



QUEEN OF THE DRAWING ROOM TOO

While Hannah Stone was getting established at the Bureau, and Willowlake was nearing completion, Margaret stayed in her town apartment and took a rest. She wrote letters to England telling Hugh, Havelock, and Wells only that she was still considering marrying J Noah, not, for some unknown reason, that she already had. Hugh answered:

Shall I like this Mr. Slee? I don't see how I can help it (much as I want to hate him out of natural spite and envy) if he is much with you, for your beauty is so infectious.

Havelock was perplexed. He congratulated her, but at the same time wrote Hugh:

I have also had a recent letter from (the prospective) Mrs. Noah H. Slee, though I do not know if that is how she wishes to be addressed. I am not sure, however, that I should myself like a husband who was "a good churchman," while if I were the good churchman I should be rather nervous about marrying the Woman Rebel.

And Wells sent one of his characteristic short notes:

* * *

If it makes you happy, then marry Mr Slee But all sorts of people who adore you will regard him with watchful and envious eyes

But soon Margaret realized it made no sense to keep up the pretence, so she wrote Hugh, Havelock, and H G again, telling them the truth In addition, she told Hugh she would like to set up a series of poetry readings for him in America, if only as an excuse to have him near her But he answered that he couldn't possibly make the trip as his wife had lost quite a bit of her money lately through bad investments He was also busy packing, he would have to leave the comparatively expensive Wantley for a smaller and less impressive place called Sand Pit He enclosed a picture of Sand Pit as well as one of himself in a dreamy and romantic pose, wearing an open-collar and pearl tie pin In return she sent him one of herself dressed, as Hugh described it, in "a cruel great thick dress, so tremendously distinguished and obscuring" She agreed that she did look distinguished, adding "And I'll have you know I'm Queen of my drawing-room too!"

Hugh also sent her a wedding gift, a selection of Blake's poems copied out in his own hand with explanatory notes between the lines The gift, he wrote,

is to carry around in your purse as a sort of spiritual powder-puff, or some other little accessory to your loveliness, and a little means by which perhaps I may be kept warm in your heart

He included a long article in praise of Havelock which he hoped she would publish in the next issue of the *Review* When she did, he wrote her

You darling Margaret It makes my heart glow to be connected with such a magnificent number—really generous, so refreshing in this meagre world

Then suddenly he struck a different note, he wrote again about Françoise, ending arrogantly

Françoise is my friend, but I've told you *that* in letters that

have crossed with yours I love you more than ever, only, if you will allow me to say so, less hungrily However, that is my affair, really

His affair? Her heart sank She decided to find out more about Françoise at once Her jealousy drove her to more than a little investigating, and she learned a good deal

The summer before, Havelock had told Margaret about a new friend, a French woman, who had come into his life, but in his usual shy manner he had hinted she was more than a friend Now it looked as if Hugh's friend and Havelock's friend might be the same person Indeed, Margaret found, this was the case In fact, the story went back to Edith's death in September of 1916

Soon after Edith died, Havelock had received a letter from a young Frenchwoman, Françoise Cyon, who was living in London The letter said that Edith had promised her thirty pounds as payment for a translation of a book of hers into French, but as the job wasn't quite finished when Edith died, Françoise would take as little as five pounds if Ellis would give her the French rights and allow her to try to get the book published herself

At the moment, however, Ellis didn't have five pounds to spare The publisher of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* had gone into bankruptcy, depriving him of an important source of royalties He replied that he would send her a little money as soon as he could, and in the meantime would think about an article she had written which she had also enclosed The correspondence between them went on for months, during which Françoise gradually unfolded the story of her tragic life Not long afterward, Ellis, who was used to getting letters from distressed women, invited her to visit him In May 1917, she did

When Françoise entered his flat, Ellis saw a woman young enough to be his daughter and almost as shy as himself As petite and charming as Margaret, though not as beautiful, she had one son by a man she had left because he did not live up to her pacifist ideals, and another by a Russian named Cyon, whom she had married in England under the impression he was a compassionate man But Cyon had disappointed her too She found him to be a materialist, a warmonger, and an extremely domineering man She had left him, taking both her sons with her, and was trying to support them on her own

Since she had few skills other than translating, supporting two boys

and herself turned out to be very difficult, yet Cyon refused to give her any money unless she came back to him and lived with him as a traditionally submissive wife. She had refused to do this and eventually became so desperate she considered suicide. When she told Cyon about her suicidal thoughts, he grew frightened and suggested they seek advice on how to live together in peace. It was at this point that she had written to Ellis, hoping he might give her the advice she so badly needed.

She arrived at Ellis' flat wearing a shabby blouse and skirt, a pair of borrowed shoes that were a size too large, and a thin coat. The moment she saw Ellis, she was relieved because he was dressed almost as poorly as she. And she felt even better when she left because, while he had said very little, she realized he had liked her for herself and that she had at last found a sympathetic friend. Yet, strangely enough, she hadn't seemed to know that Ellis was both a doctor and famous, and this pleased him greatly because for the first time in years he also felt that someone was accepting him on his own.

At their next meeting, Françoise sensed that Ellis too was in emotional turmoil. He was fifty-eight, and while he was still magnificently handsome and in excellent physical shape, he was even more despondent than when he first met Margaret. He felt guilty about his wife's death, he was so poor he had sold his furniture and was sleeping on a camp bed, and he was again afraid he had nothing more to write. Françoise told him she wanted to give him some of her strength. She had given up all thoughts of suicide, instead she was looking for a part-time job to supplement her translating income. She was sure that she would soon be successful, and he would too.

But within a month Françoise was upset again. Cyon had been sending her a little money from his well-paying job as a columnist on a London paper, but now she heard he had returned to Russia. Worse, a friend told her that Cyon was separated from another wife and child in Russia, and no one knew for sure if he had ever divorced this Russian wife. Was she, therefore, legally married to him or not? Did she and their son have any legal claim on him, or he on her? She realized he had told her many other lies too, he had for instance rejoined the very Russian army he had claimed he despised. More, he wrote her that because he was in the army, he was sending his Russian son to England for her to take care of as well as her own boys.

Françoise was so shaken by all this she went to visit Ellis more often

than ever, and compared to the other men in her life, she found him the image of perfection. On April 3, 1918, she wrote him

Dear friend, I am going to write a very difficult letter. Yet it must be written if I am to have peace of mind. The truth is, Havelock, that I love you. Yesterday I came away from you in a state of high emotion. I went to bed and shouted, "Havelock, I want to be your wife!" If the wind could have carried my words you would have heard them, though they were only said in my heart.

Many women had fallen in love with Havelock after he had given them greater self-confidence, and he had received many similar letters as a result. But these other women were usually far away, he had never met them and never would. Françoise was close by. He was no home wrecker, he honestly believed he had been working with Françoise toward some kind of reconciliation with her husband, using what he called a "friendship cure" in the same way that analysts use a psychiatric cure.

He knew he must clarify the situation at once, especially since he found himself falling in love with her too. He sent her a reply he described in his diary as written "in full honesty and full caution"

Dear, I had your letter this morning. It is very, very beautiful, and I am glad you wrote it, because it will help us to understand things and to have everything clear and right. I wanted to put my arms around you when you lay on the sofa half asleep, but I did not want to do anything you might misunderstand, and I should be sorry for you if I do anything you might feel afterwards was not right and that might make you unhappy. I would like to soothe you and comfort and help you, and it is very good for me too to be near you, and I felt much better for your visit. I am sure we could be loving friends, real affectionate and intimate friends. But I wouldn't be any good as a passionate lover or husband. I am not a bit like the virile robust men of the people in your dreams! I have several dear loving women friends, married and unmarried, but there is not one to whom I am a real lover. That is how I would like to be with you. As a lover or husband you would find me

very disappointing When you know me more you will feel that as an affectionate friend you will have all the best that I can give

If you feel that this kind of affectionate friendship (with me) is not possible, then it would be best for us not to meet But I think it is possible, and that you will find it quite easy and beautiful and natural and helpful I am in some ways understanding, as you say, but I am also like a child, and it is lovely to me to be able to be like a child

When Françoise received his letter, she was puzzled by its vagueness Still, she replied "I will have nothing but what you offer, it is the very flower of love"

Ellis was brought sharply back to life and vigor by Françoise's attitude For the first time in years, he was happy He met her children and found to his surprise that he enjoyed them, he had thought of children mainly as nuisances or hindrances to his work

Françoise, too, was happier than she had been in years She found a job as a junior French teacher though she continued to live in a tumbledown house furnished with orange crates Gradually she and Ellis gave up the idea of restoring her marriage, instead they became lovers themselves And strangely, Havelock found that at sixty he was able to become what he had never been before, a potent male He was sure that it was her unquestioning love that had brought this miracle about

His friends noticed the change in his personality, and hearing rumors that it was caused by a passionate Frenchwoman, they asked to meet her

Hugh as always was the most insistent In his own mind he was "The Perfect Lover," and he simply had to learn for himself whether Françoise was as good as she was rumored to be After asking Havelock and Françoise to lunch at a smart West End restaurant, he invited Françoise down to Sand Pit alone She hesitated, afraid she wouldn't be up to his brilliant conversation But Havelock thought differently, he told her it would be good for her to get out of her shell and move in a wider world She went to Sussex, where Hugh at first restricted his conversation to praise of Havelock Soon, however, he began concentrating on Françoise He whispered to her the same poetic phrases he had whis-

pered to Margaret. He was in effect seducing her, though he refused to think of himself as a seducer, seduction was ugly, and all was supposed to be beautiful in the magic world of free love.

Yet, seduction it was. Havelock, a man of fixed habits who refused to believe that Hugh would do anything to hurt him, went off for the winter to Cornwall as always, leaving Hugh to break down Françoise's resistance by telling her that "there would be a beautiful physical union between two souls drawn close by their love for the great teacher who had freed men and women from the bondage of obsolete moral laws."

Françoise, overwhelmed, slowly yielded, especially after Hugh showed her a letter from Havelock saying,

I hear of you from Françoise, and am delighted to know she so enjoys your visits, for her vigorous vitality is under so crushing a weight that she has no energy left to seek for herself the contact with the larger atmosphere you give her.

It wasn't long, however, before Havelock began to sense from Hugh's glowing letters what was really happening. At first he felt merely sad, feeling it his duty to suppress his jealousy. Then he returned to London and to his surprise slipped into a bitter quarrel with Françoise. He wrote her a note reassessing Shelley and James Hinton, the great prophets of free love. "Both had beautiful visions of life, but when they tried to carry them out they made a terrible mess of their lives."

Françoise understood, though by now it wasn't easy to retreat. Havelock might have become potent, but he never could match Hugh's expertise. Hugh also quoted Shakespeare and Blake at table, while Havelock kept his fine phrases for his books.

Nevertheless, Françoise realized that her deep, long-term relation lay with Havelock. She gave up Hugh, and she and Havelock were reconciled, though Havelock also started a quarrel with Hugh that he never completely resolved. Later, in his autobiography, he wrote bitterly about "sexual athletes who stab their friends in the back", this devastated Hugh, who could not help but recognize himself, yet never understood what he had done wrong.

Margaret too became saddened over the situation. She loved Hugh more than she had ever loved anyone, but for a while she stopped corresponding with him. Havelock, who still sent an occasional note to Hugh on literary matters, had to give him news of Margaret. In July

1923 Havelock wrote Hugh, "This afternoon I heard from Margaret, she says, 'How's Hugh? I have not written to him in ages, but I take delight in reading over and over again some of his old letters I do this when I get blue' But Margaret seems very happy at present and her husband very devoted to her"

And Slee *was* devoted In the summer of 1924 he took her on a long, luxurious trip to Lake Louise, stopping only at the best hotels Still, with Grant and Stuart he was apt to be tightfisted Though Slee paid Grant's tuition at the Hun School, an exclusive prep school in Princeton, New Jersey, he balked when it came to a personal allowance, sending Grant only a dollar a week In November, when Margaret was back on the road lecturing, Grant complained to her Slee defended himself "Grant is catching the extravagant disease I am sorry he has a roommate whose parents are so unwise they doubtless will pay the penalty later on I will leave it to you to keep Grant within reason In fact, the school recommends a boy's allowance be a dollar to a dollar and a half a week"

He also made Grant keep track of every penny of his allowance and give him a monthly report One month Grant simply couldn't account for thirty-six cents He complained again to his mother "I'm just not good at figures That 36¢ probably went into my stomach I'm always hungry"

Slee was just as firm with Stuart, though Stuart was now captain of the football team at Yale Even Stuart, who had always been money conscious, couldn't satisfy Pater, as he had been taught to call his stepfather Slee wrote Margaret on the subject "My field is finance-accounting and marketing, specialties which I know best Stuart has never shown me his figures However I could write reams and get nowhere with a *mother* I could with a masculine mind"

Mainly, however, J Noah wrote Margaret about his health He went into great detail about his food, drink, and exercise He had joined the Life Extension Institute and was getting himself examined regularly to ward off even the possibility of disease When Margaret was lecturing in St Louis just before Thanksgiving, he reported "Darling, you know I have a wretched cold and don't feel very happy, my nose is in a constant state of eruption" Yet in the same letter he described the fine dinner he had just eaten onion soup, fried chicken, and cake with whipped cream, followed by "a bottle of Kiantı which cost only \$2 50,

though my bootlegger usually charges \$3 " And for good measure he told her exactly how much time he had spent that morning cleaning his teeth

Margaret by now was terribly bored with this kind of letter, but soon she was back planning the decoration of Willowlake, keeping a careful list of the furnishings to be ordered, noting exactly where she wanted each piece placed Her upstairs bedroom was to have a single bed with the best quality box spring hair mattress, a fine Chinese rug, a tall, painted fruitwood highboy, a French dressing table, and a velvet arm chair Her upstairs living room was to have a loveseat, a Chinese rug, both a chaise longue and a daybed, and fine brass fittings for the fireplace

The boys' bedrooms and the guest room were to be much simpler A plain bed and dresser would do for them, J Noah was to have, instead of a bedroom, an outdoor sleeping porch furnished with a double brass bed and a single iron cot, presumably to give him the widest latitude in selecting appropriate sleeping accommodations for his health

When finished, the main house at Willowlake was a handsome place It had deep recessed windows ending in arches of pointed stone and furnishings in Margaret's favorite colors, blue and red Peacock-blue tiles bordered the huge living room fireplace, while blue satin easy chairs, a red brocade sofa, and a hand-painted red Korean chest complemented the thousand-dollar blue and red Chinese rug

For the library adjoining the living room, she chose another red brocade sofa and blue Chinese rug, as well as two thousand leather-bound books which she proudly described as "catalogued," though they were the kind usually kept more for display than reading She commissioned a full-length portrait of herself, wearing a rose-colored gown for above the fireplace, and a smaller bust-length portrait of J Noah Her portrait was to cost fifteen hundred dollars, his two hundred

The dining room, which was surprisingly small, was furnished sparsely, it contained only an oak refectory table and buffet, a grandfather's clock, and six Early American dining chairs This was perhaps a reflection of how little the house was intended for living In the winter Margaret expected either to be off traveling, staying in their town apartment, or dining alone in her upstairs sitting room Nor would the boys be dining much at Willowlake J Noah was frankly upset by the noise of adolescent boys and their friends, and he resented the expense they entailed too Once when Stuart had been driven home from Yale

in a friend's car, and had, as a matter of courtesy, filled up the gas tank with a dollar and a quarter's worth of gas, charged to Pater's account, he was roundly scolded, next time such an expense would have to come out of his own allowance

While Margaret kept track of the expense of furnishing Willowlake, J Noah kept track of the building costs He drew up an expense account that included fifty-three thousand dollars for the builders, five thousand dollars for the architects, twelve hundred dollars for electric power, and seven thousand dollars for miscellaneous items, including excavating the site and adding a slate roof and central heating This totaled sixty-six thousand dollars—a lot of money in 1923 And since he had received nothing in exchange for his former house except Willowlake's land, and the cost of landscape gardening was still to be added, he realized how expensive the house was On the other hand, Margaret's rejuvenating sexual enthusiasm made him decide it was worth the cost

He even tried to compose romantic love letters to her while she was away from home lecturing

My adorable wife, I've had you much on my mind all afternoon
I am truly lonely without you and miss you terribly Each time
you go away it seems more so I love you so ardently that no one is
interesting and I long only for you Come home soon please I
need you to clasp in my arms always, and love divinely always
more and more

This kind of letter bored her too, so instead of answering him she wrote to Hugh, enclosing a picture of herself in knickerbockers and mountaineering shoes "bought for poking around the building-operations in Willowlake" Hugh answered in characteristic form "Of all the dainty delicate exquisite people—the contrast of those thick tweed bags and stout imposing shoes, oh you are an enchanting person"

Margaret answered that she liked being called dainty and exquisite "but never call me sweet Sometimes sweetness and dearness are weaknesses Always remember that when people speak of Margaret Sanger as sweet, that word is likely to make me start something"

She went on to tell him that she had just run a portion of his confessional book *One Little Boy* in the *Review* and gotten vigorous complaints She was afraid that in the future she would have to confine

herself to birth-control subjects only, using stories like one told by Kitty Marion titled, *Ye Who Pass By*

After crying in the wilderness, in other words selling the *Birth Control Review* in the streets of New York for 6 years, I am very well satisfied with the result of my efforts. Some of the best, most intelligent and most influential people from all parts of the earth have got in touch with the movement through buying the *Review* on Broadway and have taken the glad tidings back to their homes.

Most of the people who talk to me agree that birth control is the only thing that will save the human race and civilization from destruction, but quite a number are sure it is against nature and against God. I recall a man who came up and said, "Aren't you advocating murder?" I said, "No, there is no one to murder," and explained what we are doing. "But that is interfering with nature," said he, and I told him he interfered with nature when he shaved, had his hair cut and put clothes on, that nature had brought him into the world naked and that to live according to nature he should run around naked and live in a cave or up a tree instead of in a house with all the latest comforts and conveniences. He admitted it was a good argument but insisted that "we were here to reproduce ourselves," and I asked him to think of the thousands of human beings in and outside of institutions incapable of looking after themselves. Did he want those to reproduce themselves? He replied quite vehemently, "No, I don't, you are right, you're right!" He left wishing success to the cause.

I had a similar discussion with an Irishman who called it the "slaughter of the innocents." I told him there were no innocents to slaughter, but he insisted that birth control meant taking life. I explained that it was not taking but preventing life. Oh, but that was intercepting God and nature. I asked him did he think it natural to be taken ill? He did—and did he think it wrong to get a doctor to intercept, prevent or cure sickness? No, that was all right. And I suggested to him that it was even more right to intercept and prevent the spread of poverty, disease, feeble-mindedness, etc., by prevention of conception. Well, he admitted perhaps I was right.

After thoroughly explaining to some people what we are trying

to do, they asked very anxiously, "And does this paper tell how to prevent?" I groan inwardly and explain again that it is against the law to give such information

One day last November, a woman in passing said, "You vile creature, you ought to bury your face in the mud, you dirty thing!" Later she returned and knocked some papers out of my hand which were promptly picked up for me by other passersby

I have been subjected to every expression of disapproval, contempt and scorn imaginable, including making faces, expectoration and crossing themselves. But that is water on a duck's back, and more than compensated for by wonderful compliments on my courage and perseverance

May all who see me sell the *Review* have the same impression as one of a group of little urchins who, seeing me holding up the paper, called out "Aw, lookit, the Statya of Liberty!" For birth control stands for liberty—liberty far more concrete than the Lady in the harbor herself