

PALLADIUM SHORT STORY PAGE

Table Statuary



How a Banquet Table Looks After

THE amount of money squandered on expensive banquets by the very rich has long been the subject of comment. In the effort to make these affairs unique, the question of expense is not considered, except where extravagance alone is relied upon to make the banquet novel, and then, of course, expense is the only thing considered.

Although the most expensive viands are served at these feasts, the main item of their cost lies in the luxurious accessories—the music, vocal and instrumental; the decorations, and the favors. Without referring to some of the freak dinners that have been given from time to time by men and women who had so much money that they didn't know what to do with it, and upon which small fortunes have been squandered, ultra-fashionable banquets are given every day of the week, almost, at which thousands of dollars are spent to make the occasion memorable.

The latest fad and possibly the most prodigal of all is that of table statuary made of ice, which enables our ostentatious spendthrifts to see their money literally melt before their eyes. These statues carved out of ice are used to adorn the table, and although they are the work of high-priced sculptors and artists, there is, of course, no way of preserving them.

Just what these ice statues cost depends entirely upon the standing of the sculptor engaged to make them, but an incident which occurred recently in Berlin will give some indication of the amount of money that might be spent upon this simple table decoration.

An American gentleman and his wife were staying at one of the well-known hostels of the Ger-

It Has Been Decorated with the

man capital and during their holiday it happened to be the lady's birthday. In honor of the occasion the American requested the chef to prepare something unique in the way of dessert or as a table decoration.

When the couple sat down to table they noticed that a number of dishes containing fruits and candies were embellished by what appeared to be little glass statues of different colors, and which were brilliantly illuminated by means of small electric bulbs artistically arranged near them.

"Aren't those favors just too beautiful for anything," declared the wife, delightedly. "I've never seen anything like them here."

"Well, we'll take them back with us and introduce them to the natives," replied the husband.

As the meal progressed, however, it was found that the statues began to lose their original shapeliness, and closer observation revealed the fact that they were made of ice! Long before the meal was over the only remaining evidence of the statuettes were the pools of colored water into which they had melted.

In due course the American presented himself to the chef, complimented him on the artistic manner in which he had decorated the birthday table, slipped the equivalent of a five-spot into the worthy's itching palm, and quite unsuspectingly asked what the cost of the little dinner was going to be. When the chef replied \$120—or, rather, the German equivalent of that amount—our friend promptly had a fit. But if he had no fit he had to pay just the same, and this, although he was paying only \$60 a week for his room and board for himself and wife. That little dinner cost him as much, therefore, as two weeks' board.

Expensive Statues of Ice—Before

But at the banquets of the ultra-exclusive, where table statuary of ice is now being employed, \$100 a plate is by no means high, and the artists employed to make the little figures are given carte blanche to spend as much time and labor on their work as they can afford, irrespective of expense.

The figures once carved are kept in a temperature below freezing point until they are actually needed for the table that they may not lose any of their delicate lines through premature melting, although once the assembled guests have set their eyes upon them no one cares how long it takes for the heat of the illuminations to destroy them utterly.

In making the statues a miniature ice pick is used and the sculptors work with gloved hands that the heat of their fingers may not spoil their work. Ice of different hues is used that there may be variety in the results obtained.

At banquets on a smaller scale the same effect is obtained at a much lower cost by moulding plain water and ice cream are both used for that purpose. But between the ice statues as carved by the sculptor and the statues produced by the mould there is, of course, all the difference existing between cut glass and the ordinary pressed variety.

For humble mortals, though, who feel that they must have statues with their meals, these moulded figures will no doubt answer all purposes.

Although not in the form of statues made by high-priced sculptors, ice was used in the scheme of decoration at the famous "North Pole Dinner" given by Mr. George Kessler, the American millionaire and "Champagne King," at the Savoy Hotel in London, and which,

In Ice



Photo by Paul Thompson.

A Fruit Dish Adorned by an Artistic Ice Statue Carved by an Eminent Sculptor.

from the standpoint of expense and elaboration of dinner-stage setting, no doubt, holds the record to date.

Mr. Kessler proved himself a master of the dinner-stage art. He did not even stop at architectural changes of the hotel's interior, removing the roof of the Winter garden so that real stars might shine down upon the Arctic scene into which the large room was transformed.

From the margins where the ceiling had been hung great icicles, and

the whole floor, excepting a space in the centre reserved for the great dinner table, was piled with realistic ice hummocks, like those so eloquently described by "old Dr. Cook." The tops of some of these hummocks were given a further polar region touch by the presence of polar bears, the startlingly lifelike. The roof being off, the temperature was appropriately arctic.

The great round table represented a waste of arctic snow with a peaked hummock in its centre, through

which emerged the "Great Nail," as the Eskimo people call the pole. To the pole was attached a gigantic menu card.

The dinner guests were in conventional costume, with the addition of necessary wraps, but the waiters were all attired as Eskimos. The dishes they served bore appropriate names, such as "Caviar des Sibiriens," "Truffles du Peary," "North Pole glace," "Bombe des Esquimaux," and so on.

Without considering the enormous

The New Form of Table Decoration Which Allows the Very Rich to See Their Money Melt Before Their Eyes

expense of the dinner stage-setting, the dinner cost Mr. Kessler about \$300 per plate for more than a hundred guests. But the gifts of jewelry for each guest amounted to a great deal more than the food, drink and service. The men received pearl and diamond cuff links costing about \$500 each, and each lady was made happy with diamond earrings worth \$1,000.

In one respect—but for sweet charity's sake—Mr. Kessler was guilty of an anachronism. The ice hummocks had sprouted Christmas trees upon whose branches were hung 400 gifts brought from Paris for inmates of the London Home for Crippled Children.

Not to be outdone by her husband with his "North Pole Dinner," Mrs. George Kessler chartered a New York rathskeller and gave an "Abattoir Dinner." The famous Chicago Stock Yards hardly could have furnished a scene more realistic than Mrs. Kessler had turned that rathskeller into the semblance of the refrigerating room of a modern slaughter house.

The floor was covered with sawdust, while white-frosted oilcloth walls gave the impression of an enamel-lined room. Dozens of hidden electric fans made the place as cold as an icebox. Frosted white pipes ran around the room to create the illusion of great artificial cold. Even the electric light bulbs were frosted, and every pane of glass that was visible seemed coated with congealed water.

In the centre of the room were three chopping blocks with enormous ox heads on them, while against the walls hung whole halves and quarters of beef and mutton—the real thing. The tables simulated cakes of ice, and on each pig's head and raw-pork chop served as pepper and salt receptacles.

The waiters were all dressed in the white duck caps, trousers, jackets and aprons of butchers. The menu was strictly an "abattoir" menu—only beef, mutton and pork being served. Of the former nearly a thousand pounds, mostly in the form of steaks, were served, for the guests were not only distinguished in the society and art worlds, but were numerous. It will be a long time before Mrs. Kessler's "Abattoir Dinner" will be forgotten or surpassed for originality.

The Little Lady of the Lions - By Maude C. Keator

I HAD been familiar with the piny odor of sawdust all my life. My father started his circus when I was a baby, and I had made sawdust houses, caves and tunnels, played with the elephants and tumbled with the clowns.

After he died I followed in his footsteps, feeling it a sacred duty to keep Stillman's Circus the best in the land. If I heard of anything new, I was after it hot-foot with the price. That was how I came to get George Ebers, the most daring and relentless lion trainer in the world.

He was black haired and swarthy, with glinting eyes, sensuous lips and high cheek bones. He was tall and heavy and handsome, too, if one cared for a dash of the diabolical. I paid him a pretty price, but he was worth it. It was a picture to see him stand in the lions' cage and make those beasts go smartly through their paces. They hated him, every inch of him. There was not a night that they did not long to tear him to mince-meat. One could read it in their eyes, in their crouching bodies. Sometimes it got on my nerves so that I could not look on, and one day I told him he had better give up the lions.

"If you don't, they'll kill you, Ebers," he arched his eyebrows and laughed devilishly.

"They kill me?" with a shrug and a glint of his eyes. "Bah! I could take them and strangle them like cats."

As he spoke he stretched out his hand and crooked his fingers like claws.

It was uncanny to see the man with the deep fire in his eyes and his white teeth glinting through his sneering lips.

"Did you ever know what it is to love with hatred, Stillman?" he demanded, curiously. "No! Well, it's the way I love those lions. I love them because they hate me. They're my affinities. I use my whip, so they snarl and writhe, but they do my bidding. The sting of the whip is joy to my soul! Joy! Joy!"

I don't think he was aware of the disgust that must have been expressed on my face, for I made some excuse and left him. I must say my sympathy was with the lions.

It was not long after this that we stopped for a two weeks' stay at Elmira. In the afternoon of the second day, as I was watching the performance, an attendant came and whispered to me: "Please, Mr. Stillman, there's a lady in the office waiting to see you."

This was no surprise, for I had advertised the day previous for a lady dummy for the chariot-race. By dummy we mean one that is just up for show.

As I entered my office I saw the faintest, sweetest, strangest little lady that I had ever had. She had been blessed with a nose as she heard me, and stood with a tremulous, hesitating manner that reminded me of a frightened bird. She was gowned in black, and her Auburn hair shone the brighter for contrast. Her eyes were brown

and mournful, met mine pleadingly. Yet despite her seeming timidity, there was a conscious strength in the proud poise of her head.

"You came in answer to the advertisement? Please be seated," I said gently.

"Thank you—yes. You wanted a woman? Will I do? Will the position be permanent?" she asked with abrupt eagerness.

For a moment I hesitated. Some way she seemed so childish, so gentle and refined and utterly out of place with the rather rough surroundings.

"I should want to be something more than a—dummy," she broke in, observing my hesitation. "I want to be a trainer. I should be willing to try the lions."

"But," I cried, aghast, "you know nothing—haven't the least idea of—of the undertaking."

"But I know what I am capable of doing," she declared. "I have ever so many pet dogs and cats that I have trained. Please give me a chance to prove what I can do."

"But—"

"I want the three lions, Pete, Dan and King, to train."

"What do you know of those lions?" I asked in surprise.

She smiled. "I read their history in the paper last Sunday. I know how Pete killed his keeper, and Dan and King could not be subdued by even the wiles of your great tamer, Mr. Ebers."

"And you expect to train them?" I smiled.

"I think I can," she maintained steadily, with a confidence which staggered me. "If I succeed, it will be a big card for you."

"But it's murder to think of it!" I insisted desperately, feeling myself weak before her sweet insistence.

"If at the end of three weeks I make no progress," she urged, "I'll resign."

To tell the truth, I had not the heart to refuse. So it was against the promptings of reason and experience that I was at last coaxed into yielding to her proposition.

I watched Norma Howard's progress with agonizing anxiety. There were times when it seemed to me she took reckless chances with the beasts. She did not seem to make allowance for their treacherous nature, and trusted too much in their love for her. It may be that the great brutes felt her confidence. They said that some animals have a sixth sense—the faculty of reading the thoughts of a being. I came to believe this after watching the little lady work.

As time passed, her patient efforts were rewarded. The three lions did her bidding at a word, meekly as lambs. She controlled them by love rather than by fear, by a glance rather than a whip. The great beasts, fierce and unmanageable to others, loved her touch, caressed and purled over her with all the fondness of adoring lovers.

It was not long before she tamed me as thoroughly as she had tamed the lions. I had lived forty years without meeting the one woman in the world until Norma crept into my heart. And for every year of that forty I loved with a double intensity.

I was jealous of the lions, jealous of every being who gazed on her. And yet she was as unconscious of it as a child. She seemed wrapped in some idea, some ambition outside of our common life.

Once when I reproved her for some carelessness regarding the animals, she smiled dreamily and answered: "Thank you, I'll be careful; I don't want to die—yet."

But she did not say it as one who loved life, but rather as one who was weary of waiting.

Once I overheard Ebers say to her: "Why did you come here? How dared you come?" His face was sneering.

My heart rose in my throat and my knees trembled under me as I watched Norma breathlessly, waiting her answer.

For just an instant she trembled, and the delicate pink faded from her waxen cheeks. Then she straightened, and the crimson blood flew to her face as if forced there by a red-hot iron.

"I came to remind you—to keep reminding you, lest you forget," she answered in a stifled voice. "Always and always our path runs onward—together. Death only can separate us."

His face was ghastly. Then a look of cunning flashed in his eyes, and he bent toward her so near that his lips touched her hair. He whispered something. She recoiled and turned away. He would have followed, but I went leisurely forward and began a conversation about the animals.

I scarcely knew what he said, for my heart was sick within me, sick and hard and bitter with hatred. My job was gauge and tinsel, and the sting of it was death. Yet despite all this my heart was hungry for her.

"I'm ready for my first performance," she informed me quietly. "I'm going on to-night. They are in fit condition—the beauties!"

It seems that Miss Howard has taken the pain. I glibbed maliciously at Ebers: "You've tried your hand more than once on the animals she's trained."

He was pale with rage, and his eyes narrowed as he gazed at her. But he gave his characteristic shrug.

"Well, I should wait until they had made their debut before being overconfident. A lion alone with his trainer and a lion before an audience is a vastly different proposition, my little lady of the lions."

"I am called Miss Howard," she replied with cold dignity.

He reddened and glanced at me, then hastened to apologize.

She merely nodded, then turned to me pleadingly. "You'll let me go on to-night?"

"On one condition—that you allow

Ebers to go in the cage with you. As he says, this is his first appearance, and I shall feel easier to know that he is there in case of trouble."

"That's wise," agreed Ebers.

For a moment she answered nothing. She stood very still, with her hands clasped and a silent wonder all about her. Then a light flashed in her eyes.

"It is all right," she consented sweetly. "If you think best. But, remember that my beauties have never been touched with a whip—so be careful." She spoke with evident effort and I wondered.

When Ebers turned away I gazed down into her pale little face.

"Norma," I demanded, "what did he say to you just before I came?"

She ignored my question and asked abruptly:

"You heard me warn him not to use a whip?"

I nodded gloomily.

"But just the same, when he goes in the cage he will carry whip and prod, Norma. He rules by the whip."

"He rules by the whip," she echoed in a hushed voice.

For a long time she was silent, as if revolving some question in her mind. She stood with her pretty head bent and her little feet nervously tapping at the sawdust. Presently she spoke:

"Sometimes I believe in the transmigration of souls—that is, my animals know so much."

"What an uncanny idea," I muttered.

She flashed me a quick glance. "Did you ever have a presentiment that something would happen which eventually did happen?"

"What can happen?" I demanded tensely. "Great heavens, Norma, you give me the horrors. What can happen?"

She shook her head, and her eyes were dreamy. "Only God knows—God, who balances the scales."

"Norma," I panted, "there's some mystery here—you seem to know. Who is Ebers?"

Her little body grew tense, and she averted her head.

"Norma," I cried savagely, "I demand to know who he is. Great God, it isn't possible that he—that you—I can't believe that of you!"

She glanced at me with a startled, questioning look. Then a wave of red flashed in her cheeks and she tilted her head proudly. "She turned to leave me."

"Listen," I entreated; "I love you. I had hoped to win your love and make you my wife. But I must know what he is to you. If you love me, dear, you must appreciate my anxiety—agony—"

"Norma!"

"Love trusts," she answered with quiet dignity. "True love trusts."

"Then I will trust you; I must trust you or go mad!"

She shook her head slowly.

"Love is not for me. I couldn't make you happy. My life has been so full

of tragedy that I've forgotten how to laugh and love."

She turned from me and went slowly across the stretch of sawdust to the canvas door beyond. Once she paused, seemed about to speak, then went on, leaving me alone, with darkness heavy on my soul.

That night Norma made her first appearance. Ebers entered the waiting room promptly at 8 o'clock, after making a tour of inspection to see if the lions were in fit condition before being wheeled into the arena. Not long after Norma entered. She was gowned in blue and silver, with a blue bow in her shining hair. Her soft, rounded arms were bare, and her shapely little body, in its close-fitting dress, was palpitating with eagerness. Her beauty seemed to stand out as waxen, perfect as a jasmine flower. It stabbed me with a hundred warning emotions.

Ebers glanced at her with eyes that were his heart twist with murderous desire. Then he went out, and for a moment we were alone.

Norma glanced at me swiftly with a faint smile, half mocking, half sad and accusing.

"Won't you wish me good luck?" she asked gently. Then, after a pause, as I answered her nothing—I could not for the ache in my throat—"You know I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Stillman, and want to make the name of your circus famous—more famous than I am. I'll do my best for you."

"Not for me," I answered coldly; "you are mistaken. The words were driven out by the warning demons within me. They fell sharp and cruelly distinct through the waiting room."

Her face whitened and her lips quivered. She made as if to speak, then checked herself and looked down at her blue-slippered foot, like a child who tries to control its tears.

It was cowardly of me to leave her in the hope of escape, since I had condemned her sentence to her death. I understood, and felt the barrier I had raised between us. She glanced again in my direction, as Ebers re-entered and informed her that the cage had been wheeled into the arena and their turn had come.

I followed them out and watched her as she walked proudly to the great cage, a slender, glittering figure in her dainty gown. She opened the door and stepped quickly in, followed by Ebers.

They made a pretty picture. Norma stood in the centre of the floor with a light flashed across her face as she heard my call. There was a little flutter of blue, her bright head bobbed above the low bars, and her hand was upraised. Her clear voice rang out in its welcoming: "Pete, Dan, King, my beauties, greet!"

A moment, breathless, intense—then a great sigh broke whisperingly around the arena. The lions paused, rose majestically, and gazed on her with eyes of affection.

Wild cheers and deafening applause thundered through the tent as her little hand fluttered from one tawny head to another.

By this time I was at the door of the cage and had flung it open. Norma held a light flashed across her face as she heard my call. There was a little flutter of blue, her bright head bobbed above the low bars, and her hand was upraised. Her clear voice rang out in its welcoming: "Pete, Dan, King, my beauties, greet!"

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Wave after wave of applause rolled around the auditorium, children screamed delightedly, women waited, pale and expectant while men smiled with the consciousness of superiority of nerves. Then suddenly all was hushed in a pause of horror.

Seemingly for the first time the animals discovered Ebers. Whether it was the memory of some wrong he had done them months before, or because they resented the presence of a man with whip and prod, will never be known. But in a second they were on him.

I caught a glimpse of his ghastly face and staring eyes as Dan, with one stroke of his huge paw, crushed him down. In an instant the intense excitement of the spectators gave way to panic. The sea of pallid faces heaved and rolled like a great wave. The uproar was deafening. Women shrieked and faintly smiled and swore. Above the tumult came the agonized cry of Ebers—then silence.

Norma stood motionless. A soft light glorified her face, as if even then the mystery of the new life enfolded and left its impress on her soul. She folded her arms across her breast and waited.

And then, in a flash, all the resentment and anger fell from me. I desired nothing so much in my life as that she should live—I who had sent her to her death.

The audience rose as if impelled by one supreme desire. Now was her time to speak! Now—

The end was near; a moment more, and I felt my chest heave with the great cry which rent the harrowing silence.

"For God's sake speak to them!"

A light flashed across her face as she heard my call. There was a little flutter of blue, her bright head bobbed above the low bars, and her hand was upraised. Her clear voice rang out in its welcoming: "Pete, Dan, King, my beauties, greet!"

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What's the Use?

By KENNETH HARRIS.

HERE is the sense in telling what you know?

Why should I flatter what is evident?

Painting the lily when it's white as snow?

I trust that I am too intelligent.

WATCHED your color, as it came and went.

And thought the sunset had no finer glow.

Still I spoke not of cream and peaches blent.

Where is the sense in telling what you know?

YOUR little teeth flashed in a pearly row.

But no describing phrase did I invent.

Your eyes were very bright, but even so, Why should I flatter what is evident?

YOUR hair is in the style that's prevalent.

And yet it makes a very pretty show.

To rave of it would be, to some extent, Fainting the lily when it's white as snow.

YOU moved as willows move when breezes blow.

Or like the grasses to the zephyrs bent.

But praises came in no ecstatic flow.

I trust that I am too intelligent.

BUT in the short time that you I spent.

I felt my boredom slowly, surely grow.

I had to listen. That was different.

Beauty you have. In what you utter though.

Where is the sense?

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