

THE POINT OF VIEW

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The point of view by Elinor Glyn

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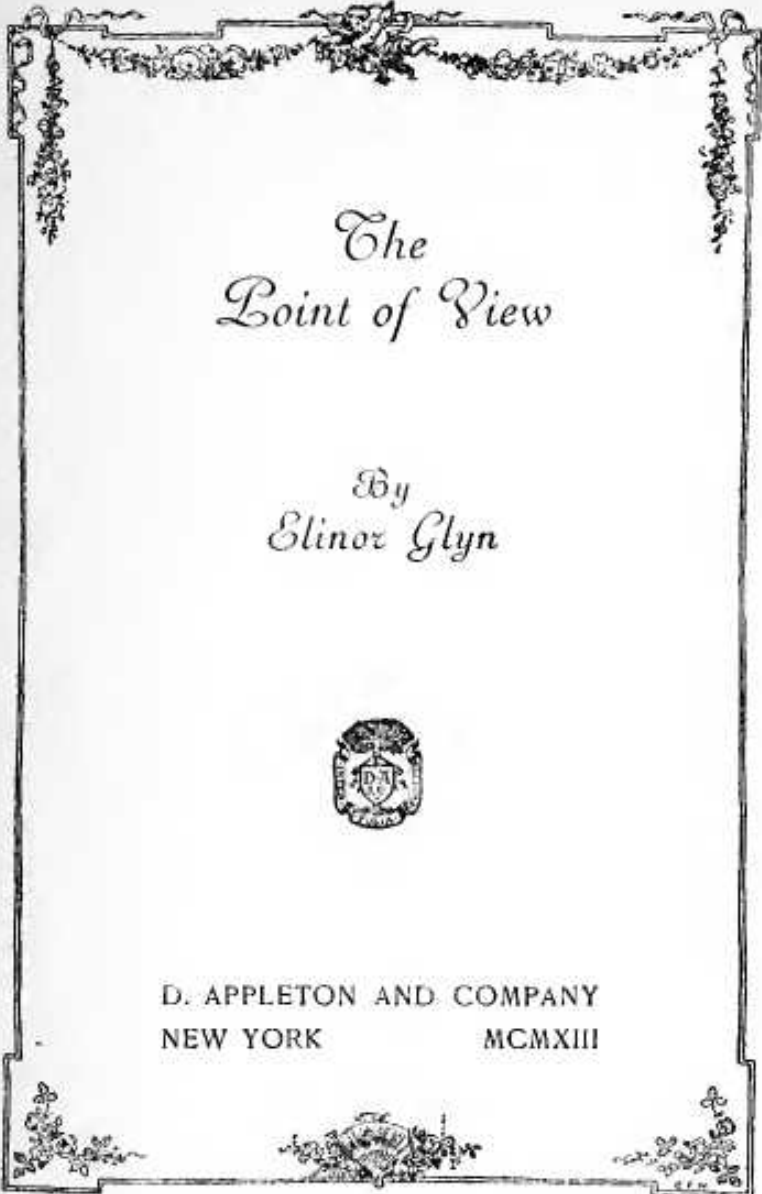
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STELLA RAWSON

A decorative border with floral and vine motifs surrounds the text. The top and bottom edges feature a horizontal band of flowers, while the sides have vertical floral arrangements.

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Elinor Glyn



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CHAPTER I



THE restaurant of the Grand Hotel in Rome was filling up. People were dining rather late—it was the end of May and the entertainments were lessening, so they could dawdle over their repasts and smoke their cigarettes in peace.

Stella Rawson came in with her uncle and aunt, Canon and the Honorable Mrs. Ebley, and they took their seats in a secluded corner. They looked a little out of place—and felt it—amid this more or less gay company. But the drains of the Grand Hotel were known to be beyond question, and, coming to Rome so late in the season, the Reverend Canon Ebley felt it was wiser to risk the contamination of

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the over-worldly-minded than a possible attack of typhoid fever. The belief in a divine protection did not give him or his lady wife that serenity it might have done, and they traveled fearfully, taking with them their own jaeger sheets among other precautions.

They realized they must put up with the restaurant for meals, but at least the women folk should not pander to the customs of the place and wear evening dress. Their subdued black gowns were fastened to the throat. Stella Rawson felt absolutely excited—she was twenty-one years old, but this was the first time she had ever dined in a fashionable restaurant, and it almost seemed like something deliciously wrong.

Life in the Cathedral Close where they lived in England was not highly exhilarating, and when its duties were over it contained only mild gossip and endless tea-parties and garden-parties by way of recreation.

Canon and the Honorable Mrs. Ebley were

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fairly rich people. The Uncle Erasmus' call to the church had been answered from inclination—not necessity. His heart was in his work. He was a good man and did his duty according to the width of the lights in which he had been brought up.

Mrs. Ebley did more than her duty—and had often too much momentum, which now and then upset other people's apple carts.

She had, in fact, been the moving spirit in the bringing about of her niece Stella's engagement to the Bishop's junior chaplain, a young gentleman of æsthetic aspirations and eight hundred a year of his own.

Stella herself had never been enthusiastic about the affair. As a man, Eustace Medlicott said absolutely nothing at all to her—though to be sure she was quite unaware that he was inadequate in this respect. No man had meant anything different up to this period of her life. She had seen so few of them she was no judge.

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Eustace Medlicott had higher collars than the other curates, and intoned in a wonderfully melodious voice in the cathedral. And quite a number of the young ladies of Exminster, including the Bishop's second daughter, had been setting their caps at him from the moment of his arrival, so that when, by the maneuvers of Aunt Caroline Ebley, Stella found him proposing to her, she somehow allowed herself to murmur some sort of consent.

Then it seemed quite stimulating to have a ring and to be congratulated upon being engaged. And the few weeks that followed while the thing was fresh and new had passed quite pleasantly. It was only when about a month had gone by that a gradual and growing weariness seemed to be falling upon her.

To be the wife of an æsthetic high church curate, who fasted severely during Lent and had rigid views upon most subjects, began to grow into a picture which held out less and less charm for her.