

Marriage for Two

By Arthur Somers Roche

The Story Thus Far:

SHORTLY after an interview in which Helen Wilson tells Larry Tracy that she wishes to break their engagement so that she can marry the rich, middle-aged Frank Burton, and Larry swears, in pique, to marry the first girl who will have him, he rescues from a park bench a poverty-stricken and starved though beautiful girl, Joyce Carroll.

A few days later they are married, agreeing that the marriage in reality will be nothing more than a friendship.

Shortly they sail for Biarritz where Joyce gains great popularity and where Larry finds himself falling in love with her despite evidence of her strange past. A man named Ratty Rogan, in New York, tries unsuccessfully to tell Larry something of his wife and in Biarritz Joyce gives 40,000 francs to a woman of the demimonde and tells Larry she lost the money at the gambling tables.

Helen Wilson and her fiancé come to Biarritz and one evening Larry kisses her and is seen by Paul Weedon, who spreads the story, though Larry tells Joyce first. Burton threatens to ruin Larry unless Joyce will promise to keep him from Helen. Joyce promises.

And that night Larry wakes Joyce, before the police come, to tell her that Paul Weedon was found dead at the foot of a cliff where at different times that evening he had been talking to Joyce, to Larry and to Billy Valdemagara, a Spaniard in love with Joyce.

Billy telephones Larry to warn them that the police are on their way to question the Tracys. The police arrive and their suspicions of Larry and Joyce are allayed. Joyce denies knowing of anyone else's talking with Weedon.

During the interview it comes out that Larry had been seen with Miss Novel, who had been supporting Weedon and who was the woman to whom Joyce had given the 40,000 francs.

X

WHEN he had escorted the Prefect and his two companions to the front gate, where they parted with many bows and expressions of esteem, Larry returned to the house. In the hall at the foot of the stairs were the cook, butler, the chambermaids and the kitchen-maid. They scattered at Larry's entrance, with many a backward glance. Only the butler retained presence of mind.

"We did not know but that Monsieur and Madame, awakened thus, would require something to eat," he suggested.

Larry shook his head. He knew that the servants, anticipating an arrest, had gathered together that they might witness the delectable spectacle and ascertain its reasons. But that was natural. So he thanked the man and went upstairs.

The door opening into Joyce's room was ajar, and she called to him as he entered. Her maid had lighted a fire and before it his wife sat, smoke trailing from a cigarette in her fingers.

"So you talked with Miss Novel, eh?" she greeted him.

HE HAD felt, all evening, upon the defensive, and when a man has offered apology for a wrong, and the apology has been waved aside, resentment soon usurps humility's place in his heart.

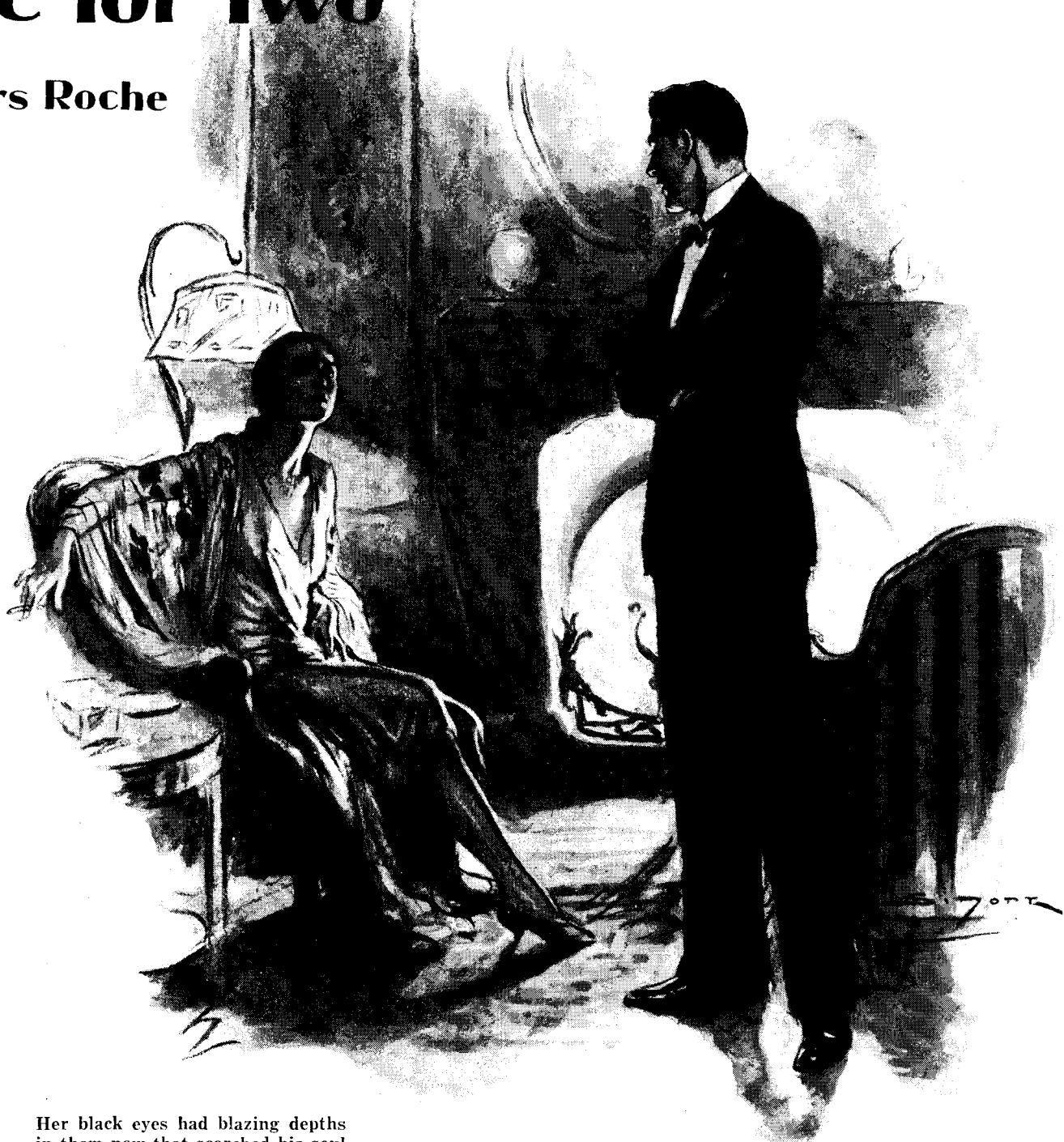
"I believe you'd talked with her first," he said.

"Did she volunteer the information, or did you discover it by—spying?" she asked. "Of course," she mimicked the Prefect, "that gallantry which is inseparable from frequenting the Casino..."

Her black eyes had blazing depths in them now, points of fire that scorched his soul.

"I asked nothing about you," he defended himself. "But if I had, I'd have found out that you lied to me about her."

"Oh, that," she shrugged. "After all, this is France, and you are a husband. And where gentlemen find it inseparable from gallantry to buy champagne for women who keep men, perhaps it is only natural that wives should lie to their husbands."



Her black eyes had blazing depths in them now that scorched his soul

It was childish, this quarrel, and he knew it. Perhaps its original causes might have some dignity—if recriminations can have such a quality—but their words were juvenile.

"I'm inclined to believe that you've had practice in deceit," he retorted. "The convincing way in which you said that you knew of no other quarrel in which Weedon had been involved..."

"Would you have liked it better if I'd told the Prefect that Billy had struck him?" she challenged.

He colored at this. "You know perfectly well that I wouldn't. I'm only stating that falsehood comes naturally to you."

"Which is, of course, a gallantry inseparable from such an occasion as this," she jeered. "And you are a man of gallantry. Miss Novel in the afternoon, and Helen Wilson in the evening. You didn't, by any chance, honor Miss Novel with an embrace? I should hate to think so. Helen might not like that."

"Joyce, please," he begged. "This is intolerable."

"Intolerable for whom?" she cried. "For me, or for you? Did I enter your room and denounce you for a harmless falsehood that saved a friend from great embarrassment? You don't believe Billy killed him, do you?"

"Of course not," he said.

"Then why object because I saved him from suspicion by a white lie? For that matter, you lied about it yourself. And did you object to my pretense of affection for you? That was false, false as anything I ever did or said in all my life. Would you prefer it if I told the police that I did not like your kissing your ex-fiancée? Would you prefer it if I said that I hated you?"

ON THAT first time when he had met her, he had asked if she were ill. Her eyes had blazed at him.

"Damn you," she had said, "I'm hungry!"

The same rage, a rage so great that it seemed impersonal, as though its scope embraced the whole world and was too great to center on any one single individual, shone in her eyes now. It was as though she rebelled against the very fate that had caused her to be born. A moment ago Larry had found humility unendurable and had disclosed his own anger. But that anger of his was a puny thing; before the blast of her wrath it shriveled.

"Do you hate me?" he asked.

"That," she said, "is a matter that neither of us could help, isn't it? So why discuss it? I'm sleepy," she announced.

There was nothing for Tracy to do

but leave her then, and he did so with what grace he could muster, and with the unaccountable feeling that he had been in some way worsted by her.

Her door was closed when he awoke next morning, and there came from her room no invitation to breakfast, so he drank his morning coffee—most dreadful stuff it was, too; he could never become accustomed to French coffee—and ate his rolls alone. It suddenly came to him that, little as Joyce had granted, it would be unendurable if she withdrew that little.

Not to be permitted those innocuous intimacies which had begun to mean so much to him; to be denied that camaraderie which had become sweeter than even the kisses that Helen had permitted. . . . He fell into that self-pitying reverie which sometimes leads to rashness, and might indeed have been led into a renewal of his quarrel with Joyce had it not been for the arrival of Billy Valdemagara.

That red-headed scion of Spanish aristocracy was in a high state of excitement.

"The police—they came here?" These were his first words as Larry met him in the salon.

"What did they have to say? Did you tell them anything?"

(Continued on page 26)

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Painted for Scripps-Howard Newspapers by Walter Seaton

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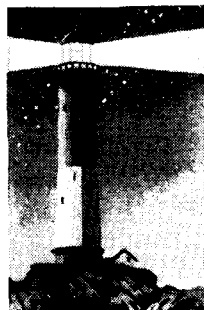
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Larry stared at him. "What could we tell them, Billy?"

"About my striking him? Not that I'd blamed you if you had. After all, when there is a murder—whew!" He mopped his forehead.

"But we didn't," Larry assured him. He told the Marquis what had transpired last night.

"And your wife—*Valgame Dios*, but she is glorious, Larry. Any other woman would have blurted out that I had hit him—where is she?"

"She'll be down any minute, Billy," said Larry. How could he tell his friend that he had not ventured to enter his wife's bedroom, and that he was unaware whether or not she had yet awakened, even.

BUT Joyce entered the room as he was professing an intimacy that didn't exist. She greeted the Marquis warmly. He bent over her hand.

"I was just telling the unworthy man who has the great good fortune to be your husband of my gratitude at your silence last night," said Billy.

Joyce laughed. "Did you think we'd tell of your quarrel with Weedon? Billy, how little you regard us."

The Marquis vehemently shook his red head.

"Not so," he protested. "But, as I was saying to Larry, when there has

been murder, the little discretions frequently disappear."

Joyce smiled upon him, but her voice was hard:

"But I had to pretend that the—er—pretty little incident on the cliff, between Larry and—well, I had to pretend that that was nothing but a fraternal and sisterly salute. If you, as well as my husband, had resented Weedon's telling what he had observed, it might naturally occur to the Prefect that perhaps I didn't take it very lightly after all."

"I don't think that follows at all," protested the Marquis. "You were just—magnificent—as always." His voice grew serious. "My children, this affair—is serious."

"Murder is never a light matter," said Joyce.

"Of course not," assented Billy. "But I mean—for all of us."

Now what he said was so obvious that Larry wondered that the Marquis had thought it necessary to voice it. But Valdemagara was not the sort to talk idly save when he flattered some pretty woman.

"What are you driving at, Billy?" he inquired.

"A *cause célèbre*; that's what the French public is always demanding, and what the French police are always trying to supply," said the Marquis. "High life scandal—you know what I mean. Rich American—titled Spaniard—get it?"

"But the Prefect was so courteous last night," began Joyce.

"You are a very beautiful woman,

and the police would be polite to you on your way to the guillotine," said the Marquis. "Don't misunderstand me. I mean—well, all that I mean is that I'm afraid you'll be annoyed, harassed, questioned—"

Joyce's brow was serene. "That can't be helped, and what cannot be helped must be borne. Isn't that so? So let's not concern ourselves about it. In the meantime—do we swim?"

"Why not?" assented Valdemagara.

He had no bathing suit with him, but Larry offered to fit him out, so they went upstairs, and he and Larry dressed in the latter's bedroom. Although the door was closed between Larry's room and Joyce's, the Marquis kept his voice lowered.

"Nasty mess, eh, Larry?"

"Well, you've been harping on that side of it quite a while, Billy. Are you driving at anything in especial?"

"Try to buy a ticket for Paris," said the Marquis sharply.

LARRY struggled into the shirt of his swimming-suit. His head emerged, hair rumpled and cheeks flushed.

"Drop the riddles and talk English," he snapped.

The Marquis met his glance fairly.

"Larry, a man was murdered last night. You had a quarrel with, struck him. The police are aware of that. I also struck him. The police were not aware of that last night."

"Then how did they happen to see you last night?" asked Larry.

"I was there—there when his body was found," replied Billy. "The party had broken up, but there was the little matter of the check to be paid, and the proprietor of the Reserve would have me honor him by sampling some ancient brandy—a waiter found the body, and—it was I who telephoned for the police. Now, the proprietor knew that you had struck Weedon. The man Weedon had no shame. He had told the

incident himself, waiters had overheard it discussed . . . the police would learn it by this morning, so I interposed no objection when my friend the proprietor told them. But I did not find it necessary to inform them of my own little affair with Weedon. Only your wife knew of that."

"Yet, if she'd told—"

The Marquis cut him short: "It would have hurt me immeasurably with the Prefect. But I was confident that your wife would not tell."

LARRY whistled. "You were taking considerable chance, Billy. It would have sounded all right if you'd told it, but if someone else mentioned it when you'd kept quiet—not so good, my lad."

"I was aware of that," returned Billy quietly.

Larry pondered this a moment, then dismissed it from his mind.

"About my leaving here? You don't mean that I'd be stopped?"

"But naturally," said the Spaniard.

"But they can't suspect—"

"The French police suspect *everyone* of everything," said Valdemagara. "That's why they're so much more efficient than the coppers in your dear old New York, Larry. But I'm not trying to alarm you."

"Then what are you trying to do?" demanded Larry.

"I'm trying to get it into your none-too-bright brain that it's up to us to find out who did kill Weedon," replied Billy. "If the guilty person is found, that would tend to stop a lot of idle gossip, wouldn't it?"

"Oh, gossip," snarled Larry.

"Yes, gossip," repeated the Marquis. "Gossip is important in that narrow world of ours which considers itself so big, my friend. For instance, gossip would hurt Miss Wilson, would hurt you, might even—conceivably—hurt Mrs. Tracy."

"Well, what on earth do you want me to do?" cried Larry.

"I wondered if there is any possible hint—Weedon was a compatriot of yours. You went to college with him? Can you think of anyone who might want to do him an injury, for example?"

"I don't know any of his friends," said Larry shortly. "But the Prefect spoke of a woman—a Miss Novel—she'd been keeping him, according to the Prefect. God pity the poor thing, but—no, I can't think of a person. I hardly knew the man. You knew him better than I, I'd imagine, Billy."

The Marquis shrugged.

"As a casual acquaintance, who knew the same people I know—not in their houses, but in the bars and restaurants and casinos—oh, well, shall we swim?"

"Let's," agreed Larry.

He knocked on Joyce's door.

"With you in a minute," she called. And in hardly more time than that they had crowded into a cab and were galloping down the avenue toward the beach where they saw no one Joyce had met yesterday. Joyce commented on this fact to the Marquis.

"The Cote Basque opened today," he replied.

"And what is the Cote Basque, and why does its opening keep the crowd from here?" she inquired.

He explained to her that it was a somewhat more exclusive beach than this public bathing place, and that its formal opening for the season always drew the fashionable crowd, although he did not so denominate his friends.

"Then why didn't we go there?" Joyce asked.

But the Marquis apparently did not hear the question, for he was racing into the surf. And Joyce a moment later forgot that she had asked it, in the tingling excitement of battling the waves. Larry observed (Continued on page 28)

Illustrated by
Joseph Simont

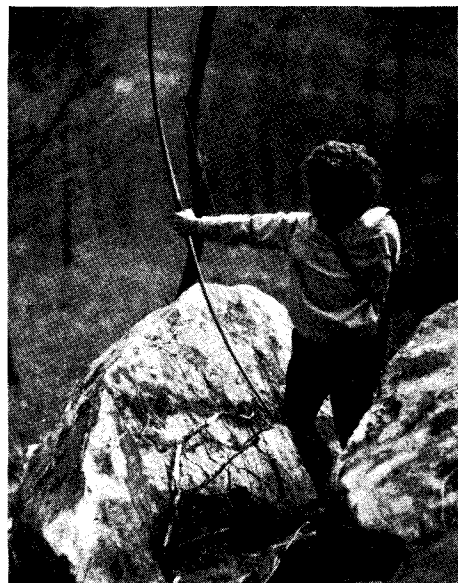


She couldn't have told why she returned to the subject of Weedon. But she realized that she had been prompted by some inner angel as she noted the expression on Burton's face



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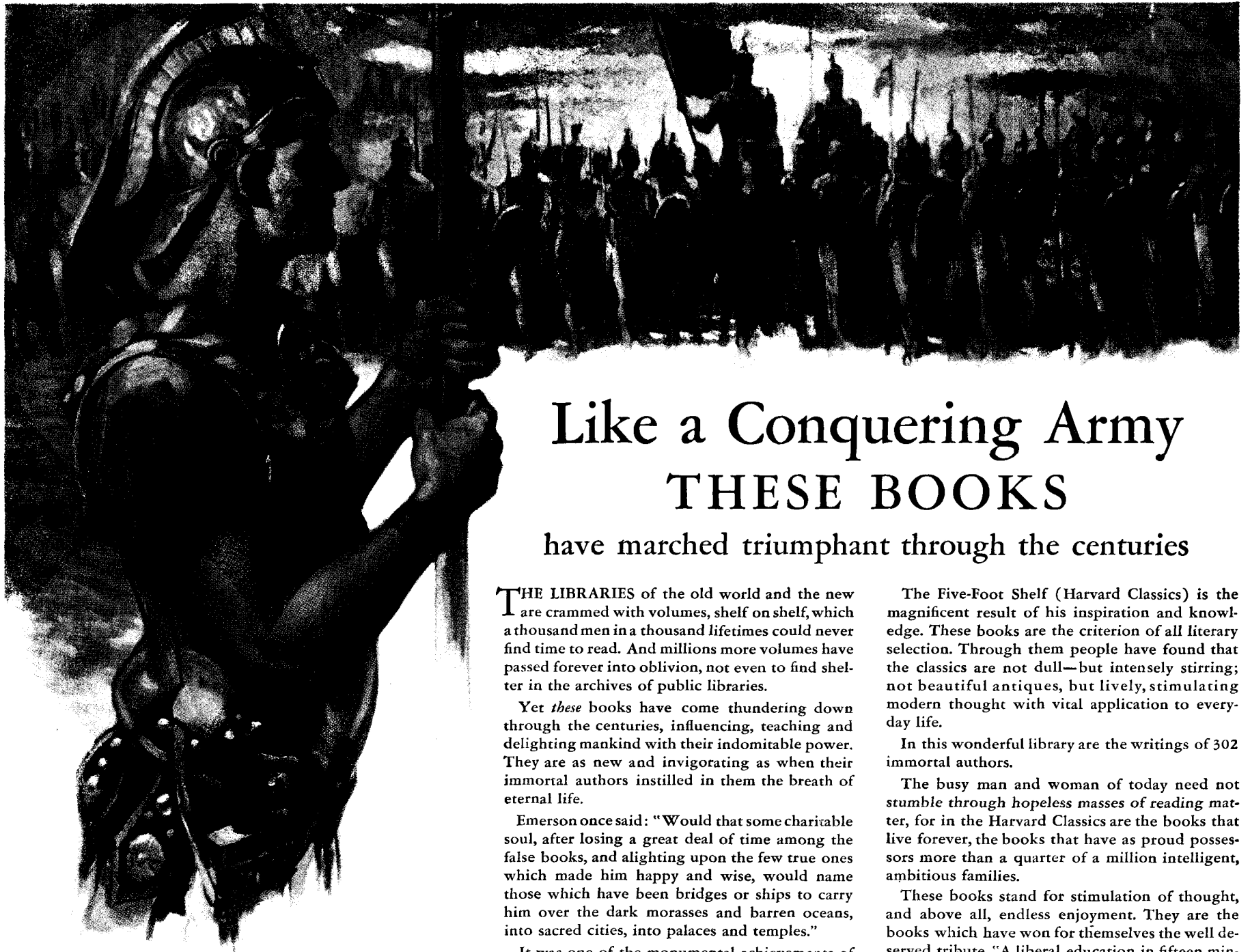
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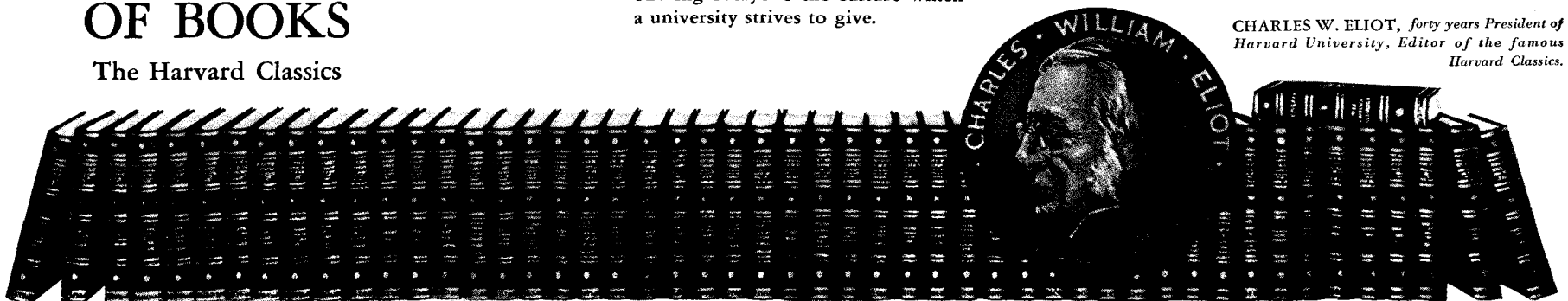
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The fat lady in the warehouse door was assisted by eight or nine singing gentlemen of Honolulu

On a Night Like This

By Frank Condon

When a boom bursts loose from its lashings in a bitter Pacific storm the best thing to do is quietly to leave the vessel and go sit under an elm tree. But that's a little impractical. Another page from the Waxman family log

OUR second night at sea provided me with steady work. On the first evening the weather was cold and the steam pipes in our One Hundred did not respond, so I covered myself with an overcoat and slumbered fitfully. The second day turned out balmy and the night was lovely, so the steam pipes began boiling with tremendous gusto. There were nine places in our cabin to turn off the steam, and I spent practically the entire night turning. The more permanently I turned it off, the more we boiled. At dawn, I gave over the plumbing business, went out on deck and let the Pacific Ocean blow on me.

When we reached Honolulu, our first pause on the way to Naples, where Romance was waiting for us, I made a definite decision. It required seven days to pass from San Francisco to Honolulu.

"The sensible method," I said to the wife, "is for me to board the next steamer back to America. I shall there take a fast train and will meet you in Naples, whenever you say."

Esther looked grieved.

"Roger," she said, "be serious."

"I am serious. You love ocean travel, and there is plenty in store, if you stick to this ship. I have had seven days of maritime experiences and that is enough."

"Pooh," said Esther, "don't be foolish. We are on our way to Naples and to see the world. Think of all the quaint places and the mysterious foreign cities."

Being the sort who is easily influenced by females, I said no more. The ship pulled into Honolulu at six o'clock in the morning and I stood beside Captain Oakes on his bridge and beheld the light on Diamond Head winking in the murk. I stared down at a fat Honolulu lady who stood in the door of a warehouse and sang plaintive songs, songs that seemed a bit out of place at that unearthly hour. She was assisted by eight

or nine singing gentlemen of Honolulu and they warbled with the despair of men whose hearts were breaking.

"They always do that," remarked Captain Oakes, who had little music in his soul. "They make me ill."

The Waxmans Take a Side-Trip

After a hearty breakfast, Esther and I plunged into our first side-trip. When you are touring around the world, anything you see outside the ship, and anywhere you go on land, any visitation not made by personal pedestrianism is termed a side-trip. You do not have to take side-trips, or pay for them, if you wish to be an independent soul. If you desire to wander by yourself, you may do so, and if you have good sense, you will do so, preserving your personal integrity. It will cost a trifle more, but you will not have a fat lady sitting in your lap hour after hour while you gaze at pagodas and native shrines. A fat lady sitting in your lap is not any great inconvenience the first two hours, but after you have become completely paralyzed an Oriental ruin means less than nothing to you.

Harold Demuth, the demon guide, who was now outside the city limits of Oakland for the first time, took us under his wing, our little group numbering an even thirty. Thirty we were, males and females, some of us married, some of us school-teachers, with the pale, sacrificial look of the teaching tribes, and

practically all of us querulous, Middle-West Americans, who had never been anywhere before, at least, anywhere on an ocean liner.

Seven automobiles confronted us as we stepped ashore with a sight-seeing glitter in our eyes and there was an immediate struggle to determine which ladies and gentlemen should ride in the good automobiles and which should tag along in motor cars that had no distinction, no paint and very little engine. This drama was repeated in later ports, in all ports, I may say.

It resolved itself into a question first of quickness of the eye which enabled one to select a motor, and speed of the human leg which hurried one into a car ahead of the others. It became a game. Mr. and Mrs. Secor of our table, easily led the Demuth party, taking first honors and the best car in every port except Manila and dropping into the fourth car at Manila solely because Mr. Secor fell over a ladder while taking off.

"Come along," Esther said briskly. "Let's hop into one of these automobiles before they fill up."

"Sorry," I said, "but I cannot go. Not today."

Esther looked astonished.

"Don't you long to see all the beautiful sights of Honolulu and have a lei hung on your neck?"

"I would love to but you know very well I have other business to attend to."

"Oh," she said.

"Yes, oh! And it is your fault if I

spend thousands of dollars on side-trips and then see nothing."

I referred, as she knew instantly, to my Velvet Sweep razor. Before we left America I asked her if she had packed the blades that go with a Velvet Sweep and without which the razor is helpless. She informed me that they were safely packed. I took her word for it. One hundred miles off the American coast I decided to shave and upon turning everything in our cabin inside out four times I discovered that the newfangled blades were at home in Glen Echo.

I shaved once with the solitary blade. Twenty-four hours later I shaved with it again. On the third attempt to use it, the blade lost all interest in the process of shaving, and there was no way to sharpen it. True, I removed the whiskers, my countenance wreathed in pain, as whisker after whisker fought off the sluggish steel. The fourth day I decided to use my pen-knife.

I saw little of the magic isle except the down-town streets which resembled the streets of Utica, N. Y., and the interiors of many hardware and drug shops. I entered every store in Honolulu in the hunt for Velvet Sweeps. I went up one side of a street and down the other.

Still No Razor Blades

I walked into stores run by Chinese, Greeks, Malays, Filipinos, Turks, Americans, Arabs and Japs, and nobody had ever heard of my pet razor. Utterly exhausted, I hired a land barber to shave me, purchased an old-fashioned razor and returned to the Hillary Castle.

There was scarcely anybody aboard the stout ship when I finished my shopping tour, if you do not count Filipino diving boys. The boys were on hand, waiting for rich American passengers to throw money into the harbor. It seems unusual to an American raised in Kansas City that a Filipino diving lad can capture a dime as it sinks slow-