

# The Romancing of a Square Party

BY LOUISE CLOSSER HALE

WHEN the Young Man and the Young Woman who were travelling with a party, and whom we had met at Monte Carlo and grown to like, told us that they would enjoy the trip across northern Italy because it would be "improving to the mind," we edged off uncomfortably toward the Casino and lost a few more unimproving francs. But even the absorbing of our silver did not blot out the gloomy prospect of motoring an intellectual pair through an emotional country.

We, as a middle-aged couple (the expression had been forced upon us, until we finally accepted it), had considered the inviting of the Young Man and the Young Woman as near an approach to a revival of tender sentiment as our slightly silvered hair would permit. It had been our vague intention to hold the mirror up to them—and see ourselves. We wished the young couple, for the trip at least, to engage in a sort of delicate exchange of gallantries, which we should have enjoyed with ourselves in the principal rôles had not the stigma of "middle age" weighted us down with its awful dignity. We hoped for a sort of flirtation pleasing to the eye, which would blossom under the Italian sky, then, later, gently die. I made this statement to the Illustrator with no knowledge of the rhyme until he laughed. Since then I have been repeating it proudly.

The Illustrator, as he bitterly slung in their books of reference amid the oil-cans and made ready for an intellectual departure, had no hope of their vulnerability, but I was not bereft of all attacking methods. The first one, I admit, was frustrated, for at the start the young girl beckoned me to the rear seat, where she had already installed herself, with a mental firmness which no romantic couple in middle age could well combat—and remain unashamed. The

Young Man settled himself in my favorite place by the driving Illustrator; the satiated retinue of the Monte Carlo hostelry bowed their adieus; and with my heart beating expectantly at re-entering the land of rich sensations, we made for Italy.

The Young Woman, who must have heard the prancing of this artery of mine which refuses to grow old, smiled at me kindly, with a question in her eyes.

"I am wishing," I said to her, conscious of my effort at careful phrasing, "that the first of the little dramas of the roadside which come to us so thickly in this country will greet us at the Customs, just as we slip past the tricolor and draw up at the post of green and white and red. Don't you think that would be splendid?"

The Young Woman looked dubious. "An episode that will give a clue to the character of the country?"

I nodded, flattened but defiant. After all, she had my thought. So she leaned forward, one hand upon her note-book, pencil poised.

At the French barrier the clean children bade us "bon voyage," then a climb across a gorge—muleteers along the way—a donkey-boy singing half French and half Italian—a sudden turn—the colors, green and white and red, upon a rock—a small stucco house with an official lounging waitingly—and in the doorway a signora gravely examining the tousled head of a small, dirty child.

"How awful!" cried the girl, shutting her note-book with a snap.

"How Italian!" I replied, well satisfied.

If one follows the Corniche road after passing into Italy, only the man of wildest imaginings can feel an appreciable difference between it and the country that is left behind. There are still the colorful sea, the baked white road,

and the pink villas, where surely no one was ever born or has ever died. There is not the dignity of these simple events about their vapid architecture. But twist the motor to the left after leaving Ventimiglia, thrust its nose into the Maritime Alps, and let it smell out Tenda, and one's forgotten Italian speech comes back to him by the aid of sign-posts and road warnings. It is a way of sharp turns bitten into the rock, across mountain torrents busily furnishing electric power to the gambling-houses back on the Riviera, and past vineyards, hanging from crevices, which soften the grim visage of Mother Earth as do long eyelashes beautify a stern-faced woman.

The Young Man and the Young Woman gave forth expressions.

"It is volcanic," they agreed.

"It is glorious," I asserted.

"It is every bit on the high speed," said the Illustrator, whose mind was on his engine.

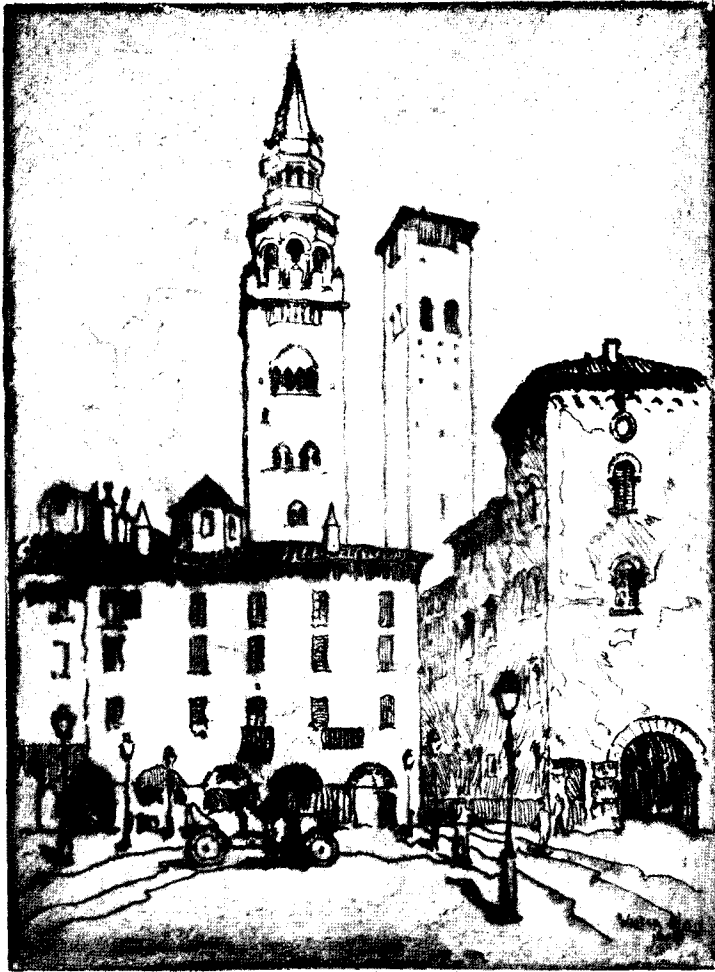
At Tenda the young couple agreed to make up their notes. Our windows looked upon a pale-green Alp, and, below, in the main street—the one street—the diligences came and went. Still they were wishful to make notes. But after dinner we took our coffee on the pavement, and the light was dim. More than that, there was an "episode." She, the lady of the episode, sat at the table next to us, and there were men about her. She was pretty, plump, provincial, and she had a way of lifting her eyelids as though held down by cognac. That is rare in Italy. The Young Man and the Young Woman grew almost interested. The lady was evidently doing the wrong thing, and was pleased about it. I suppose life is dull in Tenda. The Italian officers and their wives, who appeared to know her, were surprised, and whispered over their coffee.

After a while, out of the gloom—for the pale-green Alp threw a black shadow at night—a stumpy little husband appeared; one dressed as though having come from a journey—a journey, we assumed, that should have brought him back at ten instead of nine. He made no scene, he bowed to her companions, and, in tones tinged with as much sarcasm as he dared, begged his *sposa* not to incommode herself—he asked only

for the key. At this the wife, with an insolence born of brandy, told him that was simple, and thrusting her hand into her pocket, withdrew a key such as Bluebeard would have relished. It was ten inches long at least. It was so much more impressive than its master that we went over somewhat to the side of *la sposa*, although we shouldn't. Then he trudged out into the road again, lugging the key, knowing that he should fight, yet a scared little man. But after another round of cognac a boy appeared, a servant; in his hand he carried a lantern, and in his mouth a message from the signora: he had come to take her home. There was a forceful quality about him which the signora recognized, for though she tried to shake him off he would have none of it; and while one can with dignity quarrel with one's husband—yes, and well within one's rights—how absurd becomes the situation when one quarrels with a serving-lad! So the lady went out into the darkness too, only she would not walk with the boy. He went ahead, and showed her mud-holes, which she hazily avoided while pretending not to hear him.

That was absolutely all, and we shall never know the end, which is most tantalizing; still, the young couple could not make their notes for watching, and he was heard to say to her, "Think of a heartache in a little town!" So the evening wasn't altogether wasted.

Yet the next day they had become stiff-necked and unregenerate once more, for the morning is ever provocative of high resolves. Although I descended early, I found the Young Man occupying my place by the driver, and the Young Woman from the back seat was full of alarming erudition concerning rock formations. It made me wonder why the Creator had spent so much time carving her features prettily, when almost any face would answer for the study of geology. The Illustrator, who wished to be helpful in their emotional development, responded to the rocky dissertation by a few clumsy hints as to the tunnel we would shortly reach, and the opportunity its two miles of blackness would offer "to the foxy." Poor wit this, and most unfortunate in its result. The fine shoulders of the Young Man



THE "SKY-SCRAPERS" OF CREMONA

assumed so moral an uprightness that no possible flight of fancy could conjure a blond head resting on their heights. The blond head itself was being proudly tossed by its owner in the back seat, while I sat silent, controlling my writhing feet, which longed to press a wifely warning on the Illustrator's ankles.

The tunnel, as it turned out, was a black and chilling experience, and our lunch in Cuneo at the Bar of Iron, while provocative of chuckles from the Illustrator at the appropriate name, was not entirely a mirthful occasion. Still, as we descended into the plain my spirits

soared aloft, for the necessity of high-sounding epithets is diminished when on less aspiring land; the "soul" (as defined by the young couple) retires, and our mean shell puts powder on its nose, and takes an interest in its dinner.

Yet was I uncomfortable over the thought that this dinner must be at Turin—yes, and the stay for the night. It is a place reeking with self-improvement, and there are museums to be visited. "A city conspicuous for the regularity of its construction," I heard her read to him, and I cast about me for more irregular beguilements. But Italy

will never fail one emotionally if he limits himself to street scenes. After the Young Woman and the Young Man had taken a regular walk (and as darkness softens the lines of this rectangular town, the lights are alluring, museums closed, and there is music in the air, the walk could not have been dangerously instructive)—and after they had returned they found us peering into the lives of other people from the rear windows. Since we refused to budge from our balcony they were necessarily squeezed into one themselves. To my surprise and delight they accommodated themselves to this without effort. More than that, the girl made a discovery—a “human find.” Above the little café, at an open window, sat a woman crying. She was good-looking, but with the thinness of those who feel too keenly. At the next window sat a hard man—her husband, I was sure—reading a paper while she wept. Now and then she found that she could not sit quietly and cry—she must walk about the room, with her arms upraised and hands talking a great

deal. The man read on. The young couple approached agitation; the Illustrator and I held hands—as an example. Once the grief-stricken creature crossed to a shelf on which were vials, and we held our breath while her eyes swept the labels. The man at the other window didn't care. Yet she thought better of it; she came back again and looked down into the street—life held her there. For a long while she stood shaking her head as though it hardly mattered one way or the other; then a street fight, which is always one of words in Italy, claimed her attention, and when quiet was restored below she put her head down on the window ledge and rested. At this point the man, whom we were all hating vehemently, arose and folded up his paper. Our hopes revived in him; now, we decided, he would kiss her. Even the young pair longed for a reconciliation. But he didn't. He approached the lamp which was burning near him, there was a fumbling at the wick, then he was left in darkness; but the woman on the other side of the wall which sep-



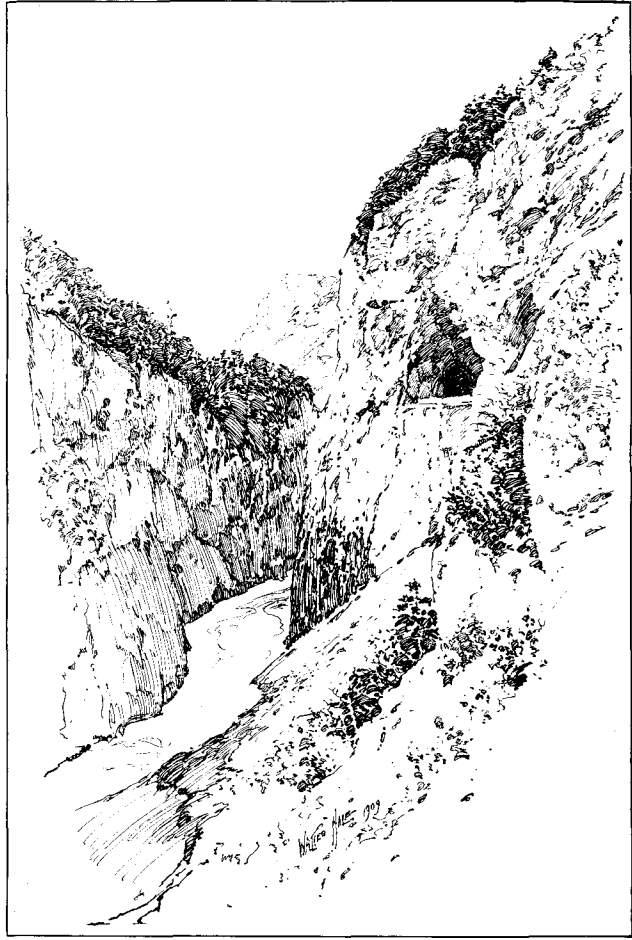
THE PIAZZA, VICENZA

arated them remained bathed in the radiance of a light which we could not see! As they probably never knew of the existence of each other, it was a blow to my romancing. Still, as the girl said, tears were tears whether the one for whom they were expended was in Turin or in Toronto, and the Young Man, greatly mellowed, admitted that it must be rather satisfying to be cried for.

"Perhaps she had the toothache," the Illustrator started, but I could reach his foot.

The next day it rained, although, emotionally and territorially speaking, this did not delay our progress. Indeed, it was the Illustrator's day. "Be human," was my insistent plea to him, and while he took advantage of my directions, I don't deny but

that the halting at the various *cantine* along the watery way did much to bridge the chasm between the front and the back seat. A *cantina*, according to the small red dictionary, is "a cellar, a cave, or a cavern," and this definition was the Illustrator's argument that his continual patronage of them could stand the pure white light of scrutiny. No one, he continued to the young couple, who were uneasy at first, could be criticised for entering "a cellar, a cave, or a cavern"; and it was not his fault that, as time went on, the "cellar, the cave, and the cavern" had thrust themselves up through the earth like mushrooms, until they became houses with bars at



A WAY OF SHARP TURNS BITTEN INTO THE ROCK

one end, across which the signora dispensed simple mixtures known to the Illustrator as "dryers."

Since there was always a stove or fireplace for our simpler drying purposes, the Young Woman finally overcame her scruples, and I was surprised to find how soon the fire which had served as the girl's reason became her excuse. At the sixth drying-place she nodded to the Young Man, who lifted his glass and cried "*Salute*" as though ashamed of nothing. The Illustrator winked at me, which I at first endeavored not to see, but as he kept on doing it under the impression that I did not grasp the situation, I finally responded with a cold stare which greatly mystified him.

The "Canteen of the Angel!" was picked out by the girl herself. The sign was a fine angel flying down the front wall with a large brown bottle in its hand and clad in a blue ribbon—though what right an angel with a bottle had to the emblem of temperance we could not discover. That it was a good angel there could be no doubt, for when we once more climbed into the car the Young Man retrograded to the rear. He did it very badly, calling out in a surprised fashion, after we had started, "See where I am!" while the girl faintly echoed, "See!" However, we kindly refused to see. With feet treading upon each other, we forged ahead.

The day went on in more delightful intimacies. For lunch we had our clothes baked, or, to be clearer, they were baked before the lunch. There were two rooms in the Hotel of the Little Mule. In one the girl and I handed our dripping garments through the door and went to bed. In an hour they were brought back, warm, and odorous of veal. The girl, after a moment's thought, decided that this was funny; later, when our square party met, and the Young Man, perplexed in his dry clothes, declared he smelled of veal, she caught her breath from delight; and when the lunch was served, pasta, fish, and—veal, she clapped her hands in ecstacy. "Was there ever such a day?" cried the Young Woman.

There was no more rainy weather from that on, and naught but sunshine in the hearts of the young couple. In fact, the Illustrator claimed (after two days of quick-melting ice) that the sunshine was exaggerated, and that there wasn't any warmth in the world to thaw out two young hearts so quickly. "Hang it all," he grumbled to me, "they seem to think because they've cooked their clothes in the same oven that all social barriers are down. And sneaking off the way they do! I tell you I don't like it!"

I was not so deeply concerned. As the speech of the Illustrator would suggest, much of his dissatisfaction was due to man's selfishness. Now that we were able to hold the mirror up to the couple and view, or perhaps I should say *re-view*, our own emotional awakening, we could not get hold of the happy pair long enough for a satisfactory reflection.

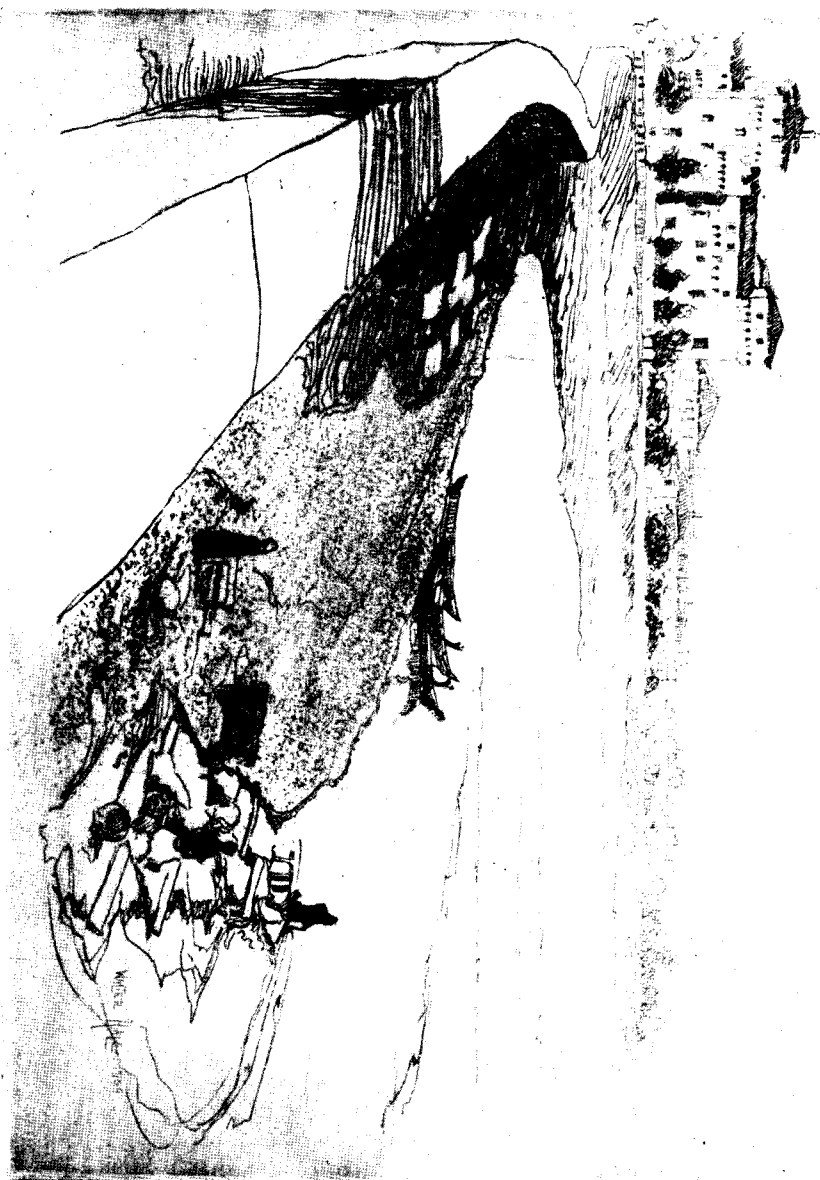
In the first place, we could not keep continually turning from the front seat to stare at them joyously riding in the rear; then when we descended from the car they had a way of rushing off together on the pretext of buying postal cards, and returning without them, which no doubt would have satisfied us sentimentally had we been along, but, by some shrewd cunning, suddenly developed, they managed that we never were.

I suggested to the Illustrator that if he sketched vigorously they might stay and watch him, and while this failed in Brescia—the creatures climbing to the clock-tower he was drawing, and jeering at us—at Cremona he had developed a regular line of attack. Here in an open square he appealed to their sympathies. Since he was an old, old man, he turned to them for protection. He looked to them to draw a magic circle around his sketching-stool, and with horned fingers, centesimi, sweets, and main force keep the Italian public from the line of vision; while I, also very old, would rest in the motor-car which he so loved to put into his foregrounds. It was a pleasant relief; keeping clear the line of vision was generally my work. I grew fond of Cremona, basked in the sunshine, dozed a little perhaps—being a very ancient person—and was just dreaming that I heard the sounds of the far-famed violins, when an amazed signore called my attention to the unpleasant truth that the music—noise, forsooth—was the voice of the Illustrator, deserted by his body-guard, rendered helpless by the throng around him, and calling for assistance.

I endeavored to calm him. "All young people are alike." The man was slinging his sketching paraphernalia into the car as he had once pitched the reference-books of the truants, and was preparing to go on without them.

"Alike!" he snorted, in reply. "Don't you think it. I never knew one of these abstemious creatures, temperamentally speaking, who could keep his head when he did cut loose a little. Why, it took us weeks to get as well acquainted as these two have become in just five days, and we were in Capri, too! This generation—" He broke off to welcome them with that guilty attempt at jocularity





MANTUA—THE OLD GONZAGA STRONGHOLD

Etched by Walter Hail

which we so often assume when in the midst of criticising a sudden arrival. "Thought you'd decided to walk on," he hazarded.

I myself was of the opinion that an explanation was not out of keeping. But they were unconscious of all irony. "Oh no, only to the corner for a minute," replied the blind ones, helping each other into the rear seat, "just to see the birthplace of—of" (a consultation here)—"of Stradivari."

"Humph!" returned the Illustrator, "that's been destroyed for ages." But the young couple didn't mind.

"If Cremona is instructive, wait till we come to Mantua," I suggested to them. As I did so, I was horrified to find that in five days I had such swift recourse to their first methods of enjoyment. However, the pursuit of learning had no attractions for them now. "Instructive!" scoffed the Young Man, as once the other man had scoffed; and from her: "It hardly matters, does it, while this soft Italian sun is shining."

The Illustrator grated into the high speed. "Sickening," he hissed, between his teeth.

From that time on, our efforts to attend the love-making of the young couple grew more and more frantic. The Illustrator still clung to the idea that some middle-aged joy ought to be derived from the situation if they only would let him come along; while I trailed after them relentlessly, more from a sense of duty, as before my vision there persistently arose two sets of parents who, with lifted eyebrows, questioned the thoroughness of my guardianship.

If I had attempted to inculcate in our guests the idea that Italy was conducive to love-making, Italy itself rose to the demonstration of the fact as though it were a living thing seeking to help me. Tall, cypress-shaded avenues were lovers' walks to them—that the way led to the cemeteries was of no moment; the barred gates of prisons were lovers' trysts; every castle on every hill had its romance; every town through which we swept, still bearing the scars of ancient conflict, was found, by diligent research, to have warred only for the love of ladies.

There was no use in telling the Young Man and the Young Woman

when we reached Mantua, for instance, that the place was noted for silk manufacturing. They had their Shakespeare, open, in their laps, to quote from, which set the lovely town back among the centuries where it belonged. They demanded a sketch—

"Upon the rising of the mountain foot,  
That leads toward Mantua,"

provoking more snorts from the Illustrator. "Shows he'd never been here—writing like a sausage of a perfectly flat plain," he ground out, doggedly. Even I, his stanch supporter, drew my breath at the iconoclast, while the young people lashed themselves into a perfect storm of sorrow that the great lover of all lovers had, indeed, never seen this country.

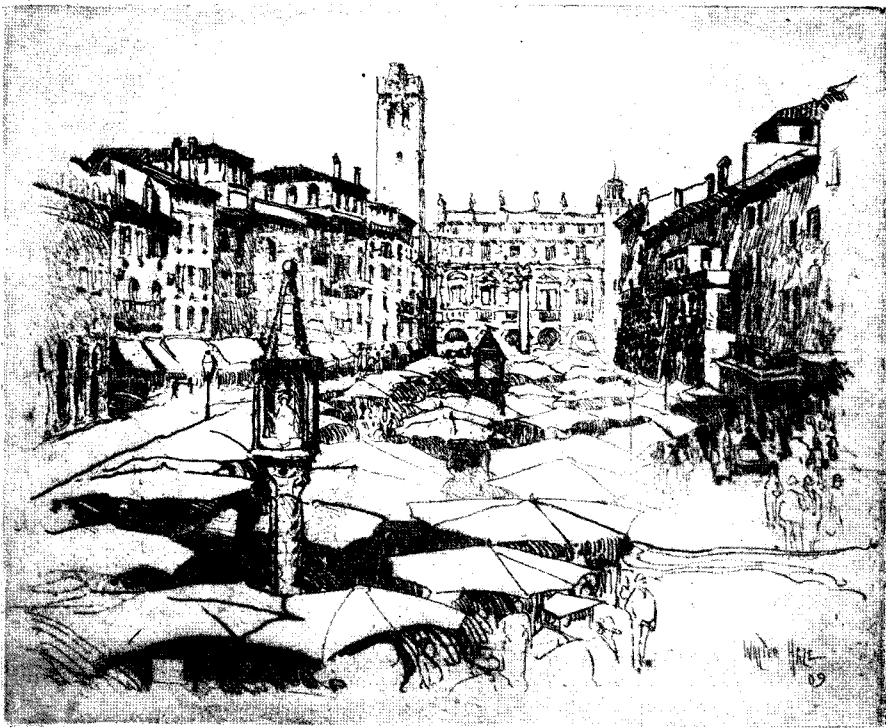
On the outskirts of Mantua they carried their grief, along with the copy of Shakespeare, into a small boat moored to the bank. This was done at the instigation of the Illustrator; by including them in his sketch, he argued, he could not only use but watch them. I asked myself if it was not Machiavelli who had said that he could deal with simple statecraft but not with youth, and as I mused, while the artist was intent upon the outlines of the old Gonzaga stronghold, a little rowboat slipped out into the Lago Inferiore, past the washing-women, past us, out of the sketch, out of our vision for an hour.

They returned without apologies—it was their custom now. We represented just two ugly old godparents with a magic pumpkin to haul them through enchanted country. They bore in their mouths many quotations for staying overnight, but with the contrariness of the man who is playing a losing game, the driver now was keen for going on to Padua. This, however, they met with a cry from *Romeo and Juliet*:

"'Tis death for any one in Mantua  
To come to Padua!"

and before we could confute them, having no Shakespeare of our own, and being a bit rusty, they went on to lighter badinage, catching the ball of humor and tossing it about—until we, harried, bewildered at this powder-play, emerged from the smoke of their sharp retorts and compromised upon Verona.





THE MARKET-PLACE, VERONA

It was not until we were well upon our way that we remembered their sudden acquiescence must have been occasioned by that flighty Juliet. Still, as the man at my elbow remarked (he talked principally between his teeth now), we would arrive late at Verona, make a sketch in the morning, and rush them on to Padua, where, he darkly hinted, he had plans that would circumvent a Delilah.

So on we whirled through the soft black night. The young couple intent upon themselves, the driver intent upon his engine, I intent upon the concocting of two letters to two sets of parents. I had thought their import was sufficiently severe at the time, but before I slept I added a more acid postscript to my mental composition. For, past my window, wafted out upon the air from the Young Man's window, came a gentle declaration.

"There is a lady in [Verona] here  
Whom I affect,"

quoted the stripling.

It was caught up and answered from the girl's window:

"My ears have not yet drunk a hundred  
words  
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the  
sound."

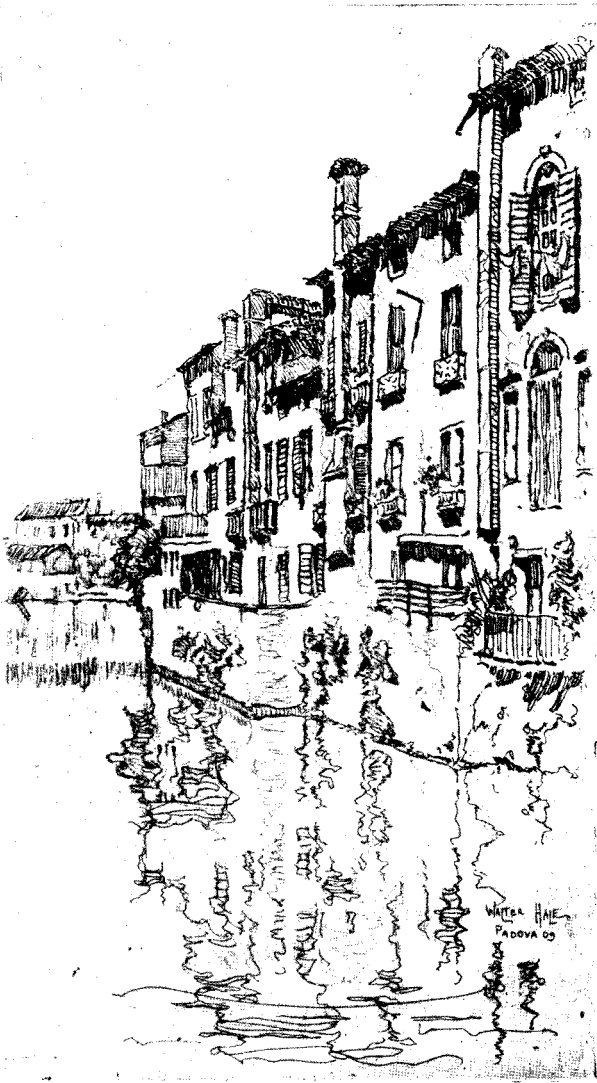
It was capped and silenced for the night from the Illustrator's window:

"Mark you this, Bassanio.

The devil can cite Scripture for his  
purpose."

There was a smashing-to of case-ments, all of us smouldering in the dark from various emotions, and there the feud rested.

If the artist did not retain the young couple in his sketch the following morning, it was not for lack of a borrowed third story from which to watch them.



A WATERWAY IN PADUA

I, as his faithful henchman, went with him, seeing to it that the children of the signora who loaned us the view did not sit upon the drawing-pencil. We were in a triumphant mood, inversely as the happy pair were subdued. They had elected to sit in the market-place below us and study the frescoes on the old palace façade; indeed, they had promised to do so. This was well, for it was a cloudy day and the umbrellas of the

hucksters, which might have hidden them, were still furled. A day bad for shadows, but the subject was one worthy of a drawing at any time. Yet the Italian sun is hard to keep behind the clouds when there are lovers about. It crept out and beamed upon the two. A big umbrella was unfurled over a stand of artichokes—we grew uneasy; the green beans next received a shelter—we could hear the young couple laugh. They were near the cucumbers, and as the sun shone hotter this miserable vegetable was also engulfed. The opening up of the coverings became general, they stretched into a lumpy sea of canvas. Certain fishy people swam around under them, and up a side street. When the sketch was finished we went, as one man, and poked them down from Juliet's balcony.

They were quite unashamed. "Did you enjoy your solitude *à deux*?" they asked us, brazenly.

We blushed a blush of middle age, and drove them sternly to Vicenza; for Vicenza, the Illustrator had discovered (by pecking stealthily into the Shakespeare), was not known to the poet. It is a charming place, but the man, in his desperation, thought his assurances to the contrary might keep from them the truth. "It is a dull town," he kept repeating, cheerily—"a dull town, no winding ways, nothing but bare open places. I'll do one of them, and draw

right from the motor, so you can all three sit and watch me." He spoke of this as one would hold out peppermint sticks to schoolboys.

"Why, if you *want* us to stay with you," said the young couple, smiling a very wise and old smile.

"What do you think they mean by that?" whispered the Illustrator. "I'm half afraid of them."

Their forced politeness made us conscious. Now that we had them well within our grasp, we didn't find their talk of any pleasing consequence; more than that, it limited our own range of conversation. Their presence barred themselves as topics, and also precluded some fond nothings which the middle-aged, when alone, can exchange without fear of being very funny.

This may have been the reason why the Illustrator, departing from his fell design of keeping them in quotationless Vicenza for the night, brought us to Padua to sleep. To me he excused his move by referring once again to the mysterious means which would turn the stream of the young creatures' bubbling spirits into their old quiet channels. It was maddening to listen to these stealthy hints as we rushed through the night, and to my guarded inquiries draw only guarded "'ssshes" in response. The young couple sang college glees from the rear seat. They were new glees since the time of the Illustrator, so that he could not join in with them, yet he was not annoyed. He nudged me painfully, uttering exultant gutturals. "Subtle influence," I gathered, and, "Creatures of habit, every one of us."

Although it was a trying evening, perhaps it was as well that the right moment for the unfolding came the next morning when I most needed it. The Illustrator found me sitting forlornly in a Paduan armchair, my breakfast cup untouched before me, and in my lap two letters which had been sent in from the bankers. Two letters from two sets of parents who were strangers to me, in answer to the ones which I had written when I was about to take their children under my efficient wing. From widely distant homes these letters came, the senders did not know each other, yet the contents were about the same.

"Be careful of our (boy, girl)," they wrote. "(He, She) is engaged to a most estimable young (lady, gentleman), so (he, she) tells us, whom some day we shall take into our home."

I put my head down on the Illustrator's shoulder. "Such duplicity!" I sobbed. "And more than that, how four young things must suffer!"

The man rose to the occasion! "I have just talked with them," he comforted. "I've given them the outlines of the plan of which I've hinted. Told 'em this was the seat of learning, that everybody studied here. I promised them that we would stay two weeks, and they could take a course of something at the university. In that way we'll get 'em back to their old ways."

I shook my head despondently. "They'll circumvent us."

"Not a bit. They went right off—delighted—to see about a course."

I looked hopeful.

"So you come out with me," he finished, with that protective air which compensates for his departing youth. "You come on out; I think that you and I can get some joy out of a Paduan canal without infantile assistance."

So we went out alone, and if the sunshine in the hearts of both was mellow, it was warm, and we did not feel the need of youthful fillips to a conversation which bore the stamp, at least, of much experience. There was a guilty pleasure in returning late to find the other couple waiting humbly.

We thought there was an intellectuality about them which we had for some time missed. We grew kindly.

"How's the 'varsity?" we questioned.

The Young Man answered, soberly enough: "We hardly know. You see, since we're to stay here for a fortnight"—he seized the hand of the Young Woman—"we've had our banns put up."

I rose, mighty in my sense of right, and wrenched their hands apart. "You can't; you're both engaged. I've heard from home."

It had absolutely no effect.

"Of course," said the Young Woman, "but to each other."

The Illustrator and I sat down suddenly.

The Young Man became a coward. It was the girl who broke the silence. "We thought we ought to keep it a great secret. We did so want to come along with you, but since you write and sketch and go in for being intellectual, we feared you wouldn't care to have two spoons around, so we started out to be—" she gasped here.

"Erudite?" supplied the Illustrator.

"Yes, thank you. But somehow the influence of—" another gasp.

"Of Italy?" suggested I, a touch of triumph in my voice.

The Young Man laughed aloud and pieced out the broken thread. "It was

some Italy, but it was mostly you—you two."

We popped up astonished heads. "Us!"

"Yes, your wanting always to be together, and alone, although you tried to hide it, so that threw us alone, making us forget the erudition game; and when we saw how happy you have been for all these years, we decided that we couldn't do a better thing than to follow your example right away."

"But we *can't* be an example," we screamed, joyous just the same; "we're middle-aged."

"Not in Italy," said the Young Man and the Young Woman.

## A Gleam of Crimson

BY ELLEN M. H. GATES

*Her dress on that day was of a most noble color, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her tender age.*—DANTE'S *Vita Nuova*.

WHERE old Florence sits majestic,  
With her treasures round her spread,  
Whispering to herself, and asking  
Endless honor for her dead;  
There, within the halls of silence  
Kept for memories and for dreams,  
Lo! a hue of softest crimson  
Through the shadow always gleams.

Ah, that festa by the Arno!  
Neighbors gathering, young and gay,  
Singing, dancing, speaking praises  
Of their lovely Tuscan May;  
And, among them, Beatrice,  
Gentle, serious, in her place;  
Guessing not her future story,  
Nor the sweetness of her face.

Unremembered are her features;  
All the eyes with joy aglow  
On that fateful eve in Florence,  
Darkened, centuries ago;  
But forever, clothed in crimson,  
Must a little phantom dance,  
And a color, rare and fadeless,  
Glow in Dante's sad romance.