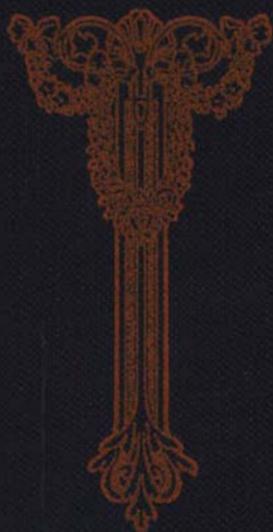


RENO REVERIES



by

LESLIE CURTIS

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BY

LESLIE CURTIS



Distributed by
ARMANKO STATIONERY CO.,
156 N. Virginia St.
RENO, NEVADA.
By mail, \$1.10 postpaid.



RENO REVERIES

Impressions of Local Life by Leslie Curtis
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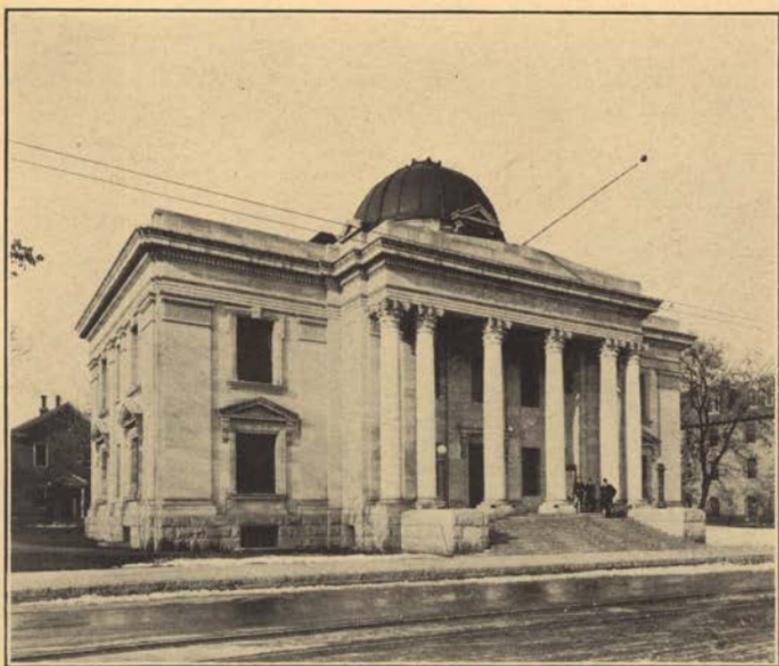
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WISE BOY!

*Miladi fair to Reno goes,
To ventilate domestic woes,
While Cupid acts as chaperon
That she may not return alone.*



WASHOE COUNTY COURT HOUSE. HOME OFFICE OF THE ALIMONY CLUB. THE TIED GO IN AND THE UNTIED COME OUT



VIRGINIA STREET, RENO, NEVADA. LETTERS PASSING THROUGH POSTOFFICE ON RIGHT TELL STRANGE STORIES OF REAL LIFE NOT FOUND IN MAGAZINES

RENO REVERIES

OUT WHERE THE TEST BEGINS

(With Apologies to Arthur Chapman)

Out where the Liberty Bonds grow stronger,
And a six months term seems a darn sight longer,
That's where the test begins.
Where tangled lives meet in silent sorrow
And Disillusion begins to borrow
The joy and hope of a new tomorrow,
That's where the test begins.

Out where the new ones are always bluer,
And the friends one has are a little newer,
That's where the test begins.
Out where a broader viewpoint's growing,
Where there's more of guessing and less of knowing,
Where the new ones come and the old are going,
That's where the test begins.

Where the legal lights new suits are making
And plaintiffs go to the Courthouse quaking,
That's where the test begins.
Where the tale is told and the Judge is sighing,
Where the wind croons low like an old love dying,
And Freedom says "What's the use of crying?"
That's where the test begins.



Reno—the clearing house of illusion.



Teacher—"Willie, where is the Great Divide?"
Willie—"Reno!"

RENO

Reno is a haven for the heart that breaks.
Reno is the clearing house for all mistakes.

The climate is attractive,
The legal lights are active,
And everyone—yes, everyone
Is glad to come to Reno!

Reno! Reno! Biggest little city on the map!
Reno! Reno! Just the place to end a silly scrap!
Where the sunshine is eternal and the dark clouds
roll away,
Where the broken hearts are mended at the Courthouse
every day,
Where the moon shines bright on the Truckee
every night,
It's a great little place,
It's a great little place,
It's a great little place to stay!



TEAR DUST

The sunset floods the desert in flaming glory;
Yet there is no answering fire in my heart—
For the little flower in the shadow of the sage-brush
Is dead.

The stillness of the desert speaks of many things.

In the thick shroud of the London fog—
Do you ever think of the little flower
That grew in the shadow of the sage-brush;
A little flower that died from lack of care?

APPRECIATION

RENO? A cameo set in snow-clad mountains, kissed by glowing sunsets, caressed by pure breezes from the great wastes of silence, a beautiful garden on the edge of the desert.

Are you so steeped in shams of society, bondage of cities, slavery of convention, that you can gaze upon it without wonder?

Behold the sky—Nevada's blanket of perpetual blue, that puts the East to shame and routs the Storm King to less lovely climes. See how the shafts of sunlight lend a thousand hues to barren mountains, crowning the snow-capped peaks with glistening halos of pure gold. Even the sagebrush, gray with desert dust, changes to pink, deepens to rose and finally joins the purple of immeasurable distance.

How soft the music of the Truckee, a mystic stream born of the snow, in Tahoe's hills begotten and doomed to sink in weird Lake Pyramid. Pure as the soul of childhood, clear as crystal, did rippling water ever whisper such good cheer to him who loiters by a river bank? Yet there are quiet pools, in whose still depths the water flows as peacefully as lives that know no pain and on the surface all is calm and sweet. Pause on the bridge and listen to its message—you who are weary, bowed with human care.

All hail the sunset, Nature's crowning glory, spread on the canvas of a perfect sky. No artist lives to duplicate its wonder—deep purple shot with gold, the crimson splendor or the green and rose, while sometimes yellow blended into orange floods the whole valley as in triumph thrown. Then fading slowly into shades of pearl and opal, the twilight reigns until the veil of evening shrouds the great West in darkness.

'Tis night in Reno. Pure air, unspoiled by smoke of crowded cities—through which the stars shine brilliantly and clear like diamonds set in Heaven's wondrous dome—brings to the one who breathes it joy of being and love of all things beautiful and good. Behind yon distant mountain lurks the moon, disclosing first a tiny silver rim which rises on the canopy of night until its circled body clears the hills and floods the valley with inspiring light. While far below, the Truckee winds like thread of silver, binding the heights to valleys vast and fertile, where once the sagebrush knew no conqueror. How like our lives it is—laughing and bubbling through youth's happy moments, meeting the quiet pools with steady flow and current strengthened in the mill of time, then ever drawing near to sad oblivion—inevitable journey of mankind. Yet on its tranquil breast, bathed in the matchless moonlight, lie the boats with gentle movement gliding to and fro, lulled by the sounds of laughter and of song. Upon the banks, beneath the deep tree shadows, sit happy lovers dreaming of Life's morrow. And over all a silence born of ages, like benediction soothes the souls of men.

To Reno, home of beauty, salutation! Blessed by the Gods and loved by all who know thee, what wonders lie unfathomed at thy gates? What treasure house of precious stores beneath thee and vast unconquered lands that hedge thee 'round? Wake, smiling Reno, greet thy glorious future, ascend the throne of industry and reign—a Sovereign City in the hearts of men!



An affinity is the witch hazel of dis-illusion.

NEVADA

Nevada, my Nevada,
A desert and a sky,
A thousand miles of sagebrush
To greet the weary eye.
A thousand miles of sagebrush
Upon a field of gold,
A thousand miles of silence,
A charm that's never old!

Nevada, my Nevada,
An endless inland sea
Of alkali and sagebrush
And winds forever free,
Out of thy desert vastness,
Out of thy deathly dust,
There comes a lure that grips the heart
And kills the wanderlust.
A lure of length'ning shadows
Of sunsets in the West
Of winds forever sighing,
That soothe the soul to rest.

Nevada, my Nevada,
Far from the haunts of men
My weak and weary spirit
Has found its own again.
Out of thy desert vastness,
Out of thy deathly dust,
There comes a balm that heals the heart
And kills the wanderlust.



TO AN EX-MATE

I cannot say what you want me to say,
Dear, for the spirit is mute.
Words insincere are best silent, my dear,
Silent, lest Time should refute.
Closed is the curtain that darkens the past,
Steady the beat of my heart,
Only in dreams it remembers, my dear,
You who have torn it apart.

There was a day when I wanted to say
All that you hunger for now;
Warm were the lips that were waiting for yours,
Cold was your kiss on my brow.
You who left gold for the glitter of dross.
Wounded and scarred by the years,
Ask me to say what you want me to say—
Bid me to smile through the tears.

You who are tired, world-weary and worn,
Sad in the light of the truth—
If you should come as I want you to come,
Once the beloved of my youth,
And I could say what you want me to say
Words that would lessen your pain,
Tell me, my dear, from the depths of your soul,
Would you be happy again?



Judge—"Why do you wish to resume your maiden name?"

Plaintiff—"Because I want to be a-Miss legally."

TO DON JUAN

He built for me a Spanish house
A palace made of dreams;
Contentment in the patio—
Endurance in its beams—
And bougainvillia clambering
Upon the outer walls,
To guard a garden of romance
Where silver moonlight falls.

He built for me a flowered court
Where tinkling fountains play,
And color riots in the sun
To greet the happy day,
When I can say "Goodbye" to Grief,
"Begone!" to vagrant sigh—
To loiter in the house of dreams
And let the world go by!

He built for me a Spanish house
A-down the lane of years,
Where we could live and laugh a bit
And hide away from tears.
Yet somehow I am wondering—
(A fearful thought it seems!)
How many others has he asked
To share his house of dreams?



Teacher—"Where is the best place to buy Liberty Bonds?"

Experienced Offspring—"Reno!"

TWO LETTERS

Hers

Reno, Nevada, November 7th.

DEAR ROBERT: I am calling you by the old name for the last time. You are no longer mine. Today I stood by the side of an open grave—heard the clods falling one by one—on all that is worth living. How dull they sounded on the hollow coffin of my disillusion! It may seem right in time—I don't know—there are so many angles to this life.

The proof of our parting is trembling in my hand—a frail parchment that divides us—you and I—until eternity. The Judge was very kind—he did not disturb the ashes—except once—he asked if I still cared. I faltered and answered that you wished to be free. That was all.

There—I am crying—christening the document that separates us. It has fallen to my feet. I can see the teardrops glistening in the firelight. There are six of them—one for each year. How childish I am!

The wind howls horribly tonight—like a lost soul crying for its keeper. It reminds me of our first kiss—do you remember? You took me in your arms so gently and said, "Sweetheart, if I had you—life would be all sunshine!" Tonight the wind howls. I am alone! And you—my Robert—are with her. Do not think me jealous—my heart is hurt too deeply for that. There was a time—at first—but it is over now. If you can find happiness with her—I am glad. But she can never understand—as I do. That is why I give you up so willingly.

It came to me in the ballroom—the night of Alicia's debut. I was sitting behind some tall ferns—it was not your fault—you did not know. Besides I should have been dancing, but I was so tired and wanted to be taken home. Suddenly I heard your voice through the shrubbery—the voice I loved. A woman laughed and you said, "Adele, I love you—have always loved you!" The music seemed a thousand miles away—my finger nails cut into the flesh—the color faded from life. Someone asked me to dance—I sent him away that I might listen to my own death knell. You said, "It was all a mistake—this marriage. She is simple and childish—she doesn't understand a man's life." Oh God—I understood too well!

How the music wailed and when an hour later she gave me her soft white hand and said "Goodnight"—I smiled into her beautiful dark eyes. May she never know the price of that smile!

You were kind that night—were you sorry for me? It seemed that you had never been so gentle before. I nestled close in the carriage—even though the odor of her violets permeated your clothing. Nothing mattered then—I was beyond pain.

Such a long, cruel night—hours that dragged themselves into eternities—and you slept like a healthy school boy. How I wrestled with the bursted bubble of my happiness—clinging close to you, who had hurt me most—listening to the steady throbbing of your strong man heart—knowing the glad warmth of your dear body for the last time. Robert, may you never know the agony of such a night. Life is all froth to you, who skim its surface—I have drained the dregs.

At last the morning came. The light fell across your face and played on the gray hair around your

temples. I kissed your eyes, your cheeks, your mouth—and then—Oh, God!—you murmured in your sleep “Adele,” and kissed me many, many times. I did not stop you—coward that I am—hungry for the love no longer mine, I took the kisses given to another—I became a thief!

It was a sorry breakfast that last morning, wasn't it? The coffee choked me, yet you never once laid aside your paper. I thought it would never end—there was so much to be done!

Were you surprised when you came home and found my letter? Such a pitiful one—all lies! I thought it out myself—that our marriage was all a mistake—I did not love you as a wife should—I wanted to be free. Oh, Robert, a simple, childish creature penned those words, but it was a woman's heart that broke!

You are free now—free to begin anew with Adele. I wish you nothing but happiness. Should you ever realize—long to turn back—but here is a little verse I wrote this afternoon—a cry from my heart to yours.

Resignation

Are you tired, Dearie—
Tired of love and me?
Has your heart grown weary
Of my constancy?

Were we only dreaming,
Sweetheart, you and I—
Is there no redeeming,
Must we say goodbye?

Life will seem so strange, Dear,
Loneliness and pain!
You have wished the change, Dear,
I shall not complain.

Should your heart grow weary
Wandering down the years,
You will find me, Dearie,
Smiling through the tears!

My eyes are brimming—I can no longer see the lines. Forgive my childishness—it seems such a tragedy. I have tried to be brave—to understand a man's life. Do not send money—I could not bear it—and there is no need. I am going to my sister in Canada. You shall never hear from me again—unless you want me. Make the best of my sacrifice, Robert! I stretch my hands to you across the body of a great love! Goodbye!

RUTH.

* * *

His

Dear Ruth:

Your letter reached me this morning. I thank you for the information, but am sorry it has made you unhappy. You always were unduly sentimental. I could never quite follow your line of reasoning.

I scarcely know what to do with this freedom you have so generously given me. Why are you so impulsive? I did not mean to hurt you. You should not take these things to heart. Life is not so serious as you imagine.

Neither must you blame Adele. She is older than you, and accustomed to the social game, while you were like a little frightened bird. I tried to make you like it, but you were always dreaming in a world of your own and writing your queer little verses. By the way, the last was pretty and very like you.

Will have my lawyer arrange for a settlement in a few days. You must accept what is your due. I will hear no protest.

I will write you occasionally, if you wish it. Whenever you want money or anything, address me at the office and mark it "personal." It will receive my immediate attention. You see, I am still your friend.

Hastily yours,

ROBERT.



Curl papers are the acid tests of love.



OUR ALPHABET

- A—Stands for ALIMONY, ANSWERS and AIM,
Also AFFINITY (whisper his name!).
- B—for the BLUFF, which we hand out so strong,
And BRIEF an affair sometimes awfully long.
- C—stands for CLIENT, COMPLAINANT and
COURT
CHARGES of CRUELTY (any old sort).
- D—for DEFENDANT, DIVORCE and DECREE,
DESERTION, DENIAL and DESTITUTE. See?
- E—stands for EVIDENCE, ERROR and EASE,
EVERYONE striving to ENTER decrees.
- F—stands for FAILURE to FAIRLY provide,
(FRIENDS and the FAMILY all on one side).
- G—For the GIRLIES who Reno-wards roam,
Then the word "GRANTED," which hurries
them home.
- H—for HER HUSBAND, a HORRIBLE brute!
Also HER HAMMER which knocks the poor
mute.

- I—for INTENTIONS to live here awhile,
IMMEDIATE cause for an INNOCENT (?)
smile.
- J—for JOY, JOURNALIST, JURY and JUDGE,
Also for JEALOUSY born of a grudge.
- K—for KIDNAPPING—quite usual now—
And KISSES as well (Reno laddies know how!).
- L—for the LAWYERS who worry us through,
Also the LOVERS we telegraph to.
- M—stands for MARRIAGE, a bothersome state!
And MONEY extracted from grouchy ex-MATE.
- N—for NEGLECT—the cause of much woe,
To NEVADA for NERVOUS disorders we go.
- O—for the OATH we must everyone face,
“Honest, dear Judge! there’s no man in the case!”
- P—stands for PROPERTY, PLAINTIFF and PRAY,
PREJUDICE, PAINT (which is seen every day).
- Q—for QUEER QUIBBLES, while fair plaintiffs
pout,
At the QUESTIONS His Merciless Honor calls
out.
- R—for RELIEF from the marital yoke,
Also RE-MARRIAGE (and this is no joke!).
- S—stands for SACRIFICE, SORROW and SIGH,
SAD SEPARATION—“Write Reno, Goodbye!”
- T—stands for TRIAL, TESTIMONY and TEARS,
And later, TRANQUILITY, missing for years.
- U—for UXORICIDE, quite the style now,
- V—is for VENUE, VICE, VIRTUE and VOW,
- W—for WITNESSES WIVES we endow.
- X—for ex-anything, just as you please!
- Y—for YOUTH’S YEARNING to capture decrees.
- Z—ZESTFUL ZEALOTS, who hustle for fees!

Leslie Curtis, in *Snappy Stories*.

THE WANDERING BOY

Where is my wandering boy tonight,
My darling, my son, my prize?
Out with the woman who does not care,
The "colony" queen with the bleached blonde hair
And a laugh in her wanton eyes!

Where is my wandering boy tonight?
Wasting the pearls of life,
Close to the woman who stands on the brink,
Kisses and curses, music and drink,
Somebody's wayward wife!

Where is my wandering boy tonight,
My darling, so young and fair?
Innocence writing its own epitaph,
Clinking a glass to the empty laugh
Of the woman who does not care!

The "colony" must be amused tonight,
To brighten a dreary stay.
And my heart's prize is the sacrifice
For the cruel smile and the wanton eyes
Of the woman who goes away!

The boy will creep to my arms some night,
Away from her selfish snare,
With eyes that fathom the ghastly truth
Of ideals lost in the haze of youth,
For the woman who did not care!



Art is long for the Johnnie at the stage door.

A SHATTERED ROMANCE

'Twas a dreamy day in summer
Going westward on "The Hummer,"
That I wandered from my Pullman
To the observation car—
There to spend a pleasant hour
Gazing at the fields in flower,
While the softly curling smoke rings
Circled up from my cigar.
Suddenly I saw a vision
Like a breath from fields Elysian,
Clad in cool and dainty garments,
Face and form divinely fair.
From my heart's wild palpitation
Came the instant realization
That this maid was my ideal.
I must know her, then and there!
So I took a seat adjacent,
Unconcerned (yet most impatient),
Hoping we could get acquainted
In some accidental way.
Long I feasted on her beauty;
Dreamed fond dreams of love and duty;
Planned the style of my proposal
And rehearsed the happy day.
The conductor came for tickets
Nearly giving me the rickets,
When he said to my fair neighbor,
"You have made this trip before."
And I wondered how could he know,
Till he said, "One way to Reno!"
While she gurgled "Yes, quite often—
Changing husbands is a bore."
Ah me! Gone the dreams Elysian,
Crumbled my domestic vision,
All the roses turned to ashes—
So I took a fresh cigar—
And I wondered how Dan Cupid
Could have been so very stupid,
To expose such charming danger
In an observation car.

Leslie Curtis in Snappy Stories.

WELCOME TO OUR CITY!

BLUE? Bored? Disgusted? Stuff and nonsense! Wake up, look around, Stranger, and dissatisfaction will soon make itself scarce.

Stop thinking about yourself and your misery, longing for the day of departure from this disagreeable place. Yet Reno is convenient, you admit, for some things. Oh, certainly! If one is driven to it!

Why not bury the painful past in moth-balls of oblivion, ignore the roseate future until it has fully ripened and then shake hands with the one best bet in life—the present?

Happiness is not a question of locality—and Reno furnishes no reason for depression. Happiness is a mental condition and in your own self lies the canker spot.

Through long gone centuries the old Greek slogan, "Know Thyself," has lived, yet many fail to heed its wisdom. A look within might bruise some tender vanity or tread upon the toes of petted pride. Hence, 'tis more human to place the blame upon exterior agents for most unlovely moods.

Abused? Of course, else why would you be here, doomed to stay a full six months or more? And yet, why mope? What use to waste such precious time and let the soul grow rusty?

Surprise yourself by rising early in the morning and gaze from your hotel window toward the south. Notice the ever-changing colors on the snow-clad mountains and fill your starved, city-cursed lungs with Nevada's life-giving air.

Don your old clothes and stroll out to Moana, along the well traveled Virginia Road, which leads to the treasure city of the Comstock, to Carson, the Capital of Nevada, and on to Genoa, a quaint, historic town.

If handsome residences do not interest you, how about the "Cowboys' Home," some distance south of town? Anything like it in New York, London or Paris?

Moana, too, is different from usual resorts. A bath in the great pool after a brisk walk will add ten years to life and coax back youthful appetite. Here one may watch lovely colonists playing in the water and listen to their laughter ringing to the rafters. What a sight this pool must have presented when Moana was the scene of Jeffries' training quarters! Imagine the collection of athletes, journalists, sportsmen of all classes and famous characters from everywhere gathered in this tranquil spot.

A trip to Rick's will lead you to Johnson's headquarters, where a similar scene was enacted and crowds congregated to see the black giant in training. This also is the goal of merry parties of colonists who seek seclusion for their celebrations, far from the haunts of newspaper men and other curious persons. Mechanical pianos grind out waltz and fox trot for the dancing visitors, and far into the night waiting automobiles line the country road.

Farther on is Laughton's, another bathing resort, a favorite haunt for walking parties, who after indulging in the refreshing dip, return to Reno on the Truckee motor.

If you wish seclusion and secrecy, it is not necessary to mingle with your fellow-colonists. Later, you

may lose the desire for solitude and realize that it is foolish to waste such opportunities for pleasant pastimes among others similarly exiled.

However, until then, why not enjoy them from a distance? Drop into the cafes, where many congregate. There you will see famous and beautiful women dining with sons of the sagebrush or Eastern gentlemen who also belong to the "Separation Squad." Study their faces and notice new combinations forming all the time. What brings them here to Reno? Why are such attractive women apparently unappreciated? Whom will they marry? Puzzle upon puzzle will keep your mind busy and in a few days your own troubles will sink into the background. You will become obsessed with the study of human nature, steeped in the problems of psychology, intent upon divining the mystery embodied in these personalities, which come and go like pictures on a screen. Who are they? What are they? Why are they? Make it your business to find out. Reno dull? Not much!

Do you know that Reno has a theater equal in beauty to the Lyric or Knickerbocker in New York? Stroll over some evening and examine the audience. What other town of twelve thousand souls can exhibit such a wonderful aggregation of well-dressed people? Metropolitan and cosmopolitan in appearance and in fact, a greater number appear in evening costume than one sees at a Gotham first night. Bored in Reno? Absurd!

If you know naught of mining, journey to the old camp of Virginia, where over seven hundred millions in gold have been extracted. Visit the underground workings of the C. & C., and watch the men who toil that you may purchase life's necessities. Above ground, see

the town, alive in memories of the greatest boom in history, rich in the names of famous men and filled with monuments of fabulous expenditure. Note the old mansions, rearing proud heads among rough shacks and miners' cabins. Dine at the Chinese restaurant and search eagerly for interesting personalities among the patrons.

The homeward ride to Reno across the famous Geiger Grade will cause your dormant senses to jump with fear and every dangerous curve will seem the last. Far below is spread the lovely valley with Steamboat Springs sending a fringe of steam into the clear air, a message from the roaring caverns underneath.

Just over a mountain from the Geiger Grade lies Jumbo, a quaint and romantic mining camp of other days, so secluded that it bursts upon one suddenly and looks for all the world like one of Bret Harte's story pictures. It is almost unconceivable that this primitive camp is not miles from civilization instead of within walking distance of two cities.

Forty miles north of Reno is a strange freak of nature, known as Pyramid Lake. It is an enormous body of water, possessing no outlet, although the famous Truckee River flows into it.

That volcanic action is responsible for its existence is probable, for along its shores are petrified fragments of vegetable formations, evidently thrown with great violence from depths below. Queer pyramid shaped cones stand like sentinels in this strange lake and add to the uncanny surroundings. On the east, high mountains rise abruptly from the water and, enveloped in purple shadows, frown upon the lake. Between Reno and Pyramid Lake are vast valleys carpeted with sagebrush and filled with the silence of centuries.

Strangely shaped rocks and mountains enclose these valleys and isolated cabins speak the presence of man at long intervals. Jack-rabbits and wild horses play in the silence and strange birds soar overhead.

A trip to Goldfield and Tonopah will afford diversion without violating residence requirements, and a stop-over at Sleepy Hawthorne and Lucky Boy on the hill-top will stimulate new mentality.

At Carson City, the State Penitentiary is open to visitors and the footprints of pre-historic colonists are still visible. While impressing your footprints on the records of Nevada, why not enjoy the novel attractions of this wonderful State?

Even in Reno are countless points of interest. The Carnegie Library; the Courthouse, where the Divorce Mill grinds the steady grist; the homes of departed celebrities; the University of Nevada, so generously endowed by Clarence Mackay; the gypsum plant; the water works; the Elks' Home and the Y. M. C. A. Could any other town of similar population offer equal diversions?

Cheer up, Stranger! Lose the grouch and imitate our sunshine! Forget the woes of city life and come into the open, ready to love and understand Nevada, within whose fold, poor slandered Reno reigns.



COMPENSATION

I laid the shattered idols one by one

Upon Life's crowded shelf—

Nursing the wounds—the silent battle done—

Seared on the Inner Self.

I turned and lo—the world seemed strangely bright,
Illusions lost, past purged—came second sight!

Leslie Curtis, in Theater Magazine.

THE CONTESTED SUIT

Mother dear, I'm in such trouble!
All my hopes have gone to smash,
Like the bursting of a bubble,
Changed from lobster into hash!
For he's going to contest it,
Mother dear, what shall I do?
As I never once confessed it,
I just wonder how he knew.

Maybe someone has been telling
My affair with Charlie C.
But a story more compelling
Is the one with Von der Lee.
Can his purpose be to draw us
As affinities? Oh, dear!
I am sure that no one saw us
Kissing nightly on the pier.

Was a woman ever harassed
Half so much? The cruel brute!
It's enough to be embarrassed
By an uncontested suit.
Think of the humiliation
When he mentions seven men!
He will spoil my reputation,
I can never wed again!

Horrid brute, he has no reason.
To contest the suit is wrong.
(I must marry George this season,
He has stuck around so long.)
Don't you think I've done my duty
Toward my husband, mean old thing?
I've a figure and some beauty
And can dance and play and sing.

I was pleasant to him often
When I wanted something grand,
And indeed—to make him soften
Once I let him kiss my hand!
Then he says I'm cold and cruel,
(George thinks quite the other way)
And my flirting added fuel
To his anguish every day.

It is awful when a woman
Cannot smoke or drink or chew,
And to spoon is only human
'Tis a harmless thing to do.
I can't see why he's objecting,
Fifty thousand is so small!
I suppose he is expecting
Not to pension me at all.

Mother dear, I'm simply frantic!
Is there nothing you can do?
Your influence is gigantic
He is quite afraid of you.
Call on him at once, dear Mother,
Beg him not to spoil my plan.
Frighten him somehow or other;
Telegraph the answer!—Nan.



ACCORDING TO TESTIMONY

PLAINTIFF—An absolutely innocent person, blameless and without fault, wronged, abused and misunderstood by the loved defendant.

DEFENDANT—A horrid example of fiend incarnate, inventor of excruciating cruelties, perpetrator of innumerable atrocities, possessing no good qualities, without pity or conscience, whose sole aim in life is to torture the loving plaintiff.

Isn't it so, Judge?

DEFIANCE

There are dreams that drift to our minds unsought,
There are thoughts that we cannot speak;
Hopes unfulfilled and mad longings stilled,
In the pitiless clutch of a conscience killed,
And pleasures we dare not seek!

The body may burn and the blood run mad
In the throes of a human fire.
The eyes gleam bright, almost—not quite—
Prepared for defeat in the wordless fight
On the altar of your desire!

Perhaps you may smile at the simple game
You think you have won, my friend.
Your victories lie in the flash of the eye,
The pressure of hands and the fluttering sigh,
And you calmly await the end.

But you overlook one thing, I fear—
A foe to your god of fire!
Though human agents may throb and thrill,
I dare and defy you to break my will
On the altar of your desire!

High up on the throne of my earthly frame,
Sits destiny's guide, the will!
Though the clinging kiss gives its thrill of bliss,
You may safely and sanely depend on this,
That I will resist you still!

You may crush me close in a mad embrace,
You may measure my strength the while.
But as you plead for your selfish need
Of my inmost soul from convention freed—
I will look in your eyes and smile.

I want you to read in that smile, my friend,
Defeat for your god of fire!
Until you can find in the wealth of my mind,
A worthier idol to be refined,
On the altar of your desire!

Leslie Curtis in Snappy Stories.

MODERN IRONY

A WOMAN of Great Gifts ventured into the world to win Fame at any cost save Chastity. Laden with Youth, Hope and the Will of Inexperience, she passed from the Valley of Simple Joys through the Gates of Obscurity, lightened her once joyous burden in the Lane of Lost Ideals, and rested her bruised feet on the Hill of Infinite Loneliness.

Caught in the Maelstrom of Ceaseless Endeavor, she came unheralded into the City of Men. Vainly she knocked at the Door of Opportunity. Beauty and Dulled Sensibility, armed with the key of Influence, passed readily through the Portals of Alpha, but the Door of Opportunity closed with a hopeless clang on the Woman of Great Gifts. She had no key save Merit. Despair and Starvation crouched beside her on the doorstep. Temptation in a touring car pointed meaningly at the closed door. She cursed him and clung closer to her gaunt companions. Death sharpened his sickle and passed the tip to a friendly undertaker.

Presto! A stray song winged its way into the heart of a Power. Popularity and Success knocked at the Shelter of Lost Hopes. Youth and Prosperity healed the sick soul of the Woman. Comfort and Luxury sat by her fireside, while Hunger and Cold sneaked out the back way to join Failure and Distress in the Alley of Dissolution.

The Motley Multitude arrived to pay tribute to the fair protege of Fame.

Said the Fool: "Your luck is phenomenal!"

Said the Wise: "Fine personality!"

Said the Frivolous: "Your beauty exceeds all else!"

Said the Sensual: "What capacity for love!"

Said the Pious: "Such knowledge is unseemly!"

Said the Worldly: "Life has given you understanding!"

Said the Poor: "Charity becomes you!"

Said the Cynic: "Unusual brain for such a beauty!"

And the woman of Great Gifts, standing alone on the Height of Achievement, gazed backward through the smoked glasses of Memory to the peaceful Valley of Simple Joys, retraversed the Highway of Hard Knocks and the Lane of Lost Ideals and crept slowly through the Field of Futile Sacrifice to the Hill of Infinite Loneliness. She smiled wearily and said: "Yet the most precious of my possessions you have not named. A pearl of great price preserved at great price—Virtue!"

A strained silence fell upon the Motley Multitude. Some smiled; others said "Impossible!" and not one believed her!

*Leslie Curtis, in Smart Set.
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AFTERGLOW

I am not alone in the desert—
For you are here standing beside me,
Watching the colors change upon the hill tops;
Dreaming great dreams.
With locked arms we wander under cool stars
Glimpsing the wonder trail of Halley's comet—
Hearing Love's call.
Do you remember, Inscrutable?
You have taken much from me, Beloved,
Yet I am not alone in the desert.

A FEMININE PLEA

Recently judges have been questioning plaintiffs about "affinities" and the desire to re-marry. This is most annoying to ladies who have made "plans."

Please, oh please, dear Mister Judge,
Do not bear us any grudge.
You ought not to spoil the future
E're you remedy the past.
For the future ('tis no fiction)
Lies not in your jurisdiction,
Even though a dozen lovers
Hover 'round a bit too fast.

Surely you are not forgetting
How we're fuming, fussing, fretting,
Waiting for your tardy verdict
Which will bring a glad decree.
Can you blame if Desolation
Looks ahead for Consolation
'Till it finds the Heart's Desire
In a Soul Affinity?

Really, Judge, you must be joking,
Ridicule or fame provoking,
For the future is subjunctive
Far beyond your legal lore.
If Life's happiness we hurry
It's unkind to cause us worry.
Please be lenient, we implore,
Dear, good, sensible Judge Orr.

Oh, you kindly Judge Moran!
How can such a lovely man
Ask such terrifying questions
Of our poor, down-trodden sex?
When one feels so calm and restful
Then you thunder out a chest full
Of the most upsetting questions
That a plaintiff least expects.

"Residence" of course you mention,
Also touch our "good intention,"
But it gets our Pet Angora
When you ask our truly age.
So when horrid things you're saying
Please remember what we're paying
Just to suffer in the spotlight
In the center of your stage.

Seats are high at the Majestic
More so in the mill domestic,
For the witness chair's expensive
When the lawyer gets his fee.
So to plaintiffs please be tender.
Oh, it matters not the gender!
Whether tearful little woman
Or a poor unhappy man.
Please don't murmur "case submitted"
Meaning suit must be refitted,
And omit these horrid questions,
All you can!



The successful author rises from a bed of rejection
slips.

REVERIE

Do you ever think of me, dear,
When the Lamp of Life burns blue,
And wonder if I'm living yet
To dream and think of you?

Do you ever long for bygone days
When shadows obscure the glow,
Recalling the stolen happiness
That we knew long ago?

Comes never an imp to plague you
In the shape of a wee regret?
For every joy has a price, my boy,
And I am paying it yet.

The ghosts of the past have ever
Clung close through the joyless years,
To sadden the eyes you loved, dear,
And chasten the soul with tears.

So whenever you grow pensive
And the Lamp of Life burns blue,
Remember the world of tenderness
That lives in my heart for you.

No matter the price I've paid, dear,
For all that the dead past dared,
But how it would lessen the burden
If I thought you knew—and cared!

Leslie Curtis, in Snappy Stories.



“My crop is a failure,” wailed Cupid, as he rested
on the steps of the Reno Courthouse.

HER ANSWER

DEAR MARGARET: I received today your little volume of verse—so fine—so exquisite, that it startles me. Can the great soul that breathes such delicate sentiment, divine tenderness and wealth of passion belong to the little girl I held in my arms so many years ago?

It seems like a dream now—my knowing you. This little book, so like you in its quiet cover, has led me deep into forgotten memories and left me wondering. Somehow, I have always felt that you loved me—were loving me all the time out in the great unknown. And tonight, as I read your verses—I know it—every one of them a message from your heart, the heart that holds such wonderful depth of feeling. How blind I was to ever let you go!

Perhaps you do not realize how much I love you, have always loved you! Life has been full since then—a long procession of events and disappointments, of young ideals shattered and regretfully laid away. Through it all has lived one memory—you—your loving eyes and soft brown hair, that little sob of happiness, the warmth of your dear hand in mine. That memory has spoiled all other loves for me. They came and passed—not one like you! And tonight, this little book has brought you back to me with all the old love shining in your eyes, all the joy of living trembling on your lips. Margaret, I want you—want you to creep into my tired heart—to make the wasted past a glorious future! I want you for my wife, Margaret, my wife!

The hours will drag until I hear from you. Write fully and freely—I must know your heart. Life has much in store for us. I am young, rich and tired of frivolity—you are full of love and your heart sings.

There is one verse that touches me, called "Recompense." It seems unlike you—a strange thought for one so gentle—yet somehow, it brings to me your answer. Love, to a woman, means just that.

If I could place the full breast of my youth
To your dear famished lips,
Bidding you drain the fountain of my being,
Drink the warm blood that surges through young veins,
Thus to absorb the fabric of my soul!
Then—One so Loved—I'd ask as recompense,
That you but smile into my dying eyes
And know the fullness of the sacrifice!

Ah, my dearest, those words fill me with new life—thrill me with dreams of the joy that is to be—must be! Time will be eternity—do not torture me with waiting. I shall be in a fever until you throw open the gates of happiness.

Hasten, my dearest, for I need you.

WAYNE.

Dear Wayne:

I am tired tonight—so tired that my thoughts ache. Are you ever like that? Perhaps not—your world is not so serious.

All day I have thought of you—pondered over your letter, word for word—traveled with you through long forgotten byways. Forgotten?—they could never be that—only long unused.

You seem startled at the qualities revealed in my poor little verses—the tenderness, the passion and the knowledge of life. You reproach yourself for allow-

ing such a jewel to slip from your grasp. You need not—all men do that—leaving the jewels for the merest dross!

Wayne, Wayne, how blind you are! Don't you know that I have paid for these things—paid with struggle and sorrow—paid with years of heartache—paid with all the ideals and illusions that make a woman's life worth living? Out of despair comes humility—out of suffering, sympathy—out of pain, tenderness! What do you know of these?

Your letter, so full of masculine selfishness, comes just five years too late!

There was a time when the possibility of being your wife would have filled me with delicious joys and solved life's farthest problem. I was poor then—young and unprotected. Because I was a poor girl whom no one knew, you hadn't the courage to say to the world, "I have found a jewel worthy of the finest setting—I will honor it before all men!"

What cowards men are! You took my kisses—won my young love—filled my thoughts with foolish dreams—and then you let me go out into the world to fight my way unaided. The world is a hard school for a tender, sensitive woman—it will bruise the soul if it does not scar the body. But I have conquered—hardship and struggle, trouble and tears, hunger and cold—endless temptation! Out of the furnace I am come—shorn of my weakness, and triumphant!

And you—who might have saved me all that—you, in your luxurious uselessness—ask me to pour into your outstretched hands the fruit of my suffering—the love, the sympathy, the passion that came to me through agonies you have never had the courage to endure. Now, that I have fought and won—have burst

into fame on the heart-throbs of my poems—brought the world to my feet in adulation—who are you? What have you done to deserve such reward? Young, rich and idle—you jest!

In all that volume—the voice of my soul—there is but one verse to you—full of the bitterness that marked our parting!

God gave me life
And laid me gently in a poppy field,
Within the vale of utter loneliness.
Whichever way my childish need might wander
Tall poppies beckoned—flaunting scarlet shame!
While I affrighted, trembled and refused them,
Until at last—you came!
You came!
Laid your cool hands upon my fevered temples;
Answered the longing of swift passing hours
And kissed away from starving lips the hunger;
Then left me there, among the flaming flowers!

“Recompense”—which you so readily accept as yours, breathes for another the boundless gratitude that binds my soul to his!

Older than you and chastened by long years of struggle—it was his hand that smoothed my rough path—his smile that comforted me in moments of despair—his love that crowned the waiting elements with such divine fulfillment! His eyes will reflect all the tenderness and understanding that you might have honored—his lips will feast upon the lips that once sought yours—and as I yield my pure white body into his dear arms—there will be no thought of you—save friendship.

Into the school of life you sent me—I have learned its lesson—and now, Thank God—I see!

Goodnight,

MARGARET.

WHO KNOWS

The parting of the ways
Watered with tears,
All joy of bygone days
Gone,—and by devious ways
Lost in the years.

Sad are the thoughts that throng,
Bringing a sigh.
Love, once a joyous song,
Faltered and then went wrong,
Now comes "Goodbye."

Where is the joy of life
Once held so dear?
Torn in a wordy strife
Husband and tender wife,
Why gather here?

Is there no other way?
Youth's hope must die?
Vows of a sacred day
Fade into hopeless gray.
Wherefore and why?

Whate'er the answer be,
May the Gods weep!
Lowly and high degree
Pray to be rendered free,
Love is asleep!



How often one sympathizes with pretty women—
and gets stung!

THE OPTIMIST

Youth! What is Youth? Speak, Seer!
"The gladsome springtime of a human year."

Hope! What is Hope? "Ambition's smile—
A vision of reward deferred awhile."

Love! What is Love? "Immortal fire—
And held within two arms—the Heart's Desire."

Regret? The answer, Seer! What is Regret?
"Remembrance of mistakes we would forget."

Death! What is Death? "Only Release—
Eternity to come and perfect peace."

Life! What is Life? "A master key
To Past, to Present and the Yet to Be."



TO ONE I LOVE

Here's to your eyes, dear,
And your lips;
Here's to the warmth of your hand
And the thrill of your finger tips.
Here's to the charm of your clinging arm,
To the throb of a heart so true;
To nothing else in the wide, wide world
But love and life and you!

THE PESSIMIST

Youth? What is Youth? Speak, Sage!
"The fair, false forerunner of age."

Hope? What is Hope? "Yearnings ahead,
Hope is frail, faints, gasps, is dead!"

Love? What is Love? "Only a mad, sweet pain;
A sorrow chanted to a bright refrain."

Regret? What is Regret? "Only a backward thought;
Only a bit of experience, dearly bought."

Death? What is Death? "Only the end;
Eternity, alone, without a friend."

Life? What is Life? "A fleeting breath;
Youth, Hope, Love, Regret and blessed Death!"

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REPENTANCE

Divorced for an affinity,
I married my divinity.
But wiser now,
I feel somehow
'Twas simple asininity!

AS OTHERS SEE US

RENO is situated on an island in the Sea of Matrimony. It is parted in the middle by the Truckee River, which flows from the Reef of Many Causes to the Harbor of Renewed Hope and More Trouble. The tide comes in regularly by the Southern Pacific and the untied depart the same way.

Reno is a winter resort for some people and a last resort for others. It consists of well-defined grounds both outside and inside of a courthouse. The town is laid out in sub-divisions and the inhabitants are laid out in court. The population is mixed, consisting of men, women and lawyers.

Hotel Refuge, on Evidence avenue, contains separate suites and individual pillow cases. Rates dependent upon alimony. Affinities and other luxuries, extra. Special department for family skeletons.

The principal industries are divorce and mining. Judges and legal lights control the most profitable mines. The main shaft extends to the level of desperation and is crossed by the drifts of non-support and cruelty. Hundreds of lawyers are engaged in sorting high and low grade domestic ore. Considerable brass is discovered and is in evidence daily. A rich vein of humor pervades the situation.

The divorce mill is situated on Alimony avenue, near Separation street. It is used for grinding grounds and pulverizing reputations. Scandal is a by-product which is devoured while fresh by a species of buzzard known as "the journalist." Painless extraction of fees, life histories and dramatic episodes a specialty. One bottle of our deadly divorce dope will eliminate

husbands, wives and other insects in six months. Assumed names, new or second-hand, delivered at your door upon request. Phone 23.

The style of dressing in Reno is distinctive, Neckties, home-ties and railroad ties are being gradually eliminated. Separate skirts and waists are all the rage. Wardrobes consist in most cases of two suits, Sunday and legal. Contested varieties occasionally in evidence, but are not popular. Hair is worn parted. Double chins not encouraged.

The Reno city government is unduly severe. All trains arriving in the city are uncoupled according to city ordinance. All wagons affect single-trees. Persons doubled up with pain are requested to redouble their efforts to leave the city. Broken hearts mended at the Double Cross hospital.

Left over husbands and wives may re-enter the United State (s) by collusion and a conference with the license clerk.

Bonds of matrimony discounted at the courthouse. No interest after six months.

Children possessing progressive parentage must be labelled with their right names.

Motto of Reno—"Part the speeding guest."

Leslie Curtis, in Judge.



Baldhead—"Has Tessie Tiptoes left the chorus?"

Manager—"Not exactly. She's out in Reno—changing brokers."



An affinity is a fresh disappointment in disguise.

THE MILE POST

"One hundred miles to Reno"—Arcadee!
One hundred miles across the desert sea!
Blest haven of the heartsick, shelter me,
Nor seek to know the wherefore and the why.
Let me but creep into your welcome fold,
So young in years and yet in life so old!
Fair Reno—jewel set in desert gold,
A gem beneath Nevada's azure sky!

The world may shout derision, prophets blate
The desecration of the sacred state—
Last station for the souls who think too late,
Who doubts thy wisdom never knew the pain.
Is there no solace for the hearts that break?
No grave to bury deep youth's sad mistake?
No rending bonds that Heaven did not make?
Or forge for broken links in Cupid's chain?

Not all the penitence, nor yet the tears
For shattered hopes and fully realized fears,
Nor all the solitude of bitter years
Can make a holy thing of loveless tie.
Off with the lies in legal license dressed!
Announce the truth and frailties confessed,
Hail humane Reno, rendezvous of rest,
The kindest spot beneath the nation's sky!

One hundred miles to Reno—and to rest!
One hundred miles—Sierra's snowy crest
Will smile its glory on another guest,
Another craft upon the troubled sea.
One hundred miles—how slow the moments creep!
Hope lives, the Past is dead, and Love asleep!
While ever on, my thoughts impatient leap
To Reno—kindly Reno—Arcadee!

AN OPPOSITE OPINION

Reno—fair Cameo upon the desert waste,
Resplendent with thy coronet of hills,
Upon whose snowy heights the rising sun
Throws shafts of glory, changing hour by hour
Until the purple shadows of the night
Envelop thee—and, covering thy shame,
Bid the pale moon ascend and bring to thee
A silvery canopy of needed peace!

Where flows the Truckee—ever rushing stream,
As turbulent as hearts whose restless sleep
But answers to the water's endless roar.
And in whose depths great rocks and boulders lie,
Deflecting currents—like the tangled lives
That seethe and whirl about the rocks that Fate,
In her omnipotence has cast abroad.

False, smiling Reno! Did the Maker plan
So fair a setting for so foul a use?
And shower blessings on a mangy dog
That proudly licks a legal leprosy?
Were those great hills—majestic monuments—
Fashioned to mark a nation's restlessness?
To cast their shadows on a human mass
Of living lies—whose god, Inconstancy,
Bids his weak votaries assemble there,
To lightly shatter vows so lightly made?
Weep, lovely Reno, Cameo of the plain,
That Desecration, 'neath so blue a sky
Can live, and thus the purity refute
Of thy surrounding snow-capped coronet!



Separation is the anarchy of marriage; Divorce—
the assassination.

ALIMONY DAY

Call me early in the morning,
Call me early, Mother dear,
For tomorrow is my alimony day.
Tradesmen surely can be vexing,
Their accounts are so perplexing,
And I'm sure there are a thousand bills to pay.

Make a list to help my shopping,
Have it ready, Mother dear,
For tomorrow is my alimony day.
Bargain sales are so attractive
And I've been so long inactive,
That I feel like throwing all reserve away.

First I need a new kimona,
Something dainty, Mother dear,
And you know I always favor baby blue.
I must get some new cosmetic,
(Twenty-nine is so pathetic,
Although I don't look more than twenty-two.)

All my evening gowns are shabby,
Quite impossible, my dear.
I haven't got a decent thing to wear!
I must renovate my figure,
Hips are slowly getting bigger,
Though they're cutting down the size of hats and hair.

• Don't forget to call me early,
'Tis important, Mother dear
I must beat the other women to the sale.
Lingerie so sheer and nifty,
Lovely things for fourteen-fifty,
So eject me after breakfast, without fail!

For I'm going to be married,
('Tis a secret, Mother dear,)
To a party not so very far away.
Hence this awful rush and worry,
Mother, Mother, can't you hurry?
For tomorrow is my alimony day!

THE CRY

I grasp the edge of life and I am tired.
Why all the struggle? What the recompense?
How beautiful the world—and many joys
Throb in the breasts of others—why not mine?
God of Eternities, what justice here?

That which is naught to others, comes to me
Through years of struggle, hours fraught with pain,
Tears that have drained the grief depths of my soul
And endless quarrelings with environment.
While others yawn and sink on velvet cushions,
A fawning Fate strews flowers in their way;
Success and Wealth arrive, unsought, unaided;
And I—an outcast—press the window pane.

Father of Tangled Cords, if in thy greatness
My bit of clay you fashioned for an end—
Keep not from me too long the precious bauble,
Lest all my strength be vanished in the quest
And tears have washed away the joy of living.
Success is failure when it comes too late!

Ask I too much—which others know unthinking?
The common joys of life—the simple things?
If so, forgive the human need, my Father,
I grasp the edge of life and I am tired.



THE WANING MOON

Latelywed: "Guess I'll run out for a shave and hair cut."

Mrs. Latelywed: "Oh, darling, you promised never to leave me."

Latelywed: "But, dearest, I must have *some* pleasure."

Leslie Curtis, in Satire.

TO ONE WHO KNOWS

"Smiles," I have called you
And "Smiles" you are!
I love the little wrinkles
'Round your eyes when you are glad.
And when life storms,
You still smile in a way
That cuts me to the heart,
It is so sad!
For I can see and understand
So many things, dear "Smiles."



ON THE MARRIAGE OF AN ARTIST

Vale et pax vobiscum—Art is dead
By tender missives and a fancy fed!
Dementia conjugalis chokes thee, Friend,
And drives Progression to untimely end.
Weep Gods of Art! Recall thy erring child,
Who would by human rite become defiled
And bury Freedom in the phrase, "I will!"
Expansion trades for a Domestic Mill
That sinks ideals in the Commonplace
And draws the gifted captive from the race.

Love laughs at Youth and the artistic mind
Can in Anticipation, pleasure find.
But Realization kills the joy to be
And bathes young hopes in cold Reality.
Fond arms grow lax and rosy dreams turn gray,
The color fades from Life, as day by day
Love's little gifts but answer Duty's call,
And one by one the leaves of Romance fall.
While Jealousy clips close the wings of Art
And like a canker eats the aching heart.

When Duty marks the confines of the Soul,
Ambition's son must pay a heavy toll.
E'en though in dreams he seek relief from care
The cry of peevish infant rends the air.
While lofty thoughts (returned to claim their own)
By Interruption to the winds are thrown.
Complaints of loved ones, neighbor's petty ills,
The nervous tradesmen's avalanche of bills,
Distractions bound to kill the patient heart,
For "Freedom!" is the battle cry of Art!

Then Memory—living Nemesis of Fate—
Paints pictures of the past—Alas, too late!
To starving soul brings all the bygone charms
Of deep-hued eyes and gentle, clinging arms,
The clasp of hand by Youth's fierce fires fed,
The kiss—hot pressed—on lips of ruby red,
The glint of loosened hair—the mad embrace—
And passion's answer in a lovely face.
With these and more—too cruel Memory plagues.
Art takes the cup and drains the bitter dregs!

While Freedom smiling, bids her sons rejoice
And pay good heed to Wisdom's tardy voice,
That they may soar in Art's domain sublime
And float unfettered on the wings of Time.
A chosen few the Heights of Fame to find,
Leaving the sordid Commonplace behind.
Lo—and the Gods grant, as a Recompense
A boundless storehouse of Experience!
The Hampered Spirit plays but minor part,
For Freedom is the battle cry of Art!

Vale et pax vobiscum—Art is dead
By tender missives and a fancy fed!
Dementia conjugalis watch will keep.
Ring wedding knell! Bend low, ye Gods, and weep!



A millionaire on hand is worth two of his sons.

THE WARNING

Oh, maiden of the glad heart, seek ye not the town,
The road will bruise those tender feet and sear thy soul
in sorrow

For while the city's favored ones are in seclusion
sleeping

A million mothers wring their hands in agony of
weeping,

And women of the sad eyes go walking up and down
Forever doomed to welcome in the pain of a to-
morrow.

Oh, maiden of the bright eyes, ask the things of peace.
Heeding not ambition's call that lures thee to the city.
Other hands, as fair as thine, have faltered in the
trying;

Redder lips have laughed at life and cursed the spirit
dying.

For women of the sad eyes will never, never cease
To vainly walk the lighted ways in search of human
pity.

Oh, maiden with the golden hair, thy country ways are
sweet,

Nature makes a pretty frame—let her beauty charm
thee.

Tarry till the lovelight sets thy deep eyes gleaming,
Floods the soul with ecstasy and colors all thy dream-
ing.

Thou art far too beautiful to brave the hungry
street—

Revel in the simple joys and naught will ever harm
thee.

Leslie Curtis.

MILDRED

Mildred is a gypsy
A merry, brown-eyed elf,
Making everybody smile
And laughing some herself.
Yet, I know beneath it all
There's a life apart
And her sympathetic soul
Hides an aching heart.
Mask your wounds, brave gypsy, do—
Love will come again to you!

TO THE MAN ACROSS THE TABLE

You will go a long way on the road with me;
Into the wind and the sunlight,
'Through mountain, prairie and valley towns
On to the silence of deserts.
Your eyes will meet mine as we wander
Amid the crowds at the fairs—
Among the hills in snow-time—
Under the palms by moonlit waters.
You will go a long way on the road with me,
Watching the mysteries of the distance unfold.

There shall be little hands, too—
Loving hands and little upturned faces;
There will be rain and snow
And wind that moans in the chimney;
Tears and pain and aching tenderness
And long night vigils over little beds;
Yet neither one must lean upon the other
Nor cry with weariness.

You will go a long way on the road with me—
Where there is no looking backward
Nor longing for what might have been.
Even unto the shadows we must wander,
Leaving behind all that we lived and loved.
But now, your arms are warm with the joy of living:
Your eyes smile at me across the table
And the winding road is very, very dear.
You will go a long way with me, Beloved.



A professional beauty is a battle-ground of Art
and Nature.

THE POET'S GIFT

(Written in appreciation of a little box of sagebrush sent by William McClure, Editor of the Manhattan (Nevada) Magnet.)

Some have sent roses—
Warm, red roses,
With dew drops on their petals
Like tears wrung from a heart.

Others expressed themselves with orchids,
Beautiful—exotic—
Culled from some tropic tangle;
And one whose heart was pure as snow
Sent poppies—poppies red as blood!

Once a man brought lilies;
Which was highly amusing
Because his ideals of life
Were more than mildly hectic.
(Perhaps the florist's girl
Knew him too well
And with sarcastic humor
Had eased her soul by smiling
And recommending lilies;
For they spoke things he knew not.)

A worldling came with lotus—
The kind that dreams are made of—
Dreams that transport the soul
To Egypt and the slowly flowing river,
Lapping the barges of dusky sirens—
Egypt—the Nile—and dreams!

Daisies and goldenrod!
Stars of the field, perhaps—
(And yet they brought no thought to me
Save crickets and hay fever
And long hot days of exile.)

A bunch of sweet forget-me-nots!
I wonder if he thinks I CAN forget?
And if I should, would he?
Forget-me-nots can mean so much
And bring to life
Dead memories that speak of old romance
And pain; of smiles that shine through tears.
Yet he has brought—forget-me-nots!
I wonder!

But you—
Oh Poet-man of the Toquimas,
You have sent SAGEBRUSH!
Aye, more!
You have sent
Memories of soft moonlight
Sleeping on snow-clad hills
And filling vast valleys
With silent beauty—
The peace that no man knows!

Likewise, visions of space—
God-given space—
Eliminating all the soul-crushing
Horror of cities;
All sight of crowded humans
Struggling like caged ants
For happiness—(poor fools,
Who never know the joy of solitude!)

You bring me dreams
Of sagebrush coloring the distance
With hues of gray and rose
That deepen into purple;
Of hills that wear a thousand lovely shades
Yet never twice the same.
You send me streams that sing anon
A soft, eternal lullaby,
And stars that perforate the night
Like diamonds—and a sky
All innocent of smoke to mar its beauty.

You send me wonder nights that lure the soul
To heights sublime, forgetting earthly things;
You send me mornings like the call of Youth
In Life's own morning—
And air like wine to lure the laggard on
To deeds worth while!
All this the sagebrush brings,
Oh Poet-man, to one whose spirit longs
To know once more the Land of Heart's Desire;
To find Nepenthe under Western stars;
To breathe again the perfume of the sage!

Oh, Poet-man, I thank you for your gift!



TO A MARIPOSA LILY

Flower, I envy thee, in thy cool bower!
Lend me tranquility—peace—for an hour.

Let my world-weary feet rest here beside thee—
I find in thy retreat all things denied me.

Thou mightst a maiden be—pure is thy feature.
Tempters come but to me, frail human creature.

Deep in thy lily eye—all things regretting
I look and wonder why—all things forgetting.

Purity there I see—calmness unending;
Can there be peace for me? Is there no mending?

Why must my weary road know a tomorrow?
Here in thy cool abode there is no sorrow.

Strife, pain, reality—lost for an hour,
Would I were like to thee! Pity me, flower!

Leslie Curtis, in Overland Monthly.

CONTRARY TO GENERAL OPINION

Nevada's six-months residence requirement was not made to favor matrimonial misfits, but to give citizenship to prospectors and miners who wander about and seldom remain a year in one place. Consequently, Nevada, being a young and thinly settled State, secured voters by shortening the residence requirement.

When Dakota placed the ban on the Sioux Falls' divorce colony, someone discovered the six-months clause in Nevada's law and hither flocked the "worms that turn."

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE DIVORCE LAWS OF NEVADA

Divorce may be obtained in the State of Nevada by complaint under oath to the District Court of the County in which the cause of divorce shall have accrued, or in which the defendant shall reside or be found, or in which the plaintiff shall reside for a period of six months before suit be brought.

"Reside" or "legal residence" was recently defined by the Nevada Legislature as "continuous presence in the State for six consecutive months."

There are seven grounds for divorce in the State of Nevada.

First and Second—Complaints covering the usual statutory grievances.

Third—Wilful desertion, at any time, of either party by the other for a period of one year.

Fourth—Conviction of felony.

Fifth—Habitual, gross drunkenness contracted since marriage of the parties, which incapacitates such

party from contributing his or her share to the support of the family.

Sixth—Extreme cruelty in either party.

Seventh—Neglect of the husband, for a period of one year, to provide the common necessities of life, when such neglect is not the result of poverty on the part of the husband, which he could not avoid by ordinary industry.

The law of Nevada provides that in the event that the defendant is a non-resident, and for that reason service cannot be had upon the defendant within the State, that such service may be had by publication.

A service by publication is perfected by filing an affidavit showing that the defendant is a non-resident, and getting an order from the Court that the defendant may be served by publication.

If the order is obtained from the Court to make the service by publication, the service may be made in two different ways:

First—If the residence of the defendant is known to the plaintiff, by a personal service of the summons on the defendant outside of the State, and,

Second—If the residence of the defendant be not known to the plaintiff, then by publishing the summons in a newspaper .

In a proceeding for divorce, where personal service within the State is had upon the defendant, the Court can enter money judgment against the defendant, as well as judgment to dissolve the bonds of matrimony.

If the service is had upon the defendant without the State then the Court cannot enter money judgment in disposing of the divorce case. Neither can the Court make any order affecting minor children, in a case of constructive service, if the children are not within the jurisdiction of the Court.

SOLACE

I pitched my tent at Samarkand,*
At Samarkand, where dreams are made—
And like the fall of gentle rain
On thirsty earth, there came to me
A peace that words cannot explain;
A peace that follows after pain;
An all pervading harmony—
As though forgotten yesterdays
Had loosed the captive soul of me
And left me free to start anew
At Samarkand—where dreams are made!
At Samarkand—where dreams come true!

I pitched my tent at Samarkand,
That smiling land of "Heart's Desire,"
Where mighty mountains woo the sea
And beauty stills the human strife;
Where once again the heart of me
Revives to sing the song of life,
While Romance laughs at Memory.
At Samarkand, the magic night
Sends through the stars a thought to me
That I am waiting here for you—
And we shall have our heart's desire
At Samarkand—where dreams come true!

*Persian for "Heart's Desire."



He who marries a divorcee is the Undertaker for a matrimonial corpse, but not necessarily a "dead one."

NEVADA MOON

Nevada moon, Nevada moon,
Pale guardian of the desert waste,
The silent land that God forgot,
Shine gently on my lonely cot
Where Sorrow sleeps and Love is not.

Nevada moon, thy beams to me
Bring memories of a symphony
Played on the heart strings long ago.
A weird and haunting melody
That stirs the very soul of me,
As here I lie on lonely cot,
Within the land that God forgot,
Where Sorrow sleeps and Love is not,
And Silence speaks Eternity.

—*Leslie Curtis, in Overland Monthly.*



Illusions are the velvet curtains of Life's boudoir.



GRACE

She wraps her lithe body in sinuous satin,
Black like the moonless midnights of forgotten worlds.
Under a quaint poke is a demure face
Framed in a mesh of gold.
Yet when the blue eyes smile inscrutably,
I wonder how many incarnations
Are measuring my nothingness,
And how many varied Cleopatras
Are laughing at me down the ages.
She wraps her lithe body in sinuous satin
And the riddle of her eyes engages me.

THE PRAIRIE

Morn on the Prairie—the dew on the grasses
Lit by the sunrise, a warm amber sea;
Painting the sage in its sombre gray masses
Color of rose as each gay sunbeam passes,
Blending bright hues, creeping on length by length.
Come and be part of me—quicken the heart of me—
Lend me thy *gladness*, thy *vastness*, thy *strength*.

Noon on the Prairie—the great sun ascending,
Grasps in its fury the desert and me.
No drop of water the dry earth defending;
Not a blade rustles! Is silence unending?
Death stalks abroad in the glare of thy light!
Boil the young blood of me—else what's the good of
me?
Lend me *intensity*, *purpose* and *might*.

Dusk on the Prairie—the wind softly blowing
Sweeps o'er thy domain untrammelled and free!
See! The last glow of the sunset is showing
Deeper and darker the shadows are growing;
Fading from sight are the hills in the west!
Solace the soul of me—chasten the whole of me—
Lend me *forgetfulness*, *happiness*, *rest*.

Night on the Prairie—the bright stars are gleaming,
Lighting the dome of the vast inland sea.
Cold is the moonlight that endlessly beaming,
Chills the young blood of me—sets me to dreaming!
Makes the mad youth of me plead for release!
Come be a part of me—enter the heart of me—
Lend me thy *brilliancy*, grant me thy *peace*.



Reno is a co-educational Turkish Bath for matrimonial drunkards.

RENO'S RIDDLE

Such a lot of lawyers! Which one would I like?
Grant A. Miller, O. H. Mack, or young Leroy Pike?
(Picking out a legal light is surely not a cinch!)
There's "Dodge and Barry" (good old firm) and
handsome Jimmie Finch;
Vanderwerker (Jerome L.) and Eugene Williams, too:
Thomas Withers, Edward Short—(Whatever shall I
do?)

Martin Scanlan, John S. Orr and pleasant Harry Pray;
Melvin Jepson, John D. Hoyt and Bartlett (Judge
G. A.)
William Kearney, John F. Kunz and Moorehouse
(Harry V.),
"Price and Hawkins" (that's a firm) or Roberts (Ed-
ward E.)
Salisbury (Arthur N.)—Just how am I to know
If Sardis Summerfield is best or McNamara (Joe)?

Oh why so many lawyers, when one is all one needs?
What of Walter Kennedy or maybe William Seeds?
"Hoyt and Norcross, Thatcher, Woodburn, Henley"
(all one firm);
Wayne T. Wilson stands quite well—no wonder that
I squirm!
Here's Nash P. Morgan, Percy (Hugh), the firm called
"Mack and Green";
Such a vast array of brains the world has never seen!

"Boyd and Curler" might be good and "Brown and
Belford," too.
I might get "Ayres and Gardiner" or John Sinai to sue;
Charles Rawlings, Diskin (one M. A.), or maybe Bill
McKnight
Would take the case and do his best to make a winning
fight.

Here's one Turano (Anthony), Tom Salter, Milton
Detch;

"Frame and Rafetto" might combine to free me from
the wretch!

Now "Huskey and Kuklinski" or Heward (Harlan L.)
Might be the very ones to whom my sorrows I could
tell;

"Cooke, French and Stoddard" or perhaps, one Dan-
forth (called H. D.)

Would take my case and bring me back a signed and
sealed decree.

Or S. H. Rosenthal might do, Charles Richards, Samuel
Platt—

Which one will buck a stiff defense and beat it to the
mat?

"McCarren and Mashburn" is a firm, "Painter and
Stoddard," too,

"Harwood and Tippet" is a third—yet any one
would do!

"Springmeyer and Cantwell," James T. Glynn and
Judge T. F. Moran;

Ye Gods of Freedom step this way and help me if you
can!

Would Lester Summerfield be game or Hacker (Wil-
liam L.)?

Could Cheney and his partner, Lunsford, ring the mar-
riage knell ?

J. W. Burrows might appear to amputate my woes,
Or Charlie Burritt—Help me choose! I cannot, Heav-
en knows!

There's M. B. Moore; here's Wm. Jones (he's known
as "Lightin' Bill")—

The very effort to decide is giving me a chill!

And so I scan the legal lists and shiver in my shoes—
Methinks will toss a penny up and let the copper
choose!

FATE THE JESTER

Fate, the Jester, is hard of heart,
Love or pity he knows for none.
He flings at random his fatal dart,
Nor wots the mischief that he has done.
But we are the victims—mortals—men,
Caught in his unerring aim and then
Awaiting the sequel from sun to sun,
Of the work that a mischievous Fate begun.

Fate was pitiless, Fate was grim,
The edge of his wit was cold and keen
When your eyes sought mine o'er the glasses brim
To see in each other, a King—a Queen.
We are the sufferers—dare you ask why?—
Victims of circumstance—you, dear, and I.
How could Fate stoop to a trick so mean
When he knew that a barrier stood between?

Love from your eyes smiled into mine;
Words half spoken died unexpressed;
Lips turned white as they touched the wine;
Could it have been but an idle jest?
Saw you in my eyes—in my eyes alone—
Love you had longed for and never had known?
While I, child of Folly, had ended my quest
To find in your tenderness, solace and rest.

Ties that torture us now exist;
We must be patient, dear, and wait
Till they fade away like the morning mist.
Though it may come soon and it may come late,
Like two tired children, our hearts storm-tossed,
We'll find in each other the worlds long lost.
For Duty and Love may yet open the gate—
To the Land of Reward for the victims of Fate!

ONLY BILLY

New York City, November, 20, 1911.

DEAR BILLY: Just a wee little note to thank you for all you have done for me during those terrible months in Nevada. You can never realize how much I appreciate your kindness, you dear, sweet "kiddie-boy."

Going to a strange place was so hard. Billy, but you chased away the shadows and made me enjoy every moment of my stay.

I have told the One Man of our friendship, and I want you to write and tell me all about yourself—straight from the heart, just as we used to talk. Will you?

I am quite happy in my new home, but I miss Nevada's matchless sunset and the glorious freedom of the open country. Do you remember our walks along the Truckee—our talks in the moonlight—our rides through the wonderful silent places? And here? My windows offer nothing but thousands of other windows and millions of human ants eking out existence in the heart of a great city. Do you wonder that my spirit longs for wings?

You must be the link, Laddie, between me and the sagebrush. Send me a whiff in your letter and remember—all about yourself!

Address me at Spencer Arms—the name is "Atwood" now.

With infinite gratitude,
HELENE.

P. S. Did Armitage marry the "Lavender Lady?"

Reno, Nevada, December 1st, 1911.

DEAR HELENE: Your saucy little note has been lying on my desk for several days, watching me with accusing eyes, calling up visions of you and tormenting me with a thousand memories. What a poor substitute for all that you mean—pardon, have meant—yet it is all that is left, this little square of tinted note paper!

How exquisitely you torture me, Helene—you who seemed the very essence of tenderness. Forgetting has been so difficult, the ordering of life into its old groove, the search for happiness among the commonplace, the struggle to regain ideals—and now your letter, filled with honeyed venom, drags me back to anguish and unrest.

Your pen dripped irony when offering thanks for what you term my "kindness." It was not kindness that brought me within your radiance, not kindness that turned our paths toward lonely places, not kindness bowing at the feet of a cruel Lorelei. It was love—and well you know it—born in the light of your wonderful gray eyes, nurtured through long hours of sweet communion, fed by your wit and brilliancy, drunk with your smiling beauty, strong in the sight of your weakness—love, Oh, Siren of the World, the blood of a man's soul!

Let us laugh together, you and I! Laugh at the boy child stretching his pink hands toward the moon, Youth longing for the unattainable, honest affection seeking its true haven. What a fool I've been!

How cleverly you told me of the future in which I had no part, laughing as the secret left your lips! Did my quick breath and haggard face exact no tithe of pity, that you should still delight in rasping quivering nerves within an open wound?

What fiend incarnate prompted you to seat me at the farewell dinner like a broken setting in your crown of conquest? Was it desire to drag your victim through the last agony of torture before your sneering guests? And when you said, "To one I love," and raised your wine glass high, what demon in your eyes could smile at me? Then at the train, as if to tempt my numbed and broken spirit, you breathed a world of passion in a kiss, burning my hurt as never man can know. Laughing, you passed out of my life into the arms of one who waited long—while you, unmindful, sought forbidden fruit. If happiness is built on such foundation, then I would wish you all that I have missed.

Some day, perhaps, when beauty fades and leaves you poor and friendless, sickened with memories of other days, your thoughts may lure you back to dreams of God's great open spaces, where often we have revelled in the silence. And yes! God help me—should you come crawling through the dust a woman of a thousand sins, a thing despised, degraded, sunken to the lowest depths, still would my arms be glad to lift you up.

I've learned my lesson well—the one you taught me in your own sweet way. No woman's eyes shall know me save in friendship, no lips shall tempt me or soft voice betray. The joys of love will find me always master—a man who buys, wearies and casts aside without qualm or conscience. My heart is but a desert stripped of all that makes life worth living.

I see your pretty mouth smiling and hear you pout, "Well, what could he expect?" Nothing, my dear, but what you led me to expect. I blame you not for inability to love me—a simple boor—but for playing with sincerity. Women like you, Helene—fair as the

dawn, warm as the noon, blessed with a thousand charms—should meddle not with hearts of honest men, who, loving blindly, tender pearls to swine.

Now you know all about myself—a pretty story, is it not? Even as I write, Armitage and his pretty bride pass the window, both radiant in their new-found happiness.

I send a sprig of sagebrush as you wished, gathered where once we wandered north of town. Its grayness may remind you of my dreary lot. Enough! For your brief friendship I have paid dearly, but the page is turned.

If ever into your bright life comes retribution, remember a foolish country boy whose name was

BILLY.



Jones—What do you think is the cause of divorce?
Bones—Matrimony.



Alimony is the dark brown hangover of a matrimonial jag.



Child—"Mamma, what was my last Father's first name?"

THE WHITE SLAVE

I am a woman and my sad eyes turn
To shrouded windows where the home lights burn.
How dark the night! How pitiless the rain!
Yet children's shadows dance upon the pane.

How great the loneliness that folds me in
A broken flower in the world of sin.
Yet with a woman's heart of hopes and fears,
A woman's need for love—a woman's tears.

No tiny hands to wander through my hair,
No loving arms to bid me nestle there.
Only the clinking glass, the hollow laugh
A life too gay to gain Love's epitaph.

And still the lights shine through the window pane.
How dark the night! How pitiless the rain!
A woman's tears fall on a painted face,
A murdered hope lives in the market place!



Kissing is the wireless telegraphy of love and anyone can master the code.



There is many a slip 'twixt the ring and the millionaire.



Anne—"Her last husband had only one eye."

May—"And she couldn't even pull the wool over that!"

IMPRESSIONS OF RENO "GRADUATES"

BETTY

When palms stand silently against a graying sky
And shadows creep along the edge of twilight—
Then I think of Betty;
For in her dark eyes are many dreams unspoken
And the bright sleekness of her black hair
Speaks of Egyptian night,
Where dusky sirens work their subtle alchemies.
And somehow, in the sad, sweet face of Betty—
I see a thousand stories yet untold
A thousand longings waiting for release.

BOBBY

Intense—vindictive—silent—
How terrible your love would be!
I hope it never more will come
To sear the tender soul of me.
Yet I enjoyed your brilliant mind
Rich in the world's best lore,
Until the terror of your eyes
Made wisdom close the door.

HELEN

Divinely tall and more than passing fair,
Bright sunbeams love to linger in her hair—
A tangled mass of gold.
Though laughter lights her lovely eyes of gray,
There comes a somber sadness as the day
Changes to dusk and slowly fades away
Into its shadowy fold.

THE KISS

A kiss—a kiss—a little kiss
A tiny thing to take,
Yet what a world of happiness
May follow in its wake.
A smile—a kiss—a sense of bliss,
Desire for another,
A thought—a hope—a question bold,
"Two souls meant for each other,"
A cottage all this joy to hold.
A wife—and then—a mother!
Two baby hands to help along,
A baby voice to sing—
And all because a little kiss
Caught love upon the wing.
Oh, little kiss, what endless bliss
A little kiss can bring!

And yet a kiss—a little kiss
A tiny thing to take,
Can bring a world of misery
To follow in its wake !
A smile—a kiss (if it's amiss)
May start a fateful fire
To sacrifice the future's meed
For just a mad desire.
For love from all convention freed
May bring a sad to-morrow,
Or cause a little soul, unloved,
To pay the price alone,
And suffer what that little kiss
Can never more atone.
And all of this for one small kiss
Into a monster grown!

So maids, beware; and men, take care!
Lest trouble you should borrow.
Some kisses promise love and hope
And some eternal sorrow,

But none can evermore return
To make a new tomorrow.
So as you go through weal and woe,
Be sure to ponder this;
There's nothing quite so dangerous
As just a little kiss!



'Tis easy to moralize on a full stomach, but hunger is the true test of virtue.



THE QUARREL

Love's lamp burns low and Cupid is asleep!
Dreams fade away and Memory grieves alone;
With human tears the pools of life grow deep
And shadows fall where once the noonday shone.

The waxen face of Wisdom wears a smile—
"That which ye sow, just that much must ye reap!"
And Joy betroth Oblivion for the while,
Love's lamp burns low and Cupid is asleep!



The best way for a woman to avoid lawyers in Reno is to marry one.

THE SQUAW

*Go to the squaw, my fair one,
Study her ways and be wise!*

LEARN from a squaw! One of those greasy fat things we see every day? Imagine a mere squaw teaching us anything! Absurd!

But is it absurd? If "the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin," why deny the stolid "Piute" her sisterhood? She is human and plays her part of wife and mother just as effectively as the beautiful white matron on Mill Street. In fact, modern womanhood would do well to observe the squaw and her ways, for she possesses admirable qualities of character which civilized charmers consider ideal but oft-times fail to embrace.

Humility, that rare state of mind which exists only when conceit and self-adulation are conquered, is personified in the squaw. She is satisfied with her lot in life. She never complains. Man is her Lord and Master through years of tradition and she is content in her own sphere with no desire for equal suffrage. Taking care of her bow-legged buck and the papoose is glory enough for her.

It is said that women are naturally envious and will strive tirelessly to outshine a neighbor. Not so the squaw, for after years of contact with extremely gowned colony queens, she remains normal and appears daily in simple "headkerchief," shawl and bright-hued dress of calico. Even among her own people, the war of dress is unknown. The use of calico is universal and envy has never caused the appearance of more costly materials.

The happy Piute loses no sleep over changing styles. While Reno streets swarmed with hobble and tube effects, the squaw placidly exhibited voluminous gathered skirts and petticoats, each trimmed with generous twelve-inch ruffles. Her entire lack of interest in the attire of her fair sisters is demonstrated by the fact that a squaw seldom turns around to gaze upon a passing creation from Worth or Paquin.

Economy is another virtue of the red woman. She discards no article of dress until it is worn out. Everything in her wardrobe is substantial and inexpensive. Dressmakers never worry the sensible Piute who makes her own calico raiment and wears it proudly. Many a white man, worn to a mere shadow by the extravagance of his foolish half, has gazed upon the economical squaw with sad-eyed approbation. Her "man" is unacquainted with the great civilized slogan, "Please remit." Happy man! Thrice happy squaw!

The red lady never worries. Her bland countenance exudes good nature and self satisfaction. She has no nerves. If "Mike" comes home with a load of Tangle-foot, does she weep, tear her hair, deliver a Caudle lecture and threaten to return to mother? Not much! She deposits him on the family pallet and ignores his condition. Sleep sobers the festive red man and peace reigns in the wigwam.

Public opinion and Mrs. Grundy have no power over Mrs. Squaw. If tired, she sits upon the most prominent curb-stone, regardless of spectators; if hungry, she eats her lunch where all may see; if sleepy, she snores beside some friendly door-step. All these things are harmless, yet would white woman be so brave? "Certainly not! What would people say?"

Squaws never gossip or criticize their neighbors.

They never speak without saying something, a habit their white sisters might well emulate, although the adoption of these characteristics by white women would naturally kill Clubs, Guilds and Aid Societies, where idle talk is the main occupation. Hatred and malice would die from neglect and poor crushed Truth could rise again. Whether civilized women could reach such a state of perfection as personified by the squaw is problematical, for gossip is largely a habit, apparently harmless, but in the mouths of the unthinking it becomes a two-edged sword.

The squaw is never ashamed of her husband or "man" as he is called. He accompanies her wherever she may wander. She is not above playing craps with him and his gentlemen friends on a vacant lot in the heart of the city. This attribute should be considered by ladies who look down upon their better halves as "mere business men entirely out of place among cultured people." Oh, fussy, fussy! And if it wasn't for uncouth Hubby's business ability to furnish the rags for milady, society would drop her quicker than a hot cake.

American mothers are flattered by the attention paid to their offspring on the streets when perfect strangers pause to admire "Goo-Goo" in his new go-cart. They beam with joy at the mere mention of Goo-Goo's fatal beauty, even if his nose is crooked and his eyes are not mates. Walk up to an Indian mother and try to engage her fat papoose in conversation. She will turn on you a look of injured dignity and remove her child from your contaminating presence by turning her broad back whereon the babe reposes. Flattery does not impress her.

Hypocrisy is also lacking in her make-up. While

some of Reno's fair church members are ordering cocktails served in tea cups, the honest squaw extracts a long bottle from her ample pocket and gulps her fill regardless of consequences. If detected, she betrays not the friend who procured the fire-water, but trots along to jail like a high born suffragette, threatening and cursing in true English style. This characteristic and her subsequent noisy conduct in the jail constitute the only "sister under the skin" similarity between "Piute Kate" and the followers of Mrs. Pankhurst. Outside of that, she is all right and deserves more than mere mention in discussing the fair sex. If comparisons are odious, who wins?



THE PRODIGAL

Deep in a hidden corner of my heart,
There lived a song—a living, joyful thing.
It breathed of life and love and youthful fire—
Great worlds to gain—and fame—the Heart's Desire
 The little song took wing.
Soul empty—waited I the proud return.
Years passed and still I loved the song and prayed,
With paling hope and long sequestered fears
Until it came—so timid and so strange,
White faced and sad—Oh agony of change!—
 A little song of tears.

Leslie Curtis, in Theater Magazine.



Fair Stranger—"Please direct me to a reliable attorney."

Village Cut-up—"Do you want a separator or a regular lawyer?"

EXCERPTS FROM "THE GARDEN OF ALIMONY"
OR "TIED AND UNTIED"

A Musical Satire in Three Acts
Book and Lyrics by Leslie Curtis
Music by Walter Howe Jones

OPENING CHORUS

Arriving guest—So this is Reno!
Departing guest—Yes, this is Reno.
Arriving guest—By Jove, I'm glad I'm here.
Departing guest—Your end achieving
 You'll soon be leaving,
 It is only half a year.

Arrival—Six months of waiting
 And contemplating
 All the joy of being free,
 But what's the hurry?
 And "we should worry"
 For Reno looks like Heaven to me!

The lawyers:
We are the lawyers—the busy lawyers,
Merry little minions of the law!
And when there's a shake up,
They make up—or break up,
And we settle things in Reno
With a hatchet or a saw.
With a grievance on your chest,
Take the first conveyance West,
And we merry little lawyers
Will attend to the rest.
Oh yes—we really must confess
That we welcome all the broken hearts in Reno.

Chorus:

Oh, chop—chop—chop,
Goes the hatchet of the law,
Chop—chop—chopping all the day;
Chopping off the husbands

And lopping off the wives,
Putting them asunder for the rest of their lives.
Chop—chop—chop, will it ever stop?
Not while we legal lights have anything to say!

Lawyer:

I am a busy little lawyer,
All day I listen to your woes,
I will take each little case
And a fee with equal grace,
To the Court-house then we go.

Chorus:

Oh, stop—stop—stop!
Merry dealers in the law,
Chop—chop—chopping all the day,
We are losing husbands,
We are losing wives,
And we came to Reno for the time of our lives.
Chop—chop—chop! May it never stop,
Until we get un-married in the Reno way.

SONG—THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

The mother-in-law has always been
The mark of cruel jokes,
Like "Let me die if she comes here!
I hope the old girl chokes!"

The mother-in-law has fixed ideas,
A firm and forceful chin—
And Love flies from the cottage door
When mother-in-law comes in!

She is the cause of suicides
And family quarrels galore—
Her voice to every husband's ears
Is like a lion's roar.

She simply reeks with good advice
And all the devils grin,
When Love prepares a nest for two
And mother-in-law comes in!

When wifie's mother says her bit,
And hubby's mother, too,
The light of love goes quickly out
And life looks pretty blue.

The honeymoon is changed to war,
For each is full of spunk,
Dan Cupid soon flies out the door
And married life is punk!

CHORUS OF LAWYERS AND JUDGES

But how we love the mother-in-law
A friend of ours is she!
She shows the wives and husbandettes
Just how to disagree!
If 'twere not for her wily work
Oh, where would Reno be?
Oh where, oh where, oh where would Reno be?

She knows just how to hurt you most,
Her kindest thought is but a roast,
She is King Trouble's greatest toast,
The PATRON SAINT of RENO!
She brews the quarrel and stirs it, too,
She turns your wife away from you,
She tells "her daughter" what to do,
And *pays her fare to Reno!*

So we revere the mother-in-law,
We welcome her with cheers.
She speaks her mind in cutting ways
And ALWAYS interferes.
And so we hope for her success
And drink her health in tears!
We drink, we drink
To the PATRON SAINT of RENO!

SONG OF THE LEFT-OVERS

(Double sextette, sung with exaggerated seriousness)

We are the left-over husbands,
And we are the left-over wives,
For nobody loves us and nobody cares,
 We're alone for the rest of our lives,
Yes, alone for the rest of our lives.

Chorus:

Oh me! Oh my!
Isn't it terribly sad?
Every one of us cast aside
 Marriage is only a fad!
Oh me! Oh my!
We never can look the same,
We don't know why, but the other guy
Is always the one to blame,
 Yes, is always the one to blame!

I was an ideal husband,
And I was a paragon wife;
But everyone knows it and everyone says
That the others caused all of the strife,
Yes, the others caused all of the strife.

I was as pleasant as could be,
And I was unusually sweet,
But what good did it do, (we leave it to you,)
For both of them met with defeat,
Yes, both of them met with defeat!

I was a famous "good fellow"
And I was a suffragette light,
But their partners "got mad," Oh, isn't it sad?
Because they stayed out every night,
Just because they stayed out every night!

Chorus, as above

TRIO—"RELATIVES"

Domestic trouble in this world is caused by relatives,
Who spend their waking hours "butting in."

They're blind to all good qualities,
They magnify the flaws,
Their welcome smiles are camouflage,
Their hand-shakes cover claws.

And every little thing you do is nothing short of sin,
So if you long for happiness, beware of all your kin!

Chorus:

Oh, never live with your relatives
Or Love will fly away,
For Ma-in-law and Pa-in-law
Must always have their say,
While Sis-in-law and Brother, too,
Will back them in the fray.
The family will all rejoice
When trouble has arisen;
His folks will say the fault is her'n,
And her'n will say 'tis his'n.

Oh, sad the day when Ma-in-law inspects the blushing
bride,
Who really is a maiden fair to see.
She thinks her very frivolous,
Not good enough for him;
Her hair is just a shade too red;
Her figure is too slim.
And every little thing she does is never rightly done,
And Ma-in-law can't understand how she "roped in"
her son.

Chorus (as before)

Then Pa-in-law will shake his head and wonder why
his boy
Picked such a lemon for his legal mate.
She cannot cook like Mother does,
Or sew like Sister Sue—

He thinks she cannot be quite right,
(She wears a high-heeled shoe!)
And every little thing she says meets with a common
fate,
Of groans from Pa and weeps from Ma and sniffs from
Sister Kate.

Chorus (as before)

But sisters are the worst of all, they're at it all the time,
They think their brother made "a great mistake."
They do not like her "type" at all,
She "hasn't any style"—
They pass each criticism out
To Brother with a smile.
"She's really too extravagant to live on what you
make"
Until he thinks the girl he wed is something of a fake!

CONFESSION

I love you, dear,
Quite unashamed,
Gone is the yesteryear
Wild and untamed.

You broke the barrier down
Stormed at the gate,
Is it for me to frown,
Questioning Fate?

You who have conquered me
Must not forget,
What it has meant to me,
Means to me yet.

Love has brought bitterness,
Life is so drear.
Yet in each mute caress
I love you, dear.

SONG—"THE ALIMONY CLUB"

Oh, come and join the Alimony Club, the Alimony
Club, the Alimony Club.

We all belong to the Alimony Club,

And this is our alimony day!

We never have to ask stingy husbands for a cent

To settle with the grocer or to pay on the rent,

For we belong to the Alimony Club,

And the law collects from the luckless dub,

So if you are wise and will open your eyes,

You will soon become a member of the Alimony Club!

Oh, come and join the Alimony Club, the Alimony
Club, the Alimony Club,

We all belong to the Alimony Club,

And this is our alimony day!

We never have to work washing dishes in a flat;

We buy our hats and dresses as we please, just like that!

For we belong to the Alimony Club,

And we don't have to sweep or dust or scrub,

So we have all day to run around and play,

It is great to be a member of the Alimony Club!

Oh, come and join the Alimony Club, the Alimony
Club, the Alimony Club,

We all belong to the Alimony Club,

And this is our alimony day!

You never see our girls darning stockings by the score,

Or hunting collar buttons, at least—not any more!

For we belong to the Alimony Club,

Let poor old hubby hustle for the grub,

So we have no chills over paying bills,

For you see, we're charter members of the Alimony
Club.

THE WAITING LOVER

I wandered in the moonlight, dear
And wondered if you knew,
That all the love within my heart
Is living there for you?
That every tender thought of mine
Goes searching weary miles
To find the one I love the best,
And change his tears to smiles.

Oh tell me truly, gentle moon—
Why must we mortals part,
When love brings joy into the soul
And fills the hungry heart?
You kissed me in the moonlight, dear,
Beside a singing stream,
And since then life has been a song
And memory a dream.

There is a home in your dear arms,
A pillow on your breast,
Where my poor heart is safe from harm,
And gains its sweetest rest.
For in this sad and weary world,
I've known no greater bliss
Than when you told me of your love
And sealed it with a kiss!

The kiss still lingers on my lips,
Far sweeter than before,
And memories of that happy day
Shall live forever more.
And so I send my love, dear heart,
Across the distant blue—
That you may meet me in your dreams
And hold me close to you.

HUMILITY

Though my heart sings to you
Clings to you, brings to you
Love that has slumbered through all that is past,
I ask for nothing, dear,
Only a passing tear,
Only your tenderness true to the last.

Life has meant pain for me,
Youth smiled in vain for me,
Love came like sunshine to brighten a day.
I grasped the whole of it,
Reached for the soul of it,
Held it with joy till it faded away.

Time is not long enough,
I am not strong enough,
Courage is lacking to struggle and live.
If in my sorrow,
I hasten tomorrow,
Cherish my memory, dear, and forgive.



THE COLONY

Have you ever thought about the Reno Colony
And what we owe this little fad, divorce?
Fair plaintiffs oft advising,
Forever criticising,
Yet their money helps us on a bit, of course.

If you legislate against the Reno Colony,
To other fields the fair ones you will drive.
For ill-advised propriety
Brings poverty with piety,
And some of us would much prefer to thrive.

Does Reno really know how much the Colony
Contributes to the cafes and the stores?

Hotels would soon be closing,
The population dozing,
If broken hearts should favor other shores.

A necessary evil is the Colony,
It must exist when Love has sullen grown,
So quit the foolish knocking,
Your own progression blocking,
And learn to let what's well enough alone.



PREDESTINATION

Women are bubbles afloat on Life's stream;
Youth is the kiss of the sun, in whose gleam
Onward they dance like the joys of a dream.
While Destiny lurks in the boulders below,
Shaping the currents of Life as they flow,
Issues too deep for the surface to know.
Poor little bubbles that glisten and gleam!

Some drift to shallows, secluded and sweet,
Safe in the pools where the love lilies meet;
Others are borne on the waves' highest crest
Home to the shores on the Isles of the Blest,
Just as the sunset illumines the West,
Gilding the sands for Eternity's rest;

Whisper! The loveliest, frail as a breath
Float toward the shadows—Dishonor and Death.
Fate's tiny puppets that dance in a dream,
Beautiful bubbles afloat on Life's stream!

WHISPERING PINES

6
Wind in the pine trees,
Far off—remote—
Soft as the kiss
On a love-willing throat;
Soothing as sleep
To a pain ridden breast,
Wind in the pine trees
Lull me to rest.

Wind in the pine trees,
Spirit of youth!
Strong as affection
That blossoms on Truth;
Keen as the note
In the voice of desire;
Wind in the pine trees,
Lend me thy fire!

Wind in the pine trees,
Sighing so low,
Teach me the things
That my spirit should know;
Sing to me softly
Winds of the sky,
Whispers of angels,
Life's lullaby.

Wind in the pine trees,
Fragrant—divine!
Sweet as the lips
Of a loved one on mine;
Pure as the tears
Of fair women that weep,
Wind in the pine trees,
Sing me to sleep.

IN RENO

SCENE—A courtroom. Judge Blank presiding.
Haughty lady on witness stand.

Question. Name and address?

Answer. Mrs. Ira Kissam, Riverside Hotel.

Q. Former residence?

A. New Yawk—Riverside Drive.

Q. Why do you wish to obtain a divorce?

A. (shrugging shoulders). One must be in the swim, you know.

Q. Then you wish to further your social ambitions?

A. Why else would one endure the foreign atmosphere of Reno?

Q. How long have you been here?

A. Six months and ten minutes.

Q. Time enough. What is the grievance against your husband?

A. Grievance! I am not the wife of a laborer, sir!

Q. But you must have some complaint. Does your husband beat you?

A. Frequently—at bridge.

Q. Does he drink?

A. Certainly! He is a gentleman.

Q. Does he use loud and unbecoming language?

A. I could not say.

Q. Surely, you must know that.

A. Really, I knew very little about him. You see, he is not in my set.

Q. Does he support you?

A. I believe so. Some one pays the bills. I never annoy myself with such details.

Q. So far you have given no reasonable ground for divorce. What is your objection to Mr. Kissam?

A. His name annoys me. Could anything be more disgustingly vulgar?

Q. Did you know at the time of your marriage that his name was Kissam?

A. (sighing). He had money then.

Q. It does make a difference. Does Mr. Kissam indulge in "affinities"?

A. I really never exerted myself to inquire.

Q. Have you any children?

A. (indignantly). Certainly not.

Q. Calm yourself, madam. This is a very sad case of neglect and extreme cruelty. How much alimony do you wish?

A. I live simply. \$5,000 a month will do.

Judge. Decree granted. Witness dismissed.

A. (rising). Very well! You will oblige me by handing me the papers as soon as possible. My fiance is impatient, you know.

Judge. Ah! A fiance? Then you expect to re-marry?

A. Certainly! He is a lovely boy.

Judge. Congratulations. Hope your second plunge will be happier than your first.

A. Perhaps. One never can tell. Good day.
(Exit.)

Judge. Next! (Indian squaw takes the stand.)

Q. Name?

A. Red Star. Ungh!

Q. Husband's name?

A. Bad Egg. Ungh!

Q. What is the matter with Bad Egg?

A. Much booze. Brave no good. Ungh!

Q. Is that all?

A. No papoose. Me want papoose. Ungh!

Judge. Decree granted. Witness dismissed.

Clerk. Your Honor is wanted at the 'phone.

Judge. Hello. Yes, this is Judge Blank. Mrs. Ura Nagger, Colonial Apartments? What can I do for you? Certainly, what kind do you want? Absolute, \$2.50; limited, \$1.98, marked down from \$2.00. Very well. Do you want it sent C. O. D.? All right, it will be there by dinner-time. What? Send the license over with it? All right. Going away tonight? Well, congratulations! Goodbye.

Judge. Court is adjourned. (Exeunt protesting attorneys and disappointed women.)

Leslie Curtis, in Life.

Copyr. Life Pub. Co.



ELSIE

A dark eyed beauty of the Orient,
Sent by the Fates to cheer the desert waste.
A languorous being still more radiant,
Than her weird jewels of barbaric taste;
A modern Cleopatra still more fair
Than she of Egypt where the lotus sighs;
Dark hued and lithe, like midnight is her hair
And hidden fires slumber in her eyes.

CIVILIZATION

I am disappointed in my daughter. She has violated every instinct of my being.

Her eccentricities are based on a strange creed called "The Brotherhood of Man." She speaks pleasantly to menials and courts the admiration of shop girls. Once she became friendly with a woman from the middle West—a creature who wore ready made clothing and smiled with her eyes.

My daughter tolerated society with a bored contempt. She yawned in the presence of eligible men and turned from debutantes to the Ladies' Home Journal.

Then she married—a POOR man—and FOR LOVE! The so-called wedding took place in a minister's study without flowers, music, attendants or the rustle of hereditary satin.

Now, she has accomplished the final severance of our relation. She has *borne a child!* She says she *wanted* it! Can this be possible in the twentieth century? My beautiful daughter, my flower of aristocracy has *had a child!*

She is dead to me—steeped in the vulgar happiness of the common herd.

Like a fish-wife she *hopes for other children.* I am through. My patience has come to an end.

I am disappointed in my daughter—she is so inexplicably normal!

Leslie Curtis in Snappy Stories.



Blushing is virtue's color, but rouge is inexpensive.



Many a box of rouge is born to blush under false pretenses.

RENO IN THE ROUGH

"For Better or Worse"

"You are bored, eh?"

The speaker, a young man of about thirty, moved his chair closer to his companion, as though making room for another party on the hotel porch. The older man puffed a cigarette lazily. Suddenly he started as though realizing for the first time the import of the question.

"Bored? Insufferably!"

"Been here long?"

"Three weeks. You?"

"Six months. My suit was filed today."

"Wish mine was. How long before the case is called?"

"Can't tell exactly. Week, ten days, maybe more. Courts are busy now, you know. Quite a bunch came here in the spring, which makes the fall calendar rather heavy. You will escape that."

The elder man sighed and extended both arms on the sides of the huge porch chair. His light overcoat fell apart exposing immaculate evening dress.

"Hope so—if I can wait that long. Six months! God!"

"Oh, you will get over that feeling," said the young man good-naturedly. "It is hard, of course, but they say the first month is the worst. After that, one begins to appreciate Reno. At the end of two months it is accepted as a matter of course. In three months the thought of going away isn't so pleasant, unless—er—well—there is someone waiting."

"Is that the cause of your enthusiasm?" the older

man asked as he proffered a box of Pall Malls. He noted the quick indrawn breath as the other answered.

"There is no one for me." His voice trembled for an instant. Then he shrugged his shoulders as though casting off a burden.

"At the end of six months," he continued, "everyone is boosting for Reno and bewailing the cruel Fate that draws him away. I suppose that is why so many Eastern women marry here and settle down in the midst of the sage brush."

"I didn't know—"

"Sure they do," interrupted the other. "You know Mrs. Henry Keene of New York, daughter-in-law of Herndon Keene? Well, she is living in a miner's cabin not far from here, as happy as a clam at high tide. Reno itself is full of women who learned how to live in Nevada and found it so far superior to the venerated misery of metropolitan shamming, that they tacked on to some unspoiled specimens of Western manhood and pitched their tents right here."

The older man sneered unpleasantly. His pale lips drew themselves in to a thin line rather drooping at the corners.

"I wish I could get some of your enthusiasm, young man. What anyone can see in this remote neck of the desert is beyond me."

"If you'll do what I say," said the young fellow, "I'll make you a Reno booster before to-morrow morning and in two days you will be a free admiration bureau for the whole State of Nevada."

"Rot! You couldn't make me like this place if you worked a year. I'm no farmer on his first trip to town. I've circled the globe three times and lived abroad half my life. There isn't a country I couldn't

travel in the dark. If New York had decent divorce laws I wouldn't stick my nose into Nevada for the whole State. Make me like it? I'd like to see you!"

"It's a go!" laughed the young man. "In the first place, what's your name? Oh, I don't mean your real name—just the one you are using here."

"Wells—George Wells. Yours?"

"Willard Brooks."

"Brooks—Brooks. New York?"

"Yes. You too, of course. It is written all over you. But you must forget all about New York for the present."

"Why?"

The younger man leaned forward and looked straight into the eyes of his companion.

"Mr. Wells," he said confidentially. "Pardon my impudence, but it is necessary under the circumstances. I've dabbled a little in psychology, just enough to take a chance on reading you, if you will permit me."

"Go ahead! You amuse me," rejoined Wells, squinting at Brooks with a half doubting smile.

"Amuse you? That is the pith of your trouble. You are so accustomed to shams, false ideals, high living and the evils of the present civilization that you have become tired and blase, bored to death at the suggestion of anything normal. You don't bestir yourself to create an interest in life, but wait for it to come to you. I'll bet four dollars to a doughnut that you came from the train to the Riverside Hotel and haven't stirred out of it since. You eat here, sleep here, sit on this porch—until mind is calloused as well as body. Isn't that true?"

"Well, of all the ———— nerve!" Wells sat bolt upright. Then he laughed and passed out an-

other cigarette. He held a match obligingly forward and as the light flickered on the face of his critic, he saw strong, earnest features and eyes that seemed to be eternally searching for something, so intense was their expression.

"You are partly right," he continued, after a short pause. "But why should I do otherwise? A man drops into a strange town, inquires for the best hotel and goes there. Anything strange about that?"

"The strange part is that he complains of being bored when he has made no effort to know it. Why, man alive, this little village of Reno contains the most wonderful tangle of human problems that ever existed. There is an undercurrent of intrigue, an element of comedy, a world of tragedy spread for your continued amusement. And the heart interest—you can't imagine the queer twists in it! Wonderful, I tell you!"

"By Jove, Brooks, you don't say so! Can't you put me next?"

"Sure! That's the spirit! Before midnight you will be worse than I am." He rose excitedly. "Come—it is only seven thirty—we are just in time for the crowd at the Liberty Cafe."

"Cafe?" echoed Wells. "But I've just had my dinner!"

"We are going there to see—not to eat. Just forget all your habits of dining and behaviour. I think you will enjoy things, if you can shake that dress suit feeling. Do you get me?"

What Wells thought as they trudged down Virginia Street is not known, but his demeanor suggested anything but happiness. He was not accustomed to insults and it hurt his pride to have this stranger drag him about like a valet.

"I say!" he puffed. "Call a taxi. How far is this place, anyway?"

"Only around the corner. Taxi, nothing! You will be doing marathons at the Madison Square if you get back before it is torn down!" In a moment he added: "Did you ever see a little town as well lighted as Reno? Look around. I think it is wonderful. Eleven thousand people—that's all! Nice wide streets, paved and kept clean, good drainage system, stores that send buyers to Paris, a theatre that is almost metropolitan. Say, New York ought to come out here and take lessons."

Wells admitted that the electrical display was unusual. He had never thought of such things before. His lack of breath prevented further speech, so Brooks seized the opportunity to rattle on.

"Over there," he pointed out a moving picture concern across the street, "used to be the office of Nat C. Goodwin & Co. You know, the actorine who amputated one of his harem here."

Wells assented with the additional information, "My office is in Wall Street." At that the two men exchanged a meaning smile.

"Down there a few doors is a place where you can get all the New York papers. And over on that corner I saw a man shot one Saturday afternoon."

"Shot?"

"Yes, for fooling with another man's wife. A laborer, I believe, but it is a dangerous game in any case."

"I suppose so," murmured Wells, and he was glad when they neared the well-lighted Cafe and passed into a large room unlike anything he had ever seen. Along the wall on one side was a row of tables and

on the other side of a fence partition was a long lunch counter where citizens in various costumes ate from platters or inhaled their soup. His well-bred soul shivered. It recalled visions of Bowery eating houses he had read about.

Suddenly he realized that Brooks had passed through an archway into another room and he followed with an opposite impulse to escape to the hotel. This feeling passed when he entered and saw a brilliant gathering surrounded with all the earmarks of a Broadway restaurant. Brooks made for a small table in a corner, commanding an excellent view of the entrance arch and the entire room, which was several times larger than the one with the lunch counter.

"This is called 'The Look 'em over Room,' said Brooks as the waiter festooned their hats and coats on a nearby rack. "You see, when this is all lit up—the place, not the people—the men around town look in through that long window on the front and if they see any 'dolls' in here, they come in. Otherwise they eat where we passed through, or 'in the 'Romance Room,' on the opposite side, a dimly lighted retreat on the Dutch order. Good place if you don't want to be observed, as there are no tell-tale windows."

"Private booths?" asked Wells with a wink.

"Don't allow them here," responded the younger man, "although the newspapers give Reno credit for being the limit. Just a quiet place with perhaps twenty tables. The town kids take their colony friends in there when they don't want Papa to know. The 'Romance Room' used to be the whole thing until they enlarged the restaurant on this side."

Wells glanced around with new interest. At least

twenty pretty women graced the room, clad in raiment worthy of the Ritz on a gala night.

"Jove!" he exclaimed. "Who are these people? I never see them at the hotel."

"Of course not." Brooks smiled. "Didn't I tell you Reno was interesting? These are the elite of the divorce colony, every one of them here to shake off a millstone. They live mostly in apartments and cottages, but dine here for the excitement. These birds of fine plumage thrive on hubbub." He spoke bitterly, but the older man was oblivious.

"Who is the blonde at the corner table?"

"Mrs. Van Luce, reputed affinity of Ward De Witt."

"So?" Wells raised his eyebrows. "Where is his wife?"

"Ran away with a chauffeur or some such insect. Strange that he didn't profit by it and pick a different kind. This one has ruined more than one poor devil. The boy with her now is madly infatuated. Going a wild pace only to be thrown down in the end. His mother is heart broken."

"A son of the sage brush?"

Brooks paused to order the dinner before replying, while Wells watched Mrs. Van Luce from the corner of his eye.

"Yes, Bert Taylor, poor dub! Decent chap at heart and only nineteen."

"He ought to get wise—living in Reno—" volunteered Wells.

"That's the trouble—too much brilliance is blinding unless one has the proper focus on life. Sincere young lads like Taylor haven't the ghost of a chance with these blood-sucking vampires, who are good

to look upon, clever, witty, oftentimes rich and always mad for admiration. An unsophisticated boy is the easiest victim, so they wine, dine, and take him to the theatre, always exhibiting him in the boxes and always at their own expense, mind you, with the excuse that while 'serving time' in Reno, it would be indiscreet to accept favors from admirers. That makes a cad of him. Then they spoil all his youthful illusions, teach him contempt for all that is good in life, make him hard and cynical, squeeze his heart dry of honorable intentions toward other women, arouse in him adolescent passion at which they laugh, and finally fling him aside—an empty shell for better women to weep over. God!"

"You are bitter!" The older man raised his glass. "Here's to the light that lies in woman's eyes!"

"—and lies and lies and lies!" finished Brooks. "Bitter? Good God, man, if you had been through what I have, you would be bitter, too." He leaned closer over the table. "I've a notion to tell you, Wells. You're a good sort. I've never told a soul, but my suit is filed and it would do worlds of good to get it off my chest."

"Fire away," said Wells, good naturedly. "We all have our troubles." The wine and bright lights were having a soothing effect. He felt young again. The waiter refilled his glass and moved noiselessly away.

"Thanks, old man. It's a sordid story, but a short one—seven years of Hell with the prettiest woman in the world, at least—my world. Met her at a hunt in Warrenton, Virginia. Her family are aristocrats—oldest of F. F. V.'S. She was beautiful, perfection itself—twenty years old and forty years wise; I was twenty-three—there's the tragedy! A

clean minded youth—if I may say so—anxious to succeed in the business my father had built before me. Lucie's people were cordial. Her fine old father welcomed me at once and in less than a month Lucie became my wife."

He looked into the bottom of his glass with a far away look and his face, to Wells, seemed to turn gray and old.

"Then—the shock! Lucie had seized upon me as the only eligible available to conceal true conditions from her doting parents, a disgrace brought on by the brutality of a coachman—so she led me to believe. The horror of it almost killed me, but I loved her and even though cruelly deceived, I considered her youth and desperation as well as my own past, which was not without blemish."

"A manly thing to do," commented Wells.

"She swore she loved me only and had feared to tell the truth for fear of losing me, so I forgave her. We had planned a honeymoon in the Bahamas, but Lucie's condition made a longer absence necessary, so I arranged at great inconvenience to spend a year in Europe. A child was born in Paris six months later—a little girl with pansy eyes and blonde hair like her mother."

As Brooks spoke he glanced at a plainly dressed but sweet-faced woman, just being seated at a nearby table. She nodded listlessly and became absorbed in the menu card.

"We have much in common—that little woman and I," whispered Brooks. "Calvin Hardy's wife. Know him?"

"Went to school with him. Same clubs, too. Didn't know his wife was here. How long?"

"Gets her's tomorrow. Wonder what she will do then, poor thing! Crazy about Cal, too—simply worships him. There are a few of that kind here."

"You were saying—?" Wells was plainly interested. His face was flushed and he had scarcely touched his food.

"The child died a month later," Brooks resumed. "Lucie refused the usual nourishment and artificial food did the rest. I thought she hated it on account of its father, but the real reason was lack of humanity. She hasn't a thought for anyone but herself."

"On our return to New York I found my business in bad shape, needing absolute reorganization, which necessitated an occasional absence on my part. We took a house on 71st Street and my seventeen year old brother came to live with us and help me with the business.

"Not long after, I returned from Philadelphia early in the afternoon, and having a severe headache, decided to cut the office and go home. What I found there paralyzed me. Later my brother told me the whole story and Lucie begged forgiveness, pleading neglect on my part and weakness on her own. To be perfectly just, I forgave again, but my poor brother naturally left my roof. He went straight to the dogs and my invalid mother grieved herself to death over him. Not knowing the truth about the rupture, she blamed me and died with a heart full of bitterness. All this for a pretty woman—bah!"

He banged on the table and leaned closer to his companion.

"That was the beginning of the end. Lucie presented me with a son the following spring—whose I don't know. My brother and I look much alike.

When the babe was scarcely a year old an incompetent nurse let him fall from a third story window. His mother was at a matinee.

"After that Lucie went to Europe to assuage her grief for the child. I could not accompany her. In less than a month rumors began to circulate. I investigated and found that she was brazenly traveling about with Calvin Hardy. That is why Mrs. Hardy is here. Tomorrow my wife's name will be in every man's mouth."

"Calvin Hardy! You don't say so! By George, I'm surprised!"

"Oh, they all fall for Lucie," Brooks continued, "old and young, rich and poor and I don't blame them. Face like a flower and a manner as innocent as an angel. When she opens wide those pansy eyes, tips her lovely head a trifle to one side and laughs with red lips, parted—Gad!—a man who wouldn't go to Hell for her isn't a man! That's the trouble—she has everything good in her makeup but honor—the one great essential. I am a fool with the rest. No matter what she does, I love her and can't help it!"

Wells said nothing. He felt choked and heavy.

"But the straw that broke my back was this"—the young man leaned his head on his hands and spoke slowly, as though looking backward over a waste of bitterness. "After breaking up Hardy and his wife, she began a flirtation with Moberley Reed, the multi-millionaire, you know. Met him on shipboard after the episode with Hardy and has him completely in her toils. Reed is a stranger to me, but he bears a good name and yet, I'm afraid, has an eye for the beautiful and romantic in life. His wife is a fine woman, they say, and there are four children. It's atrocious!"

Wells sat as if paralyzed, gazing at Brooks with wide open eyes.

"Lucie openly defied me, when I found this out. Said she was going her own way and with whom she pleased, as I haven't enough money to give her beauty the proper setting. She doesn't care for Reed either, but he is rich and powerful. No use to speak to her of love or duty—such words mean nothing to her unmoral nature. With Reed she will be just the same—marriage cannot save her. I will give her the freedom she covets, but God help Reed and his wife and children. Lucie Carlin is a woman without pity and will drag his name into the mire as she has mine, while her proud people, ignorant of her true nature, consider me a cruel and brutal husband. Bah!"

The waiter stood waiting while Brooks fumbled for his purse. Wells paid the bill before Brooks could interfere.

"See here, Wells, old man, this was my dinner," he protested.

Wells laughed. "Listen Brooks," he said, "do I understand that you are the husband of Lucie Carlin?"

Brooks nodded. "Brooks of Reno, but Carlin in New York. You're the first I've told, except, of course, my lawyers."

Wells nervously extracted a card case.

"If you will accept an exchange of confidence, as well as my gratitude and life long friendship," he said, handing over a card, "we will step to a telegraph office and juggle a little with destiny. I owe you an apology, Mr. Carlin—I had no idea—"

Carlin glanced at the card. "*Moberley Reed.*" His face turned the color of chalk. "What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Follow me," said Reed.

Several pairs of interested eyes watched the pair curiously as they left the restaurant, but neither man paid the slightest attention.

At the telegraph office the older man soberly wrote two messages, which he handed to his friend. The first was addressed to Mrs. Moberley Reed, 71 Fifth Avenue, New York City, and read as follows: "*Plans entirely changed. Will arrive at home Wednesday next. Prepare for long trip, anywhere you say. Explanations on arrival.*"

(Signed) Moberley.

The second brought a tinge of color to Carlin's face.

Mrs. Lucie Carlin,
Warrenton, Va.

Have reconsidered. Return to New York tomorrow. Further communication unnecessary.

(Signed) George Wells.

"Thank God!" breathed Carlin.

"Thank you," said Reed, "and goodnight." They shook hands in silence.

* * *

Carlin was waiting at the station when Reed arrived. He took a telegram from his pocket and held it for Reed to see.

"Reed story false. Mere gossip. Give me just one more chance. Lucie."

The eyes of the two men met. Reed smiled but Carlin's face was drawn.

"A bird in the hand, Carlin," he said. "Surely you are not—?"

"I've answered it in this way," faltered Carlin, "*Divorce must proceed. Will remarry in two years if party proves worthy.*"

Reed coughed. "You are a good fellow, Carlin. Far better than I could be, but I hate to see—"

"Yes, I know," said Carlin sadly, "but somehow I can't refuse her a chance—perhaps she isn't altogether responsible and besides, you see, I love her!"

As the train pulled out, Reed wiped his eyes and blew his nose vociferously. Then he opened his watch, extracted the picture of a flower-like face, kissed it tenderly under his handkerchief, tore it into a dozen pieces and dropped them from the window.



ALUMNI CHORUS

Goodbye Reno, dear old Reno,
We really hate to leave,
For you are kind to the stranger at the gate
And the hearts that are bound to grieve.
So goodbye, Reno, dear old Reno,
We love you every one.
As we speed East, our thoughts at least
Will be with you in the setting sun,
Will be with you in the setting sun!
All Aboard! All aboard!
Goodbye Reno—goodbye Reno,
Goodbye! Goodbye!