

# The New Bloom

By Stephen Morehouse Avery

*There were once two bachelors who lived on the top of a skyscraper. And one day a beautiful girl came in—*

LIKE a huge ghost in the night, the Aquitania hovered in the Hudson. During those excited minutes before the delayed landing, farewells, rendezvous, a certain Spanish Marquis, who for Jennifer's sake had surrendered his favorite absinthe all the way from Cherbourg, prowled the salons and deck in search of her. Others sought her, the vice president of an oil company who, after one look at the white sincerity of her young brow, had forsworn the evil of smoking-room poker parties.

But Jennifer sat on the forward main-deck hatch cover staring at the stars and holding the hot, tense fingers of a ragged Armenian violinist who, until he had glanced up from his third-class promenade one morning into the compassion of her eyes, had thought that music was the end of life.

She shook her bright head sagely. "No, dear Dikran, it is only the instrument with which you will enrich humanity. Humanity is what we live for, each in his own way, and my way leads me to my poor neglected father whom I haven't even seen for ten years, not since I was nine. My mother has had three other husbands to play with, but my poor father has not even had me."

NICHOLAS STARR and Julian Gordon, aged thirty-nine and thirty-four respectively, architect and portrait painter, fair-haired idealist and dark, amused humanist, sat comfortably together on top of the world. Their cozy and, it must be admitted, gorgeous apartment was the thirty-second and top floor of a sky-piercing, new-age tower building and, viewed from its broad windows and balcony garden, a breath-taking midnight panorama, like an inverted firmament, of all Manhattan and environs.

Mad and modern as this pinnacle was as a home, it was in a way appropriate; for, figuratively speaking, Nick and Julian rode the world quite as completely. They were bachelors—although they had also reasonably good looks, much courage, considerable wit and plenty of self-made, stock-market money. They were whispered about in bars and boudoirs. They belonged to everything, went everywhere, drank well, rode hard, and loved often. They sat on top of the world.

Best of all, they were the best of friends, beginning with a fist fight over a matter of esthetics while the guns of the Argonne-Meuse boomed in their ears and ending with a devotion which was beyond taking offense or being bored. Nothing could shake them, not even ten years of living together, not even women. If they preferred the same blonde, both gave her up and went out together looking for twins. Julian, as a matter of fact, preferred brunettes anyway, or to be specific, a brunette—and to be tactlessly definite, Lucia Calhoun.

Tonight Nick and Julian were as usual abroad in the town, and their apartment living-room, masculine and dark except where lamps or well-placed oils reflected against the paneling and the heavy Georgian furniture, held only

the weary figure of their imported major-domo and man, one Quirk. The demise of the eccentric Lord Dunralen and his own nervous collapse had ended Quirk's many sleepless years of adventure with that gentleman and he had sought a well-paid and well-padded "situation" in America in the hope of rest.

He had not expected anything like Nick and Julian, who were as bad as, if not worse than, Dunralen himself, and twice as many. He stayed up as a matter of code to take their hats and sticks, to pour their thimbles of brandy from the decanter, and to light their final cigarettes whether they came in at midnight or at dawn. Only his passion for detective thrillers made life endurable.

SOMETIMES also, with a little help from the decanter, Quirk could beguile time away pretending to be a gentleman himself, a composite interpretation of Mr. Nicholas' genial swagger, Mr. Julian's graceful indolence, and even some of the dour, daft Dunralen's remembered ferocity. In the midst of this little performance the doorbell rang and Quirk slipped back into his normal attitude of fatigue with the

speed of a quick-change artist. "Thank 'eaven," he murmured, "they're 'ome."

His chagrin at finding at the door, instead of his possibly reformed gentlemen, only a sweet young girl, was immeasurable. Usually he regretted his duty as an efficient gentleman's man in the matter of young girls at the door. But tonight he felt he could perform it with enthusiasm. He would tell her that Mr. Nicholas had just sailed for Iceland and that Mr. Julian was in the hospital. He had just decided, what with her large blue eyes and her short nose and her tight, jaunty hat, that it would be Mr. Julian she'd be asking for when she said in a very level, almost innocent voice, just as though she expected to be actually admitted: "Mr. Nicholas Starr lives here?"

Quirk saw new things about that girl. He saw that she was not only sweet but positively demure and naturally the more to be dreaded. He also saw that she had much determination and self-confidence behind her, and he saw a great deal else behind her. He saw behind her two burly porters, three trunks, seven bags, four hatboxes, and a cage full of love birds. Weakly and without confidence he explained that

Mr. Starr was unfortunately not at home. "Mr. Starr won't be home for a long time," he said. "Perhaps madam will leave her name and call again."

"Oh, no," she said, "I'll just stay. I've just landed from the Aquitania. It's my fault if I'm not expected."

WHAT with the life of a gentleman's man being what it is, Quirk could not in honesty say that anything was unexpected—least of all, sweet young ladies. All he could say was that he lacked instructions and authority. When she announced with a divine impudence that he knew of course that she was Mr. Starr's daughter he finally lost his temper. Cousins, sisters-in-law, etc., had been tried on him before, but a daughter was an insult to his intelligence.

His rage, however, was wasted upon her. "I suppose I should have cabled," she admitted. "But since no rooms have been specified for me, I'll take my choice. I don't mind. I'm very tired and want to go straight to bed."

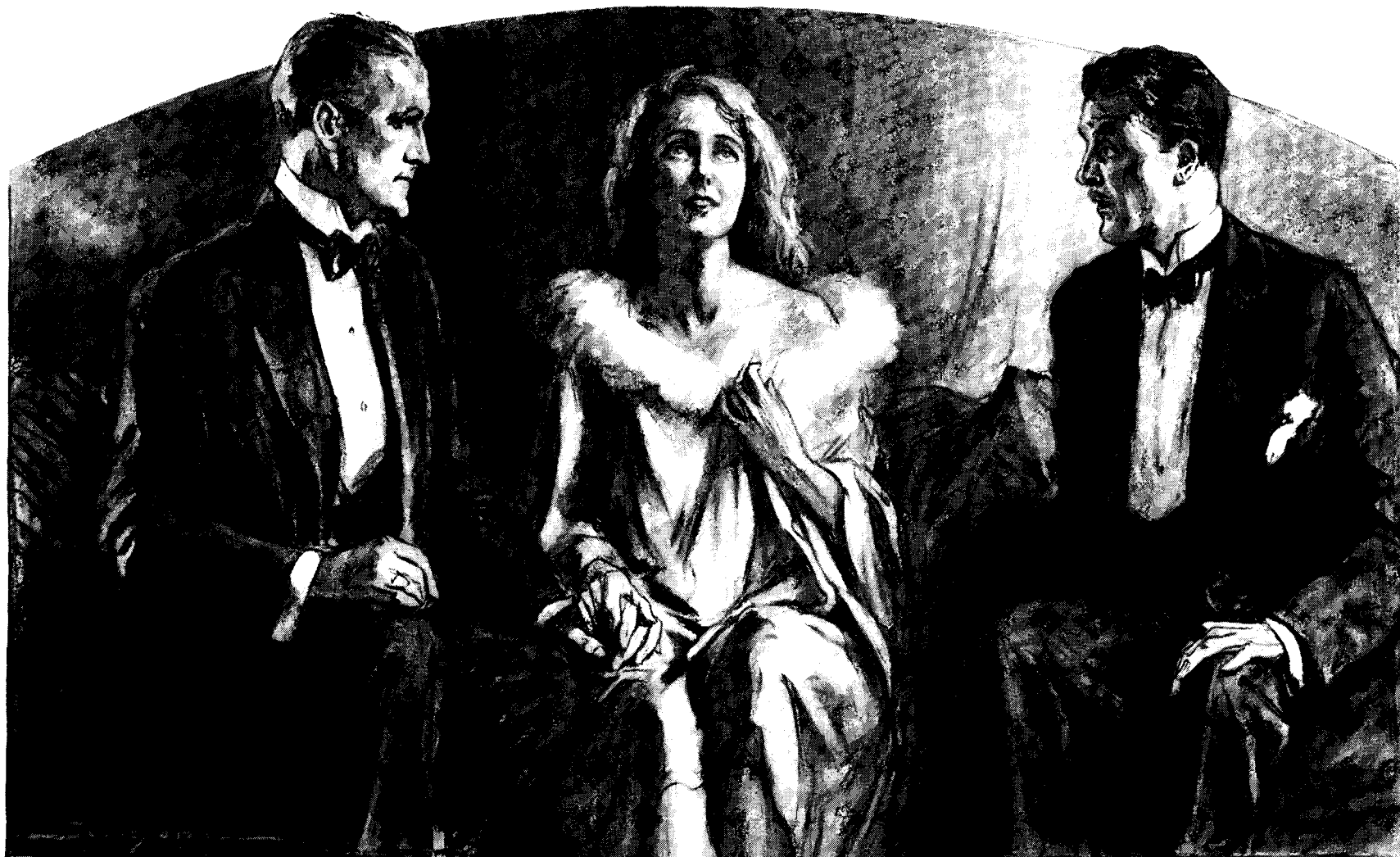
Quirk's expostulations fell like snowflakes upon the armor of that sweet young girl's determination. His actual physical resistance was equally powerless. It came to an abrupt end when a

Illustrated by  
Joseph  
Simont



Quirk, appearing at that inopportune moment, almost dropped their bacon and eggs on their heads. "What do you mean by kissing me in front of Quirk?" Julian demanded





wardrobe trunk in the hands of the two burly porters, who evidently approved of this outrage, struck him violently in the solar plexus.

In fifteen minutes it was all over. Quirk was alone again, leaning limply against the long oaken center table and trying to make himself believe what he had just seen. He had seen that sweet young determined girl open the door of Mr. Nicholas' own rooms at the head of the corridor and with an expression of innocent pleasure choose them for her own. He had seen her trunks, bags, boxes and birds go into Mr. Nicholas' rooms. He had seen her with a smile and a soft-voiced good night go in after them. The door into Mr. Nicholas' rooms was closed, eloquently closed, and when he thought of Mr. Nicholas' just resentment at coming home at dawn only to find—well, anyway he couldn't bear to think of what Mr. Nicholas would think.

He didn't think of it very long, and, if he did, he didn't care. Quirk was not the first man to be driven to drink by a sweet young girl, and that brandy decanter was so near. Now, seated comfortably in a deep chair, he didn't care if another sweet girl came up thirty-two flights in the lift and moved bag and baggage into Mr. Julian's rooms too. Somehow he never would have minded so much in the first place if it had been Mr. Julian. A soft flute-like bar of *Connais tu le pays?* reached him through that eloquent door, reminiscent of a certain little Continental lady who in vanished years had disrupted so delightfully the Dunralen peace of mind. *Ou fleuris l'oranger.* Quirk's hand beat the measure for a moment and then stood still. His head drooped.

How much later he didn't know, voices awakened him. Nick and Julian, regarding both their man and the decanter with amused suspicion, were already at their respective ends of the table. "That's right, Quirk, come alive," said Julian. "I have already had to demonstrate my sobriety with a latch-

"We mustn't let your friend feel lonely or out of it, Father. I'll be happy to help him, too"

Mr. Nicholas' hanging up his own hat."

Quirk waited until the two were settled on the divan for their usual last cigarette and chat before bed before mentioning the slight disarrangement of their living quarters. "Very sorry to bother you, Mr. Nicholas," he began, "but—"

"Well, don't bother me then," said Nick fretfully. "Can't you see we are having a serious discussion? Tell me about the laundry stealing my shirts in the morning when I'll be in the mood to be properly furious. Good night, Quirk."

"SORRY, sir, but the morning won't do at all—" Be it said for Quirk that, silenced by Nick's glare and in full retreat, he paused at the end of the corridor long enough to register by certain despairing gestures that he washed his hands of all consequences. Perhaps after all, men being what they are, Mr. Nicholas knew all about her.

Oblivious to these thoughts and gestures, Nick and Julian went on with

their serious discussion. Julian was plainly losing patience with it. "Yes, I know, I know, Nick, old man. Lucia is lovely, as you say. She is brilliant, cosmopolitan, genuine, as you say. Lucia is everything you say, Nick, and I adore her—but why do I have to have her as a wife? After all we've seen of frantic families around this town, I don't see how you can think of it, and I note that you think of it for me, not for you."

"I'm beyond hope. Seven years older than you, my lad." Nick rubbed the few gray hairs at his blond temple. "Are you sure it isn't just the talk about her that stops you? Because that gossip is an outrage. Her late husband being a naval officer, naturally she's knocked about the world and met men—"

"Oh, that has nothing to do with it," broke in Julian. "I would hardly be in a position to pick flaws in anybody's reputation, would I? Why are you so concerned?"

Nick paused to consider. "Perhaps I feel a responsibility, Julian. You are

still young enough to take a chance and I can't see you pass up a chance like Lucia just for the sake of remaining loyal to me. Why not be frank? We don't hide things from each other, Julian. Have I ever hidden anything from you?"

"WELL, I've never caught you at it," said Julian, his suddenly alert gaze fixed upon the doorway of his friend's rooms where a sweet young thing with bright silk hair stood wrapped in a blue whatever-they-are and watched them curiously—"I never caught you at it—before."

Nick faced about and they both jumped up from the divan. The girl came toward them slowly, doubtfully, the white poms on the toes of her mules bobbing with each step. She smiled, still uncertain, and looked steadily out of eyes as mountain blue as her peignoir, first at one and then at the other. "It is embarrassing," she said, "but I don't know which of you gentlemen is my father. I'm Jennifer Starr."

Julian bowed with mock solemnity. "Dear little lady," he said, "if your name is Starr, charming addition as you would be to any family, I cannot claim you. The truth is, I'm no more than a boy myself. I can, however, present you to your proud parent—"

"Stop it, Julian," broke in Nick. "Jennifer is, both actually and legally, my daughter. I was married once." In Julian's dazed silence he went on: "At the age of nineteen in California I married a girl who was seventeen. Our parents had us annulled in three months, and hardly a dozen people here know a thing about the entire affair. Jennifer was born later and has been chiefly in California and Europe with her mother and a series of stepfathers ever since. I haven't even seen her for ten years. Her arrival is a—surprise."

"Oh, I'm so glad," said Jennifer. She took Nick's fingers without the faintest embarrassment. "I wanted to surprise you, Father dear. I've many surprises for you, (Continued on page 51)



# No Son of Mine

By Charley Paddock

*"I trust that no son of mine will ever be an amateur champion," briefly expresses this veteran sprinter's views on unprofessional sport. It's not on the right track, he says*

I HAVE waited almost a year to write this article. Perhaps I should have waited two years and then not written it. But I do feel that I can sit down now without prejudice and present a cross-section of amateur athletic conditions as I have found them. At the outset, allow me to say this—that I am a sincere believer in the benefits which may be derived both mentally and physically from recreational sports.

If I am ever so fortunate as to have a son, I hope that he will be interested in athletics, and if he is good enough to play professionally, I shall not stand in his way. However, I shall earnestly try to keep him from being exposed to the petty and penurious evils which surround the amateur champion today.

For I want him to be honest in his sport relations, which at present is something virtually impossible in amateur championship competition. Because consciously or unconsciously the "simon pure" amateur who is a box-office attraction, cashes in upon his name.

All of us do it, in a greater or lesser degree, and anyone who follows sport closely realizes that this is true. There are varying degrees of professionalism, to be sure, from the athlete who "takes it behind his back" for running a race, to the bright boy who gains entrée to the office of his client by the glamour of the name that he has gained through "amateur" competition.

To the uninitiated, it might be explained that virtually every runner who has won enough prestige in his favorite event to attract public interest has his "price." But he is not so much at fault as the promoter who stages the meet in which he is a competitor.

## Strictly between Gentlemen

To illustrate what I mean, let us take the case of Mr. Blank, who for one reason or another wants to hold an athletic meet either for his own or someone else's benefit. He invites school, college and club athletes to take part in a series of events for which he offers prizes and the opportunity to gain additional glory. Though Mr. Blank generally succeeds in interesting the athletes, their presence has not aroused the enthusiasm of the public. In order to do this, it is necessary that Mr. Blank procure one or two nationally or internationally known champions who have the "color" that will draw the people through the turnstiles.

So Mr. Blank goes to the champion whom he thinks is the best bet and offers

him a comparatively small "gift," in proportion to his box-office value, to compete in the meet. The "gift" is generally handed to the athlete or to the athlete's representative by Mr. Blank or Mr. Blank's trusted henchman a few minutes before the games begin. The transaction is strictly between two gentlemen. There is no writing of any kind nor any checks and, unless both the promoter and the athlete confess, there exists no proof the Amateur Athletic Union can use for the purpose of professionalizing the athlete or of barring the promoter.

Sometimes the amateur champion has but recently attained his position of popularity and is ignorant about how affairs of this kind are conducted, in which event he proves an easy mark for the promoter. The newcomer generally learns very rapidly and soon finds himself where he can dictate terms.

Fortunately for the promoter, by the time this occurs, another athlete has arisen to take the old star's place. Sometimes a veteran stays good for a long period and when this occurs and the public is still interested in him, the promoter finds himself in a delicate

A striking action picture of Charles Paddock, made during the recent Olympic Games tryouts

position where he may be forced to give the attraction the amount that he is actually worth.

Even then, the promoter generally manages to get the best of the deal, for though he agrees to pay the athlete \$2,000 or even \$3,000, for a single night's competition, when the hour arrives for payment, the promoter has some bona fide excuse on tap that he produces along with two or three hundred dollars as a "payment down" on the full amount. Of course, the athlete never gets any more and there is nothing that he can do about it. Because if he exposes the promoter, he immediately bars himself from future amateur

competition. Moreover, when the night of the meet arrives and he has not gotten his pay, he has to go through with his running just the same. Because the Amateur Athletic Union which gave the promoter the sanction for the meet in the first place has demanded that the athlete sign an entry blank which binds him to appear.

Very often the Amateur Athletic Union officials have no knowledge of what is taking place. Under the present constitution there is no adequate way to remedy this evil and some people are inclined to believe that no law even can prevent the promoter from conniving with the athlete.

## Outlaw the "Wildcat" Promoter

If the Amateur Athletic Union would legislate against the unscrupulous promoter, allowing the athlete with a "box-office name" (that is to say, the competitor who has won an intercollegiate, or a national title, or who has broken the world's record or been a member of an Olympic team) to take part solely in the meets that are held under A. A. U. supervision, the promoter would immediately find himself helpless. For if he did persuade the amateur champion to compete in his "wildcat" games, the latter would be barred from amateur ranks whether he actually received any money or not, and the menace of the box office would be removed.

There is the possibility that such a rule might create a professional class in track and field athletics. But this is nothing to worry about, because it is a much finer thing to be an honest professional than a dishonest amateur.

Of course, the Amateur Athletic Union scorns such an idea. Only public sentiment can ever bring the A. A. U. to terms.

The colleges are by no means guiltless. If a high-school football player is good enough, leave it to overenthusiastic alumni to do their best to ruin him.

He senses the unfairness of the whole "amateur" system and it cannot help but guide his impressionable mind into the wrong channel. He often sacrifices the serious purpose for which his parents sent him to college and he does not even have a decent salary to compensate him for his loss.

If you think that the boy on a championship football team, or the amateur title-holder in track, is in the game for the sheer fun of it you are wrong again, because it ceases to be pleasure when you sweat three hours a day three months of the year, working overtime in your studies in order to continue on the gridiron. (Continued on page 39)

Drawing from Wide World photograph by C. M. Sexton