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THE STROLLERS

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

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* * *

"And you"-surveying her face, which had the freshness of morn-"look

"Of course!" Adjusting some fancied disorder of hair or bonnet. "Marriage is a fountain of youth for"-with a sigh-"old maids. Susan Duran, spinster! Horrible! Do you blame me?"

"For getting married? Not at all. Who is the fortunate man?" asked Saint-Prosper.

"A minister; an orthodox minister; a most orthodox minister!"

"No?" His countenance expressed his sense of the incongruity of the union. Susan one of the elect, the meek and lowly yokemate of- "How did it

"In a perverse moment I-went to church," answered Susan. "There I met him! I mean I saw him; no, I mean I heard him! It was enough. All the women were in love with him. How could I help it?"

"He must have been very persuasive." "Persuasive! He scolded us every minute. Dress and the devil! I"-



"Mrs. Service, if you please?" casting down her eyes-"interested him from the first. He-he married me to

reform me." "Ah," commented the soldier, gazing With an ill-fitting ready-made doubtfully upon Susan's smart gown, suit, when you can get a first which, with elaborate art, followed the contours of her figure.

appearances, you know," she continued. the steamer looking toward the city, "What's the use of being a minister's where events undreamed of were to wife if you aren't popular with the follow thick and fast. He saw her, a congregation? At least," she added, slender figure, earnest, self possessed, "with part of them!" And Susan tap- enter the city gates unheralded, unped the pavement with a well shod known. He saw her as he had known boot and showed her white teeth. "If ther in the wilderness-not as fancy the seats-I mean pews," she added a marquis-a strolling player and as come until I promised not to allow you evasively. "But you must come and such he loved best to think of her. see me-us, I should say.'

"Unfortunately I am leaving tomor-

tively. The pupils of her eyes contracted, something they did whenever | breathe the sweet air of the country | she was thinking deeply, and her gaze passed quickly over his face, striving to read his impassive features. "So soon? When the carnival is on! That is too bad, to stay only one day and not call on any of your old friends! Constance, I am sure, would be delighted

to see you." Many women would have looked away under the circumstances, but Susan's eyes were innocently fixed upon his. Half the pleasure of the assurance was in the accompanying glance and the friendly smile that went with it.

But a quiet question, "Miss Carew is living here?" was all the satisfaction she received.

"Yes. Have you not heard? She has a lovely home and an embarrassment of riches. Sweet embarrassment! Health and wealth! What more could one ask? Although I forgot, she was taken ill shortly after you left."

"Ill?" he said, starting. "Quite. But soon recovered." And Susan launched into a narration of the events that had taken place while he was in Mexico, to which he listened with the composure of a man who, having had his share of the vagaries of fate, is not to be taken aback by new surprises, however singular or tragic. Susan expected an expression of regret, by look or word, over the loss of the marquis' fortune, but either he simulated indifference or passed the matter by with philosophical fortitude. "Poor Barnes!" was his sole com-

"Yes, it was very lonely for Constance at first," rattled on Susan. "But I fancy she will find a woman's solace for that ailment," she added meaning-

"Marriage?" he asked soberly. "Well, the engagement is not yet announced," said Susan hesitatingly. "But you know how things get around? And the count has been so attentive! You remember him surely-the Count de Propriac? But I must be off. I have an appointment with my husband and am already half an hour "Don't let me detain you longer, then,

"Oh, I don't mind! He's so delightfully jealous when I fail to appear on the stroke of the clock! Always imagines I am in some misch - but I mustn't tell tales out of school! So glad to have met you! Come and see me-do!"

And Susan, with friendly hand clasp and lingering look, tore herself away. the carnival lightness in her feet and the carnival laughter in her eyes.

"He is in love with her still," she thought, "or he wouldn't have acted so indifferent!" Her mind reverted to a cold little message she had received from Constance. "And to think he was innocent after all!" she continued. mentally reviewing the contents of the letter in which Constance had related the conversation with the lawyer. "I don't believe he'll call on her now, though, after- Well, why shouldn't I have told him what every one is talking about? Why not, indeed?"

A toss of the head dismissed the matter and any doubts pertaining thereto, while her thoughts flew from past to present, as a fortress on a car, its occupants armed with pellets of festival conflict, drove by amid peals of laughter. Absorbed in this scene of merriment, Susan forgot her haste and kept her apostolic half waiting at the rendezvous with the patience of a Jacob tarrying for a Rachel. But when she did finally appear, with hat not perfectly poised, her hair in a pretty disarray, she looked so waywardly charming he forgave her on the spot, and the lamb led the stern shepherd with a crook from Eve's apple tree.

"As thin as a lath and gaunt as a ghost!" repeated Saint-Prosper, as the fair penitent vanished in a whirl of gayety. "Susan always was frank."

Smiling somewhat bitterly, he paused long enough to light a cigar, but it went out in his fingers as he strolled mechanically toward the wharfs, through the gardens of a familiar square, where the wheezing of the distant steamers and the echoes of the cathedral clock marked the hours of pleasure or pain today as it had tolled them off yesterday. Beyond the pale of the orange trees with their golden wealth the drays were rumbling in the streets, and there were the same signs of busy traffic-for the carnival had not yet become a legal holiday-that he had observed when the strollers had reached the city and made their way to the St. Charles. He saw her anew, pale its course. Nestrums! Who'll buy my high st class of workmanship "But, of course, one must keep up and thoughtful, leaning on the rail of

Arising out of his physical weakness and the period of inaction following the treaty of peace, he experienced a "Tomorrow!" repeated Susan reflec- sudden homesickness of his native land, where his boyheed had been passed, to listen to the thunder of the boulevards. to watch the endless, sad-joyfui pro-

Not far distant from the blossom ing, redolent square was the office of the Transatlantic Steamship company. where a clerk, with a spray of jasmine in his coat, bent cordially toward Saint-Prosper as the latter entered and, apure at a dosk, inquired.

"The Dolphin is advertised to sale tomorrow for France?"

"Yes, sir; at 12 o'clock noon." "Pook me for a berth. Ernest Saint-Prosper," he added in answer to the other's questioning look.

"Very good, sir. Would you like some labels for your baggage? Where shall we send for it? The St. Charles? Very well, sir. Are you going to the tableaux tonight?" he continued, with hospitable interest in one whom he rightly conceived a stranger in the city. "They say it will be the fashionable event. Good day," as the prospective passenger paid for and received his ticket. "A pleasant voyage. The Dauphin is a new ship and should cross in three weeks, barring bad weather. Don't forget the tableaux.

Everybody will be there." The soldier did not reply. His heart had given a sudden throb at the clerk's last words. Automatically he placed his ticket in his pocket and randomly answered the employee's further inquiries for instructions. He was not thinking of the Dauphin or her new engines, the forerunner of the modern quadruple expansion arrangement, but through his brain rang the assurance, "Everybody will be there." And all the way up the street it repeated itself again and again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HAT elusive, nocturnal company, "The Mistick Krewe of Comus," had appeared-"Comus, deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries"-and the dwellers in Phantasmagoria were joyfully numerous. More plentiful than at a modern spectacular performance reveled gods, demons and fairies, while the children resembled a flight of masquer-

ter, the Roman Veglioni, succeeded say charitable, ladies. Plenty of men elaborate tableaux, the "Tartarus" of at Service's church now. She's dressed the ancients and "Paradise Lost" of in Watteau fashion tonight, so if you Milton, in which the "Krewe" imper- see any one skipping around, looking conated Pluto and Proserpine, the as though she had just stepped from fates, harpies and other characters of the Embarkation For the Island of the representation. In gallery, dress Yenus, set her down for the minister's circle and parquet the theater was pretty wife!" crowded, the spectacle, one of dazzling toilets, many of them from the ateliers ' Prosper mechanically. of the Parisian modistes, a wonderful evolution of Proserpine's toga and the mortal robes of the immortal Fates. Picture followed picture-the expulsion from paradise, the conference of the Gorgons and the court of pandemonium, where gluttony, drunkenness, avarice and vanity were skillfully set forth in uncompromising colors. Availing themselves of the open

house of the unknown "Krewe," a composite host that vanished on the stroke 12, many of Old Rough and Ready's retinue mingled with the gathmaskers, nor were themselves indiffer- recall. ent to the complaisance of their entertainers. Hands, burned by the sun, looked blacker that night against the white gowns of waists they clasped; bearded faces more grim visaged in contrast with delicate complexions; embroidery and brocade whirled around with faded uniforms, and dancing aigrettes waved above frayed epaulets and shoulder straps.

"Loog at 'im!" murmured a fille a la cassette, regarding one of these officers who, however, held aloof from the festivities; a well built young man, but thin and worn, as though he, like his uniform, had seen service. "If he would only carry my trunk!" she laughed, relapsing into French and alluding to the small chest she bore under her

"Or my little white lamb!" gayly added her companion, a shepherdess. And they tripped by with sidelong looks and obvious challenge which the quarry of these sprightly huntresses of men either chose to disregard or was unconscious of, as he deliberately surveyed his surroundings with more curiosity than pleasure and absently listened to a mouzstebank from "The Belle's Stratagem." "Who'll buy my nostrums?" cried the

buffoon. "What are they?" asked Folly, can-

tering near on a hobbyhorse.

"Different kinds for different people. Here's a powder for ladies-to dispel the rage for intrigue. Here's a pill for politicians-to settle bad consciences. Here's an eye water for jealous husbands; it thickens the visual membrane. Here's something for the clergy; it eliminates windy discourses. Here's an infusion for creditors; it creates resignation and teaches patience."

"And what have you for lovers?" "Nothing." answered the clown. "Love, like fever and ague, must run

nostrums?" "Oh, I'm so glad I came!" enthusiastically exclaimed a tail, supple girl.

laden with a mass of flowers. "Isn't it too bad, though, you can't polka with some of the military gentlemen?" returned her companion, who wore a toga and carried a lantern. "Mlle. Castiglione wouldn't let you

"It was lovely of you to take me," she said, "and I don't mind about the military gentlemen."

a desire to revisit familiar scenes, to you we poor civilians would not be relegated to the background: I wish, an ill assorted cluster of maskers be was at least two tons. Nothing is though, I had worn some other cos- hind them drowned his reply, and the known of the material of the tools. As tume. This-aheza, dress-has a tend- lady and her attendants passed on. ency to get between my legs and dis- Saint-Prosper drew his breath sharp probable that corundum was used. concert my philosophical dignity. It ly. "She is here, after all," he said to ean understand why Diogenes didn't himself. wore skirts!"

an hour tollay about the wonderful! On the perfumed air the music swelled & celebrated feast given by Vitellius, as girl. "The poetry of dress, he called, national life of Vienna-the swan song brother Lucius cost a little more than

ing and raising his kentern as they; moving forms. Eyes finshed more of fish and 7,000 different fowls besides drew near the officer who had fallers brightly, little feet seemed born for other courses. under the observation of the fille a lac dancing; cheeks, pale at midday, were cassette. "Colonel Saint-Prosper, or flushed with excitement. Why doesn't set me down for an ass-or Plate, he dance? wondered the lady with the which is the same thing!"

back over his forehead.

"Glad to see you!" continued the poet, extending his hand. "I haven't | Said Chice to Strephon, What bliss, run across you before since the night of the banquet; the debut of Barnes' company, you remember? You must have left town shortly afterward. Returned this morning, of course! By the way, there's one of your old friends here tonight." Saint-Prosper felt the color mount to

his face, and even Straws noted the change. "Who is that?" asked the soldier awkwardly. "Mrs. Service-Miss Duran that was-

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ading bufferflies. The ball at the thea- now one of our most dashing, I should

"And the minister?" asked Saint-

"He brought her. He compromised on a Roundhead costume himself. But we must be off. Au revoir. Don't be backward. The ladies are all military mad. It may be a field of arms"-casting his glance over the assemblage of fashionably dressed ladies with a quizzical smile-"but not hostile arms. Come, Celestina-Nydia, I mean!"

And Straws' arm stole about the waist of his companion as Saint-Prosper watched them disappearing in the "It is useless to deny it! I knew you

when I first saw you!" exclaimed a familiar voice near by, and, turning around sharply, the officer observed approaching a masked lady, graceful of figure and lacking nothing in the numerical strength of her escort. It was to her that these words were addressed by an agile man of medium stature who had apparently penetrated her disguise. The lady, who would man sitting next to the conductor. have attracted attention anywhere by her bearing, wore a pardessus of white gauze, fitting close and bordered with a silver band, the sleeves short, the skirt of white gauze and very ample, as the fashion of the day required; the feet shod in small white silk bottines, the hair in bands, ornamented with wild poppies. Altogether this costume was described by Phazma as "ravishing, the gown adorning the lady and the lady the gown, her graces set forth against the sheen of voluminous satin folds, like those of some portrait by Sir Joshua or Gainsborough."

"How could you expect any one not to know you?" continued the speaker as this little coterie drew near, their masks a pretext for mystery. "You may impersonate, but you cannot de-

ceive." "That is a poor compliment, since you take me for an actress," laughed the lady. A hilarious outburst from



"My dear, if all women were like She tooked with blanched face toward

"Straws!" said the soldier as the bord: a year-a mad, merry time, when may "Said strephon to Chine, 'For a kiss

I'll give thee the choice of my flock If you'll add to the gift a new smock."

lemmed the lively nymph as she trip-

That Terrible Child.

The small son of a certain university professor, whose parents are deservedly popular for their tact and courteous speech, appeared at the home of a fellow professor and hesitatingly asked Mrs. - if he might look at the parlor rug. Permission was of course granted, and Mrs. - felt some surprise to see the little fellow stoop over the ring and stare silently for some half minute. He straightened himself up and, meeting her wondering expression, said triumphantly: "It doesn't make me sick!"-

there is something to be said in favor of a good meal even if a trifle heavy now and then. I believe it is a fact that the human stomach, although it is not a gizzard, like that of a goose, still does its work better when slightly stretched, just as the lungs work better with deep inhalations induced by bodily exercise in the open air.-Lon-

don Telegraph.

Work For the Stomach.

The utilization of what formerly were considered waste products and the resarrection of materials from a used up state to a new condition of serviceableness have in recent times been developed to such a degree of completeness that we are scarcely prepared to admit that anything is ever irrecoverably lost. In this respect we believe in the conservation of material just as we have long been taught to believe. in the law of conservation of energy.

Irrecoverable Waste.

From a purely practical point of view, however, some things certainly may be so completely lost to further use that their loss may well be considered absolute, and one of these is the metal lost in the wear of railway rolling stock brasses. For the speculator in copper values, the promoter of a copper "corner," to use the broker's cant, the copper which has gone into railway throng of dancers. It was Celestina's brasses need have no terror. It is not first ball, and after her long training likely ever to be available again in full at the Castiglione justitute she danced measure. It is dissipated so completeshabby, unlike the spick and span regi- divinely. Something like a pang shot ly, in part at least, that its practical mentals from the costumier. With through the soldier's breast as he folbronzed faces and the indubitable air lowed the pair with his gaze. He serious consideration. From the best of campaigns endured they were the seemed looking backward into a world available deductions on the subject it objects of lively interest to the fair of youth and pleasure, passed beyond appears that 5 per cent of the annual pears in this way every year.

Flat Wheels.

"Flat wheel," growled the old retired conductor as the trolley car in which he sat went thumping along at twelve miles an hour, shaking the passengers uncomfortably at every revolution of the wheels.

"What makes flat wheels?" asked the

"Fools," said the conductor. "It's this way: If a man doesn't know how to stop his car he makes a flat wheel. On the steam roads some brakemen flatten a wheel every time they put on a brake. When the wheel suddenly stops revolving and the momentum of the train carries it along the wheel slides along the track, and a flat is started. Next stop makes it worse, and so it goes until the wheel is no good. If a brakeman knows his business he need never make a flat wheel unless he has to suddenly avoid an accident. If he keeps his wheels turning slowly they don't flatten. Now, these fellows on the trolleys take no care at all, and every other car in some places has a flat wheel."

The Khyengs' First Woman.

The Khyengs of Burma are probably the only race or tribe of people that have any tradition of the origin of the human race that do not have a man or male human being in some way connected with that important event. The Khyeng genesis opens in this wise: "In the beginning of the world, after the sun, moon and stars had appeared, the earth by its own inherent power of productiveness brought forth a female creature, which was called Hleeneu. She laid 100 eggs and hatched them in cotton wool, and from them sprang 100 human beings, the progenitors of the different races." The least that can be said of this curious belief is that it is a fine illustration of the multiple theory as applied to the origin of the human

Tools of the Ancients.

An investigator who lived during two years in a tomb at Gizeh collected evidence to prove that the tools used inworking stone 4,000 years ago had jeweled cutting edges like modern tools. He says that the builders of the pyramids used solid and tubular tools, straight and circular saws and many other tools supposed to be modern. In some specimens of granite a drill had sunk one-tenth of an inch at each revolution, indicating that the pressure the diamond was scarce then, it is

Two Expensive Banquets.

care about walking abroad. My only "A nostrum for jilted beaus!" called The costlicst meal ever served, acwonder is that everybody didn't stag out a mountebank, seeing him stand | cording to history, was a supper given in his tub in those days. Don't talk to ing there preoccupied, alone, at the by Ælius Verus, one of the most lavish me about the 'noble Roman! Why, he same time tendering a pill as large as of all the Romans of the latter days, to a plum. A punchinello jarred against a dozen guests. The cost was 6,000 ses-"And M. Intagila lectured to us far him with, "Pardonnez moi, pardie" | tertia, which would amount to \$242,500. drapery of the ancients." laughed the rapturously. A waltz, warm with the Roman emperor of those days, to his of Lanner! Softly, sweetly breathed \$200,000. Succeeding says that the ban-"Then I prefer prose. Hello!"-paus- "Die Schonbrunner:" faster whirled the quet consisted of 2000 different dishes-

Shifting Eyes. No matter of what color, beware of white lamb. Carnival comes but once the eyes that have no desire to look you full in the face. There is somefrankly lifted his mask and tilted it ety should sweep all eares out of doors! thing wrong believed the shifting, uneasy glance, and the owner of such optics will prove to be unworthy of trust. Read well the signs, for if artions speak louder than words eyes speak even louder than actions, and to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Reversing the Adage.

They found the bride in tears. "I cook pies and tilings that, are something fierce, but George who lat eat them," she solited miserably.

"Ah, you must first make him love you. The way to a man's stomach is through his heart," they said, for they were worldly wise.

Be Cheerful. You find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful people; why not make earnest efforts to confer that pleasure on others? You will find that half the battle is gained if you will never allow yourself to say anything For the average healthy man I think gloomy.

> Getting Back at Him. "I'm afraid," said the actor when a cabbage came within an inch of his nose, "that somebody in the audience has lost his head."

The selfish, loving only themselves, are loved by no one, so selfishness is moral suicide.—De Gaston.

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