Effervescent Everton

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Evelyn Gill Klahr

The house first attracted attention because of an irregular blotch of pink paint on the front. But it held the attention on account of the two young people on the veranda.

To the passerby they presented the picture of felicity.

The veranda—cool, wide and shady—looked out on the prettiest street of the overgrown country town—a street of broad lawns, of houses that were homes, of big trees, generous of shade, the girl was young and attractive, a bit too thoughtful perhaps, but as charmingly gowned and as pretty as the most frivolous; the man was handsome, on slightly sterner lines than those prescribed by popular magazine covers, but nevertheless distinctly handsome.

The passerby, might envy, but a close observer could see that this was not a scene of unadulterated happiness.

The girl, Ruth Everton, who was visiting her sister, Mrs. Hillock, sat in the swing and stared just beyond the man, not at him, while one annoyed little foot kept tapping on the veranda floor. The man, Frank Graham, was distinctly gloomy, and his jaw was set grimly, as for battle.

"Of course,"said Ruth bitterly, "if you don't care anything about childreu—if you aren't interested in what is best—"

He interrupted her a bit indignantly.

"But it is exactly because I do care. Can't you see that it isn't fair to your little nephew to let him grow up an undisciplined individual, meddling with their affairs—"

She in turn interrupted.

"Why aren't you willing to get at the bottom of this? Now, you'll surely agree that half of the machinery of our civilization is just for those two purposes; to develop man's reason and to make him social-minded.

"Isn't that true? Schools and colleges and libraries and churches and everything? All right. Now here comes along a child with those two characteristics already remarkably developed, and what do you want to do?

"You want to destroy them utterly—turn him into an obedient little automation, just so he'll be less trouble for the present, and then expect him to acquire them all over again when he grows up. Oh, it drives me wild—simply wild!"

"In other words," dryly commented Graham, "he should be encouraged to daub pink paint on the front of his house, and so put the family to considerable expense and trouble to have it done over—to say nothing of making the place, look ridiculous until it is done. That's the sort of impulse, I suppose that you want to conserve."

"I think the generous impulse back of it," she retorted, "the desire to give pleasure is the most precious thing in the world and certainly ought to be conserved"

Frank Graham smiled a sardonic smile to himself and said nothing.

Ruth Everton stared coldly beyond him.

Presently from the house came Mrs. Hillcock, mother of little Everton, the terrible young cause of this controversy between Ruth Everton and the man she was going to marry.

Mrs. Hillcock sank wearily into a wicker chair.

"Oh, deary me," she sighed. She was an extremely pretty woman, but always had the air of being, though sweetly good-natured about it all, completely done up and winded by the strenuous complexities of her life.

"Well, I certainly wish I knew what I ought to do," she declared.

Ruth leaned forward encouragingly. "Something about Everton?" she inquired.

"Yes, I really think I ought to keep him home from little Effie White's birthday party this afternoon, to punish him for that paint, but how can I when he's been looking forward to it all week?"

It seemed to Graham as if the girl fairly gloated over her advantage over him. Of course, he couldn't interfere in this strictly family affair while she, as the child's aunt, could.

"But you must remember," Ruth was saying, "that his motive was the kindest. He wanted to paint the whole house pink as a surprise for you."

"Well," he succeeded," replied his mother grimly "I was surprised But this sort of thing must stop," she added desperately, "or we'll be stark staring mad!"

Her instincts as hostess made her include Graham in the conversation. "Did you hear about that birthday party he gave last week?"

No, Graham had not.

"Well, it's an awful story," Mrs. Hillcock confessed. You see, Everton is perfectly obsessed on the subject of parties. He thinks it is the height of earthly bliss for an individual to have one. One day last week he discovered it was the birthday of our chaufferur's little boy—little colored boy, you know—and Everton, entirely unknown to us, had a party for him in the garage.

"He didn't want to trouble me, he said afterward, and I really think that was the reason he didn't tell me. Well, anyway, he took a big fruit cake from the cellar and invited all the children in the neighborhood, and they consumed the entire monstrous cake."

She shook her head in weary remembrance. "This neighborhood furnished considerable practice for the medical profession that night."

Graham cast a surreptitious glance at Ruth. She seemed quite serene about it.

"But really I don't think that was as bad as the tulips," Mrs. Hillock went on. "Did Ruth tell you about the tulips?" she inquired of Graham.

No, Ruth had not told him

"Well, that was last spring," Mrs Hillock explained. "Oh, dear, dear!" she sighed. "That was awful! You see Mrs. Templeton right here beside us on the left has perfectly wonderful tulips.

"She gets them from Holland—some rare wonderful variety and awfully expensive. Then there's Mrs. Allen who lives a little further on down the street who goes in herself for a chaste plain expanse of lawn and thinks flower beds and all that sort of thing extremely rocco and in very bad taste.

"Well, one day Everton heard her congratulate Mrs. Templeton on her wonderful tulips, and say that she really envied her—perfectly insincere, for she wouldn't have them for a gift, but how was Everton to know that—and Mrs. Templeton said that indeed they were getting almost too much for her, and sometimes she thought there were too many for beauty.

"Of course, she didn't mean it. She wouldn't have parted with one for worlds. But how, I repeat was Everton to know? So that outrageous child carefully reasoned it out and then made all arrangements for them. Since Mrs. Templeton had too many and Mrs. Allen wished for some, he simply transplanted a hundred or so from one place to the other

"And both women were furious, simply furious. I sent our gardener right over to repair the damage, and fairly prostrated myself in apologies, but that didn't seem to help."

"But it was sweet of him," insisted Ruth. He supposed, of course, that it hadn't occurred to them what to do to prevent the child from painting the house pink another time?"

"But he knows that we are all displeased about it—that he's made us trouble," Ruth insisted. He'll never paint the house again. He wanted only to make us happy.

"But what's to prevent him from doing something else just as outrageous?"

"I sincerely hope," declared Ruth with conviction, "that there is nothing to prevent his always reasoning things out and acting on every generous impulse."

They couldn't let it alone.

It had begun a day or so before with a few idle comments on the case of Everton, and had suddenly grown into a full bodied controversy. A day or so before they had been happy in their mutual love, and now this thing seemed to have eclipsed it entirely—to have done away with it, somehow, leaving them only this eternal wrangling between them.

"Why can't you see?" Graham kept demanding of himself.

"If he's that sort of a person!" Ruth kept repeating to her heart.

All that afternoon the controversy kept them in its clutch, until at last Ruth, scarcely knowing wha she was doing until it was done, slipped the diamond solitaire from her left hand.

"I can't marry anyone I wrangle with like this," she declared.

He took the ring dully. He had not dreamed it would come to this

Nor had she dreamed he would take it, and would let it end so easily.

And so it was over, that which had seemed as permanent as the hills; was over so easily that they scarcely knew what had happened.

He found his hat and walked in dull bewilderment down the street.

Ruth, left behind, still sat in the swing, frightened, despairing, desolate. She could not keep her eyes from her ringless finger, so symbolical of the emptiness of her heart.

Presently Everton returned, buoyantly enthusiastic over his afternoon. He had had a wonderful time, but Ruth, absorbed in her own misery, scarcely listened to it.

As a matter of fact Everton himself scarcely realized how wonderful it had been, nor would he have had the words to do justice to it . His altruistic little heart had been charmed with the whole arrangement.

He particularly liked the idea of every guest bringing Effie a present.

It was at his suggestion that Effie had stood at the gate to receive the gift before the giver was permitted to enter, an idea filched by Everton from modern trolley methods. Effie's mother, little dreaming the truth, had to stand at the gate to receive her guests.

Everton himself had officiated with her at the gate, and had even loaned her his masculine strength when one small child without a gift attempted to enter. The little guest, determined to have hospitality, determined not to be deprived of his party, pulled valiantly at the gate.

Everton, bound that the custom of gift giving be preserved, by force, if need be, held the gate firmly in his two strong, little hands and reasoned in his grave, earnest way

"But why did you come without a present?"

"But I didn't have anything."

"You should have bought something."

"But there wasn't time."

"You'd have time to get something now and be back before the party is over."

And the baffled little guest had to run home frantically, in desperate fear of missing the party altogether and had returned in due time, bearing his tribute.

So the party had been a perfect success, and Everton had come home glowing with delight over the way it had all turned out so beautifully for the birthday child.

Ruth with her half-hearted attention gathered little of this from his discourse, but Everton's mother gathered enough to send her flying to the telephone.

Presently, a look of horrified amusement on her face, she came out to the veranda to find Ruth.

"That outrageous child!"

Everton followed her to the veranda and listened, gravely interested, while his mother explained the outrage of the afternoon to Ruth.

"It was a good idea to have him go home for the present," he insisted, "'cause then Effie got the present."

"Everton, Everton!" cried his weary mother, "you've just got to stop having ideas.

"Ideas are all right for grown up folks,"he explained to Ruth. "Don't you wish they was some way—"

"There were," his mother corrected.

"There were," he agreed amiably. "Don't you wish there were some way you could have a trap door for little boys' ideas so they couldn't get out—couldn't get out at all—until they were grown up?"

His mother shook her head hopelessly.

"Don't I wish there were!" she sighed. She turned to Ruth. "What am I to do," she appealed to the girl, "but spank, just plain spank?"

Ruth's protest was faint, weary. She had paid so cruelly already for her interest in the problem of Everton that she hadn't any spirit left to go on.

But after supper when the child and his mother gravely retired together to an upper chamber, she waited miserably in the swing, guilty to think that her championship had been so feeble.

Presently Everton rejoined her on the veranda and with a book seated himself on his little chair. He was very serious and quiet, but there was no tinge of resentment in his manner, nor indeed of any emotional disturbance, except that as he leafed through his book he occasionally winked very hard.

The bond of sympathy that draws together unhappy souls soon brought Ruth to the child's side, and because it is easiest to unburden one's heavy heart to those whose hearts likewise are heavy it was Everton who first heard of Ruth's broken engagement.

"Won't he marry you at all?" inquired Everton.

"Never," said Ruth, "never in all this world!"

He looked at her pitingly, gravely, and though he had no words of sympathy to offer Ruth felt a little comforted.

But though he had nothing to say, the generous mind of Everton had already begun to reason out something to help her. A party, he thought. Parties had been, on the whole, disastrous for him, but he had not lost faith in them, especially parties with presents, for see how happy little Effie had been at hers!

So he slipped out of his chair and down the street, pleasantly aglow with his generous purpose, a little knight ever ready for kind deeds and for the serving of others—no impulsive little blockhead rushing thoughtlessly into action, but a philosopher carefully working from cause to effect.

For example, with each of the many invitations he issued that evening he carefully explained the entire tragic situation of his deserted aunt, knowing full well that a sympathetic heart makes a generous hand.

He invited alike the discreet and the gossip, unaware that the eyes of the gossips danced at the news and that they chafed to be off and spreading it.

He came to Frank Graham, and stopped hesitant.

Graham stopped, too. "Hullo, son!" he greeted him.

Everton was too absorbed in his mission to return the greeting.

"Would you like to give a present too?" he inquired.

"That depends. To whom?"

"To my Aunt Ruth."

Graham's eyes opened wide. "Why—er—" he stammered.

Everton went on with his explanation. "I'm giving a surprise party for her tomorrow. With presents. Because she feels so bad that you won't marry her."

Graham's interest suddenly became a flaming thing that made his eyes blaze.

He asked a few pointed questions, and then, outstriding Everton, hastened down the street to be where he belonged, at the side of his girl during the mortifying experience.

Ruth's eyes grew big and a little frightened at the sight of him.

"Come indoors," he bade her.

Then in the big twilight-dimmed living room he drew her close to him with a little murmuring sound of comfort.

For a moment she half resisted and then yielded herself to his arms, not understanding, but infinitely glad of his presence again.

Then with his arm still comfortingly around her, he explained the astonishing mission of little Everton.

"Oh! no—no—" she gasped in horror.

And then convinced beyond all doubt, just because she knew him so well, she gave a moaning little laugh. The picture was vivid to her eyes of how little Everton's tale would be passed around gloatingly in the overgrown country town where everyone knew everyone else.

And she knew how it would grow and grow. "Oh! what a good time they'll all have with the scandal!" she groaned. "Maybe," she wondered, "Maybe it serves me right that my own theories about Everton have come back on me like this."

"But the joke's on them, dear, when they find out we are to be married."

She looked at him with grave inquiring eyes.

"As if it could be otherwise!" he answered her silent question. "Dear, think of it," he went on. "If Everton has brought your theories down on your shoulders like this see what he has done to mine! Why! if that blessed child had been the suppressed little mortal I advocated, we might never have—" He stopped, appalled at the awfulness of the thought.

Their arms caught each other in the twilight and tightened their hold.

From the veranda they heard the high little explaining voice of Everton returned, and then the baffled groan of the mother. "Everton, Everton, Everton! What will you do next.

Ruth in the living-room murmured to her lover, "After all, dearest, we don't have to solve Everton."

"Thank God we don't!" he murmured reverently.

SMILE--It Pays

In one of the southern training camps, a profane and perspiring infantry sergeant was doing his best to pound into the heads of a squad of exceedingly raw "rookies" the rudiments of military science.

When the sergeant gave the order, each willing recruit of the squad made a commendable effort to execute it, but every little rookie had a movement all his own, with highly unsatisfactory results.

"As you were!" bawled the sergeant.

At this point the proceedings were interrupted by a recruit from Boston, who before enlisting had been a Harvard student.

"Beg pawdon, sawgeant," said he, "but wouldn't it be moah propah to say, 'You will restore the status quo ante'?"

"Look here," he cried, "I can't sleep you don't make him stop, I will!"

"Come in, sir—come in!" said the kid's father. You'll be as welcome as the flowers in spring.

"What kind of a player is Mr. Jones?"

"Jones! Why he's a duffer. Can't play a stroke. Why do you ask?"

"I'm going to play against him tomorrow in the visitor's handicap."

"Too bad, old chap! I'm afraid you're in for a beating."

They were entertaining the minister

"Hello, Tom," said a man from the north who had returned to his birthplace for a brief visit. "I heard that Bill killed a man. Is it true?"

"Sure!" replied Tom. He chased the fellow three days with a shotgun, finally got a good bead on him and biffed him right through the lung."

"And killed him?" queried the northerner, with horror.

"You bet!"

"Well, how is it that they didn't lynch Bill for coldblooded murder?"

"Well, the fellow that Bill shot didn't have a friend on earth, so the game warden just fined Bill $2 for huntin' without a license."

Governor Smith of New York recently said at a dinner in Albany:

"The opponents of female suffrage take a jaundiced view of things. They are like the old Batch.

"'I see that Jones has married his cook,' a man said to Batch at the club.

"'Humph. That's just like Jones,' Batch snorted. 'He'd always rather fight than eat."

As he weighed out the sugar the grocer's boy whistled lustily.

"Don't you know that it is very rude to whistle while you are waiting on a lady?" said the elderly customer, severely.

"Well, the guy-nor told me to do it when I served you," explained the boy.

"He told you to whistle?" said the customer in great surprise.

"Yes'm! He said if we ever sold you anything we'd have to whistle for the money."

A woman went into a railroad office to buy a ticket for her son who was about to emigrate to Canada, and while the man was looking up the particulars she chanced to look around and noticed in a glass case a stuffed Canadian moose.

"What kind of an animal is that?" she inquired.

"Oh," said the man, "that's a Canadian moose."

"Well, if that's the case," she said, "I'll have my money back. I wouldn't let my son go out there. What must the rats be like.

The man in the next flat was with your kid yelling like that! If pounding on the wall.

at dinner, and after dessert little Johnny pressed the minister to have another piece of pie.

The minister laughed. "Well, Johnny, if you insist, I will have another."

"Good!" said Johnnny. "Now, ma, remember your promise. You said if you had to cut into the second pie I could have another piece!"

"I've no doubt about this case," said the lawyer's clerk to his chief. "One look at that fellow over there convinces me that he is guilty."

"Hush!" said the lawyer nervously "That's the counsel for the defense."

The young man was a devout lover of opera. All through the second act his hostess had chattered and smirked, entertaining the small party in her box and disturbing a large part of the audience.

"You must come again," she said. as he wished her "Good night"." "Come on Thursday. It's 'Manon.' Have you heard Manon?' "

"No," he responded gravely; "I've never heard you in 'Manon.' "

Little Jimmy went with his mother to stay with an aunt in the country, and his mother was very worried as to how he would behave.

But to her surprise he was angelic during the whole visit—always did as he was told, and never misbehaved.

As soon as he got home, however, he was his natural self again.

"Oh, Jimmy," she said, "you were so good while you were away, why do you start behaving badly now?"

"What's home for?" asked Jimmy in pained surprise.

Early inscriptions made about 2,200 B. C. show that the Babylonians had developed a fairly extensive system of figuring.

Foreign countries are using only half as much petroleum as the United States, but have seven times as much oil in the ground.

At their present rate of consumption, foreign oil producing countries have enough to last them more than 250 years.

Great Lives Teach the Child

The Young Look Up to the Successful

The Young Naturally Look Up to and Reverence the Successful

I cannot think of a finer service that parents can render a child than to help him rightly to appraise the moral worth of men and women well known, of the best-known, of the so-called great, says Dr. Stephen S. Wise. To reveal Washington or Lincoln to a child is to inspire and enrich a child, not only by placing a Titanic figure in the Pantheon of his imagination, but by making clear what are the greatnesses of the great.

Shrines of the Child

It was said of a most learned and distinguished Englishman that he had no shrines. I am not afraid that American children will be shrineless, but I am concerned about the American child having shrines worthy of his reverence and honor . Parents cannot expect to reveal to a child the essence of greatness and nobleness in another until after they have answered for themselves the question of what greatness really is—until they know that greatness is not a matter of passing fame, but of abiding worth, moral and spiritual, and that in a democracy no man is great who does not greatly serve.

Courageous Parents

I would warn people against the danger of filling the shrines of their children with second and third and even fifth rate figures. Parents must have the courage to say to a child. "This man, however well known, is not worthy of your respect, for he lacks nobility. This man, however rich or powerful, is not a truly great and noble person."

We owe our children the truth at all times and under all circumstances Let parents be generous in their appraisals of the worthy, but let them be unsparing in their condemnation of those who are unworthy of a child's love and reverence.

A Bean With Supernatural Powers

Savage disciples of Voodoo worship in the American tropics ascribe supernatural powers to the jack bean. These tribesmen plant a row of the seed around their rude gardens in the belief that the plant will punish trespassers. This custom was doubtless brought by negro slaves from Africa, where the very similar sword or fetich bean is thus worshipped. But the Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, fails to support this weird belief concerning the bean. Nor do these scientists find much else to recommend this plant stranger from the West Indies.

The jack bean it appears from abundant experiments, is a prolific plant. It is not unusual for the seeds in their 14-inch pods of a jack-bean plant to outweigh its own herbage: and the herbage, if cut green, frequently crops at the rate of 16 to 20 tons per acre. This wonderful productiveness makes the bean a favorite of the get-rich-quick gentry who seek to introduce a new and marvelous commercial plant. This popularity among unscrupulous promoters accounts in part, at least, for the numerous aliases under which the jack bean is known. "Pearson bean." "Wonder bean," "Gotani bean," "South American coffee bean," etc., are only a few of the names in which the jack bean has been rechristened.

It has some value in the South as a green manure crop, and there is evidence to show that it may be a good silage crop when cut green.

Cattle do not relish the jack bean hay, nor do they make gains upon the ground seed, which product they must be taught to eat.

The bean is eaten by natives of Mexico, but most experimenters describe it as flat and coarse in flavor.

The seed contains a large proportion of a material known as urease and used in medicines, but the demand for the product is extremely limited.

After all, the scientists warn the prospective buyer of "wonder beans" to have a specimen identified, or else confine the first plantings to small areas until the doubtful values of the bean are better established and a better market provided than seems to exist at present.

Electricity Versus Steam for Railways

It has been estimated that the electrification of our steam railways should save the country more than 100,000,000 tons of coal annually. On the few hundred miles of track where electricity has taken the place of steam the capacity of tracks and other equipment has increased fully one-half. Electric engines speed up schedules as much as twenty-five per cent, and cold weather that paralyzes the steam lines does not hurt the lines that are operated electrically. Of the 150,000,000 tons of coal used in one year to operate the steam roads, two-thirds could be saved under electic power, and thus ten per cent of the ton mileage of all the roads that now haul coal could be applied to other uses. Besides the waste of coal, 40,000,000 barrels of oil, or nearly fifteen per cent of the total output, goes to engines and could be saved by using electricity. It is considered by some authorities appalling that twentyfive per cent of the total amount of coal that we mine every year is used to operate our railways under such inefficient conditions that it requires an average of at least six pounds of coal to the horse-power hour.

The Short Skirts Survives

"We have already announced the survival of the short skirt," writes Helen Koues in an article in May Good Housekeeping, "and now the couturiers of Paris have decreed that this skirt shall be pleated. Box-plaits, accordion plaits, side-plaits, "pin" plaits—no matter what, so long as the skirt is plaited. Jenny plaits a tailored skirt all around at the waistline—three-quarter-inch plaits—and makes no attempt to disguise the resulting fullness. Other Jenny skirts show plaited panels, and one in finely plaited blue serge, is finished on the edge with a narrow, confining band to insure the straight silhouette. The movement of this skirt in walking is very pretty.

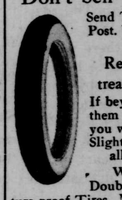
"Jenny shows very finely plaited black satin flounnces below a hip-trimmed with galon cire, plaited panels in otherwise plain skirts and much plaited or fluted serge, satin, and organdy in the form of ruffs and rushes as trimming.

"Lanvin shows straight skirts plaited in front and back, with the plain panel edges overlapping on the sides. Premet shows box-plaited tailored skirts—the plaits not less than an inch wide—below jackets which are close-fitting to the waistline and slightly below. Doeuillet makes much of plaited panels and flounces."

Long before the late war, liquid fire was used in warfare, especially by the Byzantine Greeks.

It is not generally known that a hen, when sitting, turns her eggs entirely around once a day.

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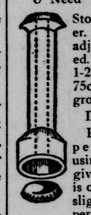
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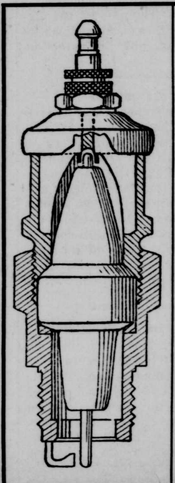
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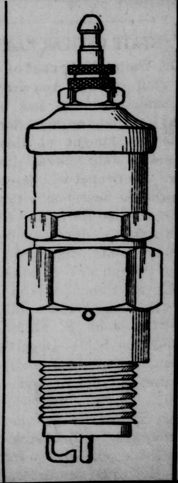
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