

TWO LETTERS TO JACK

By George Herbert Clarke

I—MIDSUMMER

DEAR JACK: I am in love. Last week I blundered,
And rallied Tom McBride with *femme* and *frau*;
He passed by unresenting, and I wondered
To see the rogue so meek and pale—but now
I am in love.

I am in love: I've had a diagnosis;
The symptoms, Tom says, no one can mistake:
To think of Rose, to wish to be where Rose is,
To feel a grievous joy, a pleasant ache—
I *am* in love.

I am in love! Oh, yes, indeed, I'm in it:
I couldn't find the exit if I would.
Free thirty years, and then—all in a minute!
You ought to see her, Jack—still, what's the good?
I am *in* love.

I am in love, I tell you! As for markets,
They bore me with their never-ending prose.
I think I'll go and stroll about the park; it's
Remotely possible I'll meet with Rose!
I am IN LOVE!

II—MIDWINTER

DEAR JACK: I am in love again, I find—
That is, I never was in love before:
Last summer's Rose deceived me, but I'm blind
No more.

I do not like coquettes and flirts and such;
Besides, she kept an offering that I need—
That solitaire—I want it very much
Indeed.

Louise is not like that; she never riles
A chap, nor makes his temper go awry;
A docile little thing, but when she smiles—
Oh, my!

THE SMART SET

And when she speaks 'tis like the murmurous trees;
 She sings—the notes like elfin music sound!
 These two as yet are all the similes
 I've found.

She dresses most divinely in silk crème—
 I think it is—that shimmers up and down.
 (Rose, now, wore golf skirts, even when she came
 To town.)

She's little and she's slender and she's still,
 And yet her hand I hardly dare to squeeze:
 If e'er a chap was love-sick, I am *ill*,
 Louise!

Don't send me any of your silly wit
 Without an ounce of sympathy, or crumb
 Of comfort, for, old fellow, this is It!—
 Your chum.



ONE ON HIM—AND HER

MRS. BLEACHBLONDE—I found this black hair on your coat. What does it mean?

MR. BLEACHBLONDE—Why, that is my last winter's coat. Your hair was black then, you know.



HER GENTLE HINT

HE—Don't you think marriages are made in heaven?

SHE—Well, if all men were as slow as you they'd have to be.



DOCTOR—You need more exercise; try to get a political job.

PATIENT—Oh, there's no exercise in a political job.
 "No; but there's a whole lot in trying to get one."

SANTOKH DAS

By Herbert D. Ward

MY wife insisted on our taking the house. It had been built within a few years, and was unattractive. It was situated in one of those convenient suburban districts where one has to get used to the shrieking of trains and the squalling of cats, to the piano practice of your neighbor's children, and the gasps of the steam-shovel raucously building an unaccepted street. The low rental and the situation, so necessary to a struggling professional man, were the chief recommendations of the place. The house was supposed to be fully furnished, and from a pictorial point of view this was certainly true. The piano was in good condition, but the furniture had the air of having gone through a series of amatory campaigns, and the sofa was impossible. It was the pictures that reconciled me to living in the house at all. In the parlor, behind the piano, a grave Buddha looked down upon the new occupants with the serene air of one who has existed through all eternity untroubled by the petty mortal worries, of which we make so much and at which a Deity can only smile. Opposite, an exquisite water-color represented the amorous Krishna arising from a watery bed of lotuses with the air of one besieged by a cloud of houris. In a niche of the room that—we never knew why—was called the study an ancient Hindu idol had its seat in the corner. This rare specimen of lacquer work—probably over four hundred years old—whose gilt veneer had been covered by generations of sandal smoke until it shone like burnished bronze, seemed to mock our bleak New Eng-

land atmosphere. Where were the rich votive offerings? Where were the bowed heads? Where was the worship that had not left that gilded soul unsated? From this lacquered idol of another country and of an esoteric people there still emanated an indescribable odor of incense; this had the strange power to soothe the most perturbed feelings.

Insidiously the house that at first seemed impossible now began to fascinate. The elderly aunt of my sister-in-law—she who owned the property—had been infected by the Buddhistic doctrines that sweep over some of the populated sections of this country through the medium of sleek and insinuating Swamis; she had decorated the place through the advice of an Indian priest, who, it seems, had used her home as a caravansary.

We had not been in the house over six months when I hurried down to the dining-room one morning a little late. This room was the smallest and at the same time the most elaborate one in the house. It was barely ten feet square, and was only suitable for tête-à-tête meals. It had been decorated in white and gold, as all dining-rooms should be, and the white work had been brought to a high state of soft polish.

As I sat down to the table alone, ringing for my belated breakfast, I noticed on the white of the door a red blotch within the middle panel. I instantly arose to inspect this strange discoloration. By its breadth, and by the narrow, encircling lines that came to a centre in the lower part of the inscription, the mark must have been