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THE SHADOWY PAST

By James Branch Cabell

“MORNING, Teddy.” Mrs. Wade rustled to her seat at the breakfast-table, with a certain shortness of breath that was partly due to the stairs, and partly to a Paquin creation that fitted a trifle too perfectly. “Waffles? At my age and weight the first is an experiment, and the fifth an amiable indiscretion of which I am always guilty. Sugar, please?” She yawned, half-heartedly, and reached—with discreet deliberation—a generously proportioned arm, clad in a very tight and very fluffy sleeve, toward the sugar-bowl. “That will do, Wilkins.”

Mr. Anstruther raised his fine eyes toward the chandelier, and sighed, as Wilkins, the demure and heelless, closed the door softly behind him. As he dawdled over his breakfast, dry, polite, a trifle ill at ease, the morning sunlight rendered him rather misty as to hair, and almost suspiciously well-preserved as to teeth; still, he was not unaware that a gracefully tempered display of emotion sat well enough on his somewhat brittle, somewhat sapless youthfulness, and that at this hour, though possibly premature, it was at least permissible, as the remainder of his house-party had already breakfasted.

“Alicia!” said he, softly, and with a lingering desire for candle-light.

Mrs. Wade partook of chops. “Is this remorse,” she queried, “or a need of bromides? For, at this hour, it is difficult to distinguish between them.”

“It is neither,” said Mr. Anstruther, shortly.

There followed an interval of silence.

“Really,” said Mrs. Wade, with

sympathy, “one would think you had at last been confronted with one of your thirty-seven pasts—or is it thirty-eight, Teddy?”

Mr. Anstruther frowned disapprovingly on her frivolity; then swallowed his coffee, and buttered a wholly superfluous potato. “H’m!” said he; “then you know?”

“I know,” sighed she, “that a sleeping past frequently suffers from insomnia.”

“In that case,” said he, darkly, “it is not the only sufferer.”

Mrs. Wade judiciously considered the attractions of a third waffle—a mellow blending of Autumnal yellows, fringed with a crisp and irresistible brown, that, for the moment, put to flight all dreams and visions of slenderness. “And Gabrielle?” she queried, with a considerable mental hiatus.

Mr. Anstruther flushed. “Gabrielle,” he conceded, with mingled dignity and sadness, “is—twenty-three.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Wade, with a dryness that might mean anything—or nothing; “she was only twenty-one when she married you.”

“I mean,” he explained, with obvious patience, “that at her age she—not unnaturally—takes a somewhat immature view of life. Her unspoiled purity,” he added, meditatively, “and innocence and—er—general unsophistication are, of course, adorable, but I—I can admit to so old a friend, it is sometimes—er—deuced awkward.”

“Gabrielle,” said Mrs. Wade, soothingly, “has ideals. And ideals, like a harelip or a mission in life, should be pitied rather than condemned, when

our friends possess them; especially," she continued, buttering her waffle, "as so many women have them sandwiched between their last attack of measles and their first imported complexion. No one of the three is lasting, Teddy."

"H'm!" said he, scornfully, and trifling with a teaspoon.

There was a silence.

"H'm!" said she, with something of interrogation in her voice.

The teaspoon was cast aside. "See here, Alicia, I've known you——"

"You have not!" cried she, very earnestly, "not by five years!"

"Well, say for some time. You're a sensible woman——"

"A man," Mrs. Wade lamented, parenthetically, "never suspects a woman of discretion, until she begins to lose her waist."

"—and I am sure that I can rely on your womanly tact, and—er—finer instincts, and—er—that sort of thing, you know—to help me out of a—a deuce of a mess." Mrs. Wade ate on, in an exceedingly non-committal fashion, as he paused, inquiringly. "She's been reading some letters," said he, at length; "some letters I wrote a long time ago."

"In the case of so young a girl," observed Mrs. Wade, with perfect comprehension, "I should have undoubtedly recommended a certain judicious supervision of her reading matter."

"She was looking through an old escritoire," he explained, desperately. "I didn't know what was in it. And the letters—why, just an affair such as any two sensible people might get into. It was years ago—and just the usual sort of thing, though it may have seemed from the letters— Why, I hadn't given the girl a thought," he cried, in virtuous indignation, "until Gabrielle found the letters—and read them!"

"Naturally," she assented, very placidly; "I read all of Theophilus's." The smile, with which she accompanied this remark, suggested that

both the late Mr. Wade's correspondence and home life were at times of an interesting nature.

"I—I had destroyed the envelopes, when she—er—returned them," continued Mr. Anstruther, with a fine confusion of persons. "Gabrielle doesn't even know who the girl was—her name, somehow, wasn't mentioned."

"'Woman of my heart'—'Dearest girl in all the world,'" quoted Mrs. Wade, reminiscently, "and such like tender phrases, scattered in with a pepper-cruet, after the rough copy was made in pencil, and dated just, 'Wednesday,' or 'Thursday,' of course. Ah, you were always very careful, Teddy," she sighed, a little wistfully; "and now that makes it all the worse, as—for all the internal evidence—the letters may have been returned yesterday." She laughed, but her laughter was not unkindly.

"Why—!" Mr. Anstruther pulled up short, hardly seeing his way clear through the indignant periods on which he had entered. "I declined," said he, somewhat lamely, "to discuss the matter with her, in her present excited and perfectly unreasonable condition."

Mrs. Wade's penciled eyebrows rose, and her lips—which were quite as red as there was any necessity for their being—twitched. "Hysterics?" she asked.

"Worse!" groaned Mr. Anstruther; "patient resignation under unmerited affliction!" He brought the teaspoon into service once more, and carefully balanced it upon his forefinger. "There were," said he, slowly, "certain phrases in these letters which were, somehow, repeated in certain letters I subsequently wrote to Gabrielle, and—not to put too fine a point upon it—she doesn't like it."

Mrs. Wade smiled, as though she considered this not entirely improbable; and he continued, with growing embarrassment and indignation: "She says there must have been others"—Mrs. Wade's smile grew

reminiscent—"any number of others; that she is only—only an incident in my life. Er—as you have mentioned, Gabrielle has certain ideals which complicate matters. She won't listen to reason, and she won't come down-stairs—which," lamented Mr. Anstruther, plaintively, "is deuced awkward in a house-party." He drummed his fingers irresolutely, for a moment, on the table. "It is," he summed up, "a combination of Ibsen and hysterics—one law for the man and another for the woman, and a realization of the mistake we have both made—and all that sort of thing, you know. And she's taking menthol and green tea in bed, prior to—to——"

"Taking leave?" suggested Mrs. Wade.

"Er—that was mentioned, I believe," said Mr. Anstruther.

Mrs. Wade looked about her. Belle Haven, which Mrs. Anstruther inherited from her parents, is one of the prettiest places on Long Island, and, without, the clean-shaven lawns and trim box-hedges were very beautiful in the morning sunlight; within, the same sunlight sparkled over the heavy breakfast-service, and gleamed mysteriously in the high, wooden panels of the breakfast-room. She viewed the luxury about her a little wistfully, for Mrs. Wade's purse was not over-full. "Of course," said she, meditatively, "there was the money."

"Yes," said Mr. Anstruther, very slowly; "there was the money." He sprang to his feet suddenly, and drew himself erect. "See, here, Alicia; my marriage may have been an eminently sensible one, but I love my wife. Oh, believe me, I love her very tenderly, poor little Gabrielle! I've knocked about the world, and I've done much as other men do, and all that—there have been flirtations and such like, and—er—some women have been kinder to me than I've deserved. But I love her; there hasn't been a moment since she came into my life I haven't loved her, and been—" he waved his hands, impotently,

almost theatrically—"sickened at the thought of the others."

Mrs. Wade's foot tapped the floor somewhat impatiently, as he spoke. When he had made an ending, she inclined her head toward him. "Thank you!" said Mrs. Wade, very gravely, though afterward she smiled.

Mr. Anstruther bit his lip, and flushed. "That," said he, softly, "was different."

But the difference, whatever may have been its nature, was lost on Mrs. Wade, who was now rapt in meditation. She rested her ample chin on a much-bejeweled hand for a moment, and, when she raised it, her voice was free from the affectations that marred her usual speech. "There comes in every woman's life," she said, very slowly, "a time when she realizes, suddenly, that her husband has a past life; she never realizes that of her lover, somehow. But to know that your husband, the father of your child, has lived for other women a life in which you had no part, and never can have part!—she realizes that, at times, and—and it sickens her." Mrs. Wade smiled a little, as she echoed the phrase, but her eyes were not mirthful. "Ah, she hungers for those dead years, Teddy, and, though you devote your whole life to her, nothing, nothing can make up for them; and she always hates those shadowy women who have stolen them from her. A woman never, at heart, forgives another woman who has loved her husband, even though she cease to care for him herself. For she remembers—ah, you men forget so easily, Teddy! God had not invented memory when He created Adam; it was kept for the woman."

Then ensued a pause, during which Mr. Anstruther smiled down upon her, somewhat irresolutely; for he abhorred a scene, and to him her present manner bordered upon both the scenic and the incomprehensible. "Ah!—you women!" he temporized.

There was a swift, upward glance from eyes whose luster time and late hours had conspired to dim. "Ah!

—you men!” retorted Mrs. Wade. “And there we have the tragedy of life in a nutshell!”

Mr. Anstruther, rebuffed, strolled toward a window, where he fidgeted for a moment with the blind; then turned, reproachfully. “We’ve always been such good friends,” said he, half in appeal.

“Yes.” Mrs. Wade was playing with the discarded teaspoon now, and a curious little smile hovered about her lips. “Do you remember, Teddy,” said she, very slowly, “that evening at Lenox, when I wore a blue gown, and they were playing *Fleurs d’Amour*, and—and you said——?”

“Yes”—there was an effective little catch in his voice—“you were a wonderful girl, Alicia—‘my sunshine girl,’ I used to call you. And blue was always your color; it went with your eyes so exactly that night; and those big sleeves they wore then—those tell-tale, crushable sleeves!—suited your slender youthfulness so perfectly! Ah, I remember as though it were yesterday!”

Mrs. Wade sprang to her feet. “It was pink!” cried she, indignantly. “And it was at Newport you said—what you said! And—and you don’t deserve anything but—but what you’re getting,” she concluded, grimly.

“I—it was so long ago,” Mr. Anstruther apologized, with mingled discomfort and vagueness.

“Yes,” she conceded, rather sadly; “it was long—oh, so long ago! We were young then, and we believed in things, and—and Theophilus wasn’t discovered.” She sighed, and drummed her fingers idly on the table. “I’ll help you, though, Teddy, for you’ve shown me the way. You don’t deserve it in the least, but I’ll do it.”

II

THUS it shortly came about that Mrs. Wade mounted, in meditative mood, to Mrs. Anstruther’s rooms; and,

recovering her breath, entered, without knocking, into a gloom where cologne and menthol and the odor of warm rubber contended for the mastery. For Mrs. Anstruther had decided that she was very ill indeed, and was sobbing softly to herself in bed.

Very calmly, Mrs. Wade opened a window, letting in a flood of fresh air and sunshine; very calmly, she drew a chair—a substantial arm-chair—to the bedside, and, very calmly, she began:

“My dear, Teddy has told me of this ridiculous affair, and—oh, you equally ridiculous girl!”

She removed, with deft fingers, a damp and clinging bandage from about Mrs. Anstruther’s head, and patted the back of her hand, placidly. Mrs. Anstruther was by this time sitting erect in bed, and her dark hair was thick about her face, which was colorless; and, altogether, she was very rigid and very indignant and very beautiful and very, very young.

“How dare he tell you—or any one!” she cried.

“We are such old friends, remember,” pleaded Mrs. Wade, and rearranged the pillows, soothingly, about her hostess; “and I wish to talk to you quietly and quite sensibly.”

Mrs. Anstruther sank back among the pillows, and inhaled the fresh air, which, in spite of herself, she found very pleasant. “I—somehow, I don’t feel very sensible,” she murmured, half sulky and half shamefaced.

Mrs. Wade hesitated for a moment, and then plunged into the heart of things. “You are a woman now, dear,” said she, very gently, “though heaven knows it seems only yesterday you were playing about the nursery—and one of the facts we women must face, eventually, is that, at heart, man is always a polygamous animal. It is unfortunate, perhaps, but it is true. Civilization may veneer the fact, but it can never destroy it. There was never any man whose whole life was swayed by any one

woman. He may give her the best there is in him—his love, his trust, his life's work—but it is only the best there is left. Some other woman has had part of it—a part of it that can never be restored." Her voice was half pitiful, half defiant, as she glanced up from the floor for an instant, and continued, almost harshly: "A woman gives her heart all at once; men crumble theirs away, as one feeds bread to birds—a crumb to this woman, a crumb—such a little crumb, sometimes!—to the other. And his wife gets what there is left." Mrs. Wade smiled, though not very merrily. "All we women can do is to remember; we are credibly informed that half a loaf is better than no bread." Her face saddened, and she murmured, a little wistfully: "We might plan a better universe, we sister women, but that isn't left to us to do. We must take it as it is."

Mrs. Anstruther stirred, uneasily, as the voice died away. "I don't believe it," said she; and added, with emphasis: "And I do hate that—that creature!"

"You do believe it." Mrs. Wade's voice was insistent. "You know it. The knowledge is a legacy from your mother."

Mrs. Anstruther frowned, petulantly, and then burst into choking sobs. "Oh!" she cried, hopelessly, "she's—some woman—has had what I can never have—his first love! And I want it so!—that first love that means everything—the love he gave her when I was only a messy little girl, with pig-tails and too many hands and feet! Oh, that woman!—she's had everything—everything!"

There was an interval, during which Mrs. Wade smiled crookedly, and Mrs. Anstruther continued to sob. Then, Mrs. Wade lifted the packet of letters lying on the bed, and cleared her throat, somewhat scornfully. "H'm!" said she; "so this is what caused all the trouble? You don't mind?" And, considering silence as

equivalent to assent, she drew out a letter at hazard, and read aloud:

"Just a line, woman of all the world, to tell you . . . but what have I to tell you, after all? Only the old, old message, so often told that it seems scarce worth while to bother the postman about it. Just three words that innumerable dead lips have whispered, while life was yet good and old people were unreasonable and skies were blue—three words that our unborn children's children shall whisper to one another when we too have gone to help the grasses in their growing or to swell the victorious, swaying hosts of some field of daffodils. Just three words—that is my message to you, my lady. . . . Ah, it is weary waiting for a sight of your dear face through these long days that are all so much alike and all so empty and colorless! My heart grows hungry as I think of your great, green eyes and of the mouth that is like a little wound. I want you so, my lady! I want you. . . . Ah, time travels very slowly that brings you back at last to me, and, meanwhile, I can but dream of you and send you impotent scrawls that only vex me with their futility. For my desire of you——"

"The remainder," said Mrs. Wade, clearing her throat once more, "appears to consist of insanity and improper sentiments, in about equal proportions, and expressed in a very dangerous manner."

During the reading, Mrs. Anstruther, leaning on one elbow, had regarded her companion, with wide eyes and flushed cheeks. "You see!" she cried, indignantly; "he loved her!"

"Yes." Mrs. Wade replaced the letter, carefully, almost caressingly, among its companions. "My dear, it was years ago. I think, time has by now wreaked a vengeance far more bitter than you could ever plan on this woman, who, after all, never thought to wrong you. For the bitterest of all bitter things to a woman—to some women, at least—is to grow old." She sighed, and her well-manicured fingers fretted for a moment with the counterpane. "Ah, who shall ever write the tragedy of a frivolous woman's middle-age—the middle-age of the pitiful butterfly-woman, whose life is all made up of worldly things, and whose mind can't—can't, because of its very nature—reach to anything higher! Middle-

age strips her of everything—the admiration, the flattery, the shallow merriment—all the little things that her little mind longs for—and other women take her place, in spite of her futile, pitiful efforts to remain young. And the world goes on as before, and there is a whispering in the Winter-garden, and young people steal off for wholly superfluous glasses of water, and the men give her duty dances, and she is old—ah, so old!—under the rouge and inane smiles and dainty fripperies that caricature her lost youth! Ah, my dear, you needn't envy this woman! Pity her, my dear!" pleaded Mrs. Wade, a certain note of earnestness in her voice.

"Such a woman," said Mrs. Anstruther, with startling distinctness, "deserves no pity."

"Well," Mrs. Wade conceded, drily, "she doesn't get it. Probably, because she always grows fat, from sheer lack of will-power to resist sloth and gluttony—the only agreeable vices left her; and, by no stretch of the imagination, can a fat woman be converted into either a pleasing or a heroic figure." Mrs. Wade paused for a moment, and smiled, though not very pleasantly. "It is, doubtless," said she, "a sight for gods—and men—to laugh at, this silly woman striving to regain a vanished waist. Yes, I suppose, it is amusing—but it's pitiful. And it's more pitiful still, if she has ever loved a man in the unreasoning way these shallow women sometimes do. Men age so slowly; the men a girl first knows are young long after she has reached middle-age—yes, they go on dancing cotillions and talking in Winter-gardens, long after she has taken to common-sense shoes. And the man is young still—and he cares for some other woman, who is young and has all that she has lost—and it seems so unfair!" said Mrs. Wade, wearily.

Mrs. Anstruther regarded her for a moment, with dry, alert eyes. "You—you know this woman?" she queried, in a curiously level voice.

"These letters"—Mrs. Wade tapped the packet idly, and Mrs. Anstruther noted with equal idleness how the flesh swelled angrily about her many rings—"were written to me."

"Preposterous!"

Mrs. Wade turned slowly toward the great mirror, that the morning wind had by now flecked with gray dust, and regarded it with incurious eyes. "It does seem so," said she, in a crisp voice; and then, lifting a handkerchief from her lap, disclosed yet another packet of letters, which she laid upon the bed. "I rather feared you would think so. Here are my letters—the answers to them. Oh, you are quite at liberty to read them."

This Mrs. Anstruther did, with flushed cheeks and trembling hands. There was an interval of silence, disturbed only by the rustling of paper. "With these letters—" began Mrs. Anstruther, harshly.

"Yes—you could drag my name in the mire, I dare say; but you won't," Mrs. Wade finished, with unconcern.

"You—you dare!" cried the younger woman.

"My dear," protested her companion, gently, "I am—as you see—an old friend of Teddy's, and I knew you in the nursery; was I to stand by and see you make a mountain of this boy-and-girl affair—an affair Teddy and I had practically forgotten—oh, years ago!—until to-day? Why—why, you *can't* be jealous of me!" Mrs. Wade concluded, half mockingly.

Mrs. Anstruther regarded her with deliberation; in the windy sunlight, Mrs. Wade was a well-preserved woman, but, unmistakably, preserved; moreover, there was a great deal of her, and her nose was in need of a judicious application of powder, of which there was a superfluity behind her ears. Was this the siren she had dreaded? Mrs. Anstruther perceived clearly that, whatever might have been her husband's relations with this woman, he had been manifestly entrapped into it—a victim to Mrs. Wade's inordinate love of attention,

which was, indeed, tolerably notorious; and her anger against him gave way to a rather contemptuous pity and a half-maternal remorse for not having taken better care of him.

"No," answered Mrs. Wade, to her unspoken thought; "no woman could be seriously jealous of me. Yes, I dare say, I am *passée* and vain and frivolous and—harmless. But," she added, meditatively, "you hate me, just the same."

"My dear Mrs. Wade—" began Mrs. Anstruther, with cool courtesy; then hesitated. "Yes," she said, very simply; "I dare say, it's unreasonable—but I hate you."

"Why, then," spoke Mrs. Wade, with the utmost cheerfulness, "everything is as it should be." She rose and smiled. "I'm sorry to say I must be leaving Belle Haven to-day; the Musgraves are very pressing, and I really don't know how to get out of paying them a visit——"

"So sorry to lose you," cooed Mrs. Anstruther; "but, of course, you know best. I believe some very good people are visiting the Musgraves nowadays?" She extended both packets of letters, very blandly. "May I restore your—your property?" she queried, with the utmost gentleness.

"Thanks!" Mrs. Wade took them, and kissed her hostess, not without tenderness, on the brow. "My dear, be kind to Teddy. He—he's rather an attractive man, you know, and—and other women are kind to him."

"I will." Mrs. Anstruther's manner of saying this rather implied that her kindness would be tempered with a certain watchfulness. However, she smiled up at her guest, brightly. "Pray pardon my behavior in this—this absurd affair," said she.

"Don't mention it," said Mrs. Wade.

III

MR. ANSTRUTHER had smoked a preposterous number of unsatisfactory cigarettes on the piazza of Belle Haven, while Mrs. Wade was absent

on her mission; and, on her return, flushed and triumphant, he rose in eloquent silence.

"I've done it, Teddy," said Mrs. Wade.

"Done what?" he queried, blankly.

"Restored what my incomprehensible lawyers call the *status quo*; achieved peace with honor; carried off the spoils of war; and—in short—arranged everything," answered Mrs. Wade, and sank into a rustic chair, which creaked alarmingly. "And all," she added, bringing a fan into play, "by telling her the letters were written to me."

"My word!" said Mr. Anstruther; "your methods of restoring domestic peace to a distracted household are, to say the least, original!" He seated himself, and lighted another cigarette. "Even if she believed it—" he began, uncertainly.

"Oh, she believed it right enough!" laughed Mrs. Wade. "You see, I showed her these—the answers to them. There's such a shocking similarity about your affairs, Teddy," she continued, lightly, as she handed him the second packet, "that my letters fitted in beautifully."

Mr. Anstruther inspected the packet with a puzzled surprise, that deepened as he recognized its contents. "You have kept them—ever since they were returned?" he queried, with courteous interest.

"Ah!" returned Mrs. Wade, "was there ever an old—well, a middle-aged woman, who had not preserved these souvenirs of her youth to look over at times? Ah, we are very old now, Teddy, and we go in to dinner with the toupeted colonels, and are interested in charitable enterprises; but there was a time when we were young and not exactly repulsive in appearance, and men did many mad things for our sakes, and we never lose the memory of that. Pleasant memories are among the many privileges of women. Yes," added Mrs. Wade, meditatively, "we derive much the same pleasure from them a cripple does in rearranging the athletic medals he has won,

or a starving man in thinking of the many good dinners he has eaten; but we can't—and wouldn't—part with them, nevertheless."

Mr. Anstruther, however, had not honored her with much attention, and was quietly puzzling over the more or less incomprehensible situation; and, perceiving this, she ran on, after a little: "Oh, it worked—it worked beautifully! You see, she would always have been very jealous of that other woman; but with me, it's different. She's always known me as I am—a frivolous and—say, corpulent, for it's a more dignified word—and generally unattractive chaperon; and she can't think of me as ever having been anything else. Young people never really believe in their elder's youth, Teddy; at heart, they think we came into the world with crow's feet and pepper-and-salt hair, all complete. So, she's only sorry for you now—rather as a mother would be for a naughty child; as for me, she isn't jealous—but," sighed Mrs. Wade, "she isn't overfond of me."

Mr. Anstruther rose to his feet. "It isn't fair," said he, very slowly; "the—the letters were distinctly compromising. It isn't fair you should shoulder the blame for a woman you never saw; it isn't fair you should be placed in such a false position."

"What matter?" pleaded Mrs. Wade. "The letters are mine to burn, if I choose. Gabrielle will say nothing; she'll hate me, but she'll say nothing—especially to you," she added, slowly.

"Still—" began Mr. Anstruther.

"Ah, Teddy, if I want to do a foolish thing, won't you let me? What else is a woman for? They're always doing foolish things. I've known a woman to throw a man over, because she had seen him without his collar; and I've known another to actually marry a man, because she happened to be in love with him; I've known a woman to go on wearing pink organdie after she had passed forty, and I've known a woman to go on caring for a man who, she knew,

wasn't worth caring for, long after he had forgotten. We aren't brave and sensible, like you men. Ah, Teddy, let me be foolish, if I want to be!"

"If," said Mr. Anstruther, in some perplexity, "I understand one word of this farrago, I'll be—qualified in various ways."

"You don't have to understand," she pleaded.

"You mean—?" he asked.

"I mean I'm a woman, and I understand. Everything is as it should be, as it stands. Don't undo my work; it will only mean trouble and dissatisfaction and giving up all this"—she waved her hand lightly over the lawns of Belle Haven—"and it will mean our giving you up, for, you know, you haven't any money of your own, Teddy. Ah, Teddy, we can't give you up; we need you to lead our cotillions, and tell us naughty little stories, and keep us amused. Be sensible, Teddy!"

Mr. Anstruther was not unmoved by her argument. "After all," said he, judicially, "women are the best judges of women. It is not my desire to imperil Gabrielle's happiness—far from it. And, after all, any action on my part will necessarily entail the reopening of a very disagreeable subject, which, you assure me, is now closed. So, if you are sure we shall hear no more of the matter——"

"Perfectly sure," protested Mrs. Wade.

"—why, then——"

"Why, then," said she, "it is settled; and I am heartily glad of it."

There was an interval of meditation.

"In the name of heaven," queried Mr. Anstruther, laughing, "why have you pursued this extraordinary course?"

"You—you don't know?" she asked, in turn.

"I?" said he, blankly.

"You really don't know?" But Mr. Anstruther's face declared very plainly that he did not. "Well!" meditated Mrs. Wade, "I dare say, it's best, on the whole, you shouldn't.

And now you really must excuse me, for I'm leaving for the Musgraves' to-day, and I sha'n't ever be invited to Belle Haven again, and I must tell my maid to pack up. She's a little fool, and she'll break her heart over leaving Wilkins. Allowing ample time for her to dispose of my *lingerie* and her

lamentations, I ought to make the six, forty-five. I'll see you on the links though, Teddy, in an hour; they tell me, golf sometimes does wonders in reducing one's weight, and, if I can't help being old, I—at least, I must try to help being fat," said Mrs. Wade.



COURONNE MARINE

J'AI jeté des fleurs dans la mer farouche,
 Mon amour défunt dort au fond des flots;
 Roule, ô vaste mer, cherche bien sa couche,
 Porte lui mes fleurs avec des sanglots.

Sois lui douce, ô mer, et berce son rêve,
 Qu'il repose en paix sur ton sein grondeur.
 Moi, je suis rivée aux rocs de la grève,
 Et mon amour dort dans tes profondeurs.

CARMEN SYLVA.



HOW SHE FELT

MRS. BLACK—Sam Johnson done left his wife 'bout six mont's ago.
 MR. BLACK—Do she t'ink he am nebbah comin' back?
 "Wal, she jest beginnin' to hab hopes."



AN AUTO'S SPEED FOR AN HOUR

CHAUFFEUR'S private opinion	12 miles
Chauffeur's opinion for his friends	20 "
Policeman's private opinion	14 "
Policeman's opinion for the judge	28 "
Old lady's opinion, who was knocked down	50 "
Actual speed	8 "

HAROLD JANSMALL.



IT is a good thing to have a good opinion of one's self, but it is not necessarily a better thing to have a better opinion.