better. Tickets were bringin’ ten dollars apiece at five o’clock this afternoon.”

Imagine paying ten dollars, or even two dollars and a half, to see a hockey match, and my companion must have paid well for his, for he did not purchase until to-day. I had thought the cost of admission must have been twenty-five cents at the most; and the thousands present! I am afraid Mr. Bang is extravagant.

The intermission ended and again the sides “faced off.” A clash of sticks, a scraping of skates and the game was on. The crowd gave a shout, evidently for practice, possibly it was exultation that again something was doing, for in hockey something is doing every minute.

In the second period Lien made one of the earliest drives; he picked the puck out of the initial scrimmage and got away with it. Of course much noise was made. I believe our people like to work themselves into a frenzy, noise being both the cause and the expression of that condition.

The second period was even more swift and exciting than the first; and what an excitement there was when Lien finally scored a goal! A moment before he had fallen, tripped over another player’s skate and sprawled at full length over the ice and lay as if stunned. No doubt he was. But waking he caught sight of the puck coming towards him. He jumped to his feet, made a dash on goal, outwitted Froggy and landed the puck. What a cheer there was! What yelling, shouting, cat-calls, and the hammering of hockey sticks against the boards that bounded the ice! How proud I felt, for I had glued my sympathy to Lien, not that I cared for his mother, but it was that I knew something of him and I disliked Froggy, and also (perhaps this was the most potent influence) I felt my companion’s interest was with the Leafs and against Lien.

As I watched the continuance of the battle, the raging, storming men, charging and clashing through entangled sticks and ringing skates, I found

my mind occupied with the problem of whether Mr. Bang's championing of the Leafs was due to predilections for them, or to mere opposition.

The finish came, the Beavers away in the lead and Lien the darling of the populace. With the close of the contest a stream of figures jumped over the boards to the ice and crowded round the players, and in me was awakened a spirit of pride, as I noticed the marked demonstrations directed towards Lien.

Slowly the masses moved towards the exits. The shoutings had died away and in its place was the shuffling of feet and the clatter of conversation. With my cavalier I passed towards the street.

A woman hailed Mr. Bang; he turned to her. She had a clever face, with kind eyes and was dressed in workable, rather than fashionable clothes.

"So this is your Little Partner; well, she's all you said of her." She beamed at me.

"Yes, this is she," and turning to me, Mr. Bang said, "Let me introduce you to Mrs. Malone."

I greeted Mrs. Malone with warmth; had she not spoken well of me, and did not Uncle say she could make or break any boy or girl in the social world.

"Wasn't he lovely?" I asked with enthusiasm.

"You mean Charlie Lien? Yes, he's a wonderful boy if he does not get his head turned. I suppose this was quite a novelty to you?" Mrs. Malone accompanied the question with a smile, so good natured that her question did not appear the least patronizing.

"Believe me, she is quite a fan," put in Mr. Bang, whereat I laughed.

We entered the street and as we did so great gusts of snow-laden wind came down. A blizzard had got up during the process of the game and drove against us in breath-taking, blinding swirls.

"How are you going to get home?" asked my cavalier of his jolly friend.

"Walk," she answered.

"Walking through the storm is fine fun for the young and active——"

"But grass widows of uncertain age had better take a cab, eh?"

"I should think so." How horribly frank Mr. Bang is; but then Mrs. Malone seemed to take it as a joke. "Wait here and see if I can engage one,"

and away he went leaving me with her. We tried to put our backs against the storm but this ended in our tramping round and round, for the immense building seemed so to twist the wind that it came from every direction at once.

“Glorious, isn’t it?” laughed Mrs. Malone.

“Yes,” I gasped.

“There is not a cab to be had,” announced the spectral figure of Mr. Bang, as he loomed up out of the storm. “We’ll see you home; you’re good for it, are you not, Little Partner?”

So we, notwithstanding her protests, walked home with Mrs. Malone and sought temporary refuge in her flat, whence Mr. Bang telephoned for a sleigh and in due course he and I arrived home. Mrs. Malone kissed me as I left her, so no doubt I have a place in her regard, even after all allowance is made for the warmth of her Irish heart.

I lay long awake glowing with warmth, the reaction after our struggle through the storm, and with satisfaction at being snug in bed; while outside the storm raged.

DECEMBER 29TH.

This morning at breakfast I noticed Mumsie look puzzled as she read a letter she had just received. Then my eye caught that of Uncle’s and he, too, read his wife’s face.

“What have you got?” asked he.

Mumsie sighed.

“Anything serious, your death warrant?”

“Just a letter from Mary.”

“Good Lord!” exclaimed Mr. Bang. “What does she want now?”

“She does not say she wishes for anything,” replied Mumsie.

“She never does,” retorted Mr. Bang.

“Let us have it,” suggested Uncle.

“My dear Aunt Bell: It was so sweet of you to remember me at Christmas: (I sent her a card only) it is so satisfactory to know one is not forgotten. (I send her a card every Christmas, but this is the only time she has ever acknowledged one.) The children had a splendid time, especially Jessie. Lawrence is yet too young to anticipate his joys or measure their

fulness. Everybody was so good to them. Jessie was enraptured with the doll Jack sent her, and Lawrence makes no end of a row with his horn. James put up with it over Christmas day, but since then, insists we hide it when he is at home.

“How is dear Jack? I should like so much to see the dear boy. It is so nice too, that Uncle takes such an interest in him. I wonder when I shall see him again.

“With love to all, I remain,

“Affectionately yours,

“Mary.”

“That is plain as day,” commented Mr. Bang. “She wishes to pay you a visit or come to town for some reason or other, possibly to do some shopping.”

“Who is Mary,” I enquired, full of wonder at such open criticism, even from Mr. Bang. I cannot help asking questions.

“My sister,” coldly replied Mr. Bang, “has a husband, a civil servant, named James Strickland. Sister Mary is respectable, and the personification of propriety.”

There seemed to me bitterness in Mr. Bang’s tone.

“I fancy Jack is right. Mary wishes to pay us a visit,” declared Uncle in a matter of fact tone.

“What shall I do?” asked Mumsie absentmindedly.

“Ask her to come,” replied he with decision.

“Where can I put her?” Mumsie then asked, wrinkling her forehead.

“Give her my room, put me anywhere, or I can go to an hotel,” said Mr. Bang.

“You’ll stay right here,” said Uncle. “She’ll only want one room, even if she brings the children. Hope she does, I’d like to see ’em.”

“I’ll give up my room if you have any other place to put me,” I said, with a forced cheerfulness, for the idea of giving up my room was really unpleasant.

“I’ll write and ask her and the children, perhaps she does not really wish to come.”

“Auntie, I wager you a box of candy she comes,” declared Mr. Bang.

To-morrow evening is Skating Club night. Mr. Bang's friend Mr. Timkins has put him up there, and for some time at least I shall have entree. So it would be well for me to practise waltzing. But Badger Lake would be covered with the snow of last night's storm. Somehow or other I blurted out my desires and fears at breakfast.

Mr. Bang knew of a rink we could go to. No, it was not the hockey rink, nor the Skating Club rink, but another. I wonder why Mr. Bang is so attentive to Me. I surely am not overly polite to him. Why is he so patient—so unnaturally so, it almost seems? I wonder if he will marry. Our personalities—his and mine—are far from being parallel, so that I am safe. What keeps him east? He says business, and, indeed, he leaves for Toronto on New Year's Eve. If he wants a wife, I should suggest his addressing his attention to Ethel Bassett. She is the type of womanhood of which he approves. I cannot admire dowdiness myself.

Again, Mr. Bang's bitterness puzzles me. Fancy anyone disliking a sister enough to speak of her as he spoke. I determined upon asking him why it should be so, and as we walked to the rink I did so.

"Do I?" he cried. "I'm sorry if I appear bitter, bitter is an ugly word but no doubt I have earned it, if you, who are my friend, find bitterness in my words. Sister Mary is a type—one of those scheming women, scheming in harmless little ways, who fancies herself clever, when she is really most transparent. I think you may accept it as an axiom, that the average of us are more adept at seeing through the schemes of others than covering up one's own designs. Sister Mary had a great deal to do with bringing me up; perhaps my bitterness arises from her having made so complete a failure of the job."

"Are you a failure?" I asked with genuine surprise. A man who can give away furs!

But my interruption did not alter the trend of his ideas.

"I fancy though, I may justly charge her with the hatred I have for the respectable. The inherent pugnacity of the human animal made me irresponsible early in life, partly as an affectation, but later from habit and inclination.

"How strange!" I exclaimed.

"Not strange, but a frequent circumstance: the parson's son is proverbially a madcap."

We skated about, hand in hand: my thoughts dwelling upon the strange being who was my companion. My mental attitude towards him had undergone a change. My interest, my sympathy were aroused. He was in the full glow of manhood, full of ambition, fighting his way in the world; and evidently doing so successfully. His abilities were constructive; his past had been hard. The story he told at the Christmas dinner while showing what he had seen and experienced also showed much of himself. Yet he could be egotistical. He is one of those who can talk of themselves without paining or boring the hearer; after all, a rare and delightful accomplishment. But his peculiar animosity to his sister I could not understand. I prompted him.

"I often think," he said, his voice soft, his speech slow and thoughtful, his utterance suggesting his desire to speak true, "that I perhaps wrong my sister; that the lack of balance, which I had so much trouble in combating in my earlier youth was due really to heredity. I believe that many of the tendencies which experience has told me are to my hurt were as strongly developed in and as detrimental to my grandfather. It is wrong, I believe, to look upon a child's character as something which may be moulded as a piece of clay. One might as well try and mould his features."

"But that may be done," I exclaimed, remembering the maternal squeezing of some infant snub-noses.

"But an Apollo could not be made out of Richard the Third. No," he went on thoughtfully, as is his wont, "we are in appearance as nature intended us to be, and temperamentally also. We may use artifice to change our appearance or we may study mannerisms—some do—but they are all more or less subterfuge. As a child my failing was unwittingly to antagonize people, and the same attribute was the bane of my grandfather."

"Tell me of him," I suggested, and I think my curiosity pleased him.

"He was educated in law; and, when the California gold excitement developed, walked across the continent to San Francisco. There he wished to practise his profession, but the Yankees would not let him do so, unless he became naturalized. This he refused to do—a right Canadian he!—so he worked in the mines and then walked home again and died in penury. The probabilities are that he would have accumulated great wealth had he become a citizen of California, the opportunity there was so great."

"He was at least a patriot," I suggested. "Bravo for Canada!"

"Assuredly he was so. His son, my Uncle, told my mother that his lack of success in life was due neither to lack of ability, nor of industry, but to his

unfortunate manner, which alienated the sympathy of those he met.”

“Dear! Dear! I have heard of such people,” I said.

“Yes,” replied my companion, “such failings are sometimes, even, the attributes of genius, but in the case of my grandfather and Uncle I have never heard that either developed brilliancy in any direction.”

“And yourself?” I asked. “Perhaps you ——”

He laughed. “If I have any genius, it has yet to be proved, and I’m old enough to have doubts of it. I’ve inherited the wrong traits that’s certain. Perhaps it is that those of us who believe in heredity find its evidence in our faults.”

For the first time Mr. Bang spoke to me without shrouded facetiousness but in earnest, and I felt pleased. I forgot he was a young man; and I am ready to believe he forgot I was a girl. We were just friends. It was a new experience to me and I welcomed it.

Suddenly I came to realize there were others about, that I was skating round and round the rink with my companion openly holding my hand. I brought myself up with a round turn, and suggested we practise our figures, threes and eights.

Mr. Bang came out of his reverie. He corrected my skating in a kindly way, though he was exact enough, and showed no tendency to gloss over my mistakes. After an hour’s skating, we decided to walk home. I was glad of this, for it gave opportunity for further conversation and I asked him several questions, to which generally he said—as well as I can remember it:

“I don’t think I was a bad boy; I never had any vices except indolence; yet I alienated my people at such an early date that I cannot remember the time when they did not think it necessary to apologize to others for me. Pleasant, wasn’t it? Ours was a large family, yet no member of it dreamed of planting in my mind those seeds of worldly wisdom so useful to youth. On the other hand, I was shunted, given up for hopeless, before I was well on the threshold of life. My mother, while she taught me the Bible, sighed: ‘What will become of the boy?’ That sort of apology did not improve me. One brother was in the habit of telling me I would be a perpetual expense to the family, though he did not help me to learn to do otherwise, or give me any money encouragement. I was certainly kept in the back ground. The result was that I early got so mean an opinion of myself that I was ready to apologize for my very existence. Whether this was an inherited trait and itself explains the attitude of my people towards me, or whether it developed

under the contempt of my own people, I have no opinion. I had to be a sort of crab. Couldn't help it!"

Mr. Bang could not have offered me a greater token of friendship than so to lay bare before me his thoughts and confidence like this. Why he should do so is the greater puzzle the more I think of it. Had I been as frank with him what a mean girl I should seem.

"I suppose," he continued with a smile, "you will see me as the small boy, who ever laments that he is not understood—like so many martyrs in novels and dramas?"

I could only answer with a smile, also. Then we trudged along not speaking. The night was falling, the air was clear and refreshing: but the jingle of the bells on the passing sleighs, and hootings of the motor horns spoiled the peace. The bells brought to me visions of the old Canadian world, of a homely social life, such as Uncle talks of and looks back upon with sighs. The hootings seemed the message of a new order, the power of wealth—discordant and a pollution. And then I started inwardly; was I a traitor to my own ambitions? I had recently become a convert to the new order; why was I forsaking my allegiance?

As we were nearly home Mr. Bang added: "Being what I was, I followed the lines of least resistance and went west. Settled industry and competition with normal personalities offered me no field; and by a natural process I evaded the issue. I threw myself into the mill. I fought while I starved, and starved while I fought. It was a stern conflict, a bitter struggle."

My companion paused ere he continued:

"There is no personality so out of tune with mankind but he will be attractive to some one; no nature so unlovely but will find a responding chord; no murderer but may gain an advocate; so there is no money-making scheme so unbalanced but will draw support from some foolish purse."

"There never was a Jack, without a Jill," I said. I don't know why I said it; it just came out.

"There never was a Jack who could not find his Jill—though sometimes, alas! too late."

"I once found a friend," he ventured. "We won."

We found Mumsie in the hall; I kissed her and ran to my room; I was unsettled. In my ears sounded the sleigh bells. My conscience was troubling me; perhaps it was my self-respect, the spirit of my forefathers. Like a ghost

of the past my grandfather's presence was with me, reproving me, admonishing me, cherishing me.

I dressed for dinner and gained mastery of myself. I was happy, laughed to myself, was singing softly a bit of a song, and perfumed my hair and neck. I was grasping for a new foothold, struggling to find myself. My spirits were so unsettled, so boisterous. Mr. Bang looked puzzled and watched me intently. Evidently he had expected other things. He, poor fool, claims to read women like a book; and yet, while I am false to his friendship, in its every phase, he this afternoon bared his heart to me, as one could only do to a trusted and valued friend.

DECEMBER 30TH.

My furs arrived to-day. They are lovely. It was so good of Uncle to have them made up for me and I feel I am able to carry them off well. Went shopping in the morning, walked with Mumsie in the afternoon, and to the Skating Club with Mr. Bang in the evening. As a precaution I asked Ethel Bassett to call for me, so she shared the burden of Mr. Bang. I kept in a corner practising.

DECEMBER 31ST.

How can I compose myself sufficiently to record all that befell me, all I experienced, and the world I was introduced to at Mrs. Lien's ball? My hand trembles as I take up my pen. As I was yesterday a different person from what I was when first I entered Uncle's home, so to-day I am different from what I was a few short hours ago. I know now that another world exists of which previously I had not even dreamed. I have found myself overflowing with emotion, pulsating, trembling under the spell of curious impulses. Oh! what a strange being am I!

Ethel Bassett called for me in a cab and came into the hall to say Good-evening to Mumsie and Uncle.

At least that was the ostensible reason; perhaps it was pride in her appearance that was the real influence. If so, it was justified. For I gazed at her a moment, standing beneath a flood of crimson light from the shaded hall lamp, and, strangely enough, realized I looked upon a higher type than myself. She is what Mr. Bang or Uncle would call a "sound girl," and with the white collar of her opera cloak about her ears, her charms were well set off. She has a shy manner, and her cheeks are dimpled and cherry-red, almost as clear as my own. A man could see in her more than half the charms usually found in a novelist's heroine and what more could any man want? What more could Mr. Bang want? I feel Mr. Bang is looking for a

wife. Why does he not pay suit to this example of all those virtues he demands of woman?

Strange that these thoughts should have flashed through my mind. Strange that I should never before have given Ethel's personality a thought.

We kissed Mumsie and passed to our cab. Uncle cheerily bade us a merry evening. We bumped away in our sleigh, a covered sleigh, a cab on runners. It seemed so weird. And the houses came into light and fell into shadow in a spectral procession.

The sleigh passed on to parts unknown to me and soon I noticed the houses were large and standing far back from the street. They represented property, position, power.

Our sleigh came to a halt. I saw before us a line of sleighs and motors stretching from the street to the portiere of a great stone mansion pouring out light from a score of windows. I could see muffled figures hurrying up the steps into the wide, open doors, and my heart began to thump. It pounded even harder as I made my entrance to the great hall. I expected to make my bow to the host and hostess and had my best smile ready; but all that happened was, a maid whispered to Ethel: "Straight up stairs, please." Not very dramatic!

The dressing-room was crowded. Ethel and I had to wait a long time ere we could have a look in a glass. The dresses of the women were gorgeous, some a glitter of transparencies, others shimmering silk; all the colours—it was Paradise. There were dresses also a good deal bolder than the fashion plates. Chatter was going on all about us, a perfect Babel.

Of course, there were some girls there with simple gowns besides ourselves, but they and we had to wait while the peacocks restored their plumage. It seemed as if the best dressed could push the most. This observation, I am afraid, is worthy of Mr. Bang. How that man is affecting me! Unconsciously, I find, he is influencing my thought.

At last Ethel and I were able to go downstairs. At least the roses Mr. Bang gave me were as good as those anyone else was wearing, and I knew that my cheeks were not a mess of rouge and powder.

At the head of what evidently was the drawing-room, we found our host and hostess. We filed in, shook hands, and passed on. I was astounded, their faces looked so bored. Mr. Lien alone attempted a mechanical smile, as he took my hand in his. Mrs. Lien moved not a muscle. Nor were we treated

differently from the general, for Ethel and I passed to chairs from which I could watch the reception of those who came after us.

From my seat I watched Mr. Lien. He was a small man, stooping, and weak of face and body. His hair was light, his forehead narrow, his nose large. When he spoke his head shook nervously; he was not a thing of beauty.

His hair, where it crowned his forehead, was twisted into a bustling tuft, which I remembered was a characteristic of his hockey-playing son. Evidently the boy inherited his father's features, and the bodily strength of his mother. As I gathered these impressions Mabel Lien came up to her parents, spoke a few words and then passed on to the orchestra in a bow window. A moment later the music struck up, and in response to it a number of young men filed into the room, paid their addresses to their host and hostess and sought their partners, programmes in hand. Couples began to waltz. A young man asked Ethel to dance, and I was alone. Then Mrs. Lien brought up an awkward-looking youth and introduced him to me; we waltzed. My partner danced well enough, but had nothing to say for himself, and I was glad when the dance ended. I asked to be taken to Ethel; I felt very depressed.

I saw Mr. MacKenzie, Mr. Townsend, and Mr. Davidson among the dancers, but they all failed to see me. I know I can dance if I cannot skate well. My depression grew. A two-step followed the waltz; and then another waltz. The third dance I had with a frivolous youth, and when it ended I asked him to take me through the portieres into the hall.

As soon as dances ended I noticed couples passing through this way as well as into the conservatory. The more gorgeously decked women sought the conservatory; the less ostentatious the hall. Several nooks and sitting-out places were occupied; and a number of couples were mounting the stairs. Evidently there were sitting-out places on the landing and floor above, but one seat remained in the lower hall. It was built against the wall at the head of a stairs, that evidently led into a basement. My partner and I sat there, and as we did so, I heard a clatter of voices.

"What is that, what is down there?" I whispered to my companion.

"That—that is the men's dressing-room, really a billiard-room. The fellows down there are having a fine time, but I don't drink." An odour of tobacco smoke came up the stairway. Here then was the explanation of the delinquent youths, whose absence caused the great number of wall-flowers in the ball-room.

"I should have thought young men accepted Mrs. Lien's invitation to make themselves agreeable to the ladies," I said. "They could smoke and drink at home."

"The fellows think Mrs. Lien is mighty lucky in getting them at all, and that's the way I look at it. I've got only one more dance engaged and then I am going to join 'em too; dancin' is too much like work. Do you like dancin'?"

"Yes," I replied with but a small spirit of the enthusiasm I commanded a few hours earlier. Then curiosity overcame me. My partner had not engaged his dance with me; Ethel had brought him up and introduced him, evidently at his request. If he had the succeeding dance engaged, he should have had the one he danced with me engaged too. So I asked the question frankly.

"Well, you see, I really had the dance engaged and my girl went off with another fellow. Of course it was a mistake, but I notice those mistakes are always made in favour of some fellow who has more money, or is more in the swim than the victim, see? So, as I always think it necessary for appearance sake to put in a few dances, I wanted to get it over. That's why I asked you. I saw you were a stranger, and with Miss Bassett."

"The men in the smoking-room have even less regard for appearances than you have?" I suggested. I was annoyed, disappointed and disgusted.

"That's it; you see Charlie Lien does not care for dancin' and those are his friends."

The music began again and my partner asked if I would care to be taken back to the ball-room. This I declined. I wished to be alone. I realized that I received attention only at the request of Mrs. Lien, or as a matter of convenience. Bitterness was upon me, a bitterness that might have been born of Mr. Bang's bitterness. Drat that man! His personality seems to be overpowering mine! He, his sayings and moods, are ever cropping up in my mind. I wish I had never seen him. I am becoming such a cynic as he.

From my seat I could see into the ball-room on my right, and the dining-room on my left; this I surveyed. Upon the table there was a profusion of dainties and the flowers were magnificent. Yuletide decorations were festooned about the ceiling. On the side-board beyond the table was a great punch-bowl and I noticed several decanters. Couples passed into the dining-room and helped themselves from the punch-bowl, laughing and chatting. Evidently the exercise was making them thirsty. I was thirsty myself.

While I watched eagerly, my ears caught scraps of conversation coming up the stairway. They all bore upon foot-ball and hockey, and as time went by the noise became worse.

But nothing could distract my mind from the bitter thoughts within me, as I watched the enjoyment of the other girls, the pets of society, those with the costly and extreme dresses. Their laughter was so clear, spontaneous and free, their manners so familiar and easy. Men were continually passing up and down from the billiard-room. A footman went down, and shortly afterwards I heard a voice say, "I'll be back in a minute, boys," and Charlie Lien came running up the stairs. It was the first time I had seen him in his own house. He caught sight of me as he passed and exclaimed, "Hello!" in a startled way, and then he laughed. He passed down the hall to his mother who immediately began to upbraid him. From my seat in the shade I had a good view of her every expression. Charlie did not seem to take things seriously for he answered flippantly. His mother became more angry as the altercation proceeded. Charlie finally broke away and passed to the ball-room, paused, looked in and then came down the hall. I thought, and evidently his mother also, had the same suspicion, that he was going back to his friends. Picture my surprise when he stopped before me.

"Say," he said, "the mater says I am disgracing myself, that I should look after her guests. I don't know anything about dancing and its her dance and Mabel's—not mine."

"I know that," I answered. "I saw you play against the Leafs; it was grand."

His eyes lighted up.

"You did!" he exclaimed. "Say you're a nice little girl, will you dance with me?"

"With pleasure," I answered; "the next waltz."

"Good! come and have a drink first."

He led the way into the dining-room, up to the punch-bowl. He gave me a drink and took one himself.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Claret cup."

We both drank. He smacked his lips and put on a wry face. "Awful trash," he muttered. "I'll improve it," and he took up a large flask and emptied it into the punch-bowl.

“What are you doing?” I asked.

“Improving the claret cup.”

“What is that you put into it?”

“Oh nothing, some sherry! Come,” he demanded.

We waltzed. Whether it was the effect of the punch or not I don’t know, or whether it was simply reaction after my depression, but a new spirit had come over me. We danced fast and furiously; we suited each other admirably.

“That was fine,” he exclaimed, as we ceased with the music. “You are a very nice, little girl; come and have another drink.”

Back into the dining-room we went, and despite my refusals, he handed me a glass of the improved claret cup.

He drank his at a gulp; I sipped mine.

“Drink it, it will do you good,” he commanded.

The effect of the previous glass was still upon me, the taste of the second was already tingling through my system. “Drink,” he enjoined again with a grin. Some boys and girls were regarding me curiously, laughingly. I drank. I then caught sight of the decanter that my companion had emptied into the punch-bowl. “What a beautiful decanter!” I remarked, and peered at the delicate tracings cut into the glass. Among the branches, leaves and flowers, nymphs and cupids, I saw the word “Whiskey.” I put down the glass and took Charlie Lien’s arm and faced towards the door. He followed my lead; I wished to gain our old seat.

“Not there,” he whispered, and led me through the hall, then through the ball-room and on into the conservatory. My head was drooping, my brain was in a whirl. He led me to a secluded seat. The odour of flowers was in the air. In the uncertain light, however, my senses seemed clouded, my faculties unbalanced.

He sat, I—flopped, I felt like swooning.

“You are not used to claret cup,” he said.

“That was whiskey you put into the punch-bowl,” I charged him.

“Just a little,” he protested.

“Just a whole lot.”

“You’ll be all right in a minute or two,” he whispered and put his arm around me.

I felt dizzy, helpless. I was however conscious of his drawing me to him and kissing me.

The blood surged through my head. I felt my face flush as I had never known it flush before. Intense with indignation as I was, the only words I could force from my lips were:

“Nobody can see us, can they?” What a fool, fool, fool, I was!

“You can rely on me for that,” and he kissed me again.

I realized I was drunk—the horror of it!—yet my mind seemed perfectly clear. I heard every sound, or thought I did, and all the facts of my situation came again and again to my mind. I found myself unable to protect myself against the indignity put upon me, although I endeavoured to protest. At length I managed to mutter.

“You mustn’t kiss me.”

“It’s a shame, isn’t it?” he said laughingly, and kissed me again.

In my humiliation and weakness I again pictured my grandfather, the old army officer, the personification of honour and gentleness, and the contrast he bore to the skin-flint progenitor of the cad who had insulted me. With half a cry I broke from his embrace, and threw myself as far from him as the seat allowed.

“You cad,” I breathed.

“Now don’t get cross, its no use; besides all the girls do it,” he coaxed and cajoled—was a picture of weakness contemptible.

“They let the men kiss them?” I demanded.

“Certainly,—all the girls that have a good time. After all what harm does a little flirtation do?”

The explanation strangely assuaged my anger. “All the girls do it,”—evidently it was custom. I sank back listless once again. He made an effort to put his arm around me.

“Don’t touch me,” I demanded, and he made no further attempt. My head getting increased command over my tongue, I asked him questions concerning his hockey, how young he was when he first began to play, etc.

He fell into an easy conversation and soon I had compelled myself to forget the worst unpleasantness.

After a little while I suggested that his mother might be wondering about him.

“Never mind mother; she’ll get over it,” he protested.

“But we should really go back to the ball-room,” I said.

“Are you all right?” he asked with a genuine concern.

“Oh yes,” I replied and stood up. I took his arm and we passed from the conservatory.

“If any of the other girls drink much of that claret cup, they’ll get—as I was,” I remarked.

He only laughed.

“But it is not right.”

“Do you want to get on in society?” he asked.

“I have felt at times I should like to make friends among nice people,” I replied.

“Well, let me tell you, you can get along easier by not being too straight-laced, and be sure you make friends with the men, believe me. Say, they are having supper, let me be your cavalier,” and he led the way to the dining-room.

The room was crowded to suffocation. At one end of the table stood Mr. Lien, while Mrs. Lien was at the other. Men and women, boys and girls, were eating sandwiches, cake, ices, trifles. I caught sight of Ethel. She had a cup of coffee in her hand and was talking sedately to her companion; they both were the picture of propriety.

Charlie Lien elbowed his way to the table and secured me a plate of chicken and a cup of coffee. I drank and ate. Charlie was certainly assiduous, most attentive, trying to make up for his bad behaviour. I began to feel pleased with myself. I was indeed in the fashionable world. Mrs. Lien was a society leader; I was singled out for special attention by her son.

Suddenly, from the outer world came the sounds of successive steam whistles, screeching and screaming, and a series of explosions. Mr. Lien held aloft a glass and said, “I wish you all a very happy New Year.” Everybody near the table took a glass and drank to the toast. Charlie Lien

thrust one into my hand. The wine trickled into my soul like the spirit of infinite joy. A cheer went up and my voice, I am sure, was as loud as any other. Somebody began to sing *Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot*, and in a moment there was a circle with hands joined singing round the table, while outside the clamour continued. And then somebody shouted three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Lien, which was answered by a yell and supported by *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*, with which was blended, *We Won't go Home Till Morning*.

Then came more drinks, more champagne. This wine I found most stimulating. I was conscious after a time that the crowd in the dining-room was much lessened. I sought Ethel Bassett: she was gone. No doubt she was suffering from the misfortune of being respectable. About me were nothing but fashionable girls and men.

One girl plucked a rose from her breast and threw it across the table. It hit a man, who immediately picked it up and threw it back; that set the bottle rolling. In a moment flowers were flying everywhere, and soon pieces of cake were used as missiles, and sandwiches and what not. Glasses went over and smashed. The fusillade only ceased when there was nothing left on the table, that could be easily thrown. Only then did the clamour die down, and we fell into silence; and with the absence of the exhilaration and excitement, a realization of what we had done, came over me. Mr. and Mrs. Lien were not to be seen.

Charlie Lien whispered to me, "Come and dance." He was strong, he guided and held me up. When the dance was over he seated me in the ball-room and went and brought me a partner for the succeeding dance, one of his own friends. This man—I don't know his name—danced divinely and treated me in his conversation and references, as, not a young girl, but a real woman of the world. I was Oh! so happy. The dances now were a riot, men and women sang to the music of the orchestra as they romped. The orchestra themselves were exhilarated, and had decorated themselves, or somebody had decked them with the flowers arranged about the bow window. Once beautiful plants were in ruin.

Dance followed dance, and I had no lack of partners: men I had seen dancing with Miss Mount, and Mabel Lien herself, came to me. My satisfaction was complete. I was happy. For once I was completely happy—and in society.

One of my partners happened to seat me near two demure maidens, who were without partners and evidently lacked admiration. I am afraid I didn't

feel as sympathetic as I ought.

“I have just come down from the dressing-room,” I heard one say. “The boys have got into the nursery and thrown things around simply awful. I looked in at the door. One was trying to sit on a rocking horse and broke it. Another was buffeting his friend with the mattress torn from a child’s cot. I saw Percy Jenkins put his foot through a drum; and dolls and animals were smashed and thrown all over the place.

“My!” exclaimed the other.

“Yes, I think this drinking is just horrible. I hear that one of the footmen, a Scotchman, who was himself drunk, emptied champagne into the claret cup.”

“I’ve heard it’s awfully risky to mix drinks.”

“Yes, and if news of this gets out I know Mother will never let me go to a New Year’s party again.”

“Good Lord!” I thought, “how am I to get home, what will Ethel Bassett think?” Would she tell her mother or Mumsie? What would Mumsie say if she knew I had taken glasses of champagne and claret cup? I felt in my bones that Ethel would be hunting me out soon. We had ordered our cab for half-past one. There was nothing for me to do but to speak to Charlie Lien about Ethel. So I asked my partner to ask him to come to me, which he soon did.

“I know Miss Bassett will wish to go on time,” Charlie declared. “I noticed she had no partner the last dance. And she’s a nice girl too. If you feel shaky you had better take a little more champagne.”

“Not more!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, more, it will straighten you up. Be sure you don’t talk too much and tell her a drunken footman emptied champagne into the claret cup and that you innocently took some. She’s a decent girl.”

“You started that story,” I cried.

“Yes—why?”

I preferred not to answer, and am glad now that I didn’t answer.

We stood in a corner of the dining-room, sipping champagne, very little I took.

"I'd like to see you again," and he looked smilingly into my eyes. "Will you come and have tea with me some day?"

I felt brave and answered, "Yes."

"When?"

I thought a moment.

"On Monday."

"Not till then?" His voice was full of solicitude.

"I must stay in to-morrow with Mumsie, Mrs. Travers, the day after to-morrow is Sunday; Monday is the first possible day, isn't it?"

"Where can I meet you?"

"Wherever you suggest."

"Horace's, at three."

"Very well, Horace's at three o'clock," I agreed.

"And now good-night." His arm went about me once more and he kissed me even passionately. I felt all a flutter of emotion; can that have been passion too? I believe I should have been disappointed had he not kissed me.

We passed into the hall and sure enough I saw Ethel evidently in search of me. We went to her, I mastering myself the best I could. A waltz was playing. I was delighted when my companion begged, "Just let us finish this waltz."

And away we went once more.

With the ending of the waltz, which I enjoyed to the full, I was anxious as to how I should appear in Ethel's eyes. I determined to be in good spirits and prayed that she would see it only as the effect of dancing. How I got upstairs and into my things I don't know. I remembered what Ethel said to Mrs. Lien, as we said good-bye; but not what I myself said. After that my mind is much of a blank. Am sure that I found myself telling the story of the drunken footman as directed, and that an infinite relief came over me when I found that neither Mumsie or Uncle had stayed up for my return.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Oh! what a headache I had this morning, the terror of it will remain with me as long as I live. My whole brain seemed one ache, a swollen brain, all turned into ache. And the thirst I had! It too, was almost tangible, material.

And my conscience, that conscience that I have heard makes cowards of us all, came preaching at me. A great terror haunted me; it seemed to be smothering me. I had to face Uncle and Mumsie, I, who had been—drunk! What would they say if they knew; could they read it in my face; could they read anything there? How ashamed and unhappy I felt!

I placed my hand on my forehead, as if to keep my head from bursting. Then I glanced at the clock on the dressing-table. A quarter to ten. But that was all right. Mumsie told me to lie in bed as long as I liked after the ball. I pressed my throbbing temples and thought and thought. I reviewed the history of the night before till my mind focussed on one object, one face, Charlie Lien. I saw the bristling tuft of dirty, yellow hair upon his forehead, his narrow, weak forehead, his prominent and pimpled nose, his protruding upper lip, his ever-open mouth, heard his croaking laughter. Oh! to think I had allowed that beast of a man to kiss me. I felt an agony of humiliation; as if I, my person, had been polluted. I had allowed him to kiss me—and that last kiss—I had expected it. I did not guard against it. The shame to me! . . . What a cad the man was; in his mother's house—to act so towards a guest. I found relief in tears. I cried.

Tears eased my headache, but I knew it would not do to allow my eyes to tell tales, so I arose and bathed my face.

I realized that by no earthly process, at this early date, could Mumsie and Uncle have heard any accounts of the ball, and that my cowardice was but the child of a guilty conscience. But this assurance I gave myself inspired a greater question. What was the chance of their eventually learning the truth? If they were likely to hear the story through the ordinary process of gossip, had I not better make at least some small confession of it. If I said nothing, and later they were to hear a wild story of our doings, what would they say? I dressed myself quickly and passed quietly down the stairs.

“Happy New Year,” I chirped to Uncle as I peeped into his den.

“Good-morning, little mouse,” responded dear Uncle, putting down the *Telegraph* and turning his kind face to me. “I have just been reading the account of the ball. You have not been neglected by the imaginative reporter.”

I felt a qualm of anxiety and then of keen curiosity, as I walked over to Uncle and he drew me to sit upon the arm of his chair. He read the account of the ball. My name was mentioned as that of one of the “buds,” who had received marked attention. Having satisfied my curiosity, Uncle told me he had waited breakfast for me and led the way to the dining-room. Mumsie

came in and kissed me tenderly, and wished me the compliments of the season. I was glad Mr. Bang was away.

“Now, Elsie,” began Uncle, “tell us all about your experiences.”

“I had a lovely time, perfectly delightful,” I said, with as much semblance of delight as I could muster. My temples were throbbing violently.

“That’s good. What did you say to the men, when they came crowding to be introduced? They must have seen you were my niece by adoption?”

“Don’t answer him, Elsie,” cut in Mumsie and turning to me, “He’s an awful tease, this Micawber of mine.”

“Did you begin to make conversation, like the gentle maiden who said to each new acquaintance, ‘I had a little kitten and it died.’” Uncle imitated a little girl’s voice.

“Oh Uncle,” I protested, “I’m not so green as that, surely!”

“I told you to pay no attention to him: quit—” and Mumsie made to throw a napkin across the table at her husband.

But I was really delighted, for Uncle’s mood gave me reassurance and Mumsie’s threat to throw her napkin at her Micawber inspired me to broach the subject of the riot at the ball. I told of the girls throwing flowers, whereat Uncle pricked up his ears, and soon I had given them a mild account of what happened.

“I heard,” and I spoke with great seriousness, “that someone, one of the servants, put champagne in the claret cup.”

“I hope you did not take any of it,” Mumsie said, her voice in alarm.

“I had a glass before the champagne was added,” I replied, my heart in my mouth.

“Does she look as if she had been on the bat, does she talk as if this were the morning after?” Uncle asked his wife in kind mockery.

How grateful I felt to Uncle! Mumsie, however, did not respond to her husband’s raillery as readily as I could have wished. This troubled me, left me full of doubts. I went to my room as quickly as I could.

The last words Uncle said to me were that if his memory were good and his experience counted for anything, I would not feel as played out to-day, as I would to-morrow. Of course, Uncle was not figuring on the wine, what he

meant was the effect of the late hours and excitement. It struck me that if I had a worse headache to-morrow than I had to-day, I would die of it.

On returning to my room, I threw myself on my unmade bed and worried. I must break with this Charlie Lien. I must write him a letter telling him it would not be right for me to meet him, and intimating what my sober senses thought of his familiarity with me.

But how could I word it: it might fall into some other body's hands. His mother might open my letter by mistake—awful thought!

Oh! what a day of misery has been this New Year's day!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2ND.

My conscience is darker than ever, it is really oppressive. I went to church in the morning. I prayed, I asked for strength and wisdom. But I really don't think I would have gone, had it not been that I wished to meet Ethel Bassett, so that I might judge by her manner, as to the impression I had made during the ball and after. I felt that if she were pleasant to me, my conduct would not have been so bad.

At breakfast and on the way to church I could not raise a single jest from Mumsie. I know it is only my conscience, that Mumsie is not cross with me, does not dream anything of my doings. But oh, if I could only read in black and white that she truly thinks, so that there would not be the tiniest little bit of doubt about it.

What a relief it was after church to come upon Ethel Bassett and her mother, and receive from each of them a cheery smile. I fairly fell upon Ethel: I wanted to get her to myself and confide in her. And I did, I told her that my conscience was troubling me. I poured out abuse upon the legendary drunken footman, and dilated upon the awfulness of my having drunk a glass of claret cup to which champagne had been added.

Ethel smiled, and dimpled her cheeks so prettily that I felt I could have fallen on her neck and wept. At that moment I felt I could have fallen at her feet. And when she remarked in her shy way, on my mentioning my conscience: "But you know it is said we must not humour our conscience too much," I nearly wept.

In fact, when I rejoined Mumsie, I realized that her tardiness in responding to my efforts at inspiring levity was the result of her being temporarily out of sorts. For she was talking with Mrs. Bassett at a great rate.

After our Sunday dinner (mid-day) I returned to my room and sat by the window. I had much to think about. I realized my conscience troubled me chiefly and more persistently as danger threatened. Danger removed, my soul was less troubled. Moralizing so, I deemed I had mastered philosophy, that I was philosophical and my self-esteem and confidence increased. But for Charlie Lien I had a real detestation and repugnance. He was an utter beast. I must write him a letter refusing to meet him to-morrow. How shall I word it?

I took pen and paper and wrote:

“My dear Mr. Lien,—

“I am very sorry to have to disappoint you in my engagement to take tea with you to-morrow. I find———”

No excuse would frame itself in my mind. I thought of pleading a forgotten pre-engagement but put this aside as unworthy. My pride rose. I tore the letter into bits and sat again by the window. I found Uncle’s prophecy had come true. I felt really more tired to-day than yesterday. My brain refused to work. I strove to recall my doings since first I came under Uncle’s roof, my aims and aspirations, and my efforts towards attaining them, but my brain seemed muddled. I could not think systematically or with any decent effect.

Then I had an inspiration. It struck me a letter such as I should write to Charlie Lien should be written in the third person. Again I took up my pen and wrote:

“Miss Travers begs to be excused from keeping her engagement with Mr. Charlie Lien on Monday afternoon.”

Just as I stamped the envelope, Mumsie came to the door and said Uncle wanted me to go for a walk. I slipped the letter into my muff and dressed hurriedly.

Mumsie did not come with us, pleading a headache. I was half glad, half sorry. We walked through the city for several miles. Uncle did the talking, I had little to say. I could not get my mind off the letter in my muff. We passed a score of post boxes: but when we returned home I still was in possession of the letter. Before going to bed I tore it up.

JANUARY 3RD.

I feel I have irretrievably thrown in my lot with Charlie Lien and his set. I found my course with them to-day so easy, they took me to themselves so quickly. It was all so simple. As I came away from the King Henry-the-Eighth Hotel, I felt my head was high in the air. We met Polly Townsend and I bowed to him in the most patronizing manner I could command and got a profound return. After all, the Skating Club crowd are a sloppy crowd, as Charlie says—namby-pamby men and bread-and-butter maidens.

I struggled hard not to keep my appointment, but at the time arranged found myself at Horace's. Charlie was there, buying a tie. He took me in hand immediately and we crossed the street to the Henry-the-Eighth. I had seen it before, of course, a great tall building mounting to the sky, but did not know it was an hotel. We entered a door that seemed very small for such a great building, but I have since learned this is the "Ladies' Entrance." We had no sooner entered the passage-way inside than we passed into the elevator and Charlie gave orders for the Palm-room. We mounted a dozen feet only, and stopped, the man opened the cage door, we turned round a corner, and were in a low room filled with cigarette-smoke, and some palms and easy chairs and tables. In an instant I took in these surroundings and the people present. Several tables were about, each occupied by a man and girl. Some of the men were old with coarse faces, and some were young and sallow. I could judge little or nothing of the men. Some of the women were not young, and their faces were of a type I had only before seen on the street. They were unhealthy and unwholesome looking. I am sure I could not make friends with them. To me they were repulsive. The young girls all wore extreme costumes, and some were much made-up. Paint and powder were thrown on them. They also were distasteful to me. What sort of a place had I got into? And the thought struck me that an outsider looking down upon us must have found me in my simple and plain attire, conspicuous by contrast.

A waiter came to our table and stood expectant.

"What will you have?" asked my host.

I picked up a card and made a show of looking at it and replied, "An ice."

"Two plain ice creams, and two Manhattan cocktails," ordered Charlie.

I gasped: cocktails! I had often heard of them as being a man's drink. I did not wish to drink a cocktail.

"Not a cocktail for me," I protested; but already the waiter was gone.

“That’s all right,” laughed my host in his discordant way. “You needn’t drink it, if you don’t want to.” How his croaking laugh jarred on me! I felt positively frightened.

“What will the other people think?” I asked.

“What do you care what they think?” retorted my companion. “Besides nobody here knows you, and besides here it is the custom.”

“The custom!” “All the girls do it!” These phrases again passed through my mind, but did not assuage my fears as my indignation had been assuaged in Mrs. Lien’s conservatory on Friday night.

“Do you wish to make a drunkard of me?” I asked, finding fortitude I know not where.

“Look here,” he demanded almost crossly, “you say you want to get into our set. The people whose guests you are, are not rich; you are not rich. You have nothing to give except your own good company and the pleasure one may find in your companionship. I have taken a fancy to you, feel as if I would like to be kind to you. I am ready to introduce you to my friends and give you a good time, but the girls I know, and who are my friends, are not Puritans. They take an occasional drink, they smoke cigarettes, on the whole they enjoy themselves.”

Charlie Lien paused as if for want of words, but I did not take the opportunity to speak, as indeed there was nothing to say. I suppose he was trying to find words to intimate that those who ask of others must be prepared to give. Could I have got away, withdrawn at this point, undoubtedly I would have done so. I lacked courage, however, to make the breach openly.

“Come and sit with us,” I heard Charlie call out, and I saw a lady with a boy of Charlie’s age making towards us. Charlie stood up and handed the lady to a seat. They were introduced to me, Iris Carey and Basil Locke. I was startled out of my boots almost, as I heard my companion say, “Miss Travers is from England.”

“Good Lord,” I mused. “What does this mean?”

The waiter now appeared with our ices. “Ice cream good for you?” enquired Charlie of them, and being so assured he repeated his earlier order.

The two new-comers were evidently on the most familiar terms with Charlie. I was ignored for the moment, and an animated conversation sprang up in which each addressed the other by the Christian name. The

conversation bore upon the Hunt Club and motoring; and was doubtless a measure of high life. At a pause Miss Carey turned to me and asked.

“Have you been long in Canada?”

“Some time, and I like it immensely.”

This seemed to please her; so my embarrassment passed.

“English people always accuse us of asking them how they like our country: you have evidently learned to forestall the question,” she remarked. These words seemed to me surprising from one whose conversation a moment before had been so flippant. I was glad she did not continue that line, but came under the necessity of answering Charlie Lien. For one thing my embarrassment was great, and for another I wished to observe her.

Irish Carey is a tall, willowy girl with a long neck. She is dark and her complexion very bright. Her cheeks were undoubtedly rouged. Her forehead is high, bold and very white; her mouth small as is her chin. How I envied her her command of chatter. I suppose the ability to chatter is a gift, I find it impossible even to transcribe it, so how can I hope to copy it?

In Basil Locke, I observed a slight youth with a pale and narrow face. He had a deliberate way of speaking, a drawl. And he did not have much to say, the chatter being chiefly between Miss Carey and Charlie.

When we had finished our ices, or even a little before, Basil produced a cigarette-case and passed it to me. I took one and my heart fell into my boots. I toyed with it, Miss Carey took a cigarette as did each of the men. Charlie Lien struck a match and held it towards me. I was smoking before I knew it. I saw Charlie regarding me, evidently with approval.

My cocktail was still untouched, when the men had finished theirs and Iris's glass was half empty. Charlie noticed this, caught my eye and then glanced at the glass. I drank a little to counteract the effect of the cigarette, and then smoked to counteract the drink. And then I talked because I felt like talking.

What I talked about, what we all talked about for an hour and a half I don't know, except that my friends did not favour balls, to which their own set was not asked, or at which the hostess did not provide wine. From all they said about what each had done or was doing, or intended to do, I could gather but little and can remember less.

Before we left the hotel Miss Carey suggested that I be shown the drawing-room of the hotel and Charlie invited me to come with him. We

went up a few steps and soon were among great pillars and pictured, and hangings, and things, and big upholstered chairs, in which sat couples, who became strangely silent on our approach. I took advantage of an opportunity to ask Charlie why he had introduced me as English.

“Why! because you look English. Besides,” and he spoke slowly, “dressed as you are, or are not, as a Canadian girl you would hardly do for our set.” We were in a passage-way. Charlie turned round and looked behind him. Instinctively I knew what was coming: he put his arm about me and kissed me. I felt that I was being put to the test, my acquiescence meant I accepted him as my friend with all that went with it. My refusal meant a final break and a hum-drum existence. I feel I am drifting, that I have ceased to have any power to select where I shall next place my foot. I have gone so far, I feel I cannot turn back. One good thing is that the idea of being untrue to Mumsie and Uncle troubles me less. I argue to myself that many girls, Iris Carey, for instance, must deceive somebody. And, after all, if all one reads and hears is true, there must be a vast number of naughty people in the world. Charlie has promised to motor Iris, Basil and me out to the Hunt Club to-morrow.

On arrival home I did not give any account of my doings to Mumsie. But I will have to patch up some story for to-morrow. I don’t like it, but I must lie. What can I invent?

I settled down to my seat at dinner with a positive feeling of satisfaction in Mr. Bang’s presence, and by my plate, I found a handsome copy of *The Vicar of Wakefield* inscribed as a New Year’s gift to me from him. I had read the book and told him so.

“Long ago?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied, “Father asked me to read it years ago.” In reality it was three or four years ago.

“You will read it again just to please me,” he pleaded.

I agreed to do so. Uncle asked him some question bearing upon his business in Toronto. I was glad of this as it prevented any question being fired at me as to my afternoon’s doings, and I could use my brain planning how to keep such a question from being asked. I determined to get Mr. Bang and Uncle talking and to keep them talking. So when a pause came, I asked Uncle, “What is a Puritan?” little dreaming of what a flood-gate I would turn loose.

“A Puritan! Who has been calling you a Puritan?” demanded Uncle.

I was just going to reply that I had heard of one girl at Mrs. Lien's ball speaking of another as a Puritan, and wished to know exactly what was meant. All this, of course, would have been half lies—for I was the girl—but I must lie it seems as things are going. Mr. Bang saved the necessity.

"Now-a-days a Puritan is considered as an overly good person whom in business dealings, it is necessary to watch," he growled.

Uncle smiled and agreed.

"The Puritans most famous in our history are those who settled in New England in the early 17th century as you know———" he began.

"They were a bad lot," cut in J. B., "far from what their name would imply, so you see to be called a Puritan now can hardly be accepted as a term of respect."

"Were they very bad?" I asked, inwardly rejoicing at the success of my strategy.

"Their chief recreation was hanging Quakers, Episcopalians, and Papists; they, together with the descendants of twenty thousand odd convicts, and other scum that England had dumped into the New World. Such were the 'Fathers of the Revolution' in the great Republic."

"Twenty thousand convicts is not many in a big nation," Mumsie suggested. She always wants to bolster up any bad case.

"The total immigration to the American Colonies before the revolution was one hundred thousand, out of which grew the three million people constituting the population at that time," Mr. Bang replied, looking severely at his aunt, "and then the British Government swept the streets of their large cities to find these people wives."

I noticed that as Mr. Bang said this, he brushed together a number of crumbs on the table cloth in a significant manner.

"Jack! what a thing to say, and before the child!" Mumsie protested. "The Child," indeed!

"If she doesn't hear worse among the Liens and Mounts than anything she does from me, she will be lucky," retorted the amiable one: "besides" he continued, "the version taught in our schools of the causes that led to the American Revolution is the only version that could justify the world's greatest robbery, perpetuated by the most virulent set of utter, damned scoundrels the world has ever known." He looked like a turkey-cock in his trumpeting indignation.

“Don’t start another revolution,” cried Mumsie, shocked.

It quieted Mr. Bang. He continued in more moderate tones.

“No doubt these women were included in the one hundred thousand. If you read Mary Johnson’s book, *To Have and to Hold*, you will see there written that one shipload of wives was warranted honest, but this I fancy we may put down to the bias and prejudice of the author.”

“Why?” I asked.

“For the simple reason that to-day the serving women^[2] of England are reluctant to come to Canada to receive double the pay they receive at home. When you consider that a hundred years ago, a passage across the Atlantic was looked upon with horror and undertaken in terror, and that in the seventeenth century the danger of being tomahawked by the Indians in the colonies was very real, you will understand that honest maids did not then so seek to espouse honest convicts.”

“In old colonial days,” said Uncle, “crossing the Atlantic in sailing ships was a fearful ordeal. Our family legends are full of stories of its terrors.”

“Tell her of old Aunt Havelock,” suggested Mumsie.

“What of her?” I said. I preferred anecdotes to Mr. Bang’s jeremiads.

“Aunt Havelock was my aunt; Jack’s great aunt. She was crossing from England in a sailing ship sometime between 1830 and 1840. The steward gave her a plate one day that had not been properly washed. She handed it to him, saying, ‘Sandy, this plate is not clean.’ The honest Scot took it, looked at it disdainfully and spat upon it, rubbed it with his apron, and handed it back to her.”

I shuddered. So did Mumsie. Horrid!

“I remember Aunt Havelock, when I was a small boy playing at her feet, a lady of excellent refinement, a model of the old school,” said Mr. Bang. “She had the most gentle, and sweetest voice I ever heard. When you consider, what she, an army officer’s wife, had to put up with, you can conceive what the treatment of the serving classes would be. No, No,” and Mr. Bang shook his head, “not many of the maids that went to Virginia as wives were honest.”

We were still a long way from the nuts and raisins. I was dreading lest Mumsie turned the conversation. What would be more natural, if she wished to do so, than for her to ask, “Elsie, what did you do with yourself this afternoon?” I shuddered at the thought. I must keep Mr. Bang talking.

“You think then, Mr. Bang, that no person came to America unless he had to?” I asked.

“Undoubtedly,” he replied. “Few leave England permanently to-day unless necessity compels. And the chief argument against the stories of the Fourth of July orators is that the lukewarm Briton, who comes to reside in Canada immediately turns into a redhot Imperialist. Human nature was the same yesterday, as it is to-day. It is against nature for any normal body of Englishmen to do what the Yankees did, no matter what the provocation.”

“But there were Englishmen who revolted.” I suggested.

“Puritanism was doubtless an expression of religious insanity,” he replied with fervour, “and then what child would believe his father a felon? The children of felons invariably believe their fathers the victims of oppression. No doubt the Yankee children were taught of bloody kings and dukes and earls—and of feudal oppression. Such legends are current even to-day. The highest expression of Yankee humour is that wherein the western bully spits tobacco juice on the patent-leather boots of the eastern dandy. Class intolerance is still active in Yankee land.”

“Jack’s quite right there,” put in Uncle.

“I’ve never known you to find him wrong.”

“Now Auntie,” pleaded Mr. Bang, “you know I have had special opportunities of studying the Yanks. Besides they are re-writing their history. One old gentleman of Boston wrote up the history of the Loyalists of his state, and incidentally showed the majority of those who signed the Declaration of Independence to be unspeakable scoundrels. Their descendants, I am told, beat the poor old man up and wrecked his home. And then *The True American Revolution*, goes into all the harrowing details and shows that the story of the wrongs inflicted upon the colonies was more invention to justify the atrocities committed.”

“Canada is loyal,” said Mumsie soothingly.

“Canada is loyal and Canada’s loyalty is the wonder of the age,” commented Uncle.

“Why?” I asked.

“Why! think of what our forefathers suffered, the Loyalists!” cried Mr. Bang.

“The revolutionaries were only one-third of the population of the colonies,” Uncle replied. “These people banded themselves together,

transgressed every moral law against those who would not renounce their lawful kind, tarred and feathered innocent officials, ill-treated their wives and daughters. The houses of Loyalists were broken into and destroyed; and while the faithful patiently waited the happy day when law and order would be established, Whig eloquence sounded platitudes in the British House of Commons.” Uncle was almost as serious about it as Mr. Bang.

“I always think,” said that worthy, “that history should recognize as a supreme token of the righteousness of British rule in the colonies, the fact that many of the unfortunate followers of Prince Charlie in the rebellion of Forty-five, who went to America, sided with King George.” Turning to me, Mr. Bang continued, “Little Partner, if you read the mournful tales of the persecutions that followed the battle of Culloden, you will agree that Major MacDonald, the husband of the gentle Flora, had little cause to love the House of Hanover.”

“Loyalty, Elsie,” said Uncle, “is best considered as an expression of ancestor worship. I can make nothing else out of it.”

“The Englishman comes out to Canada and hears himself spoken of as a ‘damn fool of an Englishman,’ ” added Mr. Bang, “and therefore concludes his country is not popular. Uncle’s definition of loyalty is as good as any other.”

Mr. Bang had one other idea he could not restrain.

“If you wish for a definition of the Yankee you will find it on the old revolutionary banner.”

“What was that,” I asked.

“A coiled rattle-snake—the snake in the grass. That’s the Yankee. That’s the animal the statesmen of Britain toady to, and yet we love England still.” And Mr. Bang smiled, and actually his smile was not cynical.

“What about taxation without representation?” asked Mumsie.

“Largely advanced subsequent to Independence,” explained Mr. Bang. “England fought France and took Canada to prevent the raiding of New England’s frontiers. This cost England seven hundred million dollars. The colonies were rolling in prosperity, but when asked to meet a portion of the cost, according to their agreement, they evaded the issue. They guessed England would be an easier mark than France, and they guessed rightly. But this was only because the Lord in his inscrutable scheme created the Whig.”

“Is the Whig such a very dreadful person?” asked Mumsie.

“The Whigs instigated indirectly the Yankee Revolution. That brought on the French Revolution, for the war of the American Revolution cost France more than it did the Yankees, and the oppressive taxation to pay for France’s participation in it incidentally brought about her Reign of Terror. This in turn evoked Napoleon and his twenty-five years of war. Surely that is a sufficiently heavy score?”

“You might add the War of 1812,” suggested Uncle.

“Undoubtedly; when the Yanks thought they saw Napoleon winning, the master of Europe, they attacked Canada, believing their success assured and that they could so curry favour with the despot, Napoleon in Elba. They signed a treaty of peace in which no mention was made of the ostensible cause of the war, namely, the right to search on the high seas. Yet they teach in their schools that they fought the War of Independence for the principle of ‘No taxation without representation,’ and they call the War of 1812 their second war of independence.”

“A Whig must indeed be a very dreadful person,” I remarked in glee. I have stumbled on a way to keep myself from being asked questions, and the opportunity to denounce anything—anything, and everything, and everybody—seems to bring joy to Mr. Bang. After all one does good when one gives pleasure. “What was a Whig?” I asked.

“One whose instincts were good and understanding bad,” replied Uncle.

“A political Jesuit,” suggested Mr. Bang.

“The ancestor of the Scottish Grit, in Canada, and the Liberal in England,” Mumsie explained.

Of course, I did not understand quite all this, but it did not affect my enjoyment. Such talk is very stimulating.

“The Whig or what he has developed into,” said Mr. Bang, “is a dangerous being. Gladstone forsook Gordon and laid the seeds of trouble in the Transvaal; and as the Whig party caused the American Revolution, so are Whiggish principles leading to the impending war in Europe.”

“Why?” enquired Mumsie quite seriously.

“Because the Germans think they can bamboozle England as the Yankees did, and because, were the Tories in power in England, they would bring commercial ruin to their European rival.”

“But,” said Mumsie, “Germany may be guiltless of bad intentions.”

“Auntie,” almost thundered Mr. Bang, “once in Alaska, I had a German as mining partner. We slept under the same blanket for months. I learned to read the German mind. The frugal German is not putting countless millions into armament without believing he will get a return. I have also travelled in Germany.”

“This is then why you think regeneration of our society is at hand?” asked Mumsie, doubtless referring to Mr. Bang’s suggestion of many nights previous. Oh, how long ago it seems!

“Yes, that’s it. A great war will come when England will have to strain every muscle. Then let us hope our women folk turn from those who trifle with them, and spend their money on them, to those who defend them.”

Dinner ended with no bones broken. In fact, we were all in very good humour. I made the excuse of a headache and slipped away to my room. Soon my joy left me, my head became filled with difficult thoughts. Laughter, I believe, is not a measure of the joy within me, not always. I believe I now laughed in an attempt to induce joy, not as an expression of it.

I have decided to tell Mumsie that I have an engagement for to-morrow afternoon to go shopping and take tea with some fictitious person. This I believe to be the safest device. Should I say Ethel Bassett for instance, Mumsie might find out I fibbed, which would look bad. I can say I met Hannah Smart at Mrs. Lien’s ball. I know there is no real Hanna Smart. What a sneak I feel—and am.

[2] It may interest old country people to learn that servants coming to Canada generally expect to take their meals with the family, or enjoy other social advancements.

JANUARY 4TH.

This morning Mumsie received a letter from Sister Mary intimating that she would arrive by the day train. “It is so good of you to think I should like to see dear Jack, and I am so proud Uncle wishes the children to come.” The new-comer would stay just for a few days. Brother Jack opined that she really meant this, as she could do a world of shopping in a few hours. Mumsie and I decided that she and the children should have my room, and that I should occupy the sewing-room as temporary quarters.

During breakfast Mr. Bang seemed more than usually intent on reading the *Telegraph*. In the process he read aloud: “Sir Thomas Billings returned yesterday from a visit over the lines of the Poverty, Distress and Want System. He reports the company’s affairs in a particularly prosperous

condition, and in answer to a question inferred that the stock is due for a substantial rise.”

“That’s what might be called a straight tip,” laughed Uncle, “written in very poor journalese.”

“According to Timkins the process of making money in the circumstances is easy. The fourth of January, too,” mused Mr. Bang.

Nothing more was said. I went into the drawing-room to look over my New Year’s gift. I became absorbed in it, until I was startled by hearing Mr. Bang’s voice at the telephone.

“Is that you, Timkins? This is Bang speaking.”

* * * * *

“I see Tom’s red hot tip in the *Telegraph*.”

* * * * *

“Yes, it’s pretty coarse. I think I may as well have a little easy money as let you make it all. Please have your broker sell a hundred shares in the Poverty, Distress and Want on my account.”

* * * * *

“No, a hundred is enough for me. I’m not in your class, you know.”

* * * * *

“Very good, thank you. I am going to walk down town for the exercise. Will look in and see you.”

The receiver was hung up. Mr. Bang and Uncle left the house together en route to the city, and I was left to my thoughts and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. I soon became interested in the book, reading passages here and there, and examining the illustrations. As I glanced over the pages the story came back to me, the fine old Vicar and his foolish wife, the girls who wished to see “high life,” and their numerous disappointments, with Olivia’s tragic danger. “High Life!”—an inspiration flashed upon me. As I have said I am getting into Mr. Bang’s processes of reasoning. I am beginning to use his own philosophy against himself. No person can tell me that he fell upon this book haphazard, or because the binding was handsome, and the illustrations charming and clever. Oh, no, not Mr. Bang! He is quite too serious a person for that. Not only does he take it upon himself to out do Uncle in the effort to mould my mind, but essays to lecture me by the pen of Oliver Goldsmith. Mr. Bang, I believe I’m a match for you now.

My eyes caught the lines:

“When lovely woman stoops to conquer.”

I felt stunned. The significance of the song struck me as a blow. I had forgotten the lines, now they are established in my memory. Perhaps it was that I might fall upon those few words that prompted the gift of the volume. I wonder! And then, possibly Mr. Bang has found out I was in the Henry-the-Eighth yesterday. Oh dear! Oh dear! this conscience of mine does keep preaching. I do wish it would keep quiet. The only thing to do is not to let my mind dwell upon the past. The future—that’s it—the bright, beautiful, jolly, glorious future. I went on with the book. I read the story of George and his wanderings. It inspired thoughts of Mr. Bang. I was going to ask Mr. Bang’s opinion on George’s wanderings. Possibly a wanderer may be the best judge of a wanderer’s story.

I had just come to the realization that it was time to hunt Mumsie up and tell her the story I had framed, when she came into the drawing-room—on a tour of inspection. Her face seemed so open, so genuine, so good, so motherly that my heart sank. I felt I could not tell her a lie. “Well, dear,” was her only greeting as she came into the room, looking like radiant love. I hesitated, I could not begin my false story until I realized I had promised to go to the Hunt Club, I had promised, the fact gave me strength, courage. I smiled, and then I stretched and yawned. It was an instinct, and yet not without strategy; it suggested that I considered going out to lunch a bore. I felt the lack of enthusiasm, which lent my story credit.

“Well, my dear,” said Mumsie after I had told my fiction, “you are here to enjoy yourself, I’m sure I’m glad to see you do so.”

Dear old Mumsie, how little she deserves my treatment of her!

Before I dressed for the Hunt Club, I put my things together so that the maids might move them to the room I am to occupy during Sister Mary’s stay.

As I walked into town the idea impressed itself on me that there was no reason why I should not have told Mumsie I was invited to the Hunt Club by some friends—she goes there herself.

Conscience again.

My first motor drive. The very first time I rested in the deep and luxurious cushions and was whirled away by hidden mechanism. Of course it would not do to let my companions know the truth, that this was a first

experience, and I think I succeeded fairly well. I'm sure I succeeded. But I needed every bit of my self-control.

How grand I felt sweeping over the frozen snow, snuggled in furs; and how I admired Charlie for his mastery of the mechanism: I believe this appealed to me more than his prowess as a hockeyist.

We went miles and miles and then turned off the road and on through a grove of forest trees until we brought up before a great building. There were a number of other motors standing about.

The club was beautifully warm and we entered the lounge, as Iris explained, where huge logs were burning in a fireplace. About the place were small tables just like the Palm-room of the King Henry-the-Eighth Hotel. All was wonderfully neat and had the appearance of being well kept. The air was stimulating with the breath of the forest. I glanced through a window and looked over a few fields and a great stretch of water. How beautiful I thought, how lovely it must be to take such things as the Hunt Club as a matter of course. Poor little me, how my soul yearns for the money that is power.

There were card-players at several tables. "Shall I have to play?" was my thought. Iris carried me off to the cloak-room and I asked her if we were to play.

"Certainly," she replied.

"Oh!" I exclaimed.

"What is it, didn't you expect to play?"

"It never struck me we should play, and I don't think I have enough money, if I should lose—"

Iris laughed immoderately.

"You are a funny girl, really you are; why let such a matter trouble you? Besides, you'll have Charlie Lien as partner. If you lose, he'll pay the bill."

I know I blushed and looked confused.

"Do you know," Iris continued, "Charlie Lien's taking you up is the funniest thing—"

"Why?" I demanded.

"Because you are so unlike Vivi Strange—"

"Vivi Strange?"

“Don’t you know?” said Iris. “Why I thought everybody knew!”

“No,” I had to say.

“Vivi Strange was Charlie’s old girl. Her mother has taken her to the Mediterranean for the benefit of her health,—so she says—that is her mother. But those whose chief delight it is to gossip say it was to get her away from Charlie.”

I felt red and angry. A surge of jealousy swept through me. So Charlie has or had another girl.

We played cards, we drank, smoked, had lunch, played cards, drank again, and smoked more, and returned to the city. I asked to be put down at Horace’s. I wished for a cup of coffee, naturally I must pull myself together before returning home.

I had tea all by myself in Horace’s. I’m afraid my nerves are getting in a frightful shape, however, I had a good tea, for Charlie gave me our winnings, three dollars and sixty-five cents. Thank goodness, Sister Mary would be at home on my return and her children. They would draw attention from me.

As I walked home I kept revolving in my mind “Vivi Strange was Charlie’s old girl.” What a fool I am! But the realization that I am a fool did not dissipate my jealousy. I obtained some relief by occupying my mind with the problem as to why Mrs. Strange had taken her daughter away and of what she was frightened. Who were the Stranges and would not Charlie Lien be considered a good match? And yet I knew that in entertaining this question, I was deceiving myself. I realized I could only so deceive myself, because I wished to do so.

“’Ook, ’ook Uncle Dack, ’orses,” I heard a child’s voice exclaim as I passed along the upper hall to my new retreat, the small room adjoining my former room and used by Mumsie as a sewing and lumber-room.

“Yes, they are very fine horses,” replied the voice of Mr. Bang. The child was evidently Miss Jessie.

“’Ook, ’ook, Uncle Dack, why does one ’orse put out his hoot before the other ’orse puts his hoot out?”

“That’s because the horses are not keeping step, Jessie. What makes you ask so many questions?”

Jessie evidently ignored both the question and the implied admonition, for she continued:

“’Ook, ’ook, Uncle Dack, the moon has its hace all boken.”

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Bang.

“Why doesn’t the moon get its hace mended?”

“Because the moon is naughty and is too careless.”

I took off my things and as the door was open, entered the room, Mr. Bang was at the window amusing himself with Lawrence. Mr. Bang turned at my entrance and with the shade of a smile on his face introduced Jessie to me. The little girl was very bashful and placed her arms over her eyes and remained quiet. Her Uncle urged her to shake hands with the kind lady, but without result, until she raced towards me and threw her arms around my neck and gave me a great hug.

“Where’s Mother?” I asked.

As Jessie did not answer, Mr. Bang informed me his sister had gone with Mumsie on some errand, and that Jean, the nurse, was in the kitchen preparing the nursery supper.

Then I heard Uncle in the hall and soon he came cheerily in, caught the children up and kissed them, beaming with pleasure. I could not but feel sorry for him as an old thought came back to me that Providence had been unkind in not giving him a family. What a different atmosphere this was to the one I had recently been in, the Hunt Club! What a pain it would be to Uncle had he a daughter, and found her out in deceit such as mine. My conscience was at me again, and my head ached.

I was really prepared for something very awful in Sister Mary, and the fact that Jessie and Lawrence were such fine youngsters had not affected my estimate. Picture my surprise, when I found her a very pretty woman with most engaging manners. She enquired after my health and said she hoped I was enjoying my stay in town so prettily, that she quite won my heart and made me dislike her brute of a brother still more. I cannot understand how Uncle and Mumsie allowed him to speak so ill-naturedly of her. “If Sister Mary had as good an opinion of other people as she has of herself, she would be a high-class citizen,” is his latest comment.

At dinner Mumsie gossiped with Sister Mary, and Uncle and Mr. Bang chatted on politics and business. I understand Uncle is financially interested in his nephew’s enterprises. I was left pretty much to my own thought, which, needless to say, dwelt upon Charlie Lien and my other new friends. When conversation flagged I amused myself watching the expressions of Sister Mary and her brother. Whenever the latter made a remark to Auntie,

apprehension marked the features of his sister. She appeared to have seated herself on the proverbial keg of powder. And he—Mr. Bang—appeared also to be on edge, and even more taciturn and cynical than ever.

“Why did they give the Henry-the-Eighth Hotel its name?” I asked Uncle.

All eyes at once were turned on me. Mr. Bang’s glance being even contemptuous if not surly, I thought.

“Because that jolly monarch’s name suggests magnificence and extravagance. You have read of the ‘Field of the Cloth of Gold?’ ”

I assented to the soft impeachment.

“Merry King Hal’s name also suggests a plenitude of wives, an over-indulgence in womankind, ha!” he went on.

Sister Mary’s large eyes were wide open now, and I fancied I could almost see in them an expression of fear, as well as pain. Evidently she did not know what to expect next, and, I fancy if this guess of mine is right, shared the apprehensions of the rest of us.

“Oh, oh, Jack,” gasped his sister.

“All right, Mary. Don’t be frightened; but this place is largely what the French call a ‘House of Pleasure’ and it’s just as well Little Partner should be warned.”

If the French mean anything dreadful by “House of Pleasure,” the words conveyed nothing more to me than what I had found it, a place frequented by men and women, many of them vulgar, who drank cocktails and smoked cigarettes. But why should I be warned?

“I’m sure I’ve had dinner there often,” spoke up Mumsie, “and I know many good people who frequently go there for tea.” That was comforting anyhow.

“Yes,” drawled Mr. Bang, “ostensibly it’s an hotel.”

Then Uncle hit me a blow when he said, “But Belle, you would not care to hear that Elsie had been seen in the Palm-room there, would you?” I am quite sure that Uncle did not know the truth; though his nephew may have. But oh! the pain it gave me, the agony of doubt and apprehension!

“Not exactly,” said Mumsie.

“The hotel was built to fill a long felt want,” said Uncle.

“And thereby hangs a tale,” retorted the nephew. “According to Timkins, —(the blessed Timkins)—when the idea of building the hotel came up, the Jinricky family led the patriotic enterprise. They invited aid from the public-spirited, and opened a stock list. The hotel was built and then the owning company leased it to an operating company—which was the Jinrickeys—with the result that the stock of the original company is worthless, while the stock of the new company is profitable.”

“It was a palpable fraud,” murmured Mumsie.

“But unfortunately, a fraud the law can’t punish,” commented Uncle.

“It simply shows what people owning millions will do. There’s no measure to human avarice. Personally, I refuse to have anything to do with people who derive revenue from whiskey, either directly or through stock-holdings. I have worked with a pick and shovel, rather than make money by selling whiskey. Selling whiskey is absolutely beyond the pale, and I claim the right to despise all those connected with it, down half a dozen generations.”

At the end of this speech Sister Mary began to smile, finding relief no doubt in the idea that her brother had spent his store of fury. I believe his ill-nature accumulates till it gushes like a geyser, or erupts like a volcano, which having gushed or erupted feels at ease. I rather believe he is incensed with me. I am sure he knows I have been to the Henry-the-Eighth. But I do not care, who is he?

In honour of Sister Mary we invaded Uncle’s den and talked, at least Mumsie and Sister Mary and Uncle talked. Mr. Bang and I listened. Perhaps only I was listening, for I do not think Mr. Bang paid the least attention to the conversation. He seemed lost in his own thoughts. I can see the antagonism existing between that brother and sister. To Mary, Jack is still the *enfant terrible*. In her presence he becomes even more irascible, and bridles up as if anticipating a reproof from her for anything he may say. She seems always prepared to disagree with him, and, at this, one perhaps may not wonder.

Uncle went into raptures over Jessie and Lawrence—Jessie is so bright, so original, so active, and vivacious; and Lawrence has the makings of a fine boy. I won’t try to describe either mother or children, for I do not consider I shall ever be clever enough to write of children, and I am quite sure Sister Mary is too deep for me to fathom.

When I might I slipped off to my own room—to think. The shock Uncle gave me at dinner still hurt, and I am beginning to think the game is not worth the candle. I believe in my efforts to get into society, I have merely got switched into the fast set, and this is more than I bargained for. How my head aches—and my nerves are all on edge. Cocktails and cigarettes!

No further engagement was made with me by Charlie. I think I shall leave the future to him. If he wishes to see me again, he can ring me up or write. Since I arrived in town I have sought pleasure assiduously and found—sensations. I dwell in fear continuously—fear that I shall be discovered in my duplicity. Life is a nightmare—and yet I go on! No doubt my remorse is due to reaction after this afternoon's festivities. If only Mr. Bang were as nice as I believe him to be good! Why are good people so uninteresting, and in some cases so—positively repugnant?

Nothing on the tapis for to-morrow but writing this wretched diary and—possibly a shopping expedition.

JANUARY 5TH.

Someone has said: "You can never tell from the way the wind blows how the baby will look in the photograph." Mumsie, Sister Mary and I walked demurely into town escorted by Mr. Bang. Could anything be less promising?

Nothing would do our cavalier but that we must enjoy his hospitality at the Green Tree Restaurant for lunch. "They have a decent orchestra and the grub is not half bad," he pleaded.

We entered a confectionery shop and passed up a handsome stairway to the first floor, where we were met by a head waiter, and shown to a table from which, through the large window, we commanded a view of the street. As we approached our table, I recognized at the next one Mrs. Mount and her daughter, and at a table over against the wall Iris Carey and Basil Locke. I kept my eyes away from these last and prepared my best smile for Mrs. Mount, and with Mumsie bowed my acknowledgments. I took a seat that would place my back to Iris and her swain.

Mr. Bang pressed me to supplement my modest order with several dainties and we settled down to await the arrival of a generous lunch. I felt the place very hot, though the air was not close.

Mumsie set her eyes on the young creatures and said to Sister Mary, "There's the Carey girl having lunch with Basil Locke, and drinking wine too—the brats."

"Isn't it awful, and so young?" agreed Sister Mary.

"They belong to the fastest of the fast—such a pity! The Careys are such a good old family——"

"And the boy is doing his best to add his people to the ranks of the genteel poor," added Mr. Bang.

"Too bad!" muttered Sister Mary.

"How's that?" I asked, feeling I might safely appear curious. "Why poor?"

"He's supposed to be a mining broker. What of his father's money he can't lose trying to rig the market, he loses playing poker," explained Mr. Bang.

Yesterday I won some of his money, but our game was only bridge, eminently more respectable than poker.

The Mounts were the first to rise. Condescendingly her ladyship approached our table. Mr. Bang rose deferentially; his manners are certainly excellent. Sister Mary was introduced.

"And how are the dear people in Ottawa, Lady Lawson, Lady Matthews, and dear Sir Charles? Do you know, really, I think Sir Charles Matthews is the most *delightful* man; really charming manners—so rare now-a-days. Lady Matthews—Clair I always call her—has asked me down for the Opening of Parliament, and, do you know, really, Doris has *never* attended a Drawing-room yet! You know we go to Europe so often, or to Bermuda, for the winter."

"Are you not leaving on the 15th by the *Carmania* from New York?" asked Mumsie.

"No, do you know, really, it is the March winds I feel the most, if *only* I can get away for March, and you know I always do," she put in parenthetically with a glance at Sister Mary and me; and then continued, accompanying her words, by nodding her head, and advancing her chin in her own peculiar way. "I think I shall this year take Doris to the Drawing-room, and then to St. Agathe or Algonquin Park for winter sport. And then you know Clair—that is Lady Matthews—is so pressing in her invitation—Why!"

For some moments before Mrs. Mount broke off her conversation I noticed Mr. Bang's eyes directed towards Iris and Basil. A slight rustle behind me and Mr. Bang jumping to his feet, caused the interruption. Mr.

Bang made a bolt towards where his eyes had been directed, and I wheeled round and saw him bending over the form of Iris, while beside him stood Basil, looking on more or less stupidly. Of course, we all rushed to help. Mr. Bang grabbed a tumbler of water and threw it in the face of the unconscious girl. The waiters came crowding round, and some of the other guests.

"I think we had better take her to one of the Reception-rooms," said Mr. Bang.

"What—Oh, what—is the matter, with her?" cried Mrs. Mount.

"She's fainted," answered Mr. Bang, "Don't you think I had better take her into the Reception-room?"

"Oh, no, no, let her come out of it," protested Mrs. Mount.

"But it may be a long time before she does," Mr. Bang objected.

"Perhaps we had," agreed Basil at last.

So without more ceremony Mr. Bang gathered her in his arms, and, followed by Basil, made his way through a portico into what I believe was a Reception-room.

"Oh my! Oh my! poor Mrs. Carey! What will she say, how can she bear it? And Iris has been talked about quite a lot, too. Do you know really, if it had been Doris here——"

"But Mrs. Mount," protested Mumsie, "Iris Carey became overcome by the heat and fainted."

Mrs. Mount looked steadily out of the window, advanced her chin, drew up her mouth into the grimmest of grim expressions, and said slowly and deliberately, "Yes, Iris Carey fainted," and then under her voice, in the thinnest of tones, "and Mr. Bang is a fool."

Mumsie, Sister Mary and myself moved sadly back to our table. Mrs. Mount said good-afternoon, and rustled away.

Naturally the incident was a shock and particularly to me. I have not yet got over the fright Uncle gave me by his remark about the Henry-the-Eighth Palm-room. Now I have this added stress. But I have this consolation, Mumsie does not know that I know Iris.

Mr. Bang came back to his place.

"What ailed the girl?" asked Mumsie.

"A combination of things, I fancy."

“Of what?”

“Wine, heat, and possibly, chiefly, a cigarette in which there was a little too much opium.”

“Poor girl,” muttered Sister Mary.

“I smelled her breath,” added Mr. Bang, “and it was strong with alcohol.”

“I’m afraid Mrs. Mount suspects,” said Mumsie.

“Sort of trained knowledge, as it were. Yes, I suppose a tavern-keeper’s daughter ought to be able to distinguish between a case of acute intoxication and a fainting fit.” His voice was sarcastic.

With that our luncheon came to an end.

I felt relieved when the discussion of the affair at lunch, which as I knew, would prove a topic at dinner, was ended. I made a remark about the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

I was still curious to know why Mr. Bang had given the copy of it to me. What was the idea behind the offering?

“Have you read the copy Jack gave you?” Uncle asked.

“Only a little here and there to see how much of the story comes back to me.”

“I always think the *Vicar of Wakefield* such a delightful story,” and Sister Mary smiled sweetly upon me.

“That is true,” said Uncle, “but the feature of the tale is that the social ‘bug’ seems to have been active in Goldsmith’s time too, and perhaps was then just as prevalent as it is to-day. Don’t you think, Elsie, you can find a suspicion of very fine satire here and there?”

“Really, Uncle, I read the story so long ago, I have quite forgotten the impression it made on me. I was so young and now I have only glanced through it and read the story told by George, the vicar’s son.”

“That is a page out of Goldsmith’s own life.”

“Poor Poet Noll!” said Mumsie. “Except Charles Lamb, wasn’t he the dearest?”

“Because he ‘wrote like an angel,’ ” suggested Uncle.

“Goldsmith was a loveable, weak character with whom starchy, business-like people often lost patience. He was anyhow better than his judges.”

“His heart was too soft,” suggested Sister Mary.

“And he had vanities,” said Uncle, “but he was of the salt of the earth. A born Irishman! When he died old Samuel Johnson wept, and Joshua Reynolds said he could do no more work that day. These are testimonies to worth. I have always suspected Bozzy of being jealous of Goldy.”

“What I meant,” said Mr. Bang, whose strong point is evidently not literature, “was that Goldsmith was one of the kind who are easily misunderstood.”

“So are we all,” cried Uncle. “Your aunt invariably misunderstands me.”

“Oh pooh!” said Mumsie.

“And I think his contemporary Dr. Johnson a most interesting character,” smiled Mary in her drawing-room manner.

“At any rate he knew the Yankee,” put in Mr. Bang.

I looked at Uncle and smiled. Uncle smiled too, then drew his face into a fearful frown and bringing his clenched fist down on the table thundered—in what must have been meant for the Johnsonian manner—“Sir! they are a race of convicts.”

“Yes, that’s it,” cried Jack and burst out laughing. So did I.

“What’s the joke?” demanded Sister Mary.

Poor Mr. Bang! I’m quite sure he gave me the *Vicar of Wakefield* because he thought it might do me good. How kind of him! Pooh! as Auntie says.

JANUARY 6TH.

What luck I am in! We are going to Ottawa, Uncle and Mumsie, their nephew and myself. I am going to attend the Drawing-room. Hoo, hoo!

I had the blues all day before I knew. Perhaps it was because I worked so hard at this diary this morning. In the afternoon—to get rid of cobwebs—I walked out by myself. Indeed, I had the blues. I realized I had lost the grip on life that was mine by inheritance, and I saw no other in prospect. I feel I am a social derelict.

On my return home I came softly up the stairs and entered my room. Mr. Bang was with the children and I left the door ajar that I might hear them.

“Tell me a story, Uncle Dack,” Jessie demanded.

“Red Ridinghood?”

“No, No, another story, a new story, a great big story, that has not got an end.”

“All stories come to an end sometime Jessie; but I will try and tell you a long story.”

“Once upon a time a beautiful, young lady set out upon a highway. The highway was called Life, and beside it grew the flowers of Friendship and Truth. It ran through a valley and as she journeyed along she beheld all things about her were very beautiful. The fields, the woods, the meadows, all lay in contentment and joy. Shadows came, but they quickly passed and the world seemed more beautiful than if they had never been. The people she saw travelling on the highway were many and different. Some had beautiful dresses, such as she wore; others were shabby. Some carried heavy loads, but all were happy. Some were beautiful, some ugly, and some were neither good-looking nor plain. Do you understand me, kiddie?” he asked.

“Yes,” said the child gravely. Anyhow, I understood.

“And the beautiful young lady was happy, and sang gaily as she walked along. But soon she came to where the road ran beside a great mountain, and here she was met by a grand lady. This lady was very, very grand; she wore tinsel, and spangles, and diamonds, and rubies, and sapphires, and emeralds, and pearls, and her name was Ambition. And Ambition smiled sweetly upon the young lady, and said ‘I am your friend, come with me.’ And the young lady said, ‘Where to?’ and Ambition said, ‘Away up on this mountain, which is called Society.’ ‘But,’ said the beautiful, young lady, ‘I am happy, why should I toil?’ To this Ambition made reply, ‘Because if you climb this mountain with me you will be able to look down upon the rest of the world.’”

“What is a mountain, Uncle Dack? Tell me,” interrupted Jessie.

“A mountain, Jessie, is a great high hill, a hundred times higher than this house. ‘Will I be happier because I look down upon other people?’ asked the beautiful, young lady. ‘Oh! very much,’ replied Ambition, and with this she took the young lady’s hand and led her up the hill.”

“Did Ambition have a big, long nose, and long ears, and great, big, shining teeth?” demanded Jessie.

“No, Jessie, Ambition is naturally pleasing. So they started off, Ambition and the beautiful young lady. As they left the highway and stepped on the rising ground, they found people sitting about in groups and all were very merry and gay. Through these Ambition led the beautiful, young lady until the ground began to rise more and more, and here Ambition said to her: ‘Behold the world, does it not appear more beautiful, now that you may look down upon it?’ And the beautiful, young lady looked upon the Highway of Life, and the world did appear more beautiful than when she was on the beaten way. She did not, however, see the smiling, happy faces, nor hear the gay laughter of the people. But the laughter of those who also had left the Highway of Life sounded in her ears, and appeared much more merry, and their smiles were much broader.

“Ambition then cried, ‘On, on,’ and drew the young lady up the steep side of the mountain. And the dear girl noticed that the flowers of Friendship and Truth were much tramped upon and pulled up by the roots, and she spoke in wonder at it. And Ambition said, ‘Oh, those are only flowers. They who have gone before have used them to pull themselves up by.’ But the beautiful, young lady said to herself that she would not so treat the flowers of Friendship and Truth; but Ambition urged her on and on, and soon she found that she, too, was destroying the flowers of Friendship and Truth. And whenever she would speak Ambition would say, ‘On, on, hurry, hurry!’ and so the beautiful, young lady did not know what she did. And the beautiful, young lady noticed that the higher she climbed, the fewer were the flowers of Friendship and Truth, and the higher she climbed the more were the flowers of Friendship and Truth uprooted and torn, and the more wearied looked the faces of those she met.

“But Ambition still called ‘On, on,’ and the beautiful, young lady climbed up and up till there were no more flowers of Friendship and Truth, and those who sat about were old and wizened, and ugly. Up and up, and up, the young lady climbed, leaving all others behind until she stood on the very top of the mountain called Society. Here she looked down upon the beautiful world; but she was so far above it, that she could not see the green fields, or the gay meadows, or the woods, the flowers, or anything; and she sighed and turned towards Ambition, but Ambition had fled; Ambition was nowhere to be seen. And the wind that blew against her was chill and cold, and the beautiful, young lady felt very, very sad.”

I don't know if I may be called a beautiful, young lady, but I believe that Mr. Bang was telling this tale for my ears. He must be troubling his head a great deal about me. He has not shown me much attention lately, but I know I am continually in his mind. I'm sure I could never support being called "Mrs. Bang."

At dinner Uncle announced that he had to go to Ottawa on the ninth; and then Mr. Bang electrified us all by inviting Mumsie and me to go too as his guests, for the opening of Parliament on the thirteenth, and the Drawing-room on the evening of the following Saturday. He had made two hundred and fifty dollars he said, in a little speculation for the decline in Poverty, Distress and Want Railway Stock, and he would enjoy "blowing it in." Such an expression!

"Just for a few days at the 'Boardin'^[3] House' " I thought it very strange that Mr. Bang, with his general broadness, had decided to take us to a Boarding House. If he wished to spend two hundred and fifty dollars in a few days, I should think a hotel was the proper place.

I have never been to Ottawa, so I asked Uncle what the city was like.

"Ottawa is a very pretty place, and its winter climate good—if you ask about the city as a city. If you ask about it socially ——"

"It is best described as the re-incarnation of the home of the original snob," broke in Mr. Bang.

What else was said, I shall not here set down. I think it will be much better to set down my own ideas of Ottawa.

And then the conversation drifted to comparisons of the men of these and other days. Uncle was of the opinion that the general code of honour was higher now than it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Mr. Bang agreed with this but stated it was unwise to lean too heavily upon any man's sense of honour.

"I once sued a descendant of an Irish king for one hundred dollars. I thought the fellow could not evade the facts, but when he got into the stand he lied a hole through a stone-wall. If you wish a sample of a high-class liar, get a weak creature on the wrong side of a law-suit and then watch him wiggle. My friend was of people who fancy themselves of superior clay, and yet he lied—lied confusedly—to beat one, who had befriended him, out of one hundred dollars. Imagine a man being admonished by a judge to remember he was on his oath! Is such humiliation worth the privilege of cheating a friend out of one hundred dollars?"

My mind keeps playing upon Charlie Lien. I did not meet him to-day. It is so humiliating to think he does not seem to care. As I passed the Henry-the-Eighth to-day, I felt I would like a glass of wine and a cigarette, my nerves seem to demand them.

[3] Possibly Elsie might have spelt this word differently.

JANUARY 7TH.

I have seen Charlie Lien. I have had lunch with him. I am the most wretched of girls—women. I am a woman. I have developed in the last ten days.

But did a more inconsistent girl, woman or child ever live? I am consistent only in my inconsistency. Battledore-shuttlecock. Hither and thither I am bounced like a weak, feathery thing. One impulse throws me against my conscience, and then I rebound. And then another whim, inclination, impulse, instinct, or what-not, sends me off again. Happiness can be found only in contentment! I am far from contented, I am far from happy.

After all what does it matter? One dissolute person more or less in the world cannot matter, and dear, old Dad will not live long, and Uncle and Mumsie will not feel more than sorry—very sorry. Eternity is so very hard to conceive of, forever and ever and ever. I have felt remorse, just enough to understand or feel how its quintessence might well be hell. And yet, there are so many worse than Elsie Travers. May I not suffer as bravely as they?

This morning's mail brought a letter from Charlie, so I lied to Mumsie and came away,—same story, an invitation from Hannah Smart. With Charlie I was happy, or shall I say excited. But as I walked home, reaction set in. Charlie Lien is an evil influence, against which my inherent sense of rightness revolts. Calm analysis tells me that social ambition is passing from me. What is supplanting it? I do not know. But I know what it is to which I cling—the real and tangible pride of ancestry—which Uncle and Mr. Bang say is loyalty. Surely ancestor-worship is a comprehensive virtue—better than social-climbing. It is the rock to which I hold, the rock to which I shall continue to cling.

I told Charlie we were going to Ottawa. He told me his mother was taking Mabel to Norway House on Norway Lake for three weeks. At this information I felt relieved.

JANUARY 8TH.

Packing and shopping was the order of to-day. Of course, Sister Mary is returning with us and dear little Jessie and Lawrence, and Jean. Dear old Uncle, I know, will revel in Jessie; and the number of questions Jessie will ask in the hours of our journey!

JANUARY 9TH.

The station at Ottawa is quite the grandest I have ever seen and on entering it I was so lost in wonderment, so overcome by its immensity, that I followed my seniors without any questionings. We entered a tunnel and walked up an incline which seemed interminable. En route, Mr. Bang remarked: "This passage-way always reminds me of the tunnel that leads to the tomb of Seti in the 'Valley of the Dead'," I suppose he was referring to some distant parts.

Soon we came into a room flooded with electric light and then passed into an elevator and so up one floor, where we stepped out into what struck me, as being of necessity a great hotel. Uncle and Mr. Bang passed to the counter, and registered. I could restrain myself no longer, so I whispered a question to Mumsie.

"That was only Jack's joke: this is one of the really good hotels of Canada."

I looked about and saw ceilings immensely high and passage-ways that led—anywhere. I felt really happy.

Porters struggled with our hand-luggage and a bell-boy holding keys in his hand passed into the elevator and so we went to our rooms. I entered mine and in a moment was alone. I opened one door and looked into a clothes-closet. I opened another and saw a bath. And then I pulled up the blind and looked out. To my left lights flashed far below, to the right impenetrable space, in front of me were great spectral masses—an inspiration—the Houses of Parliament! I felt sorry I had been so unkind in my thoughts of Mr. Bang. I was indebted to him for all this grandeur.

My trunk was brought into the room. Would I dress? Certainly. I felt satisfaction in my worldly wisdom when Mumsie called for me and I found her in full dress and Uncle and Mr. Bang in their dinner-jackets.

I know my putting down these trivialities would appear childish to anyone who read them; but this is actually the first hotel in which I have ever been a guest.

I felt small in the great dining-room, and overawed by the tall waiter who led us to our table. What a blessing it is that thoughts are not visible! I

was given a bill of fare and immediately lost myself in a world of words and figures. I was asked what I would have, but the cost of everything seemed so great I felt positively too frightened to choose. Dear old Mumsie saw my embarrassment, and ordered for me; then my nervousness left me.

Uncle and Mr. Bang pointed out different politicians in the dining-room, whom they recognized; but I am really not interested in politicians.

Being Sunday there was nothing for us to do, so we sat long at dinner discussing politics and politicians. Mr. Bang hates the Liberals, or “Grits,” as he invariably calls them most cordially. Would the Government again introduce the Navy Bill?

“The Grit opposition to the Navy Bill is politics, merely dirty politics. They claim to advance the scheme for a Canadian Navy, but had the Government advanced their scheme they would have opposed it, they would have had some other,” he said.

“Is it not the duty of an Opposition to act such a part as a process of sounding the popular will?” queried Uncle.

“In some cases, yes: but not in this. The Government did the most practical thing: Ministers went to England and consulted the Admiralty. The British Government told them what they deemed expedient, suggested three Dreadnoughts, told them of an emergency and gave them the benefit of their secret service. What could be more practical? The Grits carried their opposition too far.”

“The Senate did the deed.”

“Subservient to the Grit caucus the Senate did the deed,” agreed Mr. Bang.

“You really believe there is an emergency,” asked Mumsie, “that there is need for these ships?”

“I do. What is more evident than that the British Government is taxing the Mother Country to death to meet an emergency, real or fancied, and it is the duty of Canada to bear a part. Isn’t it an Empire concern? But the Grits think that Canada, forgetful of all else but money-making, is willing to play the stability and existence of the Empire against a stake of thirty-five million dollars. The populace has an open ear for pleasing assurance. So they figure chances, but life and liberty are not given us to be gambled with. There are some things we may not gamble with—and one of them—” he went on, “is a maiden’s reputation.”

Mr. Bang's remark surprised Mumsie and frightened me. I wish I could sound the depths of that young man's mind. True he did not glance at me. Had he done so, it could only have meant a warning, that he had knowledge of my—intrigue. And here I feel the pain of my folly, my duplicity. Oh, what a fool was I! Social-climbing—the folly of it!

"You don't accuse the Grits of being disloyal, do you?" asked Mumsie.

"The Grits have no political affiliations outside Canada and are not disloyal. Given an occasional opportunity to misgovern^[4] the country, they are happy enough. They look upon the Yankee as a success, that is the Scotch Grits do——"

"How about the French?" queried Uncle.

"The Canadian Frenchman does not like the Yankee and is not a money-seeker. He, like the Scotch Grit, has no outside affiliation. He has no love for British institutions. How could it be expected of him? He is not actively disloyal: he does not lie awake at night worrying about the vitality of the British Empire. Being, perforce, a guest of the Empire, he has decided to enjoy its privileges and dodge its obligations."

"That would seem reasonable enough," suggested Uncle. "Put ourselves in his place."

"I was in Ville Marie, a French village, that remains in its primeval state. About it I saw floating a dozen French flags, but no British. Of what was this the expression? Not of loyalty to Britain. But it was not necessarily the token of love of France. In fact your French-Canadian hates the old country Frenchman. Laurier——" Mr. Bang stopped with the one word and beckoned a man passing from his dinner. The gentleman came towards us, was introduced and invited to join our party. He was Mr. Fraser, a Western Member.

"You are a personal friend of your chief: what is his outstanding characteristic?" asked Mr. Bang.

"Serenity," came the quick response.

"We were discussing politics," explained Mr. Bang, "and I am conscious I am prejudiced."

Mr. Fraser chatted a few moments and then excused himself.

"A most apt description," said Uncle. "I don't know any better."

“Fraser is a clever fellow, the wonder is he remains a Grit,” agreed Mr. Bang. “Serenity—the serenity of his mind; that’s it. Polished to reflect the philosophy of others. A man of learning, but of no understanding: that’s Laurier.”

“No understanding! how could a man have been the Premier of Canada without understanding?” I asked.

“By the serenity of his mind. Cleverness is a native attribute. In homely circles it is called common-sense. A serene mind is the complement of a healthy body and the polish of learning. A man may be learned and yet not clever, or he may be clever and yet not learned. Herein is the world deceived.”

“What do you call a clever man?” asked Mumsie, smiling.

“That needs some definition too. A clever man is a man of understanding, one who has his mind in tune with the scheme of the universe; a man who can feel the influences at play about him and foresee to some extent the play of events. Clever men are rare: and are seldom attractive. They work their minds so assiduously that they have no time for the commonplace. In a general way as man’s best study is man, so the clever man is he who has the clearest understanding of human nature. Laurier has no understanding of human nature.”

“And Borden, what of him?” I asked.

“Borden’s outstanding impulse is affection for the British Empire. As Laurier is a French-Canadian, so is Borden a British Loyalist. At the present time this is the most valuable attribute in the Premier of Canada. French Canada is hunting for an impulse, and so its tide of life is dormant. Loyalist Canada is responding to its inherent virility, reaching out. Borden is doing his best to train its growth. Beyond his loyalty Borden is a kindly gentleman.”

“Is he not clever?” I enquired.

“You are probably labouring under the mistaken idea that a Prime Minister is a Napoleon. You don’t trouble to realize that the Prime Minister is selected by his associates. With the Grits the custom is to choose a man of upright character and turn the limelight on him, so that they may practise their rascalities in his shadow. In this process the stronger the light the greater their immunity.” Mr. Bang did not answer my question and I did not repeat it. But his systematic and patronizing abuse of the Grits amused me.

“You know, Elsie,” remarked Mumsie, “these two have decided that the whole parliamentary system is wrong.”

“Good Lord!” I exclaimed inwardly, “they must be out of their minds.”

“Not the parliamentary system,” corrected Uncle, “but the processes of electing members——”

“We won’t inflict our arguments and ideas upon you,” cut in Mr. Bang, with what was intended to be a pleasant smile. “But the public is such a poor judge of character, we are all of us so easily caught by the pleasing ways which cover either weakness or villainy, that it would be better were the selection of representatives taken from us and left to the goddess of Fortune.”

I looked puzzled while Mumsie smiled. Uncle explained: “The idea is that our judges select, say, twenty candidates in each riding, to represent all classes, and from these twenty one is selected by lot and sent to Parliament whether he would or not. The larger questions of the day should be settled by direct vote, by plebiscite, so that the popular will could find direct expression.”

I did not feel interested but pretended that I did. Mr. Bang tried further to enlighten me.

“In England at the last election, if a man wished to support Home Rule he would vote for the Government, or, if he desired to support Free Trade he would do the same, but there was no process by which he could support the one and oppose the other, whereas, if he had a ballot—or referendum—on which these definite, different principles were set down, a clear expression of the national wish could be given. That is impossible under the present system.”

“I thought you did not value public opinion,” I said. I thought I had caught him there.

“The public mind is suspicious, shallow, vacillating and generally contemptible. In other words the public is a cad and not too honest. So much for my opinion of the public. But the point I would make is that Parliament does not necessarily express the public mind. The party system has robbed Parliament of its full capacity, and as an institution I’m inclined to think it will pass away.”

“Jack is looking some far distance into the future,” said Uncle.

“The growth of ages as the system of Parliament is does not die in a night,” said Mr. Bang. “But I daresay there are some people, mostly Grits, who are fond of saying, ‘Vox populi, vox Dei’; whereas really, the voice of the people is the braying of an ass. The homely idea is that the ordinary mother is fitted by nature with an instinct, which directs her properly to look after her infant, whereas, as any doctor will tell you, the human mother is naturally extraordinarily incapable.”

The mother and her child! on what subject has this strange man not an idea?

On the whole, as at the end of the great day I snuggled into bed, I felt pleased with the way the world was treating me, and looked forward with pleasurable anticipation to the morrow.

[4] Doubtless Mr. Bang would not have said this had he known the rottenness existing in Manitoba.

JANUARY 10TH.

Owing to the fog I could see only the spires of the House of Parliament, and the different blocks when I looked out of my window this morning. But then, after we had breakfast, and left the Boardin’ House and walked up Parliament Hill, I saw them shining in the bright frosty air, in the winter sunlight and through the fading mist; they seemed to express the character of a young and healthy nation. As we walked past them and came to Nepean Point, and looked over the river and the hills of Quebec, wrapped in forest, some dreams of Empire came into my mind. Here I was at the heart of a nation; what was to be its development? A hundred years hence, for instance, what rank would Canada take among the nations? Would I could think our future was as bright as the physical prospect before us! All seemed so beautiful, so clean, so strong, so perfect! For the first time in my life I felt my personal responsibility, that I had a duty to this, my country.

We gazed upon the prospect for many minutes, Mr. Bang and Uncle pointing out the Chaudiere, the location of Rideau Hall, and other objects of interest. As we turned away Mr. Bang with a sigh exclaimed, “What a pity our people are so dishonest in their politics!” Doubtless his mind was filled with thoughts similar to mine.

Uncle took leave of us, saying he must attend to business; so we were left with Mr. Bang as our sole guide. We visited the House of Commons, the Senate Chamber, and the Library. In some way the things I saw did not match my expectations. Of course I was much interested in the Senate

Chamber, for here I understood His Excellency would open Parliament on Thursday at three; and here would I make my bow on Saturday evening.

Sight-seeing is tiresome work, and I was glad when lunch-time came.

At tea Mr. Bang informed us of a bazaar to be held in the evening, at which the Government House party would attend. This filled me with joyous anticipation. I would for the first time cast eyes on a real, live Lord, and his Lady, and their noble family. I wonder what they will look like. I am interested because my grandmother, my mother's mother, was the granddaughter of an earl. Poor little me! It does not do me much good—those exalted antecedents!

At dinner we had a dissertation on guinea-pig directors. When a rascally promoter wishes to lend credit to his enterprise he employs a guinea-pig director to act for him or, when the promoter has a reputation and is careful of it he does the same. The guinea-pig director must be of commanding presence, have a title, or some notoriety to give his name value and be able to make an after-dinner speech. Colonel Grass is a professional guinea-pig; Colonel Sir Lancelot Pill is lapsing that way.

"Colonel Sir Lancelot Pill!" I exclaimed, "why I thought he was one of our highest citizens."

"I have no doubt," responded Mr. Bang, "he would feel grateful could he hear you say so: he gives away vast amounts of money but then he can only do that because the public buy his wares. But Sir Lancelot began to lose cast ever since he promoted 'The Slough of Despond'."

'The Slough of Despond' it appears was a mining venture capitalized for an enormous sum.

"When Sir Lancelot found the boom had burst and the public would not buy the stock, he conceived the idea of asking authority from the Legislature for the company to buy in its own stock. This was granted—which shows what fools make our laws—and the gallant Colonel used his company's treasury to support the market. And then with quotations marked up by such unusual methods, another shuffle of the cards took place and the stock was issued in London to the accompaniment of more market rigging. So do our patriots establish our credit abroad."

"How on earth did Sir Lancelot ever get such authority?" asked Uncle.

"There is only one way: he went to Wee Macgregor, who in turn fixed it up with the Mulligan Guards."

“What a name!” I exclaimed. “Who—”

“The Mulligan Guards is our Conservative Club where our members foregather to select the sheep from the goats, barter and sell our legislation. Wee Macgregor was a lawyer and no doubt he received an enormous fee in the guise of a reward for professional service. What do our farmers know of high finance?”

“Here I should have thought was a chance for Timkins—”

“Timkins did—but what was the result. Some years afterwards Timkins decided, being a good Tory and the Mulligans being a good lunching club, to go up for election. He was turned down. Think of it, a man of Timkin’s brains and character being refused membership of the Mulligan Guards—”

“Rather thick,” commented Uncle.

“Time was when clubs were supposed to be homes for gentlemen. To-day, from such point of view our clubs are jokes. Politics, finance, and society are intimately interwoven. Our society is no better than our politics, and our finance is as rotten as its two associates. Colonel Sir Lancelot Pill was able to employ our legislature to put one over on the British Public. Timkins was kept out of the Mulligan Guards to wreck a personal spite, and all this in our enlightened age, our democratic age.”

“How did Sir Lancelot get his title?” I asked.

“He lent the Prince—”

“That be blowed for a story!” broke in Mr. Bang. “He carried a speculative account for one of Laurier’s Ministers, an old reprobate, and the game ended up two hundred thousand dollars to the bad. Pill accepted a knighthood as the only thing to be had in the premises. There is nothing in the white charger—Prince story.”

“I suppose,” ventured Uncle, meekly, “it is quite on the cards the knighthood was a complete ‘quid pro quo’?”

“Quite, oh quite,” agreed Mr. Bang, “most useful for stock market purposes.”

The bazaar, I found just like bazaars at home, only larger; and Lord and Lady Saffron had nothing remarkable about them, while Ladies Margaret, Muriel and Millicent were dressed quite dowdily. To me the three girls seemed ordinary, and one of them, Lady Muriel, stood talking to Mr. Bang before everybody for quite a long time. I know the people of Ottawa did not like it, from a conversation I overheard.

During the evening Mr. Bang went off by himself to play roulette and evidently after this had palled on him, wandered among the booths and soon met Lady Muriel, who was selling tickets for a lottery. I happened to see them meet, for Mumsie, who had fallen in with an old acquaintance was engaged, and so I had nothing to do but to see everything and hear everything I could. Two ladies were conversing in the most English of accents.

“I don’t know why their Excellencies allow their daughters to take so much interest in a beastly bazaar. Bazaars are all the same, wretched things. I came of course, because of the vice-regals.”

“I quite agree with you. Look at Lady Muriel, selling tickets just like any common girl! And who is that she is talking with? Oh, really this is too much.”

“I don’t know, really. Ask Montie.”

The other called to a man, evidently their cavalier, and asked him who Mr. Bang was.

“Oh that fellow,” was the ready response in contemptuous tones, “he comes to Ottawa often. He is a railway navvy, contractor, or something like that. I’ve seen him about the hotels.”

“How dreadful! Just a common navvy. I suppose he’s made money some way. I’ll—”

At this point in the conversation the ladies had sauntered beyond my hearing.

JANUARY 11TH.

At breakfast this morning I said to Mr. Bang, “You had quite a long conversation with Lady Muriel Saffron last evening.”

“Did I? I was not aware of the fact,” he responded coldly.

“Why, you were standing talking to her for five or ten minutes: I heard one lady ask another who you were.”

“Not really?” In saying this Mr. Bang’s voice seemed more affected than natural. Possibly it was an expression of sarcasm.

“Indeed you did,” I affirmed.

“I did not know it was Lady Muriel I was talking to, but I am not surprised, as her manners were very good, and her sentiments worthy and

gracious.”

Never have I known Mr. Bang to talk with greater assurance. I felt snubbed.

“Do you mean to say Lady Muriel talked with you all that time, without knowing who you were, or anything about you, and without a formal introduction?”

“Certainly, why not?”

I looked from Mumsie to Uncle, but the former was abstracted, and the latter deep in the columns of the *Citizen*.

“Auntie, who were the females my Little Partner heard talking about me last evening?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” replied Mumsie.

Mr. Bang’s voice was such that it seemed as if he were imitating the ladies who had complained. I smiled expectantly.

“Did they use the English accent?” asked he.

“I believe they did,” I replied.

“They were probably members of the Government House set—”

“I thought them English,” I ventured.

“Which shows only that you lack experience.” That was rather blunt.

A moment’s pause and then Mr. Bang continued, “You know there are lots of old maids in Ottawa.”

“Now, Jack, leave the ladies alone,” protested Mumsie. But unfortunately my curiosity got the better of my dignity and my loyalty to my sex.

“Ottawa young ladies won’t look at men of their own class, the sons of civil servants, but set their caps towards Government House.”

“Yes,” I said weariedly.

“To them the aides are the only fish in the matrimonial sea.”

“Have they caught many?”

“In this particular they remind me of the Irishman at sea, who fell asleep on the look-out. ‘Ahoy’ called the mate. No answer. ‘Ahoy’ again called the mate, and this time the awakened salt replied:—‘Shoo! Shoo! Sir, whist! I’m

ketchin' rats.' 'How many have you caught?' asked the mate. 'When I ketch this one and two more I'll have three.' Now when Ottawa society ketches one aide and then—"

"Hush Jack, somebody may hear you," pleaded Mumsie, and our breakfast ended in silence. I wonder if Mr. Bang has proposed to some Ottawa girl and been refused!

After breakfast we wandered into the lounge, where we found Mr. Fraser. Mr. Bang led us to him saying,

"You have been in Ottawa off and on, over many years, what is the origin of the English accent here?"

Mr. Fraser looked up from his paper, rose to his feet, and after we were seated answered, "It's barrack-room English, that's what it is."

"Barrack-room English!—surely not?"

"Yes it is: I lived in Halifax for thirty years and I know."

"But it's not the voice of Tommy Atkins—"

"No, it is the voice in which the senior Major's wife calls over the back fence to the neighbouring officer's lady to know if she can have the loan of some hair-pins. Lord! how I hate it!"

"The English accent as an affectation," interposed Uncle, "has been handed down for generations."

"If it is of ancient lineage here, it has died out in England," said Mr. Bang with his usual assurance. "One does not hear it in Piccadilly or on the promenade at Eastbourne."

"They take it as the correct thing, here in Ottawa."

Mr. Fraser was interrupted by Mr. Bang, who said: "I often thought—when in England I noticed its absence—that it would be a good thing if Ottawa were to send a delegation to London to furnish instruction in the English accent. Now here's an idea for you: introduce a Bill in Parliament bearing out this suggestion. You'd make a name for yourself."

"I'd make an ass of myself. Leave the society people alone, if it amuses them it cannot do us much harm—"

"They should be sat upon," said Mr. Bang. "What are English people to think of us when they hear such whinings uttered in all earnestness—"

“A visitor who would draw his estimate of a people after merely a survey of the court circle, would show such disregard for history and such general shallowness, that it would not matter what he thought.”

I felt this remark would appeal to Mr. Bang. His only comment was:

“Yes, and the Government House set of Ottawa corresponds to a court circle.”

“Exactly, and you know the stories they tell about our Government House set. One is that a visitor one day found a number of young ladies in the drawing-room playing a game with one of the aides. The young gallant would sit on a chair and a damsel would sit on his knee, another on her knee, and so on with the others until the line of damsels on the young aide’s knee would stretch across the room. Then he would stand up and all of them would fall amid shrieks of laughter.”

Mr. Fraser told this with such satisfaction that he angered me; I was still more angered when Uncle remarked:—

“Sounds as if it were an incident culled from memoirs of Charles the Second.”

“Do you know whether the story is true or not,” I asked.

“No! I told it as current gossip to be taken for what it is worth,” replied Mr. Fraser.

“Quite likely it’s true: it’s not much worse than the ‘What-a-liar-you-are’ story,” said Mr. Bang.

I was so annoyed that I would not give Mr. Bang an opportunity to exercise his bitterness, so I held my tongue and did not ask the perhaps expected question. Mumsie was not so wise, and gave him the opening.

“This is of a maiden from the prairies, who went to dinner at Government House. An aide was commissioned to take her in to dinner and she asked him whether she should wear her gloves at the table. The aide replied, ‘Yes,’ but when the young lady found she had been deceived, she immediately tore off her gloves, remarking, as she did so, ‘What a liar you are.’ This story has become an Ottawa classic.”

“How could such a girl get an invitation to Government House?” I demanded, “surely——”

“She had de beeg pull wid Laurier,” replied Uncle.

Mr. Fraser smiled and remarked.

“You Tories will never forget that story.”

“Please tell it to me,” I was glad of a change.

“You tell it, Bang,” requested Fraser.

“No, you tell it,” and so requests and protests were bandied. At last Mr. Fraser complied.

“A French-Canadian, a habitant farmer, met a compatriot one January day some years ago, and remarked:

“ ‘Queen Victoria shees dead.’

“ ‘Queen Victoria shees dead! who get shees job?’

“ ‘Prince of Wales gets shees job.’

“ ‘By gosh, dat Prince of Wales feller mus’ have beeg pull wid Laurier.’

“From what I have seen and heard,” then said Mr. Bang, “I believe Ottawa society would accept a Hottentot lady and swear she was Diana, so long as she came as a Minister’s wife.”

“I hope you don’t refer to the heroine of the ‘What-a-liar-you-are’ story, for she is quite a friend of mine,” said Mr. Fraser.

“Do you find her amusing?”

“Quite.”

I felt satisfied that the young lady referred to had snubbed Mr. Bang at some time. His rancour must have been born of personal spite. So I made some remark to that effect, smiling sweetly.

Mr. Bang ignored my jibe for a moment; and then he told the following story:

“Once I was staying at Ottawa for some days. Some person told me it was the custom for visitors to call upon the wives of Ministers. Why people should desire to call, or why the obligation to receive all and sundry should be thrown upon Ministers’ wives, I don’t know; but, being idle, I called upon one of them. I knew the daughter of the house and talked to her for the regulation five minutes, and then made a motion to leave. The girl begged me to stay, and I stayed. From my corner of the room, the constant stream of frivolity in and out amused me, it was a novelty. I stayed, making myself useful, until the ebb set in and then I went away. I attended the rink that evening and the first thing I heard was that I had visited at a Minister’s house that afternoon and stayed over an hour. This girl had asked me to

overstay custom for the sole purpose of having something to gossip about. Knowing that she and her people were a source of innocent merriment, she planned to make me, in turn, an object of ridicule. But can any civilized being understand the mind that would stoop to such folly? Yet Ottawa accepted these people, as ‘so quaint don’t you know?’ They were quaint indeed.”

To-day was not as cold as yesterday, and we went for a drive. We drove about Rockcliffe and through the grounds of Government House—Rideau Hall. At dinner Uncle announced that he had secured tickets for an exhibition of skating to be held this evening.

Such skating as I saw I had never before pictured in the wildest flights of fancy. There was skating free, and skating in pairs, and there were figures done by fours. Such grace, such rhythmic motion, such ease, such exactness! And the music, the band helped one to ecstasy. One would think to watch the skating that those people had been bred to it, they swung from circle to circle with such marvellous ease and assurance.

The dance of the fairies will ever live in my memory. The rink was darkened and a shaft of green light was thrown upon the ice. Over the ice came a band of maidens led by a most beautiful skater of delightful form, swaying and flitting, their white draperies responding to their motions which were tuned to the music. The leader came down the middle of the ice, her followers filed at the sides. They were as sprites. I’m sure nothing so lovely was ever seen before. They filled the rink, swayed, marked time, as it were, and then retreated. They went as they came, rhythmic, beautiful.

There were other scenes, pageants, call them what you will, but I paid little heed to them. The dance of the fairies had appealed to me so strongly that the others made little impression. And then when the lights went up after the dance of the fairies, I saw among the spectators Charlie Lien. It made me sick at heart. I had decided, as the vulgar say, to cut him out; and now—I found my heart pounding. All my resolutions faded as a fog-bank dissolves before the rising sun. Oh dear!

JANUARY 12TH.

Charlie Lien met me in a corridor this morning. He is staying at this hotel. He says he came down to play in a hockey match this evening. Had it been possible I would have avoided him. He had evidently planned to give me no such opportunity. He addressed me with: “Hello, old girl.” And then protested life was no good without me, he must have someone on whom to spend his money. He invited me to drive out in the afternoon with him to

Aylmer. I declined. He drew me into a recess and used his every art to break my resolve. I allowed him to kiss me, to put his arm about me, but I held to my determination and made no response. To give the devil his due, as Dad would say, he did not tell me he loved me. But then, perhaps, he knew that if he told me he loved me I would ask him if he desired to marry me. So perhaps I am more than just to him. In any case these reflections helped me to gather my wits together and I calmly walked away from him. From first to last I had not uttered a word.

Away from him at first I felt sorry I had not accepted his invitation—and then glad. How strangely are we, am I, constituted. There is something attractive and something offensive about that young man.

This evening there was a concert in the drawing-room. Like the bazaar, it was in aid of charity; and like the bazaar was under vice-regal patronage. There were songs and a speech from His Excellency. Then a painting by Lady Muriel was to be auctioned. The gathering was all very grand and interesting. Ministers high in the Government and their wives were present. The dresses were gorgeous.

The picture Lady Muriel had painted and which was to be sold was a log cabin in the forest with a mountain towering in the background. Mr. Bang, I noticed, regarded it with a critical eye. I could notice that Lady Muriel had her mind on it; and when it was put on sale became visibly interested. She was standing with her mother and sisters, and with them also was a good-looking man, who I afterwards learned was generally known as Dapper Dicky.

“How much am I offered for the picture?” asked the auctioneer.

“Seventy-five dollars,” replied Dapper Dicky over his shoulder. He was deep in conversation with Her Excellency.

“One hundred dollars,” bid a voice at my side. It was Mr. Bang.

“One hundred and twenty-five,” came from Dapper Dicky.

“One hundred and fifty,” bid Mr. Bang.

“One hundred and seventy-five,” responded the other, glancing again over his shoulder in an endeavour to see who was opposing him.

“And fifty would be a big price for it,” Uncle whispered in his nephew’s ear.

“Two hundred dollars,” offered Mr. Bang.

“Two hundred and fifty,” cried Dapper Dicky.

“Three hundred,” came from Mr. Bang.

Those present became interested and stared at Mr. Bang. Evidently he alone was the object of curiosity.

Dapper Dicky was evidently known to them. And he evidently was curious also. He gazed at Mr. Bang in a wondering sort of way and with an expression, which told that he did not exactly know where he was.

“Four hundred dollars,” he bid.

“Five hundred dollars,” bid Mr. Bang.

Good Lord I thought, can it be that Mr. Bang has had his head turned by Lady Muriel and is going to ruin himself?

Dapper Dicky became visibly confused.

“Six hundred dollars.”

“Six hundred and twenty-five,” bid Mr. Bang.

“Ah,” I thought, “Mr. Bang is becoming more cautious.”

“Six hundred and fifty.”

“Seven hundred.”

Mr. Bang offering seven hundred dollars for a picture not worth, as Uncle said, fifty!

“Eight hundred dollars,” retorted Dapper Dicky, whose full attention was now devoted to his opponent. His eyes were flashing in anger.

“Nine hundred,” bid Mr. Bang.

“One thousand dollars,” spluttered his opponent, while the company was lost in wonderment. No further word came from Mr. Bang.

“Any advance on one thousand dollars?” questioned the auctioneer. There was a silence as if of the tomb.

“Sold,” called the auctioneer.

“Come and have some supper, all of you, and I’ll invite Fraser.”

Mr. Fraser was gathered in and Mr. Bang marshalled us all towards the dining-room.

“Will you tell me what in the name of goodness you mean, by offering nine hundred dollars for a picture, not much better than I could do myself?” demanded Mumsie.

“Now Auntie! do give me credit for a little sense—common sense—and sense of humour! I had no intention of buying the thing.”

“What did you bid for then?”

“Don’t you know who that was I was bidding against?” Mr. Bang in turn demanded.

“Your nephew was bidding against Dapper Dicky,” explained Mr. Fraser, in matter of fact tones.

“It was amusing to see the expression on his face, when he found he had opposition. He is accustomed to have it all his own way. Now if you only knew Dapper Dicky—”

“He is not half a bad fellow, in fact a very decent fellow, I’ve found,” said Mr. Fraser.

“Who is he, what is he?” demanded Mumsie.

“Up till a few short months ago, he was a staunch supporter of the Liberal Government. He sold us many things, and made much money and then—”

“And then the Government changed, and so did Dicky,” interjected Mr. Bang. “‘You know,’ he said as he shook hands with one of Borden’s ministers, ‘I always was with you. I really never did care for these damned Grits.’”

“I believe, now, to make doubly sure, he has taken into partnership Colonel Nimble. Colonel Nimble is a life-long supporter of the party in power and will be able on that score, to command inordinate profits from them,” said Mr. Fraser.

“By the way, what is the Government going to do with Tom and Jerry,” asked Mr. Bang, looking into the Member’s eyes.

“Give ’em a hundred million or more I suppose, what else can they do?”

“Let ’em bust,” suggested Mr. Bang savagely.

“It would bring ruination to Canada, spoil our credit,” said Mr. Fraser.

“Bosh! it would do us good, shake things down to rock bottom, make us quit gambling and go to work. In this country, the net result of most people

losing their money is that they begin to lead useful lives.”

“It would never do, you are joking. The banks, the money of the widows and orphans.”

“What most politicians and financiers are concerned about is their own money and their own speculations,” suggested Mr. Bang.

“The Canadian is a gambler no doubt,” said Uncle, “but when he loses in the gamble he cheerfully faces the issue.”

“But the trouble is that while he will cheerfully face adverse fortune himself, he expects others to accept the fate he brings them with equal nonchalance,” objected the disagreeable one.

“You Tories are to blame for Tom and Jerry’s road, the ‘Poverty, Distress and Want’,” claimed Mr. Fraser.

“I deny the allegation,” retorted Uncle with affected heat.

“Laurier wasted over two hundred million dollars on the Transcontinental,” said Mr. Bang. “The road was built to win the support of Quebec. So the price we pay for the honour of having Laurier Prime Minister for two extra terms is at least two hundred million dollars.”

“The road will pay some day and be regarded as a blessing.”

“That is a delightful possibility. But I know, know with a big ‘K,’ that the reason the Transcontinental was built was to hold Laurier in power. Quebec is always ready for public expenditure—within Quebec. The habitant makes his own whiskey, grows his own tobacco, pays no taxes. If debt is heaped up he can look on with indifference.”

“My man,” thought I, “you certainly have your knife out for the Canadian French.”

“Do you think,” asked Uncle, looking at Mr. Fraser, “that the Government of to-day is any improvement on that constituted by the Family Compact in Ontario?”

“Certainly, our present Government is by the people.”

“But as a Government, I mean, are officials more conscientious, more honest, does the man in the street fare better, is there less waste of public money?”

“I think so! Yes.”

“Is working a graft less pernicious when carried out by an elected representative, than when it is done by a member of an autocracy like the Family Compact?”

“They call it graft here; while in England it is known as ‘family influence’,” cut in Mr. Bang. “This was a distinction framed by an Englishman I knew in Dawson City.”

“There is no difference,” acknowledged Mr. Fraser in reply to Uncle’s question.

“What was the Family Compact?” I asked.

“As its name implies, a compact that lorded over Ontario in the old days.”

“It came to an end after the William Lyon MacKenzie rebellion. MacKenzie, with a bunch of Scotch Grits and devil-dodgers, set out to be the father of a Northern Revolution. The scheme failed after a little bloodshed. Since that time, the descendants of the leaders have used so much ink in trying to show how the rebellion was justified and its results meritorious, that the poor old Family Compact has suffered badly.”

“Poor Family Compact,” murmured Mr. Fraser in mock tones of condolence.

“People who use doubtful means invariably complain that their opponents were the first to be unfair,” continued Mr. Bang, who was quite unruffled. “This is a process much used by the Yankees since their revolution, and it apparently has secured them peace of mind.”

And so banter was indulged in and our supper ended pleasantly. I learned what a devil-dodger is. “There are those who tread the straight and narrow way from love of God; others from fear of the devil,—and these are the devil-dodgers. Scotch Grits are mostly devil-dodgers,” said Mr. Bang.

“It requires the highest type of patriotism to prompt an honest Canadian to devote his life to politics,” so said Uncle.

“That ‘the Government of a people is as good as they deserve’ is an old saying, and Canada is no exception. Our press panders to the rich. Our Governments confer knight-hoods on grafters, financial adventurers, and corruptionists—” this from Mr. Bang.

Uncle chimed in, “Democracy is an experiment to which the regent has yet to be applied.”

“Man is a mean and vicious animal, and the process of ‘trusting the people’ must bring trouble to the world.”—Mr. Bang.

“Virtue is an abnormal development.”—Uncle.

“Society is the folly of the day.”—Mr. Fraser.

“Class prejudice is the strongest lever in politics.”—Mr. Bang. Clatter! Clatter! Clatter!

JANUARY 13TH.

I sat through the Opening of Parliament without a word. Gossip, comment, praise, and ridicule, bombarded my ears from four sides. I was lost in reverie. I once more reviewed my experiences, aims, and aspirations, the workings of my mind, and my schemings, since I came to Mumsie; and while my ways have been devious I seem to have journeyed from nowhere to—the same no—place. My first effort towards making friends with Mrs. Mount has, as Mr. Bang would say, “petered out.” This ambition was lost in those newer impulses that came from contact with Charlie Lien. How can I analyze them? Coming like a thought, a visitation from space, from infinity, I do not recognize them and I may not ask. Had I now a mother—Ah! Mumsie is a dear—it is with that sentence I began this diary—but I am not of her; flesh of her flesh, mind of her mind. Had I a mother, I could ask her and she could explain to me this development of what Uncle and Mr. Bang call the “social bug.”

And then the rest!

Mr. Bang’s fairy tale to little Jessie, the story of Ambition, really does not parallel my case, for I have not climbed. I have not had even the fleeting breath of happiness enjoyed by the “beautiful young lady,” while still she was amid the flowers of Friendship and Truth. Perhaps had I never met Charlie Lien and really had luck in securing somebody like Mrs. Mount to take an interest in me, I might have enjoyed that fleeting measure of reward. And the flowers of Friendship and Truth!—I had uprooted and trod them under foot that is true. But it is this blowing hot and cold over Charlie Lien that mystifies me—I seem to control myself so little, where he is concerned.

In his court dress, His Excellency, standing before his Senators, their wives and daughters, the High Court officials with their wives and daughters, and the Members of Parliament; the reading of his words of commendation and hope, all appealed to me, as being of a world to which I truly belonged. To me the assembled officials in their robes, spoke of a world with which my ancestors were intimate. Perhaps such thoughts are in

keeping with the inherent process of ancestor worship—that Mr. Bang and Uncle say is ours. In any case, as I have before set down, I can find in it nothing but good.

It was an impressive scene, a pageant of far more potency than any mere form would cause. It spoke of great loyalty, a rule of faith and love. Altogether it was elevating and ennobling. I thank His Excellency for it: I thank Mr. Bang for it. I must not forget, or rather I must try and remember the extent of my indebtedness to him. I am certain that my mind was widened and broadened by this great experience.

There is quite a lot of ceremony about the Opening of Parliament. It always starts at three in the afternoon, and there are those who can get entree to the floor of the Senate Chamber by way of the entrance behind the dais. That is if they have enough “pull.” But I won’t bother with that.

The drowsiness developed by my musings, and the heat of the Senate Chamber, was quickly dispelled on our return to the Hotel by meeting Mrs. Mount.

“Why Mrs. Mount,” exclaimed Mumsie, on finding her in the rotunda.

Mrs. Mount looked at us coldly, said: “How do you do,” and started away on a long tirade.

“I got so beastly tired of home and, do you know, I said to Doris that I really thought we must have a change. Doris has never yet attended a Drawing-room,” etc., etc. It was a long dissertation about her habits and doings. She was evidently a guest of the Hotel, so was not the guest of Lady Matthews. Nor did she offer any explanation of the difference from what she had led us to expect. Probably she had forgotten the account she gave us a week or so ago, wherein Lady Matthews,—“Clair as I always call her”—had invited her to the opening. Mrs. Mount I’m afraid, has lost her novelty for me, and I’m with Uncle in putting her beyond the pale.

Mr. Bang was most attentive to-day. Probably my latest mood has attracted him. Still I cannot reconcile myself to the thought of inscribing on my visiting card, “Mrs. Bang.”

After the opening I fell into a long conversation with Mr. Fraser. He is a pleasant man to talk to. And I can quite understand how his chief is the charming personality everybody says he is.

“It is not wonderful,” said he, “that you find Mr. Bang a strange character. He is of the school of many years ago. Changes of temperament, like fashions, develop in the great centres, the capitals of Europe. Jack’s

tricks of mind are of another age handed down from generation to generation, true to its parent culture, that culture which took life seriously and whose chief diversion was controversy. His ideals are of that school and have been impervious to change.”

“Oh! I see,” I agreed, in no positive tone.

“I don’t know if I have made myself clear,” continued Mr. Fraser, “but perhaps you may better understand what I mean when I tell you, that French scholars say they find in Quebec phrases and expressions that have been dead for ages in France. So old habits of thought are still with us. Jack is, however, one of the best of fellows.”

Mr. Fraser’s tone in speaking of Mr. Bang is most sympathetic which reconciles me somewhat to the man, if not to his name.

JANUARY 14TH.

“Oh, Mrs. Somers,” blustered Mrs. Mount to Mumsie when I was with her in the drawing-room this morning, “I have had such a shock, such a shock and do you know, really, I don’t exactly know *how* I am to get over it.”

“Why, what can the matter be?” asked Mumsie, responding to the evidences of distress with measurable interest.

“Oh! I have had a shock, such a dreadful shock——”

“What is it?” again demanded Mumsie, apprehensively, while I felt like quoting: “Oh dear! what can the matter be?”

“Do you know, really, I have always understood that my Doris was to have the most expensive dress at the Opening, and now, do you know what I have discovered? I have found out that a horrid American creature, a Miss Spruce from New York, has arrived and is to wear a dress costing no less than ten thousand dollars—ten thousand dollars—think of that! Dear! dear! dear!” and the good lady stamped her foot and protruded her chin.

“That is too bad, it must be a great disappointment,” said Mumsie in the most sympathetic tones, “but then Doris may be—I have no doubt is—a very much better-looking girl than Miss Spruce.”

“Yes, yes, yes; no, no, no; that is, Doris is much the better-looking girl, certainly. Doris is so sweet, so graceful, so everything don’t you know, really, but then you know these American creatures make up so wonderfully
_____”

“Can’t you have Doris make up too?” suggested Mumsie with innocence sublime.

“But everybody will know Miss Spruce’s dress has cost ten thousand dollars, they do already, you know. I’ve heard it from half a dozen people and she has been in the hotel only one hour—only one hour—just fancy!”

Mumsie affected a fitting expression of amazement, which I copied to the best of my ability.

“Only one hour!” repeated Mumsie in doleful tones, and then pitching her voice to a key of joyousness cried: “Don’t tell anybody and they will never know Doris’s did not cost ten thousand dollars—nobody will know the difference ——”

Mrs. Mount gazed at Mumsie as if she were deciding whether to shriek or cry. She did not do either, but in a voice sepulchral murmured:

“Mrs. Somers, I’ve already told twenty people that Doris’s dress cost one thousand dollars. As a matter of fact, it really only cost six hundred and fifty, but I said a thousand as I always like to deal in round figures. All Ottawa has heard of Doris’s thousand dollar dress, and that I cabled to Paris for it. There is nothing for it; I’m beat, I’m beat. And, by a beastly Yankee whose father made his money out of chewing-gum. Chewing gum! just fancy!” Mrs. Mount wore an air of complete defeat as she walked away.

As Mrs. Mount left us, Uncle and Mr. Bang came up, and Mumsie recounted the scene with admirable skill. Uncle was highly amused and laughed immoderately; Mr. Bang being in a less doleful frame of mind than usual, became almost gleeful. Dear old Mumsie!

Uncle then informed us that he must leave for home by the Sunday morning train. This was a disappointment to us, of course, and then Mr. Bang said:

“Auntie, I learn that Norway Lake Hotel is the last word of comfort and—as Elsie will be pleased to hear—fashion. We can leave here Sunday morning and be there at three in the afternoon. And, do you know—I won’t add the ‘really,’ unless my ears or understanding played me false—Mrs. Mount is also——”

“If Mrs. Mount is going that fact will give Norway Lake its certificate,” cut in Mumsie.

I stood limp—Norway Lake!—not Mrs. Mount or her daughter was the person to whom my mind flew, but Charlie Lien. But what could I say—do?

For a healthy debutante to decline to go to a winter resort, such a winter resort as Norway House, would be suspicious. I said nothing.

JANUARY 15TH.

It is all over; I have made my bow. I am really in society. In a great, gloomy corridor hundred and hundreds of us stood for hours, trampling on each other. The human sand ran very slow, but at long last we—I—filed in. Battered and bruised I passed up the aisle underneath the gallery and handed my card to an aide. In stentorian tones he announced my name, but although his voice was good and strong, I felt it falling on an indifferent world. I passed into the limelight, curtsied to His Excellency and then to Her Excellency. It was over. Only a moment, and it was done.

The faces of their Excellencies, as I paid tribute, were smiling kindly. Standing to the left of their Excellencies were their daughters. We passed, the procession passed, in front of them, and out: and then upstairs into the gallery, where I took my stand and watched those coming after. This is all there is to making one bow, except getting one's bouquet crushed; and yet as a ceremony it means much. I am in Society.

After it was over, back to the hotel we went. This as a dress parade was a greater success than the Drawing-room, for the really grand dresses simply swarmed in, and a better look was to be had of them.

Mrs. Mount, Doris and Miss Spruce were included in one party. Our own was very happy, in fact, I felt more genuinely happy than I have been since my first advent to Mumsie's home. Of course, Mr. Bang abused the Scotch Grits and the Yankees, but not to excess this time.

Mumsie asked Mr. Bang what practical good there was in abusing the Yankees, to which he replied:

"Auntie, if one believes the Yankee version of their Revolution, and the causes thereof, he must conclude the Loyalists, our ancestors, were a people lacking in virility. To the everlasting harm of our country our own schools teach that twaddle. British schools teach it, because it is the essence of Whig doctrine, and the Whigs and the Liberals are fully alive to the policy of catching recruits young."

"But what harm does it do?" persisted Mumsie.

"Simply that the English youth emigrating to America chooses Yankee-land instead of Canada. And here in Canada, our young men, having been taught to despise their fathers, and respect the Yankees, have left their homes for the mammon of unrighteousness. But now a change is at hand. To-day

Canada is the land of opportunity. The United States has reached the apex of its prosperity, it is becoming a tired people. The tide is flowing with us and our young men are staying at home.”

Were this diary a novel, I should now bring it to a close. What a sorry tale it is, telling only of failure, at least on my part. And what a halting lover Mr. Bang would make, providing he is a lover; I cannot help thinking. And Charlie Lien is tame even as a villain, but then he might be doctored up. A little bit of melodrama! What a pity the mock-marriage and the abduction is so worn out. Surely I can invent at least a new staging for the old theme. Perhaps if I can do so, all this, my writing, will not have been in vain. Indeed in a month I have felt the impelling force of ambition, and all the pangs that come from humiliation.

A strange mixing will take place at Norway House—Mrs. Lien, the women of wealth, in whom ennui is a genuine complaint; Mrs. Mount, who envies Mrs. Lien, but cannot command courage enough to affect her pose; Mumsie, dear old Mumsie! Mr. Bang, Charlie Lien and—. Here is a setting for an inventive mind, scope for the villain’s villainy, field for a hero’s heroism. Who might be the hero? Could Mr. Bang be a hero? He hasn’t quite the name.

JANUARY 17TH.

Jack Bang has saved my life and I hate him! How I hate him! I know now the meaning of “a consuming hate.” My heart seems of lead. I am frightened because I hate him so much.

Charlie Lien was taking me down the toboggan slide when it happened. Mrs. Lien and Mrs. Mount were there, each with a cavalier; and Mumsie with Mr. Bang. Charlie and I had reached the head of the stairs and had placed our toboggan ready and I had just seated myself. Mrs. Mount was next in turn and was talking to Charlie.

“Do you know, really, Mr. Lien, I think you are the nicest young man I ever met. You are such a good sport, and so good to everybody, even if they don’t amount to anything ———”

At this point I felt the toboggan move, and a moment after a number of shrieks, and then a great thump behind and then—a hundred sensations. The toboggan skidded this way and that, first on one side of the slide and then on the other, till it settled down to its arrow-like course, by which time I was exhausted through fright. To fortify myself I put my arm behind me and with it encircled what I thought was the head of Charlie Lien, murmuring, “Oh, Charlie, oh! Charlie.”

Imagine my feelings when I found I had the head of Mr. Bang. At the moment I would willingly have severed my right hand to have retrieved my mishap. Oh! oh! how can I express my mortification? No words of mine can tell.

I suppose Mumsie, and Uncle, and other old-fashioned people would say that it was noble of Mr. Bang to say "It was nothing," and to ignore the fact that I had put my arm about his neck and called him Charlie. If he had only appeared one whit more self-satisfied after the occurrence, I believe I could almost love him. But, possibly, for him to feel more self-satisfied than he does is beyond his capacity. And then if he had only smiled even cynically when our eyes met at the bottom of the slide, I could forgive him much—the beast!

It all happened through that wretched woman, Mrs. Mount, who wants him for a son-in-law, trying to win him, I know. Charlie let go the handles of the toboggan just a moment to look at this audacious creature when the toboggan slid off. Of course, without its steersman it would have run over the side of the run-way and I would have been killed. But Mr. Bang, who was watching everything as usual, made a spring as I passed him and landed, where Charlie should have been, behind me. He certainly did well after he gained the steersman's seat. Had he been unable to steady the toboggan and we had both gone over the run-way, we would have been killed—wouldn't we?

Of course, it broke up the tobogganning for the morning. Everybody crowded round us. Mumsie was almost as white as the snow when she came up. Mrs. Lien was most sympathetic. Others said nice things and then Mrs. Mount, having reserved her fire until the last, said: "Oh! Miss Travers, it was all so melographic. We shall expect a romance to grow out of this, shan't we, Mrs. Somers?"

I was so angry I nearly fainted through the effort I made in restraining myself. Of course, too, I had no fitting retort ready. It would be so nice if we would only have a stock of retorts ready for use on emergency. And I don't believe there is any such word as melographic.

I know Mrs. Mount wants Charlie Lien for her Doris, and this knowledge came through a conversation I heard last night. Norway House has wonderful acoustic properties. Sounds come from everywhere, anywhere, and last night as I lay in bed, I heard the following:

"But, Mother, the Travers girl is quite good-looking, and I don't see why Charlie Lien should not marry her."

“Doris,” came Mrs. Mount’s voice in the severest tones, “You must not contradict your mother. I say the Travers girl is not nearly as good-looking as you are—you who are all grace and beautiful as a cowslip in the morning dew—”

“Oh, Mother!”

“Now, don’t contradict—”

“But, Mother, Charlie has had Miss Travers to lunch at the Hunt Club, and they’ve been seen together several times.”

“Now, now, Doris, you should know young men will be young men. But it’s time Charlie Lien began to look around serious-like—”

“But why should he fancy me?”

“That’s it, that’s it, that’s why I want you to put your best foot forward, don’t you know, really——”

“But Mother, if Mrs. Somers did not think there was something in the affair between Charlie and Miss Travers——”

“Now, Doris, I don’t want any more back answerings. To show I ain’t a fool, I may tell you that I’ve sounded Mrs. Somers and have found out it’s the big fellow who has put up the coin, so now! It’s all very plain—”

“But Mother, Mr. Bang is not paying Miss Travers any attention.”

“Now, Doris, I have told you already I don’t want any back answerings. You’re my daughter, and I want to see you well married. When I’m dying I don’t want to be thinking of you sitting round a boarding-house about the time you should be a grandmother.”

“There’s lots of time, Mother.”

“There ain’t lots of time, and you know it. Don’t you know, really, there ain’t a Charlie Lien to be picked up every day.”

“But, Mother, I can’t pick him—”

“Doris,” the mother’s voice was rising in anger, “what did I say about back answerings?”

“Well, Mother, do please give me time to think. Assuming Charlie is having a harmless flirtation—”

“Harmless flirtation, indeed, with a hussy that has no money, and no good clothes to set off what few good looks she has got—”

At this point I heard a door slam. Evidently Doris had left her mamma whose voice was getting coarser every second the controversy continued. "Hussy indeed!" I thought. Her Doris! Bah! But how in the name of fortune did Doris learn of my doings with Charlie Lien. Of course, no mention was made of the Palm-room, which is a comfort. And how coarse the mother's voice became as it gained in heat. Her "ain'ts" and her "back answerings"—Oh! to think of my having toadied to her! I painted her picture at my age, a buxom slattern, that is what she was, a slattern, the butt of every jolly cavalier who felt a budding wit; bare feet, possibly, and dirty petticoats, tattered and torn! And her home, the tavern at the dusty corner, the long intervals between the coming and going of guests; the wild acclaim, the shouted jest, the latest news from the seat of war, political, or otherwise.

And to think that I, Elsie Travers, toadied to her!

The conversation I have recorded I heard on Sunday night. Of course, there has been nothing else to record—beyond the fact that we travelled by the same train as the Mounts.

And now to return to the thread of my narrative. After the first flutter of excitement and Mrs. Mount's stab at matchmaking, I had a fit of nerves and went to my room. I had my lunch sent to me; I wished to think. And I thought and thought; and then I realized that all my effort could not hit upon a line of action. What to do? Would that a fairy would speak!

But a demon spoke—a demon, a hell-cat's words with the philosophy of Satan!

Shortly after lunch I heard the Mounts at it again.

"I'm sure she'll never marry him now. What girl would marry a man who would imperil her life so?"

"What do you know of diplomacy? Will you answer me that now, you who was so fond of back answering last night?"

"I—"

"I tell you, you know nothing. The girl's gone to bed, and her no more scared than you be."

"But, Mother, her nerves—"

"Her nerves, her nothing, all bunkum! She's gone to bed to ketch him. She's going to ketch him if you don't look out. That's what I'm frightened of."

“But how?”

“How—how—how? Don’t you know how the chorus girls ketch the lordlings? Why, keep him at a distance, you bet. I’ll tell you she’s no fool, that girl is no fool. That fledgling is a wise bird, as wise as the ‘chicken^[5] wid de big eye.’ ”

“Will keeping a lordling at a distance catch him?”

“Ketch him? Certainly, didn’t I say so before. Keep him chasing, chasing, chasing and never satisfy him until he pops.”

“Pops, Mother?”

“Pops the question, of course. Now mark my words, see if the hussy does not pout, squirm, and lally gag; make out she’s mortal offended and play him to a finish. That is, she would do it if she knew enough—”

Of course, I could not see Mrs. Mount as she spoke; but her voice—her words and expression were totally different from what she used in society. But her words gave a stimulus to my thoughts. I was very angry. To be called a “hussy.” And the slurs the women made against me! I hated her for it, even more than I hated Jack. And so I thought again. And then I reached a decision. I would fulfil Mrs. Mount’s prophecy. I would repulse Charlie Lien and flirt with Jack Bang. But I would revenge myself on both the woman and the man, I mean Charlie Lien. If Charlie proposes to me I shall say “NO.” So bids the spirit of my ancestors.

I appeared at dinner and was the sensation of the moment. I smiled, oh so sweetly, on Mr. Bang, and after dinner settled down to a book at the side of Mumsie in the fireside circle. Mrs. Lien and Mumsie fell to talking. Out of the vast amount of small talk that I heard, the following remains in my memory:

“Do you know, Mrs. Somers, my cook absolutely refused to cook a dinner if Lady Billings was to be a guest. I reasoned with her—it was no use. ‘Mrs. Lien,’ said she, ‘I refuse to cook a dinner for Molly Fenton.’ ‘But, Kate,’ I pleaded, ‘I don’t ask you to serve it. All I ask you to do is to cook it.’ ‘I don’t care,’ she answered. ‘I’ll walk out of your house before I’ll cook a dinner for Molly Fenton, even if she now is Lady Billings. When we were children together, Mother would not allow me to play with her, and I won’t cook a dinner for her now.’ ”

^[5] An Italian navvy once shot and ate an owl, and when he was asked what he had eaten, he replied: “De chicken wid de big eye.”

JANUARY 18TH.

I arranged it all most successfully. I really believe I am diplomatic. Mr. Bang asked me to go snow-shoeing with him this morning. We went. The sky was bright, the wind was up and it was very cold, almost numbing. We crossed Norway Lake, and down into the forest, and then we felt no wind, and as we walked and walked, I felt a gentle glow come over me.

I soon found I lost myself in the interest I gained in Mr. Bang's conversation, just as I did one day long ago. He told me of the forest wilds of British Columbia, and trappers' tales of the deer, and the martin, and the fisher, and the beaver, and that strange creature, the Canada-Jay, or Whiskey Jack.

"You talk like an animal story book," I remarked.

"Do I?" he asked. "I'm sorry. The animal story men are fakers, and I would not like you to think me a faker. There is not a trapper in the West who is not more or less conversant with the writings of this class of authors. All I have heard speak of them, damn them up and down. Even I dislike them, and wonder at the public taste. But then the public is an ass."

Wapoose is the rabbit of the North. His tracks were everywhere about. In the North everybody, everything lives on the rabbit. The Indians, trappers, the owls, the fox, the wolf, all feast upon poor wapoose. And like many another faithful friend he is despised.

But the silence of the forest is oppressive. Stepping into it one feels as if one entered the realm of nature. One feels the temporary guest of the world where a ceaseless war is being waged, in which the fittest only survive, where animal life is maintained by the death of animal life. Nature is as cruel as a steel-trap that the fur-hunter sets for the fox.

And the trees stand about spectral in the silence; the firs and spruces with their branches laden with snow-droop as if in shame. They picture modesty. The clatter of a squirrel, or the squeak of a tom-tit, or the hammer, hammer of the woodpecker come at long intervals. They merely announce the great oppressive silence, each striking his own note.

All the region round about Norway Lake is a Government game and timber reserve. The streams are filled with beaver and the woods with other fur-bearing animals.

We came to a beaver-dam, Mr. Bang recognizing the rounded ridge in the snow marking the dam and domes of snow marking the houses. He told

me of the strange family huddled in these humble homes and the superstitions they have engendered.

And after two hours tramp we came to Napoleon's cabin. Napoleon is one of the game wardens, and by a strange chance was known to Mr. Bang. Mr. Bang had planned our tramp that we might call on his friend. Napoleon was at home. I really believe Mr. Bang had sent him word we were coming, as everything about the cabin was so neat, and the warm air that greeted us at the open door was in itself hospitable. It told me I might take off my wraps and rest and be comfortable.

Napoleon was a grim customer whose broken English was that of the Canadian French. His grin was expansive. He asked question after question of mutual friends in the Kootenays, but his eye was continually on me; that is, in a sly way, he was continually glancing at me.

As I sat perfectly happy and lazy it struck me I was in an odd position, deep in the forest, in the cabin of a good-natured savage. But somehow I felt safe, and I felt I was absorbing local colour by the bucket-full, and could now feel superior to the mere reader of books. I fancied my two companions fighting wolves, and bears, and wild Indians, all most exciting. This shows only that in some ways I have not yet ceased being a child.

Just as Napoleon was putting the finishing touches on the laying of the lunch table, his accumulating admiration burst its bounds.

"By gosh! shees look for nice leetle girl, some day maybe shees Messus Bang, uh?"

Of course, I blushed crimson. Fortunately Mr. Bang's face was turned away from me, and, of course, he could not turn to look at me, and so could not measure, my confusion. But I saw his—his confusion. He flushed a moment and admonished Napoleon not to take things too seriously. But I had heard it, the spoken words, "Mrs. Bang." Really, they did not sound so very awful. I think the pleasurable anticipation I felt for the savory lunch must have made them less objectionable.

I did enjoy that lunch!

JANUARY 20TH.

I am to be Mrs. Bang and am reconciled. Fate has spoken and all sensibilities have been matched by Fate. And oh! what an adventure was ours. Has all history such another tale to tell? I know now what my hate for Jack meant; it was the fight my spirit put up against his spirit. But his has now the mastery and I love him. After all, I believe a woman's greatest

privilege is to love. It is so much more blessed to give than to receive. How infinite is the philosophy of the Bible!

As I held his poor, lacerated head in my lap in the depths of the forest last night, I gave up my soul. He murmured, “You have saved my life,” and I felt it was true. It was all so tragic, so terrible, so glorious.

As I lie in bed propped up in pillows, my own head bandaged, I can see them now, savage, furious, bristling beasts—the World, the Flesh and the Devil. What power they held, what fury, hate, and passion! How vast is the scope of nature.

Jack and I went to Napoleon’s cabin and had lunch and then it began to snow and we tarried. And then the snow stopped and we set out, and the wolves came. How my blood ran chill as I heard their howling coming near and nearer. We were too far from Napoleon’s cabin to retreat, besides their howlings came from our rear.

I suppose I have no right to call old Devil by that name, as he was leader of the pack, but it fitted him so well.

There was no hesitation in his movements. As an arrow from a twanging bow-string he sprang at Jack’s throat. Of course, I only call them the World, the Flesh, and the Devil for the purposes of this narrative. I am not trying to turn my diary into an allegory. They were all devils, but I must individualize them. Devil was the biggest, strongest, fiercest.

When Jack learned by the howling of the wolves they were on our trail, he armed himself with a great club, and after arming me with a smaller club, he lifted me into the branches of a birch tree. Then he took up his stand, my defender, my savior, my hero. He stood with his back against the tree trunk.

His views of life are so noble, so broad, so profound. I have told him everything, that is, almost all about everything. This, of course, is since the fight. His comment was so far-reaching, so generous.

Folly visits most homes and most individuals sometimes in our lives. The thing is to come through it, and having come through it not to be worse than when going in, for we must be wiser. Our grip on life is stronger. To have made an error in younger life and to recognize that error makes us surer-footed on the trail of life, and it gives us a measure of our powers of resistance.

And then I told him the real climax of my life, which is the climax of this story, came to me last Thursday as I sat in the Senate Chamber. Then the spirit of my ancestor spoke as it never spoke before. Then I made my

choice; then I realized Society was indeed the folly of the age. To this he replied with the question:

“Can you wonder the Chinese worship their ancestors? Perhaps we—”

“Perhaps we may drop Christianity for ancestor—”

“It is not necessary to drop Christianity. Christianity is not incompatible with ancestor-worship.”

Dear Jack!

Darkness was settling down over the scene and Devil’s eyes gleamed fire as he came. And so did the eyes of World and Flesh, for the three were in the air at the same time. Three pairs of jaws snapped together like steel traps, pitilessly. Oh! the cruelty of those jaws.

As the three snapped their jaws, Jack’s club swung round and they were hurled away. In the attack Devil sprang at Jack with Flesh at his left and World at his right. Jack’s club caught Flesh behind the ear and made him feel very sorry. And World and Devil sat on their haunches and snapped.

Jack glared at the wolves and the wolves glared at Jack. I called to him: “Jack, why do you not come up into the tree with me?” It was the first time I had ever called him Jack.

“That would not do, for if we stayed in the tree very long we should freeze to death. I must stay below and fight for us both, dear.”

My hero!

World and Devil sat at a distance and licked their chops, while Flesh wandered about with his head bent low.

What woman knowing she was loved by such a man could help returning his love. We were primitive, and I’ve heard love is primitive, back through the ages to when man had little but his superior intelligence to guard his love.

As Flesh regained his senses, the three threshed about up and down and then they sprang, this time Devil coming at my foot. Of course, it was all fancy, but I fancied I felt his hot breath. I foiled his attempt while Jack managed to hit him over the back. It was not a very hard blow as its force was spent ere it reached him, it having actually been aimed at the other two.

Darkness was settling fast, and this fact increased my horror. Jack enquired if I were cold. I answered, no. This was between the howling of the wolves. Jack asked me if I could climb higher into the tree. I replied I could

not. Then he told me to pluck from the tree all the loose bark I could and roll it into bundles. This I did as the wolves held a longer council of war. They circled round and round the tree, ugly, grey, devilish, watchful brutes. Jack told me to undo the sash I wore round my waist and lower it to him. This I did, and then he told me to shout and wave my arms to attract the wolves' attention. When I did as he requested, he drew his knife and his match-box from his pocket and, placing his club between his knees, tied them into the end of the sash and told me to hoist away. With the knife I managed to secure a much greater quantity of birch bark. I asked if I should light any of the bark, but Jack said no, as it was no use driving the wolves away unless we beat them. By this he meant that should we merely frighten them into the forest depths we were still their prisoners. The bark was to be for an emergency.

The wolves crept closer, ever watchful, the cruel beasts! Their howlings and the snap, snap of their teeth seemed to grow louder and more frequent. Suddenly they sprang, Devil at Jack's throat. Jack had swung his club in order to guard me; this caused his left shoulder to remain unprotected. Devil seized it in his fangs. Fortunately Jack had been able to throw up his left elbow to protect his neck, but over he went. Quick as lightning the other two were on him.

I lighted the birch bark, and with it flaming in my hand, dropped into the midst of the raging, struggling pack. Oh! the glory of it—to rescue the man I loved—and, incidentally, to save my own life, for I did not know then that Napoleon was on his way to our rescue.

First in the face of one, then in the face of another I flung the flaming bark, and screamed and shouted. The smell of singeing hair sickened me, but it frightened them away. Although they had tasted blood, dear Jack's blood, they drew off. And then I remembered. I placed the flaming bark against the birch tree; it burst into flames; the forest round about was lighted up, and then I knelt by the side of my lover.

Napoleon came. His rifle rang out. Devil at least was dead.

And now I have Jack, my Jack! The Mounts and the Liens and all that vulgar, selfish, self-advertising, wasteful crowd; they are nothing

Mrs. Bang!

THE END

Toronto: T. H. Best Printing Co., Limited

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Book name and author have been added to the original book cover. The resulting cover is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *As Others See Us: Being the Diary of a Canadian Debutante* by W.H.P. (William Henry Pope) Jarvis (as Goosequill)]