

# A Foolish Young Man;

Or, the Belle of the Season.

CHAPTER XXIX.—(Continued).

Mrs. Heron subscribed to a library, and she and Isabel read the latest six-shilling novels with avidity, stuffing them under the sofa cushion at the sound of Mr. Heron's approaching footsteps. They always chose the worst books, and found one as soon as they took up another. Ida examined one and dropped it with disgust; for it happened to be a sexual problem novel of the most virulent type, a novel which was selling by scores of thousands, and one which Isabel had recommended to Ida as "delicious."

Of all the days, Ida found Sunday the worst; for on that day they went twice to a little chapel at which Mr. Heron "ministered." It was a tin chapel, which by its construction and position struck a chill to one's very bones. Here Mr. Heron ranted and growled to his heart's content; and Ida learned from his sanctimonious lips that only a small portion of mankind, his own sect, to wit, was bound for heaven, and that the rest of the world was doomed to another place, the horrors of which he appeared to revel in. As she sat in the uncomfortable pew, Ida often wondered whether her cousin really believed what he preached, or whether he was a hypocrite of the first water.

All this was very hard to bear; but a burden still heavier was provided for her in the conduct of her cousin Joseph. On the evening of her arrival he had been gracious enough to bestow upon her an admiration of which she was then unconscious; but his admiration grew, and he began to pay her what persons of his class call "attentions." He came in much earlier of an evening than he did before her arrival, and he sat beside her, and with his small eyes fixed on her pale and downcast face told her anecdotes of the office and his fellow-clerks. He was under the impression that he possessed a voice, and with a certain amount of artfulness he got her to play his accompaniments, bestowing killing looks at her as he sang the "Maid of Athens," or "My Pretty Jane"—with a false note in every third bar.

Sometimes he came home to lunch, explaining to them that there was nothing doing in the City, and went with Ida and Isabel on one of their walks. On these occasions he was got up in a Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, and enjoyed the flattering conviction that he looked like a country gentleman. He addressed his conversation exclusively to Ida, and endeavored, as he would have said, to make himself agreeable.

It was all lost upon Ida, whose head was in the clouds, whose mind was dwelling on the past; but his mother and sister noticed it, and Mrs. Heron began to sniff by way of disapproval of his conduct. With a mother's sharp eyes, Mrs. Heron understood why Joseph had launched out into new suits and brilliant neckties, why he came home earlier than was his wont, and why he hung about the pale-faced girl who seemed unconscious of his presence. Mrs. Heron began to feel, as she would have expressed it, that she had taken a viper into her bosom. She was ambitious for her only son, and wanted to see him married to one of the daughters of a retired City man who had settled in Wood Green. Ida was all very well, but she was absolutely penniless, and not a good enough match for so brilliant and promising a young man as Joseph. Mrs. Heron began to regard her with a certain amount of coldness and suspicion; but Joseph's manner, as she was of the cause of Mr. Joseph's attentions; to her he was just an objectionable young man of quite a new and astonishing type, to whom she was obliged to listen because he was the son of the man whose bread she ate.

He had often invited Ida to accompany him and Isabel to a matinee, but Ida always declined. Not only was her father's death too recent to permit of her going to the theatre, but she shrank from all public places of amusement. When she had left Herondale it had been with the one desire to conceal herself, and, if possible, to earn her own living. Mr. Joseph was very sulky over her refusal, and Isabel informed her that he had done so ill-tempered at the theatre that she did not know what to make of him. One day he came in soon after luncheon, and when Mrs. Heron had left the room, informed Ida and Isabel that he had got tickets for a concert at the Queen's Hall that evening.

"It's a sacred concert," he said, "so that you need have no scruples. Ida, it's a regular swell affair, and I tell you I had great difficulty in getting hold of the tickets. It's a charity concert got up by the big nobles of the Stock Exchange, and there'll be no end of gossips there. I got the tickets because the governor's going to the country to preach to-night, and while the cat's away we can slip out and enjoy ourselves; not that he'd object to a sacred concert, I suppose—especially if he were allowed to hold forth during the intervals," he added, with a sneer.

"It is very kind of you to ask me," said Ida; "but I think I would rather stay at home."

"I thought you were fond of music!" Joseph remarked, beginning to look sullen. "We shall go quite quietly, and no one need know anything about it, for I got tickets for the upper circle and not the stalls on purpose; and there's in a back row. I thought you'd enjoy this concert, and if you don't go I shall tear up the tickets."

"Oh, do let us go, Ida!" pleaded Isabel. "A sacred concert isn't as good as a theatre, but it will be a break in the monotony; besides, Joseph must have had a lot of trouble to get the tickets, for I read in the paper that there was a regular rush for them. Don't be selfish, Ida, and spoil our enjoyment."

"I wish you would go without me," said Ida, with a sigh; but ultimately she yielded.

Mrs. Heron, of course, knew that they were going, but she was not told in so many words, that she might deny all knowledge of it if the outing came to Mr. Heron's ears; and she watched them with a peevish and suspicious expression on her face as they started for the train. They went up second-class, and Mr. Joseph, who was in the best of humors, and wore a new pair of patent leather boots and a glossy hat, to say nothing of a dazzling tie, enlivened the journey by whispering facetious remarks on their fellow-passengers to Ida, who in vain endeavored from him, as far as possible in her corner of the carriage, and endeavored to concentrate her attention on the programme. But though her eyes were fixed on it and she could not entirely shut out Joseph's ill-bred jokes, her thoughts were wandering back to a certain afternoon when she had sat beside the Heron stream and listened to Stafford planning out their future. He had been telling her something of the great world of which she knew nothing, but into which he was going to take her, hand in hand, as it were; he was going to take her to the theatres and the concerts and the dances of which she had read and heard but of which she knew nothing by experience.

Now, she was going to her first concert with Mr. Joseph Heron.

There was a larger crowd than usual outside Queen's Hall that evening, for the concert was really an important one for which some of the greatest singers had been engaged. In addition to Patti, Santley, Edward Lloyd, and other famous professionals, some distinguished amateurs were to perform, and royalty, as represented by the popular and ever amiable Prince, had promised to patronize the affair.

"Quite a swell show, ain't it?" said Joseph, as he pushed his way into the crowd and looked over his shoulder at the long line of carriages shuddering down their occupants. "I'm glad you consented to come; it would have been a pity if you'd missed it."

"I hope we shall be able to see the Prince from our seats!" said Isabel, whose eyes were more widely open than usual, and her mouth half agape with excitement. "I'm always stuck in some corner where I can't see them, when the Royal family's present."

They succeeded in making their way into the hall, and after Joseph had held a dispute with the man who had shown them into their place, and who had muddled the tickets and their numbers, they were seated in the third row. Though their seats were in the whole of the large hall, and she found the sight a novel and impressive one, her interest increased as the admirable band played the first number with the precision and feeling for which the orchestra at the Queen's Hall is famous. In the interval between the selection and the song which was to follow, Joseph pulled out some of the celebrities who were present, and whom he recognized by their photographs in the illustrated papers.

"Regular swell mob, isn't it?" he said, exultingly; "there isn't a seat in the house, excepting those three in the stalls, and I suppose they'll be filled up presently by some swells or other; they always come late. Aren't you glad you've come?" he added, with a languishing glance.

Amidst a storm of welcome, Patti came forward to sing, and Ida, listening with rapture, almost forgot her sorrow as she passed under the spell of the magic voice which has swayed so many thousands and hearts. During the cries of "encore," and unnoticed by Ida, the chief of the stalls, and two gentlemen entered the stalls, and with a good deal of obsequiousness, were shown by the officials into the three vacant seats.

One great singer followed rapidly after another, and Ida, with slightly flushed face and eyes that were dim with unshed tears for the exquisite music, thrilled her to the core—leaned back, with her hands tightly clasped in her lap, her thoughts flying back to Herondale and those summer evenings which, in some strange way, every song recalled. She was unconscious of her surroundings, even of the objectionable Joseph, who sat beside her as closely as he could; and she started slightly as he whispered:

"Those seats are filled up now. I wonder who they are? They look classy—particularly so."

Ida nodded mechanically, and paid no heed. Presently Joseph, who was one of those individuals who can never sit still or be silent for long at a theatre or concert, nudged Ida and said: "Look! there is one of them standing up! Why, I believe it is the man sitting in front of him and levelled it at the stalls. One of the new-comers, one of the gentlemen, had risen from his seat, and with his back to the platform, was scanning the house with a pleasant smile on his handsome face. 'Yes, it is!' exclaimed Joseph, excitedly. 'It's Sir Stephen Orme! Here, take the glasses and look at him! That gentleman looking round the house, the one standing up with the white waistcoat, the one that came in with the other two! That's the great Sir Stephen himself! I saw him once in the City; besides, I've seen his portraits everywhere. That's the man who has created more excitement on the Stock Exchange than any man in our time.'"

Ida took the glasses which he had thrust into her hand and held it to her eyes; but her hand shook, and for a moment or two she could distinguish nothing; then, as the mist passed away and her hand grew steadier, so that she could see Sir Stephen, he bent down and said something to the lady sitting beside him. She looked round, and Ida saw distinctly for the first time, though fashionable London was tolerably familiar with it now, the beautiful face of Maude Falconer.

With her heart-beating painfully Ida looked at every nook and detail of the handsome face with its wealth of bronze-gold hair. A presentiment flashed into her mind and weighed upon her heart as she looked, a presentiment which was quickly verified, for the man on the other side of the beautiful woman rose and looked round the house, and Ida saw that it was Stafford.

Her hand gripped the opera-glass tightly, for he was in danger of falling. She felt as if she were stifling, the great place, with its sea of faces and its rings of electric light, swam before her eyes, and she felt sick and giddy. It seemed to her that Stafford was looking straight at her, that he could not fail to see her, and she shrank back as far as the seat would allow, and a sigh that was a gasp for breath escaped her lips, which had grown almost as white as her face. In taking the glasses from her, Joseph noticed her pallor.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Do you feel ill? It's beastly hot. Would you like to come outside?"

"No, no," she panted with difficulty. "It is the heat—I am all right now—I beg of you not to move—not to speak to me."

She fought against the horrible faintness, against the shock which had overwhelmed her; she bit her lips to force the color back to them, and tried to keep her eyes from the tall figure, the handsome face against which she had so often pressed her own; but she could not; it was as if they were drawn to it by a kind of fascination. She saw that he looked pale and haggard, and that the glance with which he swept the house was a wearied one, in strange contrast to the smiling, complacent, and even triumphant one of his father.

"Are you all right now?" asked Joseph. "I wish I'd brought a bottle of smelling-salts. Will you come out and get something to drink—water—brandy? No? Sure you're all right? Did you see Sir Stephen? I wonder who the lady is beside him? Some swell or other, I'll be bound. The other man must be Sir Stephen's son, for he's like him. He's almost as great a personage as Sir Stephen himself; you see his name amongst those of people of the highest rank in the fashionable columns in the newspapers. The lady's got beautiful 'air, hasn't she?" he went on, after a pause. "Not that I admire that color myself; I'm gone on black 'air." He glanced insinuatingly at Ida's.

When the interval expired, Sir Stephen and Stafford resumed their seat, and, with a sigh of relief, Ida tried to listen to the music; but she seemed to hear Stafford's voice through it, and was obliged to shut her eyes that she might not see him. Instinctively, and from Joseph's description, she knew that the beautiful girl, with the complexion of a lily and the wealth of bronze-gold hair, was Maude Falconer. Why was she with Sir Stephen and Stafford? Was it, indeed, true that they were engaged? Up to the present moment, she had cherished a doubt; but now it seemed impossible to doubt any longer. For how many minutes, hours, years, would she have to sit with those two before her, her heart racked with the pangs of jealousy, with the memory of happier days, with the ghastly fact that he had gone from her life for ever, and that she was sitting there a spectator of his faithlessness. Every song seemed to mock her wretchedness, and she had to battle with the mad desire to spring to her feet and cry aloud.

In a kind of dream she heard the strains of the national anthem, and saw Stafford rise with the rest of the audience, and watched him as he drew the costly cloak round Maude Falconer's white shoulders; in a dream allowed Joseph to draw her arm through his and lead her down the crowded staircase into the open air.

"Splendid concert!" he said, triumphantly. "But you look tired, Ida. We'll have a cab to the station. But let's wait a minute and see the Prince come out."

They stood in the crowd which had formed to stare at his royal highness, and as luck would have it, Stafford, with Maude Falconer on his arm, and followed by Sir Stephen, passed in front of them, and so close that Ida shrank in terror lest Stafford should see her. Some of the crowd, some Stock Exchange people probably, recognized Sir Stephen, and spoke his name aloud. Ida saw Stafford's face darken with a frown, as if he were ashamed of the publicity, as he hurried Maude Falconer to the carriage. A moment or two after, the Prince appeared, there was an excited and enthusiastic burst of cheering; and at last Joseph forced his way out of the crowd and found a cab.

They had some little time to wait for the train, and Joseph, after vainly pressing some refreshment on Ida, went into the refreshment-room and got a drink for himself and a cup of coffee for Isabel, while Ida sank back into a corner of the carriage and waited for them. Joseph talked during the whole of the journey in an excited fashion, darting glances every now and then from his small eyes to his sister, as if he were with her. When they got out at the station, he offered Ida his arm and she took it half-unconsciously. The path was too narrow to permit of three to walk abreast, and Joseph sent Isabel on in front; and on some trivial excuse or another contrived to lag some little distance behind her. Every now and then he pressed Ida's arm more closely to his side, and looked at her with long and lingering glances, and at last he said, in a kind of whisper, so that Isabel should not hear:

"I hope you've enjoyed yourself, Ida, and that you're glad you came? I don't know when I've had such a jolly night, and I hope we may have many more of them. Of course you know why I'm so happy? It's because I've got you with me. Life's been a different thing for me since you came to live with us; but I desay you've seen that, haven't you?"

He laughed knowingly.

"I have seen—that?" asked Ida, trying to rouse herself and to pay attention to what he was saying.

"I say I suppose you've seen how it is with me, and why I am an haltered being? It is you who have done it; it's because I'm right down in love with you. I've been going to say it for days past; but, somehow, though I desay you don't mean it, you seem so cold and standoffish, and quite different to other girls when a man pays them attention. But I desay you understand now, and you'll treat me differently. I'm awfully in love with you, Ida, and I don't see why we shouldn't be engaged. I'm getting on at the office, and if I can squeeze some money out of the governor, I shall set up for myself. Of course, there'll be a pretty how-d'you-do over this at home, for they're always wanting me to marry money, and unfortunately you've lost yours. Not that mind that mind you, I believe in following the dictates of your heart, and I know what my heart says. And now what do you say, Ida?"

And he pressed her arm and looked into her face with a confident smile. Ida drew her disengaged hand across her brow and frowned, as if she were trying to grasp his meaning.

"I beg your pardon, Joseph," she said. "I didn't quite understand—I was thinking of something else. You were asking me—" He reddened and pushed his thick lips out with an expression of resentment.

"Well, I like that!" he said, uneasily, but with an attempt—at a laugh. "I've just been proposing to you—asking you to marry my wife; and you're going to aren't you?"

Ida drew her arm from his, and regarded him with stony amazement. For the moment she really thought that either he had been drinking too much spirits at the refreshment-room at the station and that it was an elaborate joke on his part, or that she had lost her senses and was deliriously talking a mixture of gas and foolery. She looked at him with a mixture of astonishment and grotesque fear for even a moment, but she saw that his face was sober and that he had actually proposed to her, and, in a kind of desperation, she laughed.

He had been going to take her arm again, but his hand fell to his side, and he looked at her with a mixture of astonishment and indignation, with such an expression of wounded vanity and resentment, that Ida felt almost forced to laugh again; but she checked the desire, and said, as gently and humbly as she could:

"I—I beg your pardon, Joseph. I thought it was a—a joke. I am very sorry. But though you didn't mean it as such, it is, of course, absurd. I don't think you quite knew what you were saying; I am quite sure you don't mean it."

"Oh, yes, but I do!" he broke in eagerly, and with a little air of relief. "I'm in earnest, on my word, I am. I'm awfully in love with you; and if you'll say yes, I'll stand up to the governor and make it all square for you."

"But I say 'No,'" said Ida, rather sternly, her lips setting tightly, her eyes flashing in the darkness, which, fortunately for Joseph, hid them from his sight. "Please do not speak to me in this way again."

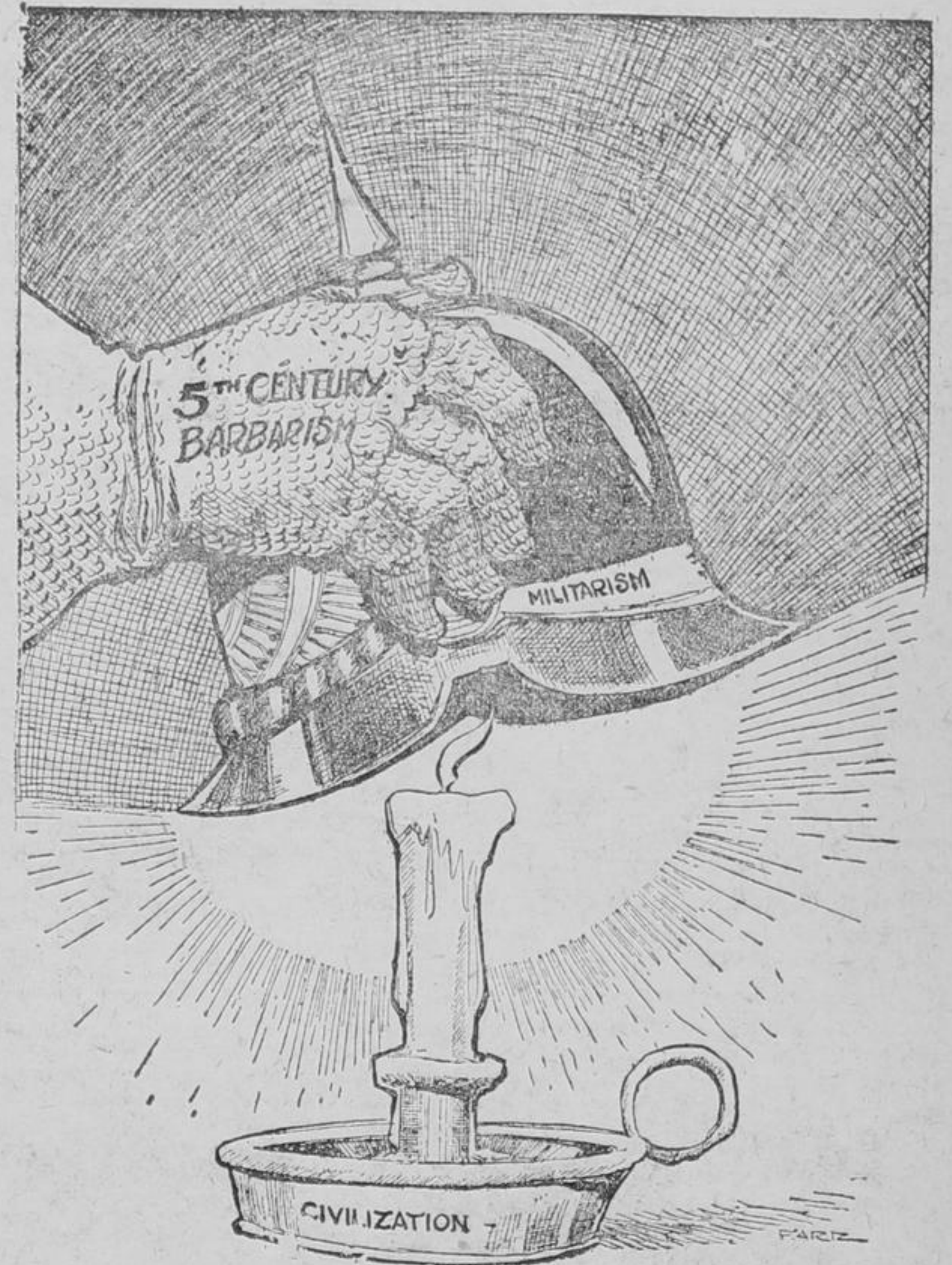
"But look here!" he stammered, his face red, his thick lips twisted in an ugly fashion. "do you know what you're doing—saying?"

"Yes," she said, more sternly than before. "I think it is more you do not know what you are saying. You cannot mean to insult me. I beg your pardon, Joseph. I do not mean to be angry to hurt your feelings. I think you mean to pay me a great respect, and I thank you; but I cannot accept it. And please make this as my final answer, and never, never, speak to me again in this manner."

"Do you mean to say—" he began angrily.

"Not another word, please," said Ida, and she hurried forward so that they came within hearing of Isabel.

Nothing more was said until they reached Laburnum Villa. Mrs. Heron was waiting for them, and was expressing a hope that they had enjoyed themselves—she had a woollen shawl round her shoulders and spoke in an injured voice and with the expression of a long-suffering martyr—when she caught sight of Joseph's angry and sullen face as he flung himself into a chair and



A LA BERLIN.

A cartoon from the New York Evening Telegram, which shows the view taken in the United States of German militarism.

thrust his hands in his pockets, and she stopped short and looked from him to Ida, and sniffer suspiciously and aggressively. "Oh, yes," said Joseph, with an ugly sneer and a scowl at Ida as she was leaving the room, "we have had a very happy time—some of us—a particularly happy time, I don't think!"

(To be continued.)

## WORRY CAN KILL YOU.

It is Usually the Dominance of One Ideal—Mainly Fear.

We have often heard that worry can kill even the nine-lived cat; but we have only half believed it, and until now we have had no scientific proof that it was so.

Medical science has recently confirmed the fact and explained how worry commits its murders. It has reached the conclusion that in many instances of what has been regarded as lunacy, and from which the victim finally dies, the case has simply been one of acute worry. Instead of the person dying of mental breakdown he has worried himself to death.

Worry, medical science now defines as the dominance of one idea, usually that of fear. There is a fear of some existing condition or dread of what may happen. The idea crowds all others from the mind, or permits them only the feeblest and occasional activity. The most terrible tyranny is the tyranny of an idea.

This one idea pounds hammer-like upon one set of brain cells. It over-stimulates them, causing an unusual flow of blood, to those portions and a dearth of it to other parts of the brain. This would not be serious if it happened only now and then, for every brain cell should be replenished by more than the usual flow of blood at times to keep it properly fed and nourished.

But a constant overfeeding of these cells causes a congestion there. The cells become more and more distended. The worry grows more and more acute. The pound-

ing of the blood against the sides of the cell acquires a hammer-like violence. The sides of the cells wear thin. A cell bursts. There is a so-called "clot on the brain." Death follows.

The cure of the worry that kills is prevention. Refuse to worry. Do your best, and, having done this, decline as positively to fret about the results as you would decline to brink a draught of poison. Worry comes as an occasional visitant to everyone, but as we shut our doors to unwelcome visitors, so we close the portals against the entrance of worry. Admitted, it ceases to become a visitor—it is a habit, and a habit that destroys. The action of worry upon the brain cells is most like the constant dropping of water upon a stone. At first it makes not the slightest impression upon the stone, but in time it wears it away. The cells of the brain are of more delicate tissue, and the steady wear and tear of the extra blood supply in time quickly wears them out.

Or, according to medical science, it is as though a garment worn day after day without change, soon falls into tatters. Examinations of the brain after death have shown a group of nerve cells at the crown of the head that have perished in the same way the nerve of a tooth dies. While every other brain cell seems to be in ordinary condition, this group has shrunk. It is a curious coincidence, and science says a consequence, as inevitable as effect after cause, that the hair on the portion of the scalp just above this brain area is the first to grow white. Heat in the scalp causes hair to grow gray, and an excess of blood in any portion of the brain causes the scalp above that portion to be overheated.

If you want work done choose a busy man to do it—the other sort have no time.