THREE INTERIORS

Drawing the ragged curtain aside, centuries were obliterated. There lay the babe. The floor, covered with rough matting and a little straw, was his cradle, Joseph crouched on the left gazing at the tiny form wrapped in swaddling clothes, while Mary lay behind it half supported against the straw. Her hand reached out to touch the baby limbs. In the shadow behind was a woman shrouded in white woolen robes; her aged face, dark from exposure, looked down on the group reverently.

Outside, cattle and asses moved about in the Fondak and men loaded or unloaded their beasts. As I looked the child stretched out its tiny arms and Joseph and Mary leaned closer in the gloom of the stall.

Only some refugees from the Spanish Zone driven into Tangier by bombs. Only a poor Moorish mother and her infant? Nay, I saw the Holy Family that day!

* * * *

The sunshine without was so dazling that the doorway of the Jewish provision shop at Arzila at first disclosed only a group of people quarreling over the price of some vegetables. Presently the tall thin figure of a Moorish woman with her baby could be distinguished, a little child pressed close against her, and at her feet the basket of greens for which the proprietor was bargaining. Proud, straight, slim as a lance stood the woman, face uncovered; in her eyes a sadness that darkened her beauty, for she was beautiful. The short fat swarthy shopkeeper gesticulated and gabbled; the womans face never altered its tragic sadness. The baby moved restlessly; the other child pulled at her cloak. She stood tall and straight and proud, refusing firmly to be beaten down from the price she set upon her wares. Who won? Did she get the few poor coins needed to buy her coarse bread, I do not know, for it was time to be getting on to Tangier.

* * * *

Out of the low door of the hovel, apparently its only opening, came a young woman who added bits of dried thistle-stems to the blaze in her little earthenware stove. It was the hour of eating. The rules of Ramadan, the Moslem fast, forbids all food or drink while the sun is up, but as it sinks to rest these tiny fires may be seen among the Moorish hamlets, and women make a meal for their lords and masters, in their kitchens, the great outdoors.

Leaning against the fence of dried millet stalks I watched the young woman until she became aware of my presence. Young and smiling she was ready to be friendly, so I motioned to my mouth in the universal sign-language for hunger. Nodding vigorously, she laughed her understanding of my gesture. "Ramadan!" I said. "Ramadan," she answered. Then we both laughed for we understood each other perfectly. I then made the motion of hunger again, and repeated, "Ramadan!" She threw her head back and laughed, nodding forcibly as she also made the sign of wishing to eat. A harsh voice called from the darkness of the hut, quite evidently her husband, so I waved a "good night" and went my way up the long white road in the twilight.

New Diving Suit.

An armored diving suit of English patent, similar in some ways to the type used by German divers in searching for the lost submarine M1 off Start Point, attracted consideable attention at the Shipping Exhibition at Olympia, where it was on view for the first time.

It is the invention of Mr. J. S. Peress, a young engineering designer of Byfleet, who has taken five years to complete it.

Fifty pieces of Frith's rustless Sheffield steel go to the making of the suit, which weighs over 550lb. No depth test has yet been carried out in the sea, but the device has been subjected to pressure tests in a tank under conditions it would meet at a depth of 650ft.

Puzzle of the Day.

Another problem of this unsettled age is whether a mother should be her daughters guide or her pacemaker.

Winter Color-Print.

A grey afternoon without wind,
A still mistiness of town and winter combined,
When folk sit within doors
And yellow lights show palely through the windows.
An old poplar tree drapes the balcony,
A dark-grey etching of innumerable branches
Marvelously combined in rhythmical order.
The twigs curve upward,
And buds, like little hands,
Seem to be lifted in praise toward the sky.
A mauve-grey pigeon rests heavily in the tree,
His feathers in perfect tone with the picture—
A silent, solemn watcher in the color-print.
Below, a split cocoanut, suspended from a branch,
Twists slowly on its string
This way then that,
And a blue tit, clinging to the edge,
Pecks—pecks—pecks from its doubtful balance.
In the midst of the balcony a ghost ball,
Like a Japanese lantern,
Glows ruddily;
It is the reflection of the lamp within my room.
One by one the shutters in the houses are drawn;
Great, heavy, old-fashioned shutters
That close with metal hinges
As if to defy the night.
Figures come to the windows,
Look out for a moment or two,
Then pull the wooden flaps together.
What, I wonder, is the more lovely thing
They prefer to look upon indoors?
I open my French window
And stand in the evening air.
Would it were possible to frame my color-print—
My poplar, my pigeon, my blue-tit—
And keep it forever.
But the grey has already turned to heavy shadow.
I do not even see my tree.

—D. A. Lovell.

Head Polar Flight.

Capt. George Hubert Wilkins, aviator and explorer, who, with Stefansson will lead the expedition of four planes across the North Pole in the spring. The trip will take in about 1,900 miles and will cost about $150,000. The Detroit Aviation Club, of which Henry Ford is a member, and the North American Newspaper Alliance, are among the backers.

Beauty of Snow.

The peach flower and the plum flower have a beauty,
Which flourish in the warmth of sun and shower;
The snow's brief charm is purity and brightness;
It does not claim the sun-tints of the flower.

—From the Chinese of Pao-Chao, by Charles Budd.

Crossword puzzles have helped to improve the health of a patient in a Sussex infirmary. He had been bedridden for six years, and had become very depressed; but the solving of cross words has proved successful in cheering him up.

IS ASTRID TO BE BRIDE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES?

RUMOR SELECTS BRIDE FOR PRINCE OF WALES

Princess Astrid of Sweden to Visit Their Majesties at Buckingham Palace.

A despatch from London says:—Princess Astrid of Sweden is about to pay a visit to the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace, and the newspapers are all agog.

She is a niece of the King of Sweden, and, according to an unnamed Swedish diplomat, she is one of the prettiest girls in Europe. She is just twenty, a keen sportswoman, and a delightful dancer. Moreover, it is pointed out that this will not be the first occasion on which she has met the Prince of Wales, as she stayed in London about a year ago. Whether the Princess has any romantic dreams no official information is available, but if so, she is pitted against an elusive Prince Charming.

London remembers that a year or so ago the late Queen Alexandra had the delightful Swedish Princess as her guest at Marlborough House for months, but the Prince hardly went near her.

Princess Astrid is a daughter of Prince Charles and Princess Ingeborg, being a grandniece on her mother's side of the late Dowager Queen Alexandra.

With the announcement of Princess Astrid's impeding visit to Buckingham Palace, it became known to-day that the Princess and her sister, Princess Martha, were dinner guests of the King and Queen last November, the Prince of Wales and Prince Henry also being present.

Princess Astrid and Princess Martha were also guests of the Duchess of Norfolk during their November visit. When they were entertained by the Duchess, Prince Henry was present, but not the Prince of Wales. This led to rumors in society that Prince Henry also was interested in one of the sisters.

Familiar Nickname of Bank of England Baffles Historians.

The origin of "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street," the nickname of the Bank of England, never has been definitely established, but "The London Economist" traces the appellation back as far as May 22, 1797, when William Pitt induced Parliament to suspend cash payments at the bank.

This moved Gilray to draw his famous cartoon, which shows an old lady, seated on a chest labeled "Bank of England," being savagely attacked by Pitt. The drawing was published on May 22, 1797, with the caption: "Political Ravishment, or the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street in Danger."

But, it is argued, Gilray may have made use of an old idea. As early as 1695, a medallion appeared, and still appears, on the bank's notes. It consists of a seated, draped figure, with the head uncovered, holding a sprig in one hand and a spear in the other, and throughout more than 200 years it has remained substantially the same.

"In a recent medallion," says a writer in a recent number of the bank's staff magazine, "if only by reason of the extraordinary persistence of the essential details, we have a perfectly reasonable explanation of the origin of the phrase, "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street."

Moreover, he adds that it is not unlikely that the medallion was the bank's sign when signs were universally used, and that in the archives there are old letters addressed to the bank "at ye sign of the (Old) Lady in Threadneedle (or Threeneedle) Street." On the whole, the medallion provides the most acceptable explanation of the origin of the familiar phrase so often attributed to Cobbet.

So prolific in new departments has the "Old Lady" become under the stress of new functions forced upon her by war and post-war financial developments that her children became too numerous to be housed under the roof of the old name. Now the famous premises are being rebuilt in magnificent fashion to provide all necessary accommodation. When the new imposing structure has arisen, may we not expect the old nickname to give way to a new one—perhaps "The Belle of Threadneedle Street?"

Exploits.

A former's wife, in speaking of the smartness, aptness and intelligence of her son—a lad sixty years old—to a lady acquaintance, said:

"He can read fluently in any part of the Bible, repeat the whole catechism and weed onions as well as his father!"

"Yes, mother," added the young hopeful, "and yesterday I licked Ned Rawson, throwed the cat into the well, and stole old Hinckley's gimlet!"

Misuse of Rope.

Brown—"Give a man enough rope and he'll—"

Jones (chucking a stump)—"Put out a new brand of five-cent cigars."

Famous Downs — Touch down, young whiskers, $1 down.

Bluebeard.

Who has not been a bluebird to himself,
Locked up one door and thrown the key away,
For fear of something hidden on a shelf
That he might find if he returned some day,
And, finding it, not bother any more
With what his friends were always running after,
Nor care if they did mock him and deplore
His loss to their security, their laughter?

Who has not hung his dreams with shining hair
Twisted to rafters of dark common sense,
And gone untroubled by the whole affair,
Or, punished only by indifference,
Making achievement bitter on his tongue,
Because he closed one door when he was young?

—Ruth Fitch Bartlett.

Stoop to Succeed.

Nothing will ever go right in business if you aren't physically fit, and the best way to secure fitness in winter is by taking some simple exercises.

Those which involve stooping are propably the most valuable. You stoop to succeed.

With the knees straight and the heels together, bend down slowly until the fingers touch the toes or, if possible, the floor. Breathe out as you go down. Come slowly to the upright position again, breathing in as you do so.

With the feet apart, the knees straight, and the arms raised sideways to a horizontal position, twist round slowly until you can see the wall behind you. Keep upright, and remember that your waist muscles are the first consideration and not those of your neck. Do this alternately to left and right.

From the same starting position, bend down to touch your left heel with your right hand, and come up again. Then touch the right heel with the left hand, keeping the knees and arms straight throughout.

With the heels together, rise on your toes and stretch your arms above your head as high as possible. Bend your knees outwards fairly quickly and bring your hands between your thighs to the floor, bending the back but keeping the seat on the heels.

From six to twelve repetitions of each movement should be sufficient.

Occasionally, at intervals in the day's work, it is very useful to sit upright in a chair, with the feet flat on the floor and the knees together, and to twist the trunk round as far as possible to left and right alternately.

For the limbs there are a great number of well-known movements, such as bending, stretching, and circling the arms, and knee-bending with heel-raising.

The Window Picture.

There hangs a magic picture on my wall,
Framed in a glass, as anyone may see;
I have not hidden it in some dark hall,
Or for its view charged any man a fee.

When strangers come to visit in my home,
I watch their inclinations with a smile;
At once their busy eyes begin to roam—
They classify my taste, or lack of style.

Upon their left they see a little child,
(Such prints are quite passe since nineteen three!)
While opposite is hung a landscape wild,
(How I stand such a mess they cannot see!)
Now my best picture never has been seen,
Its beauty, to my dole, is not admired;
I smile at guests who claim a vision keen,
When they pass by my window, sunset fired.

—Lyday Sloanaker.

Mr. Seymour Hicks, the well-known actor, has not eaten breakfast for years. He finds that a good lunch and a good supper are sufficient to keep him fit.

OWL-LAFFS

BY
O. W. L.
(On With Laughter)

Jones—"Sorry, old man, that my hen got lost and scratched up your garden."

Smith—"That's all right. My dog ate your hen."

Jones—"Fine! I just ran over your dog and killed him."

There never was an article placed on the market that some one else couldn't make it worse and sell it for less.

A maiden fair in a dairy cloak
Went out to milk the family goat;
She patted, cooed, and said, "Nanny be still,"
The animal said, "I ain't Nanny, I'm Will."

Ever see anybody who didn't have a weakness for punching the fire?

Fashion dictates suspenders again to be worn. Judging from the appearance of some of our young men, the present suspense is terrible.

He Would Beef.

Just suppose that the prodigal son hadn't liked veal!

Patient—"Why, doctor, you told me to show my tongue, but you haven't looked at it even."

Doctor—"No. It was only to keep you quiet while I wrote the prescription."

Another good memory test is to try to remember the peace plan that won the Bok award.

If the Engaged Man Answered His Finacee's Questions Truthfully.

1. How much are you making a month? Fifty dollars per month less than I am spending.
2. How much of your salary do you save? See above.
3. How do you like your position? Do you know of another?
4. What do you think of your boss? Deleted.
5. How many positions have you held? Kept changing. Haven't held any.
6. What did you do with the first money you ever earned? My bootlegger got it.

A chaperon is an old maid who was sweet enough to eat in her days. But none of her suitors were hungry.

Acid-ine.

There was a certain old geeser,
Met an old maid and tried to please her.
When she said, "Stop, mister,"
He grabbed her and kissed her.
Now his friends call him lemon squeezer.

It is rumored that a fisherman dislocated one of his shoulders telling about a big one that got away.

Men may come and men may go, but where in the heck they go to I don't know.

Lots of girls have more on their cheeks than on their minds.

Child—"Sheep is the dumbest of all animals, ain't they, mamma?"

Mother (absently)—"Yes, my lamb."

"Funding an obligation" sounds wonderfully impressive, but it just means paying up.

Cop (to pianist)—"Someone called up the police station, reporting that a guy named Schubert is being murdered in here."

MUTT AND JEFF—By Bud Fisher.

That's the Kind of Trout They Have in France