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gical goddesses combined, but that

does not count for everything. If I

remember rightly, those mythological

With the instinctive desire that

Clare had possessed to fly to his de-

fense, I now felt myself surging to

Mrs. Dace's. But I held myself in

leash. "Even assuming for the sake

of argument that I should desire to

make a fool of myself over her, what

possible object could she have in en-

couraging me to such idiocy?" I asked.

his hands deep in his pockets.

He puckered up his mouth and thrust

Absolutely without information con-

"Whew! I didn't think you were

going to get so warmed up over a

little thing like that. But you may be

sure I have no desire to disparage

your lady. I told you to start with

that I knew almost nothing about her

except by hearsay, and you know as

well as I do what that sore of evidence is worth. They won't listen to

it in law. She may be pure gold for

all I know; but I was just warning

have feinted her out. But now I'll tell

a fact. If you expect to hold a prin

cess, you have got to be a prince of

good fellows yourself and go out and

buy her a castle every few days,

Furthermore, in this case, you are go

"Dragons always get the worst of

casm. But Bruce seemed very much

"Well, you won't find this one any

fairy tale beast that you can chop up

high-geared, sixty horse-power, mile-a-

minute juggernaut, and you had better

"And the dragon is who?"

keep out of his way or you'll get

"Richard Mackay, boodler prince

and political boss, who was indicted

that thirty-million dollar franchise

cell that he ought to garnish," he shot

"Thank you, ever so much," I re-

over his shoulder as he turned away.

Continued next week

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grab from the city; and who by some

means, unknown to me, escaped the

with a tin sword. He is an up-to-date,

it in the story books; fire, smoke and

ing to run up against a real dragon."

I smiled.

in earnest.

smashed.

goddesses were a pretty bad lot."

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aggressive that no more and some go in another direction, and leave you some others aren't have species before to your pleasant homeward ride. Of know something of the species before to your pleasant homeward ride. Of know something inst because it is ********** ANYONE ONE NEEDING bly four years older. My acquain-bly four years older. My acquain-tance with her began through the irrelation one over."

New Pumps, Pump Re- pressible Bruce.

I had dropped into the blue room of pairs, Cement Curbing or the Imperial for a bottle of ale and

> "Delighted, old fellow. Just in time. Come—I want to introduce you." He Every Woman grasped my hand with the grip of a wrestler. Now, you have to exercise grasped my hand with the grip of a meet Bruce's friends, and I glanced around furtively. You can never tell The new Vaginal Syringe. Best whether the next minute you will be -Most convenient. It cleanses whether the next minute you will be shaking hands with the Chinese ambassador or the latest popular pugi-

> > "To whom?" I inquired. The nodded toward a near-by table at which sat it.

two women and a man. "To Dick Edwards-but I guess you know him already-and the two ladies. But especially to Mrs. Dace. If you want good company, you ne d not go any further, for you wen't find any better anywhere." I asked him whom the especial Mrs. Dace might be, and he laughed with what I thought was a faint undercurrent of

significance beneath it. "Oh, I haven't time to tell. Widow of somebody who died somehow, which is enough to know all at once. Main thing is she is as beautiful as a houri and gracious as an empress, but wise, my boy, wise, wise. Also apparently is a person of some means, amount of means represented by an X, meaning unknown quantity; source of means problem in higher mathematics very difficult of solution. But remember this: If you begin to feel sentimental when you look at her, remember that life is only a joke, and laugh at yourself; but when it comes to wine, remember that life is a mighty serious proposition, and stay sober. Come on, now." In another moment

he was introducing me. "Mrs. Dace and Miss Lyddon-Mr Halliday. Cousin of mine through no fault of his, but nevertheless highly recommended by me. I believe you have met him, Dick, and will confirm Sorry I have to go, but he will my place and round out your Good-night, all," and he was

I took my chair with a quick mental inventory of my new acquaintances. Miss Lyddon was tall, waspy and good looking in an indolent blonde way; Edwards was a propserous looking man of about thirty-five; Mrs. Dace positively startling. From a purely physical standpoint her beauty was gorgeous. But so wonderfully complex was it that it could no more be analyzed by one glance than can a painted masterpiece. While its general effect was to cause a gasp of deagain you saw that its perfection was the result of exquisite blending of many tints into an incomparable whole. Never had I seen a mouth so bewitching, lips so rich or smile so dazzling. Her hair was changeful as an opal, her brows wonderfully arched, her eyes royal blue and bordered by long lashes that screened them as ferns shade deep forest pools. She was wonderful. Fascinated by her beauty for a moment, I sat silently as she calmly surveyed me, one perfect hand idly toying with a small gold purse that lay upon the table. Then far down in the sea depths of her blue eyes I saw faint amusement gathering, and I drew myself together with a

start. Edwards was explaining: "You see, we had arranged for a theatre party, and there were to be four of us. Then at the last hour Mrs. Dace's escort became slightly indisposed, and she came down alone and met Miss Lyddon and myself. We are now about to have something to eat, and possibly a wee bit to drink. I happened to see your cousin Bruce, and hailed him to join us, but it seems he has an excuse. Then he providentially happened to spy you and impressed you into his place to complete

the party. So everybody is happy once more." While I am no such a gabbler as Bruce, I think I can hold my own in any fairly well regulated conversation. I rose to the occasion. The wine oiled my tongue, and Mrs. Dace's little applauding laughs and nods of approval spurred my wit. Edwards think of it, I never did know you to seemed content to remain compara- make a fool of yourself over anything. tively quiet; Mrs. Dace was a sympa- That does seem to be my specialty, thetic listener, and without effort I held the floor. I had read considerably, and the pigeon holes of my memory were well stocked with the aphorisms of the sages . Through the simple effort of recollection I became

soft patter of their applause I even

"Well, now, that is one of the funny things about women. Of course, we don't know much about them; but we do know this: We know that the only reason they care for us is because fact, when one o'clock came and with they can't get anything better. If the it the intimation from Mrs. Dace that gods came to earth, the only thing left It is now necessary that I take one she must depart, it was only after a for man to do would be to cast himstep backward in my relation of this little sigh that reached my ears alone, therein is where we differ from we mysterious occurrence. I must go and a flash from her wonderful eyes therein is where we differ from wonderful eyes the commisback to some time before the commistant plant that quickly hid themselves behind mankind. Man doesn't want angels; sion of the burglary and the entry of the screening lashes as I looked deep plain, mortal woman—provided she is LeDuc upon the scene, in order that into them. Of the perpendicular bill not too plain, of course—is good

Edwards paved the way for me. But, remember, there are women and "Mrs. Dace lives at the Arcadia, which women. Take Clare, for instance. It was at this period of my life that is not more than a mile from your She is beautiful, too, and keeps her-I was cast under a spell. Hopelessly, house. You can take her there, step self looking as attractive as possible helplessly, and blindly I fell in love helplessly and blindly I fell in love back in your carriage and be home in order to make people like her. Yet ten minutes later. Miss Lyddon and I she is as harmless as a butterfly. go in another direction, and leave you Some others aren't. You ought to course we must all meet again. It will you pick up a thing just because it is We bade them good-night, and hail cerning her beyond what Bruce him-

ing a carriage, I assisted my compan- self had confided in me, half angry ion into it. The rather long ride at myself that I should take the trouhomeward still lingers in my mind as ble to answer him, I nevertheless a pleasant dream. The gentle sway- yielded to my impulse to defend her. ing of the carriage as the rubber tires With considerable emphasis I told him rolled noiselessly over the boulevard that I should refuse to believe any intold me quite a few things about her- tive knowledge of their truth. He Her husband, an Englishman, listened silently, growing suddenly nad been in some diplomatic service sobel at my warmen, and when a molli- Prices almost cut in 2 in the Orient, had a died a year before, finished, addressed me with a molliand she had now come back to her fying pat upon the back. birthplace on matters of business. Unreservedly, she seemed to accept me as a thorough man of the world. and even did me the flattery to repeat some of the witticisms of the evenexpress it, I sparred a moment for ing and laugh over them for a moment was charmed I think I have expressed

In front of the formidable entrance to the building where she resided

assisted her to alight, and she thrust out her fingers, which I took eagerly The physical contact thrilled me from head to toe, and the enchantment of her smile enthralled me. "You have entertained me delightfully. I feel flattered to have met you," she murmured. "And since you are a busy man by day, I hope you will call and see me some evening when you can think of nothing else to do. You can any time. I hope you will not forget all," I returned with a touch of sar-

That anyone once seeing her could ever forget her! Nothing could be more ridiculous than the thought. lightly laughed the idea to scorn as I bent over her hand. "Mrs. Dace, the old Roman general reported to his emperor, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' To you I must report somewhat differently. 'I came, I saw, I am conquered.' I will pay you my tributes very soon. Until then life will be a neces-

by the grand jury in connection with sity instead of a pleasure." She tripped to the entrance steps, and from their top sent me a flutter of her handkerchief and a flashing smile that made my blood leap as she vanished behind the heavy door. Back into the carriage I climbed, and went home in an exhibaration of spirits that the wine did not account for. The seine had been cast and was being held wide to receive. Unsuspiciously

the fish wiggled on. The next day I happened to see Bruce. In the course of our conversation I casually asked him what he knew of my companion of the night before, and he began digging his fingers into his head as though trying to scratch out an answer. Presently it

"Let's see. I don't know that I can and giving the patient strength by tell you very much-you know. never paid any particular attention to her," he began in a quizzical glance at me. "Still, if you will agree to light at first sight, when you booked keep it a family secret, I might re-

member a few things. Promise, honest Injun?" "Honest Injun."

"Well, then, here goes. Matie Madden was born in this town about thirty years ago of poor but dishonest parents. But she was a beauty, even as a girl, and people forgave her parentage on that account. She eloped out of school with a more or less account Englishman named Dace, who afterwards got into the service of his Government over in India or some other outlandish place on the back of the map. He died with his boots on."

"How; was he killed?" I inquired. Bruce grew a trifle more serious. "Well, now, that is something I am no authority upon. I can only repeat to you in confidence what I have heard and read. But the report has it that it happened in a disagreement with a Russian nobleman over herone of those cheerful little affairs that sometimes occur out that way, you know; referee and seconds to the front; wine and jealousy in the background; moon in the distance-you understand. Anyway it made a ripping good story for the journals. Next thing I heard of her she was back here. I hope you are not going to

make a fool of yourself over her." His general tone had slightly irritated me, but the last remark positively nettled. "No; I think one in the family is enough," I retorted. But he slipped the thrust aside in his usual

smooth way, laughing. "I guess that's right. Come to doesn't it? But while I give you cre-At for having a better balanced head than I have, I'll tell you what I do in certain cases. When I get up against a proposition like cocaine in wine, or a woman like Mrs. Dace, I run for the philosopher, theologian, poet. To the fence. They are too blamed seductive to fool with, and I don't take any chances with them. She has got the soared to original heights. In the parbeauty and graces of all the mythololence of the steem I ----

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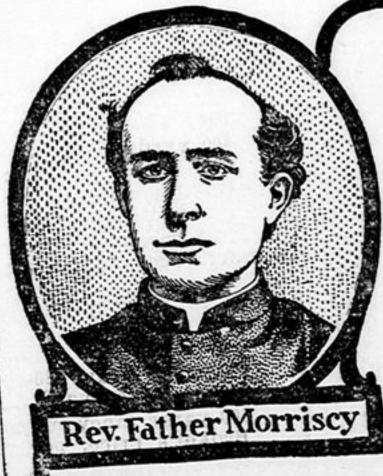
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