

wished me to. She told me they were very unhappy, and I guess they were. I made them take my name and title off their play, and I burned my play the very next day, with a match, in my wash-bowl.

One morning, four days later, Kittie James approached me timidly and handed me a letter, and went away crying. The letter was from George Morgan, and this is what it said:

DEAR MAY,—Kittie has written me about your play. It's hard luck, and I want to say I'm sorry. Don't forget that there are others, and that it's all in the day's work. It was only a fortnight ago, you know, that you and I sat and watched a company making a Spanish omelet of *my* play! So, as a fellow playwright, I understand how you feel. But we'll show them, *yet!*

Your friend,

GEORGE MORGAN.

Perhaps you think I didn't cry over that letter! I cried till I was sick. And most of all because I hadn't known it was George's own play we were seeing

rehearsed! To think I hadn't told him more about how dreadfully sorry I was over what they were doing to it! I realized now that what happened to him and to me probably happens to every one, and that into each playwright's life some star must fall. Isn't that beautifully expressed—and so sad, too!

But there was yet time to tell George things. I went straight to the reading-room and stayed there for hours. I read Grey's *Elegy*, and the death of Ophelia and Juliet, and Burns's farewell to Highland Mary, and Sir Walter Raleigh's last letter to his wife, and the death of little Nell, and Napoleon's last days at St. Helena, and parts of *David Copperfield* ("Never again, O Steerforth, to clasp that hand in love and friendship!"), and about the battles of Waterloo and Leipzig; and I copied all the saddest parts of every one of them, to quote where needed. After that I thought about my own play.

Then I wrote to my dear, dear friend and fellow playwright—a letter of sympathy and understanding.



I BURNED MY PLAY IN THE WASH-BOWL

## A Cry

BY CHARLES F. MARPLE

LIVING is such a lonely task!  
A little joy, and then—anon!  
We cannot always wear a mask;  
Ah, God! is it too much to ask  
A little love to cheer us on?

# Hospital Social Service

BY ROBERT W. BRUÈRE

Formerly General Agent of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor

ONE morning, in late February three years ago, I met a member of the visiting staff of Bellevue Hospital out on his private rounds. It was one of those soft, bright days that the Gulf Stream sometimes brings unseasonably out of the tropics. Children danced responsively in the parks, and one was aware of a festive spirit among the men and women abroad in the streets. The physician, however, did not share the general elation. "What's wrong?" I asked, remarking his preoccupation. "I don't like it," he answered, vaguely. "Don't like what?" said I. "This reminder that summer is on its way." I laughed at his borrowing trouble so far ahead, but he was disinclined for laughter. He spoke of the holocaust of little children that annually recurs when the hot weather fills the hospital wards, and deplored the inability of the medical staff to cope single-handed with summer conditions. "What happens again and again," he explained, "is this: We discharge a child from the ward apparently convalescent; in a few days back it comes sicker than ever. Or a working-woman brings her baby to the dispensary; we diagnose and prescribe, and yet, in spite of our treatment, the patient steadily fails, if indeed we ever see it a second time. The fact is that there are home conditions which baffle our science—dirty rooms in dark tenements, insufficient and improperly cooked food, and the thousand other by-products of poverty to which the medical staff has deliberately closed its eyes. It's bad enough, Heaven knows, to send children back to such homes in winter when the microbe is partially ice-bound; but in summer, when everything they touch swarms with noxious parasites, I feel myself an accomplice in the undoing of every child I send out of the dispensary or discharge from the wards. I'm afraid I'm developing a conscience. Every warm

day like this is a voice that dins in my ears the reminder that unless I am willing to accept the usual results this summer, I must do something to forestall them now."

Accustomed as I was to the routine handling of patients in charity hospitals and dispensaries, this statement impressed me as memorable. I knew from experience the truth of what Dr. Richard C. Cabot has put so effectively in his *Social Service and the Art of Healing*—namely, that "the average practitioner is used to seeing his patients flash by him like shooting-stars—out of darkness into darkness; that, trained to focus upon a single suspected organ, he comes to think of his patients almost like disembodied diseases." Only a few days ago a medical friend invited me to attend his clinic in the dispensary of one of our great charity hospitals. On arriving at the hospital, we found the usual gloomy entrance packed like a subway station at rush hours with sick and crippled humanity. We elbowed our way to the examining-room, which, in sharp contrast with the entrance hall, was perfectly lit, spotlessly white, its very air scoured with disinfectants. While he was yet lifting his arms to the sleeves of his white hospital jacket, the doctor began calling numbers in chain-lightning groups—138-206-140—and the patients who held the correspondingly numbered tickets jostled in. Dozens came and went with surprising speed. In little more than an hour two men had *disposed of* fully forty-five cases. "What work we do," observed the physician, smiling, "is of the most excellent quality, but of course we haven't time to do much. Our first duty, for the performance of which we are held most strictly accountable, is to find material for the professors, who come on regular days, not only to lecture, but to give practical demonstrations before their students. Of ne-