



"'NAW! SWANSKY WAS KILLED WITH HANDS!'"

AT BRADY'S

BY

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WHEN it happened, I was learning the business by beginning at the bottom. I was a great, husky brute just out of college — or, rather, just off the football field, for, to me, college meant football. Besides football, I had absorbed a few vague sociological theories, which I suppose was what made me tell myself that I'd get a better grip on the men if I lived for a while as they did; that's what I told myself, but I really did it for the adventure of the thing. I felt rather puffed up because nobody saw through me, though why I should I don't know. Put a pair of dirty overalls on a man and set him to work in a rolling-mill, let a day's beard get

on his face, and when he has sweated good and plenty his college education's hidden fairly well.

I learned about people fast enough, and learned — the way every one does who learns at all — by finding out how little the human animal acts in accordance with tradition; how, under the pressure of the stronger emotions, he feels and acts differently from what we have been led to expect.

Leon, my foreman, took a fancy to me, and had me go to board with him at Brady's. Leon was a big fellow, with eyes like blue flames. He was liked for his unbelievable simplicity, and respected for his fiery temper. Indeed, his temper had the sudden and unreasoning quality of a lusty baby's — though, when a baby weighs

nearly two hundred pounds in packed-down muscle, and uses all his strength without realizing what this strength is, he may become dangerous.

I remember with a great wealth of detail how the room looked that night at the Bradys'. There sat Lotta, Brady's wife, slouching across the table, which she had cleared with a neat thoroughness that was a perpetual surprise to me, so at variance was it with her smoldering, slouching, down-at-the-heel beauty. Devil-spawn — that was what I called Lotta then, having yet to learn that, as life is diverse, the individual is no less so, and may at different times turn to one diverse faces. Lotta was one of those ill-begotten crossbreeds that the odd mixture of aliens in this country brings forth. Her father was black Irish, County Cork, and her mother, they told me, a dago — Sicilian was what she really was, I learned later, and there is a wide, bitter sea between the island and the mainland. Lotta walked as if the bog were continually sucking at her slovenly heels; she held her head as erect as a caryatid. From her dusky face, cut like a Carthaginian coin, she perpetually pushed back disorderly witch-locks of Irish hair. She had the quick Irish wrath that makes the sons of Erin break one another's heads for the sheer joy of anger, and the calculating Sicilian vengefulness.

I tell you that I was young and romantic, which perhaps was what made me imagine Lotta plotting from year-end to year-end to wreak her wrath on some enemy, and, when the hour of her reckoning came, I could imagine her in the fierce, joyful flare of anger, slaking her hate as remorselessly, as simply, even, as the thirsty man drinks.

This evening, Lotta lolled across the table, and in a slow, colorless voice that had a haunting foreign accent — for Lotta had been brought up among Italians — she indulged in her favorite game of baiting little Tim Brady.

Don't ask me why Lotta married Tim. Why does anybody marry anybody? Why Tim married Lotta was more obvious. She had undoubtedly flaunted herself in his eyes, the way she had flaunted herself in the eyes of any man she had met — and then hated him for having desired her. Thus did Ireland and Sicily perpetually fight in Lotta. She hated passionately the passion that she consciously aroused — hated it even more than she resented not arousing it. She loathed Swansky for having responded to her call. No one could say that Lotta was playing the game fairly — to lure people, and then desire keenly to destroy them for desiring her.

Now, as she lolled across the table, rousing the temper of her lord, she was conscious that Swansky never took his eyes from her. Swansky

just sat still and watched Lotta. He would have been good-looking but for his long, yellow fangs and for the expression that gave him the nickname of the "Mean Pole." He let his eyes travel over her as calculatingly as some one inventorying the points of a creature he intended to purchase.

Leon watched Swansky less overtly, no less intently. Blue fire flickered in his eyes, though his great length was stretched out, relaxed; for Leon wasted no effort in unnecessary tenseness.

Occasionally Lotta threw a glance at Swansky, a glance as taunting as the words that she spoke to her husband in her gentle, razor-edged tone, a glance that dared and defied, provoked and insulted, meeting his unwavering gaze squarely, measuring the insult of his look with the insult of her unspoken reply. The quick look she gave Leon from time to time — and which he did not see, being occupied as he was with Swansky — was as shy as that of a little girl coming tiptoe into a room were she hopes she is wanted but is not sure.

The whole atmosphere was like a jangling stringed instrument, untuned, but keyed up to the highest pitch. It was Lotta who had strung it up like this, and Lotta who drew out jangling noises with I know not what perverse satisfaction. It had even set my nerves on edge. The only person who escaped was Mikey Hurley, who, with the face of an Irish cherub, and with eyes turned heavenward, his chair tipped far back against the wall, his feet on another chair, serenely played an accordion and added orchestra to the drama. And the background of it all was a sizzling hot kitchen, furnished principally by an able-bodied cook-stove and a conscientious-looking sink, a kitchen as spotless as it was commonplace.

Stung at last beyond the breaking-point, Brady jumped to his feet, muttering something. He had a futile, flash-in-the-pan kind of anger.

Lotta narrowed her eyes.

"Swear at me," she said evenly. "Swear at me, do, before everybody." Her eyelids drooped; a glint of menacing onyx was all one could see between them.

Swansky laughed shortly, laughed like a jackal. Lotta's anger tickled his nerves pleasantly.

Leon rose to his feet; his eyes shot blue flame at Swansky. He made me think of some northern god about to rid the earth of an ignoble thing through the sheer force of his wrath.

"Now you've sworn at me, Brady, come on and hit me! Do it up brown for once, Brady," came from Lotta. She twisted her head ever so slightly and smiled at him. There was some-



thing so malevolent in her jeering anger, it is no wonder that I then called her "devil-spawn." She pushed back the hair that fell into her face. Swansky barked again.

"Some men would kill you for this," he said in his thick English. Lotta turned on him a dazzling smile.

"Shut your head!" she said. "No one spoke to you." Her tone was exquisitely polite.

"God, it's hot here!" said Leon. "Come on, Brady; we'll have a drink. Come on, kid!"

They stood aside to let Swansky leave the room, for he, also, had reached for his hat. Mikey Hurley, oblivious of all that had happened, played us out of the room.

Lotta did not move. She drew pictures on the bare table with her finger, and flashed one maddening look at Brady. Only I saw the shy look that stole, as it were on tiptoe, after Leon.

We were at breakfast next morning, Mikey Hurley, Leon, and I. Lotta was baking griddle-cakes. She was in good spirits and jollied Leon pleasantly.

"Where's Tim?" asked Leon.

"Search me," Lotta responded airily. "He didn't come in last night." This fact evidently gave her some perverse satisfaction.

"KEEP ME, CHERISH ME, FOR I
LIVE ONLY THROUGH YOU"

"When he does, he'll catch it," I reflected. Then my thought was crashed into as if by some falling object. A boy catapulted, panting, into the kitchen. Lotta turned on him in a fury, her mouth open to volley injuries at him. It stayed open, to change its expression, oddly, from anger to horror.

"Swansky's killed," the boy gasped. "He's been murdered. His head's near hammered off him on a stone." He spoke with a savage relish in the affair. He had run until his breath came rasping, that he might be the bearer of the news.

"Where'd they find him?" I heard myself asking.

"Was he dead long?" came from Mikey Hurley.

Eagerly the lad babbled details, then fled on to speed the tidings. A curious stillness settled

on us. Lotta stood as if turned to an absurd waxwork, her cake-turner in midair, a griddle-cake neatly balanced on it. Leon shuffled uneasily and looked at his plate, as if deeply embarrassed.

It was Mikey Hurley who broke the silence, asking, with rare tact:

"Say, Lotta, do you think — Brady —"

She let the griddle fall with a clatter that made me jump like a nervous cat.

"Brady!" she cried. "Brady! Naw! Swansky was killed with hands! How could Brady kill Swansky with hands? Swansky would 'a' broke him in two like a grasshopper. Oh, I wish to God he'd done it!" Upon which, Lotta, being overwrought in her nerves, sat down and wept.

I interpreted her speech to mean that she wished she had been married to a man with enough prowess to have murdered Swansky because of the insult that Swansky's calculating scrutiny had put upon her. Lotta knew, just as Leon and I knew, that Brady had been too occupied in sucking his own sore paws to notice Swansky.

It's queer how much more important a man like Swansky gets to be after he's dead — when he doesn't die in his bed. Now, there wasn't any one in the shop that wouldn't have been glad to have him out of it; yet, when they found him in the road back of the scrap-pile, with the back of his head very much knocked in on a stone, the rolling-mills and the saloons didn't talk about anything but Swansky, and who killed him. They didn't waste any sentiment on him. No one would say anything about Swansky, only that he was mean. Swansky the Mean Pole, he was before he was killed and afterward. If you have ever worked along with Slavs and Poles, you'll know what I am talking a' out. You'll find one of them, now and then, that will set a whole shop by the ears. They won't say much — just drop a word or lift an eyebrow: it will be enough to make every last Irishman in the crowd fighting mad.

Naturally, the police tried to put two and two together in Brady's disappearance and Swansky's death. We had all been at Halloran's that night — Leon and myself, that is, and Swansky, though we had not spoken. Brady had not been in the saloon at all. He had just stepped out into the darkness and vanished. That's all we had to tell the police — that, and that Swansky and Tim Brady "got on," and that Swansky had been only a few days in the house. They stopped bothering us pretty soon, and I guess they stopped looking for Brady, for the death of a Mean Pole don't count much when there's no widow or kids to make a kick about it.

It was about two weeks after this, one Sunday, that Leon and I took a trolley car to a picnic park. We sat apart, near a little stream in which children dabbled and on whose surface egg-shells curtsied and bottles bobbed grotesquely as if begging the picnickers who had thrown them in the water to rescue them. Since Brady's disappearance, Leon had worn rather a preoccupied, ruminating air; his eyes had been very mild. I took it that he was turning over the whole affair in his mind. We sat in silence a while. Snatches of song came to us, the noise of children laughing and crying, the shrieking and giggling of girls as they ran away in pretended fright from their boy friends. Perspiring women lugged stolid babies, or dragged children by the hands back and forth across the grass. In the distance, the merry-go-round gave forth the music of "La Spagnola," that Italian song whose melody is so curiously reminiscent of "The Bowery."

In this jumble of commonplace noises, I opened my mouth to say: "I don't believe Brady killed Swansky."

I remember that I spoke with a certain positiveness that must have seemed convincing to Leon; for he flashed a curious glance at me that made me wonder if he knew anything; and so, by way of drawing him out, I used the simplest form of the third degree — I had read about the way to do it in the papers. Staring at him, I asserted, with a meaning in my voice that I didn't feel:

"You don't, either, Leon."

"No," he echoed; and, after a slight pause, "No, I don't, either!" Then he said, "What makes you say that?"

"The same reason that makes you," I fenced craftily.

"Oh, speak out," said he; his manner had not changed a hair's-breadth. "Did you follow me out, that night?"

I had not remembered that he had left the saloon; now it vaguely occurred to me that he had. But I answered, "I might have," wondering what was behind it all. Not a suspicion of the truth flickered to me, even then.

"If you seen anything, tell me," he said. He did not even look around to see if any one was listening; it was I who made sure that we were not overheard.

"You tell me what you know first," I temporized.

"Why didn't you go to the police?" he asked me.

"Why didn't you? I didn't want to get mixed up with it," I answered.

At this he laughed.

"I didn't want to get mixed up with it," he echoed. "You see, I thought about it a lot."



“‘BRADY WAS NO KIND OF HUSBAND FOR LOTTA’”

I thought about it all that night, and ever since.” He paused. “They say, when you kill a person, you got to tell somebody once. I don’t mind tellin’ you, kid. You see, I didn’t mean to kill him, so that’s the same as if I didn’t kill him.”

I suppose at these words I must have changed color; I know my heart gave a queer big thump as if it suddenly filled my chest to bursting, and then pattered away against my ribs in an uncomfortable fashion.

“So,” he murmured, “you weren’t sure, were you, it was me?”

“No, I wasn’t sure,” I told him.

“You just saw some one bigger than Brady walking away — from it,” he brought out.

“That’s all,” I faltered. I couldn’t bear to tell him that I had so easily filched from him his secret.

“You didn’t go down to see what it was? Of course you didn’t, because you was in the saloon when I came back.”

“I only knew who it was next morning.”

“Well,” said Leon, “I never went out to kill Swansky. I was walking along, sort of looking out for Brady,—when Lotta makes him mad, sometimes he goes off that way,—an’ Swansky come along; he must ‘a’ followed me.

“‘Good evening, Leon,’ says he; ‘you’ve got fine blue eyes to stare with.’

“You know how he talked, like something thick and nasty running out of a barrel. I just

lost my temper — you know, I’ve got quite a hot temper.” He looked at me like a little boy confessing a fault. “I went for him!”

I could imagine his “going” for Swansky. It must have been like the onrush of an avalanche.

“We clinched; he fell; I fell on top of him, and his head was smashed on a stone. All smashed! When I saw how smashed, I saw there was no good doing anything.”

“Then you came right back to the saloon?”

He nodded gently.

“I wanted to wash my hands, and I wanted a drink — I wanted a drink bad. It shakes you when you kill something like that, even if it’s a Mean Pole.”

His simplicity had served him better than any ruse. He had done the ideally right thing. He had washed his hands and taken a drink; and, being shaken, he had felt the need of human society, and had stayed quietly with the rest of us, and gone home with me.

He didn’t even ask me not to tell. He told me with the same simplicity that he had acted, looking at me straight, with serene young eyes. He took it for granted that I judged him as leniently as he judged himself. A regrettable accident, the killing of Swansky had been, for which he was no more to be blamed than if he had inadvertently smashed Swansky’s head by letting a brick drop on it. It was not, he claimed, like happening to kill anybody you were fond of. Still, he admitted that it was an awful lesson to

him. He remarked gravely that he should keep his temper better in future.

"I'm glad you feel like I feel. I thought anybody'd feel like I feel, but there's some things it's nice to know. Of course, I know how Lotta feels. I'd almost like to tell Lotta," he said wistfully, "but I guess it's just as well that as few people know as possible."

I agreed with him, helpless in the face of his innocence, that it was better. I was helpless, too, in his failure to follow the literary tradition. He was not feeling any of the things that both the literature of the newspapers and the literature of books had led me to suppose that the murderer feels, even when he has murdered by mistake. Calm and tranquil, passive and self-forgiving, was Leon. He did not fear the sight of his blood-stained hand. He had looked the matter over, and had then, apparently, said to the heart of the universe, "I didn't mean it"; and the heart of the universe had answered back to him, "I know you didn't," so peace was his.

"But what," asked Leon, "do you suppose has become of Brady?"

"I suppose," said I, "that he may have lit out for the night because he was tired of Lotta's nagging, and then read about the murder in the paper and saw they were looking for him."

At this Leon's face grew troubled.

"I'd hate to think I was keeping Brady out of anything," he said. He ruminated a moment. "Brady was no kind of husband for Lotta."

With which I agreed heartily, but wondered to myself just what kind of a man would be.

In the next few days I got a vague inkling of this. With the irritation of Brady's presence removed, and with Leon, as Brady's friend, a sort of unofficial head of the house, I had strange glimpses of a different Lotta. Instead of gnawing on herself, as she had always seemed to me to be doing, and then making others pay for her own suffering, I saw a different creature steal forth — a shy, appealing somebody; this for Leon, however. She treated Mikey Hurley and me to a broadside of her indifference — we had failed to respond to her charms.

I was too occupied with myself to spend much time on Lotta. I'm ashamed to say it, but I felt that the situation was becoming intolerable — Leon's placidity had in it something monstrous. I'd have felt it more than that if I had killed a man by chance on the football field. I remember the sickening noise a fellow made that I tumbled on top of and knocked the breath out of once. And Leon had killed in anger. No, I could not sit there and watch him enjoying life, his conscience as much at rest as that of a sleeping child. I suppose that is what

education does for one. I couldn't get rid of the thought of his simple words that he wanted to wash his hands, after he discovered that Swansky's head was so very much smashed.

Lotta, too, got on my nerves. Hang it, after all, a woman's husband is her husband; and Tim Brady had been a good husband. He didn't drink. To be sure, his was not a high grade of efficiency, nor was he a heroic figure of a man. A little anxiety as to the whereabouts of her lord would have been becoming in Lotta, especially as, the last time she had seen him, she had fairly baited him out of the house. If she'd gone wild with anger, it would have seemed to me the human desire to justify herself; but apparently she felt no more need of justification than did Leon. As far as Lotta was concerned, there might have been no Brady at all. No; decidedly, the two of them got on my nerves — Leon, the inadvertent murderer, who with such placidity had dismissed the untoward adventure from his mind; and Lotta, the deserted wife, who made no more outcry about her desertion than if Brady had been a yellow pup that chance had brought to her kitchen for a night or two, and which had then wandered on.

What I wanted, to relieve the situation, was some outward sign of emotion — some gloomy brooding on Leon's part; I wanted Lotta to take some notice, any kind of notice, of Brady's abrupt departure.

I came into the kitchen one night, and there sat Lotta and Leon on the kitchen stoop. Lotta was mending something; Leon sucked at his pipe. His extraordinary eyes were two calm lakes of light; his hand rested on his great knee. He was perfectly contented with the world, and contented to be near Lotta. There was something about their happy quiet that sickened me. They appeared so domestic — yes, positively domestic. Swansky was dead, and Leon had done it; and he sat there and sucked his pipe. Brady was wandering around the earth, sent away from home and friends by Lotta's intolerable devilishness; and she brushed her untidy hair out of her eyes, and sewed, and shot shy, maidenly glances at Leon.

Instead of admitting my squeamishness, I invented for myself the story that I had got everything out of this special experience that was coming to me, and cleared out. I got a job, a better one, in a place quite a distance away. A different class of men were working in the mills, the older ones almost all of them Welsh this time, and a lot more American-born.

One night, as I was going home from work, suddenly a man who was about to pass me stopped and slunk into the shadow. If he had gone on I shouldn't have recognized him, but

the light from the street-lamp struck his face for the fraction of a second. I went up to him.

"Hallo, Brady!" said I, and put out my hand. He shook it — ill at ease, I could see. He had a hunted air, an air of conscious guilt that would have convicted him before any enlightened jury.

"What are you doing here, Brady?" I asked.

"I'm here because of the mill," he simpered. "It seemed kind-a homelike!"

For a second I understood the roots of Lotta's contempt for him. It was the one place in the world where an inconspicuous chap like Brady ran the risk of being recognized, just as he had been by me; for there is always some shifting of workmen in a special trade like this. Then he said to me, in a low voice:

"Say, kid, I didn't kill him. Honest to God, I didn't!" He looked so futile, such a poor creature of a man, that it made me laugh, the idea of Brady's having killed a hulking, yellow-fanged brute like the Mean Pole.

"I know you didn't," I answered.

"How'd you know?" he asked. "D'you know who did?" was his next question.

We fenced around a while, and presently I became sure, from things he let drop, that he knew all about the affair. I snared him with as little effort as I had Leon. Perhaps they do it better when they are guilty, or when they're up against the police; but the application of the third degree is not the dread psychological process that it's supposed to be, if people are like Brady and Leon.

"What made you run off, Brady?" I asked. He stared at me, round-eyed.

"Why, you know, I'd seen him do it — I seen him; and I was afraid there might be some clue about it and I'd be called on for witness — I'm the only witness, you know. Then I heard they wanted me, and I got scared. If they got me, why, Leon'd have to confess, you see, or I'd have to squeal!" It was as simple as two and two.

We sat on a pile of sewer-pipes, I remember, which was in the peculiarly black shadow that electric lights cast, and Brady babbled out his story, beginning at the very beginning — babbled like a man who has been alone on a desert island, uncloaking his poor little soul to me in a way that, young as I was, sent a shiver through me. It's your unutterably commonplace man who, if he lacks self-consciousness enough and talks enough, gives you your picture. He piles up detail on detail until you have your story as complete as if you'd lived it; very likely he will bring in, like a refrain, the thing that he has longed for most. The thing that Brady had suffered for was home — home and wife; not Lotta, mind you, but just plain wife,

the woman who was lawfully his, was what Brady wanted.

"At first I was kind-a glad to be away," he told me. "It seemed sort-a larky. I was mad at Lotta that night." He had forgotten how mad, and how unceasingly mad Lotta kept him. The free, light feeling that he had had at first had speedily vanished. He had been like a child trying to play runaway. Very soon panic had closed in on him, panic and homesickness, the desire of the undeveloped mind for the places with which it is familiar. Oh, the heartbroken voice in which he cried out:

"You don't know how I have wanted a drink of beer at Halloran's!"

There was something terrible in the wistfulness of his voice. It seemed hideous to me that an innocent, kind little man should want so much a glass of beer at Halloran's and not be able to have it. I remember, he said several times in the course of his narrative:

"I don't like trampin', and I don't like tramps!"

And that is what this poor home-body had had to do. But, through it all, it had never occurred to him to go home and let Leon take his chances, or to write to Leon. There exists for everybody in this world something, as the saying is, he can't do; and the special thing that Brady couldn't do was to go on the witness-stand against a friend; he couldn't even contemplate putting himself in a position where this might be remotely possible. He had kept out as unquestioningly as he had gone away; and it dawned on me, after a while, that his fear was more for Leon than for himself. When he told me, "honest to God," he didn't do it, he was merely clearing himself with a friend.

We are all familiar with the term "cut adrift"; but to hear a phrase, and to know what it really means, are two very different things. I hadn't known what this meant until I heard Tim Brady talk that night.

He prattled on tirelessly, piling detail on top of detail. He couldn't get into life at any point. He had always worked in the mills, and there wasn't anything else for him to do now. Adrift, the shadow of his friend's crime over him, was what poor Brady was; and as the tides ebb and flow, carrying seaweed and refuse with them, so the tides of life carried that poor bit of human drift-wood aimlessly up and down, longing unspeakably for his place in the world — his home, his woman, his glass of beer at Halloran's! That in giving these up as he had he had done anything heroic, had never occurred to him. He had followed a law of his nature, which seemed to him no more to his credit than breathing.

"Why," I suggested, "don't you let Leon

know you know? Anyway, why don't you change your name and get a job far West in some mill? Let your beard grow," I urged him. Brady was one of those colorless men so like the rest of the world that the slightest outward change disguises them completely. "Anyway, if you want to so much, why don't you go back and hide in your house? I'm going East soon; come along with me," I said.

"I'd like to," said Brady; "I'd like to."

How much he would have liked, the yearning of his voice showed.

"Say," he told me, "you come with me,—you come up to my place with me. I don't like to go alone!" He had been drift-wood for so long, you see, that he needed some one now to steer him to port.

It was what I was perfectly willing to do. I suppose that I still had sticking in my crop the large complacency of Leon and Lotta; the spectacle of seeing them shattered out of it, I thought, would be a pleasant thing. I wanted to see, too, this shadow at my side turn into a man again. For, sitting there in the blackness of the night, the kind of things he said made me think of him as a ghost hungering for life again.

I had great fun coming East with him. I disguised him, and we lived like tramps. It was a great lark for me.

It was dusk when we approached his house. The window-shades had not been pulled down, and the light streamed beckoningly from the kitchen. As we had gone through the squalid outskirts of the manufacturing town, every familiar object of this place where he had been a person, a man living like other men, was burned into Brady's brain as if with fire, as I could see by some little things that he let fall. Every trifling alteration, the clearing away of a fence, the building of a new house—he remarked on them all.

"I wanted," he said over and over, "to come home just once, even if I had to go away again."

I had intended to go on first and find out from Lotta if the coast was clear. I had rather fancied seeing what she'd say when I told her of Brady's return. But Brady insisted on going with me. He couldn't wait. He wanted to look at his house; for that's what it was to Brady, this rented tenement—his house.

We peered in through the window with caution. Leon and Lotta were alone there—Lotta in a chair, Leon standing over her. They were not speaking. Then Lotta raised eyes to Leon—dove's eyes, good eyes, eyes full of submission,

eyes full of the promise of loyalty, the eyes of an adoring child. No caress they could have given each other could have been so eloquent, no word they could have spoken so impressive. All that was good in the woman had come to the surface. "Take me," her look seemed to say; "keep me, cherish me, for I live only through you. I am yours, the work of your hands, the creature of your making!" If ever the soul of a woman came to her eyes, Lotta's did at this moment. The change in her was, to me, infinitely touching, as if the only reason she hadn't been good before was because she had been waiting for Leon, that the need of him had been gnawing at her, and that in the pain of her cruel waiting for him she gave pain to others.

How long we stared in at the window, like creatures looking at paradise, I don't know. As I look back at it, it seems to me a long time that Leon stood there, looking at Lotta, and Lotta raised her face, full of love and pride and trust, to her man—Lotta, turned from a devil to an angel through love. Presently as they moved, by some force outside of ourselves we turned without speaking, and went away. I remember wondering to myself, "What will Brady do?" expecting to see him go back, perhaps, into the house.

"Well?" I said, after a time.

Brady smiled at me sheepishly.

"I guess I'll be going," he muttered vaguely.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

Somehow, the irony of it all made me shiver. Brady, the innocent one, outside; and, inside, Leon, who had killed Swansky, and Lotta, whose vicious tongue had whipped Brady out of the house, happy with the happiness of perfect understanding.

"Where am I going?" said Brady. "I don't know. Out West, I guess, and let my beard grow." He spoke like a boy who was reading a lesson.

I put him on a West-bound train the next day, certain in my heart that poor Brady would never do anything so decisive as to let his beard grow, and take another name, and find a job. He had made all the effort he was capable of when he came back; and now, cut adrift for the second time, he would continue to drift, and die, most likely, a drunken vagrant—for drink would be the only refuge that his vague and unimaginative spirit would think of. It takes a specially hardy kind of plant to stand uprooting.

Meantime, Lotta and Leon are happy, while Brady drifts up and down the earth—which is the way that things happen in this world.



HORACE FLETCHER AT HIS HOME IN VENICE

SOME MODERN IDEAS ON FOOD

BY

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ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

AT the present time many hundreds of thousands of people in the United States are voluntarily abstaining from eating meat. They are doing this as a protest against the increasingly high prices exacted for this staple of modern life. Their action, however, if continued indefinitely, may have not only economic but important physiological results. It calls attention anew to the many experiments made in the last few years by scientific investigators on the whole subject of nutrition. Besides the vegetarians, who are sentimentally opposed to the consumption of animal flesh, there is a growing body of scientific men who attribute to the excessive use of meat many of the distinctive physical evils that seem to be increasing at the present time.

In the last twenty-five years medical science

has waged an unceasing and largely successful warfare against contagious diseases. The practising physician has now lost that helpless horror with which he formerly saw the membrane gather in the throat of the diphtheritic child. The mortality from typhoid fever, scarlatina, and pneumonia has decreased nearly one half. Tuberculosis kills only two thirds as many people now as it did twenty years ago. Yellow fever has all but disappeared from the Southern ports in which it was formerly an annual scourge. Even so hopeless a malady as cerebrospinal meningitis, which five years ago destroyed three out of every four of the children it assailed, now takes only one. Medical science seems pointed fairly toward the goal which half a century ago would have seemed as unattainable as another golden age—the elimination, from civilized society, of all contagious diseases.