...which often belongs to a sensitive and shy person.

dressing gown. His mother had that high pride that was when his mother died—since then he could never face the desolation of the place without her. Even now he dreaded it. He had lived all his childhood and early youth close by her side, for she, a widow at twenty-five, had centered herself on her only child, had magnified his tendency toward temperatures and snuffles into inherent delicacy, petted him, coddled him with dainties, kept him from racing and roughing with other boys, and to make him content under her restraint, she had read to him constantly, books far beyond his years—books on music, painting, drama, faraway countries and peoples, and always poetry. When his schoolmates got sleds and baseball gloves for Christmas, Theus had a volume of Browning and a soft blue dressing gown. His mother had that high pride which often belongs to a sensitive and shy person.

choose." And so, with a definite, though limited esthetic and intellectual training, Theus had grown up, passed well through prep school and college, and then, prodded by his mother's ambition as much as his own, he had started on his career.

Theus Laverock thought now of that career—which he liked very much most of the time—and how oddly different it was from his and his mother's intention. Instead of a poet or playwright or novelist, he had become a metropolitan columnist, always at first nights and previews; always in the know when anything happened in the overlapping layers of Park Avenue and Broadway; an authority on the well-dressed man and the well-dressed woman, and where the said well-dressed should frivol and frisk; and lastly, but by no means leastly, where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and in the know when anything happened in the overlapping layers of Park Avenue and Broadway; an authority on the well-dressed man and the well-dressed woman, and where the said well-dressed should frivol and frisk; and lastly, but by no means leastly, where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink.

He knew it was not exactly world-shaking when Theus Laverock thought now of that career—which he liked very much most of the time—and how oddly different it was from his and his mother's intention. Instead of a poet or playwright or novelist, he had become a metropolitan columnist, always at first nights and previews; always in the know when anything happened in the overlapping layers of Park Avenue and Broadway; an authority on the well-dressed man and the well-dressed woman, and where the said well-dressed should frivol and frisk; and lastly, but by no means leastly, where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink.

Theus remembered, to a gentle scorn of the cooking of their many kinfolk, and when she entertained the family she would comment that it was a mercy to give Uncle Gene and Cousin Roddy a decent meal, for what they got at home was nothing but dyspepsia breeders. One of her many pungent sayings was: "Health comes more from the cookstove than the medicine bottle." Thus unconsciously, Theus had absorbed the creed that all small-town and country food was ill-cooked and unpalatable, and as he had spent his adult vacations in Europe, nothing had disturbed this belief.

Ah, well, he was almost there! He shook off the cinders and dust, set his two bags together and wondered what the plumbing in the hotel was like, and whether anyone in town would recognize him. The train slowed, settled into the little old station and stopped, and the train slowed, settled into the little old station and stopped, and the train slowed, settled into the little old station and stopped. A crowd of people came flocking about him with welcoming cries and gestures: "Timmy Laverock!" "Tim, old chap!" "How're you, Tim?" "Glad to see you home again!" He was clapped on the back, his hands were shaken, and a white-curled, chipper old lady whom he didn't recognize hugged and kissed him warmly.

"This is Bad Randall!"
"I'm your ma's first cousin, Roddy Trent."
"Jim Pease."
"Tody Marshall—and this is my wife—you know, Lucille Givens."
"Bart Oliver."

In all this welter, the old lady who had kissed him elbowed fast to his arm. She, it appeared, was his great-mother, and the well-dressed woman, and where the said well-dressed should frivol and frisk; and lastly, but by no means leastly, where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink. He was erudite, connoisseur, gourmet, well-bred gossip, wise man about town, and where and what they should eat and drink.
be his guest during his stay in Elen
ton. His protests
were disregarded,
his bags and him-
self settled into a
waiting car, and he
was borne awa

dazed, but trying
to be responsive
and polite, down
Main Street and out
the grove lane to
the Steiff house,
where Great-aunt
Jinny and her vener-
able hired girl,
Matilda, had passed
some fifty years
of stimulating
warfare. All the
way there Theus
had no opportunity
to stop and to
three words of
sentence, for Great-
aunt Jinny's talk
was an engulflng
current:

"Go to a hotel?
You think I'd let
my own niece's
child go to a hotel
when I've got a
roof
over my head, let
alone a spare room
which is fairly cry-
ing out to be used,
and you a famous
man, too, Timmy Laverock,
and the hotel all down at the heel, and people even
whisper there's bugs in the beds; though I wouldn't
like to repeat anything as awful as that, and we're all
so glad to see you, Timmy. The whole town's glad,
and the Community Club's going to have a speical
supper, and say, my, my, you certainly have grown up
into a grand-looking man, Timmy, and I'm proud of
you, and so is everybody else—all your relatives
and your old friends. Why, ever since Hughie French
said you were coming, we've all—" It went on,
and on, and on, rising triumphant ly to . . . "so here
we are, and this is your home while you're here, and
you can't wear out your welcome, even if you stay
forever; there's Matilda waiting, and I bet you're
hungry as a hunter, and as soon as you've had a
wash, we'll sit right down . . . "—Look out, Reddy! —
this to the chauffeur—"if you hit that rhododendron
I planted last year, you'll have to buy me anoth
er . . . Come right along, Tim, you're going to
have the downstairs bedroom . . . That's the
way . . . . . . There we are!

Theus was pushed into the bedroom and the door
shut behind him. His faculties, numbed by Great-
aunt Jinny's patter, rallied in this welcome solitude,
and while he washed and shaved and put on a clean
shirt, he poked about the room, noting that the
blinds were not only dark but workable, the bed was
soft but not too soft, there was an adequate reading
light, a deep armchair, hangers in the closet, and in
the bathroom next door, plenty of hot water and
clean towels. To be sure, it was all very old-fashioned
and worn shabby, but clean and quite possible for a
night. But his sensitive nose gave him warning that the
coming meal was going to be a trial. Unmistak-
able whiffs of hot frying fat leaked in around the old
doors, and, worse, it had a fishy taint! Theus hunted
out his digestive tablets and wished he had brought
two bottles. He abominated fried fish! And yet he
was hungry.

"You ready, Timmy?" chirped Great-aunt Jinny
at the door. "Come right along and set down!"
The fishy fat was stronger than ever as he opened
the door, and he shuddered as he came into the
dining room. There were three places, and a hand-
some dark girl was coming in from the kitchen with a
covered dish. "You'd never guess who this is," said
Great-aunt Jinny. "She's one of your relations
too. She's your pa's Cousin George Mendon's oldest
daughter, Alison. She's only twenty-two but teaches
primary grade, and she's on spring vacation now. You
wouldn't remember her."

"Yes, I do remember her," said Theus, shaking
hands with Alison. "I'm sure this must be the bad
little girl who came to our house with her mother one
Christmas when I was home from college and kicked
me on the shin because I wouldn't play snowballs."
Alison smiled as if she'd rather like to kick him
again. "You're perfectly right. I did that very
deed. . . . Let me air this room a minute before we
sit down, Aunt Jinny." She opened the window.

"This is such an old house," said Aunt Jinny,
comfortably motions Theus to his place. "Everyth-
ing we cook smells all through it, and fish cakes
worst of all, seems to me."

Theus could not keep dismay from his face at the
words "fish cakes," and Alison, returning from the
window, saw it. "I hope you're fond of fish cakes," she
drewl with polite mockery; "they're Matilda's
great specialty."

The table had clean white damask, very old,
medal here and there, white china with gold bands,
an old sugar bowl with pussy willows, elder catkins
and two or three jack-in-the-pulpits for centerpiece.
He realized there would be no picquant apéritif, no
soothing cup of hot broth or slice of melon to preface
the horror of fish cakes. There they lay, a multitude
of brown spheres, without garnish or sauce. He re-
ceived three of them on his plate and picked up his
fork, settled himself for the worst. He took a bite,
shuddering away from the taste he expected, and
then—"But this is marvelous!" he exclaimed.

"Marvelous! Like—as cream or mousse."

"Have some green-grape catchup!" beamed Aunt
Jinny. "It's very relaxing with fish cakes."

But he was still intent on the delectable fish cake.
Feathery light within, its thin crust crisp and melt-
ing, seasoned and blended with cunning art, he had
never, in all his life, tasted anything better. "Yes,
like a mouse—a lobster mousse. Is it lobster, Aunt
Jinny?"

"It's salt codfish," said Alison—"plain salt cod-
fish and potatoes, and fried in lard."

"I don't believe you," said Theus, letting another
quarter sphere melt ravishingly in his mouth. "It
wouldn't be!"

Alison watched him, her eyes cold. Great-aunt
Jinny babbled on that the way to make fish cakes
light was to beat them up with your hand, and if the
codfish wasn't properly soaked it didn't—and so on,
while spooning grape catchup onto Theus' plate
and giving him a great slice of something which
looked like a dull steamed pudding. "Try the Togus
loaf," she urged. "Three by my grandma's recipe,
which would be your great-great, Timmy. . . . Give
him some butter, Alison; it ought to be
slathered with butter."

Theus, abandoning the fish cake unwillingly,
slathered butter on the uninteresting-looking object
and broke off a very small bite. Simultaneously he
discovered that the hot moist bread was wonderfully
solid with flavor and that the salt butter—and how
many times had he in his column inveighed against
salt butter?—was its preordained accompaniment.

"Delicious!" he said. "Simply delicious! What
on earth is it? It's not corn bread, and yet there's the
subtle savor of corn. What did you call it—Togus
loaf? I wonder where that name came from!"

Alison answered smoothly: "One of the early
peasantry, a Mr. Togus, perhaps, or maybe the cook
who invented it had a boy friend named Gus and
dedicated it to him—to-Gus. You see?"

Theus now took a good look at the venomous
young woman. It was very easy to do, for though
her expression was unfriendly, she had lovely color
and a fine straight way of

(Continued on Page 100)
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GENEVA, N. Y.

(Continued from Page 13)

holding her back and head. Thisus, who, in his column, had warned on the debatable slouch unceasingly, liked to see young women with good easy posture. What he didn’t like was to see any young woman making fun of him. He was not used to that. Before he left, he decided, he must put this chit in her place, but for the moment he was prepared to get back to the top of the catchup and the tart suavity of green-grape catchup. A glorious combination, perfectly balanced through contrast.

“Give me the recipe for the catchup and Togus leaf, won’t you, Aunt Jenny?” he begged. “Write them out for me in full. And please give me three more fish cakes and another slice of hard-boiled and more catchup and more butter. I could eat them forever.”

“Save some room for dessert, Timmy,” said Great-aunt Jenny, “Ma tilda’s made one of her blackberry puddings, and she’ll be raving if you don’t eat some. She’s very set up over her cooking, but the Togus leaf, I made myself.”

“And in the Tyrol,” said Theus, gatherer another slice, “at a very small inn, I found something a little like this, but not so good. They served it with grated pepper, and it was good but I ate it all, and it was in a Mittel-europa.”

Alison’s eyes gleamed at him sarcastically, but he didn’t notice. She said nothing, because Great-aunt Jenny waved a hand over the table of speech, and thereafter the lunch went on with Theus eating, Alison still scowling and aloof, and Aunt Jenny talking. Theus didn’t manage to pause for a brief moments when the blackberry pudding came in, hot sweet fruitiness below, a top of buttered sugared sippets of bread, all baked to a noble welding of savor and softness with crunchy accents. A thick souring of chilled cream gave the only possible enhancement to the dish. That Thues could create something at the taste of infinite satisfaction, and Matilda peeped in from the kitchen to see and hear him. She brought in the coffee herself, and even here Thues could find something, the roasted, fresh-ground beans, and was strong and black and scalding hot. To be sure, it was served in a large cup, and Matilda would have disliked to have had a smaller, but for her bearing and the beauty of his bearing, had Great-aunt Jenny known it, a great compliment.

“And now,” said she, “I told Hughie French you’d come down and see him as he was the only man I had in my marriage. And I’ll invite you to Cousin Roddy’s.”

“He’s a fine young man, Timmy,” said Great-aunt Jenny, “and we’ll all be going out to supper together to Cousin Roddy’s.”

“That’s fine,” he said, “That’ll help me through it.”

“What do you mean, oralde? Don’t you want to go to Roddy’s?”

“Not strong enough for me,” he said.

“But what can I do?” asked Thues.

“I can’t live here and do my work; it seems foolish for me to hold onto the house; I won’t sell it, you know; I don’t get it half enough; it barely covers the taxes.”

“Yes, I know, but I remember your mother sweeping the front path of a summer morning and raking up the leaves and sitting sewing out under those maples, and you alongside of her with your rose in a book. She and your father planned and built that house. The old man buried his tired face away from the window.”

“I can talk about it now, Tim, because it’s all past history. I don’t know, before your father died. She wouldn’t take me, but she was the only woman I ever looked at. So there’s considerable sentiment mixed up in this deal. I don’t like to see that house go where the people aren’t in her class. Your mother was a fine woman, Timmy. And a sweet one. Branny, too, outside of all that. She was the only woman I ever looked at.”

Thes sat silent. He couldn’t repress as much as he felt he ought, the old man’s reasoning. To drag him away here on this long, tiresome and excruciatingly painful to him that he ought not to sell the house was, of course, outrageous. One part of his brain cried this manifest truth. The other recognized Hugh French was right; he could not let his mother’s house be defaced and cheapened: he’d have a black spot on his conscience if he did that. “I’m a flabby romantic, and so’s my mother,” he said, “but I know I am right; he told me it was old-fashioned, but he knew there was matter here with roots deeper than romanticism.

“You wouldn’t want to come back to Elenton yourself, would you, Tim?” he asked. “You might marry one of our nice local girls and settle down.” The old man’s smile was wistfully jocular.

“You are the tribute of showing no horror. "I’ve got a newspaper job, you know,” he said, “and it requires that I show up on the premises every day. Elenton’s not exactly in town, you know.”

“Well, you walk around by the house and look at it. The Wades live there, and Myrtle Wadell’ll be tickled to pieces to show it through. You know her? She was Myrtle Vincent’s oldest girl."

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“Alas, how now, do you know what I’d like to do?” There used to be a path around the millpond when I was a kid. I’d like to see if it’s still there. How about it?”

And a very odd thing for him actually to want an hour or more of uninterrupted society of a girl, Theus realized, and even more odd, he wanted it very much. Theus, at thirty-seven, was cool and wary about women; he knew the tricks they played on the attentions and invitations which they lavished on him were for the publicity he could give their parties and their personalities. As he walked along with Alison he found it amusing to think of the things he could write about her. They would, he was sure, make her furious.

He didn’t have to be wary with her. They talked about Aunt Jenny and Uncle Gene. They mentioned the clumps of wild blackberry bushes—Aunt Jenny’s pudding—and he made a mental note to write of these in a forthcoming column. Alison could not only perfunctorily to his enthusiasm over the food supply, but she brightened when they talked of poetry. Theus was charms to discover that she knew his heart’s favorite, Eve, by Ralph Hodgson.

When they got back to Aunt Jenny’s, conversation between them ceased, because Aunt Jenny was all set for another monologue, but their friendship had been well established. Secure in solitude for the brief space while he brushed up to go to Cousin Roddy’s supper party, Theus realized he had never mentioned, anywhere, a girl who combined so many attractions—a fine figure, a lovely face, an independent spirit and a first-rate brain. He had always thought of himself as a perpetual bachelor—a true bohemian is always unmarried and undisciplined—but there had never met anyone like Alison. He was resigned to the inevitable bad meal which he anticipated at Roddy’s, because Alison would be there; indeed, he began to be quite desire that which he expected would be accepted to meet a girl like Alison. He became resigned to the inevitable bad meal which he anticipated at Roddy’s, because Alison would be there; indeed, he began to be quite desirous of a girl like Alison. A girl like that opposite him at table forever—a possible and pleasing vista.

Roddy came them in his dilapidated old car; and as they went through Main Street, Theus had an opportunity to see how much worse the Warnitz store looked by night than by day. It was bedecked with many colored lights, and a garish green head over the door had winking green eyes and a toothily illuminated mouth from whence issued radio jazz at its most strident. On Broadway, Theus noticed; but in this quiet, deserted street it was abominable.

At Cousin Roddy’s bungalow, there was his wife Corn and his two squirming youngsters and Uncle Gene, his father, who didn’t seem to have aged a day since Theus’ mother used to prepare for him those benedictine dinners, nor did he appear to have suffered from that chronic dyspepsia which had been part of Mrs. Laverock’s pitty. He was glad to see Theus, and said so, and very soon the entire group, including the children, were seated in the tiny bungalow dining room and Corn

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"That was grateful; it gave him more time to eat, steadily, concentratedly, amid every variation in the harmony of flavor which the meal offered."

"Now, if I had a glass of good white wine —"

"when he heard, beneath Aunt Jenny's talk, Uncle Gene's rumbling murmur: "Why don't you let him try it? I think it's first-rate."

Cora took extra glasses from the shelf, and Roddy brought a demijohn. "What you got there?" Aunt Jenny stepped herself to ask.

"Well," hesitated Roddy, "it's some Delaware grape wine I made almost eight years ago, and pa and I figure it would go pretty well with this pork."

"I think it's sour!" said Cora, drawing down her mouth.

Theus picked up the glass and sniffed at the smell like the heady perfume of grape blossoms. He sipped cautiously; the wine was dry, mellow, with a proper oiliness as he expected; but it had a small red grape of which it was made, it had a distinguished, distinctive flavor, which he could not define by comparison with any vintage he knew. It was more like one of the local wines which knowing incomers of Languedoc buy up in quantity for their cellars and annexe proudly serve to the guest who asks "for vin du pays." And Cousin Roddy had made this himself!

Yes, Cousin Roddy had made it. Most of the people in Elenton made wine of some sort, according to the saga of Aunt Jenny, which now arose again—elderflower, elderberry, dahlia, grape, blackberry—and applejack by the simple process of freezing hard cider, and peach brandy by the judicious mixture of ripe fruit and sugar and a subsequent burial in the ground for six months. Theus listened to such fascination that he hardly realized the main course of the meal was finished and dessert was coming on.

The dessert was a steamed bakeberry relish, Cora cut into whorls of down-light dough tinted through with the royal purple of the fruit, which flowed from and about it gaily in ambrosial rivulets. There were two sauces, one transparent, sugary, bland; the other the dark juice of the berries, speeded and hot. Theus tried each singly and then both together, and could not decide which was better. He was, he knew, eating like a pig! But each seductive mouthful tempted him on. He had forgotten the digestive tablets entirely.

Luckily, he did not need to talk after supper; he could sink back in an easy-chair and listen, as they all did, to Aunt Jenny, whom nothing disturbed quietly. It was surprisingly peaceful in the bungalow sitting room, and he smoked and looked and talked at Alison and was blissfully happy. The two children were taken to bed by Cora, and when she came back she sat down by Roddy and slipped her hand in his, and Theus liked the domestic peace and affection so frankly shown. How would it be, he wondered, if Alison sat down beside him and made that same gesture of trust and understanding? How would it be, indeed? He could live here in
companionship of the lovely Alison, in hot cakes, were all appropriate accompaniment to this regal gorge. Not with butter and maple syrup. He ate them.

The voice of Aunt Jiny, the suent two pieces of sausage, two large mounds of samp. He drank three cups of coffee. The next morning when he appeared at breakfast, the beastie dreams of the evening were lashed as a background for his mood. He relished with extra care, chosen smart, roughish, country clothes and a fowl and tie with a dash of the same scarlet as Alison’s scarf. He had told his mother, Laverock approach his former home in Lenton for very little. He had some sausages, and the dark, forbidding pancakes were unappetizing to the eye.

“Fine! Get rid of Ed, and you and I’ll fix it up right.”

They left Myrtle in stitches of hilarity over this flat joke. But Myrtle was not humorous. “Of course,” he said to Alison, “I kept the place made me drowsy, and I don’t think I could get any sleep.” He told her that he had no job till just a little while ago and she works, but doesn’t earn much. He’s got debts, too, that he’s trying hard to get out of. He didn’t tell her of the place as well as the Wades, but they couldn’t pay as much rent.

“They are who?” asked Theus. “I thought I ought to give them their names, because even their parents don’t know they’re engaged, and I only know it because I’m her best friend. Would you like to see me to the post office? I could voice them for being honest and hard-working, and I know they’re both crazy about that place.”

“If yes, I can do that. They could get married in June, I suppose. It would mean such a lot to them; it’s terribly hard on people in love to wait. And wait. They could move in with their folks, but they don’t want to, and there’s no place they want to. But the country folk are fine. But don’t they can only pay a very little at first. Would you let them use your furniture, as the Wades do?”

“They’re all right, don’t want to sell it, you know.”

When they appeared at Aunt Jiny’s, she was bustling about getting ready to go out for a drive. Theus said, “That’s folklore!”

“Perhaps better than you think,” he replied, it seemed to him, very neatly.

“Missus Wadde, which cawed on the roof, seemed to be in a state of discovery that breakfast consisted of—could it be?—sections of onion-flavored stewed sausage, lumps of sausage gravy, a dish of dish of samp hominy and—no, impossible—it was—some sort of dark and menacing pancake.

He had opened his lips to ask if he might have a pancake, and then he lifted his hands to repulse the generous serving of sausage which Aunt Jiny was offering, but suddenly he caught its full aroma, the whiff of fresh clean pork, chopped and sauced with salt and black pepper and made from the softest of country sausages. He had tasted the sausage and found it delicious. He had eaten it with his hands.

“Fine! Get rid of Ed, and you and I’ll fix it up right.”

But Theus did not define his imaginings anatomically; he only regarded Alison’s lovely eyes and felt noble and tender as a maiden’s sigh and had the full aroma, the unmistakable matchless blend to a melting harmony.

“There’s what Theus suggested,” said Theus. “I might,” he went on, improving, “start a country dish, a kind of ground buckwheat flour, country sausage, Delaware grape wine, jars of pickle with—of the same scarlet as Alison’s scarf. She had come in as fresh as the sun and bluesky outside. “Eleenton for very little. He had some sausages, and the dark, forbidding pancakes were unappetizing to the eye.

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(A Continued from Page 108)

Aunt Jenny Stoff presented Theus to his audience—presented, not introduced, she said, for he needed no introduction. And then Theus got to his feet, feeling very fat and weakly, and began to talk. What he said was not at all the sort of thing for which he was noted; there were no witty stories, no wisecracks, no nightmares, no humor of any sort. Generally thrilled by his voice and generously well-fed, he told, very simply and sincerely, his pleasure at being home again, of seeing his kinfolk and neighbors, of his happy and peaceful childhood, of his regret at having stayed away so long. He told also of his reluctance to return, of how surprised he was at their reception and their kindness, when he had himself forgotten. All the time he was speaking he kept his eye on Alison to see if she liked it—and she did; he was sure of it. It really was a pretty little house that sat uneasily in the quaint feeling which Theus presented to his fellow townsman, and when he sat down he was pleased with himself, knowing they—and Alison—were pleased with him.

His audience applauded wildly, and then Uncle Gene rose and made a little speech, as neat in its way as Thesus' own, and at the end, turning jealously to his nephew, he said: "But I'm bound to ask our guest of this evening one question: We've all read his pieces in the papers, and we all want to know where he ever learned such a lot about food?"

To which Thesus made prompt answer: "After a supper like this, Uncle Gene, you ought to be ashamed of that question. I learned about food right here in Elenton, which has the best cooks and the best things to eat in the whole civilized world!" Whereupon Masonie Hail rocked with the ensuing laughter and handclapping.

The rest of the evening was a blur to Thesus, everyone had something to say to him, but he tried to get through the crowd and find Alison and ask her to walk home with him. And at the last he found himself strolling along through the night with her.

"You were just right," she told him.

"You made everyone feel good."

"You liked it?"

"Yes, I did. Did you really think the supper was too good?"

"It was delicious beyond words. The thing I specially notice here is that they make their variety, not in the articles of food, but in their ways of cooking it."

"You see," explained Alison, "we're all very poor here; poorer than you've any idea. There hasn't been any money to speak of around for a couple of years, and so we live on what's raised and swap it about for work and for what we must have at the store. We have pigs and chickens, and cows for milk and butter and cheese, and apples and canned stuff and vegetables that keep through the winter, but we can't afford the out-of-season luxuries and things they have in the city markets. Do you see? Aunt Jenny told you about raising and grinding our buckwheat. We do our own baking and waffle bread. Nobody goes hungry, either, we have apples and that. And nobody's on relief, nobody!"

"It's like the pioneers," said Thesus, awed.

"Yes, it is, in some ways. It's been awfully hard. But I think life ought to be like that, hard things to do, but doing them, and doing them together and no whining around to be taken care of without your own effort."

"Alison," said Thesus Laverock, "you are the most wonderful girl I ever met. I didn't know there were any women in the world like you. I've only known you this little while, but could you—in time, after I've talked to you—then you didn't say he loved her—but she broke in an instant too soon:

"Now, about your house and the young couple who want it, I couldn't tell you about that. After I'd talked to Charlie, but—it's Charlie and I—"

"Charlie!" stammered Thesus. "Yes, Charlie Wheeler and I—you said him off to Bert's. If you'll let us take your house so we can live like real people—even if only he does get a little bit of money from Bert—I can go on with my teaching and we can pay you a proper rent after a year or so. I know we can. It's so hard waiting, and—it's so hard to be afraid we'll have to wait—indefinitely."

Thesus tried to escape out of the morass of emotion into which her words had thrown him. "You mean you and Wheeler are engaged and want to get married and live in my house?" he asked stupidly, heavily.

Alison caught his arm, turned her lovely young face toward him in pleading: "Do you think I'm greedy to ask? It's such a nice house, and we'd take good care of it; we'd keep it in beautiful order, truly we would, and it's the only way we can manage. If you'd ever loved someone very much and wanted to be with her, you'd understand. We're young now, and we wouldn't mind how poor we were if we could only be together."

"Thank God, " thought Thesus, "I didn't ask her to marry me! I had seemed a fatheaded fool! But the thought was poor comfort. Dreamly he rallied his sense of fitness, his precision of thought. He remembered Sydney Carton and his "far, far better thing." He must do this, and do it beautifully, 'I do understand, he thought. 'I—I'll write,' and something can be arranged. I—I'd like—" the phrases arranged themselves—"I'd like to feel that you are living in my house and that I'd contributed to your happiness, Alison."

They were near home now, and suddenly its door was flung open and Aunt Jenny appeared, waving a paper in her hand: "Timmy-me! My gracious, I thought you'd never get here. Look, a telegram's come for you; they phoned it up from the station and I wrote it down; your paper wants you to come right back; you can catch the midnight, and Roddy'll drive you over to the Junction; he's gone home to tell Cora. If you hustle, you can make it."

Thesus hustled. They all hustled. The bags were strapped two minutes before Roddy returned.

"I'll write—I'll write both of you," he said, and kissed Aunt Jenny, and then, turning to Alison, he kissed her, too, a lover's kiss, full on her sweet and desirable young lips. "I'll write," he declared again, huskily, "and the house, my dear, is yours."

It was not until he was on the train that he realized fully what he had done and what had been done to him. He had practically given away his most valuable piece of real property. He had fallen in love and been turned down before he could declare it. And he would never find another girl like Alison—never! For a long time he sat holding his hands over his pines. He felt old and forlorn. Moreover, he began to feel a pang of ingration—that last tremendous touch and the thought that he was
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