THE WAITER

In the bay-window of the boarding-house sitting-room a little group was discussing the girl who had just passed down the front steps.

"The airs she puts on!"

"And the money she spends!"

"It's a pity she hasn't someone to look after her. If she were my daughter——"

They paid no attention to George Hurstaway, who longed for courage to speak his mind, and defend Sylvia Grex in her absence. To him she seemed all that was perfect. He had thought himself lucky just to spend a week under the same roof.

Their fellow-guests would have said that Miss Grex had snubbed him on every possible occasion. Of course, Hurstaway reflected gloomily, she could not possibly be interested in a very ordinary fellow, plain and by no means smart—just a city clerk on his annual vacation, who was not accustomed to feminine society.

He wished that he could approach her dashingly as the other men did—wonderful dandies, with the latest thing in waistcoats, socks, and slang. But in the boarding-house society he was of no account whatever.

This was, in some ways, the most miserable holiday he had ever spent. Presently he must go back to town and the office. He would never see her again.

With an angry glance at the gossiping party in the window, he walked moodily upstairs. From his seat at dinner that night he could observe Miss Grex across the table. She seemed even more excitable and high-spirited than usual, and, with pangs of jealousy, George Hurstaway noted the evident admiration of her masculine neighbors.

When the meal was over, he wondered listlessly how he should spend the evening. Finally he was left alone in an alcove adjoining the hall.

There he must have closed his eyes. He roused himself with a start, to hear Mrs. Beatson's voice raised shrilly:

"So that's your little game, is it, Miss! To pack up your luggage and sneak off a day beforehand, without settling your bill!"

"I didn't know you were in. I've left a note to explain. I'd have written again directly I got home."

"Oh, of course! Nice goings-on! My word!"

"I meant to send you the money. You can't think I intended——"

"You'll pay me to-morrow," declared the proprietress thickly, "before you leave this house, or I'll know the reason why!"

She stamped off. Sylvia Grex sank down on a basket-chair, quite close to Hurstaway. She was crying a little.

He reached out and touched her arm.

"I heard," he stammered. "I couldn't help hearing."

She lifted her face, shrinking away.

"What must you think of me!"

"I have to apologize——"

"Do let me explain, please." He could hardly realize that this was the vivacious and haughty Miss Grex he had admired from afar "I quite thought I should have some extra money this morning. It was my birthday yesterday, and an uncle of mine has always sent me a present—five pounds. I counted on it this year, too, but perhaps he has forgotten."

She bent her head again.

"You see why I spent all I had with me. I thought I could easily pay Mrs. Beatson's bill to-day. I've been extravagant—having a good time."

"I'm not one of the fellows you've been friendly with. I haven't taken you about anywhere," observed Hurstaway slowly. "No one else need know. When you get home you can pay me back. I'm just a stranger, that's all; but I'd like to remember that I'd helped you, even in such a little way."

"Yes—you'd lend——"

"Please let me!"

"But you mustn't! I couldn't take it!" He turned away. "There's no time to ask my father or mother, though."

A few minutes later Hurstaway was walking along the promenade, happier than he had been since his holiday started.

Next morning Miss Grex went away. Everyone in the house was astonished to hear of her departure before breakfast. On the stairs George Hurstaway found one of his own visiting-cards.

"She dropped it! Now she won't know my address! But she's coming back here in September. If I could manage to run down for a week-end. I wonder if she'd mind."

He was occupied during the next few days mainly in thinking of her. Ordinary amusements were out of the question.

"I've only just about enough for Mrs. Beatson," he reflected; but he did not regret the fact at all. When asked to join in different excursions he pleaded engagements, and went for solitary walks.

On the Sunday, however, he made a discovery which appalled him. The return-half of his ticket was gone!

He remembered that once his letter-case had slipped from his pocket, and all the afternoon he spent in searching the beach, without success.

There was no one available from whom he could possibly borrow. There was no time to wire to friends even if the post-office had been open. Mrs. Beatson, he deliberated, would never consent to retain his belongings as security for part of her bill, and he was due back at the office the following morning!

At an early hour, desperate, he sent a telegram. The answer soon reached him. He stiffened as he read it:

"Excuse not accepted. Stay away for good. Week's salary follows by post."

The manager had always disliked him, and, after recent reprimands, had thrown out the broadest of hints that he should seek another situation.

Hurstaway hardly grasped the truth until he had actually left the boarding-house. Dully he reviewed his position.

He was left with a few copper coins.

. . . . . .

The waiter in the rather dingy restaurant in the side-street was snatching a few minutes' rest. A big party of excursionists had just left after a late lunch, and it was not likely that there would be any further customers yet awhile.

He was rather surprised, therefore, when the swing-doors opened.

"It's raining fast now!" remarked the elder lady audibly. "This isn't much of a place, but we can shelter till the shower's over."

Miss Sylvia Grex glanced round as they sat at a small table, but almost before her gaze could rest on the waiter, he had turned his back. She saw a stout man approach him, and overheard a sharp command:

"Attend to those ladies at once! What is wrong with you?"

But the waiter vanished through a curtained doorway. The stout, foreign-looking person came forward.

"I am sorry, but my waiter—he is ill. Kindly excuse him. I myself will take your order."

"Coffee for two, please."

The proprietor presently, with much condescension, set the cups before them. A quarter of an hour went by.

"Ready, dear? I think the rain's over for the present. Shall we move?"

Miss Grex roused herself, seemingly with an effort, and assented. A minute later the waiter had apparently recovered. He reappeared, and began to clear the table.

Beneath one of the chairs lay a glove. As he picked it up, he noticed that the proprietor was occupied. He held it tightly for a moment between his two hands. There was a curious, strained expression on his face.

As he retired with the tray, the door was pushed open again—very softly this time. Miss Grex had returned alone. She stood looking awkwardly round. The stout man suddenly became aware of her presence.

"I believe I—I left something behind just now."

"Certainly! I will inquire at once. Yes."

He rang a bell, and the waiter stepped out.

"Have you picked up anything from that small table by the window? Come, come! Are you deaf?"

Slowly the waiter's hand sought his breast pocket.

"The lady's glove! You have it. Why did you not tell me, George? Why?" The stout man was growing angry.

"I was keeping it, sir, until—until——"

"Yes, yes; of course!"

Miss Grex drew the proprietor aside.

In the big mirror before her she saw the waiter's reflection. With a rapid movement he carried the glove to his lips. When they swung round to face him he bowed and held it out, impassive and respectful.

"Very well, miss; I will not reprimand him, since you wish. George, the door for the lady!"

As she passed, the girl's eyes sought the waiter's face. He was looking down, with head bent.

"Eight o'clock, outside the pier!"

He heard the whisper, and flushed suddenly, with a quick gasp.

"N-nine o'clock is when I'm free."

"Nine, then!" She disappeared.

"Do not loiter there all day, George! Write these menus—quick! Tchah! I will do them myself. Your hand shakes. You are ill yet?"

"No, sir," George Hurstaway answered quickly. "I feel considerably better now."

. . . . . .

"Shall we go through?" Miss Grex asked, indicating the turnstile.

"If you don't mind being seen about with me. I'm not known in the town much, after all, because I'm kept indoors a lot."

"And you think I'd care if——"

"My position, you see," Hurstaway reminded her quietly. "People would think you—you'd lost your senses!"

"I choose my own friends." The girl swung round to him as they walked along the pier. "And I don't consider what they do for a living!"

Hurstaway was silent for a moment.

"You said you'd come down here again."

"You've stopped here all the summer? I never expected to meet you."

"In there least of all, I suppose." He waved towards the distant cafe.

"Why did you take up that work?"

"It was all I could get, when I found I'd lost my situation in the city. The day after you left I—I went in for a meal just as the proprietor was discharging his waiter in a fit of temper. He offered me the job. I was in rather a hole."

He bit his lips as Miss Grex gave a cry.

"Explain it all. Yes, you must tell me."

She listened to his few faltered sentences, and guessed the remainder of the story.

"Then it was all through helping me that your troubles came!" Her voice was unsteady. "I lost your card somehow, but I remembered the name of your road. I returned that money next day to your lodgings in town."

"My landlady kept it, then, for the rent I owed her."

"I wondered why you'd never written even a line. So you didn't know my address."

"But I hoped I'd see you again if I waited till September. That was one of the reasons——"

"The reasons why you stayed!" she echoed softly. The look on her face made Hurstaway catch his breath. "I imagined you'd quite forgotten me."

"You'd have cared? But as the boarding-house you avoided me—hardly ever spoke!"

"Oh, you're very foolish!" He could just catch the words. "You were so different from those others! I—I liked you all along. I was so afraid I'd show it, though. Now I don't seem to mind, after meeting you this afternoon."

"In the restaurant?" he queried, puzzled.

"I recognized you directly, although you tried to hide. I left my glove on purpose. You—you kissed it. That shows——"

Hurstaway drew back from her.

"I'm poor, though—a waiter—shabby clothes." He set his lips together. "You can't think what you're saying." He held out his hand.

But the girl laughed shakily.

"I'm going to do the waiting now. You'll rise in the world. Want you—if I believe in you?"

George Hurstaway caught her hand. A new confidence came to him. He threw back his head.

"Yes, in spite of everything."

"I, too, feel perfectly sure of that."

Hurstaway leaned over the pier railings, and stared across the sea into the darkness.

"Dreams," he muttered — "dreams are sweet!"

And one day his dreams came true.—London Answers.

*

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Keep the Children Well

TORONTO CORRESPONDENCE

INTERESTING GOSSIP FROM ONTARIO'S CAPITAL.

The New Corporation Counsel—New Labor Paper—Down Town Problem—A Big Audience.

After several months' delay the City Council has decided to appoint his Worship Mayor Geary to the Corporation Counselship, made vacant by the elevation of Mr. H. L. Drayton to the chairmanship of the Dominion Railway Board. The salary is to be $8,000 a year to begin with. This is not much advance over Mr. Geary's income as Mayor, which was $7,500. But it has the advantage of being permanent. Besides, Mr. Geary has expressed the hope that when he makes good the salary will grow. And it doubtless will. Some aldermen who opposed Mr. Geary's appointment on the ground that he was not a big enough lawyer for the job, said they would be prepared to pay $25,000 a year to the right man. Viewed from this standpoint, it is just a question if the city will not do as well with Mr. Geary on the job as it would with some man with a made reputation at a fancy salary. It is true he has not had much experience in legal work. But this is partly offset by his intimate knowledge of municipal affairs. Besides, he is young, energetic, diplomatic and ardently ambitious.

SOME SORENESS.

The sound criticism of the appointment is on the ground that no member of Council should be appointed to a permanent job during his term of office. In the present instance the Mayor admittedly did not give the subject disinterested consideration, and that is something the public, having elected him to the Chief Magistracy, had a right to expect from him on every issue, particularly on one as important as this one. There is a good deal of underlying soreness about this phase of the matter.

There is some surprise that Mr. Geary, by his action, has expressed a preference for his legal profession as against political life. He could have had a nomination for Parliament any time during the last five years, and with the star of the Conservative party in the ascendant he might have been expected to have had a brilliant career. And he may yet return to the political arena. Meanwhile he is to be known as G. R. Geary, K. C., Corporation Counsel.

A NEW LABOR PAPER.

The appearance of a new labor paper in Toronto is an event of importance, not so much for the immediate effect it will have in politics or in labor affairs, but because of the potentialities for the future. The editor-in-chief is Mr. James Simpson, formerly a typesetter, more recently for many years city hall reporter for one of the local dailies, and always an active labor agitator, as well as temperance lecturer and Methodist local preacher. He was also a member of the Board of Education for some years and was a member of the Dominion Government's Commission on Technical Education. He will likely this year be a candidate for the Board of Control.

There have been many previous attempts to establish a labor organ in Toronto, but the attempts merely served to help fill the newspaper graveyard. A paper called "The Toiler" was the last victim. There are higher hopes for the latest venture. It starts off with fairly liberal support in the way of stock subscriptions from labor organizations and individuals, so that it is assured of sufficient capital to give it a chance to get on its feet. To prevent control of the publication falling into the hands of any individual or organization, or even group, the number of shares permitted to any one subscriber is strictly limited.

It has yet to be demonstrated that the labor organizations will support an "organ." The fault with previous publications is that they have been too much "organ," and not enough attention paid to making the paper interesting.

WILL AVOID GENERAL POLITICS.

It is expected that the newspaper will keep away from tariff and other issues of a general character, devoting itself to issues which specifically effect the city laboring man, such as conditions of labor and workmen's compensation. It will, in its general effect, probably emphasize rather than diminish the cleavage between city and country.

Its first political activity will doubtless be in municipal affairs. A labor "slate" for nearly all the civic offices is within the range of possibilities this year. If moderately successful there the next move, no doubt, will be to get into Provincial and Dominion politics. The establishment of the paper foreshadows the first serious attempt to launch a real labor party in Canadian politics.

IN BOND STREET CHURCH.

In my letter last week some reference was made to the down town problem confronting Toronto churches, and the disposition shown in some quarters to shirk it and in others to meet it. The solemn fact is that of the 50,000 persons living south of College street, only a small fraction has been reached by the churches. Both in preaching and in works it is undoubtedly the fact that some of the churches in down town Toronto are out of sympathy with the masses whom they are supposed to serve.

The church perhaps most popular in many ways with the crowd is Bond Street Congregational, whose destinies are presided over by Rev. Byron H. Stauffer, who came here several years ago from Buffalo. His methods are much less sensational than those employed in this pulpit twenty years ago by the late Dr. Wild, but he contrives to make his services interesting, and he always draws full houses. He is a man of considerable personality, a fluent speaker and embellishes his sermons with frequent references to the affairs of the hour. Some might call some of his addresses lectures rather than sermons, meaning that there is less of spirituality about them than is usual. Bond street church is sometimes compared to a business, of which the preacher is the general manager. Bearing out the analogy, he has there an office which he occupies several hours a day. And yet Bond street has no empty pews, and that is one point gained.

A SPURGEON NEEDED.

What the church in down-town Toronto needs to-day is a Spurgeon. It wants a man with fire and spirituality. The harvest is waiting for him. He could take such a building as the new arena, which will seat 7,000 persons, fill it three times on Sunday and possibly on any other evening in the week, if he had the physical strength But where is the Spurgeon coming from?

Down town Toronto needs more, of course, in the way of church service than a preacher, even if he were a Spurgeon. It needs a small army of workers. It has a few now loyal and devoted, but their numbers are sadly out of proportion to the work that is to do. One wonders of the churches really appreciated the work that lies right at their hand.

TORONTO'S BIGGEST AUDIENCE.

Toronto's new amusement showplace, The Arena, has been successfully launched with a week's "musical festival." Designed primarily for hockey matches, the promoters hope they can make use of it in the off season for all sorts of special productions. The problem will be to fill it. It will hold eight thousand people, twice as many as any other meeting-place in Toronto, and a small city in itself. The sight on the closing night of the opening week, when every seat was filled, was one long to be remembered. The layout of the building is that of an oval amphitheatre, without galleries. All around the oval solid masses of humanity, rising tier upon tier, furnished an impressive sight. It was the greatest concourse of men and women ever gathered under one roof in Toronto.

Unless it is filled, however, the effect of the interior is barnlike.

*

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Took Over Twenty-Four Thousand Lives in India Last Year.

According to a report just published in Simla, India, the number of wild animals destroyed in India in 1911 was 25,840, as compared with 19,282 in 1910. This total included 1,426 tigers, 5,352 leopards, and 4,251 wolves. Nearly 172,000 snakes were destroyed, as against 91,100.

This increase is largely accounted for by the offering of rewards by the Burma Government. That this action was necessary is proved by the fact that in one area the paddy fields were so snake infested that their cultivation was impossible.

Altogether 1,947 persons were killed by wild animals and 24,264 by snakes, the figures for 1910 being 2,382 and 22,478 respectively. The number of cattle killed by wild animals was 91,709, against 93,070, and by snakes 10,533, as against 10,990.

With regard to snake bite of human beings it is said that in the Bombay Presidency, the United Provinces and Eastern Bengal and Assam the use of Sir Lauder Brunton's lancets is reported in a number of cases to have resulted in a high proportion of cures. As in previous years, however, the statistics relative to the successful use of this instrument can only be accepted with reservations.

*

Quite Sincere.

"Sir," said the young man respectfully, "I am a poor man and you are a millionaire. It seems presumptious in me, no doubt, to aspire to the hand of your daughter, but my love for her is so great that I cannot be stopped by such considerations. Oh! sir, will you give her to me?" The old magnate smiled and seemed interested. "But which of my three daughters do you want?" he asked, not unkindly. Eagerly the suitor made answer, "Oh, I'll leave that to you, sir."

Give Him Time.

Roland—There goes young Swift. They say his wife has money.

Oliver—Well, that isn't his fault. They've only been married a short time.

LEARNING SOMETHING.

The Visitor—"Have you any of that delicious porkpie we had from you last time?"

The Old Lady—"No, sir, I 'aven't; you see the little pigs have been so 'ealthy this year that we haven't 'ad to kill none—and none of 'em's died!"—English paper.

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