

**MORE T LEAVES**

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More T Leaves by Edward F. Turner

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**EDWARD F. TURNER**

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MORE  
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LEAVES.

BY.

EDWARD F. TURNER,

AUTHOR OF "T LEAVES," "TANTLER'S SISTER, AND OTHER  
UNTRUTHFUL STORIES," ETC.

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### *WHAT BOUSTER DID.*

WE had to give some sort of entertainment, and the only question was what it was to be. We, that is self and lady, had been repeatedly dining and dancing and receptioning and drumming and amateur theatricalising at the expense of our friends, and our children had been out to tea all over the place; and all this time we had not called our neighbours together to partake of so much as a glass of marsala and a cucumber sandwich. Therefore we felt that society was entitled to look to us for some return, and that our response to that expectation ought to be worthy of us. So we deliberated long and anxiously.

Our social debt went far beyond the dimensions of any dinner within our compass. We could only get twelve people at the outside into our dining-room, and then our waiter (pew-opener at a neighbouring church) always had to squeeze himself into nothing and perform most difficult evolutions at the window end, resulting on one occasion in his discharging a shower of green peas over a lady's head and shoulders. A dinner was out of the question from every point of view.

Theatricals. We debated that and hesitated very much. My wife had always had a hankering to do Juliet, and she was under the impression that the balustrade of a short second staircase which led to my dressing-room was admir-



ably adapted for the balcony scene. But on my pointing out respectfully that the assembled company would in that case have to leave the drawing-room at the particular juncture and sit on the stairs, she realised that the idea was not practical. Still of course there were many excellent plays, and as we could both act beautifully it was a great temptation. But after much consideration we gave it up in favour of TABLEAUX, which we had never tried before. We both had very elegant figures, and that had something to do with the decision, I daresay. So we sent out the invitations announcing to all whom it might concern that on the eventful evening we should be "At Home" at 8.30. And in the left-hand corner we wrote the word "Tableaux," so that our friends might know what we were going to provide for their amusement.

We required, of course, the assistance of others in getting up the tableaux, because two people cannot make a proper tableau any more than one swallow can make a summer. We looked around us and enlisted the sympathy of our neighbours, Mr. and Mr. Bouster, who were great friends of ours in this lop-sided and not very uncommon matrimonial way, that I was extremely fond of Mrs. Bouster but didn't care much about her husband, and my wife was devoted to Bouster but could not, as she described it, understand what I saw in her. Next we lighted on my old bachelor friend, Horace Pooley, who was of the comic order of person, and Priscilla Vaughan, a maiden lady of comparatively mature age, who had written tons of poetry (still in manuscript) to broken hearts, and quivering lips, and similar objects. We rounded off the company with a young articted pupil of mine, Nichols by name, to whom I wished to show a little

unselfish kindness. It also entered my contemplation that he might be useful in going errands, and looking after details that I was too busy to attend to. Human motives are ever mixed. We thought this would do for a compact nucleus, and that if we wanted further assistance in the way of May-pole dancers, or Halberdices, or such like supernumeraries, we could easily enlist them.

The first thing naturally was to select the tableaux, and we held a preliminary meeting for this express purpose. I led off the discussion as in duty bound, and I made the striking and original observation that I thought we ought to have one historical scene at least, and invited suggestions as to the particular scene or scenes.

"You," I said, turning to Nichols, "have been at school last, and ought to know more history than any of us. Now what is your idea?"

Nichols, being eighteen, blushed crimson; and, after a rather painful pause, was heard to murmur, "William the First, 1066-1087; William the Second, 1087-1100; Henry the First, 1100 —."

As he did not get any further I relieved his embarrassment by making an appeal to Mrs. Bouster.

"What do you think," said she, "of doing the scene of James the Second escaping over to France in disguise in a boat?"

"Bosh!" interrupted Bhuster. "How can you turn the back drawing-room into the Thames or the Channel with a great boat in it?"

Bouster's criticism was just, but the brusque manner in which he addressed his wife was very painful to me. I thought how differently I should have spoken to her if I

had married her instead of my own wife, and she had married me instead of Bouster. Not that I was unhappy in my domestic relations, but merely that Mrs. Bouster was a distinctly charming and pretty woman, and much too good for Bouster.

"I," broke in Miss Vaughan, "should so much like to do a scene with Mary Queen of Scots in it."

"Oh, yes!" chimed in my wife, "that would be delightful. I have always wished to represent Mary Queen of Scots."

"My dear," I replied, "you are about as much like Mary Queen of Scots as you are like the Tattooed Lady. Now if Miss Vaughan would not mind?"

This may at first sight appear unkind, but the fact is that I saw Miss Vaughan freezing visibly when my wife jumped at the idea of taking Mary Queen of Scots for herself, and I was obliged to cut in. Besides if a man (except Bouster) may not snub and repress his own wife, where is the sacred bird of freedom roosting, I should like to know?

Miss Vaughan melted instantly and said that if we really wished it (I gave my wife such a look that she had to say yes she did, but she didn't) she would try her best to do the part.

"What scene in the lady's life should we choose?" I asked.

As I looked rather pointedly at Bouster, he was obliged to say something.

"What do you say to the scene where she is stepping on shore, and the Earl of Darnley lays his cloak down for her to walk upon?"

Pooley exploded with laughter, and was nearly annihilated