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All these and some other lines will go at Cost.

## S. SCOTT

DURHAM, — — ONTARIO.

# THE STROLLERS

By FREDERIC S. ISHAM,  
Author of "Under the Rose"

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her, glanced up. His gaze rested on her for a moment and then returned in cold contemplation to the fare set before him.

Yet was she worthy of more than passing scrutiny. The gleam of the lamp fell upon her well turned figure, and the glistening of her eyes could be seen in the shadow that rested on her brow beneath the crown of hair. She wore a dark lavender dress, striped with silk, a small "jacquette" after the style of the day, the sleeves being finished with lace and the skirt full and flowing. Her heavy brown tresses were arranged in a coiffure in the fashion then prevailing, a portion of the hair falling in curls on the neck, the remainder brought forward in plaits and fastened at the top of the forehead with a simple pearl ornament.

If the young girl felt any interest in the presence of the taciturn guest she concealed it, scarcely looking at him and joining but rarely in the conversation. Susan, on the other hand, resorted to sundry coquetries.

"I fear, sir, that you find our poor company intrusive, since we have forced you to become one of us?" she said, toying with her fork and thereby displaying a white and shapely hand.

His impassive blue eyes met her sparkling ones.

"I am honored in being admitted to your fellowship," he returned perfunctorily.

Here the dark haired girl arose, the dinner being concluded. There was none of his usual brusqueness of manner as the manager, leaning back in his chair and taking her hand, said:

"You are going to retire, my dear? That is right. We have had a hard day's traveling."

She bent her head and her lips pressed softly the old man's cheek, after which she turned from the rest of the company with a grave bow. But as she passed through the doorway her flowing gown caught upon a nail in the wall. Preoccupied though he seemed, her low exclamation did not escape the ear of the soldier, and, quitting his place, she knelt at her feet, and she, with half turned head and figure gracefully poised, looked down upon him.

With awkward fingers he released the dress, and she bowed her acknowledgment, which he returned with formal deference. Then she passed on and he raised his head, his glance following her through the bleak looking hall, up the broad, ill lighted staircase, into the mysterious shadows which prevailed above.

Shortly afterward the tired company dispersed and the soldier sought his room.

## CHAPTER II.

THE crowing of the cock awakened the French traveler, and, going to the window, he saw that daylight had thrown its first shafts upon the unromantic barnyard scene, while in the east above the hills spread the early flush of morning.

Descending the stairs and making his way to the barn, he called to Sandy, the stable boy, who was performing his ablutions by passing wet fingers through a shock of red hair, to saddle his horse. The sleepy lad led forth a large but shapely animal, and soon Saint-Prosper was galloping across the country. After a brisk pace for some miles he reined in his horse and, leisurely riding in a circuit, returned on the road that crossed the farming country back of the tavern.

The rider was rapidly approaching the inn when a sudden turn in the highway as the road swept around a windbreak of willows brought him upon a young woman who was walking slowly in the same direction. So fast was the pace of his horse and so unexpected the meeting she was almost under the trampling feet before he saw her. Taken by surprise, she stood as if transfixed, when, with a quick, decisive effort, the rider swerved his animal and of necessity rode full tilt at the fence and willows. She felt the rush of air, saw the powerful animal lift itself, clear the rail fence and crash through the bulwark of branches. She gazed at the windbreak. A little to the right or the left, where the heavy boughs were thickly interlaced, and the rider's expedition had proved serious for himself, but chance—he had no time for choice—had directed him to a vulnerable point of leaves and twigs. Before she had fairly recovered herself he reappeared at an opening on the other side of the willow screen and, after removing a number of rails, led his horse back to the road.

With quivering nostrils the animal appeared possessed of unquenchable spirit, but his master's bearing was less assured as he approached, with an expression of mingled anxiety and concern on his face, the young girl whom the manager had addressed as Constance.

"I beg your pardon for having alarmed you," he said. "It was careless, inexcusable!"

"It was a little startling," she admitted, with a faint smile.

"Only a little!" he broke in gravely. "If I had not seen you just when I did—"

"You would not have turned your horse—at such a risk to yourself!" she

added. "Risk to myself! From what?" A whimsical light encroached on the set look in his blue eyes. "Jumping a rail fence? But you have not yet said you have pardoned me?"

The smile brightened. "Oh, I think you deserve that."

"I am not so sure," he returned, glancing down at her.

Slanting between the lower branches of the trees the sunshine touched the young girl's hair in flickering spots and shone down her dress like caressing rays of light, until her figure, passing the window, left these glimmers on the dusty road behind her.

Little muslin cap, flaunted in the breeze and a shawl of China crepe fluttered from her shoulders. So much of her dusky hair as defied concealment contrasted strongly with the calm translucent pallor of her face. The eyes alone belittled the tranquility of countenance; against the rare repose of features they were more eloquent, shining beneath brows delicately defined but strongly marked and shaded by long upturned lashes, deep in tone as a sioe.

"You are an early riser," he resumed. "Not always," she replied. "But after yesterday it seemed so bright outdoors and the country so lovely."

His gaze, following hers, traversed one of the hollows. Below yet rested shadows, but upon the hillside a glory celestial enlivened and animated the surrounding scene.

While the soldier and the young girl were thus occupied in surveying the valley and the adjacent mounds and hummocks the horse, considering doubtfully that there had been enough inaction, tapped the ground with rebellious energy and tossed his head in mutiny against such procrastination.

"Your horse wants to go on," she said, observing this equine byplay.

"He usually does," replied Saint-Prosper. "Perhaps, though, I am interrupting you? I see you have a play in your hand."

"I was looking over a part, but I know it very well," she added, moving slowly from the border of willows. Leading his horse, he followed.

His features, stern and obdurate in repose, relaxed in severity, while the deep set blue eyes grew less searching and guarded. This alleviation became him well, a tide of youth softening his expression as a wave soothes the sands.

"What is the part?" "Juliana, in 'The Honeymoon.' It is one of our stock pieces."

"And you like it?" "Oh, yes," lingering where a bit of sword was set with field flowers.

"And who plays the duke?" he continued. "Mr. O'Flarity," she answered, a suggestion of amusement in her glance. Beneath the shading of straight, black brows her eyes were deceptively dark until, scrutinized closely, they resolved themselves into a clear gray.

"Ah," he said, recalling Adonis' (O'Flarity's) appearance, and as he spoke a smile of singular sweetness lightened his face. "A Spanish grandee with a touch of the brogue! But I must not decry your noble lord," he added.

"No lord of mine!" she replied gayly. "My lord must have a velvet robe, not frayed, and a sword not tin, and its most sanguinary purpose must not be to get between his legs and trip him up. Of course, when we act in barns—"

"In barns?" "Oh, yes; when we can find them to act in."

She glanced at him half mockingly. "I suppose you think of a barn as only a place for a horse."

The sound of carriage wheels interrupted his reply, and, looking in the direction from whence it came, they observed a coach doubling the curve before the willows and approaching at a rapid pace. It was a handsome and imposing equipage, with dark crimson body and wheels, preserving much of the grace of ancient outline with the utility of modern springs.

As they drew aside to permit it to pass, the features of its occupant were seen, who, perceiving the young girl on the road—the shawl, half fallen from her shoulder revealing the plastic grace of an erect figure—gazed at her with surprise, then thrust his head from the window and bowed with smiling, if somewhat exaggerated, politeness. The next moment carriage and traveler vanished down the road in a cloud of dust, but an alert observer might have noticed an eye at the rear port hole, as though the person within was supplementing his brief observation from the side with a longer, if diminishing, view from behind.

The countenance of the young girl's companion retrograded from its new found favor to a more inexorable cast. "A friend of yours?" he said briefly. "I never saw him before," she answered, with flashing eyes. "Perhaps he is the lord of the manor and thought I was one of his subjects."

"There are lords in this country, then?"

"Lords or patrons, they are called," she replied, her face still flushed.

From the window of her room Susan saw Saint-Prosper and Constance re-

turning and looked surprised as well as a bit annoyed. Truth to tell, Mistress Susan, with her capacity for admiring and being admired, had conceived a momentary interest in the soldier, a fancy as light as it was ephemeral. That touch of melancholy when his face was in repose inspired a transitory desire for investigation in this past mistress of emotional analysis. But the arrival of the coach which had passed the couple soon diverted Susan's thoughts to a new channel.

The equipage drew up and a young man, dressed in a style novel in that locality, sprang out. He wore a silk hat with scarcely any brim, trousers extremely wide at the ankle, a waistcoat of the dimensions of 1745 and large wath ribbons sustaining ponderous bunches of seals.

The gallant fop touched the narrow brim of his hat to Kate, who was peeping from one window, and waved a kiss to Susan, who was surreptitiously glancing from another, whereupon, both being detected, drew back hastily. Overwhelmed by the appearance of a guest of such manifest distinction, the landlady bowed obsequiously as the other entered the tavern with a supercilious nod.

To Mistress Susan this incident was exciting while it lasted. The young man had disappeared, but the woman was again attracted to the newcomer, Saint-Prosper, who slowly approached. He paused with his horse before the front door, and she stood a moment near the little porch, on either side of which grew sweet williams, four o'clocks and larkspur. But the few conventional words were scanty crumbs for the fair eavesdropper above, the young girl soon entering the house and the soldier leading his horse in the direction of the stable. As the latter disappeared around the corner of the tavern Susan left the window and turned to the mirror.

"Lal!" she said, holding a mass of blond hair in one hand and deftly coiling it upon her little head. "I believe she got up early to meet him." But Kate only yawned lazily.

In the taproom the soldier encountered the newcomer, seated not far from the fire, as though his blood flowed sluggishly after his long ride in the chill morning air. Well built, although somewhat slender of figure, this latest arrival had a complexion of tawny brown, a living russet, as warm and glowing as the most vivid of Vandycok pigments.

He raised his eyes slowly as the soldier entered and surveyed him deliberately. From a scrutiny of mere physical attributes he passed on to the more important details of clothes, noting that his sack coat was properly loose at the waist and that the buttons were sufficiently large to pass muster, but also detecting that the trousers lacked breadth at the ankles and that the hat had a high crown and a broad brim, from which he competently concluded the other was somewhat behind the shifting changes of fashion.

"Curse me, if this isn't a beastly fire!" he exclaimed, stretching himself still more, yawning and passing a hand through his black hair. "Hang them, they might as well shut up their guests in the smokehouse with the bacon and hams! I feel as cured as a side of pig ready to be hung to a dirty rafter."

With which he pulled himself together, went to the window, raised it and placed a stick under the frame.

"They tell me there's a theatrical troupe here," he resumed, referring to

his chair and retreating into its depths. "Perhaps you are one of them?"

"I have not that honor."

"Honor!" repeated the new arrival, with a laugh. "That's good! That was one of them on the road with you, I'll be bound. You have good taste! Heigho!" he yawned again. "I'm anchored here awhile on account of a lame horse. Perhaps, though," brightly, "it may not be so bad after all. These players promise some diversion." At that moment his face wore an expression of airy, jocund assurance which faded to visible annoyance as he continued: "Where can that landlady be? He placed me in this kennel, vanished and left me to my fate. Ah, here he is at last!" as the host approached, respectfully inquiring:

"Is there anything more I can do for you?"

"More!" exclaimed this latest guest ironically. "Well, better late than never. See that my servant has help with the trunks."

"Very well, sir; I'll have Sandy look after them. You are going to stay, then?"

"How can I tell?" returned the newcomer lightly.

The landlady looked startled.

"How far is it to Meadtown?" continued the guest.

"Forty odd miles. Perhaps you are seeking the old patron manor there. They say the heir is expected any day," gazing fixedly at the young man; "at least the antirenters have received information he is coming and are preparing!"

The sprightly guest threw up his hands.

"The trunks; the trunks!" he exclaimed in accents of despair. "Look at the disorder of my attire—the pride of



The landlady bowed.

these ruffles leveled by the draw; my wrist bands in disarray; the odor of the road pervading my person! The trunks, I pray you!"

"Yes, sir; at once, sir! But first let me introduce you to Mr. Saint-Prosper of Paris. Make yourselves at home, gentlemen."

With which the speaker hurriedly vanished, and soon the bumping and thumping in the hall gave cheering assurance of instructions fulfilled.

"That porter is a prince among his kind," observed the guest satirically, "wining as an unusual bang overhead shook the ceiling. 'But I'll warrant my man won't have to open my luggage after he gets through.'"

Then as quiet followed the racket above—"So you're from Paris?" he asked half quizzically. "Well, it's a pleasure to meet somebody from somewhere. As I, too, have lived—not in vain!—in Paris we may have mutual friends?"

"It is unlikely," said the soldier, who meanwhile had drawn off his riding gloves, placed them on the mantel and sat facing the fire, with his back to the other guest. As he spoke he turned deliberately and bent his penetrating glance on his questioner.

"Really? Allow me to be skeptical, as I have considerable acquaintance there. In the army there's that fire eating conqueror of the ladies, Gen'—"

"My rank was not so important," interrupted the other, "that I numbered commanders among my personal friends."

"As you please," said the last guest carelessly. "I had thought to exchange a little gossip with you, but—n'importe! In my own veins flows some of the blood of your country."

For the time his light manner forsook him.

"Her tumults have in a measure been mine," he continued. "Now she is without a king I am well nigh without a mother land. True, I was not born there—but it is the nurse the child turns to. Paris was my bonnie—a merry abigail! Alas, her vicious brood have turned on her and cast her ribbons in the mire! Untroubled by her own brats, she could extend her estates to the El Dorado of the southwestern seas." He had risen and, with hands behind his back, was striding to and fro. Coming suddenly to a pause, he asked abruptly:

"Do you know the Alpe Moneau?"

At the mention of that one time subtle confidant of the deposed king, now the patron of republicanism, Saint-Prosper once more regarded his companion attentively.

"By reputation, certainly," he answered slowly.

"He was my tutor and is now my frequent correspondent. Not a bad sort of mentor either!" The new arrival paused and smiled reflectively. "Only recently I received a letter from him with private details of the flight of the king and vague intimations of a scandal in the army, lately come to light."

His listener half started from his seat, and had the speaker not been more absorbed in his own easy flow of conversation than in the attitude of the other he would have noticed that quick change of manner. Not perceiving it, however, he resumed irrelevantly:

"You see, I am a sociable animal. After being cramped in that miserable coach for hours it is a relief to loosen one's tongue as well as one's legs. Even this smoky hovel suggests good fellowship and jollity beyond a dish of tea. Will you not join me in a bottle of wine? I carry some choice brands to obviate the necessity of drinking the home brewed concoctions of the innkeepers of this district."

"Thank you," said the soldier, at the same time rising from his chair. "I have no inclination so early in the day."

"Early!" queried the newcomer. "A half pint of Chateau Cheval Blanc or Cru du Chevalier, high and vinous, paves a possible way for Brother Jonathan's dejeuner—fried pork, potatoes and chichory!" And, turning to his servant, who had meantime entered, he addressed a few words to him and, as the door closed on the soldier, exclaimed with a shrug of the shoulders: "An unsociable fellow! I wonder what he is doing here."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## MODERN UTOPIAS.

### European Countries in Which Pauperism is Unknown.

Denmark claims that there is not a single person in her domain who cannot read and write. On the northeast coast of New Guinea the island of Kutaba, surrounded by a wall of coral 300 feet high on one side and from 50 to 100 feet on the other, maintains thirteen villages of natives, to whom war, crime and poverty have been unknown since the beginning of their traditions. The most peaceful and comfortable community in Europe is the commune of the Canton Yand, in Switzerland. Nearly every one is well off, and there are no paupers. Finland is a realm whose inhabitants are remarkable for their inviolate integrity. There are no banks and no safe deposits, for no such security is essential. You may leave your luggage anywhere for any length of time and be quite sure of finding it untouched on your return, and your purse full of money would be just as secure under similar circumstances. The Finns place their money and valuables in holes in the ground and cover them with a big leaf. Such treasure is sacredly respected by all who pass it, but in the rare event of a man wishing to borrow of his neighbor during his absence he will take only the smallest sum he requires and place a message in the hole telling of his urgent need and promising to repay the amount on a specified date. And he will invariably keep his word, for the Finn is invincible in his independence.

Agneta Park, near Delft, in Holland, is another Utopia example. A tract of ten acres has upon it 150 houses, each with its little garden and with certain common buildings and common grounds. The houses are occupied by the employees of a great distilling company, who form a corporation which owns the park. Each member owns shares in the corporation and pays rent for his house. The surplus, after all expenses have been paid, comes back to him as dividend. If he wishes to go away or if he dies his shares are bought up by the corporation and sold to the man who takes his place.

## PICKINGS FROM FICTION.

Life is short—avoid causing yawns.—Eleanor Glyn in "The Damsel and the Sage."

A man's conscience is the best barometer of his ability.—Owen Kildare in "My Mamie Rose."

Women's counsel may not be worth much, but he who despises it is not wiser than he should be.—Amelia E. Barr in "The Black Shilling."

Human nature is not always at its highest level, and heroic sacrifices arise only from heartfelt motives.—Sir George Trevelyan in "The American Revolution."

Life is the only real counselor. Wisdom unfiltered through personal experience does not become a part of the moral tissues.—Edith Wharton in "Sanctuary."

Do not attempt to do a thing unless you are sure of yourself, but do not relinquish it simply because some one else is not sure of you.—Stewart Edward White in "The Forest."

Don't be fooled by a cheer or by a crowd. Cheers are nothin' but a breeze, an' as for a crowd, no matter who you are, there would always be a bigger turnout to see you hanged than to shake your mitt.—Alfred Henry Lewis in "The Boss."

Precoctious.

"Oh, yes, we were a very young couple—mere children, in fact. I was but a simpering schoolgirl in short skirts, and George was just a boy in jackets. I remember how pleased he was when he cast his first vote."

"But he didn't vote until he was twenty-one?"

"George was very precoctious. He voted much earlier than they usually do."

Motherhood Up to Date.

"Think of a woman with her social responsibilities having a child!"

"Disgraceful! But they say she is fond of it."

"That's the strange part. She is almost like a mother to it."

Writing and Dressing.

Dorothy—Don't you feel in awe of literary women?"

Dora—No, indeed. My literary cousin says it takes more sense to dress well than it does to write a book.—Detroit Free Press.

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