

WHEN WE GET IN WITH NICE PEOPLE

BY THYRA SAMTER WINSLOW

Irene and Laurence Turner came to New York from Camden, Illinois. Their coming was a part of the pattern of their lives as they saw and wanted their lives to be. They had always been aware that Camden wasn't good enough for them.

"There's no one here to go with who is our sort," they would tell each other after some party they had honored by attending. "Some day we'll get to a real city. We'll entertain . . . go places . . . do things. No use bothering here. When we get in with some nice people . . ."

Yes, they were undoubtedly superior to Camden. Not, of course, that the town was in any way foreign to them. Irene, in fact, had been born there and Laurence had been born on his grandfather's farm, eight miles out the pike—a farm which his grandfather had paid for by his own toil and on which he had worked long hours every day. But that was before Laurence's time. His grandfather had died long ago, in what might have been the prime of life, if he hadn't worked so hard on the farm. His father had inherited it, but not liking farm work—he was as superior to the farm as his son became to Camden—he moved into town, taking a position as salesman in a wholesale feed house and later acquiring a partnership. He kept the farm, though, and got an old couple to look after it. It became "the country place" and Laurence was born there. As he grew older, and had to go out with his parents each Summer, he found that there were even worse places to live in than Camden. A farm!

Irene had never had a taste of farm life. She had been born in the Moffett home in

Perry street, the same house she lived in until her marriage. It was a comfortable, square house, painted, according to the whims of her parents, alternately yellow or white. Her father was a lawyer, only fairly prosperous, and given to long arguments and discussions. You could find him in his office nearly every day that court wasn't in session, talking oratorically to two or three friends. The office was always dusty, the floor always stained with tobacco, and the air filled with an odor of stale liquor. A good man, Victor Moffett. Everyone said so. They said he was "his own worst enemy" and that it was a shame he hadn't gone into politics . . . he might have been one of the big men of the county—of the State, even. He had the reputation of being "a great classical scholar," and could quote, at length, dull passages from some book no one present had read or heard of. Irene never paid much attention to her father at home, though she was glad he was a professional man.

Mrs. Moffett was a brisk little woman, with bright, round eyes. She never said a great deal, but didn't mind giving her real opinion, if you asked her. She was neat but dowdy and never forgot that her father, old Judge Harper, had been one of the important men of the community. As the daughter of a judge and the wife of a lawyer, she felt that her position in Camden was impregnable and her thoughts never went outside at all. There were no sons in the Moffett family, a fact which Lawyer Moffett always regretted, but there were two other daughters, Grace and Emily, both older than Irene—pretty, com-

placent girls, who married young and went to housekeeping in broad-roofed bungalows on the outskirts of town. They owned shining new cars which stood in brand new garages back of the new bungalows when they weren't being used to take the men to business, or "the girls" to the country club, or to the homes of other "girls," for bridge or an afternoon of sewing. Each of Irene's sisters had two babies. They found nothing the matter with Camden.

But Irene had felt superior to Camden even when she was a child, though she hadn't dared speak of it then. She had taken the smarter fashion magazines and had had the town dressmaker copy dresses out of *Vogue*, though she achieved only indifferent results. She started getting Altman's catalogue when she was fifteen, and would send away for things, a hat, a scarf, a pair of gloves.

"I don't see why the stores here aren't good enough for you," Grace or Emily would say, selecting their hats at the Banner Store. "I think the people in Camden are awfully good dressers. Mrs. Fuller just got back from Chicago and she said that the women here dress every bit as good as the women she saw on Michigan boulevard."

"Mrs. Fuller—she's the tackiest thing I ever saw! I wouldn't let our cat wear anything she'd pick out!" Irene would answer politely.

No, her sisters didn't understand. There was something different about her. She read about the kind of people she would like to know. Some day, somehow, she'd manage to know them.

She got along as well as the others when she was in school—the grades and high school. While at grade school she studied music, practicing finger exercises for long hours on the piano in the back parlor, just as Grace and Emily had done. She hadn't much taste for music, so when she went to high school she stopped taking lessons, though she felt that she rather furthered her musical education by buying classi-

cal records for the Victrola. She never liked them, but she listened to them, patiently, when she had time. Knowing good music would come in handy, some day.

For two years she went away to the State university but, though she joined a sorority and was fairly popular, she didn't like it, and regretted that she hadn't gone East to a finishing-school. The rubes you meet at a State university! Earnest young fellows, just off the farm, who have solemn ideas about Success or want to talk for hours about books. Even the boys who had come from cities seemed stupid, didn't know things. The richest Chicago boys—the most sophisticated—went East to school, Harvard or Yale, and the Milwaukee boys with money went to the University of Wisconsin. Oh, well, she was young. She learned a few things at school, things that would help her, later, when she . . . well, met people. She had a couple of half-hearted love affairs, even. Such rubes! She hardly remembered their names, later.

When she got back from school, Emily was married and she was maid of honor. That started things nicely in Camden. Not that Camden counted, of course—still, she might as well have a good time while she was there.

II

Then she met Laurence Turner. She had known him vaguely, all her life, of course, but Laurence was four years older, which meant that he left high-school the year she entered, and he'd gone to a grammar school in another part of town, and had spent his vacations on the farm, so they were practically strangers. He had had two years at the University of Chicago and had then gone to work in his father's wholesale feed house.

The thing that brought them together, from the first, was their disdain of Camden. They didn't call it that, of course, but they understood. They were quite sure that Camden was no place for them. They

were intended for a city, for foreign travel, for New York.

They had a brief and uneventful courtship and a very pretty church wedding. Mrs. Moffett gave a sigh of contentment even through her tears—the tears so necessary at a wedding in Camden. All of her daughters nicely married and settled down! She had been sure enough of Grace and Emily, but Irene was different. She'd been afraid that, with her funny ideas . . . but here was Irene marrying nicely, right in Camden. Of course, it would have been better if she had married a richer boy, or one whose father was more important. Still—a wholesale feed business—nice respectable people . . . the only son in the family, and only one daughter, and she lived in Kansas City . . . not bad at all!

Irene and Laurence took a bungalow out on Rock Road, near where Grace lived. They rented it with the privilege of buying after a year.

"I wouldn't think of buying property in this town," Laurence told Irene. "Oh, you can sell and all that, but I don't want to be tied down. Some of these days you and I are going to light out of here . . . no use wasting our lives with these rubes."

"I should say not," said Irene. "Why, even while I've been fixing up the house I've been laughing at it. I can't get anything I want here—cretonne I've seen pictures of nor any of the furniture—and you can't send to New York for everything you want. When we live in New York . . ."

"I know," Laurence would agree, sympathetically. "If you did fix up the place all swell, what would these rubes know about it? Did you see the parlor suite the Harrisons bought? Wouldn't it make you laugh? Why, folks here don't appreciate it when you do try to show them something."

Irene squeezed his hand understandingly.

"I know. Wait until we're in New York. . . . When we get in with some nice people . . ."

They went to parties at the Blakes' and the Harrisons' and the Drewseys', at Grace's

and Emily's and at the country club. But what did any of these people know? Somewhere . . . their crowd . . .

Then, Laurence, finally:

"Listen, let's get out right away. No use waiting. Wait too long and we'll never get a chance. We'll get in a rut here. Father'll raise the dickens, of course, but there's no help for it. I shan't be buried alive. What do you say?"

Irene said the idea was grand, of course. What if Laurence didn't have a job ready in New York? They had a little money saved up. A big fine fellow, with a college education, could always get something; there were big opportunities in a city. . . . How silly to worry! Of course, now, while they were still young enough to enjoy themselves, they would meet people—make friends—before they started to get settled. Not that they'd ever let themselves "settle down" the way some folks did! But the friends you make when you are young are the ones you keep all of your life, they told themselves.

Their friends were amazed at their decision. Irene and Laurence listened to their comments with silent amusement, though they couldn't keep from exchanging smiles of understanding. There was old Mr. Hodkins, who got up to New York once every year or two:

"Well, you can believe me or not, but I wouldn't live in New York—not if you gave me the town. No sir, I like to be here in Camden, where I can wish my neighbors the time of day and where I amount to something. You couldn't hire me to live in New York."

The old fool!

The Blakes, who went to New York occasionally, were just as bad, and they were young, too.

"New York's a nice place to visit once in a while, but for a place to live in, Camden's got it beat a mile!"

And Betty Harrison said:

"You won't stay in New York. Inside of a year you'll be back in Camden. Just wait and see."

Little she knew! Of course, Betty Harrison wouldn't like New York—a small-town person with small-town ideas. Irene and Laurence told themselves that they really were New Yorkers, in thought and viewpoint and all, even before they got to New York.

They were glad they hadn't bought the bungalow—funny how things were working out just as they had planned. They sold most of their furniture and gave the rest to Emily and Grace. No use taking things bought in Camden to New York. They packed a few boxes of books—books do add so much to a home! They planned to have quite a library after they got settled. People judge you so much by your books when they come to see you. They could get the right kinds of books in New York. They took a couple of barrels full of their best china and silver—wedding gifts, mostly—and some linens. Those things would be fine to start with; they could always get more when they needed them. That was the nice thing about New York—everything right there handy.

III

Irene and Laurence reached New York on a cold day in January, a windy day, the streets full of dirty bits of paper, gray snow packed against the curbs. They went to a hotel in Twenty-eighth street that they had heard of: the hotel the Harrisons came to. They found it more expensive than they had expected and not at all attractive: a small lobby, the usual hotel room furnished in bright red mahogany. They had a nice bath, though, and, after all, they had taken the room because of its convenient location; they wouldn't be in it much, anyhow.

Irene had never been in New York but Laurence had been there with his father when he was nineteen. He remembered that Fifth avenue crossed Broadway at Twenty-third street with a resultant Flatiron Building, that Macy's was in Thirty-fourth street, that the restaurants were

awfully expensive, Broadway full of theatres and people and bright lights, and that you got to the Metropolitan Museum by taking a bus—it was some place in Central Park—and that you took the subway to Wall street and Trinity Church. He felt quite superior to Irene, who knew New York only as she had read of it in the advertising columns of *Vogue*.

They spent a few days getting acquainted. They took bus rides, choosing a Number 4 or a Number 5 or a Number 7 with remarkable impartiality, and forgetting, of course, which bus they were in and where they were going, as soon as they got inside. They marvelled over the huge apartment buildings they saw from the busses which went up Riverside Drive and wondered if they would like living in an apartment. They'd take one later, as soon as they got—well, settled a little. They peeped in at the Public Library, whispering to each other as if they were in a hospital. They sauntered with a pretended carelessness into the Ritz and the Plaza. Awfully expensive, those places! They'd eat there after they were . . . when Laurence had a job and they had some nice clothes. They hoped no one they wanted to know saw them in their funny Camden things. They didn't want to buy any clothes until they saw their way a little.

Armed with a dozen letters from Camden business men, who had various, though unfortunately not intimate, connections in New York, Laurence visited the business districts. He was willing to try anything—banking, selling bonds, real estate—even something more lowly and commercial. But the New York business firms to which he applied were not crying out, it seemed, for young blood from Camden, Illinois.

So he and Irene gave up their room at the hotel—expensive and not at all attractive, anyhow, and, through the columns of the *Telegram*, found a room in Eighth street. Irene had read about Greenwich Village, and though she desired acquaintances above the level of starving artists and writers and poseurs, it still was

a good place to get started. They'd be careful whom they met there.

Their new room showed a gallant attempt at decoration. Their landlady, who explained that if her grandfather had been cleverer, she would be the owner of the whole lower portion of Manhattan, and who frizzed and dyed her hair more than was necessary for beauty, had "rebuilt" an old, brownstone house into small "apartments." Their "apartment" consisted of one fairly large cubicle, full of an odd assortment of rocking-chairs, divans and tables. You slept on the divans, which were revealed as not at all uncomfortable single beds when their Turkish covers were removed. There was a tiny kitchenette, and a bath without outside ventilation.

Irene and Laurence ate most of their meals in the Village. It was cheaper to eat there, and, besides, you could learn about New York. They determined to be real New Yorkers. They visited the High Hat, the Green Mouse, the Red Umbrella, the Lamp Chimney and a dozen other such places. They would nudge each other when interesting-looking individuals came in. They "just knew" that the people they saw were writers or artists or musicians. Maybe someone they had heard of! The girls had bobbed hair, of course, but Irene had bobbed hair herself, and most of them smoked, but the girls in Camden also smoked, when they were sure there wasn't anyone around to see them. Here, they didn't care, of course. New York! The people were rather poorly dressed—they admitted that. Oh, they wouldn't be satisfied to live in the Village after they got settled. As an experiment it was awfully nice.

They heard a man say something about an article he had written for a Sunday paper and were a bit thrilled over it. A real writer! Another man and a woman discussed a Village masked ball they had attended and the man said, "Yes, I went—Spanish. An awful wild crowd there—I didn't get home until seven o'clock." Not people they wanted to go with, of course—but then . . .

IV

During the first few weeks, no one spoke to them—though of course they really didn't care about meeting people. Then a man got into conversation with them. He worked in a book-store, day times, it seemed, and wrote poems at night. One of the poems had been in the *Times* a few months before, and their new acquaintance—his name was Hollis—took a yellowed copy of it out of a note-book he carried in his pocket and read it to them. Irene didn't quite know what it was about. A piece of free verse Hollis had written had been printed, too, though he neglected to say where, and this, even more yellowed, torn, and mended across the back, was produced and read aloud, too.

Then they met a girl who said her name was Dell Drimmer—"she had a hard time making that up," Laurence commented, later. Miss Drimmer hurried toward them if they entered a restaurant where she was, and, though she spoke a great deal of her career and her freedom, she seemed a bit forgetful of her independence when the time came to pay her dinner check. Oh, well, they weren't so poor they couldn't buy a cheap dinner for an interesting acquaintance.

But Laurence didn't find anything to do and their money started to run low. They didn't want to write home for more, though they knew they could have got it. No, there had been too much talk about money before they came to New York. So they began to prepare meals in their room instead of eating in restaurants—bringing home little paper bags from neighboring delicatessen stores and heating a can of beans on the single burner in the kitchenette. They were surprised, sometimes, when Hollis or Dell Drimmer appeared. They tried to discourage them, but they both seemed perpetually hard up, and a free meal was a free meal.

"Don't worry," Laurence would say, after a delicatessen dinner, and after their uninvited guests had departed. "I'll get

something before long. I'm a college man—young—there are a thousand opportunities here in New York. We'll get away from this hole and drop these leeches. We'll get a nice place to live when we get in with some nice people."

Laurence went again and again to the business acquaintances of his friends in Camden. There were no openings. He looked up an old college friend who had moved to New York. The college friend was busy and uninterested. Laurence started reading the want ads and on Sundays the floor of their one room was littered with newspapers. Then Laurence, at the unsteady desk, wrote innumerable letters beginning "In answer to your advertisement in this morning's *Times*, I believe that I have just the qualifications . . ."

When they were really starting to worry, Laurence got a job through an advertisement. The job consisted of soliciting advertising for a third-rate advertising firm.

"It's straight commission," he told Irene, "but when I make good I'll get a lot of money. It's my chance. You watch me show some of these Smart Alecs what I can do."

But for several months Laurence was not able to demonstrate his brilliancy. He made barely enough to pay for their room, their breakfast in the kitchenette and their dinners in the restaurants of the neighborhood. Then he got another and better advertising job. He had found out by this time that he had qualities which could be developed into those of a good salesman. He decided finally that soliciting advertising was the quickest way to get ahead in New York. He had once thought vaguely of stocks and bonds but they seemed to represent a knowledge that he could never possess. Advertising seemed clear, definite. All you did was to convince a client that he should make a certain appropriation each year for advertising, and that his sales would jump beyond his wildest ideas if this appropriation were wisely distributed. In this second agency Laurence did

better from the start. He was even able to get one or two fairly good contracts from reputable advertisers. He was still "new at the game," but the other solicitors in the firm gave him valuable hints.

As the money increased Irene and Laurence decided that it was time for them to start doing some of the things for which they had come to New York. The first thing they did was to move uptown, quite far uptown—almost as far as the Number 4 bus would take them. Washington Heights. It was clean, Irene told Laurence, and not too expensive, and a lot of young couples lived out there and they could start making friends. It probably wasn't considered very stylish but there was time enough for style when they had more money. It would take a lot of money to fix up even a small apartment.

The apartment they found in Washington Heights had four rooms. It was brand new and the kitchen was elaborately tiled and the other rooms boasted of paneled walls, the paneling being made by nailing strips of molding in rectangular design on the wall. Irene bought their furniture at a store which extended the payments over many months. She bought carefully, her knowledge based on what she had read in the magazines before she came to New York and on the furniture she had seen in the shops since she arrived. For the living room, taupe over-stuffed furniture with a few little tables for magazines and ash trays and a day bed—very stylish just then. For the bedroom, twin beds in walnut and a chiffonade with an intricate arrangement of trays and doors. The dining room bloomed with Windsor chairs and a gate-leg table—the last word in simplicity in the women's magazines.

The night the Turners left the Village, Hollis and Dell Drimmer came in to call—helping them abstractedly with the packing. After they had gone Laurence said,

"We've seen the last of them, all right. Now that we've got a start we'll meet some people that really amount to something."

V

The Turners liked Washington Heights. The air was fresh, the Hudson only a few blocks away. There were dozens of clean markets and groceries, ornate moving picture houses, little restaurants when you didn't feel like cooking. The restaurants were "dainty" and served innumerable but insignificant courses at reasonable prices.

At first there was just enough money for the rent of the apartment and payments on the furniture and the economical purchase of clothes. Gradually Laurence and Irene were able to shed their Camden raiment and began to look like their idea of New Yorkers. When money became a little more plentiful they went to the theatre, picking out the more obvious successes, musical comedies and revues, followed by supper at the less expensive restaurants they had heard about.

They made no acquaintances at all at this time. At first they did not feel the need of other people, and then they really didn't know just how to go about getting acquainted. They had heard that New York neighbors were not friendly and they were glad of it; they didn't want to get in with their neighbors. Those neighbors, now, were mostly young Jewish couples, each possessing several round brown babies. Nice enough, but not folks you'd care to go about with socially. The heads of Laurence's firm were Jews, too—both rotund, brisk and smiling. Their wives were fat and jewelled and wore too-small slippers with French heels. There was no one in the office that Laurence cared to know outside of business hours. He had tried a bit eagerly to get better acquainted with one or two clients who seemed the sort who would make desirable acquaintances, but nothing came of it.

Then he and Irene got in touch with Mr. and Mrs. Jessup Blake, relatives of the Blakes in Camden. The Jessup Blakes had once lived in Camden themselves. They invited Irene and Laurence to dinner, but the Turners found them extremely dull. They

did not dance nor play bridge. They thought new music stupid and undignified and Mr. Blake said, "When I come home at night I'm too tired to think of going any place." Nothing there. They looked up the Griswolds, who also had lived in Camden, and found an oldish couple given to long conversations about their goldfish, their electric piano, and the annual putting up of home-made preserves. Why, you wouldn't even go with them if you lived in Camden! There must be thousands of young couples in New York, college-bred, who were jolly and up-to-date, who went to parties and theatres, whom they would enjoy knowing—and who would like to know them, too.

They were enthusiastic over the theatre that first year in Washington Heights and were glad when money came in more freely and they were able to go down from the gallery to the balcony, and finally could afford to buy seats downstairs without the horribly guilty feeling that they had had at first when they went to the theatre at all.

Irene met a Mrs. Rogers who lived in an apartment a few doors from her and who had a small Pekinese dog. Owning a Pekinese dog is one way of getting acquainted. Irene asked Mrs. Rogers to call and bring Mr. Rogers, and Mrs. Rogers asked Irene to call and bring Mr. Turner, but their acquaintance was never furthered.

As Laurence made more money he and Irene became dissatisfied with Washington Heights. It was a long trip to the office. The subways were always crowded; it took you half an hour to get home from the theatre. They could afford something better. Washington Heights had been all right for a while—certainly better than Greenwich Village. They knew now what social status Washington Heights occupied. Why, people who amounted to anything never lived above the hundreds! After all, they hadn't made a single acquaintance on Washington Heights. If they did meet people they wouldn't want them to know they lived way out there or ever had lived

there. Might as well get in a better neighborhood so that when they got in with some nice people . . .

They found an apartment in West End avenue. It had six rooms and allowed them a guest room—Laurence and Irene preferred sharing the same room—and a room for a maid. They kept the same furniture, but bought new things, too: an elaborate console table with a mirror over it for the foyer hall, a Cogswell chair for the living room, and some brass andirons for the fireplace. It was supposed to be a real fireplace but they never experimented with it. They bought gray enameled furniture, painted daintily with lavender morning glories, for the guest room, "in case any one comes up from Camden." The maid's room and bath were off the kitchen and a line of maids appeared and disappeared until Irene found a young colored girl named Hilda who suited her.

Irene and Laurence wore better clothes now, and Hilda became the possessor of the things that seemed so nice just after Irene had moved to New York. Irene patronized the smarter shops in Fifty-seventh street, and to see her step out of her apartment in the afternoon you would know she was going to a smart tea or a *matinée*. Laurence got a new dinner coat and the two of them discovered First Nights at the theatre. What fun those First Nights were! Irene would wear one of her newest evening gowns and Laurence his dinner coat, and they would nudge each other and point to people whom they recognized. "There! that's Bright Morning, the movie star," or "Look! Harold Strongface, the actor whom we saw last week in 'Once Over,'" or "There! I don't know her name, but I saw her picture in the Sunday paper—a *débutante* or an assistant at a charity ball or something."

Laurence changed his position. He left the agency to become an advertising solicitor for a well-known magazine. More money still. He was a good advertising solicitor now. He met men in business, jolly fellows with whom he had frequent

drinks. On several occasions he went to the theatre with a group of them or to dinner, but he and Irene were never invited *en famille*. Irene made acquaintances, too. A woman across the hall who stuttered and who, before noon, always had cold-cream on her face and wore soiled negligees. The woman who lived on the floor above and who had a series of mysterious callers. Neither insisted that Irene and Laurence call on her.

VI

New York was grand. A lovely place to live in. They wondered how they had ever stood living in Camden, that funny place. Yet—well, it would be nice to know someone. They wondered how other people got acquainted. Of course you didn't want to meet the wrong kind of people . . . still, there must be some way. It wasn't any fun being always alone, just the two of them. At night they went to a neighborhood movie or to the theatre, or fell asleep reading books they had seen reviewed in the literary supplements. Irene found herself getting annoyed at little things Laurence did, and she knew Laurence felt the same way about her. They had a hundred needless quarrels, losing their tempers completely and forgetting, the next day, what they had quarreled about.

Jack and Betty Harrison came up from Camden, and, of course, Irene and Laurence insisted that they stay with them. Nice to have folks in the guest room. Nice too, being able to show Betty and Jack the city. Betty and Jack knew New York well enough, so they didn't have to see the Woolworth Tower. So Irene and Laurence took them to odd little restaurants they had stumbled on, first nights at the theatre. Irene and Betty went shopping, buying innumerable and unnecessary garments. The Harrisons stayed for ten days. Yes, it was nice to have had them, but it had meant running around, getting all tired out, and spending a lot of time and money. What rubes the Harrisons were! But of

course even when they had all lived in Camden, Irene and Laurence had realized the Harrisons' lack of knowledge and sophistication. Now, they were full of small-town ideas. They had exclaimed over all the wrong things and wondered how Laurence and Irene were so satisfied, cooped up in an apartment. They didn't get any sort of a thrill when celebrities were pointed out to them. On the whole, the Turners were glad when the Harrisons returned home.

Laurence was a lucky fellow.¹ He realized that. During the next two years his salary and commissions were more than doubled. There was no use for them to live, well—so simply. Irene was quite sick of West End avenue. Such funny people were moving there. Newly rich. Why, she and Laurence had college educations. She was tired of the West Side anyhow. They considered the suburbs, rode out to Forest Hills and Kew Gardens, Garden City and Pelham, Rye and Great Neck, spoke to a dozen real estate agents, and inspected fifty houses. It might be nice . . . a little garden, a garage, a country club. But they didn't want the country. They had had enough of that in Camden. They hated the idea of a furnace to look after, of trains to catch, of living on a schedule. Of course, you do meet people in the suburbs, but what of it? In time they'd know the people they wanted to know right in town.

Irene knew that the East side of the Park was far smarter and more expensive than the West. After some deliberation she and Laurence picked out a rather elaborate apartment in one of the brand-new apartment buildings just off Park avenue in the East Sixties. Expensive. Of course. Why not? They could afford it. They bought a car too, a rather good-looking limousine, and, because Irene was afraid to drive in traffic, they hired a chauffeur; otherwise she knew she wouldn't get any use out of the car at all. The new apartment was most attractive. Irene had finished with Windsor chairs and day-beds. She went to an expensive-looking shop in

East Fifty-seventh street, where a sleek and good-looking young decorator helped her make the proper purchases. These were bought "on time," in a way, though you didn't call it that. They were so expensive that no one—unless you really had an awful lot of money—could pay for them all at once. The bills were sent in, and you paid a part every month until the things were paid for.

The apartment was done in Georgian English to correspond with the house itself. It had many French doors and rather good hardware. The mahogany had good lines and the stuffs used for draperies were of rich material and color. This was something like it. Irene was enthusiastic from the first. Laurence thought it all a bit formal, but he got used to it. There were book shelves for the books they had brought from Camden and the few additions they had made to their library since coming to town.

Now they were ready at last. They told themselves that they would have been premature if they had tried to make friends when they could not receive them in proper surroundings. Now, they had the proper surroundings. Before this they had made little active effort to get acquainted, feeling that friends would come to them in time. Now, their search became a real part of their lives. They went to the most fashionable church of their neighborhood, High Church Episcopalian, of course. They found that the only way to attract attention would be to make huge donations. They couldn't afford that. It took all their money to live, now that they had the car and the apartment. Their fairly generous contributions were received without comment. A few solemn men, a couple of dowdy old women shook hands, nodded to them. No one they cared to know made any effort to get acquainted with them. They stopped going to church altogether after a while. Too much trouble getting up Sunday morning, and anyhow it was tiresome sitting through the sermons—if you didn't meet anyone. Laurence tried the ex-

periment of bringing home some business friends to dinner. The friends would come, prove rather boring, and then go away offering no similar entertainment in return. Irene smiled and spoke to several neighbors and found that they were not visibly eager to be friends.

Irene did meet one neighbor whom Laurence nicknamed "the sporting widow." Mrs. Camilla Humphrey had an expensive apartment and a maid but there was no Mr. Humphrey. Camilla was always having remarkable adventures. Her life was a series of misunderstandings and coincidences. She and Irene went shopping occasionally—she had no car—but Irene found she was always buying things she didn't care for and paying for the luncheons or teas, too. Mrs. Humphreys never invited them to any of the evening parties she told about.

They entertained the Dreweys from Camden and felt that the Dreweys were properly impressed by their manner of living—far above the way the Dreweys or anyone else they knew had ever lived. Well, they had shown them! The Dreweys were gossips and would tell everyone in Camden how well they were getting along. Laurence and Irene still read the Camden *Advocate* rather thoroughly—especially the social column—and questioned the hall-boy if they missed a number of it.

Their parents came to visit them occasionally and they dutifully took them to theatres and restaurants. They were always a little glad after they had gone back home. Laurence's father was a plain, good man but not the kind you like to be seen with in New York. Victor Moffett was still oratorical and conceited, full of long quotations. Mrs. Moffett was still bright-eyed and dowdy. Grace and Emily came up on occasional visits, too, a bit envious of Irene and Laurence, but complacent as they had always been, telling of Camden parties and Camden events. "The Riggss are putting up a great big home on the old Seaton place, and all around there is being built up with perfectly darling

little houses. You won't know the place when you come out for a visit."

"As if we'd ever go out to Camden for a visit," Irene would say to Laurence after the guests had gone. "They must think we're as big rubes as they are. New York is good enough for me. I'm perfectly satisfied with things just the way they are."

"So am I," said Laurence. "We've got things fixed up pretty nearly the way we want them. I'd like to be able to save a little money, if I make more, next year. And, after we meet a nice crowd, get in with some nice people . . ."

VII

On New Year's Eve they decided to attend a restaurant that was just coming into prominence. It was the smartest and one of the most expensive places in town. A group of well-known dancers performed nightly, and a world-famous jazz band played until four in the morning. They engaged a table weeks in advance.

"You never can tell what parties like that can develop into," Laurence told Irene.

Irene had a new evening gown of white georgette, elaborately beaded. Her evening coat was of white ermine lined with jade crêpe. She felt that she looked important, and hoped that people would ask "Who is that?" when she came in. She felt, too, that she looked much younger than she really was. She had learned little tricks of the toilet that made her attractive—not that she cared to attract other men, of course, nor anything like that. But you can never tell.

They went to the theatre first and got to the restaurant just a little before twelve. An elaborate supper was served. Laurence had brought his own liquor, which was supplemented by the restaurant. Laurence and Irene looked around eagerly. At each table was a party of happy people. If they only knew some of them! Why, at the table next to them—the very kind of people they wanted to meet! There was a man of about fifty, two younger men, three

girls. The girls were all young and pretty and beautifully gowned. Irene and Laurence drank champagne in celebration of the New Year. Irene wished something would happen so that these people would invite Laurence and her to join them. She looked at them and caught the eye of the oldest man, who held his glass up and seemed to be making an invisible toast with his lips. She returned it. Somebody called across the table to them and in ten minutes, after much laughter and drinking, Irene and Laurence found themselves at the other table.

What a nice evening it was! Later, Irene realized that she never knew quite what happened. But there were drinks and laughter over nothing at all and uncertain dancing. The party broke up at five o'clock and they all went to a breakfast of ham and eggs. There the men exchanged cards and telephone numbers and the women told Irene that they would telephone in a day or two.

The men telephoned Laurence and the women telephoned Irene as they had promised. Within a week Laurence and Irene found out that the eldest man of the crowd was Edwin Schwelbach, of Quality Clothes for Misses and Children, and that the other two were the Messrs. Strickman and Harberg, of Strickman and Harberg, Smart Sport Outfitters. One of the girls was Mr. Harberg's stenographer and the other two were models for Quality Clothes. The crowd decided that the Turners had money and wanted to help them spend it. They got into the habit of telephoning to Laurence and Irene at odd hours, of coming into their apartment after the theatre for drinks. It took them several months—they didn't like to be rude—to get rid of these acquaintances. Oh, well, things like that happen in New York. It was an experience. Something to laugh at, when they got in with some nice people.

One night at the theatre they saw Hollis. He was sleek in new dinner clothes and Irene could scarcely believe he was the man they had known in the Village until

she heard a man call him by name and say, "Your play is going over with a bang, isn't it?" Was this the same Hollis who had written "Several of Them" that they had seen just the week before? She caught Hollis's eye and smiled cordially. He returned her greeting coolly and walked away.

Laurence made a new purchase, this time without the help of the interior decorator. Irene was sick of the decorator, anyhow. He had promised her so much—said he would take her to teas and introduce her to all sorts of people. He forgot all about her after the apartment was decorated. She knew he would never approve of this last purchase and that rather pleased her. It was a huge cabinet Victrola, liberally carved. Of course, they could have bought a Victrola at any time—though not such an expensive one. They had even had a little one back in Camden. They just hadn't thought of getting it, somehow. Now, it represented a definite triumph: it was one of the most expensive ones they could buy. They put a new jazz record on the Victrola after dinner and danced to it. They felt they were good dancers; they hadn't let themselves get old and settled.

"Gee, but there's nothing as good as having music in the house," said Laurence. "Hasn't this machine got a clear sound? I want to get a radio, too. Maybe I'll get one soon—get a good one—nothing like something first-class. When you pay a lot for a thing, you usually get your money's worth. You know, Irene, we've got it pretty soft . . . the apartment, my job, the car, a chauffeur, nice clothes, good servants in the apartment, both got our health, still young—living in New York—no kids to worry about. I guess we're getting all we want out of life. Look—this apartment's the greatest place in the world to entertain in . . . we can roll up these Oriental rugs here in the living room and have a wonderful dance floor . . . serve a buffet supper in the dining room around twelve. Great, I tell you . . . when we get in with some nice people . . ."

AN ARMY OF AMATEURS

BY AN ARMY OFFICER

THE Army of the United States to-day is submerged in a mass of civilians. The professional soldier is in the minority; the amateur struts in khaki and Sam Browne. Here are the figures for our forces as given in the 1924 report of the Secretary of War:

Regular Army (including nurses and West Point cadets)	132,464
National Guard	176,235
Organized Reserves	85,104
Reserve Officers' Training Corps	115,337
Citizens' Military Training Camps	33,975

Truly do the publicists at Washington prate of the Citizen Army and truly does the Secretary of War warn a group of Regular officers that "the Army should not be a class apart." There is, indeed, some sense in the dictum, set forth in successive appropriations bills, that the standing army should remain small. A productive nation needs to avoid enrolling too many men in the non-productive pursuit of arms. Out on the hill slopes and the wooded valleys between the main force and the potential enemy, a mobile force places its outposts, just strong enough to delay hostile attack until the major man-power can be brought into action. So it is with troops on campaign; so should it be with the defenses of the nation. The outlying forces, always alert, are necessary, yet they need only be as large as the barest safety demands, especially in a republic like the United States, with oceans for protection and a popular aversion to standing armies handed down from the days when the red-coats insulted the people of Boston. But if the ever-alert outguards be only a shade too weak the whole nation is imperilled. And if the primary duty of military leadership be left

too largely in purely civilian hands, the whole defense may collapse.

Since the Act of 1920 was put into effect, various pacific persons, such as the adroit Mr. Frederick J. Libby, of the National Council for the Prevention of War (neatly changed from its former title, which announced its purpose as Disarmament), have protested that the United States is in peril of being militarized. They have had nightmares over the amount of military training being given the youth of the country. They have quite obviously viewed a very small regular force as adequate for all the protection the country needs. I believe that the perils of militarism which make these gentlemen tremble in their boots are fictitious. Militarism means *compulsory* service, with the military men in the saddle. A Citizen Army means *voluntary* service with civilian direction and eventual control. There is no doubt of the political power wielded by the Reserve officers of the country, many of whom sit as legislators at the national Capitol. Yet the American nation remains peace-loving, and there is not the slightest chance of "a vast military organization" seizing the reins of power from the hands of the people. The Reserve officers are politicians first and Reserve officers afterwards. The Citizen Army insures popular control and general popular participation. That, in truth, is what is the matter with it.

There is a tradition in this country that Americans will providentially provide skilled military man-power on an instant's notice. It is a tradition handed down by the text-books which retail second-hand history incorrectly, and give the impression that the minute men of the Revolution were