

age; and on each of them a single silver statue. At the upper end of the room hung a crucifix of ivory, with three tall silver candlesticks on each side of it. The candles were of yellow wax. Facing this was a single picture, a group of dancers by Monticelli.

Sieglinda led the way upstairs. Here was a modern sitting-room, evidently designed for a woman. The main motive was steel-blue, harmonized with ruddy amber. Everything in this room was soft; it was, as it were, an archetype of cushions! The pictures were all landscapes by Morrice. The room opposite was as typically a man's. Great leather arm chairs and settees stood on every side. A huge cigar cabinet of cedar was opposite the open fireplace, with a long narrow table between them which divided the room into two halves. One half contained a billiard table, and its walls were covered with sporting prints; the other had a card table and a chess table, but no other furniture except chairs. On the walls were nudes by the best masters, Manet and John, and O'Conor, and Van Gogh, and Gauguin, culminating in a daring freak by Cadell, and a solemn and passionless eccentricity by Barne.

The third floor was guarded by a single door. It was all one room, a bedroom lined in rose marble, with a vast antique basin of the same material, in which a fountain, a reduced copy of the "Universe" of the Avenue de l'Observatoire, played. Around the room stood many a masterpiece of marble and of bronze, the Drunken Satyr and the Dancing Faun, Diana of the Ephesians and the terminal Hermes of the Aristophanes of sculpture, Marsyas and Olympas, the goat-piece of the unknown master of Herculaneum, the Femmes Damnées of Pradier, the Bouches d'Enfer of Rodin and his Epervier et Colombe. All these were grouped about the great bed, which rose from the floor like a snowy plateau lit with Alpenblühn. There were no pillars, nothing but a table-land of ease, swelling like a maid's bosom from the marble. One could hardly say where floor left off and bed began, save that around the rising curves of rosy purity stood eight Cupids wreathed in flowers.

Light, in this room came pale and timid, like a girl's first love, through trellises of ground glass. But the room was not dark, for there was no color in it deeper than the bronzes; and they like islands in the rose-white loveliness that girt them like a sea. The ceiling was a single sheet of polished silver.

From this room brother and sister mounted to the highest floor. Here was the music room, a chapel of carved walnut, lofty and Gothic, endowed with a great organ; its choir ready to become vocal at the waving of the wand of a magician, for every kind of musical instrument was in its place.

Siegmund for the first time exhibited manly firmness. "I am going straight out of this house," he cried angrily, "and my permanent address will be the Hudson River!"

### III.

In the matter of the seven thousand-dollar motorcar Sieglinda, although German by birth, had taken French leave. Without asking the proprietor, she had ordered it to be at the door; it was the last day. "Pretty mean, I think," she said, as they drove up town. "I do him a house like that, and all I get is a measly eight hundred and fifty-six dollars. I know now that I could have got a commission on everything I bought." "I'm glad you didn't," said her brother; "I never liked tradesman's ways, and I never will."

When they were dressed for dinner they drove to the McAlpin, told the chauffeur to call for them at the Opera at eleven, and after one more Banquet of Jupiter, walked up through the snow to the Metropolitan. The wine and the music made them mad; starved of every pleasure as they had been for months, the lure of the old life took hold of them, and they abandoned themselves wildly to the intoxication of the moment. The future? Bah!

Sieglinda had stuck at nothing in her daring; she had borrowed her rich man's box. Siegmund noticed that she had bowed very sweetly to a dapper little gentleman opposite, before the curtain rose, and he would probably have asked a question, had not the first bars of the overture rapt him away into the world of that other Siegmund and Sieglinda after whom he and his sister had been called.

Just as the last curtain fell, the door of the box opened, and the little gentleman walked in. "Mr. Damff; this is Graf von Eichen." They shook hands, exchanged a few general remarks; the trio went off to Noel's, where Sieglinda, determined to get the last minute out of her Day of Fairyland, ordered a splendid supper. But even as the clams arrived the day was spoiled for Siegmund. The band struck up. "Oh God!" he cried, rising from his seat, "there's that nightmare again!" "I can understand," said Mr. Damff, smiling, "that it must get a good deal on your nerves. Every rose has its thorn." "I don't see any rose about it," snapped Siegmund. Mr. Damff was embarrassed. "I'm sorry," he said, turning deferentially to Sieglinda. "I seem to have said the wrong thing. But I certainly understood from you —" Sieglinda interrupted him. "The boy doesn't know," said she; "I'll break it to him gently. It's degrading and horrible, I know, dear," she went on, putting a slim hand on her brother's, "but the fact is that you're my rich man. That house is yours; it all came out of the profits of that song you threw on the floor eight months ago!"

"Good God, Sieglinda!" cried the boy, "you sold that muck! I'll never look myself in the face again. But —" he caught his breath. "That was a tune you hummed; I thought you had picked it up on Broadway!"

"And I didn't know I was humming it! Ach, du lieber Gott!" she cried, lapsing into German, as a great light broke in upon her, "so that was what the wind said to the Old Man of the Peepul-Tree!"

Of course her hearers did not understand her. Over yet another bottle of champagne — Sieglinda had now drunk merely six during the day — she told the story of her picnic in the park. "So," she concluded, "while I slept the wind spoke with the old man, and they put the song into my brain, and I got the habit of humming it — and oh! Siegmund darling, you're rich, and we'll never have any more trouble in the world again!"

"If your conscience troubles you," said Mr. Damff, "about the quality of the music you are inflicting on humanity, let me reassure you. The Gräfin did not mention it, but I have the honor to be a director of the Metropolitan Opera House, and the purpose of our meeting to-night was that I might tell you that we had decided to produce your 'Heine's Tod,' and to discuss the preliminaries. I hope you will allow me to order another magnum of this very delightful champagne."

It was ordered; but the error was fatal; for that moment the proceedings became so far from lucid as to baffle the historian. Presently, however, Damff rose (as best he could) and