

THE PRINCESS BARNABAS.

The Princess Barnabas was in a state of the most profound perplexity. She could not, for the dainty little life of her, make up her mind on the important question as to whether she should or should not commit suicide at the close of the season. It was not very easy for the Princess' many admirers to understand why she should perturb her mind with such a problem at all, but perturb it she did with that very problem, whether wisely or unwisely.

The Princess Barnabas was a very remarkable young woman, who had proved the puzzle, the pride, and the passion of London society for three whole sensational seasons. She was not yet four-and-twenty. She bore the title of a great Russian prince who had married her just before she came of age, at a time when he himself was old enough to be her grandfather, and who had considerably died within two years of the ceremony, leaving her the absolute mistress of his fortune and his territories, as she had been during life the absolute mistress of his heart for the short time in which he swayed it. She was said to be fabulously wealthy. Her jewels were the wonder of the world, and she delighted in wearing them, in season and out of season, with a semi-barbaric enjoyment of their glitter and splendor which was, like everything else about her, partly Oriental and partly childish. Some time after her husband's death she had come to Paris and got tired of it, and then she crossed the Channel and conquered London. During one resplendent season little else was talked about but the Princess Barnabas. Society journals raved about her delicate beauty, which seemed to belong to the canvases of the last century, which ought to have been immortalized on pate tendre, and hymned in madrigals. Men adored her. Women envied her marvelous dress and machless jewels. The dying ashes of a season's scandal flared up into marvelous activity around her pretty personality. She was enormously "the thing." Enormously "the thing" she remained during a second season, after an interval of absolute disappearance into the dominions of the Czar. Enormously "the thing" she still appeared to be now in her third season, in spite of the rival attractions of an American actress who had not married an English duke, and an American girl with millions who had married the bluest blood and the oldest name in Europe. It would have been absurd for any one to contest the point that the Princess Barnabas was the very most interesting figure of that phantasmal dance of shadows which is called London society.

Nevertheless the Princess Barnabas was weary, positively bored. If she had been less of a success, life might not have appeared so desolate. There would have been a piquancy in the possibility of rivalry which would have lent a new interest to the tasteless feast. As it was, however, London life at the height of its maddest activity appeared to her as drear and gray as those vast stretches of steeps which lay like a great sea around one of the Russian castles of the late Prince Barnabas. It was during this fit of depression when the Princess Barnabas was graciously pleased to agree with the author of "Ecclesiastes," that life was vanity, that it occurred to her that in all her strange experiences she had never yet committed suicide. She immediately gave up her mind to the important problem, whether she should gain this ultimate human experience at once, or postpone it indefinitely.

It was in this frame of mind that the Princess went to the great ball at the Russian Embassy. As she nestled among her furs in the dim, luxurious warmth of her carriage, her mind was running entirely upon the various forms of self-destruction which had been made famous by celebrated persons at different stages of the world's history, and she could find none that were sufficiently attractive or remarkable to please her. "Good heavens!" she thought to herself, with a little shudder which even the warmth of her surroundings could not repress, "is it possible to be banal even in that?" and she gave a little groan as she stepped out of her carriage and up the embassy steps. The thought was still on her mind, and tracing the least suggestion of a frown upon her exquisite girlish face as she entered the great room and took the hand of the ambassador. The thrill of interest, of excitement, of admiration, which as a matter of course attended upon her entrance did not give her any answering thrill of gratification. She appeared to listen with the most gracious attention to the compliments of the ambassador. She answered with the daintiest little air of infantile obeisance the Old World courtesy of a white-haired Minister who have been as much at home as she herself in a salon of the Regent of Orleans. She condescend-

ed to entangle in a network of fascination a particularly obdurate and impassive secretary of State. She patronized a prince of the blood royal and was exceedingly frank and friendly with the young painter Lepell, who knew exactly how much her familiarity meant, but was at once amused and delighted by the envy it aroused in others. Yet all the while the Princess Barnabas was not devoting a single serious thought to one of her admirers. Every idea in that vain and foolish head was centered upon the one query, "Shall I commit suicide next week, and if so, how?"

It was while in this frame of mind, talking to twenty people, and thinking of none of them, that her bright eyes, wandering lightly over the crowded room, chanced to fall upon a young man who was standing, somewhat removed from the press of the throng, in a window recess, which was at least comparatively quiet—a tall, grave, self-possessed young man, sufficiently good-looking to be called handsome by an enthusiastic friend. When the Princess Barnabas looked at him, his eyes, which were bright, clever eyes, were fixed on her with a look of half-humorous contemplation. The moment, however, their eyes met he turned his head slightly, and resumed a conversation with a gray-haired old man with a red ribbon at his buttonhole, whom she knew to be a foreign diplomatist. The young man's gaze had expressed an interest in the Princess, but it seemed to be just as interested in the pale, wrinkled face of his companion. The Princess Barnabas seemed piqued. "Who is that young man?" she asked, half-fretfully, of the Secretary of State.

"Which young man?" The Secretary of State's stolid face gazed vaguely into the dense crowd of dress coats and white shoulders, of orders and stars and diamonds.

"The young man in the window talking to the gray-haired man."

The Secretary put up his eye-glass and considered the young man in question thoughtfully. He was never known to hurry in his judgments or his replies in Parliament, and he did not hurry now, though it was the Princess Barnabas who was interrogating him, and not a member of the Opposition. Then he answered her, weighing his words with more than judicial deliberation: "He is a young fellow named Sinclair. He is going out to the East, or something. Why do you ask?"

"His face interests me," replied the Princess.

"I should like to know him. Bring him to me, or stay, give me your arm, we will go to him."

She rose and dispersed her little knot of disconsolate courtiers. Taking the Secretary's arm she moved slowly toward the window where Sinclair was still standing. The Secretary touched him on the arm. "Mr. Sinclair, the Princess Barnabas has expressed a desire to make your acquaintance. Allow me, Princess, to introduce you to Mr. Julian Sinclair."

The young man bowed. He seemed a little surprised, but not in the least embarrassed. The Princess smiled brightly at him, and her eyes were brighter than her smile. "Thank you," she said to the Secretary of State with a pleasant little smile, which was meant to convey, and which did convey, that she had had enough of him. He promptly disappeared into the crowd with resigned good humor, bearing away with him in his wake the elderly red-ribboned diplomatist.

We were such very good friends, and I assure you I quite missed you."

Sinclair got up and looked down into her laughing eyes. "I left St. Petersburg," he said, "because I was afraid to stay."

Her eyes were laughing still, but there was an unwonted softness in her voice, as she asked him, "Why were you afraid to stay? Surely you were not a Nihilist?"

He began to speak, and paused; then with a determined effort to keep his voice under control, he said: "I left St. Petersburg because I was fool enough to fall in love with you."

"Thank you for the compliment. Was that so very foolish?"

"Not for others, perhaps. For me folly, and worse than folly—madness. I never thought I should see you again: I did not dream that we should meet to-night. But since chance has thrown us together for the last time, as I leave England in a few days for the rest of my life, I may as well tell you, for the first and for the last time, that I love you."

Her eyes were laughing still: those wonderful gray-blue northern eyes which so many capitals raved about; but her lips were firmly, almost sternly set. Still she said nothing, and he went on "I knew it was folly when I first found that I loved you over there in St. Petersburg. I was a poor English gentleman, and you were the Princess Barnabas. I might as well have fallen in love with a star. So I came away." He said the words simply, with a quiet conviction, and held out his hand. "Good-bye, Princess, and forgive me my folly."

She rose and faced him. Any one of the hundreds in the great room beyond who chanced to look at the couple half hidden by the curtains of the deep window would have seen a man and a woman talking lightly of light things. "And you have not forgotten me yet?" she said.

"I never shall forget you," he answered sadly. "I cannot love more than once, and I love you with all my soul. Do you remember one day, when we drove together in the Neva Perspective, how you stopped to give some money to an old beggar? I envied the beggar for getting a gift from you, and you in just dropped a coin into my outstretched hand." He took out his watch-chain and showed her the tiny gold coin with the Russian Eagle on it. "I have kept it ever since," he said. "It is the only thing I care for in the world. I have lived and shall live so much in the East that I am somewhat superstitious, and I think it is my talisman. Good-bye. He held out his hand again. She took it.

"Will you come and see me before you leave?" she asked almost appealingly.

He shook his head. "Better not," he said.

For a moment she was silent; she seemed to be reflecting. Then she said, with a sudden vehemence, "Promise me that if I write and ask you to come you will obey me. Promise me that for the sake of our old friendship."

He bowed his head. "I promise," he said.

"And now give me your arm and take me to my carriage," said the Princess Barnabas. "I want to go home to bed."

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The next day Julian heard nothing from the Princess. "Of course not," he said to himself, shrugging his shoulders at the fantastic hopes which had besieged his brain since that strange meeting, and he doggedly faced his approaching exile. But on the afternoon of the second day after the meeting at the Embassy, Julian Sinclair, coming to his hotel after a day spent in busy preparations for departure, found a tiny note awaiting him. It was from the Princess, and had only these words: "Come this evening, I shall be alone." And he went.

This was part of a conversation which Princess Barnabas chanced to overhear at a reception at the foreign office, and on the eve of her departure for the east. The speakers were Sir Harry Kingscourt and Ferdinand Lepell. Said the painter: "Have you heard the news about the Princess Barnabas? She is going to marry a fellow named Sinclair, and is going to live in the east—Persia, or some place of the kind. The fellow hasn't a penny in the world and won't have from her, for I believe that by her husband's will she loses almost all her fortune if she marries below her own rank."

"How very romantic," yawned Kingscourt. "Romantic," replied Lepell; "it is absurd. Have you not heard?—the woman has committed suicide." And the speakers moved away.

"Suicide," said the princess to herself, smiling. "No, no; I was going to commit suicide once, but I have learnt what life is worth, and I have changed my mind."—The Whitehall Review.

LOVELY WOMEN OF LIMA.

Peculiar Manners and Dress—Their Amusements and Families.

Lima Letter to New York Sun.

The ladies of Lima are all eyes. They have the reputation of being, as a class, the most beautiful in the world, and meeting them on the way to mass in the morning or shopping later in the day, one can easily see how they obtained it. It is the manta, which they wear in such a coquettish way, that gives them their reputation for beauty, for it conceals every feature except their bewitching eyes and lovely olive complexion. No matter how ugly her mouth or her nose is; no matter how high her cheekbones or large her ears, a manta will make any woman with pretty eyes look handsome, and, like charity, it covers a multitude of sins.

On the street the women look like a procession of nuns, but in their homes when they are dressed, like the queen of Sheba. Indoors she is bright, vivacious and winning. With more passion than intellect, with very little knowledge of the world outside of her own orbit, she never reads a newspaper and never looks at a book, but she is up in art and operas, plays the piano brilliantly and with exquisite taste, and talks like a conversational blizzard. She is affectionate, impetuous, and strong-willed; gushes over what she likes and shudders over what does not please her. Impulsive, frank and generous, she is easily betrayed, and the principal object in life of her mamma is to watch over her like a hawk. At seventeen or eighteen she marries—often younger still. At twenty-five she is the mother of three or four children, shrunken and wan, or else inordinately fat. Their good looks seem to go with youth, and old-maids are unknown.

A Peruvian soldier is usually accompanied by a woman called a rabona, who sometimes is his wife. They receive rations like the soldiers, but no pay. They are faithful and enduring, but degraded creatures, who follow the army in its long, weary marches, assisting their husbands by carrying part of their load, and about half of them have babies slung over their shoulders in blankets. When camp is reached they do the cooking; in battle they nurse the wounded and rob the dead. Water is very scarce along the coasts of Peru, where most of the marching and fighting is done, and it is part of the duty of a rabona to see that her husband does not die of thirst.

Milk is peddled about Lima by women, who sit astride of a horse or a mule with a big can hanging on either side of the saddle behind them. When they ride up to a doorway they give a peculiar shrill scream, which the servants within recognize.

The fashionable entertainment in Peru is bull-baiting. The bull is not killed, as in Spain and Mexico and other countries, and no horses are slaughtered in the ring. The animal is simply teased and tortured to make a Liman holiday. The young men of the city do the baiting, and it is regarded as a very high-toned sort of athletic sport, like polo at Newport. The young ladies take darts made of tin decorated them with ribbons, lace and rosettes, and give them to their lovers to stick into the hide of the bull. The great thing is to cast those darts so as to strike the bull in the fore shoulders or in the face, and in order to do it he who throws them must stand before the animal's horns. Active young fellows do the trick very dexterously, but it takes nerve and agility, and at times fair senioritas have seen their lovers ripped open.

Florida has entered the list of competitors for the Northern flower market. A horticulturist of that state has recently shipped 30,000 tuberose bulbs to dealers in the North.

The Chinese wall is over 1,000 miles long, but is not continuous, being a mere breast work where the mountains are precipitous, and is surmounted with towers no more than 40 feet high where the chances for attack are unusually favorable. It is not miles high nor hundreds of yards broad. The old stories in ancient books of travels were mostly imaginary, and as is now sometimes the fashion, were exaggerated for the purpose of selling the books.

The first cherries which reached Chicago in car-load lots from California sold for fifteen cents a pound on an average. The cost of transportation was from nine to ten cents per pound, which left a profit of \$100 per ton. The orchardists of Alameda County say that, if the freight rates were reduced one-third, they could send a loaded train every day for sixty days. A thrifty cherry orchard at these rates ought to return from \$500 to \$1,000 per acre to its owner.

The extent of the dead meat trade of London is becoming enormous. The total weight of the deliveries last year exceeded that of any previous one and amounted to 230,873 tons of 2,250 pounds each. Of this the united kingdom furnished 179,000 tons. America, including Canada 27,071 tons, and Australia and New Zealand, 11,128 tons. It is of interest to the American trade to know that while the consignments had but slightly exceeded those of the previous year, the weight of Australian and New Zealand meat showed the large increase of 138 1-4 per cent. on that of the year 1883.

The Fastest Steamer in the World.

The fastest steam yacht afloat is the Stiletto. She is a strange looking little vessel, ninety-five feet long and eleven feet in beam—a perfect water knife. She has a straight bow, and her widest part is a little forward of amidships. From that point to the stern she diminishes in width till she ends in a sharp point. The sharp stern lies low in the water, so that the boat has the appearance of pointing her nose into the air. She has a high freeboard in proportion to her size, and her flush decks are enclosed with a light railing. Her rig is that of a three-masted schooner, and her little masts look like walking sticks. Her single funnel, situated forward of the main mast, is painted a dirty gray. Her hull is painted black about a foot and a half above the water, and the rest of it is white. Her row of portholes in the white part look like pinheads in a sheet of note paper. She had a race on the Hudson River recently with the Mary Powell, which has heretofore claimed to be the fastest boat in the country. The contrast between the two boats was extraordinary. The big wheels of one smote the waters defiantly, clouds of smoke rolled out of her smokestacks, and her walking beam plunged up and down with a force that made her decks tremble. The other, little and slim, looked like a needle on the water, through which she slid with an easy, graceful motion, flinging the spray behind her. The two boats cut the waves nose to nose, and the Powell's pilot eyed his saucy neighbor a trifle anxiously. Soon the firemen began to shovel on the coal, the steam gauge showed a pressure of thirty-six pounds, and the river boat bounded ahead. But the yacht's smoke-stack belched out an angry cloud, and she whisked up to her first position, bow to bow. The Powell made another effort to win the advantage, and crowded the steam to a pressure of thirty-nine pounds. But the yacht was equal to the occasion and refused to yield an inch. The next moment a great sweeping streak of silver foam was flung off the Stiletto's sheer, and a glistening, boiling white mass of spume shot out from under her sharp stern. A moment later two jets of water were shooting three feet into the air behind her, and her bow was cutting through the water like a bullet through the air. She gave a great leap forward, and every living soul on board the Mary Powell, from the captain in the wheel down to the cook in the kitchen, opened his mouth and eyes, held his breath, and stared with the concentrated essence of his whole soul. "Great Scott and huckleberries!" exclaimed a deck hand; "look at that!" The Stiletto was simply walking away from the Mary Powell, and in a short time was one hundred yards ahead of her. The one hundred and two hundred and then to three hundred. Down in the neighborhood of the steamboat's engine room things were lively. The engineer was watching his steam gauge and running in and out to see where the yacht was. The firemen were ramming coal into the furnaces at a great rate. The Mary Powell is allowed to carry forty pounds of steam. At one time her gauge showed thirty-eight. It was no use, however. The little boat kept right on crawling away from her, and at Tarrytown light it was plain to see that the Stiletto was a winner. She was off Sing Sing at 4:45, having done the distance, a little less than thirty miles, in 1h 17 m. The Mary Powell's time was 1h 24m.

A Queer City in the Air.

The Pueblo of Acoma, situated ninety miles west of Albuquerque, is one of the most remarkable communities in New Mexico or the United States. In the middle of a valley six miles in width stands a butte, and on the top of this is Acoma. Eight hundred people are living there, and they and their ancestors have gathered there the sum of their possessions for nearly three centuries. This butte is one of the many that are remnants of a mesa that has been worn away by the erosion of the ages, and survives only in flat-topped mountains here and there. The valleys between are fertile, and untold generations of men have seen them covered with men and flocks of sheep. Some time in the seventeenth century the Laguna or valley Indians made war upon the Acomas for the possession of the country, and the latter being the weaker, occupied this butte as a defensive position believed to be impregnable. Their judgment has been abundantly vindicated. It has proved a Gibraltar of strength and safety. The comparison is not inappropriate, and in approaching it from the north I was struck with the resemblance to the pictures I have seen of that grim old fortress that frowns over the strait of the Mediterranean. The height above the valley is nearly four hundred feet, and the walls in several places are nearly perpendicular. There are two means of ascent, one by a flight of steps cut in the face of the wall and rising at an angle of forty-five degrees, and the other by a fissure in the rocks leading up into the heart of the mountain. Both ways have been trodden by human feet until the steps are hollowed out like shallow troughs. Either one is exceedingly difficult, and neither is tolerably safe.