

KISMET

BEFORE the world had thought to be,
 Or stars their courses ran,
 Alone and free the Sisters Three
 Shaped out the thing called man.

And what they ruled by rune and rhyme
 Ere yet the sun had sway,
 We, at the pinnacle of time,
 Must think and do to-day.

They weighed the portion of our tears,
 And dealt the cards of joy,
 To whom the awful roaring spheres
 Are but a noisy toy.

Yet each man takes his life in hand,
 And lives it bit by bit—
 The life he cannot understand—
 And thinks he fashioned it!

But do they smile, the Sisters Three,
 Who wove the web of old?
 I wis their hearts must gentle be,
 Although their eyes are cold.

Only, the problem must not stop
 In solving, for all time—
 The way unto the mountain-top
 Must be a weary climb.

Take, then, the measure of distress,
 For each, since time began,
 Must drain the cup of bitterness
 To make himself a man.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



THE GREATER QUESTION

HUSBAND—I don't see how I can afford to send you away this Summer.
 WIFE—I wish you would solve a much more important problem than that.
 "What is it?"
 "Just where I'd better go."

THE POMPADOUR'S PROTÉGÉ*

By Kate Jordan Vermilye

THE PEOPLE

THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR . . .	<i>Favorite of Louis XV.; in the zenith of her beauty, about twenty-seven years of age</i>
MACHAULT	<i>In favor with THE POMPADOUR; very handsome, very manly, elegantly, but not foppishly, dressed; about twenty-five years of age</i>
D'ARGENSON	<i>An enemy of THE POMPADOUR's; a cynical, blasé, effeminate court exquisite, about forty years of age</i>
ATHÈNÉE	<i>A native of Martinique, very pretty and earnest, simply attired, about eighteen years of age</i>
SACAR	<i>THE POMPADOUR's small, black slave boy</i>

THE time is late Summer, in the year 1757. The Scene, after Fragonard, is an enchanting spot in the gardens of Versailles. Alleys, in varying tones of green, show a billowy cloud effect of sky in the perspective. The spot is enclosed in a frame of foliage. In the foreground there is a column bearing a statue; the base of this forms a marble seat with steps. Behind the statue, and over it, clamber the loose roses of late Summer. The singing of birds is heard. Now and then an overblown rose sheds its petals, which flutter through the sunlight, and this occasional drifting of a breeze-blown flower is sustained throughout the act. When the curtain rises, it is a golden afternoon on the edge of sunset. COUNT D'ARGENSON paces slowly to the alley extending back, and looks off.

D'ARGENSON

The blow to her vanity this morning has not made The Pompadour punctual.

(He takes out a letter.) If she knew my real reason for seeking this interview! (Holds letter off, and laughs.) The king's dismissal from Versailles! Her social death warrant! When I deliver it, I shall feel that it satisfies my hatred of her, and wipes out old scores. (He puts it again in pocket. Soft singing is heard in distance.) Ah! With her usual insouciance! (D'ARGENSON listens expectantly, comes down, and stands waiting.)

THE POMPADOUR appears at the end of the alley. She presents an exquisite picture of beauty and splendor, framed in flowers. She comes forward slowly, smiling, carrying a high cane. She is followed by SACAR.

THE POMPADOUR

I've kept you waiting, count. I hope, in this delicious quiet, where Autumn is just hinted at, you have reflected—on your sins. (She extends her hand. He kisses it with excessive hu-

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