

“YOU CAN’T LIVE THAT WAY”

By Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

We Practise What You Preach

The eminent professor of psychology sat meditatively gazing into his grate, warming his soul at the brisk fire. The attitude was conventional and the exterior person of the professor was conventional but, aside from that there was little conventionality in the man.

On the table near at hand lay the manuscript of the lecture he was to deliver to his class on the morrow, and now he sat conjuring up the faces of the two hundred young men who would drink in his revolutionary doctrine with something akin to excitement. All the afternoon he had laboured at that lecture; blow after blow of his trip-hammer logic he had aimed at the obsolete doctrine of free will, and now the lecture lay there a miniature bomb ready for the terrific explosion.

Deny Freedom.

Beginning with the self-evident proposition that man is a mere physico-chemical machine without more soul than a billiard ball, he had traced the compelling power of heredity and environment upon the actions of that machine.

“There is no such thing as sin.” So ran his triumphant conclusion. “Crime is but a physical disease. Man is no more responsible for his crime than he is for his bad tonsils, his falling hair or his tendency to insanity. With the delusion of free will, primitive man tickled his vanity. Science knows that it is as false as his creed in a happy hunting-ground. Man is not free, but a slave.”

The flame in the grate flickered, died down, then leaped into new life. There was an uproarious shout in the street such as only college boys can or dare utter. A moment’s pause and then was heard a sharp rap at his door.

“Come in,” said the professor, who prided himself on his personal interest in his students.

The door was flung open by a youth whose clothes were a taunt to dignified reserve. He stood for a moment abashed in the sacred shrine of learning, and then impulsively offered the professor his hand.

Off for the Night.

“I’ve just dropped in,” he said, “to congratulate you on your afternoon lecture on free will. It was the most important event in my life.”

For a moment the professor was puzzled. He glanced at his desk calendar. To be sure, he had delivered that revolutionary lecture this very afternoon. Why had he fancied it was to be tomorrow?

“Sit down, my boy,” he said, and his glowing countenance cast the flickering fire into complete shadow. “Delighted! Glad you liked it. It’s satisfaction to know that the undergraduate appreciates the fruits of years of mature study. Here; sit in this comfortable chair.”

“Thanks,” said the youth, “but I can’t. The fellows are waiting for me. We’re off for a night of it down there.”

The youth pointed through the window out into the night. Instinctively the professor turned to follow the line of his finger to where a blaze of white light with flares of dangerous red glowed against the dull sky of a winter evening. It was a mysterious light, compounded of arc lamps and incandescent bulbs, of flashing diamonds and shimmering shoulders, of candles burning at both ends, and the scorched wings of moths.

It Can’t Be Helped.

“I’ve never been there before,” said the youth. “I’ve sort of clung to the creed of my youth, which made me pray to be delivered from temptation. I felt a responsibility for my future, and I didn’t want to take risks. But thanks to your lecture, I know that all this talk of responsibility is poppycock; and so I’m off with the crowd.

The fellows say that down there it’s glorious until midnight, and after that it’s glorious to the fifth power. Why didn’t

you give that lecture months ago? I've been a fool in missing the fun."

"My boy," said the professor, wiping away the sudden dampness that chilled his brow, "sit down a moment. You see — er — that is, you mustn't take my words too literally. I —"

"Look here," said the youth almost fiercely; "you're not backing down on what you said this afternoon, are you?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried the professor, snatching wildly at the house that he saw falling suddenly about his ears. "Not that...."

"Well, that's all. Good night. I'd feel like the deuce hitting the pace if I really were responsible for it. But you said yourself a chap can't fight down his wild hereditary impulses; he can't resist the chemical and physical forces that draw him on in spite of himself. I'd fancied I had succeeded in breaking the devil in me; but I know now that I was no more free in doing good than I shall be in tripping the primrose path. And the second's a lot easier. Thank you and good night."

"My boy" (the professor's voice was pitched high), "won't you stay with me instead? I'll explain further just what I mean. You don't quite grasp—"

"No," he answered. "Thanks, just the same. I've given the crowd my word I'd go. I've fought them off for a long time with my conscientious scruples. When they invited me for a night of it, I told them honestly I had to take care of my soul. But after the lecture I didn't dare say that; and when they joked me about flattering myself that I was free to care for what does not really exist, you had left me no answer. So I pledged my word."

Dynamite.

"You're lucky, Professor; you're not free to be bad if you wanted to. Here with the fascination of your books and studies, hedged in by strong opinion, with your chemical forces as quiet as a crystalline compound after evaporation, everything forces you to be respectable. But study doesn't attract me, and life and light and laughter and love, and the whole alliterative group, do. There is no public opinion for me except that all college men have a certain acreage to be sown plentifully with wild oats, while the chemical forces of my nature are boiling and effervescing like Dante's sulphur baths."

"And now I can take the whole group of I's to my heart, scatter wild oats till the seed sack is empty, and let the chemical forces of my nature bubble up and boil over; for I'm no more responsible than Frankenstein's monster was for the ruin in its wake. When I believed in free will I was a slave; with the knowledge of slave will, I am free."

As another shout from below reached the lad, he turned to go. "I'm off," he said, almost sadly. "I'd rather hate to have mother and the girls hear of this, but even if I smash their hearts I'm not responsible for that either; so I've got to take the risk. If I sleep in class tomorrow, Professor, show your sense of logic and remember I can't help it."

The Price of Souls.

The door slammed and the professor rushed wildly to the window. Below, a crowd of boisterous youths were welcoming the recruit with enthusiasm. Into the throbbing cars they tumbled, and away they went into the darkness that lay between the college and that seductive strip of light, with horns shrieking and the gleam of their lamps cutting a rent in the shadow of the night.

Trembling, panic-stricken at the sense of his own responsibility, the professor stood with his eyes following the flying cars. It was he who had stripped the youth of the one thing that had held him back from moral ruin. His hands had flung down the bars to these turbulent passions. The sins of the youth were on his doddering old head. What though his theories were right, that free will was a foolish dream? Had it not been better a thousand times that he had never spoken? Oh, to be able to bind in once more the wild passions he had loosed he would give—

Who Cares for Consequences.

The flame in the grate flickered and died down and then leaped into new life. The professor half sprang from his chair. On the table lay his lecture with the ink fresh upon it. The desk calendar registered the day previous to the day set for its

delivery. With a quick movement he seized the manuscript and thrust it towards the flame. He paused; smoothed the crumpled page gently, his eyes turning slowly towards that light still glowing against the wintry sky. He read the opening sentence thoughtfully and then carefully laid the paper back on the table.

“It’s a splendid lecture,” he murmured. “I must have dreamed.... Surely none of the class is smart enough to draw practical conclusions. I’m safe in chancing it.”

So he handed to youth moral dynamite for its plaything.

Their Souls Shall Meet

THEY closed the door softly behind him, and he stood alone in the dim bed chamber. He did not move a step. Every power of mind and body seemed stricken with a fatal listlessness, a languor that numbed all but the terrible sense of pain in his heart.

Four calm candles burned with a motionless yellow flame. He noted irrelevantly that not the slightest flicker stirred their oval contours and that the light they shed upon the tall silver crucifix and on the calm face of the woman in the draped bed was steady and meltingly soft.

In spotless white they had laid her body, the shimmering folds of her delicate wedding gown. She looked much as she had looked on the day they were wed. The smile was almost the same. But now the hand that had rested trustfully in his lay in maternal pressure upon the still child at her breast.

Gone.

A terrible sense of loneliness swept over him, and he fell heavily back against the closed door, his hand to his eyes. Gone the wife of a blissful year, gone the child he had never kissed. Gone into the inky blackness called death, like shadows that vanish in the fall of a winter twilight. The rush of memory flung over him the thousand and one details that had made her infinitely precious: her quick sympathy, her sweet forgiveness, the blush that sprang so swiftly to her cheeks; and all were gone, forever. She had died because she had loved him in the child at her breast.

The flame of the candles swayed as he rushed forward in the wild impetuosity of grief. The smooth folds of her wedding gown fell in disorder as he buried his face in her dress, sobbing in gasping, masculine sobs, “Gone, gone, gone!”

Time passed unnoticed, swallowed up in the fathomless abyss of grief. Then a gentle knock at the door roused him slightly, and, kneeling, he bade the visitor enter. The door swung without sound, and he struggled to his feet, her dress still clasped in his hand, turning to greet the intruder.

Never Again.

It was a small, smoky-complexioned man with the nervous step of a student, and in his eyes burned keen intelligence, but a keener despair.

“I heard of your loss,” said the stranger, “and I came to offer my sympathy.”

The man stretched forth his hand to this friend. He had not seen him since the days when, a callow but clever youth, he had sat at the elder man’s feet in a musty room and listened to his enthusiastic explanation of the works of Buechner, Haeckel and their school. The old man had turned the youth from religion to a materialistic philosophy, and then vanished into the maelstrom of a great city, always pitiless towards the dreamer.

Now he moved across the room and stood over the quiet woman and her babe.

“She was fair,” he murmured. “You were happy to have possessed her even for year.”

In his gesture of passionate repudiation the man almost tore the dress, which he still clasped.

“No, no; that was not enough. We had just begun to love. I want her still; I shall always want her. Shall I never see her again?”

The look of despair in the old man’s eyes deepened. He slowly shook his head.

“To believe that is to hug to your heart a beautiful dream. It cannot be. The physical forces cease to act; the chemicals

are dissolved; atom slips from atom and the eternal cycle of nature's laws proceeds. But she has gone forever."

"Not that ." cried the other. "You cannot talk of her as a meaningless jumble of atoms and forces. It was not the atoms the laws, I loved. It was a personality, a woman. You offer me sympathy, you whom I counted among life's few friends, and you say she is gone forever? Give me hope of her, or I want neither you nor your philosophy of despair."

He sank to the floor, his face buried in her dress, his body throbbing with the rhythm of his sobs.

Unknown.

And then a hand rested on his shoulder. He shook it off angrily, but when its reassuring pressure was, renewed, he turned his look up through the faint light and then, from force of habitual respect, sprang to his feet.

The tall, stately man, whose hair shone white and silken in the candle light, was little changed since the days when he had thrilled the youthful undergraduate with his spectacular reasoning, his daring speculation. Now, as then, his eye was kindly, his handclasp reassuring.

Side by side professor and former pupil stood above the peaceful woman. The man felt his visitor's silent sympathy too vast to be couched in the broken utterances of a death chamber. The professor's eyes dwelt long on the beautiful face before him and then travelled inconsequentially towards the silver crucifix.

"She was a Catholic?" he asked. "It is a beautiful faith—if it were only true."

The man's agony burst forth afresh.

"But you believe in immortality, do you not? I cannot give her up; love like hers cannot die. Her purity, her devotedness, her gentleness cannot be lost forever!"

He felt once more that reassuring pressure on his arm.

"We are immortal," said the low, firm voice that had so often gripped him with its vibrant power, "but not as personalities.

The great world soul, whose fragments form our thoughts and our emotions, is immortal. We live forever because the world soul shall never die. But for us as individuals death ends all."

"But it is she I want. I did not love a world soul, I loved her. Shall I not see again and recognize the wife I loved?"

"I wish I could say yes; but it cannot be."

"Then," cried the man, "what do I care for your world soul, your great, selfish monster that swallows up all we love and sinks them in an ocean of oblivion? I want the woman I love, the woman who died because she loved me. If you cannot give me her, you cannot give me anything but bleak despair."

Once again he sank to his knees, borne down by an overwhelming sense of desolation. Then, of a sudden, he felt upon his hair the touch of a loved hand.

Reunited.

"Mother!" he cried, turning his face upwards in wide-eyed surprise. "I thought—"

The white-haired woman, whose face bore his own features, softened and feminized, smiled.

"Death," she said, "is the mother of miracles."

He leaped to his feet and, quite unafraid placed his arm about her waist. Together they looked into the calm face of death.

"My son's wife," she said, and her voice fell soothingly on his wrenched heart, "was beautiful and, better still, she was good."

"But she has gone from me forever." Anguish made poignant his tone. But the mother's hand closed upon his as it rested on her waist.

"My son has forgotten much as a man that he knew as a child. Can death end love? Do not the good deeds begotten of purity and self-sacrifice and gentleness cry out for a reward? Shall son be torn from mother, and wife from husband, when a lifetime of service shall have linked them together with bonds stronger than steel? My son, is the cold, lifeless form

before you your wife? Was it merely this that you loved? Was it this only that loved you? Or was it rather the warm, vital soul that has left you and that waits and watches for you beyond?"

"Mother," he cried, "shall we then meet again?"

"As surely as heart cries, to heart, as love demands fruition, as goodness and purity cannot perish in vain. Faith joins hearts separated by the abyss of death. Faith unites time with eternity. The woman you loved lives and loves you still."

They found him crouched at the side of his dead wife, his lips close to her free hand. Grief, they said, had mercifully been swallowed up in sleep. Then they noted how like to the smile of the dead woman was the smile which softened his lips. And they said wisely:

"Even in death their souls shall meet."

The Philosophical Bigamist

His Honour, the philosophical judge, closed the volume of the eminent psychologist reluctantly and laid it with his top hat and his coat. He had just finished a most absorbing section on the human soul in which the writer, in his graceful style, had waged relentless war on the personal, individual, substantial soul.

It was cleverly done. Wit had shone; a little touch of satire had brightened the page; there was all the charm of literary allusion and indirect quotation; and, thought his Honour, it had left the poor, antiquated idea of a substantial human soul without a prop to lean on. All thought was ultimately reducible to nerve processes; and all nerve processes were identical with material activity.

His Honour smiled a bit pityingly at the thought that there were actually some people in the world who believed in a human soul.

Then, with the smile still on his lips, he shook his shoulders until his coat collar rested comfortably, threw his expensive cigar stump on top of the bailiff's "five-center" and the clerk's cigarette, and solemnly entered the courtroom. All who knew him well recognized that the judge was proud of his habits of philosophical study; but he made his money by being judge.

The Prisoner Smiles.

The first case on the docket was listed as bigamy. The judge donned his largest tortoise-rimmed glasses and frowned down upon the prisoner at the bar. Bigamy was a crime on which the judge was particularly severe. A term of five years on the baseball team at Sing Sing was no infrequent sentence.

But the prisoner stood before him, a debonair smile on his sensuous lips and his head thrown back at an angle which permitted him to return his Honour's glare with compound interest.

He was a large, sticky specimen of masculinity, over-fed and over-drunk, the sort whose brows are always clammy and who have the unpleasant habit of licking their full lips. His bulky frame and bright raiment contrasted blatantly with the plaintiff's figure and garb, a thin, sunken-chested woman with faded roses on her hat and cheeks, and a dress, which was reminiscent of former fashions and former owners. Even more in contrast were the tears in her eyes and the cold leer in his. Strange how a broken, beaten woman will fight for the possession of the brute who hates her.

The judge listened to her plaint with growing wrath. It was a wretched story told in English that reeked of gutters and the cheapest tenements, and was interspersed with sobs and sniffings that made the judge writhe internally. The prisoner had married her seven years previously after meeting her at a dance hall. He was the dissolute son of well-to-do parents, dismissed from college after his sophomore year, and, subsequently, disowned by his father. She was a waitress in an uptown restaurant. For four years he had led her a life that had annihilated her frail physical attractiveness and left her without courage to do more than cringe under his domination. Then he had left her penniless. A month before, she had found him married to another woman, and now she wanted him back.

Even the flippant reporters were touched by her pitiful story, and they saw lightning in the judge's eyes as he addressed the prisoner.

Seven Years Ago.

“Do you admit the truth of this woman’s accusations?”

The prisoner’s smile, if anything, grew more humid.

“I do, your Honour. But, remember, it all took place seven years ago.”

The judge’s glasses trembled with wrath. “Is that supposed to be an excuse for your neglect and abuse of your wife? Does that account for your leaving this woman for another? Is the fact that you married her seven years ago any extenuation of the crime of bigamy?”

The prisoner leaned forwards confidentially and spoke in an oily voice: “Your Honour, I congratulate myself on being presented at your court. You, too, I understand, are a philosopher.”

The judge’s mouth opened and closed with the movement of a thirsty fish, while every person in the courtroom gasped like a tender youth thrown suddenly into cold water.

Fellow Philosophers.

“Because,” went on the prisoner, heedless of the court’s surprise, “we shall understand each other so much better. I, too, read and admire your favourite author, who, by the way, taught my favourite college professor. I am a practical philosopher. So your Honour will understand me when I say that I left this woman because of a philosophical scruple.”

The eyes of the judge seemed bursting from their natural setting, but when he tried to speak, astonishment held the words fast in his throat.

“Your Honour, we philosophers have tender consciences, and though this woman has told a truthful story, she was wrong in saying that she was the woman I married. And surely a man of your spotless honour will respect me for refusing to live with a woman I never married.”

The woman, who had been sniffing and wiping her eyes, suddenly stopped in wonder and indignant protest. “Your Honour, I did marry him. I did, I did.”

“One moment,” said the judge, soothingly, and then he turned to the prisoner, and the dam which had obstructed his words broke. “In all the days I have spent on the municipal bench, I have yet to meet with your equal for impertinence. You admit this woman’s story and then deny that you ever married her. Do you take this courtroom for a nest of simpletons?”

“No, your Honour, but for the sanctuary of trained philosophers. To you, as a philosopher, I appeal. Let me explain. You and I, your Honour, are not so antiquated as to believe in the reality of a personal soul, I trust.”

“Of course not,” blustered his Honour “but that has nothing to do with the case.”

Not Married.

“A moment, your Honour; it has everything to do with it. Philosophy is the law of life, and I am a practical philosopher. I do not believe in a personal soul for I recognize that all mental activity is ultimately reducible to nerve processes, which in turn are material or bodily.”

“If you mean,” said his Honour, “that all thought is ultimately reducible to modifications of the nerves, especially those of the brain, we agree. That is necessary if one denies, the soul.”

The prisoner smiled. The court sat at attention, and the woman in the plaintiff’s chair ceased sniffing at this exhibition of mental acumen on the part of “her man.”

“I knew we were of one mind, philosophically at least. Now, it is a known fact, proved beyond shadow of doubt, that our bodies, with their nerves and brain cells, change completely in the course of seven years. Old nerves and cells are cast off and new ones are formed from the food we consume, until there is nothing left of what was once our old body. Am I correct?”

The judge nodded. The fact was well known to him as it is to all scientists, Catholic as well as infidel.

“And we agreed in advance,” went on the prisoner, “that I have no soul. Hence all my personality is made up of my

body with its nerve modifications. Now let me state my point. Seven years ago I married this woman. Time went on; gradually every nerve and fibre of her body and mine was cast off and replaced by new nerves and new fibres, until today our bodies are completely changed from the bodies we had when first we married. We agree, your Honour, that there is no substantial soul, only a body, and if this is the case, I am not the same person who married seven years ago; nor is this woman the woman.”

Logic that Destroys.

His Honour glared helplessly at his hands, then frowned at the prisoner, and then rapped viciously for order as a titter ran through the courtroom. At last he thundered at the prisoner:

“Your conclusion is perfectly absurd. If it were true, there would be no possibility of collecting debts; for the person who contracted them ceases to exist. Prison sentences would be ridiculous; for the man who committed the crime passes altogether out of existence. All of the paraphernalia of our courts and prisons would be a preposterous injustice.”

“And so precisely, on philosophical grounds, I claim they are. Without that absurdity called a soul, there is only the body left. The body changes entirely in the course of seven years, and the man who existed before that time has been succeeded by a new and distinct person. Your Honour, in justice to a philosophy which we both admire, you cannot, surely, punish me for a wrong which I never committed.”

His Honour swallowed rapidly three times, shook his shoulders, and then thrust forth his chin menacingly.

“When philosophy interferes with the workings of justice, philosophy has to go. When the philosopher comes in conflict with the judge, the philosopher must give way. If it is necessary to admit a substantial soul before I can convict you, I admit a soul. You will have ample time to meditate on the futility of philosophy at Sing Sing. In the interim I request the bailiff to throw into the furnace a book which he will find with my coat and hat. Call the next case.”

People Who “Do” Things

It would be almost enough to say of her that she joined by a hyphen two of the most famous names that ever slipped out of England. Also, she kept a lorgnette and a social secretary, and one eye on the society column, where persons who matter oft do congregate. For her the world was made up of persons who matter and persons who don't, and the entire list of the first class she had written in a limp-leather memorandum book the size of a small cardcase. These favoured few were either persons of blood, blue and preferably a bit thin, or persons who do things.

Doing things was the touchstone of worth. One was interesting if one did things - accenting the “did”; if not well, Mrs. Beverly-Byson would raise eyebrows, prematurely white with hoar frost, and beg, in a helpless movement of her shoulder, that you hold her excused. Persons who did not do things - now accenting equally the verb and the noun - could hardly hope to climb the ice-crusting steps of Mrs. Beverly-Byson's town house, much less aspire to week-end refrigeration at her cottage on the Sound.

“Interesting” People.

Of course, to the mind of Mrs. Beverly-Byson, “doing things” had none of the ample inclusiveness suggested by those two small words. “Do,” by the very nature of things verbal, is an energetic little body, limitless, in its activities. You remember, for example, how deliciously you shuddered over the vague threat of Macbeth's witch to “do and do and do”: it suggested such widely terrible possibilities, anything from tweaking a nose to firing a castle or sending a soul shuddering to its doom. And “things” - well, “things” is a sort of etymological carry-all, a verbal municipal bus into which you can pack all the nouns, proper and improper, in our language. Ah, but not when Mrs. Beverly-Byson utters them, as just now she is doing to her social secretary.

“We want none but interesting people,” she was saying, and her voice had the sad remote, frigid note of water dripping in the far-off recesses of a cave or into the pan under the family ice-chest. “Roland Wear, who does those charming bits of plastic enamel, and Cluinevere Hypatia, who does those startling Eastern dances, and Byron Sylvian, who does such

weird, impressionistic verse, and Hoffman Smythe, who does those odd improvisations on the piano, and Gertrude Van Pool, who did such a delightfully wicked one-act play for the Strollers last month, and Horace Lytton, who is doing such remarkable things with Russian wolf hounds. Can you think of any more we should include, people who matter, you know; people who do things?"

Omitted.

Miss Gilson, social secretary, laid down her plain black fountain-pen wearily. This everlasting contact with zero weather had done its work at last, and she was sighing, oh, so fondly, for the warmth of genuineness, the freshness of sincerity, the vivifying breeze of laughter that had not been strained through faultless teeth. Besides, she and a hearty auto salesman had last evening given a final pat to a little apartment far, far from the Ritz-Carlton, and she didn't care. So when she had laid aside her plain black pen, she opened her mouth and spoke:

"Oh, dear, yes; you've omitted untold people who do things, most interesting, important, entertaining things.

Mrs Beverly-Byson thawed to a trifle below freezing and leaned forwards beyond her normal perpendicular.

"Really?" she said. "Tell me some of them. People who do things are so rare, you know."

People Who Matter.

Miss Gilson breathed a worthless prayer and plunged in. "Out in the solitude of a Harlem kitchenette with no company save the ice-box - which isn't such chilly company, after all - and the gas range, which range is very limited indeed, and the kitchen cabinet, containing uncounted bottles and jars never filled in the history of man, Hulda the cook, with deft fingers and light, fashions here dainty bits of plastic art. No lasting statuette in bronze or ivory is here. No artistic passion floods her calm soul as she builds and fills and pats and shapes confections to sensuously beautiful curves. Yet, Hulda the cook does things that matter supremely, that brings light to the eye and water to the most spirituelle mouths. Hulda does cherry pies. Shall we invite her?"

Mrs. Beverly-Byson, whose most violent display of amusement consisted in showing briefly six perfect upper teeth, gasped. Obviously this was humour. But Miss Gilson hurried on.

"Then there is young Arthur, salary thirty-five a week; family, one wife and two glorious kiddies. Arthur is quite supreme in his line. Tired though he be at the end of his day over the ledger, he can fling himself on his knees and imitate a bear with such hilarious perfection that Cissy and Arthur II roll on the rug in an ecstasy of mirth as he worries them with a bear-like growl, while Honey, her hands still moist with the steam of boiling potatoes, leans against the door jamb to laugh until her sides ache. Then, deft parlour entertainer that he is, he leaps into a new role, playing bandit caught in the trap set by two crowing sheriffs, or, behold this happy master of pantomime turns himself swiftly into a spirited barb and, with the two straddling his back, is put through the paces of a thoroughbred. And all the while the tiny flat, cosily cheap, pitifully beautiful, rings with a merriment like the happiest laughter of fairies under an August moon. Young Arthur does parlour entertaining superbly. Shall we invite him?"

But Not in the Register.

"Of course, we mustn't forget Honey, his wife. Just look for a second at that flat. Isn't it sweet? Isn't it homey? That rug each bare spot hid by a carefully set chair, that vigorously dusted and rubbed but thinly veneered parlour set (you've never seen that kind at five dollars down and five dollars a week); the crisp, clean, cool and cheap curtains, the walls gracefully panelled with - whisper it gently - strips of crepe paper; and oh, that wonderful atmosphere of charm and welcome and privacy and cheer - she does all that on his salary of thirty-five dollars a week. She is a supreme house decorator, a skilled homemaker, a mistress of the art of making a gas log seem like a manorial hearth, a plain oak dining table glow with the charm that is more lovely than the glitter of crystal and the restful sheen of silver under shaded lights. Honey does things, too. Shall we invite her?"

"Did you ever think of inviting little Maisie? Maisie is something of a genius in her way, in fact, I think she is one of

the world's supreme costume designers. To see Maisie floating forth from her three dollar-a-week room into the cool of the evening is to get a revelation in the possibilities of clothes. That bright, bird-like hat (let no one hint that dash of red is a dyed cock's feather); that walking suit that fits her supple form as Lucile's creations never could have done (please don't look too closely at the quality of the material or the brave lines of braid standing guard against the onslaught of time); that dainty waist fashioned in weary hours under a single light-begrudging bulb; those silk stockings that cost three dinners and a half-score breakfasts; those smart shoes with the thin leather outsides and the hidden mysteries of paper beneath - all that is Maisie's triumph. How does she do it and all the while keep her lips smiling, her eyes pure, her mind fresh and eager and her knees a little roughened from praying? There isn't an answer unless you admit that Maisie is a genius, a clothes designer of marvellous skill. Maisie does miracles on twelve dollars a week. Shall we invite her?

Real Things.

"Of course, there are dozens of others. Bill who does such excellent plumbing; Harvey, the butcher, who carves a quarter of beef more skilfully than ever Mr. Wear carved a block of marble; Miss Barry, the nurse, who does miraculous things with a little cotton, a bottle of alcohol, and cool, sympathetic hands; old Mrs. Grogan, who darns socks for a family of twelve so perfectly that you can scarcely note a break in the warp and woof, Dick Train, who, in his Red Cross ambulance, runs daily races with death through the tenement districts; and Sister Mary Angela, who makes institutional brick and mortar a home for weary, forsaken little bodies, and pours into souls that never knew other than cold neglect something like a mother's love; and—"

Mrs. Beverly-Byson was on her feet, one pale hand resting on the back of her chair and a dangerous glitter in her grey eyes.

"Miss Gilson," she said, and her words were like hailstones flung at a window pane, "this frivolity is too absurd. You know, I trust, that I cannot endure trifling?"

"Frivolity?" Miss Gilson looked her surprise. "Surely you don't fancy I'm not serious. Don't you think that these people do things supremely worthwhile? If there is any frivolity, it is certainly in believing that only those people matter who do silly things like dabbling in bad verse, or toying with delicate-scented vice in badly written plays, or musing about meaninglessly in clay, or breeding dogs that will take the place of babies. If 'doing things' has any real meaning, the people I suggest...."

Especially, One.

Mrs. Beverly-Byson swept from the room completely enveloped in a mist of chilly wrath. Miss Gilson called a number over the phone.

"Tom?" she asked.

"Rather," came the hearty reply.

"Can you give me the names of one or two people who do things that matter?"

"You lay a large side bet," was the flippant answer, "I know a priest who does a marriage so tight that all the divorce courts in the country can't undo the knot."

"Oh," sighed Miss Gilson, "I should so like to meet him."
