

A WHITE ROSE.

She was very young in spite of her nineteen years; very young, and of unmeasured innocence. Yet it was a whole year since that day most radiant in her memory—the day when she had graduated from the little boarding school up in the Connecticut hills. She dreamed it over often now—the golden morning, enriching the young green meadows that curved against the sky; the troop of girls in white—her friends—marching into the hall and awaiting the proud expectancy of many faces; the tremor of her heart when she arose to read her essay about "Happy Queens," the cruel tears that got into her voice at the valedictory climax of the paper, as she turned to pronounce the long farewell. It was a great day, good to know and dear to remember—would she ever again have so much glory?

For the world seemed large and vague, and she could not find her place in it. Every one was kind to her, she did all that was appointed of work or play, and lived gently through well ordered days. Yet, when she walked out under the deep sky, her heart would open wide with wonder that could not find words—wonder about the meaning of it, about the cold vastness of the world and her own littleness, about the strangeness of being alive; or even a deeper wonder whether she was really alive at all, whether this seeming world was not a panorama of illusions. And so her "first season," as her mother called it, passed as vaguely as a dream. She talked and laughed and danced like the other girls, or tried to, but had no part in their absorbing dramas, and felt aloof from the heroes of them.

And now it was over, and she could have a quiet summer in the country, and look out upon imperious Lake Michigan, while the sands of its shores slipped through her fingers. On the whole, it was pleasant to be alone, though she tried not to feel uncomfortable when her solitude was invaded. There was a melancholy gentleman not far away down the bluff who seemed to like to talk to her while they wandered back and forth on the sand. She scarcely knew what to say to him, he was so much older; but her heart went out in sympathy to one who was manifestly unhappy, so she screwed up her courage and tried to forget that he was a man and an alien.

At last he told her a sad story to explain his sighs, told her of thoughts and feelings which had thrilled her in books and on the stage, but which none of her friends had ever before confessed. Somehow, they did not seem natural in the new guise—it was as though she had crossed the footlights to assume a role. There was an awful excitement in the change, but it made her suddenly aware of rouge and powder, of trapdoors and painted scenery. Did real men and women really suffer such ecstasies of rapture and despair, and was she to hear of them, feel them in the faces of her friends?

They were sitting on the sand together as he confessed his sorrows, and the waning

moon shone full in his face and silvered his curly hair. He told her how he had been in love, and her heart beat fiercely to hear that thrilling phrase from the lips of a living man. He had been in love with a false hearted Southern beauty, one of those marauding creatures whose lot hitherto had been to prey upon heroes of romance, but whose existence in the flesh had never been proved to Rose before. It appeared that this unworthy being had vowed she loved him, and promised to marry him, but after a week or two of rapture her loyal-hearted lover had discovered that she was engaged also to another man—a young little Creole with a plantation in Mississippi and a bank account in New Orleans.

"I went to her in a rage, told her she had wrecked my life—and she laughed at me," the blighted lover continued bitterly. "But did you care for her any more?" said Rose.

"Do you think I could get over such a feeling in a minute?" Rose felt the injured tone in his voice, and said, "I suppose not," with a wistful wonder at the power of passion to conquer reason. She clasped her hands behind her head, he went on, "and looked at me sideways and laughed. And then she said—I can hear her little draw now—But you know, 'I like you both, Arthur Dunne—why don't you fight it out?'"

"Why—she was wicked," said Rose, horrified. "You should never think of her again."

"There is a spell about such women," said the stricken hero. "She is my evil genius, I suppose." Rose looked at him with awe for his deep experience in life. His sorrowful face looked handsome in the moonlight, darkly beautiful and almost boyish. Surely he was too young to have suffered so much—perhaps twenty seven was not such a great age after all. She dropped her eye with a swift shyness: the silence deepened around her, and she could not think how to break it. When

What could she say to console him—a little insignificant thing, ignorant of grief! Suddenly she became aware of two figures approaching—her neighbor's coachman and housemaid, out for a stroll. They would pass in front of her—what could she say? She was sitting in the moonlight, alone with a man—what would they think? Would they glance at her and smile, and fancy the man had been making love to her? How terrible! How unjust! She must say something quiet and commonplace, just to show that nothing of that sort had been going on. What could she say? Why did Mr. Dunne sit there looking at the moon, without a word to help her at that awful moment? The strollers were near—were not two feet away. She must speak—oh, for a ready tongue!

"I hope such a thing will never happen to you again—" The words tumbled out of the girl's mouth as the wayfarer's passed between them and the moon.

"What did you say?" said Arthur Dunne, startled from his reverie.

And now poor little Rose could have stabbed herself for her foolish speech.



How could she have said it? And how could she repeat it in cold blood? She tried to think of something else to say at that moment. She would have welcomed any lie; but her brain was paralyzed. The young man repeated his question—and how handsome he looked as he turned to her! Was she a fool, that in spite of icy lips and a sinking heart she could do nothing but repeat those stupid words?

He looked back toward the lake. "A burnt child dreads the fire," he said, after a pause. Rose felt degraded and oppressed; shame made her blood run cold. She suffered one of those writhing agonies of self-disgust which only the young know. The beauty of the night had gone; she rose shivering, and they climbed the bluff in silence.

In the morning she woke with a rush of shame and lived over again those awful moments. What could he have thought of her? How could she live it the thought her foolish and indelicate? She must deserve that he should despise her, for in every face she felt a suspicious smile. Her mother's eye twinkled, her father called her a little flirt, and her twelve-year-old brother shouted, "I saw you; did he propose by the light of the moon?" How cruel they were. How little they knew of his sorrows, her feelings. They thought that there was only one thing in all the world which a man and a woman could talk about under the moon. She longed for some one who would not laugh at her, some heart of sympathy, in the crowded world.

It seemed strange that she saw no more of Arthur Dunne. Why should he avoid her? He had no right to despise her for one foolish speech, even if—she shivered to think how he might interpret it. He ought to feel that she needed a friend, and yet he never came. She would not go down to the sands any more, after all the teasing; but surely he might climb the bluff. She began to feel bitter as she thought of his adoring that Southern woman. How could men care for such creatures? What was the secret of their

charms? And suddenly she longed for the secret. Such thoughts as these frightened her and she brushed them away; but again and again they returned. One day they crowded in upon her with questions as she sat on the bluff, brooding over the lake. It was two weeks and more since that foolish night, and yet she felt Arthur Dunne's step behind her on the grass. He approached resolutely and sat down. "See here!" he said almost fiercely, "I want to know what you meant by that remark of yours the other night?" She trembled, and her voice pleaded for mercy. "You ought to know I didn't mean anything," she said. "You must have felt that I loved you before I knew it myself," he remarked. "Why, no—no—I thought you—cared for" (she could not yet utter familiarly so large a word as "love")—"that other woman."

"Oh, that's all both," said Arthur Dunne, irrelevantly. "I care for you. And I'm going to try and make you like me."

But she felt instantly that she liked him already; and instead of sobering her this new emotion made her laugh. A joy that was almost hysterical swept over her. "It would not do," she said, between gay smiles, "to let that awful thing happen to you again."

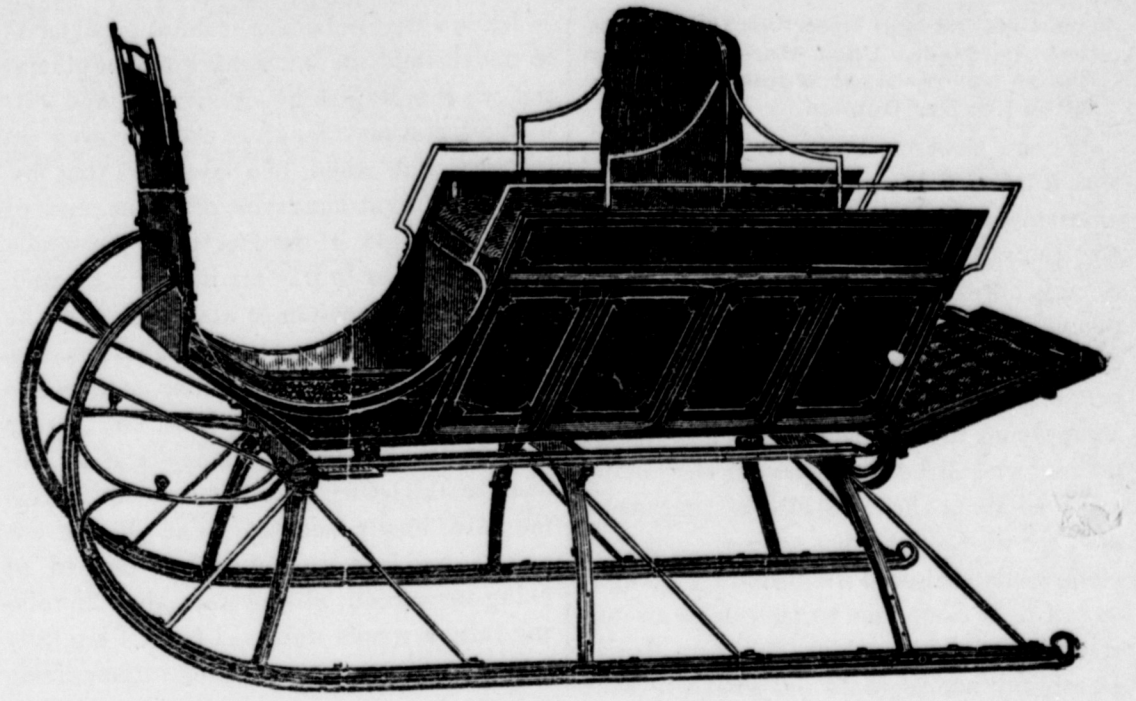
And the next instant she was slipping away down the bluff and he was chasing her.

Insulted the Kaiser.

A girl of Metz 14 years old, has recently been condemned to eight days imprisonment for having insulted the German emperor. The insult consisted in writing a private letter to one of her little friends in which there was something disrespectful to his majesty. It is said that such sentences are common in Alsace-Lorraine. Herr Lebknecht, the veteran socialist [of the rich stag, will have to serve four months' imprisonment also for insulting the emperor after the reichstag adjourns.

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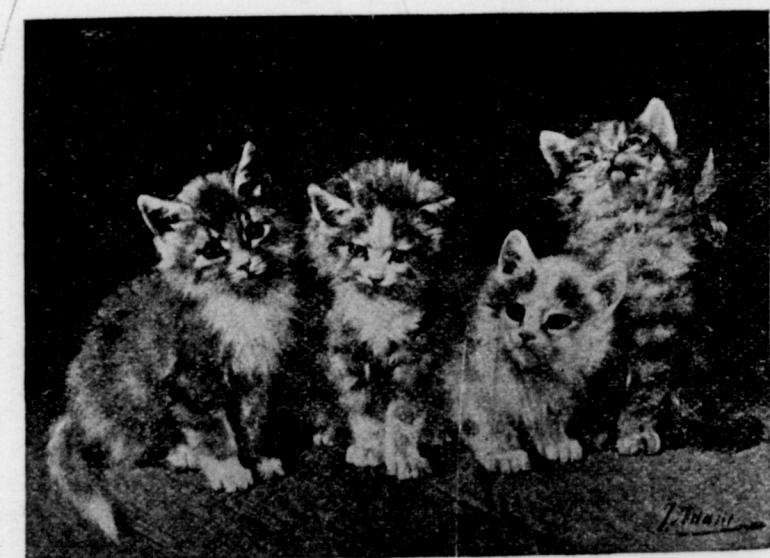


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