



THE LION'S MOUTH

THE THIRTEENTH GODDESS

BY HENRY B. FULLER

FAR to the north of the great town's center the vast stream of travel still kept up its flow. It was a Saturday afternoon in summer, and thousands were making the Grand Weekly Escape. Over a wide triple avenue, inclosed by a double row of tall new structures, the flood of vehicles moved on: motor cars, motor cycles, motor buses; and then more motor cars, and more, in close, endless succession.

One of these distinguished itself from all the rest. It was a huge and gorgeous affair. It out-chugged, out-sputtered, and out-honked any of them. Speed laws seemed to mean nothing to its occupants. Its windows and panels glittered like a celestial city perambulant. Its doors displayed spread-eagles and lions rampant. Its chauffeur was liveried in scarlet. Its running boards were of glittering brass. Its four headlights, despite the sunshine, were all aglare. Its windshield—but it had none.

All at once this car began to slacken its speed. It slowly grazed the curb, a few paces from where I was sitting. I was on a bench in a small park which interrupted, for a moment, the strong march of the tall new buildings. I was surrounded by nurse maids and babies, by rollicking, rowdyish, little boys, and by a small miscellany of loafers and loungers—a company similar, in fact, to the company I had left an hour ago in another park, ten miles to the southward.

"Stop!" cried a loud, imperious voice from within the car. A footman, in scarlet, like the chauffeur, sprang down and set one of the eagles into sidewise

flight, and a woman stepped out and walked straight toward me.

She was a tall, robust creature. She advanced with a sharp look and a masterful stride. She was dressed in broad stripes of black and red, and her gown was covered with gold sequins that glittered and jangled. On her head she wore a sort of small, close-fitting helmet. The usual crest, however, was replaced by a panache—one plume was red, one was white, and one was blue.

"Ah!" she said, in a loud, commanding voice. "So you have come to see It."

"Madame," I replied, as I rose, "I have come to see nothing. I have endured the hurly-burly of your metropolis for more than a week, and now I'm looking only for rest and quiet."

"Rest and quiet where *I* am?" she rejoined with a harsh yet complacent laugh. The crowd in the park came clamoring round her. The crowd on tires roared past over its triple roadway. "You shall see It all the same."

"It? What?"

"That." She pointed to the far end of the park. A small white cottage stood among the last trees. "Come." She strode along with a kind of masterful, compelling grace. I thought of the walk of Juno—or was it Venus?—early in the *Æneid*.

"Madame . . ." I began. "Or, perhaps, Goddess . . ." I continued.

"Goddess is right," she remarked succinctly. "Of the Greater Gods there were twelve. I am the thirteenth—and the greatest of all. I am Publicity. You may bow."

I bowed. We all do. But I cringed, and I almost shrank away.

"Ho!" she cries. "Nothing sinister about me, I hope? Nothing ill omened?"

"Oh no; no, indeed," I hastened to assure this exigent divinity.

She led me toward the house. It was as small and simple and humble and rustic as could be imagined. It had a cramped side porch, and a lowly kitchen was tacked on behind. On one of its white shingles somebody had painted a small, black bird.

"A crow?" I ventured.

"A crow!" she returned disdainfully. "A Raven."

"Ah!" said I. Now I understood.

"Come," she urged. "We will enter."

I hung back. Three or four cars stood in front of the cottage. Some visitors were going in. Some others were coming out.

"I'd rather wait a little," I said.

"Very well," she agreed. "But consider for a moment. Try to realize what I have done. This is one of my greatest triumphs."

She stood there, feet well apart and arms akimbo, addressing not only me, but the gathering crowd as well.

"Think how little I had to work on, yet see how much I have accomplished. An obscure tragedy, involving obscure people, in an obscure and remote village—yet what I have made of it! Why, this spot, seventy-five years ago, was as far away as the Canadian border. Motor cars—*then*?" she asked, as a tall green tower, crowded in both its upper and lower stages, rolled by. "Trolley cars?" she continued, as a long red vehicle rasped and clattered past, under an adjacent viaduct. "Neighbors?"—with a wide sweep of the hand toward a nearby group of apartment houses, just built or building. "Doctors?—in that forlorn, deep-buried hamlet? Roads?" she asked of the wide concourse, with its hundreds of vehicles rumbling and glittering by. "And in winter, with the one sole track a stretch of frozen mud, it was farther away than Canada—it was as far away as the Pole. Oh, that January!—no food, no fire: it was the Pole indeed!"

I shuddered, in the hearing of such "copy."

"Come, now," she said to me. The last of the visitors seemed to have left.

We stepped along and gained the narrow porch. "Plenty of callers to-day," she said, with high satisfaction, to the custodian. "That's good, good, very good."

She paused in the doorway. Her tri-colored panache waved in the breeze and shone in the sunlight. "I have made him the greatest and best-known of our poets," she said, "and the most accessible. Everybody worships and wonders. Abroad they translate and imitate. At home we chatter and gossip about those last days incessantly. Isn't that glory? Doesn't that show—results? Follow me."

She led the way into a small square room. On one side, a table; on the other, a simple fireplace and mantelpiece. "Here he wrote," she declared, "his final masterpieces. And here," with a step toward the fireplace, "her mother and her husband stood on either side of the cold emptiness and asked, with eyes, the wordless question, 'What can be done?'"

She pushed me toward the rear. Another small room. "The kitchen. Bare and empty now as it was then."

She seized me by the shoulder, swept me past the dead fireplace, and propelled me toward a tiny chamber on the other side of the house.

"And here . . ." she began complacently . . .

In this narrow place a serious woman who wore a long touring veil was making her last observations and notes. A large, well-fed man took up most of the space left by his wife and by an old-fashioned four-poster bed. "And now, Mary," he said, "if you've about got this cleared up we may as well drive on." They passed out.

My guide began to dilate. The great moment was come.

"And here, in this room," she gloated, "the young wife, ill and undernourished,

died. Yes, in this room, and in this very bed. And now, thanks to me, everybody can come; everybody can see. I have laid out a magnificent avenue past the very door. I have crowded it with public conveyances. I have let in the Light. . . ."

"Madame!" I cried. "Cease! And go! Take your beak from out my heart, and get you back to your office. Leave me, I beg!"

"Oh, if you feel that way about it!" She swept out in high dudgeon, her plumes grazing the top of the low door. From the porch I saw her take her glittering, jingling way to the waiting car. The scarlet footman sprang down and slammed her in; the chauffeur, behind his absent windshield, gave out a hoarse honk; and the machine, gasping and spluttering, turned about and sped toward the south.

THE CASE OF "MY DAUGHTER"

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

HERE is the incident. A young girl of the approved flapper type was sitting at the extreme end of the car. She was busily engaged with a piece of fancy work. I will wager that she was not conscious of herself or her apparel—except, perhaps, with the slight virtuous consciousness of being well dressed, according to her standards of dressing. She certainly gave no sign of being aware that she was the observed of every male passenger entering the car. Oh, yes, her "endearing young charms," fully set off by her manner of dress, were evidently noted, if for an instant only, and then dismissed for the superior charms of the morning paper! It was for me a bit of pleasant comedy—this absorption of the girl in her fancy work and the momentary start and confusion of the masculine newcomer.

Suddenly, at my side, from an elderly gentleman who had irritatedly dropped his *Times*: "Madam, what would *you* do, if a daughter of yours dressed like *that*?"

Now, what I do not yet understand was the manner and the spirit of my reply: "Why, I wouldn't do *anything*! There's no harm at all in that young thing. She only wants to be in fashion!" I said much more in defense of the subject. I experienced a great wave of tenderness for her and a determination to put her case so that she might not be misjudged. Apparently, it was all in vain.

"Well!" declared the old gentleman, with a glance expressive of indignant disappointment in me: "All I can say is, that I have three married daughters with daughters of their own, and I can tell *you*, they wouldn't stand for any such indecency as that. We Southerners evidently have different standards."

I am still wondering why I took up the cudgels for a might-be but non-existent human creature belonging to me—why, on the contrary, I did not reply, courteously, but with a finality: "Sir, I have no daughter." I might also have contrived to convey in stating this fact a certain pensiveness, which, I feel sure, my interlocutor would have approved. Instead, I am left with a hypothetical offspring of the unfortunate age, most difficult to deal with—a flapper! And, being a person of a peculiarly irresponsible type, I am astonished that I should have taken this problem upon me when it could so easily have been averted. Does anyone understand the psychology outlined in this incident? I have sometimes thought that my behavior was merely a sporadic variant of the feminism of the day—a little exercise, so to speak, in polemics, as though preparatory to some vaster adventure in the defense of "something or other."

THE ANTIQUE BED

BY FREDERICK L. ALLEN

I HAVE one advantage over my wife in the matter of antique furniture. It is I who customarily drive the flivver. As most roadside antique shops are