

She smiled.
 "What are we going to buy, if I may ask?" he said as the cab rolled away.
 "We are going to buy a cradle," she said.
 "A cradle?"
 "Yes, a cradle. I have a little friend here in Paris whom the world has made poor, but whom Heaven is making rich,

and I have promised her a cradle. You see, the world has made me rich, and Heaven has left me poor, so the best pleasure life gives me is when I can balance the load a little for someone else." Her great eyes turned towards him, and something rose oddly in his throat so that he could not possibly speak to her.
 "I take a great deal of pleasure in helping people," she said, "and madame

is lovely about helping me to help them. Places where I cannot go, she goes, so we can know every person and know just what they need. I have a bed in ever so many hospitals, and a long list of dear sick or unhappy people in almost every place we stay. It keeps me from thinking of my own life—it teaches me that sorrow is not mine alone."

She paused for a minute, and then went on in a brighter tone, "But the cradle is not exactly charity. You see, they ran away—Sophie and her lieutenant—and were married, and the parents declare they will not forgive them—but, of course, they will. They have a cunning apartment, and a bonnie and tout cela only poor Sophie feels it is almost scandalous that she cannot have real lace on every little thing she is making, and so I have promised that the cradle at least shall be suitable for one whose grandpapas are a baron and a general."

He found himself still unable to articulate.

"You won't mind?" she went on, a shadow of anxiety darkening her voice. "You know you said yesterday that men went shopping often. I've seen them day after day, and I think it is very sweet to see. At Madame Jeanne's yesterday I saw a very great man indeed choosing his wife's hats, and I admired him all the more for it. I like the way they both work together here; the little time that Dick was spared me we never went one single place apart; we used to laugh when he bought cigars with me, and I hat-pins with him."

The cab was crossing the Pont Neuf and beginning its struggle for existence in the Quartier Latin.

"I assure you," he said, "so far from minding, I feel deeply honoured. I—I'm very glad I took tea at the Ritz yesterday."

She gave him a glance so devoid of anything but gratitude that an echo of the swallowed choke came back—and just then the cab stopped.

They alighted.
 It was a big and brilliant store, and the windows were full of cradles containing happy waxen babies.

They went in.
 Instantly a clerk was before them, smiling, bowing, deeply concerned for their welfare.

"A cradle—a 'completely furnished' cradle."

"Ah, on the second floor—all everything would be found there. Monsieur would see, madame would view—a moment till the lift descends! Voila! Take care of the crack in entering! Cradles—furnishing—second floor!"

The elevator took them up, and as they quitted it he had to notice the lovely, heightened interest in her face. She looked up and down the vista of little beds, and said softly, "Just to think that a baby will come to claim every one of them—"

But another clerk was before them—another of those perfect beings whom all the shopping public of the wide world may well envy Paris—and a very few other cities.

"A cradle! at about what price? This way, I beg."

They went round to the other side and there stood twenty in a row, all different, each exquisite, some in enamel, some in carved wood, some in gilt or in silver, some made of the great silken ropes interwoven, some made of twisted bamboo.

He could only watch her face as she moved up and down the line, touching them with her gloved finger tips—the touch as tender as the expression on her face.

The clerk was not voluble; he was silent; he saw the sale was made beforehand. He answered questions, and sometimes he looked at Davis. Davis hardly knew what to do with the look; he felt it would be thieving to accept, and yet it was too overwhelmingly delightful to refuse.

She stopped at last before one that outshone all the rest. Two great storks carved in dark wood held, hung between them, a basket of woven silver.

"Do you think it is too rich?" she asked Davis with an irresistible appeal in her tone and eyes.

The clerk did not even trouble to raise his eyes—he thought he knew—and he did!

"No, no, indeed!" came the answer. She flashed one look of radiant joy over the two men and the cradle.

"And now the furnishings," she said breathlessly.

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