

A PROPHET IN HIS COUNTRY

BY EDNA KENTON

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IT was even as the neighbors and their neighbors and the ever-widening circle of Doverton inhabitants surmised: Katie Cameron had found the old Cameron home "unendurable," and had sent on to New York for her own furniture. She herself confirmed it, one week after she had taken up her quarters at the Grand Hotel, and she added that she hoped the storage people would quickly send it out, as she found the hotel "unendurable." It was hardly wise of Katie Cameron, and it was ignorant erring, for she had honestly intended to combine the cunning of the serpent with the tact of Mephisto and the general sweetness of the cooing dove, hoping thereby to escape further addition to the stigma which she was well aware had attached to her in Doverton ever since her first book was published, and which had increased in weight and shadow from the time of her eastward flight. For she should have remembered that the Grand Hotel was the accepted scene for the revels of the Thackeray Dancing Club and the Monday Night Dancing Club, and was in other ways a source of innocent pride to the town's residents.

But, for a full week after her return to her native town, Katie Cameron was singularly obtuse. Obtuse, that is, for a young woman who had spent the first eighteen years of her life there, and who had been away from its somewhat restrictive environment for only ten years. For instance, it was a full week before she discovered that she had offended mortally some dozen old family friends by not having gone direct to their homes, after her one uncomfortable night passed under the "unendurable" Cameron roof.

"But, Mrs. Unseld," she cried in dis-

mayed defense against the tall, severe woman who, with her daughter Elsie, had called, and was sitting opposite her, surveying the extravagance of a sitting-room with cold eyes. "It really is n't much, out here. It never *occurred* to me to bother any one. I really don't indulge in second-floor suites in New York and Washington; but the bedrooms here are so stuffy, and I came away from town and out here primarily for air, you know."

"I never thought your mother's daughter would ever feel it necessary to go to a hotel as long as I am here," Mrs. Unseld remarked for the fourth time. "And as for Elsie, I'm sure she won't get over it very soon."

"No, indeed," Elsie murmured, and Katie Cameron reflected that cattiness was still Elsie's predominating trait. "And I'm very sure that all the traveling gentlemen say the Grand Hotel is *fine*, Katie." At Miss Cameron's involuntary uplift of brow, Elsie glanced deprecatingly at her mother. "I forgot," she murmured hurriedly. "I told mama before you came in that we must remember to call you Catherine now—you sign all your books that way. It seems *very* queer that you write, especially when I remember how you used to fail so many times in our English work at college."

"I remember," said Catherine Cameron, lightly. "I always gave up when Miss Meakes gave us our choice between themes on 'Life's Sacrifice' and 'Grant's Generalship.' How is the old college getting along, Elsie?"

"Very nicely," Elsie's mother answered for her. "Almost all the old professors are still here, which will make it seem very homelike for you, Katie. Elsie

will come by for you some morning, and you must go with her to chapel. She goes very often; she is secretary of the Dover Alumni Association now, you know. Yes, I remember very well when Elsie used to get 9.8 in her English theme work, and you would get only 6.5 or 7.2. It does seem, if *grades* count for anything, that Elsie should have been the writer. But Elsie never cared for *fame*. And I should never consent to her having her pictures in the papers and the magazines."

"I should think it would seem *very* queer—to see yourself in the magazines—your pictures, I mean. I don't think I could *ever* get used to it," Elsie murmured. "Yes, I'll be glad to come by for you Thursday morning, Katie, and take you to chapel exercises. They give half an hour to the services Thursdays, you remember, and I'm sure Miss Meakes and Dr. Thorne, and Professor Arnold, and all the rest, will be *very* glad to see you."

"I hope so," laughed Miss Cameron. "I remember they were glad enough to see me go."

Mrs. Unseld straightened her flat figure involuntarily. "Well, Katie,—I hope you don't *mind* being called Katie, because I can never call you anything else, and it does seem queer that Kate is n't good enough for a writer's name,—I must say, since you mention it, that Dover College will *never* get over your taking a degree from Smith, with just two years' work there, when with just one year more you could have taken your Dover degree, *if* you would. And never to *mention* Dover, as long as the papers were really writing about you, and to give all the credit to Smith, when most of your English training you must have got at Dover—of course they *felt* it. Elsie did her best for you, trying to explain; but even Elsie's friendship could hardly explain *everything*—especially when Elsie herself is the *soul* of loyalty."

Catherine Cameron laughed. "Of course degrees are n't everything in life," she said carelessly; "but it's an undebatable statement that a Smith degree means more than a Dover parchment, and none of it matters now, any way. I'll go with you Thursday, Elsie, and you'd better come by here for me. I'm quite

sure my furniture won't have come by then."

"Then you *have* sent for your furniture?" Mrs. Unseld asked with heavy emphasis, and received fateful confirmation of the rumor which had been flying. "And that means that you will make your home for the future in Doverton? No? Only six or eight months! Well, doubtless you know your own affairs, Katie, but one would think that you might put up with your aunt's furniture that long. Why, a great deal of Doverton furniture is horse-hair; and if you don't like it, it can be covered. Mrs. McDavid tacked on some red rep herself—her lounge looks very cheerful. Oh, I dare say you've grown notionate; but if you need any help that I can give, Katie, I shall take it very hard if you don't let me know. Of course it's been a good many years since your mother died, but I want to do anything I can for her daughter."

"That is so good of you," said Catherine, with quick appreciation. "And I promise you I shall."

As they were making their final adieus, Mrs. Unseld turned back with a touch of embarrassment. "I suppose you'll write, Katie," she said jerkily, "while you're here?"

"Oh, yes," Catherine replied carelessly. "I've been a city-dweller so long that I need another atmosphere. I can see clearer both ways then."

As the two callers went down the violently crimson hall, Elsie commented complacently to her mother.

"It sounds *dreadfully* affected in Katie Cameron to be talking about *atmosphere*. They say all artists and literary people talk that way now. I suppose she thinks she is one. You did n't say a word about her last book, mother!"

Mrs. Unseld replied vigorously: "I know I did n't, but I shall. I want to be alone with her when I tell her what I think about it. I think it is a *shame* for Kate Cameron's daughter to write such a thing—a young girl, and *unmarried*! She can't have any idea of what she writes about. But, then, her mother died when she was sixteen, and she would n't stay with her aunt after she was of age; so the poor child is to be pitied."

"I saw her type-writer on a table, right out for everybody to see. It seemed so—

ostentatious," Elsie said. "I wonder if she really *does* write everything on it, or just copies. Blanche McDavid said she heard she uses a type-writer as fast as a real type-writer-girl. It seems awfully—queer."

"Anybody would think, her being a writer, that she 'd use pen and ink," agreed her mother. "It certainly sounds more ladylike. But Katie looks at a great many things very differently now; one can see that plainly."

"Do you remember that expression she used," asked Elsie, delicately, speaking with a tongue all but gloved—"as green as absinthe"? Of course she may have just picked it up from Marie Corelli's 'Wormwood,' but it *sounded* as if she *knew!* Why, I should be frightened to death to taste it, even, after that book. It reads as if one could get the habit *instantly.*"

Meantime "Katie" Cameron, in her sitting-room, wrestled with mixed emotions; and of these, bewilderment was uppermost. Was this Doverton, where one's most casual remarks were picked bare for hidden meanings, and where people were sensitive-plants, becoming really "hurt" over trivial ignorings! Where one felt almost apologetic over deeds out of the Doverton ordinary, and found one's self explaining involuntarily the sources of one's actions! But it was good of Mrs. Unsel, with all her peculiarities, to remember her mother so loyally. At the word, Catherine remembered Elsie—the soul of loyalty, indeed! A little cat, rather. She could imagine precisely the sort of defense Elsie would put up for her, "Katie" Cameron, at any time! Then she laughed at some memories of the call, and went down Main Street to Foster & Smith's for some burlap. The walls of the old home were impossible, but burlap was easily put on, and stenciling was always fun. It would serve to while away the time until her furniture came.

And so it came about that it was at the old Cameron home where Elsie Unsel found her on Thursday morning. Catherine had left word with the hotel clerk to send Miss Unsel on down College Avenue, and, once absorbed in measurements and cuttings, promptly forgot all about chapel, and was sitting on a sea

of burlap when Elsie walked in upon her.

"Whatever *are* you doing, Katie?" The tone was politely curious and disapproving. Catherine explained joyously.

"And so I got *yards*," she finished exultantly, "ridiculously cheap! Enough to do the hall and these two rooms. I'm going to turn the back parlor into a dining-room, and make the hall my reception-room, and do over one room upstairs, and live in the four rooms and the kitchen."

"*But common burlap!*" Elsie italicized beyond her usual degree. "Reeves Brothers do *very* reasonable papering, Katie. I would have told you, if you 'd only asked me, and they have *beautiful* new flower designs. I know you 'd be better pleased. This color's *horrid!*"

"Why, it's beautiful!" Catherine cried. "A perfect grayish, greenish brown—the greatest piece of luck I ever happened on. Up and down New York I've gone for this tone—and find it here in Doverton, going to seed. Must we go? Do sit down and help me plan it out, and put in the morning. There 'll be plenty of other Thursdays."

"Oh, but, Katie," Elsie protested primly, "everybody is expecting you. They've all heard you're coming, and I'm sure it will be very much better, for your own sake, to go."

"Oh, well," sighed Catherine, rolling down her shirtwaist sleeves resignedly—sleeves which Elsie regarded with some dubiousness.

"They're cut just like a boy's shirt, are n't they?" she remarked.

Catherine nodded. "I paid a frightful price to Le Compte & Rogette for my first one," she confided; "but they are the only people in New York who make these shirtwaists just right. Then I put in two days ripping it up, and getting a pattern from it for my pet sewing-woman, and she's made me dozens since. This happens to be the old original."

"Do you mind how much—" Elsie hesitated. "*Thirty-five dollars!* Why, *Katie Cameron!* For *that* pattern!"

"Oh, it paid," Catherine rejoined lightly. "For all my others are just right, and Miss Reed can get them up for me for just a few dollars. By the way,

Elsie," she added quickly, a memory of old-time chapels coming back to her, when homing alumni perched again upon the old rostrum roost, "I never make speeches; and if there 's any sort of arrangement—" She stopped at Elsie's delicate flush. "What is it?" she demanded sharply.

"I suppose it 's my duty to tell you," Elsie began primly, "but I 'm very sure Dr. Thorne won't ask you for a speech, considering—well, I 'm sorry to be the first to tell you, but Miss Meakes forbade any of the dorm girls to read your last book, Katie,—I 'm awfully sorry,—and would n't have it in the hall or the library. I don't know what she would have done if it had been published serially in any of the magazines the college takes; but, you see—"

She stopped as Catherine's laugh pealed out,—a laugh restrained for one long week,—and she looked almost anxiously upon the figure rocking on the floor, with an anxiety which turned speedily into offended dignity.

"All Doverton says it is perfectly terrible, Katie," she persisted, with stiffness and appalling frankness. "Mother was intending to speak to you about it—alone—the next time she saw you. People here can't possibly *understand* how you can write about—such things, when you come of such a nice family. I don't care, Katie, you may shriek all you wish, but the woman in that book was *disreputable*, and your very best friends were perfectly shocked, especially as you make her out a really nice woman, after all."

"She is, she is!" Catherine protested weakly. "Oh, Elsie, Elsie, she is! I know her."

"You know her!" Elsie whispered. "A woman who sinned!"

"Yes; why not?" Catherine demanded crisply. Laughter still lurked in her eyes and about her lips, but the paroxysm was over. "Oh, it 's not her story; but she was the direct inspiration, and she 's really a nice woman, I give you my word of honor, Elsie. Oh, this is humiliating! Why, Elsie, that book made me, brought me my greatest honors, my editorial position, has established me definitely. You little innocent, you don't know a thing about it; so what 's the use of talking!

But, Elsie, don't you call this a college going back on a student?"

"Well, of course," said Elsie, a little stiffly, "you had been disloyal first."

"I see," said Catherine, and laughed again. "Well, come along. We 'll go down."

She sat again under the familiar gallery, facing the familiar rostrum. The ten years were as if they were not. Dr. Thorne was unchanged. Professor Arnold was, indeed, some seventy pounds heavier; but the familiar coldness of his eye, its stationary gray, and its mackerel-like fixity, wiped out the difference his increased avoirdupois might have made. The number of the hymn startled her,—383,—why she did not know until the hands of the head of the musical conservatory dropped heavily on the piano in the opening chords of "Holy, Holy, Holy," as they had dropped ten thousand times ten years before.

After the services they straggled up to her, with formality and uncertainty apparent in every eye and hand. The formality denoted strictly their attitude toward her, fixed as the North Star; the uncertainty rose solely from an apprehension that such attitude was unknown to her. Atmospherically it amounted to excommunication.

Catherine refused Elsie's invitation for dinner,—Doverton dined at noon,—and left her on the Chestnut Street corner, aware that Elsie was torn between two horns, one a legitimate apprehension against being classed as the intimate friend of the author of "The Path of Dalliance," and the other a swelling pride at being the official escort of Doverton's only writer—"Doverton's product," as the Doverton "Times-Herald" had named her in calling local attention to a serial tale of hers which was just beginning in the current number of the "Millennial Magazine." Instead, she went back to the old Cameron home, where she lunched on crackers and cheese purchased at a corner grocery, and worked all afternoon on her bur-lapped walls.

"I am really almost a famous woman," she mused frankly over her tacks and hammer. "For a woman under thirty I 've really accomplished a lot of work. There is n't an editor or a magazine publisher or a book firm in all the East who

does n't know me. I 'm on all the lists of prominent authors, and on the editorial staff of the 'Millennial.' And I come back here to Doverton, a town with a college in it and a public library and ten woman's clubs, and I 'm no longer Catherine Cameron, but only little 'Katie' to the whole town, simply because they all knew me when I was stubbing my bare toes on loose planks, and had n't a front tooth to my name. An object of awed commiseration to the whole town because I 'm on Dover's Expurgatorius list! And in two days, thanks to Elsie Unseld, I 'll be an object of unholy suspicion because I know a woman who is like 'Sara' in 'The Path of Dalliance'! And be looked on as a possible lunatic because I paid thirty-five dollars for this shirtwaist! Well, in the circumstances, at the time I bought it, I 'd be willing to grant that freely. 'Katie' Cameron, you must hold your tongue, if you can. And I came down here to be free as the air, because I was honestly sort of homesick for 'home'!"

During the next three weeks, effusively, primly, dutifully, inquisitively, all Doverton called on her, and all Doverton virtually she received in a torn-up hall, or the living-room, as she persisted in calling the erstwhile Cameron best parlor, without apology, and almost always in the now famous thirty-five dollar shirtwaist or its replicas.

"I 'm taking my time," she explained cheerily to all callers. "Yes, that 's my furniture. Yes, on the order of 'mission'; crafts furniture I call it, though. I had it sent on from my Long Island place. Yes, a tiny little place I got ridiculously cheap, and took as an investment, only to get so fond of it that I think I 'll keep it forever. No, not all my furniture is this sort. Yes, all my farm furniture is; but my New York furniture is Sheraton that I 've been picking up for five years. I 'm going to take a piece or two back with me from here, but most of this is walnut in the most hideous sort of style, marble-topped and all that. Yes, burlap. Don't you! Oh, you can't get the effect now—it takes time to settle. Yes, I expect to write some during the next six months." And so on and on and on!

Once fairly in order, she disposed for

the nonce of calls by inviting all her old friends to afternoon tea in her two one-time parlors, now living-room and dining-room, and in her hall, which was her reception-room without having been in any Doverton home but the Unseld residence, depriving herself thereby of any comprehension whatever of the sensations of Doverton society as it stepped gingerly within her burlapped, strikingly stenciled, crafts-furnished rooms. Against the walls of her living-room were hung two or three Japanese prints, and as few pen-and-ink drawings adorned the dining-room, while four sepia affairs were placed in the hall. The articles of furniture comprised the needful things, and the rest was generous spacings. It was all very simple and in perfect taste, but Doverton came and looked, and saw not the inner message, but only the outer seeming, and departed for intimate converse. And the text thereof was one of Katie Cameron's remarks: "I can't endure to live in rooms that are unbeautiful." Doverton honestly wondered, and openly scoffed.

Only when she made her round of return calls did she gain a faint idea of what Doverton was thinking, and that was purely by reasoning from the general to the particular. On every afternoon of the four afternoons it took to complete them she returned to her own restful abode and sat down to sigh. It seemed to her that every parlor ran to red paper, heavily embossed and largely patterned, or to greens equally unquiet. A sprawling grape-arbor design in purples and greens and buffs seemed the Doverton ideal for a tasteful dining-room. Dropsical sofa-pillows in painted bolting-cloth over satins seemed as near as Doverton approached to William Morris's ideals. Mrs. McDavid had forty-one framed pictures on one side wall. She counted them one afternoon while she waited for Mrs. McDavid to make an elaborate toilet, that thirty minutes of delay being her first light on the social crime she must have committed in receiving people as she was. "Well, it cost thirty-five dollars, anyway," she said in self-justification, counting the pictures mechanically, while the other side of her brain grasped her social sin, and she grinned joyously as Elsie's comment came back to her: "For *that* pattern!"

It was Blanche McDavid who excelled in confused apology for not having read "The Path of Dalliance." "Mama says I must not; but I intend to, Katie," she said bravely. "Because I always did like you at school, and I'm sure it is n't nearly so bad as they say it is. I would have read it before, but Annie Morrison promised me her copy; only she promised it to so many that I've had to wait. Did you know that your book had a very good sale here, considering that Mr. Fulton said he would n't keep it in his stock? He thinks it's very immoral, and being a deacon, you know, of course he felt that he ought not. But he simply had to order seven copies,—he told mama so himself,—and of course people have lent, so that a good many have read it, and I intend to." And Catherine, reflecting that Blanche was all of thirty years of age, could not but be flattered at the courage the blonde little friend of her school days displayed.

She sat down one evening, six months after her arrival in Doverton, resolved to achieve "Chapter X" before she slept. But ideas lagged sluggishly, and finally she pushed her pile of virgin paper away. "It's making me humble," she said. "This town is so firmly convinced that I have no sense that I'm beginning to believe it. This whole town—all but Blanche."

She twisted her large chrysoprase ring about her slim, brown finger, and smiled down at it. Elsie Unseld considered it very cheap-looking; it was so *queer* to have it set in silver instead of gold, and such tarnished, dirty-looking silver at that. Had Katie ever tried Dimnot Polish? It was very good for silver stains. Elsie also disapproved of Katie's silver combs, set with chrysoprases. Gold would be, of course, much more expensive, but it did seem worth it, *if* one really liked such queer green stones.

She was thinking gratefully of Blanche, who had come in only that afternoon, with cheeks which alternately flushed and paled. "I hope you'll forgive me, Katie, beforehand," she said earnestly, "but Elsie Unseld is telling it about that you know—that you are really a personal friend of a woman who—well, is like 'Sara' in your book."

"Yes," said Catherine, and Blanche

gasped with the cold-douche shock of definite affirmation; but rallied courageously.

"You *do!*" she breathed. "Then, Katie, would you mind—telling me honestly what you really think—of her? Because I want to know. And I promise you solemnly that, whatever you say, I shall not betray you."

Catherine had smiled, and then had sobered repentantly. However gropingly uncomprehending it might be, this was the first note of real sympathy she had heard since she came to Doverton, and she found that she was hungry for it. Of them all, Blanche McDavid, little feather-head that she had been at school, and sweet little nonentity which her masterful mother had kept her all her life—of them all Blanche had not condemned unheard.

"I intend now to tell mama that I have read it," Blanche had said firmly, at the close of the afternoon. "And I shall insist on her reading it, and I shall explain some of it to her, and make her understand some things better."

Although Catherine smiled to-night over the memories of the afternoon, she felt depressed, nevertheless; so much so that, after half an hour of restless musing, she fairly welcomed the advent of Elsie Unseld, close wrapped against the March wind.

"I just ran in," Elsie began explanatorily, "to tell you, Katie, that I am very glad I was able to persuade Dr. Thorne that you should have an invitation to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of Dover College. Of course the tickets to the banquet are limited, and you are not really a graduate, and have never paid any attention to requests for gifts to the gymnasium or science funds; but I made it a personal matter, and finally Dr. Thorne said yes."

"But I don't know anything about this, Elsie," said Catherine. Elsie opened her eyes.

"Now, that is just like you, Katie. You seem to read no newspapers but those New York ones. The Doverton papers have told all about it. There are to be a great many famous men and women here, and I knew you'd enjoy meeting them, and I made up my mind you should. In a sense we feel, mother and I, that you

are our guest, even though you act so strangely about things; and I put it that way at last to Dr. Thorne and Miss Meakes—the committee.”

Catherine glanced over the invitation; then she laid it down. “I can’t go, Elsie. That is grand-opera week in Chicago, and I am faint for want of some music; and since grand opera lasts one week in Chicago, it’s then or never. No, I can’t go.”

“Now, Katie!” Elsie protested. “The banquet is Tuesday night, and you can very well get grand opera enough during the rest of the week. And I want you very much to go to the banquet, and I want you to wear publicly that lace dress of yours, *very* much. I suppose I ought not to tell you, but people are talking a good deal. Of course you have told about your Long Island place, and of course I know how really expensive these shirtwaists you wear all the time are. But you won’t mind my saying they don’t really look it, and here people do dress a good deal. I have heard a great many people wonder if you really do make as much money as some things sound like. Nothing really *looks* it, though you speak of this sort of furniture costing a good deal, and the Japanese prints. But that lace dress *does*, and I want you very much to wear it for your own sake, for that way a great many people will see it.”

“Who are coming?” Catherine asked idly, and listened with steadily growing wonder to the list of celebrities, some of them greater than Elsie knew. At the last name she exploded.

“Not Eliot Macey, the *poet*!”

“Yes,” replied Elsie, placidly. “Why should n’t he come? He’s a great friend of Dr. Marshall, who’s given \$100,000 to Dover. It’s really Dr. Marshall who should so many of these people to come.”

“Yes,” mused Catherine. “I knew the explanation lay somewhere, if we could find it.”

“And Eliot Macey gives the banquet address,” Elsie purred on. “Do you know him?”

“No,” said Catherine, to the almost anxious query; “I don’t.”

“I did n’t think you would,” Elsie remarked, with maddening certainty in her voice. “He is such a very great man.”

Catherine put down a murderous im-

pulse to fling a book at her guest. Certainly her nerves were getting on edge in this simple life she was leading. She rose almost rudely.

“I’ll let you know within a week,” she said. “I’ll send to Chicago for the list of operas and singers. Forgive my seeming lack of eagerness to accept, Elsie.”

With composure she showed her ruffled guest out, and then went back to her fire-side chair, picking up a thin, dull blue volume, Eliot Macey’s latest bit of flame—his play in five acts, “The Saxons.” She smiled as she turned to her favorite passage—favorite already, though the damp of the presses was hardly off the volume. She could not miss this odd chance of meeting Eliot Macey, of hearing him, at least. She was hardly eager to meet him. So few geniuses wore well from the personal standpoint. But she must hear him.

During the next few days she collected a few back issues of the *Doverton Times-Herald*, and discovered that the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration was going to be an amusingly great event. How great, no one in *Doverton* realized, she was convinced. This Dr. Marshall, the “angel” millionaire, and Eliot Macey together must be responsible for the distinction which was to attend the event. Yale was to be officially represented, and Harvard; Princeton, Columbia, and Pennsylvania; Chicago University was to send an actual delegation. Smith and Vassar and Wellesley were to have their representatives there. It was an amazing aggregation of names, considering *Dover*’s status. Yet it was an old college in the new West, and it was going to be the happy occasion of a great affair, an interesting one.

For the next three weeks *Doverton* talked and read and dreamed Eliot Macey, and Catherine discovered that she, with all her opportunities for ascertaining his proper place in the literary gamut, had never known before how exceeding great he was. To *Doverton* he alone was great, and there was none beside him. The few copies of his poems in town were entirely inadequate for the demand, and so there were special meetings of the various clubs, when selections from the “Poems,” or “Parnassus,” or “The Queen of Sheba,” or “The Saxons,” were read amid low, rapt murmurs. It is a safe venture that not even the immortal

bard of Avon—and there were three Shakspeare clubs in Doverton—was ever so faithfully studied through his immortal works as was Eliot Macey. His pictures, clipped from the various literary magazines, adorned many a dressing- and center-table, and “rhythm” and “iam-bics,” and all which pertains to the art of poesy, burdened the verbal aura of Doverton’s best people.

On the night of the banquet, unheralded and unsung, Catherine Cameron meekly became “among those present.” She gowned herself in the lace dress, clasping her chrysoprase necklace of tarnished silver about her throat, and her chrysoprase bracelet of tarnished silver on her arm. It was the dress which she had worn, for the first and only time until to-night, at a dinner given for a famous English litterateur visiting for a brief space “the States,” and she smiled irrepressibly as she recalled the fact that on that night she had sat at the great man’s right hand. To-night she was an unhonored unknown. Never before had she been so grateful to the godmothers about her cradle for their gifts bestowed of a finely humorous sense. As the hour of the great fête drew nigh, she folded about her a dull-green velvet evening coat, and traversed alone, in the early shadows of the spring night, the short distance which lay between the old Cameron place and Dover College.

In the dressing-room she met Elsie and Blanche, and Elsie drew her deprecatingly aside.

“I hope you won’t mind, Katie,” she began, maddeningly explanatory as usual, “but though I tried to get you a seat at the speaker’s table, I *could n’t*. Miss Meakes would n’t *hear* to it. I tried to explain to her that you *were* a writer; but I ’m sorry to say that your last book killed you *here*, Katie. So you must n’t blame *me*. What an extravagant thing this evening coat! You can’t ever wear it out, can you? But it’s *very* pretty.”

Catherine threw it off, and touched her dark hair to smoothness, not at all disturbed by Elsie’s revelations of friendliness which proved abortive. She was not sure yet that she wished to meet Eliot Macey; she often preferred to know her favorites through their works alone.

The sparseness of first arrivals forced

her into an introduction to the guest of honor, when she went down to the parlors, but though he repeated “Miss Cameron” distinctly, she saw that it meant nothing to him; and, indeed, why should it? But she instantly discovered that he was likable, and she was very glad. When personal charm and genius could go together, she was always delighted to know it. Then, for the next miserable half-hour, she was enmeshed in a stiff little group of faculty people, and knew no more until, above the hum of the now-crowded rooms, Blanche McDavid’s clear, childish voice rose distinctly:

“Oh, I ’m so glad that I happened to say it—that Catherine Cameron was here to-night. You must have met her, but names are mumbled so. Here she is—Catherine!” It was Blanche’s first evidence of extreme, inherent social tact, her voluntary omission of “Katie.”

Catherine turned to behold the guest of greatest honor before her, his hands stretched out to hers. “Catherine Cameron!” he was saying. “Catherine Cameron! Twice I ’ve written you sickeningly impotent letters, trying to tell you what ‘The Path of Dalliance’ means to me. Once I almost met you, and then ran away from you, too fearful that you could n’t be as good as your books. To-night, thank Heaven! I stopped not to reason why, but came, to talk about ‘The Path of Dalliance’ face to face with you, Catherine Cameron!”

He stopped a moment to laugh with her while the various friends of “Katie” Cameron’s youth looked on appalled, and then his words ran tumultuously on:

“Why has n’t your name been on the lists of attending celebrities at this feast—you who top us all! No one has said a word about you to me, Catherine Cameron!”

“Did you never,” she murmured softly, “go back to the small Maine village which sheltered your unhallowed and unhaloed youth—to be called ‘El’ Macey? I am nothing more than ‘Katie’ here, and never shall be.”

“A child of Doverton!” exclaimed the poet, delightedly. “A prophet in his country! Yes, I know it all. This accounts, then, for meeting you here, and the incognita. Got out of the city’s hurly-burly to go yourself one better, eh?”

Oh, I *was* leaving to-night, but I shall put up at your Grand Hotel, and stay over, in the hope of being asked out to the ancestral home to-morrow morning early—thanks, ten thousand times. Indeed, I shall take luncheon with you, since you are so good to suggest it. As for to-night, it is n't possible that I am *not* to take you out to dinner, since my Vassar lady professor missed her train, and is not present. It is n't possible?" he questioned, turning to the amazed and uncertain president of Dover, and there remained nothing for the dignified Dr. Thorne to do but to acquiesce in the twice-expressed desire of the speaker of the evening, and then to hurry away to break it gently to Miss Meakes that the king of the feast had personally selected his queen. And this is the true and authentic story of how Catherine Cameron, at the seventy-fifth anniversary banquet of Dover's founding, shared the seat of honor.

That fact in itself, let pass the sight of Miss Cameron's poise and superlative brilliancy, and the shock of Mr. Macey's stepping aside from his chosen subject to laud Catherine Cameron and "The Path of Dalliance" in terms which reddened her cheeks and paled Doverton's, was food enough for converse. But on the morrow it became noised about that Eliot Macey had indeed stayed over; that as early as nine-thirty in the morning he pushed open the gate of the old Cameron place. In a later neighborhood bulletin Mrs. McDavid announced that he did not emerge therefrom till late in the afternoon, and then it was only to lift his hostess into her saddle, and, swinging on to his own livery animal, to canter off with her toward the west-end pike. "Probably out to see Martin's Cave," was Mrs. McDavid's acid comment. "I wonder if he 'll be back there for supper."

And later that evening, having observed, in her casual moonlight stroll past the Cameron place, the restful figure of Mr. Macey besides Catherine's fire-place, she said to her daughter:

"I wish you 'd speak to Annie Morrison about lending me Katie's last book, without delay. Mrs. Unsel always goes too far. Oh, you have it up-stairs? Bring it down."

Mr. Macey remained, though inaccess-

sible to Doverton's clubs, through the entire week of Chicago grand opera, which Catherine missed, a fact which Elsie Unsel pointed out faithfully, after her manner. Then he departed, and awed Doverton settled down to a lynx-like wait, relieved with spasmodic attempts to lionize the angel it had ignorantly visited, who pleasantly frustrated the most intricate plots therefore. In June it was rewarded, for in June he came again for a brief, unheralded week, and again departed. And Catherine lived serenely on in the old Cameron home, "writing," so Doverton surmised, in lieu of any light.

Doverton has not yet recovered from the "queerness" of the wedding in September, every detail of which has been told and retold a thousand times. At ten o'clock on the third morning of his third visit to Doverton, Mr. Macey was seen to enter the Presbyterian parsonage, and, in company with the Presbyterian minister, to stroll down College Avenue to the court house, where he took out a license to wed. About that same hour Catherine personally called up a few old family friends by telephone, who gasped, and accepted without exception for noon, at which hour Mr. Macey and the clergyman came together up the walk of the Cameron homestead. In defiance of all rules known to Doverton for the proper conduct of brides and weddings, Catherine met them in person at the door, and the reading of the marriage service was a matter of the next few minutes. There was some simple punch, which Doverton tasted tentatively, and then a quiet departure on the two o'clock train for the poet's summer home in Canada. The farewells were many, and, on the whole, heartfelt; but Elsie Unsel, as might have been looked for, had the last word.

"I suppose it was quite a change, Katie," she said smugly, "coming out here from New York. But since you 'll always have this to remember, that this was the only way you met Mr. Macey, you won't think any the less of Doverton. And I 'm sure,"—patronage leaped out unrestrained,—"you must have found lots of what you literary people call 'material' here, to use some time." At Catherine's laugh she brindled. "I 'm sure that 's what you call it," she said.

But Catherine's eyes, resting on Mrs.

Unself, self-appointed but faithful representative of Kate Cameron, dead these twelve years, at Kate's daughter's wedding, softened. Her laugh, as she turned back to Elsie, was of different note.

"Plenty of material, Elsie," she said lightly; "but not a thing that I can use."

No one spoke until Doverton's best carriage turned down Chestnut Street toward the station. Then, as Mrs. Un-

seld bustled into the house to begin her self-demanded task of packing the crafts furniture for Eastern shipment, Elsie elucidated.

"Of course," she remarked somewhat tartly, "I should have known that there's not, in the whole length and breadth of Doverton, anybody *queer* enough to be put into Katie Cameron's books. That is why."



THE REMINISCENCES OF LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

BY MRS. GEORGE CORNWALLIS-WEST

EIGHTH PAPER: LORD RANDOLPH'S CANDIDATURE FOR
BIRMINGHAM—RELATIONS WITH LORD AND LADY SALIS-
BURY—THE SHAH'S VISIT TO LONDON—LADY DE GREY'S
SALON—COLONEL NORTH, THE "NITRATE KING"—
BARON HIRSCH—MURDER AND ROBBERY IN
PARIS—VISIT TO BAYREUTH—ANEC-
DOTES OF MUSICIANS

AT this period (1889), although Lord Randolph Churchill was out of office, his interest in politics was as great as ever, and he made some of his best speeches. His followers in Birmingham had never ceased working in his behalf since he stood for the constituency in 1885, and at the death of John Bright their greatest desire was that he should represent them in Parliament. Randolph himself was very keen about it, and at this time would probably have won the seat had he not listened to the over-scrupulous advice of the Unionist Party. Great were the pourparlers and controversies in their councils as to whether he ought or ought not to stand. The decision was finally left to Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, who, very naturally from their point of view, persuaded him to withdraw his candidature.

It was a great blow to his friends and supporters in Birmingham, who felt that they had been offered up on the altar of Mr. Chamberlain's ambitions. Bearing in mind the political campaign of 1885 and the hard work in which I had taken part, and which now seemed a waste of energy and time, I was very incensed. One evening when Randolph returned from the House of Commons and informed me of the pressure brought to bear on him, and how he had given in, I accused him of having shown the white feather for the first time in his life. He had, he said, "made up his mind to abide by the opinion of the leaders of the party." "But not when those leaders are your political enemies!" I cried. Arguments, however, were useless. If he was right, he got no thanks for it, and a great opportunity was lost for him to show his strength and power.