The JOY of LIVING

By SIDNEY GOWING

Illustrations by Ellsworth Young

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Complications.

"Either you are working too hard, Alexander," said Lady Erythea, inspecting her nephew through her lorgnette, as they rose from the luncheon table, "or the burglary has been a greater shock to your nerves than I should have suspected. I do not like to see you wearing that pallid and constrained expression. Your sister will be quite concerned about you. She arrives, you remember, by the evening train."

"Diana!" said Mr. Lambe. "I had quite forgotten that she was due here."

Georgina started slightly, and looked perturbed.

"She is coming," said Lady Erythea, "to investigate the Jervaulx ghost. Certainly, she might have done it before. But I believe she has only recently become a member of the Psychical Research society. She is quite enthusiastic about it—so far as Diana can be enthusiastic about anything. Indeed, her letter is so technical as to be unintelligible to me."

"I did not know there was a ghost here," said Georgina, wide-eyed.

"I should not like to say that there is. But it is a tradition in the family, and has been well vouched for. I have never seen it. Diana seems to imply," added Lady Erythea a little acidly, "that only those who are advanced, and in tune with the infinite, see such things. If she thinks she is more spiritual than I, she is welcome to try. She will discover nothing whatever." Lady Erythea turned to her nephew. "Bertrand de Jussac is coming also."

"De Jussac?" cried Alexander, staring at her.

"Yes. You know him, I think."

"I have met him, of course," said Mr. Lambe dryly. "I should have thought this was the last house that so frivolous a person would wish to visit. Why is he coming? Surely he is not interested in the ghost?"

"In the ghost—no," said Lady Erythea, with a faint yet serene smile, "but possibly his interest may arise. I approve him. A young man of excellent standing and irreproachable descent."

"Descent is the word," said Mr. Lambe rather curtly, and left the room.

"How long is—Diana going to stay here?" Georgina asked anxiously.

"Two days—but it is possible she may be persuaded to prolong her visit," said her ladyship placidly.

"What is the Vicomte de Jussac like?"

"D'Artagnan—in the flesh. With a touch, perhaps, of Porthos. The type which it is a good woman's mission to reform. But this is outside your province, Aimee," she said abruptly, and laid a hand on the girl's shoulder. "Go, my dear child, and get your cousin away from his books. Take him for a drive and some fresh air."

Georgina left the room obediently. But instead of seeking Alexander, she hunted, with an agitated face, for Aimee.

"Hullo! What's the trouble now?" exclaimed Aimee. "I say, Georgie, dear, I'm beastly sorry about being in the arbor. I couldn't help—"

"Oh, never mind that now!" broke in Georgina distractedly. "A much worse thing's happened. I knew how it would be. Lady Diana Lambe is coming; she'll be here in an hour or two."

Rapidly she repeated the news concerning the two expected guests. Aimee received it with consternation.

"Cold Lambe!" she exclaimed. "Coming here? As if I hadn't enough to bear without that! It's the worst news yet."

"Wh-what did you call her?"

"It's what everybody calls her in London—Cold Lambe. It fits her like a glove. A beautiful, frigid beast!"

"Aimee! She knows you, doesn't she?"

"Of course. She lives in town. She's the only one of the Lambes I do know. And Diana hates me, and—well, I've never pretended to like her, either. She's perfectly pitiless; she'll give me away like a shot, and flatten me out. She'll be all over it!"

"Let us hope," said Georgina breathlessly, "that Monsieur de Jussac will—er—distract her attention; keep her occupied. Lady Erythea says—"

Aimee sat on the bed and exploded with laughter.

"That aunt of mine is incorrigible!" she gasped. "I tell you it's perfect rot. You might as well try to melt an iceberg fresh from the Pole. This French vicomte won't stand the slightest chance."

"Do you know him, too?"

"I've heard of him. They say he's rather a—a rip. I expect that means he's a good sort. But Diana—heaven preserve us! Well, she probably won't know me in this rig, but she'll know you're the wrong horse. And then zizz! boom!—up we all go in the air! You and Billy, and me—and Alexander!"

Georgina sat down and pressed her hand to her forehead.

"Aimee," she said faintly, "the burglary, and all the rest of it, has upset me. I don't feel well. I—I have headache, and I can't come down to dinner. I shall go to bed."

"What a trump you are!" said Aimee, kissing her with intense affection. "It's the very thing. I'm so sorry, Georgie. It'll be beastly dull for you in bed, dear."

"I shall like a little dullness," said Georgina pathetically, as she left the room, "it will be restful. Goodby, dear. You will have to keep out of Diana's way as best you can."

"I'll take jolly good care I do," murmured Aimee fervently, as she put her cap straight. "Even Billy can't help this time!"

CHAPTER XVIII

"Cold Lambe!"

Lady Diana might have been the original of that tedious young woman who was described by the poet as "divinely tall and most divinely fair." She was without doubt strikingly beautiful, a type of the large and very pale blonde. But an atmosphere of frigidity surrounded her, which many people found repellent.

"My dear aunt," she said calmly, entering the drawing room and kissing Lady Erythea, "so good of you to have me for this flying visit. Alexander, how are you?" She touched her brother's cheek with her lips.

"You will have a clear field for your investigations, my dear," said Lady Erythea, "and I hope the advances you have made in psychic science will—ah—bring you to terms with the ghost. But I doubt it. By the way, your cousin Aimee is here, as I told you. But she is unwell and is keeping her room. I am rather anxious about her. Incidentally, we shall have another guest; I expect Monsieur de Jussac today."

Alexander left the room.

"Monsieur de Jussac!" exclaimed Diana. She paused. Lady Erythea watched her somewhat keenly. "What brings him here?" said Diana.

"He is very anxious," said Lady Erythea glibly, "to examine the Lambe collection of armor. We have a suit of mail which is believed to have been captured at Crecy; there is a tradition that it belonged to one of the De Jussac family."

Lady Diana looked incredulous.

"And I understand he is interested in psychic matters, and anxious to improve his knowledge."

"That is something in his favor," said Diana with suspicion.

"I expect that is his car," said Lady Erythea.

A rakish automobile of semi-racing type was observed sweeping along the park drive. The Vicomte de Jussac had motored direct from town.

A minute later he presented himself. Bertrand de Jussac was tall, and for his age, rather full-bodied. His complexion was healthily ruddy, he had a little black mustache and a jolly, roving dark eye. In spite of his very material appearance, he had undoubtedly the bel air. He raised Lady Erythea's skinny fingers to his lips.

"Enchanted, dear lady, to pay homage to you sur vos terres. How very amiable of you to invite me!"

Lady Erythea bestowed on him the smile she reserved for elder sons. "Charmed to have you. You know my niece, surely?"

Bertrand's little start of surprise was admirably done. He bent low over Diana's hand, but refrained from kissing it.

"But this is delightful!" exclaimed Bertrand. "You told me in town, Lady Diana, that you were interested in the ghost. Happy ghost! I, too, am developing rapidly an interest in the psychic. I hope—"

"I thought it was armor that attracted you here," said Diana frigidly.

"Helas, mademoiselle," said Bertrand, allowing his dark eyes to meet her pale blue ones, "there are weapons against which armor is of no avail."

"With your bent for ancient history, Diana," interrupted her aunt, "you should know more of the Lambe armor than I do. Why not show it to Monsieur de Jussac, so that he may commence his studies. You will find most of it in the hall."

"I think Monsieur de Jussac had better pursue his own investigations, for I shall be fully occupied with mine," said Diana, "and for the present I will retire to my room, if you will excuse me, Aunt."

She glided majestically through the doorway.

The Vicomte's eyes followed Diana's departure.

"Adorable blonde!" he mused. "The invincible phlegme brittanique. But it is the icy, inaccessible peak that spurs the courage of the mountaineer!"

He sat down and made himself particularly pleasant to Lady Erythea.

* * * * * * *

When the party of four assembled for dinner, Lady Erythea was amiable and resplendent in purple, Diana frigid and ethereal in pale yellow, while Alexander at first wore the air of the Jackdaw of Rheims molting under the abbot's curse. But Bertrand de Jussac, looking like a revived D'Artagnan in evening dress, contrived to chase heaviness away.

His merry, infectious laugh and quick sallies uplifted the spirits of the others. He made a deeper impression than ever on Diana Lambe, and with the usual perversity that seized her when in mixed company, she felt it due to herself to become the more openly hostile.

"I do not understand how you can defend the spirit of the age," she said coldly, in answer to a sally that made even Alexander smile. "The days of chivalry are dead. What romance can one attach to the modern young man? But in the days of heraldry, when men were splendid in helm and gorget and camail—ah, then," she exclaimed, with a rare touch of enthusiasm, "romance flourished indeed—"

"Talking of mail," said Lady Erythea blandly, "the ghost always appears in a complete suit of it, though his coming is noiseless as a breath of mist. I regret to tell you, Vicomte, that he came to a bad end through a romantic passion."

"Why regret?" protested Bertrand. "I will wager 'twas worth it."

"Because he was reputed—or disreputed—to be an ancestor of yours; a De Jussac taken as hostage by Sir Piers Lambe—after a most gallant resistance," said Lady Erythea smiling. "While here he engaged the affections of a daughter of the house, and being discovered, was permitted to don his armor and debate the matter with Sir Piers. His end was—tragic."

"No end can be wholly tragic, if reached by the path of a great passion. To every rose its thorn. I applaud him!" Bertrand raised his glass. "To you, nameless ancestor!" He replaced the glass appreciatively, and Mr. Tarbeaux refilled it. "Touching this ancestor, Lady Diana—"

But his hostess had given the signal, the ladies rose, and the two men were left alone—a custom that still lingered at Jervaulx. De Jussac did not find Mr. Lambe a very exhilarating companion, but Alexander, though drinking only water, kept him at the table an unconscionable time. When eventually they reached the drawing room Alexander departed at once to his library, and Bertrand found that Diana had retired.

"I must apologize for my niece, Vicomte, but she has gone to her room; to achieve the proper psychic attitude, or whatever she calls it, for her inquiries as to this absurd ghost," said Lady Erythea. "She can, of course, do nothing tonight. And as it is late, and you will not wish to sit up talking to an old woman—"

"Most spirituelle of hostesses," protested the Vicomte, "I should like to sit and talk to you all night, if you will allow me—"

Diana put her head inside the door.

"I told you, Aunt," she said, "that my stupid maid lost herself at the terminus, and I cannot retire unattended. May I have yours?"

"My own incumbrance has been away for two days," said her aunt, "but we have a parlor maid who really attends to one's hair very soothingly; she did mine last night." Lady Erythea pressed the bell.

The butler appeared. "Tarbeaux, you will tell Snooks to attend Lady Diana in her room."

"Very good, m' lady."

Mr. Tarbeaux found Aimee on her way upstairs to bed, and gave her the order. Aimee was astonished, and secretly panic-stricken.

"This has absolutely finished it!" she reflected. "I might as well bolt at once." Suddenly she came to a resolution. "But—I'd better go. I shall run against her sooner or later. And anyhow she'll be alone. Di's such a fool she may not know me."

Aimee reached the bedchamber, where Lady Diana had just arrived. She scarcely glanced at the parlor maid, and donning a light wrap, seated herself before the mirror.

"Take down my hair," she said curtly, "and if your fingers are cold, warm them first at the fire. I abhor being touched by cold fingers."

Aimee's fingers itched to warm themselves by a totally different method. But she held them to the fire, and then set about her task. She had hardly commenced when Diana's pale blue eyes, catching sight of her



"Whom Did They Say You Were?"

in the mirror, opened in a stare of amazement.

"Whom did they say you were?" she said in a grating voice.

"S-Snooks, m'-lady," said Aimee, dropping a curtsey.

"Snooks! You are Aimee Scroope! Don't deny it!" said Diana fiercely. "Don't attempt to deceive me. I should know you in a thousand. What is the meaning of this—masquerade?"

Aimee surrendered.

"Yes, Di—it's me! For goodness' sake don't shout." For once Aimee lost her head. "Aunt doesn't know I'm here, you see. Don't give me away. I'll try and explain—"

"I don't want your explanation. You will explain to Aunt!" rasped Diana. "I can see by your manner there is something more in this than mere folly! I've had my suspicions, from what Aunt has said—"

"Di," exclaimed Aimee imploringly, "there's no use trying to hide it now—I'm in trouble—real trouble. If you give me away now you'll get me into a fearful row with Dad. You don't want to do that, do you? It—it will simply finish him!"

"Very likely! It is high time he knew the truth about you. I know a little more of your character than he does, Aimee. His absurd leniency to you up till now—"

She moved swiftly between Aimee and the door, and pressed the bell.

"Let me out!" said Aimee, rather white and her eyes gleaming. "Get away from that door!" She strode toward Diana.

"I shall not!"

There was a knock at the door. Diana opened it, and the housekeeper appeared.

"Was that your ladyship's bell?"

"Yes!" said Diana. "Ask Lady Erythea to come here immediately. Do you hear? Immediately!"

CHAPTER XIX

Arms and the Man.

The housekeeper looked bewildered. Diana's wrath agitated her. Aimee was standing quietly in the middle of the room, her hands behind her.

"I dare not disturb her ladyship now that she has retired for the night and her room is locked," said the housekeeper; "my orders are strict. May I suggest that you see her yourself, my lady? If there is anything else I can do—"

Diana paused, and appeared to reflect.

"No," she said curtly. "You can go." When the housekeeper had left the room, Diana turned to Aimee.

"You will come with me now—to Aunt!"

"I'll do nothing of the sort," retorted Aimee defiantly. "Go and speak to her yourself, if you want to. Rouse her out of bed now, and tell her all you know. I shall get it hot; I'm used to that—but there's one consolation, she'll jolly well flatten you out, too!"

Again Diana hesitated. She saw herself roaring accusations into the ear-trumpet of an infuriated aunt newly aroused from slumber.

"I am tired, and I do not wish for a scene at this time of night," she said, fixing Aimee with a malignant eye. "On consideration, I shall leave this affair till the morning. And now—you may go."

She stood away from the door.

"Won't you be decent about it, Di?" said Aimee imploringly. "I don't care for myself, but it's going to be awful for Dad. I—I—if you'd only let me tell you—"

"I have no desire to listen to a discreditable story, at which, no doubt, I could give a very good guess. As for your father, he must face the consequences of having allowed you to behave as you do. I have no more to say," replied Diana with cold disdain.

Aimee's eyes blazed at her.

"You utter beast, Di!" she said, and flung out of the room.

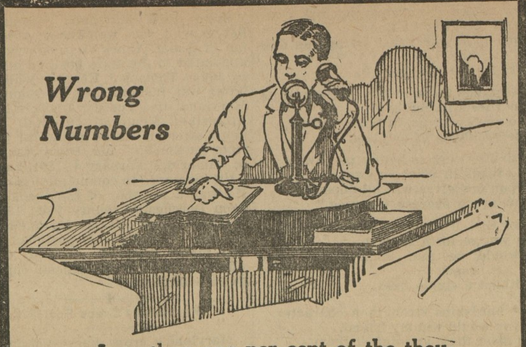
For half an hour Aimee mused upon the situation, and mentally pronounced it hopeless. The dreary bedroom became impossible to her. She opened the door; the house was in darkness; everyone, apparently, had retired. Aimee made her way to Georgina's bedroom door, and rapped stealthily for some time, for the door was locked. It seemed impossible to arouse Georgina, and after a lengthy effort Aimee desisted. Lady Erythea's room was next door, and even the deaf hear when they are not wanted to.

Finally, Aimee crept down into the hall, where the suits of armor loomed grimly in the half-light, a silent, threatening host. It was impossible to get out of the house. All conceivable outlets were secured, since the burglary. Aimee passed through the paneled dining hall. The darkness got on her nerves. She switched on a single electric light, and looked round her hopelessly.

(To be Continued)



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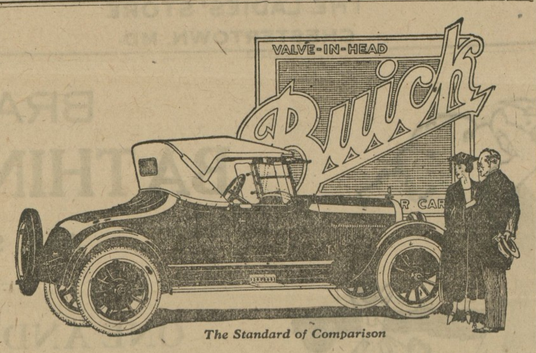
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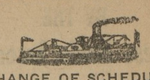
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(Weather Permitting)

Standard Time

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Tuesdays: leave Frederick for Baltimore at 9.30 a. m., leave Betterton for Baltimore at 10.30 a. m., leave Worton Manor for Baltimore at 11.15 a. m., arrive in Baltimore about 1.30 p. m.

Wednesdays—Leave Baltimore for Betterton, Worton Manor and Sassafras River landings 9.30 a. m. Returning leave Fredericktown for Balto. 3.30 p.m., erturning leave Betterton for Baltimore at 4.30 p. m., returning leave Worton Manor for Baltimore at 5.30 p. m., arrive in Baltimore about 8.00 p. m.

NOTE:—Steamer will not stop at Worton Manor Wednesday July 4th.

Saturdays: Leave Baltimore for Fredericktown and Betterton 1.00 p. m. Returning leave Fredericktown for Baltimore at 6.00 p. m., returning leave Betterton for Baltimore at 7.00 p. m. Arrive in Baltimore about 10.30 p. m.

PORT DEPOSIT AND HAVRE de GRACE LINE

Effective June 17th, 1923

Mondays: Leave Baltimore for Betterton, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit at 1.00 p. m.

Tuesdays: Leave Port Deposit for Baltimore at 6.30 a. m., leave Havre de Grace for Baltimore at 7.00 a. m., leave Fredericktown for Baltimore at 9.30 a. m., leave Betterton for Baltimore at 10.30 a. m., leave Worton Manor for Baltimore at 11.30 a. m. Arrive in Baltimore about 1.30 p. m.

Thursdays—Leave Baltimore for Betterton, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit at 1.00 p. m., returning leave Havre de Grace for Baltimore at 6.00 p. m., returning leave Port Deposit for Baltimore at 6.30 p. m., returning leave Betterton for Baltimore at 8 p. m. Arrive in Baltimore about 11.30 p. m.

Sundays: Leave Baltimore for Betterton, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit at 9.30 a. m., Returning leave Port Deposit for Baltimore at 3.00 p. m., returning leave Havre de Grace for Baltimore at 3.30 p. m., returning leave Betterton for Baltimore at 5.00 p. m., Arrive in Baltimore about 8.15 p. m.

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