In The Eleventh Hour . .

(By Marcel Savignon.)

Why, of course you must come along," said the blind gentleman kindly, "when you are a friend of my chauffeur. Please take a seat in the tonneau. I am sure you will enjoy the ride to Esterel."

He held out his right hand, which was immediately taken by the stranger, who stammered a few words of thanks and handed the chaffeur a satchel, a heavy suit case and a hat box. A little distance off a lady was waiting in silence until the man opened the door of the tonneau, when they both noiselessly and in silence seated themselves in the large comfortable car.

The auto had come upon them at the outskirts of Nice as if by accident and the blind owner of the car had no idea that the meeting had been arranged by Raoul, his chaffeur.

The couple, inspite of their elegant dress and the many diamonds of the woman did not make a very favorable impression, and it was evident that they belonged to the many adventurers who abound along the Riviera during the Monte Carlo season.

The car started off. The blind owner was seated next to the chauffeur and was dressed exactly the same, goggles, leather coat and cap. In the rear seat the man and woman were sitting without speaking.

As they left Nice the chauffeur turned toward Saorge, on the frontier in the opposite direction of Esterel, where he was supposed to be going. The blind man did not notice it, but said in his kind voice: "It is a fine day to see Esterel, there is no wind and the air feels so balmy. You will enjoy Esterel, I am sure. I love to ride though people do not understand it, and the ladies at the hotel laugh at me and call me a dreamer. And I suppose that I am something of a dreamer. I love Nature, though I cannot see. When I took my first rides friends explained the nature of the country to me—now we are passing through fields, they said, now we come to the woods, and I tried to remember what I had once seen for I have been blind for only ten years. Today I know my outo and by riding I learn to know the country. By the noise of the motor I can tell whether we are going up or down hill and when it runs as it does now I know that we are on the level road. The speeding through the air fills me with joy. It at once stimulates and calms me. If you would tell me of the houses and villages we pass and which I cannot see my enjoyment would be perfect."

M. Girard kept on talking, and because he felt he must say something, the chauffeur's friend said:

"I notice you are a great lover of sport, sir."

At first he had been astonished at the eloquence of the man now it appeared . . funny to him, and he nudged the chauffeur, while the woman had to stuff her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from laughing.

And the car sped along.

They had now nearly reached the foot of the mountains. The country grew rough and stony and the air was quite chilly. Girard wrapped the rug closer around his thin legs. He was now quite silent. Suddenly he raised his head, drew a deep breath and said softly, as if thinking aloud:

"How strange, I do not remember ever having been here before."

Immediately afterward he asked if they were near the woods.

"There is a small clump of trees ahead on the right," the stranger replied.

"Olive trees, I suppose?"

"Oh, no, they are not olive trees, they are oaks, beautiful, tall, majestic oaks, just the thing for a lover of nature like you, and on the left are masses of flowers in the meadows with little children dancing."

The three looked at each other and smiled at the excellent joke.

The blind man shook his head. Strange, he thought, he did not remember any meadows, nor did he now smell the fragrance of flowers.

On and on sped the outo, close to the overhanging wall of rocks. It was a lonesome country, where no one came except teamsters and mountaineers and shepherds with their flocks.

M. Girard grew uneasy.

"Are we soon at Vallauris?"

"Oh, Vallauris is far behind us now," came the reply in a mocking voice.

Suddenly the blind man understood and at the same time he heard whispers behind his back and turned around, as if he could see.

"Raoul," he said, "you have not been in my service very long and cannot know my peculiar ways yet, but in the future you will take me where I tell you to and nowhere else."

He tried to discover where they were, but in vain, and cried:

"Raoul, you are receiving me. Where are we going?"

There, again they were whispering. The woman is nervous. She has a map in her lap and is pointing out the route with her finger, while she whispers the names "Saorge, Tende, Limone."

The intention of the three is clear enough. M. Girard always carries a large amount of money. They want to rob him and flee across the frontier in his car, leaving him behind. The stranger is leisurely arranging a loop of a silken handkerchief with which to strangle the blind man.

The intended victim can control his anger no longer. He turns to his chauffeur and cries, "Who is that talking behind me in the car?"

No answer; only a renewed burst of speed. Louder and louder grow the voices and Girard shouts for help.

The two men look at each other; he must be silenced. On the left is a precipice. What would be easier than to throw him into it? The chauffeur slows up.

"No, go on further! Not here!" cries the woman.

The blind man jumps to his feet; he takes hold of Raoul's shoulders, but the chauffeur easily shakes him off.

The car now dashes ahead at top speed. The road turns sharply, the auto whirls around and suddenly stops with a shock. Ten meters further and they would have run into another car, which had broken down in the middle of the road.

"Why, M. Girard! You come like a godsend. Your chauffeur may help us to fix our car. May he not?"

The man is at Girard's side and helps him to get out. The blind man has recognized a friend's voice; he wants to speak, but the voice fails him.

"But, my dear M. Girard, what has happened to you? You are so pale and you tremble."

"Those scoundrels—I mean my chauffeur and the others—"

"What does this mean? Your chauffeur and the lady and gentleman who came with you are running away as if somebody were after them."

"They wanted to murder me and to throw my body over the cliff—me, who never harmed anyone—"

Great tears were rolling down the poor fellow's cheeks as he collapsed and fell to the ground in a dead faint.

Our Expensive Palates.

Physological chemists occasionally delight to tell us that we are the dupes of aesthetic senses and pleasing flavors. Men will pay, they say, half a guinea for a pint of turtle soup which, from a strictly nutritive point of view, is not worth a twentieth part of that sum. Oysters, we are told, are an extravagant form of food, since fourteen of them do not contain as much nourishment as a single egg, while it would require the ingestion of no less than 100 good oysters before the protein equivalent of a pound of beef was reached. Caviare, again, is not to be compared with the bloater as regards its nutritive value. Indeed, the latter offers the largest amount of nutriment for a given sum of any animal food."

It is evident if we regard these conclusions seriously that a large section of the human race is wickedly indulgent, caring more for the palatable than the nutritious quality of food. The same appears to be true in regard to beverages, and even in the case of cigars there is no difference, chemically speaking, between the penny Pickwick and the shilling Havana. The difference of eleven pence is paid for flavor, and flavor alone. Physiologically, it is possible that a "brandy and soda" costing say one shilling is just as satisfactory as a "pint" of champagne at five shillings. Similarly it may be said that a pint of beer at sixpence is quite as good, distetically speaking, as a small bottle of Chateau Margeaux at three shillings and sixpence.

There are, however, clearly instances in which in no sense can the nutritive equivalent of food and beverages be summed up in so many pounds, shillings and pence. How often it is found, for example, that the invalid may be tempted to take a few oysters in preference to a small beef fillet, or some turtle soup when calves' head, the basis of mock turtle, would scarcely appeal to him, even although it may be more than equal in nutritive value to the only reptile used to any extent as food in this country. When a person refuses to take a given food, however nutritive and wholesome it may be, because it is in many instances probable that if he struggles to overcome it may prove to tax his digestive functions and may even cause gastric trouble.

The chemical analysis of food and physiological experiments in the test tube do not take into account this psychical factor of digestion, for the digestive process is well begun when the sight of food is pleasing. On the contrary, when food does not appeal to the eye it is likely not to appeal to the stomach. It is hardly reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the price of flavor is always the price of luxury.

Leper Asylums in Norway.

There are in Norway no fewer than twenty leper asylums, but each contains only ten to fifteen beds. They are situated in country places, and the style of living followed in them is similar to that of an ordinary family in moderate circumstances.

"BONE AGE" ON THE PRAIRIES.

How Many Settlers Lived While Getting Their Claims.

The pioneers of Kansas will never forget the "buffalo bone age." When central and southwestern Kansas were settled the prairie was strewn with buffalo bones. Those were hard times in Kansas and the gathering of these bones enabled the early settlers to live while they were getting their claims broken out for the producing of crops.

Nine-tenths of the pioneers of that section of Kansas—and there weren't very many at that—had literally nothing but a team and a few household goods that they had hauled from the East in a single wagon. Of course there were no buffalo, for this was in the late 70s, but their bones strewed the plains, and these bones were the only thing that had a commercial value and they were utilized. They were hauled in great wagonloads to the nearest railway, often from sixty to one hundred miles away, and sold.

The horns were the more valuable and they went first, but the rest of the skeleton soon followed. There were no fortunes made by these early bone hunters, for a large load of buffalo bones brought only from $5 to $8 at the railroad towns, but the proceeds from a load enabled the settler to buy a little flour, coffee and occasionally meat and lumber.

Songs vs. Hymns.

"I'm a religious man myself—you understand," he said as he walked into Prosecutor Geier's office, considerably aroused. "But is a man supposed to listen to his neighbor playing the organ and singing hymns at 4 o'clock in the morning? Huh!

"I go to church just as much as he does and my children go to Sunday school, and I think I'm just as good a man as he is, if I do say it myself. But this is going too far. He isn't even a good singer. Honest, he's got an awful voice."

The neighbor, it seems, gets up at 4 or 5 and starts long hymns every morning accompanying himself on the organ. Geier refused to order an arrest.

"All I can suggest is a counter irritant," he said. Noting the look of surprise, he exclaimed: "You get up a little earlier and start a phonograph playing 'Waltz Me Around Again, Willie,' or 'Oh, Gee, Be Sweet to Me, Kid,' or 'Love Me and the World is Mine,' or something like that. Then when he gets mad and comes to you about it make a bargain with him."

The man agreed and started for a music store at once.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Plea for Cannibalism.

The physician took a little more turkey.

"We digest turkey easily," he said, "because the flesh resembles our own. A turkey eats grain, meat, fish, pretty much everything tasty; we do the same, and hence human flesh and turkey flesh are a good deal alike.

"Fish digest fish best. Carnivorous animals, if fed on the flesh of carnivores, keep in the best condition. When a snake goes off its feed the trainer soon brings it round with a meal or two of snake meat.

"These and similar facts have been proved strikingly by Emil Fisher, the Berlin chemist. The most digestible and the most economical food, Fischer's experiments show, is that which is more like the feeder. The most indigestible, costly and least nourishing food is that which is most unlike the feeder. Cannibalism, in other words, is the most reasonable food law, and vegetarianism is the most unreasonable."

A Moveable Watermark.

The "Circle" tells the following story of high tide and low tide in a small boy's affairs:

"Willie," commanded the mother, as the little family were about to set out for the Sunday-school picnic, "you run right back to the sink and wash your face again; and when you come out don't let me see that black watermark on your neck!"

A little later, as the mother and her two children were hurrying toward the suburban trolley depot, the boy and girl, unable to keep the mother's pace, dropped behind.

"Willie," asked the sister, stimulated to continual chatter by the thought of the joyful picnic, "did you manage to wash the watermark off?"

"Naw, I didn't!" the boy gleefully rejoined, casting a stealthy glance at his mother, "I only moved it furder down!"

Dog Rescued Another in Distress.

An instance of a dog's devotion is reported by M. K. Gleason of Warren, Pa. Mr. Gleason and others noted a big shepherd dog on the railroad bridge over the Allegheny barking frantically. The animal ran to them and then back to one of the centre piers, where it stopped and looked down.

Finally the men secured a ladder and going out on the bridge clambered down and found a fox terrier dog that had fallen there. When the little dog was rescued the joy of the shepherd was unbounded and it manifested its gratitude by jumping up on the men and licking their hands.

The Blue Ribbons of Mathematics.

This year's "senior wranglership" at the University of Cambridge, England, gave great honors to a young Russian Jew. The result of the "mathematical tripos" shows that Selig Brodertsky, whose father had sought an asylum in England from Russian oppression, has been bracketed with Mr. Ibbotson, scholar of Pembroke, for the coveted British blue ribbon of mathematics.

COLOMBIAN ETIQUETTE.

Demands That Persons Shake Hands and Ask Many Questions.

It was the third or fourth day out from Santa Marta, Colombia, and early in the morning, when one of the South American passengers came on deck. Another South American arose from his deck chair, extended his hand and as the men shook hands inquired after the health of the newcomer, his wife and his children.

As they had parted company only about eight hours before in the smoking room, this seemed like unnecessary courtesy. The observer noticed that this happened in the case of all the Colombians on board, so he asked one man about it.

"It is a custom of the country," said he. "On the occasion of meeting a person for the first time each day it is etiquette to shake hands and to make inquiries about the health of the person so greeted and of his relatives. It would not be considered polite to do otherwise."

Continuing, this man told of taking a walk one day in Bogota with a merchant of the place. They were bent on business and were to cover a distance that might be made rather easily in ten minutes. Because of the necessary stops to make the customary inquiries and to shake hands with friends of the merchant, the trip took nearly an hour.

A Moqui Repartee.

A certain commissioner out West was given to treating the Indians with a scorn they did not deserve. One day, as he sat with a great chief in his tepee, smoking the pipe of peace, the chief entertained him with many quaint legends.

One of these dealt with a plague of locusts, and the grim orator described in flowery language how they had swarmed over the land, eating every herb and green leaf, and blotting out the light of day for every number. Then, he concluded by remarking that it was not until the medicine man made an offering of a silver locust to the Great Spirit that the creatures disappeared, and this they did, swiftly and suddenly.

Loudly the commissioner laughed the superstitious Indian to scorn.

"Do you mean to say you're such fools as to believe that rubbish?" he asked.

"Not much," replied the chief gravely, "or we would have offered the Great Spirit a silver paleface long ago."

Golf in High Altitudes.

It is strange how many golfers there are who fail to appreciate the great effect the density of atmosphere has on the flight of a golf ball. On a still, misty day the ball flies about five yards to ten yards less than it does when the wind blows from the opposite and more acceptable quarter.

The writer was fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to play many rounds a few years ago on the Johannesburg links in South Africa. These links are situated some 6,000 feet above sea level and the air is wonderfully rarefied. The ball consequently flew the most surprising distance; as proof of this the winner of a driving competition sent a ball a carry of 323 yards, the second player returning the modest distance of 313 yards. Yet neither of these two players could approach the driving capabilities of good amateur golfers.

A Good Suggestion.

One of the speakers at the dinner given in Cleveland by the National Educational Association was Booker T. Washington, the distinguished negro leader of the South. In the course of his remarks he told the following story about a Southern minister, who was evidently rather long winded:

"One Sunday morning, while the minister was in the midst of his sermon and had reached the point where he was shouting, 'And fourthly, dear brethren,' a man poked his head through the door, and said in a low voice:

"Don't get too much excited, parson, but your church is on fire!'

"'All right, brother ones,' said the parson. 'I will hasten out. But possibly you'd better wake the congregation.'"—Judge.

Sun Makes the Hair Curl.

The holidays had been dry and bright, and from daylight till dark the links had been covered with bareheaded youths and maids.

"All this sunshine," said a girl, "has changed the nature of my hair. It is straight, oily, heavy hair, but the sun has made it dry and crisp and slightly curly. Strange!"

"I returned from Africa with crisp, curly hair," said an engineer. "I went bareheaded there all winter in the brilliant sunshine. And as I watched my lank, greasy locks dry and kink up I began to understand why the hatless natives working around me had such peculiar dry, tightly curled hair. The sun was the cause, of course."

The American Climate.

Ou Shotchun, of the Chinese Embassy, on a sultry evening in Cape May condemned the American climate in the world. And yet you can joke about it.

"A physician joked to me about it the other day.

"'Accustom yourself, Mr. Ou Shotchun,' he said, 'to our climate's ways. Our winters are arctic, our summers and subtropical. And often our climate gets mixed, and arctic days and subtropical ones alternate. Inure yourself, like me, to these changes. In summer and winter, sleep with four blankets.'

"'You do?' I gasped.

"'I do. In summer,' he added, 'I put them under me.'"

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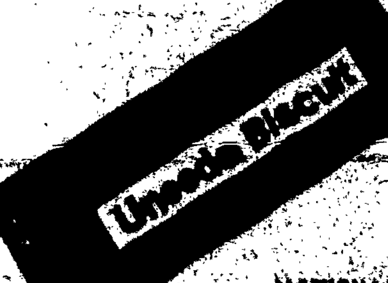

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