JAUNE D'ANTIMOINE.

DOWN Greenwich way—that is to say, about in the heart of the city of New York—in a room with a glaring south light that made even the thought of painting in it send shivers all over you, Jaune d'Antimoine lived and labored in the service of Art.

By all odds, it was the very worst room in the whole building ; and that was precisely the reason why Jaune d'Antimoine had chosen it, for the rent was next to nothing : he would have preferred a room that rented for even less. It certainly was a forlorn-looking place. There was no furniture in it worth speaking of; it was cheerless, desolate. A lot of studies of animals were stuck against the walls, and a couple of finished pictures—a lioness with her cubs, and a span of stunning draught-horses—stood in one

corner, frameless. There was good work in the studies, and the pictures really were capital—a fact that Jaune himself recognized, and that made him feel all the more dismal because they so persistently remained unsold. Indeed, this animal-painter was having a pretty hard time of it, and as he sat there day after day in the shocking light, doing honest work and getting no return for it, he could not help growing desperately blue.

But to-day Jaune d'Antimoine was not blue, for of a sudden he had come to be stayed by a lofty purpose and upheld by a high resolve : and his purpose and resolve were that within one month's time he would gain for himself a new suit of clothes ! There were several excellent reasons which together served to fortify him in his exalted resolution. The most careless observer could not fail to perceive that the clothes which he wore—and which were incomparably superior to certain others which he possessed but did not wear—were sadly shabby ;

and Vandyke Brown had asked him to be best man at his wedding ; and further—and this was the strongest reason of all—Jaune d'Antimoine longed, from the very depths of his soul, to make himself pleasing in the eyes of Rose Carthame.

How she managed it none but herself knew; but this charming young person, although the daughter of a widowly exile of France who made an uncertain living by letting lodgings in the region between south and west of Washington Square, always managed to dress herself delightfully. It is true that feminine analysis might reveal the fact that the materials of which her gowns were made were of the cheapest product of the loom ; yet was feminine envy aroused—yea, even in the dignified portion of Fifth Avenue that lies not south but north of Washington Square—by the undeniable style of these same gowns, and by their charming accord with the stylish gait and air of the trig little body who wore them. Therefore it was that when Monsieur Jaune

graciously was permitted to accompany Mademoiselle Rose in her jaunts into the grand quarter of the town, the propriety of her garments and the impropriety of his own brought a sense of desolation upon his spirit and a great heaviness upon his loyal heart.

For Jaune loved Rose absolutely to distraction. To say that he would have laid his coat in the mud for her to walk over does not—the condition of the coat being remembered—imply a very superior sort of devotion. He would have done more than this: he would have laid himself in the mud, and most gladly, that he might have preserved from contamination her single pair of nice shoes. Even a cool and unprejudiced person, being permitted to see these shoes—and he certainly would have been, for Rose made anything but a mystery of them—would have declared that such gallant sacrifice was well bestowed.

The ardor of Jaune's passion was increased—as has been common in love matters ever since the world began—by the knowledge

that he had a rival; and this rival was a most dangerous rival, being none other than Madame Carthame's second-story-front lodger, the Count Siccatif de Courtray. Simply to be the second-story-front lodger carries with it a most notable distinction in a lodging-house; but to be that and a count too was a combination of splendors that placed Jaune's rival on a social pinnacle and kept him there. Not that counts are rare in the region between west and south of Washington Square; on the contrary, they are rather astonishingly plentiful. But the sort of count who is very rare indeed there is the count who pays his way as he goes along. Now, in the matter of payments, at least so far as Madame Carthame was concerned, the Count Siccatif de Courtray was exemplary.

That there was something of a mystery about this nobleman was undeniable. Among other things, he had stated that he was a relative of the Siccatifs of Harlem—the old family established here in New Amsterdam in the early days of the Dutch Colony. Persons disposed to comment invidiously upon this asserted relationship, and such there were, did not fail to draw attention to the fact that the Harlem Siccatifs, without exception, were fair, while the Count Siccatif de Courtray was strikingly dark; and to the further fact that, if the distinguished American family really was akin to the Count, its several members were most harmoniously agreed to give him the cold shoulder. With these malicious whisperings, however, Madame Carthame did not concern herself. She was content, more than content, to take the Count as he was, and at his own valuation. That he was a proscribed Bonapartist, as he declared himself to be, seemed to her a reasonable and entirely credible statement; and it certainly had the effect of creating about him a halo of romance. Though not proscribed, Madame Carthame herself was a Bonapartist, and a most ardent one; a fact, it may be observed, concerning which the Count assured

himself prior to the avowal of his own political convictions. When, on the 20th of April, he came home wearing a cluster of violets in his button-hole, and bearing also a bunch of these Imperial flowers for Madame Carthame, and with the presentation confessed his own imperialistic faith and touched gloomily upon the sorry reward that it had brought him—when this event occurred, Madame Carthame's kindly feelings toward her second-floor lodger were resolved into an abiding faith and high esteem. It was upon this auspicious day that the conviction took firm root in her mind that the Count Siccatif de Courtray was the heaven-sent husband for her daughter Rose.

That Rose approved this ambitious matrimonial project of her mother's was a matter open to doubt; at least her conduct was such that two diametrically opposite views were entertained in regard to her intentions. On the one hand, Madame Carthame and the Count Siccatif de Courtray believed that she had made up her mind to live in her mother's

own second-story front and be a countess. On the other hand, Jaune d'Antimoine, whose wish, perhaps, was father to his thought, believed that she would not do anything of the sort. Jaune gladly would have believed, also, that she cherished matrimonial intentions in quite a different, namely, an artistic, direction; but he was a modest young fellow, and suffered his hopes to be greatly diluted by his fears. And, in truth, the conduct of Rose was so perplexing, at times so atrociously exasperating, that a person much more deeply versed in women's ways than this young painter was, very well might have been puzzled hopelessly; for if ever a born flirt came out of France, that flirt was Rose Carthame.

Of one thing, however, Jaune was convinced: that unless something of a positive nature was done, and done speedily, for the improvement of his outward man, his chance of success would be gone forever. Already, Madame Carthame eyed his seedy garments askance; already, for Rose had admitted the

truth of his suspicions in this dismal direction, Madame Carthame had instituted most unfavorable comparisons between his own chronic shabbiness and the no less chronic splendor of the Count Siccatif de Courtray. Therefore, it came to pass—out of his abstract need for presentable habiliments, out of his desire to appear in creditable form at Vandyke Brown's wedding, and, more than all else, out of his love for Rose—that Jaune d'Antimoine registered a mighty oath before high heaven that within a month's time a new suit of clothes should be his!

Yet the chances are that he would have gone down Christopher Street to the North River, and still further down, even into a watery grave—as he very frequently thought of doing during this melancholy period of his existence—had not his fortunes suddenly been irradiated by the birth in his mind of a happy thought. It came to him in this wise: He was standing drearily in front of a ready-made clothing store on Broadway, sadly contemplating a wooden figure clad in pre-

cisely the morning suit for which his soul panted, when suddenly something gave him a whack in the back. Turning sharply, and making use of an exclamation not to be found in the French dictionaries compiled for the use of young ladies' boarding-schools, he perceived a wooden frame-work, from the lower end of which protruded the legs of a man. From a cleft in the upper portion of the frame-work came the apologetic utterance, "Didn't mean ter hit yer, boss," and then the structure moved slowly away through the throng. Over its four sides, he observed, were blazoned announcements of the excellences of the garments manufactured by the very clothing establishment in front of which he stood.

The thought came idly into his mind that this method of advertising was clumsy, and not especially effective; followed by the further thought that a much better plan would be to set agoing upon the streets a really gentlemanly-looking man, clad in the best garments that the tailoring people

manufactured—while a handsome sign upon the man's back, or a silken banner proudly borne aloft, should tell where the clothes were made, and how, for two weeks only, clothes equally excellent could be bought there at a tremendous sacrifice. And then came into his mind the great thought of his life: he would disguise himself by changing his blonde hair and beard to gray, and by wearing dark eye-glasses, and thus disguised he would be that man! Detection he believed to be impossible, for merely dressing himself in respectable clothes almost would suffice to prevent his recognition by even the nearest of his friends. With that prompt decision which is the sure sign of genius backed by force of character, he paused no longer to consider. He acted. With a firm step he entered the clothing establishment; with dignity demanded a personal interview with its roprietor; with eloquence presented to that personage his scheme.

"You will understand, sare," he said, in conclusion, "that these clothes such as yours

see themselves in the best way when they are carried by a man very well made, and who 'as the air *comme il faut*. I 'ave not the custom to say that I am justly that man. But now we talk of *affaires*. Look at me and see!" And so speaking, he drew himself up his full six feet, and turned slowly around. There could not be any question about it: a handsomer, a more distinguished-looking man was not to be found in all New York. With the added dignity of age, his look of distinction would be but increased.

The great head of the great tailoring establishment was visibly affected. Original devices in advertising had been the making of him. He perceived that the device now suggested to him was superior to anything that his own genius had struck out. "It's a pretty good plan," he said, meditatively. "What do you want for carrying it out?"

"For you to serve two weeks, I ask but the clothes I go to wear."

For a moment the tailor paused. In that moment the destinies of Jaune d'Antimoine,

of Rose Carthame, of the Count Siccatif de Courtray, hung in the balance. It was life or death. Jaune felt his heart beating like a trip-hammer. There was upon him a feeling of suffocation. The silence seemed interminable; and the longer it lasted, the more did he feel that his chances of success were oozing away, that the crisis of his life was going against him. Darkness, the darkness of desolate despair, settled down upon his soul. Mechanically he felt in his waistcoat pocket for a five-cent piece that he believed to be there—for the stillness, the restful oblivion of the North River were in his mind. His fingers clutched the coin convulsively, thankfully. At least he would not be compelled to walk down Christopher Street to his death: he could pay his way to eternity in the one-horse car. Yet even while the blackness of shattered hope seemed to be closing him in irrevocably, the glad light came again. As the voice of an angel, sounded the voice of the tailor; and the words which the tailor spake were these:

"Young man, it's a bargain!"

But the tailor, upon whom Heaven had bestowed shrewdness to an extraordinary degree, perceived in the plan proposed to him higher, more artistic possibilities than had been perceived in it by its inventor. There was a dramatic instinct, an appreciation of surprise, of climax, in this man's mind that he proceeded to apply to the existing situation. With a wave of his hand he banished the suggested sign on the walking-advertiser's back, and the suggested silken banner. His plan at once was simpler and more profound. Dressed in the highest style of art, Jaune was to walk Broadway daily between the hours of 11 A.M. and 2 P.M. He was to walk slowly; he was to look searchingly in the faces of all young women of about the age of twenty years; he was to wear, over and above his garments of price, an air of confirmed melancholy. That was all.

"But of the advertisement? 'Ow ——"

"Now, never you mind about the adver-

tisement, young man. Where that is going to come in is my business. But you can just bet your bottom dollar that I don't intend to lose any money on you. All that you have to do is just what I've told you; and to be well dressed, and walk up and down Broadway for three hours every day, and look in all the girls' faces, don't strike me as being the hardest work that you might be set at. Now come along and be measured, and day after to-morrow you shall begin."

As Jaune walked slowly homeward to his dismal studio, he meditated deeply upon the adventure before him. He did not fancy it at all; but it was the means to an end, and he was braced morally to go through with it without flinching. For the chance of winning Rose he would have stormed a battery single-handed; and not a bit more of moral courage would have been needed for such desperate work than was needed for the execution of the bloodless but soul-trying project that he had in hand. For the life and spirit of him, though, he could not see how

the tailor was to get any good out of this magnificent masquerading.

In one of the evening papers, about a week later, there appeared a half-column romance that quite took Jaune d'Antimoine's breath away. It began with a reference to the distinguished elderly gentleman who, during the past week, had been seen daily upon Broadway about the hour of noon; who gazed with such intense though respectful curiosity into every young woman's face; who, in the gay crowd, was conspicuous not less by the elegance of his dress than by his air of profound melancholy. Then briefly, but precisely, the sorrowful story of the Marquis de—— ("out of consideration for the nobleman's feelings," the name was withheld) was told: how, the son of a peer of France, he had married, while yet a minor, against the wishes of his stern father; how his young wife and infant daughter had been spirited away by the stern father's orders; how on his death-bed the father had con-

fessed his evil deed to his son, and had told that mother and child had been banished to America, where the mother speedily had died of grief, and where the child, though in ignorance of her noble origin, had been adopted by an enormously rich American, about whom nothing more was known than the fact that he lived in New York. The Marquis, the article stated, now was engaged in searching for his long-lost daughter, and among other means to the desired end had hit upon this—of walking New York's chief thoroughfare in the faith that should he see his child his paternal instinct would reveal to him her identity.

"I calculate that this will rather whoop up public interest in our performance," said the tailor, cheerfully, the next day, as he handed the newspaper containing the pleasing fiction to Jaune. "That's my idea, for a starter. I've got the whole story ready to come out in sections—paid a literary feller twenty dollars to get it up for me. And you be careful to-day when you are interviewed" (Jaune shuddered) "to keep the story up—or" (for Jaune was beginning a remonstrance) "you can keep out of it altogether, if you'd rather. Say you must refuse to talk upon so delicate a subject, or something of that sort. Yes, that's your card. It'll make the mystery greater, you know—and I'll see that the public gets the facts, all the same."

The tailor chuckled, and Jaune was unutterably wretched. He was on the point of throwing up his contract. He opened his mouth to speak the decisive words—and shut it again as the thought came into his mind that his misery must be borne, and borne gallantly, because it was all for the love of Rose.

That day there was no affectation in his air of melancholy. He was profoundly miserable. Faithful to his contract, he looked searchingly upon the many young women of twenty years whom he met; and such of them as were possessors of tender hearts grew very sorrowful at sight of the obvious

woe by which he was oppressed. His woe, indeed, was keen, for the newspaper article had had its destined effect, and he was a marked man. People turned to look at him as people had not turned before; it was evident that he was a subject of conversation. Several times he caught broken sentences which he recognized as portions of his supposititious biography. His crowning torture was the assault of the newspaper reporters. They were suave, they were surly, they were insinuatingly sympathetic, they were aggressively peremptory—but all alike were determined to wring from him to the uttermost the details of the sorrow that he never had suffered, of the life that he never had lived. It was a confusing sort of an experience. He began to wonder, at last, whether or not it were possible that he could be somebody else without knowing it; and if it were, in whom, precisely, his identity was vested. Being but a simple-minded young fellow, with no taste whatever for metaphysics, this line of thought was upsetting.

While involved in these perplexing doubts and the crowd at the Fifth Avenue crossing, he was so careless as to step upon the heel of a lady in front of him. And when the lady turned, half angrily, half to receive his profuse apologies, he beheld Mademoiselle Carthame. The face of this young person wore an expression made up of not less than three conflicting emotions: of resentment of the assault upon the heel of her one pair of good shoes, of friendly recognition of the familiar voice, of blank surprise upon perceiving that this voice came from the lips of a total stranger. She looked searchingly upon the smoked glasses, obviously trying to pry into the secret of the hidden eyes. Jaune's blood rushed up into his face, and he realized that detection was imminent. Mercifully, at that moment the crowd opened, and with a bow that hid his face behind his hat he made good his retreat. During the remaining half hour of his walk, he thought no more of metaphysics. The horrid danger of physical discovery from

which he had escaped so narrowly filled him with a shuddering alarm. Nor could he banish from his mind the harrowing thought that perhaps, for all his gray hair and painted wrinkles and fine clothes, Rose in truth had recognized him.

That night an irresistible attraction drew him to the Carthame abode. In the little parlor he found the severe Madame Carthame, her adorable daughter, and the offensive Count Siccatif de Courtray. Greatly to his relief, his reception was in the usual form: Madame Carthame conducted herself after the fashion of a well-bred iceberg; Rose endeavored to mitigate the severity of her parent's demeanor by her own affability; the Count, as much as possible, ignored his presence. Jaune could not repress a sigh of relief. She had not recognized him.

But his evening was one of trial. With much vivacity, Rose entertained the little company with an account of her romantic adventure with the French nobleman who had come to America in quest of his lost

daughter; for she had read the newspaper story, and had identified its hero with the assailant of her heel. She dwelt with enthusiasm upon the distinguished appearance of the unhappy foreigner; she ventured the suggestion, promptly and sternly checked by her mamma, that she herself might be the lost child; she grew plaintive, and expressed a burning desire to comfort this stricken parent with a daughter's love; and, worst of all, she sat silent, with a far-away look in her charming eyes, and obviously suffered her thoughts to go astray after this handsome Marquis in a fashion that made even the Count Siccatif de Courtray fidget, and that filled the soul of Jaune d'Antimoine with a consuming jealousy—not the less consuming because of the absurd fact that it was jealousy of himself! As he walked home that night through the devious ways of Greenwich to his dismal studio, he seriously entertained the wish that he never had been born.

The next day all the morning papers con-

tained elaborate "interviews" with the Marquis: for each of the several reporters who had been put on the case, believing that he alone had failed to get the facts, and being upheld by a lofty determination that no other reporter should "get a beat on him," had evolved from his own inner consciousness the story that Jaune, for the best of reasons, had refused to tell. The stories thus told, being based upon the original fiction, bore a family resemblance to each other; and as all of them were interesting, they stimulated popular curiosity in regard to their hero to a very high pitch. As the result of them, Jaune found himself the most conspicuous man in New York. During the three hours of his walk he was the centre of an interested crowd. Several benevolent persons stopped him to tell him of fatherless young women with whom they were acquainted, and to urge upon him the probability that each of these young women was his long-lost child. The representatives of a dozen detective bureaus introduced themselves to him, and made offer of their professional services; a messenger from the chief of police handed him a polite note tendering the services of the department and inviting him to a conference. It was maddening.

But worst of all were his meetings with Rose. As these multiplied, the conviction became irresistible that they were not the result of chance; indeed, her manner made doubt upon this head impossible. At first she gave him only a passing glance, then a glance somewhat longer, then a look of kindly interest, then a long look of sympathy; and at last she bestowed upon him a gentle, almost affectionate, smile that expressed, as plainly as a smile could express, her sorrow for his misery and her readiness to comfort him. In a word, Rose Carthame's conduct simply was outrageous!

The jealous anger which had inflamed Jaune's breast the night before swelled and expanded into a raging passion. He longed to engage in mortal combat this stranger

who was alienating the affection that should be his. The element of absurdity in the situation no longer was apparent to him. In truth, as he reasoned, the situation was not absurd. To all intents and purposes he was two people: and it was the other one of him, not himself at all, who was winning Rose's interest, perhaps her love. For a moment the thought crossed his mind that he would adjust the difficulty in his own favor by remaining this other person always. But the hard truth confronted him that every time he washed his face he would cease to be the elderly Marquis, with the harder truth that the fabulous wealth with which, as the Marquis, the newspapers had endowed him was too entirely fabulous to serve as a basis for substantial life. And being thus cut off from hope, he fell back upon jealous hatred of himself.

That night the evening paper in which the first mention of the mysterious French nobleman had been made, contained an article cleverly contrived to give point to the

mystery in its commercial aspect. The fact had been observed, the article declared, that the nobleman's promenade began and ended at a prominent clothing establishment on Broadway; and then followed, in the guise of a contribution toward the clearing up of the mystery, an interview with the proprietor of the establishment in question. However, the interview left the mystery just where it found it, for all that the tailor told was that the Marquis had bought several suits of clothes from him; that he had shown himself to be an exceptionally critical person in the matter of his wearing apparel; that he had expressed repeatedly his entire satisfaction with his purchases. In another portion of the paper was a glaring advertisement, in which the clothing man set forth, in an animated fashion, the cheapness and desirability of "The Marquis Suit"—a suit that "might be seen to advantage on the person of the afflicted French nobleman now in our midst, who had honored it with his approval, and in whose honor it had been named." Upon

reading the newspaper narrative and its advertisement pendent, Jaune groaned aloud. He was oppressed by a horror of discovery, and here, as it seemed to him in his morbidly nervous condition, was a clew to his duplex identity sufficiently obvious to be apparent even to a detective.

THE Count Siccatif de Courtray, as has been intimated, went so far as to fidget while listening to Mademoiselle Carthame's vivacious description of her encounter with the handsome Marquis. Being regaled during the ensuing evening with a very similar narrative—a materially modified version of the events which had aroused in so lively a manner the passion of jealousy in the breast of Jaune d'Antimoine—the Count ceased merely to fidget, and became the prey to a serious anxiety. He determined that the next day, quite unobtrusively, he would observe Mademoiselle Carthame in her relations with this unknown but dangerously fascinating nobleman; and also that he would give some

attention to the nobleman himself. This secondary purpose was strengthened the next morning, while the Count was engaged with his coffee and newspaper, by his finding in the "Courrier des États-Unis" a translation of the paragraph stating the curious fact that the daily walk of the Marquis began and ended at the Broadway tailor-shop.

Having finished his breakfast, the Count leisurely betook himself to Broadway. As he slowly strolled eastward, he observed on the other side of the street Jaune d'Antimoine, in his desperately shabby raiment, hurriedly walking eastward also. The Count murmured a brief panegyric upon M. d'Antimoine, in which the words "cet animal" alone were distinguishable. They were near Broadway at this moment, and to the Count's surprise M. d'Antimoine entered the clothing establishment from which the Marquis departed upon his daily walk. Could it be possible, he thought, that fortune had smiled upon the young artist, and that he was about to purchase a new suit of clothes? The

Count entertained the charitable hope that such could not be the case.

It was the Count's purpose, in order that he might follow also the movements of Mademoiselle Carthame, to follow the Marquis from the beginning to the end of his promenade. He set himself, therefore, to watching closely for the appearance of the grief-stricken foreigner, moving carelessly the while from one shop-window to another that commanded a view of the field. At the end of half an hour, when the Count was beginning to think that the object of his solicitude was a myth, out from the broad portal of the clothing establishment came the Marquis in all his glory—more glorious, in truth, than Solomon, and more melancholy than the melancholy Jaques. And yet for an instant the Count Siccatif de Courtray was possessed by the absurd fancy that this stately personage was Jaune d'Antimoine! Truly, here was the same tall, handsome figure, the same easy, elegant carriage, the same cut of hair and beard. But the resemblance went no further, for beard and hair were gray almost to whiteness, the face was pale and old, and the clothes, so far from being desperately seedy, were more resplendent even than the Count's own. No, the thought was incredible, preposterous, and yet the Count could not discharge it from his mind. He stamped his foot savagely; this mystery was becoming more interesting than pleasing.

In the crowd that the Marquis drew in his wake, as he slowly, sadly sauntered up Broadway, the Count had no difficulty in following him unobserved. The situation was that of the previous day, only it was intensified, and therefore, to its hero, the more horrible. The benevolent people with stray fatherless young women to dispose of were out in greater force; the detectives were more aggressive; the newspaper people were more persistent; the general public was more keenly interested in the whole performance. And Rose—most dreadful of all—was more outrageous than ever! The

Count grew almost green with rage during the three hours that he was a witness of this young woman's scandalous conduct. A dozen times she met the Marquis in the course of his walk, and each time that she met him she greeted him with a yet more tender smile. A curious fact that at first surprised, then puzzled, then comforted the Count was the very obvious annoyance which these flattering attentions caused their recipient. Evidently, he persistently endeavored to evade the meetings which Rose as persistently and more successfully endeavored to force upon him. Within the scope of M. de Courtray's comprehension only one reason seemed to be sufficient to explain the determination on the part of the Marquis to resist the advances of a singularly attractive young woman, whose good disposition toward him was so conspicuously, though so irregularly, manifested: a fear of recognition. And this reason adjusted itself in a striking manner to the queer notion that had come into his mind that the Marquis was an ideal creation, whose reality was Jaune d'Antimoine. The thought was absurd, irrational, but it grew stronger and stronger within him—and became an assured conviction when, shortly after the promenade of the Marquis had ended, Jaune came forth from the clothing-store in his normal condition of shabbiness and youth. The Count was not in all respects a praiseworthy person, but among his vices was not that of stupidity. Without any very tremendous mental effort he grasped the fact that his rival had sold himself into bondage as a walking advertisement, and, knowing this, a righteous exultation filled his soul. Jaune's destiny, so far as Mademoiselle Carthame was concerned, he felt was in his power: and he was perplexed by no nice doubts as to the purpose to which the power that he had gained should be applied.

Untroubled by the knowledge that his secret was discovered, Jaune entered upon the last day of his martyrdom. It was the most agonizing day of all. The benevolent