



CENTURY
for MAY 1922





Among Our Contributors



James Branch Cabell ("The Candid Footprint") has been represented in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE* by several of his most interesting short stories; but if this notable story that we present this month were the first that it had been our privilege to give to our readers, the author of "The Cream of Jest," "Figures of Earth," and "Jurgen" would now need no introduction. Hugh Walpole, writing in "The Yale Review" two years ago, says of Cabell:

No one travelling around the United States of America during these last months, no one at least who is interested in literature, can escape the persistent echo of that name. It may be since the stupid and entirely ludicrous censorship of "Jurgen" that Mr. Cabell has floated into a new world of discussion. I don't know. I am definitely speaking of the period anterior to that censorship. I had not been two weeks in the United States before some one said to me, "Well, at any rate, there is Cabell." That was a new name to me. I was given "Beyond Life" to read. My excitement during the discovery of that perverse and eloquent testament was one of the happiest moments of my American stay. I spent then a wild and eccentric search after his earlier masterpieces. . . . I have read them all, and I am amazed that this remarkable and original talent has been at America's service for nearly twenty years, its patient waiting entirely unrewarded whether by the public or the critics or even the superior cranks.

Mr. Cabell was born in Richmond, Virginia. He was graduated from the College of William and Mary, and after three years of newspaper work began his real career as a writer. "The Wedding Jest," "The Designs of Miramon," "Porcelain Cups," and "The Feathers of Orlun" are short stories which have appeared in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE*.

J. Scott Williams, who illustrates Mr. Cabell's story, is an illustrator and painter of water-colors whose work is widely known. His first work was as a designer for printers and engravers. Then came illustration and work in water-color for the love of it. He is a member of several water-color societies and has exhibited widely.

Bertrand Russell ("What Makes a Social System Good or Bad?") is among the most notable of English social philosophers. He was for many years lecturer and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, his subject being mathematics. But his interest in sociology and politics gradually overshadowed everything else, and for the last few years he has devoted himself entirely to study, writing, and travel. He made a first-hand investigation of the Russian situation two years ago, and more recently has been in China and Japan studying conditions there. His book, "Why Men Fight" attracted wide attention during the first years of the war, as did also "Proposed Roads to Freedom," which followed. The present article is a part of a forthcoming book to be called "Prospects of Industrial Civilization," which Mr. Russell is writing in collaboration with Dora Russell, his wife, and which the Century Company will publish in the fall.

Sheldon Cheney ("Why Dada?") will be recalled as author of the text which accompanied Mr. Norman-Bel Geddes's drawings for the production of Dante's Divine Comedy, which we published in the April issue. Mr. Cheney is the founder and one of the editors of the "Theatre Arts Magazine." He is at present in Europe as the American delegate to the International Exhibit of Theatre Arts now being held in Amsterdam. Mr. Cheney has followed the Dada movement since its beginning, and has an interesting collection of Dada productions.

Thomas Beer ("The Enemy") has had five stories in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE*, among them, "The House of Atreus" and "Onnie." His first printed story, "The Brothers," appeared in *THE CENTURY* for February, 1917. His first novel, "The Fair Rewards," was published this spring, and has attracted wide attention. Mr. Beer was born at Council Bluffs, Ohio, in 1889, is the son of





The CENTURY MAGAZINE

VOL. 104 *May*, 1922 No. 1



The Candid Footprint

By JAMES BRANCH CABELL

Drawings by J. SCOTT WILLIAMS

THEY of Poictesme narrate that on the day Count Emmerick married the high Queen Radegonde was such a drinking of healths and toasts as never before was known at Bellegarde. They tell of a most notable banquet from which Sir Ninzian went homeward hiccoughing and even more than usually benevolent, and without any consciousness of that misstep which had imperilled his continued stay upon earth.

For Sir Ninzian of Yair and Upper Ardra had not wholly broken with the heroic elder ways of those years wherein Dom Manuel ruled Poictesme. Now Manuel was gone, the times were changing. These days seemed to Sir Ninzian to breed littler men, who, to be sure, lived far more decorously than had lived their fathers, now that St. Holmendis had come to them out of Philistia with his miracles: for this sacrosanct person would put up with no irregularity anywhere, and would hardly so much as tolerate the mildest forms of thaumaturgy by anybody else. You could go for days now without encountering a warlock or a fairy; the people of Audela but rarely came out of the fire to make sport for and with

mankind; and while many persons furtively brewed spells at home, all traffic with spirits had to be conducted secretly. In fine, Poictesme was everywhere upon its very best behavior, because there was no telling when holy Holmendis might be dealing with you for your own good.

And while Sir Ninzian had become appropriately staid with age, and in theory approved of these reforms, and was in practice a stanch supporter of holy Holmendis in all the saint's crusades against moral laxity and free-thinking and in his hunting down and torturing and burning of heretics and in all other pious works, there is no disputing that the stalwart, frank old knight had kept a taint of the freer social customs of Count Manuel's time. So that Sir Ninzian, be it repeated, went home from Count Emmerick's wedding-feast with a pleasurable at-randomness for which, in a so liberal contributor to every deserving cause, appropriate allowances were made by St. Holmendis and everybody else except one person only. Ninzian was married.

The next evening Ninzian and his wife were walking in the garden. They

were a handsome couple, and the high-hearted love that had been between them in their youth was a tale which many poets had embroidered. Now they who were in the mellow evening of life were lighted by a golden sunset as they went upon a flagged walkway made of white and blue stones; and to each side were the small glossy leaves and the crimson flowering of well tended rose-bushes. And Balthis (for that was the name of Ninzian's dearly beloved wife, the heiress of Upper Ardra) said:

"Look, my dear; and tell me, what is that?"

Ninzian inspected the flower-bed by the side of the walkway, and he replied:

"My darling, it appears to be the track of a bird."

"But surely there is no fowl in all Poictesme with a foot so huge!"

"No; but many migratory monsters pass by in the night, on their way north, at this time of year; and, clearly, one of some rare species has paused here to rest. However, as I was telling you, my pet, we have now in hand—"

"Why, but think of it, Ninzian! The print is as big as a man's foot!"

"Come, precious, you exaggerate. It is the track of a largish bird—an eagle, or perhaps a phoenix, or it may be the Zhar-Ptitzza paused here—but it is nothing remarkable. Besides, as I was telling you, we have already in hand for the edifying of the faithful a bit of Mary Magdalene's haircloth, the left ring-finger of John the Baptist, and one of the smaller stones with which St. Stephen was martyred—"

But Balthis, he saw now, was determined not to go on in talk about the latest church that Sir Ninzian had builded and was stocking with very holy relics. Instead, she asserted with deliberation:

"Ninzian, I think it is fully as big as a man's foot."

"Well, be it as you like, my pet."

"No, but I will not be put off in that way. Do you tread beside it in the flower-bed there, and, by comparing the print of your foot with

the bird-track, we shall easily see which is the larger."

Ninzian was not so ruddy as he had been, yet he said with dignity and lightly enough:

"Balthis, you are unreasonable. I do not intend to get my sandals all over mud to settle any such foolish point. The track is just the size of a man's foot, or it is much larger than a man's foot, or it is smaller than a man's foot—it is, in fine, of any size which you prefer. And we will let that be the end of it."

"So, Ninzian, you will not tread in that new-dugged earth?" said Balthis, queerly.

"Of course I will not ruin my second-best sandals for any such foolish reason."

"You trod there yesterday in your very best sandals, Ninzian, for the reason that you were tipsy. I saw the print you made there, in broad daylight, Ninzian, when you had just come from drinking with a blessed saint himself, and were reeling all over the neat ways of my garden. Ninzian, it is a fearful thing to know that when your husband



walks in mud he leaves tracks like a bird."

Now Ninzian, you may believe it, was truly penitent for yesterday's over-indulgence. And Ninzian said:

"So you have discovered this accomplishment of mine, after all my carefulness. That is a great pity."

Balthis replied, with the cold non-committalness of wives:

"Pity or no, you will now have to tell me the truth about it."

"Well, my darling, you must know that when I first came into Poictesme, I came rather unwillingly. Our friend St. Holmendis, I need not tell you, was even then setting such a very high moral tone hereabouts, the holy man is so impetuous with his miracles when anybody differs with him on religious matters, that the prospect was not alluring. But it was necessary that my prince should have some representative here, as in all other places. So I came from down yonder—"

"I know you came from the South, Ninzian. Everybody knows that. But that appears to me no excuse whatever for walking like a bird."

"As if, my dearest, it could give me any pleasure to walk like a bird or like a whole covey of birds! To the contrary, I have always found this small accomplishment in doubtful taste; it exposes one to continual comment. But, alas! it is the *geas* which in the old time was put upon all those who serve my prince, so that our adversaries in the great game might be detecting us."

Now Balthis fixed on him wide, scornful, terrible eyes.

"Ninzian, I understand. You are an evil spirit, and you came out of hell in the appearance of a man to work wickedness in Poictesme!"

And his Balthis, as he saw with a pang of wild regret, was horribly upset and grieved to know the thing which her husband had so long hid away from her; and Ninzian began to feel rather ashamed of not having trusted her with this secret, now it was discovered. At all events, he would try what be-

ing reasonable might do.

"Darling," said he, with patient rationality, "no sensible wife will ever pry into what her husband may have been or done before she married him. Her concern is merely with his misdemeanors after that ceremony; and, I think, you have had no heavy reason to complain. Nobody can for one moment assert that in Poictesme I have not led a scrupulously upright and immaculate existence."

She said indignantly:

"You had fear of Holmendis! You came all this long way to do your devil work, and then had not the pluck to face him!"

Ninzian found this just near enough the truth to be irritating. So he spoke now with airy condescension.

"Precious, it is true the lean man can work miracles, but, then, without desiring to appear boastful, I must tell you that I have mastery of a more venerable and blacker magic. Oh, I assure you, he could not have exorcised or excommunicated or tried any other of his sacerdotal trick-work upon me without sweating for it. Still, it



seemed better to avoid such painful scenes; for when one has trouble with these saints, the supporters of both sides are apt to intervene: the skies are blackened, and the earth shakes, and whirlwinds and meteors and thunderbolts and seraphim upset things generally, and it all seems rather boisterous and old-fashioned. So it really did appear more sensible and in better taste to respect, at all events during his lifetime, the well-meaning creature's religious convictions, in which you share, I know, my pet, and—well," said Ninzian, with a shrug, "to temporize; to keep matters more comfortable all around, you understand, my darling, by evincing a suitable interest in church work and in whatever else appeared expected of the reputable in my surroundings."

But Balthis was not to be soothed. "O Ninzian, this is a terrible thing for me to be learning! There was never a husband who better knew his place, and holy church has not ever had a more loyal servitor—"

"No," Ninzian said quietly.

"But you have been a hideous demon in deep hell, and the man that I have loved is a false seeming, and the moment St. Holmendis ascends to bliss you mean to go on with your foul iniquities. That is foolish of you, because of course I would never permit it. But even so— O Ninzian, my faith and my happiness are buried now in the one grave, now that all ends between us!"

Ninzian asked, still very quietly:

"And do you think I will leave you, Balthis, because of some disarranged fresh earth? Could any handful of dirt have parted us when, because of my love of you, I fought the seven knights at Evre, and overthrew Duke

Oribert and his bad custom of the cat and the serpent, and cast the Spotted Dun of Lorcha down from a high hill?"

She answered without pity:

"You will have no choice, for it is on this evening of the month that St. Holmendis hears my confession, and I must confess everything, and you know as well as I do of his devastating miracles."

"Balthis, my sweet, now, after all, what complaint have you against me? You cannot help feeling that the no doubt ill-advised rebellion in which I was concerned in youth—unarithmetical eons before this earth was thought of—took place quite long enough ago to be forgotten. Besides, you know by experience that I am only too easily guided by others, that I have never learned, as you so eloquently phrase it, to have any backbone. And I do not quite see, either, how you can want to punish me to-day for iniquities which, you grant, I have not ever committed, but—so you assume, without any warrant known to me—have just vaguely thought of committing by and by, and, it may be, not for years to come, for this stringy Holmendis seems tough as whit-leather—"

His stammered talking died away. He saw there was no moving her.

"No, Ninzian, I simply cannot stand having a husband who walks like a bird and is liable to be detected the next time it rains. It would be on my mind day and night, and people would say all sorts of things. No, Ninzian, it is quite out of the question, and you must go back to hell. I will get your things together at once, and I leave it to your conscience if, after the way I have worked and slaved for you, you had the right to play this wrong and treachery upon me."



And Balthis said also: "For it is a great wrong and treachery which you have played upon me, Ninzian of Yair, getting from me such love as men will not find the equal of in any of the noble places of this world until the end of life and time. This is a deep wound that you have given me. Upon your lips were wisdom and pleasant talking; there was kindness in the gray eyes of Ninzian of Yair; your hands were noble at sword-play. These things I delighted in, these things I regarded; I did not think of the low mire, I could not see what horrible markings your feet had left to this side and to that side. Let all women weep with me, for I now know that to every woman's loving is this end appointed. There is no woman that gives all to any man, but that woman is wasting her substance at bed and board with a greedy stranger, and there is no wife who escapes the bitter hour wherein that knowledge smites her. So now let us touch hands, and now let our lips, too, part friendly, because our bodies have so long been friends, the while that we knew nothing of each other, Ninzian of Yair, on account of the great wrong and treachery which you have played upon me."

Thus speaking, Balthis kissed him. Then she went into the house that was no longer Ninzian's home.

Ninzian sat on a stone bench that was carved at each end with a crouching sphinx, and he waited there while the sunlight died away behind the poplars. The moment, he knew, was pregnant with all danger: Holmendis was coming, and you could never tell

about these saints. But Ninzian loved his wife so greatly that prolonged existence without her did not tempt him. His wife, whoever she might be, had always seemed peculiarly dear to Ninzian. And now, as he looked back upon the exceeding love which he had borne his wife, in Nineveh and Thebes and Tyre and Babylon and Rome and Byzantium and in all other cities that bred fine women, and as he weighed the evanescence of this love, which was evading him after these few thousand years, it seemed to Ninzian indeed a pitiable thing that his season of earthly contentment should thus be cut off in its flower and withered untimely.

And his conscience troubled him, too. For the fiend had not been entirely candid with his Balthis, and Poictesme was not by any means the stage of the poor easy-going fellow's primal failure. So he now forlornly thought of how utterly he had failed in his mission upon earth ever since he first came to Mount Kaf to work evil among men in the time of King Tcha-ghi, a great while before the Deluge; and he considered with dismay the appalling catalogue of virtuous actions into which these women had betrayed him. For always the cause of Ninzian's downfall had been



the same: he would get to talking indiscretion to some lovely girl or another just through his desire to be agreeable to everybody, and the girl would invariably marry him and set about making her husband a well-thought-of citizen. Nor did it avail him to argue. Women nowhere appeared to have any sympathy with Ninzian's appointed labor upon earth: they seemed to have

an instinctive bent toward heaven and the public profession of every virtue.

Then Ninzian, on a sudden, recollected the cause of the disturbance that had been put upon his living. He drew his dagger, and squatting on the paved walkway, he scratched out that incriminating footprint. It was none too soon, for Sir Ninzian rose from this erasement just in time to bump into none other than the emaciate flesh of holy Holmendis, bishop and saint of the calendar, who in the cool of the evening was coming up the walkway; and indeed, in rising, Ninzian jostled against the saint rather roughly. So Ninzian apologized for his clumsiness, and explained that he was going fishing the next day, and was digging for worms. And Ninzian was in a bad taking, for he could not know how much this dreadful saint from out of Philistia had seen or suspected.

But holy Holmendis said friendly that no bones were broken, and he went on, with the soul-chilling joviality of the clergy, to make some depressing joke about fishers of men.

"And that is why I am here," said the saint, "for this evening Dame Balthis is to confess to me whatever matters may be on her conscience."

"Yes, yes," says Ninzian, fondly, "but we both know, my dear and honored friend, that Balthis has a particularly tender conscience—a conscience which is as sensitive to the missteps of others as a sore toe."

"That is how everybody's conscience ought to be," returned the saint, and he went on to speak of the virtuous woman who is a crown to her husband. And he made a contrast between the

fine high worth of Balthis and the shamelessness of that bad beggar-woman upon whom, just outside the gate, the saint had put apoplexy for speaking lightly of the Government of Poictesme.

Ninzian fidgeted. He did not like the hard, pinched little mouth and the glittering, very pale blue eyes of this gaunt saint, and the nimbus about the white hair of holy Holmendis was beginning to shine brighter and brighter as the dusk of evening thickened. Ninzian found it uncomfortable to be alone with this worker of miracles; piety is in all things so unpredictable: and Ninzian was unfeignedly glad when Balthis came out of the loved house that was no longer Ninzian's home, and held open the door for Holmendis to enter, where Ninzian might not come any more.

As Holmendis went in, Dame Balthis tried for the last time to speak sensibly and kindly with her husband.

"Pig with the head of a mule," she said in a low tone, "do you stop looking at me like a sick calf and go away. For I must confess in what a state of sin I have been living as a devil's wife, and I have little faith in your black magic, and you know as well as I do that there is no telling

what blasted tree-trunk or holy bottle or something of that sort he may not seal you up in until the day of judgment, precisely as he has done all those other evil spirits."

Ninzian replied:

"I shall not ever leave you of my free will."

"But, Ninzian, it is as if I were putting you into the bottle myself! For



if I do not tell that spiteful old bag of bones,"—she crossed herself,—“I mean that beloved and blessed saint, why, he would never have the sense, or, rather, I intended to say that his faith in his fellow-creatures is too great and admirable for him ever to suspect you.”

“Yes, yes, my darling,” Ninzian said, “it is rather as if you yourself were thrusting me into a brazen bottle, and setting to it the unbreakable seal of Sulieman-ben-Daoud with your own dear hands. But, nevertheless—” He took her hand, and gallantly he kissed her finger-tips.

At that she boxed his jaws.

“You need not think to make a fool of me! No, not again, not after all these years! Oh, but I will show you!”

Then Balthis also went into the house, where the gaunt saint waited to hear her mensual confession. And poor easy-going Ninzian sat like an outcast on the stone bench, and thought forlornly about the ruthless miracles with which this Holmendis had harried the fairies and the fauns and all the other amiable iniquities of Poictesme, and about the saint’s devastating crusades against moral laxity and free-thinking, and his torturing and burning of mere heretics. It seemed uncomfortably likely that in dealing with a devil the man would go to even greater lengths, would cast off all compunction, if somehow Ninzian could not get the better of him.

So Ninzian tried a bit of magic to see if his hand was in, and his magicking went so utterly awry that in place of the small basilisk he had intended to evoke, there came to him, from among

the sweet-smelling rose-bushes, the appearance of a proud gentleman in gold and sable: and Ninzian bowed very low before his liege-lord.

Now, the new-comer paused for an instant as if he were reading what was in the troubled mind of Ninzian, and then he said:

“I see. Surkrag, whom mortals hereabouts call Ninzian! O unfaithful servant, now must you be punished for betraying the faith I put in

you. Now is your requital coming swiftly from this ravening saint who will dispose of you without mercy. For you have forgotten long ago what magic you ever knew, and when Holmendis gets hold of you with one hand and exorcises you with the other, there will be hardly a cinder left.”

So did Ninzian know himself to stand friendlessly between the wrath of evil and the malignity of holiness, both bent upon his ruin. He said:

“Have patience, my Prince!”

But Satan answered sternly: “My patience is outworn. No, Surkrag, there is no hope for you, and you become shameless in perfidy as steadily you go from good to better. Once you would have scorned the least deviation from the faith you owe me; but a little by a little you have made compromises with virtue through your weak desire to live comfortably with your wives, and this continuous indulgence of women’s notions is draining from you the last drop of wickedness. Not fifty centuries ago you would have been shocked by a kindly thought. Twenty centuries back, and you at least retained a proper feeling toward the decalogue. Now you assist in all



reforms, and build churches without a blush. For is there nowadays, my poor Surkrag, in candor, is there any virtue, however exalted, is there a single revolting decency or any form of godliness before which your gorge rises? No, my poor friend: you came hither to corrupt mankind, and instead they have made you little worse than human."

The Angel of Darkness paused. He had spoken, as became such a famous gentleman, very temperately, without rage, but also without any concealing of his sorrow and disappointment. And Ninzian answered contritely:

"My Prince, I have not wholly kept faith, I know. But always the woman tempted me, always I wanted to have happy faces about me, and so I have been now and then seduced into marriage. And my wife, no matter what eyes and hair and tint of flesh she might be wearing at the time, has always been bent upon having her husband looked up to by the neighbors; and in such circumstances a poor devil has no chance."

"So that these women have been your ruin, and even now the latest of them is betraying your secret to that implacable saint! Well, it serves you rightly, for since the time of Kaiumarth you have gained me not one follower in this place, and have lived openly in all manner of virtue when you should have been furthering my power upon earth."

Thus speaking, Satan took his seat upon the bench. Then Ninzian, too, sat down, and Ninzian leaned forward toward this other immortal in the ever-thickening dusk, and Ninzian's honest face was sad.

"My Prince, what does it matter? From the first I have let my fond wife have her will with me, because it pleased her and did no real harm. What do these human notions matter even in so dear a form? A little while, and Balthis will be dead. A little while, and there will be no Bellegarde yonder, and all Poictesme will be forgotten from the face of this earth. A little while, and this earth itself will be an ice-cold cinder. But

you and I shall still be about our work, still playing for the universe, with stars and suns for counters. Does it really matter to you that, for the little while this tiny trundling earth exists and has women on it, I pause from playing at the great game to entertain myself with these happy accidents of nature?"

Satan replied: "It is not only your waste of time that troubles me. It is your shirking of every infernal duty, it is your cherubic lack of seriousness. Why, do you but think of how many thousand women have passed through your fingers!"

"Yes, like a string of pearls, my Prince," said Ninzian, fondly.

"Is that not childish sport for you that used to play so mightily at the great game?"

But Ninzian now was plucking up heart, as the saying is, hand over fist.

"Recall the old days, my Prince," he said, with feeling, "when we two were only cherubim, and played so lovingly together in the fields of heaven; and let the memory move you even to unmerited indulgence. I have contracted an odd fancy for this inconspicuous sphere of rock and mud, I like the women that walk glowingly about it.



Oh, I concede my taste is disputable; and yet what does it matter what I do on earth? Frankly, I think you take the place too seriously. For centuries I have watched those who serve you going about earth in all manner of quaint guises, in curious masks, which are impenetrable by any one who does not know your servants are decreed to leave the tracks of a bird wherever they pass upon your errands. For ages I have seen your emissaries devote much time and cunning to the tempting of men to do evil, and to what end? Man rises from the dust; he struts and postures; he falls back into the dust. That is all. How can this midge work good or evil? His virtue passes in a thin scolding; the utmost reach of his wickedness is to indulge in the misdemeanor of supererogation, by destroying a man or two men, whom time will very soon destroy in any event. Meanwhile his sympathies incline—I know—by a hairbreadth or so toward heaven. Yes, but what does it matter? Is it even a compliment? Ah, Prince, had I the say, I would leave men to perish in their unimportant starveling virtues without raising all this pother over trifles."

Ninzian could see that he had made a certain impression, but still dark Satan shook his head.

"Surkrag, in abstract reason you may be right; but warfare is not conducted by reason, and to surrender anything to the Adversary, though it be only earth and its inhabitants, would be a dangerous example."

"Come, Prince, do you think how many fine stars there are to strive for—stars that are really worth the having; and do you let me have this earth to amuse me for a little while!"

Now, Satan did not answer at once.

The bats were out by this time, zig-zagging about the garden; the air was magical with the scent of dew-drenched roses; and somewhere in the dusk a nightingale now tentatively raised its thrilling, long-drawn, plaintive voicing of ineffable desire. All everywhere about the two fiends was most soothing. And the Angel of Darkness laughed without a trace of ill humor.

"No, no, old wheedler, one cannot neglect the tiniest chance in the great game. Besides, I have my pride, I confess it, and to behold earth given over entirely to good would vex me. Yet, after all, I can see no great hurt in your continuing to live virtuously here with your seraglio while the planet lasts. So, if you like, I will summon Sclaug and Baalzebub, or even old Phobetor, and they will dispose of this saint."

"My Prince, I am afraid that some of those officious archangels would be coming, too, and one thing might lead to another, and my wife would not at all like having any supernal battlings in her own garden among her favorite rose-bushes. No, as I always say, it is much better to avoid these painful scenes."

"Why," Satan said, in high astonishment—"why, but your wife has repudiated you, and has betrayed you to that flint-hearted old saint!"

Ninzian in the dusk made bold to smile. But Ninzian did not need to say anything, for at this moment Balthis came to the door, and not being able to see Satan in the twilight, called out that supper was getting stone-cold on the table, and that she really wished Ninzian would try to be a little more considerate, especially when they had company.

And Ninzian, rising, chuckled.

"My wife has been like that since

Sidon was a village. Oh, if I could explain it, I would perhaps care less for her. In part, I think, it means that she loves me; in part, I fear, it means that no really capable woman is going to intrust the proper punishment of her husband to anybody else. Of course all that is merely theory. What is certain is that my wife's confession has been conducted tactfully, and that you and I are going in to talk solemn nonsense with St. Holmendis."

But Satan once more shook his head.

"No, Surkrag, no; I am not squeamish, but I have no use for saints."

"Well, Prince, I would not be overhasty to agree with you, for Holmendis has some invaluable points. He is perfectly sincere, for one thing, and for another, he is energetic, and for a third, he never pardons any one who differs with him. Of course he is all for having men better than they were intended to be, and he does frighten them into a great deal of public piety. Still, there are always corners and secluded places wherein one strikes a balance, as it were; so that, in the long run of

affairs, I doubt if you have anywhere upon earth any more serviceable friends than are these saints who will put up with nothing short of perfection. For you will be remembering, Prince, that upon the mortal who has gained a hundred followers for you is set the *geas* of our race. And, well, sir, you may see here in the mud just where I jostled Holmendis from the walkway—"

Satan made luminous his finger-tips, and held them like five candles to the saint's footprint. The Angel of Darkness bowed, with real respect, toward heaven.

"Our Adversary, to do Him justice, keeps an honest score. Come, Surkrag, now this is affecting! This very touchingly recalls that the great game is being played by the dear fellow with candor and fine sportsmanship. Meanwhile"—here Satan laughed—"I make a fourth with the fanatic, the woman, and the hypocrite."

"Ah, Prince," said Ninzian, a little shocked, as they went in, "should you not say, more tactfully, with us three leaders of reform?"

