

THE QUEST OF THE HAT

BY SARGENT RICHARDSON.

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No one except Harry Bancroft would have undertaken the quest, but Harry was not at all like other men. His father, having reached the financial position where he could afford the luxury of an eccentric son, often checked over the fact. His mother, who prostrated herself daily before the altar inscribed "The Right Thing," groined over his conduct, secretly and slyly, little dreaming that she owed her social position to her son's genius for doing the unexpected, the daring original, rather than to her husband's mere millions. Society—with a capital S—will descend to be amused when it seems to be fed.

The quest started in a Fifth Avenue store on the night of the Spencer-Jones cotillon. The Bancroft horses were in use. Mrs. Bancroft and Helen having invited the Courtney girls to share their box at the Metropolitan, Harry had telephoned the club, only to learn that there was not a hansom on the stand. So there was nothing for it but a stage, and Harry signaled the lumbering vehicle with a growing sense of irritation at Mrs. Spencer-Jones for having selected a Calve night for her cotillon, and at the perversity of cabs for invariably being scarce on stormy nights.

The stage plunged forward just as he reached the top step, and he rasped the crown of his hat as he was precipitated through the narrow door. His snowy down-pinion, with one immaculately gloved hand, he smoothed the nap. Bancroft had always held that white clothes might not make the man, but he certainly stamped his attire. He gave one last critical glance at its polished surface and set it firmly, squarely on his head, and once more looked the world in the face.

And such a face as the world turned toward him at this particular moment in the dim light of the swaying stage! Oval, almost classical in its outlines, under stormy coils of deep gold hair of that tint which only Dame Nature, past-mistress of colorists, can spin. Dark brown eyes that might be meltingly tender, but which just now were dancing with amusement at his too obvious magnificence. And lips that were gentle even in their mirth.

Bancroft, the fastidious, noted even the dress, so inconspicuous that no single detail stood forth. Seeing that she had attracted his attention, the girl flushed slightly and her face turned expressionless. But not before Bancroft, raising his glance from the tails on her great fox-brown to the coils of spun gold under her bonnet velvet hat, caught the delicate flush as it passed, and, locking, he was lost.

If Helen did not know this girl, it was her sisterly duty to make the acquaintance, on the morrow. Girls must know how to manage these things. If only he knew her name or address—

Then the province which tenderly guards children, fools and lovers, intervened. A middle-aged woman clambered into the stage. There was a joyful meeting, from which the observant Bancroft gathered that the newcomer had once taught Miss Divinity, and was greatly surprised to meet her in New York. She called the girl Alicia, or Miss Bronson, according to the emotion of the moment, and the younger woman, in turn, offered the information that she and "papa" were stopping at a quiet but fashionable apartment hotel near Washington Square.

Under cover of smoothing his mustache, Bancroft coined the name and address several times. Then sudden terror possessed him. His memory, always treacherous, would lose its grip on that address before he reached the coat room at Sherry's. In desperation he ran through the pockets of his top coat and found the stub of a dance card pencil, but no scrap of paper. With a guilty air, quite lost on Miss Divinity, who was chatting unceremoniously with her companion, he scribbled the address on the white silk lining of his hat, and carefully turned the back band

over the toll-tale words. Then he woke up to a realization that he was seven blocks below his destination, and, with a last lingering look at Miss Divinity, he plunged into the inky blackness of the night.

Two hours later he looked up to find his bootses studying him carefully.

"Something on your mind, Harry?"

"Yes, something pleasant," he replied, spinning her jeweled fan, like an ivory devil, on the palm of his hand. "You would laugh if you knew."

"Tell me, then, quick! I want to laugh!"

"That is just why I think I had better not tell you. I don't want you to laugh at—this—"

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HANDED IT QUIETLY TO BANCROFT.

he wanted to get to the club, where there might be some chaps of the sort who did not receive cards to the Spencer-Jones affairs, but who knew about pretty western girls whose fathers put up near Washington Square.

He found the smoking-room at the club deserted. In the dining-room, a farewell banquet was under way, in honor of a man who looked distinctly western. Bancroft caught sentences about a boat to sail early in the morning, and a long stay abroad; then with a shrug, he walked into the writing-room. Drawing a chair into the writing-recess, he threw himself into its leather depths to watch the cable flash through the storm and to think of Miss Divinity.

Of course, there had been other dainties. He almost laughed aloud when he recalled the first one, whose insipid pink-and-whiteness had been the power to draw him to the dancing class, clad all in velvet and disgustingly girlish ruffles. There had been that of the wild rose, girls with coils of satiny hair, girls with tender mouths and deep brown eyes, but never had there been one who could combine all these graces as did the Lady of the Stage.

In her delicate treatment of the faded, nervous old teacher he had received a womanly sympathy; in her bearing, dignity and the art of repression; in her eyes, when she laughed, that latent sense of humor which is the heaven of marital life.

The club rooms were very quiet when at last he pulled himself together and ordered a cab. John, the hall man, handed him The Hat. Bancroft's penchant for new hats was well known, and he did not resent John's quiet "Another new one, sir?" but slipped a crisp note into the serving man's hand.

Helen Bancroft laughed at her brother over the edge of her chocolate cup. It was nearly noon of the next day and Harry had been waiting impatiently for an hour or more for a word with his sister.

"No, you need not give me the marquis ring for such a trifle," she said teasingly, "merely promise that I shall be the maid of honor. It has been the delight of my ambition to be maid of honor at a church wedding—in a picture hat and carrying a big ermine muff. Give me the name and address, and I will wager a new scarfpin against the marquis ring that I meet Miss Divinity before I have finished my round of teas this afternoon."

Harry jettied her shoulder approvingly and darted out of the room. It had been a happy thought—that hat.

He came back with the hat in his hand, and led Helen triumphantly to the window.

"This is where your little brother was when he carried her," he said. "He did not trust to his poor memory."

But suddenly the look of triumph died from his face. He uttered a groan, and Helen clutched his arm.

"What's the matter?"

"Matter? Matter? Everything's the matter! This is not her hat!"

"Then he told her the whole story."

"That is all right," she said mockingly. "All you have to do is to go to the club and find out which man has a hat with a girl's name written on the lining."

Her mischievous words brought comfort to the perturbed Bancroft.

"Not a bad idea. I'm off to the club."

And at the club he found John in the accustomed place. It was a club tradition that John never slept. Yes, John remembered the hat (also the tip which he did not mention, how ever). It was a new hat. He remembered having made free to mention the fact to Mr. Bancroft. No, he didn't think he could have made a mistake. He had been tending the rack for years and never made mistakes. Yes, there was one other gentleman who had worn a new hat the night before. Come to think of it, it was the same make as Mr. Bancroft's. It had been a gentleman with Mr. Hanson—a western gentleman. White hair, spare figure, about the same height as Mr. Bancroft. That was why the two hats were on the same rack. He could remember every hat, of course, but it helped some to have the tall men's hats on the top rack and the short men's hats underneath. That was how he always got

them so easily. Still, with the two hats side by side, he could not understand how he could make the mistake. Yes, Mr. Hanson was in the club house this morning. John thought he had gone into the billiard room.

Mr. Hanson was in the club. He could not understand why Bancroft should be so interested in the friend he had entertained the night before. It was a western friend, a man by the name of Stroud who had made millions in copper, and was on his way to Europe. Had said that morning at 6 on the City of Chicago. Hanson had been giving him a little send-off the night before.

"Did he—his hat fit him?"

Hanson laughed.

"I can't answer for this morning, but I know it was all right last night. I was with him when he bought it yesterday afternoon."

Bancroft made a dash for the writing room. Now that he had located his man it was a simple thing to send a Mr. Hanson asking Stroud to cable back the name and

tion. The former's heart gave a great leap as he recognized the man he had seen at the club. And there on the rack above him was The Hat. Stroud had not noticed their entrance. He was gazing at a man across the way who was dialling over a lemon squash. For four hours the man had been digging the American's heels, and the latter remembered having seen the same person around the day before. He had the unpleasant feeling that he was being shadowed.

Bancroft stepped up to his companion.

"I beg your pardon," he said, extending a penciled card from Hanson, "but I believe you have my hat and yours is in my luggage."

If the detective had been astonished, Stroud was dumfounded. Throughout his years of toil, a trip to Europe had been his ambition. And here was a man who had taken the trip merely to recover a hat picked up by someone by mistake.

When he had recovered sufficiently to act, he reached for the hat above his head and handed it silently to Bancroft. Harry

turned down the band with hands that almost trembled. There on the silk the name was still legible, "Alicia Bronson."

Stroud accepted his own hat from the hands of Bancroft's man with supreme indifference, but he seemed loath to part with the young American.

"I am glad there is someone here to vouch for me," he explained, "for I may have to send for you. Some fool detective has been watching me ever since I landed. I don't know what they want me for, but I don't do it, no matter what it is. He is sitting over there now."

And Stroud pointed to the unfortunate "shadow" who was still trying to look as if he enjoyed a lemon squash when his throat cried aloud for Scotch and soda. Bancroft looked inquiringly at Swinton, who nodded. Swinton in turn looked inquiringly at Bancroft, who also nodded. A moment later the detective's man was standing at attention with his master's luggage in hand, ready for the next move, and the bewildered Swinton, at a word from Bancroft, was threading his way among the tables.

Stroud put on his hat, then jerked it off again, and spoke with a gentleness and hesitation which would have astonished the men who had worked with him and for him in Montana.

"London may be all right when you've been here before and know folks, but it's darned lonesome when you haven't. If you wouldn't mind meeting my daughter and having dinner with us I'd—'d be darned glad."

Bancroft murmured something about the pleasure of meeting American girls so far from home. Everything seemed joyful now that he had that name and address under his thumb. He sent his man down to register and followed Stroud to the lift. They passed before the latter's apartment, which Stroud had dubbed the English hotel edition de luxe, and the man who made his money in copper said to the man whose father had made his money in lead:

"I forgot to tell you her name's not Stroud. She's my stepdaughter, and I don't mind adding that her mother was a belle out in good old Montana. Her name's Bronson, Alicia Bronson. Walk right in!"

Why Popcorn Pops.

Popcorn pops by reason of the volatilization of heat of the oil contained in the kernel. Field corn does not pop because the outer portion of the kernel is more porous, permitting the escape of the oil as it volatilizes, while in the case of popcorn a great pressure is developed in the kernel by the confined oil, and the kernel is suddenly exploded and turned wrong side out. We are indebted for this information to the Department of Agriculture of the United States, but the same story might have been got out of a cyclopedic or a dictionary, and it would have cost less.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

TRIUMPHS OF CIVILIZATION

Some Things the Truly Progressive People Hand to the Deighted Heathen.

CHAPTER I.

He was a free, contented native of a beautiful Pacific island; free to come and go, contented with his simple life and surroundings. Worries and troubles he knew not of. The earth and sea supplied his wants, and he was happy with his wives and children and harmless gods.

One morning on waking he saw a ship at anchor in the bay and a boat coming ashore, with a strange looking man wearing glasses and carrying many books seated in the bow. It was a missionary.

"I have come," said the representative of the Foreign Mission society, "to convert and civilize you; to drag you out of the mire of ignorance. You are a poor, lost, miserable, wretched, damned sinner. Forgive your false gods and evil, iniquitous ways, and see from the wrath to come. If you will return with me I will show you the manifold blessings and glories of civilized, enlightened and Christian nations." So they sailed away together.

CHAPTER II.

The missionary and his subject for conversion had arrived. Before and around them spread a panorama. Here an immense gathering of fashionably dressed people were piling money on collection plates, while hearthside flared and foreign mission board looked approvingly on. It was fashionable. The same grandly dressed gathering, on emerging, were seen to draw their skirts aside, and pass with looks of disgust and contempt their own needy, starving country people.

There a howling, maddened mob, armed with guns and clubs, was burning a terror stricken, screaming negro at the stake. He was suspected but not proven to be guilty of crime.

On one side an excited, yelling crowd applauded two men who, on a raised, roped-in platform, were endeavoring to maim and knock each other senseless.

Here a huge concourse of people applauded a heretic a number of padded, bloodthirsty, kicking, tearing warriors, who savagely jumped on and broke one another's limbs while chasing a leather ball.

There cockfighting was in full blast and live pigeon shooting was being indulged in, while hearthside flared and tearing living animals to pieces little by little, in the name of science.

People were being crushed and burned in railway tunnels—victims to greed.

Fashionable crowds were noticed in gilded temples offering up prayers, but on emerging from the houses of worship were heard to criticize the wearing apparel of other worshippers, vilify their neighbors' characters and repeat scandalous stories. The whole nation groveled before and worshipped a huge golden idol, and obeyed the whip-lash of its master, a bloated trust, hypocrisy, fashion, selfishness and gold reigned supreme.

"Is this a civilized and Christian country?" asked the savage. "It is," replied the missionary.

CHAPTER III.

The savage had returned to his beautiful island home, and the natives, gathered about him, were listening with horror-stricken faces to his experiences in the terrible Christian country. "My brothers," he continued with tears in his eyes, "a great and noble work lies before us. We are in duty bound to form ourselves into a Foreign Mission society and raise funds to send missionaries to these poor white people. They are our brothers, and we must endeavor to unteach, unchristianize and unenlighten them."—A. G. Racey in Life.

COMPETENT JUDGES.

Beauty Doctors Endorse Herpicide.

Women who make a business of beautifying other women come pretty near knowing what will bring about the best results. Here are letters from two, concerning Herpicide:

"I can recommend Newbro's Herpicide," as it stopped my hair from falling out; and, as a dressing it has no superior." (Signed.) Bertha A. Trullinger, "Complexion Specialist."

"324 Morrison St., Portland, Ore." "After using one bottle of Herpicide my hair has stopped falling out, and my scalp is entirely free from dandruff." (Signed.) Grace Dodge, Beauty Doctor.

"35 Sixth St., Portland, Ore." Sold by leading druggists. Send 10 cents in stamps for sample to The Herpicide Co., Detroit, Mich. Sherman & McConnell Drug Co., special agents.

Ten free trips to the World's fair each week. See coupon on page 2.

Traveling Man Commits Suicide.

ST. LOUIS, May 6.—In the presence of more than a score of men and women, Paul Moore, a traveling salesman of Cleveland, O., today shot and killed himself in a street car at the intersection of two of the busiest thoroughfares in the heart of the business section of the city. He left a note saying that he committed suicide because he "has no home, no wife and nothing to live for."

He left a note requesting that Harry Richey of Cleveland, be notified.

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the only underwear which is pure linen to the last thread.

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Furnishings Slaughtered

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\$1 and \$1.50 shirts....50c
25c Boston Garters....15c
50c Underwear.....19c
50c men's suspenders....19c
Men's fancy Hose— 2 pair for.....25c

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Water Filters, up from.....\$2.95
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WANTED, girl for general housework. Mrs. John Jones, 1000 Some street.

If you want to attract a bright girl—say something to make her feel that yours is the sort of place she wants. If the family is small—if the wages are large—if she can have more leisure than in most places—or no washing—a pleasant servant's room—say so. That kind of an ad will bring the right one—every time.

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