

**A MATTER OF
TASTE: A NOVEL**

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A Matter of Taste: A Novel by George H. Picard

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GEORGE H. PICARD

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A Matter of Taste

A Novel

BY GEORGE H. PICARD

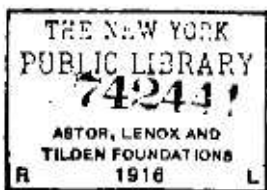
*"Three faculties enter into that complex faculty that is called
Taste,—imagination, sentiment, reason."*

M. COUSIN.



New York
White, Stokes, & Allen
1884

DM



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W O Y V A M
A S T O R
L E N O X
T I L D E N

A Matter of Taste.

At the close of a sultry day a merry party sat upon a prayer-rug spread out upon the steps of a great white house. It was in a mid-land city of phenomenal growth where everything is constructed upon a grand scale. On one side, a wonderful park is laid out along the brink of a blue, inland sea ; the ambitious dreams of young architects are everywhere realized in piles of chiseled stone, and the freshly laid asphalt makes the wide avenue like a bit of Paris transplanted here—and suffering no great loss from the operation.

The rug was rather too cleverly constructed

Miss. M. M. M. M. M.
31 Jan. 1916

for the patient toilers of Agra, but its vivid intricacy was a great credit to Philadelphia—where it was doubtless woven.

A very large woman, with a face as fair, and skin as soft and roseate as a beautiful infant's, was saying with mock earnestness,—in a voice pitched too high for ultra refinement,—

“Yes, my friends, that is precisely what I will do if—I am ever left alone. I will gather together my chattels into as small a space as I can manage to put them, and at once begin a series of wanderings such as has never before been attempted by any woman,—at least by any American woman. Imagine me camped out among the picture-galleries of Europe! I fairly revel in the idea!” And the fair woman's blue eyes rolled upward in a very good imitation of childish ecstasy.

“Pardon me, Alicia,” lazily observed the

gentleman beside her,—a slightly bald and singularly deliberate young person who already began to show signs of an aggressive corpulency,—“are not your plans a trifle exclusive of the Judge?”

Mrs. Alicia Talcote's soft face resolved itself into countless merry dimples, which made it very pleasant to look upon, as she laughingly replied to the sober badinage,—“Don't you think the Judge's present robustness sufficient to clear me of any suspicion of treason? When I look upon him, my dream fades into nothing. I shall view it in the light of a remote possibility.”

The somewhat dignified young gentleman did not continue his well-bred raillery. His large gray eyes were fixed with careful attention upon a smoke-ring of great perfection which had just escaped from the skilled lips of the Judge—over whose massiveness there

certainly hung no appearance of any immediate pathological change.

"Nevertheless, it is very lovely," sighed a young girl, who had been attentively quiet for a long time, "lovely even to dream it."

"Merciful goodness, Mary!" exclaimed Alicia, with a pretty start. "How dreadfully serious you seem!"

Then they relapsed into a slightly uncomfortable silence.

Presently Alicia rose with a graceful flurry that set her many ruffles into a little whirl, and, with a charming irrelevancy, declared that she must at once descend to the kitchen to watch the progress of a wonderful new dish which she had recently invented.

"It's a brilliant thing!" she exclaimed, as she was going away. "Judge, you may prepare your palate for a new tickle. I mean to astonish you all. It's an *olla podrida*."