

The SUPERPERFECT BRIDE

By Bob Olsen

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OW would you like to marry a woman who is absolutely perfect in face and form?" asked Doctor Goddard.

"Is there such a woman?" Broderick doubted.

"Judge for yourself." He pressed a button; and, as if operated by the invisible hands of spirits, the green curtains at the end of the room parted and swayed open.

Astounded beyond measure by the unexpected sight which met his eyes, Broderick sat for a moment of pulseless rapture; then, a sudden throbbing of arteries, he leaned forward, his eyes bound as if by invisible wires to the female form which the open curtain had disclosed.

She was nude, and yet not naked, since the heavy profusion of lustrous yellow hair, which fell to her knees, clothed her in a garment more modest than a bathing suit.

Held as if by some mesmeric power, Broderick remained seated until the curtains mysteriously and silently fell together. Then he rose to his feet, and, with the steps of a somnambulist, faltered toward Goddard.

"Open the curtains again, please! I didn't have time—Oh, please let me see her again. Won't you let me push the button myself?"

"Go ahead, but don't blame me for what happens."

At Broderick's touch the green curtains again swayed open. A cry of disappointment escaped from his lips—the alcove beyond was empty.

"Be patient, importunate youth," Goddard interposed. "You shall see her again in half an hour. Perhaps you may even be permitted to kiss her hand. Only give her time to dress. And now about the answer to your question? Do you think there is such a thing as a perfect woman?"

"Perfect? She is superperfect! I've never seen anything in sculpture or painting to compare with her. It is impossible to believe that such a lovely creature could have been born. She must have been created, full-grown, by a God who models with flesh."

"You are right," said Goddard. "She was not born, but created; and I am her creator."

"You her creator? What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. I made her what she is. Shall I

tell you how I did it? It may be some time before Eve is ready."

"Yes, yes, tell me, I beg of you."

"As you perspicuously remarked a moment ago, it is impossible for a perfect being to be born. Nature produces many handsome things but none of them are absolutely flawless. Go into the garden, and select the prettiest blossom you can find. A careful examination convinces you that it is absolutely perfect, but scrutinize it through the penetrating lens of a microscope, and you discover countless blemishes, and irregularities of outline, which would bar it completely from the realm of artistic perfection.

"As with the tiny flower, so with the big things in the world of beauty. Gaze upon a wonderful landscape, so stupendous, so enchanting that, to the casual observer, it seems the utter climax of perfection, but the discerning eyes of the trained aesthete would find it lacking in unity, balance and harmony. As a scene it may be beautiful; but as a picture it is full of faults of composition, exaggeration in coloring, incongruities of structure and over-vividness of detail.

"No artist dares to paint a landscape exactly as he sees it. His mission is to select, to modify, to recombine, and thus, from the parts which nature offers him, to construct a complete, unified, beautiful whole.

"Poe brings out this idea in his story called 'The Domain of Arnheim.' You've read it? No? Well,

you ought to. It's a masterpiece of descriptive diction. It tells about a man with the soul of an artist and a poet, the fortune of a Croesus, and a fervid passion for happiness. He employed a portion of his great wealth in constructing a garden, in which every individual nook and vista offered to the eyes of the observer a beautiful and artistically perfect picture. This he accomplished through an exalted form of landscape gardening, using

all the individual units just as they occurred in nature, but eliminating recombinining, rearranging and supplementing according to the absolute laws of art.

"The wealthy landscape gardener regarded this as the realization of the highest ideal of beauty. I do not agree. To my mind, aesthetic perfection can only be attained by a single unified object, which is small enough to be taken in with a solitary glance, and yet rich in infinite details of form and coloring, so that the eye,



Doctor Goddard anticipated Broderick's decision almost to the minute. He had everything in readiness for the first operation.

while keeping the lovely whole ever focussed on the retina, is constantly discovering new elements of beauty to admire. Of all individual objects in the universe there is none so capable of variation of beauty and ugliness as the human body, especially the body of a woman.

FOR centuries, sculptors and artists have striven to delineate human forms of consummate beauty, yet none has fully succeeded. The nearest approaches to perfection have been achieved by those who used composite models, combining the face of one with the torso of another and the limbs of a third.

"Even with this method, the results produced have been far from faultless. Witness, for instance, the learned criticism of the classic example of feminine grace, the statue of the Venus de' Medici. Edwin Chadwick, a noted scientist and connoisseur, says that the Venus de' Medici is lacking in two most important attributes of human beauty—health and mentality. Her chest is too narrow, indicating insufficient development of the lungs; her limbs are without evidence of due training of the muscles; and her cranium and face are deficient in all traits of intellect.

"Were it possible for the sculptor to produce a flawless model of a woman's figure, he is still woefully handicapped since he can only represent form, without color or any other attribute of the living being. The painter has the advantage of being able to impart the hues of nature. By skilful shading he also gives his flat canvas a third dimension, suggesting solidness, and elegance of contour.

"But neither the painting nor the statue can depict one of the most important attributes of living beauty, namely motion. To be perfectly beautiful, a creation must have the breath of life, and the power of locomotion. Bryon was right when he said:

"I've seen more living beauty, ripe and real
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal."

"He forgot, though, the fact, of which you seem cognizant, that it is impossible for blind nature to produce anything which possesses complete and faultless pulchritude. Unlike a poet, the perfect Venus must be made, not born.

"It is to the creation of this lofty ideal of a living, moving, intelligent woman, absolutely lovely in body and mind, that I have dedicated my lifetime of artistic and scientific research and my entire fortune. You have just seen in Eve the realization of this great ambition."

He paused a moment to observe the effect of his discourse on his young listener. Broderick had followed him with a fluctuating, petulant interest. Now he eagerly cried, "You said I might see her again;—that I might kiss her hand."

"Yes, yes; but pray be patient. She's not half ready yet to receive you. Aren't you interested in the process of her creation?"

"Indeed I am, but only let me see her for a moment, then I'll gladly listen to you."

Slightly offended, Goddard lapsed into a moody silence.

Broderick got up and paced the length of the floor three successive times—then exclaimed, "For God's sake, speak. I can't stand this suspense. Tell me more about Eve."

"Please be seated and compose yourself. You want to know how I accomplished this great and wonderful task? Hasn't a possible means suggested itself to you? I was obliged to waste a great deal of time in futile study, observation and experiment before I arrived at the right solution.

"At first I thought I could encompass my purpose through eugenics, which is nothing more than the application to the human race of familiar rules, which have been practiced for centuries in the scientific breeding of other animals. But the fault with this method is that, although it is possible to develop strongly some peculiar or characteristic variation, it is not so easy to remove completely those irregularities which make an organism imperfect.

"Take a specific instance. Let us assume that we have found a woman whose only flaw is a small nose. We may mate her with a man who is nearly perfect except for a nose which is a trifle larger than it should be. From this union we might expect to produce a child with a well-proportioned nose, but we can have no assurance that the progeny may not have a nose which is either larger than its father's or smaller than its mother's. Then, too, the matter of sex variation introduces an element of uncertainty; and, worst of all, experiments of this sort require an inordinate amount of time, besides being attended by overwhelming difficulties, the nature of which you can readily surmise."

Broderick became restless again. "Yes, but Eve," he rudely interrupted.

"I'm coming to her in just a minute. She is what might be called a synthetic woman; she was made by combining the complete living parts of no less than twelve different women."

Aghast, Broderick stared at him. "I don't understand you," he stammered.

"You must have heard of bone grafting, homoplastic transplantation, and other marvels of modern surgery. Perhaps you are familiar with some of my attainments along that line."

"I remember reading about a girl whom you treated after her face was badly burned. Didn't you cover her cheek with the skin taken from her thighs?"

YES. That is a very simple operation. Those involving the transplanting of organs and limbs are much more difficult, yet not impossible to the surgeon who knows his trade. As early as 1908, Debert succeeded in grafting the lower leg of one dog to the thigh of another, in such a way that it appeared perfectly normal. It was even before that time that Lexer, using the method of juxtaposition, transplanted the entire knee joint of a child. But more wonderful still is the work of Alexis Carrel, who, you know, invented a method of joining large blood vessels by clamping them to stop the flow of blood and then sewing them

together with silk thread. I have conducted a large number of experiments on animals and human beings, and have improved the methods of Lexer, Debert and Carrel.

"But I am more of an artist than a surgeon. Surgery is my vocation and art my avocation. It therefore occurred to me that by combining my artistic taste and my surgical skill, I could model in flesh and bones, just as the sculptor models in clay. Taking another hint from the artist, I resolved to create a living woman of unsurpassed beauty, by joining together parts which, though taken from imperfect individuals, were themselves free from flaw.

"Of course it was necessary that the greater part of my composite woman be taken from one body, since it is of course extremely difficult and dangerous to make many alterations in the so-called vital portions of the human anatomy—the head and the torso. My first task, therefore, was to find a woman who embodied perfection in these essential parts.

"I finally discovered, in the person of a young woman for whom I set a broken leg, all the qualities which I required. By good fortune, she, like yourself, was an orphan with no near relatives living. She had an independent income of about eighteen hundred dollars a year. A well-known university had granted her a bachelor's degree, although she was only seventeen years old. Her interests were mainly for art, literature, and music, but she had also done work in science and philosophy. She was very fond of all forms of outdoor sport, in fact it was while skating that she sustained the injury which first brought her to me.

"Her torso, her neck and her head were absolutely perfect, although the other parts of her body were susceptible to improvement. You may fancy the delicacy with which I broached my purpose to her. Finally, by appealing to her devotion to art, and to the feminine ambition to surpass all others in beauty, I won her consent. She became my adopted daughter, and the heiress to my entire estate.

"I began by providing Eve with a new head of hair. Her own hair was pretty enough—a glossy amber brown,—light and fluffy,—but bobbed, as is the case with nearly all women today. The scalp she now wears used to belong to a Norwegian servant girl, from whom I bought it for five thousand dollars, giving her Eve's hair in exchange. When Ingemar recovered and found that she still had a full head of growing tresses, she was immeasurably pleased. She said her long golden hair had always been too much of a bother to her anyway, and she liked her new hair better.

"In a similar way, I exchanged Eve's imperfect parts for flawless members from other girls, who consented to the transfer for considerations varying from one to twenty thousand dollars. Her ears belong to an English girl, and her lips used to grace a French beauty—but her nose is her own; I merely remodeled it a trifle, reducing its size by removing portions from the inside.

"I got her left arm from a girl who is an expert swimmer, and her right from one who loves tennis, but hadn't played enough to overdevelop it. Two

dancers, chosen from among five hundred chorus girls supplied her legs, at ten thousand each. I found it easier to induce two women to trade each a leg, than to get one to take the risk of sacrificing both limbs. Besides, it very rarely happens that both arms or both legs of any one person are perfect mates.

"The feet belonging to this pair of legs I could not use. They were too deformed by the combined effects of tight shoes and walking on the toes. It was exceedingly difficult to find two perfectly formed feet. Those accustomed to being imprisoned in modern shoes were cramped and abnormal, while the feet of European peasant girls who had always gone barefooted were too coarse and large. I solved the problem by selecting a girl who had always worn sensible shoes, and having her go barefooted for two months before I operated on her.

"I had the hardest job in obtaining a perfect right hand. Her left hand I bought from a masseuse, who was willing to sell her other one also, but I couldn't use it on account of a tiny scar on her little finger. Finally I found a perfect mate to her left hand on the person of a musician. She refused to sell her hand at any price, and I actually had to kidnap her. When she discovered that I intended to take her hand by force, she agreed to submit voluntarily for twenty thousand dollars. Four months after the operation, she was able to play the piano as well as ever. It was just six weeks ago that I put the finishing touches to my masterpiece. Now Eve is completely perfect."

"You speak of exchanging member for member," said Broderick, "I don't understand how you can do that."

"**M**Y assistant, Doctor Mann, and I work together. He removes the member from Eve while I am separating the corresponding part from the other woman. Every incision and cut made by me is reproduced with mathematical exactitude by him, so that the surfaces of the severed portions are precisely identical in outline. Then, while the members are still warm and living, they are exchanged and attached by methods with which every surgeon is familiar. While I am fastening the new part to Eve's body, Doctor Mann performs a similar operation on the other girl. In a month, both have complete and perfect use of their new limbs."

"But surely, all this horrible cutting and slashing must leave some marks."

"Why so? Haven't you ever cut yourself with a razor, and watched the wound heal? In a week or two, the skin over the injured place cannot be distinguished from the rest of your face. It is thus that the skin grows over the places where the parts are joined together. You shall see for yourself. Eve must be ready by now." He pushed the button, and once more the curtains spread apart.

The woman who stood in the opening was attired in the flowing white draperies of Greek antiquity. Except for light, corded sandals her feet were bare. Her hair was parted in the middle, and was gathered in a high roll at the back of her head, from which fell

a thick cluster of curls. It seemed a perfect picture.

At a gesture from Goddard, she stepped forth, every movement a reflection of superb elegance and grace, combined with a singular suggestion of alertness and power.

"Eve," said Goddard. "Let me present Mr. Charles Broderick."

She inclined her head slightly, and held out the faultlessly manicured hand of the masseuse. Broderick took it as if it were a piece of priceless, fragile china. The mere contact of her warm, magnetic fingers sent through his frame a thrill such as he had never before experienced.

"May I kiss it?" he asked in a trembling voice.

A quizzical smile from Goddard. "Young man, never ask for a kiss. If you want one, take it." Broderick lost no time in complying, with fervid lips, to the suggestion of the older man, who continued: "That may not be sound ethics, but it's good practical common sense. Now see if you can find where that hand joins on to the forearm."

In vain Broderick searched for a scar. Not a scratch, or blemish could he discover.

"Here is where I attached her arm," said the doctor, running his finger over her bare shoulder. "I'll defy you to find a mark of the joint. And you remember what I told you about her lips? Would you suspect that they ever belonged to anyone else?"

"Never! Oh, that I might kiss those luscious lips!" And, suddenly recalling Goddard's bit of philosophy concerning osculation, he thrust his arm about her neck and made a sudden effort to kiss her mouth. The doctor stopped him just in time. A crimson flood mantled Eve's cheeks, to the great delight of Broderick, who thus perceived that she was really human and not merely an animated statue.

"Take your time, rash youth," the doctor laughed. "Helen of Troy was not won in five minutes. Eve's lips are not for you—unless—"

"Unless?"

"Unless you agree to certain essential conditions."

"Name them."

"It is a long story. Eve knows it already, and so will not be interested. You will excuse her while I explain."

With supple litesomeness, she stepped to the door. Broderick's eyes followed her until the curtains closed behind her.

Then he turned to Goddard with, "Now for the conditions."

"As you doubtless have surmised, I am looking for a mate for Eve, but he must be as perfect as she is. Since I prefer a college bred man, I enlisted the aid of the physical directors of every large university in the United States. Out of over a hundred candidates sent to me, only three have passed the rigid examination to which I personally submitted them. I'll speak of the other two presently."

"You've been with me now for a week, and my tests have shown that your health, vitality, and your intellect are all excellent. You have no physical defects, except in parts capable of being interchanged."

"What I wish to do is to reconstruct your body, just as I have done in the case of Eve, and thus transform you into a perfect man. This accomplished, you shall marry Eve, assuming the name of Adam Goddard. Thus I expect to found a new race of perfect beings bearing my name."

"The other two men I spoke of passed in all but the last crucial test. One of them went so far as to allow me to put him on the operating bench, but lost his nerve with the first whiff of the ether."

"It is not necessary for you to give your answer today, in fact, I'd rather you would take plenty of time to decide. This is a momentous matter, and is not to be entered into lightly. It will be attended by considerable pain, and some danger, although both these features will be reduced to the minimum. You may see Eve every day if you wish. To-morrow evening at eight-thirty you will be given an opportunity to test some of her mental powers. You'll be here?"

"I certainly shall."

"In the meantime, take good care of your body. To me, it is worth a million dollars."

A Game of Chess

IMAGINE, if you can, the emotions which surged through Broderick's mind as he strode back to his hotel.

Eve had made a profound impression on him—had charmed and fascinated him with her incomparable attractiveness. But he was not in love with her, he told himself, any more than he could be in love with a beautiful statue. How could he love a woman with whom he had not even exchanged two words of conversation? One thing, though, he could not escape—she completely dominated his thoughts, to the exclusion of all else, preventing him from sleeping that night or from engaging in any serious occupation the following day. More and more strongly came the realization that, having seen Eve, the society of all other women would, now and forever, seem insipid. Yet his involuntary admiration for her was rudely tempered by two shocking thoughts; one was the domineering influence which her foster-father exercised over her, and the other was the repulsive notion that she was stuck together, like a picture puzzle or a crazy patchwork quilt.

Repelled as he was by these considerations, they were far outbalanced by the overwhelming force of her many attractive attributes. Three-quarters of an hour before the appointed time, he presented himself at the door of Doctor Goddard's lordly residence.

"You're early," the doctor greeted him.

"Am I? Is Eve at home?"

"Yes. I'll send your card up to her. She'll be down in a few minutes. You're fond of chess, aren't you, Broderick? I judge so from the fact that you represented Princeton in the last cable tournament with Oxford and Cambridge. I've arranged to have you play chess with Eve this evening, if you care to."

Broderick suppressed a smile. "Who ever heard of a woman who could play chess?"

"You will remember questioning the existence of a

perfect woman yesterday. As then, I'll answer—judge for yourself."

He drew from a corner a small, beautifully finished table with a chessboard inlaid in squares of ebony and basswood. The pieces were of ivory, exquisitely carved. The doctor began placing them on the board.

"Let me see, Queen on her color, isn't it? I haven't played for such a long while, I've almost forgotten. Ah, here comes Eve."

Broderick's eyes were already fixed on the green curtains, as if loath to miss a single instant of delight in her loveliness. They parted and she appeared, bearing fresh causes for wonder and admiration. Now her figure was veiled in the graceful folds of a short-waisted empire gown, which smacked of the middle ages, yet suggested the trim smartness of modern fashion. Her arms and neck were bare. The style of her heavily massed golden tresses reminded him of the helmet of Minerva. She bowed, but did not utter a word, as she sat down in the chair which the doctor placed for her.

"White to move, and win," Goddard chuckled; and she immediately responded by leading with her king's pawn.

Broderick played an indifferent, listless game, giving more attention to his opponent's face than to her moves. But suddenly he woke up to find one of his bishops in direct line with an unprotected castle. Without giving the usual careful inspection of the other pieces he swooped down and removed it from its corner. Instantly Eve reached across the board and removed a pawn, putting in its place one of her bishops. Since this placed his king in check, Broderick could do nothing else but take the bishop with his knight. Eve removed the horseman with her queen, which was thus placed in the square next to the king, but protected by a knight.

"Checkmate!" laughed the doctor.

"By Jove, so it is. That's a new one on me. It's almost the same as the fool's mate."

"A modification of it which Eve invented herself. The rook was just left for bait."

"She won't catch me napping next time."

The pieces were replaced, with the whites on Broderick's side of the board. There was no more careless dawdling after that. He started out with the fierce aggressiveness which had won him fame in college matches, but still kept every piece carefully protected. Eve played a defensive game, anticipating his complex plots with the weird magic of a sooth-sayer, and foiling them with consummate ingenuity. He realized that he had met an opponent worthy of his skill; and for the moment, his fascinated interest in this unusual game, overcame the distracting magnetism of her beauty.

He gleefully felt that he had the upper hand, however, and came near venting his satisfaction in a vain boast, "Checkmate in three more moves." Luckily for him, he restrained this ungentlemanly impulse; for Eve, by an unexpected exchange of queens, suddenly broke through his line of attack, and put him on the defensive.

Broderick fought like a cornered lion, and finally won his way out of a precarious hole, by a series of judicious swaps. He had one piece to the good, and he knew that any even exchange was to his benefit. Finally, after over an hour of playing, he found himself with a rock and a knight, while she had only a single pawn to support her king. He moved the castle to a more advantageous position, where, however, it did not bear on her king. With seeming unconcern, she removed her solitary pawn from the protection of her king, placing it directly in the path of the threatening castle. No sooner had Broderick swept the last pawn from the board than Doctor Goddard slapped the table and yelled, "Stalemate. She can't move, and she's not in check. The game is a draw."

"Well, so it is." He glanced at Eve. The smile on her face was not one of triumph. He knew by the glitter in her clear blue eyes that she, like himself, was a keen lover of the game, and that she played for the sport and not for the pleasure of winning.

Goddard snapped open his watch. "Hello, it's past Eve's bedtime. She has to keep regular hours, you know. Mr. Broderick will excuse you now, my dear. If he wants revenge, you can give him a chance some other time."

Without a word, she arose, bowed to the two men and gracefully withdrew.

"Well," said Goddard, "what's the verdict?"

"She certainly knows how to play chess, or else I'm a dub."

"To-morrow, if you wish, you may have an opportunity to test her physical skill. What is your favorite outdoor sport?"

"I have three favorites—skating, swimming and tennis."

"Eve skates and swims unusually well, but tennis will be the best. Shall we say to-morrow afternoon at three?"

"That suits me all right."

A Perfect Sportswoman

THAT night, in the seclusion of his chamber, Broderick was beset by a multitude of unusual ideas and conceptions, some of them felicitous, others distressing. The methodical mind of a chess player he had never expected to find in a woman, and this added another strand to the chord which he felt binding him to her. "A woman who can play chess like that would certainly make a man's home life attractive. He wouldn't need to go to the club for recreation."

Thus he reflected, showing that he was a true devotee of the ancient game of war.

But, though her prowess at chess was to him an indication of superior intellectual caliber, yet the mysterious control which her foster-father seemed to exercise over her suggested mental weakness. Broderick even harbored a suspicion, that Goddard's own mind had engineered his defeat, and that he had merely used Eve as a human tool for translating his thoughts into acts.

Fulminated in his brain the realization that he had never heard her speak. Was she deaf and dumb? Surely

not deaf, since she responded immediately to suggestions addressed to her.

At the end of several hours of musing, Broderick was certain of only one thing—he wanted to see her again.

The tennis match took place at the appointed time on Goddard's private court. Eve was more delectable than ever, for she had shed her unnatural air of statuesque antiquity and was a thoroughly modern girl of the great outdoors. She was attired in a short wide skirt of white flannel and a low-necked, short-sleeved middy blouse. Her blond hair was coiled in thick braids around her head.

Doctor Goddard acted as umpire, calling the score after each point. Eve served first. She began by sending a swift twister which fell just inside the corner of the court, and spun along, hardly an inch above the ground.

"Fifteen love," Goddard called.

In the other court, Eve served with her left hand, with equal speed but not quite so much English, and Broderick hooked over a neat back-handed Lawford.

"Fifteen all," and thus the match progressed, with the honors close to even. Nearly all were deuce games, and hotly contested. Eve played a clever, heady game, putting unusual cuts on the ball, and placing it in out of the way corners. She was constantly shifting her racket from one hand to the other, and seemed equally skilful with either. Broderick depended more upon speed than generalship and won most of his points by vicious chops and tearing smashes.

At the end of an hour of playing, the score stood at eleven and twelve, with Eve serving. Two beautiful Lawfords and a lucky stroke which sent the ball against the top of the net so that it dropped gently into his opponent's court, won three successive points for Broderick. Then Eve made a superb burst of unusual speed and brought the score up to deuce. Time after time, he smashed her left-handed serve, but each time she recovered the point from the other court. At last, with the score at "'vantage out," she served a ball which Broderick had no difficulty in returning. For several minutes, the ball danced back and forth over the net, then Eve drove a pretty Lawford into his back-hand court, immediately following it up to the net. By wonderful footwork, Broderick reached the ball and returned it, but Eve met it at the net and sent it crashing into the opposite court. It bounded fully twenty feet in the air. Broderick dashed back and leaped for the ball, meeting it squarely, but in doing so he crashed into the back-stop, and fell to the ground in a heap.

His high lob fell but a few feet on the other side of the net, where his opponent was ready to receive it. She could have easily dropped it in the center of the court where he could never have reached it; but instead she struck it underhand, sending a rainbow lob to the back court. It gave Broderick just time enough to regain his feet and send the ball back to her. At the end of thirty more seconds of playing, Eve misjudged one of Broderick's smashes and sent it into the net.

"Game and set. Score thirteen to eleven," announced

the doctor. "Broderick, that was marvelous playing."

Broderick leaped the net, grabbed her extended hand, and panted, "Thank you for a wonderful game. You're the best woman player and the finest all around sport I've ever met."

She smiled and bowed in acknowledgement of this splendid compliment, but said nothing.

"Do you want to play any more?" This from the doctor.

Broderick, who was drenched with perspiration and still puffing, answered, "I've had enough for today."

"Yes, that was enough for anyone. I don't care to have Eve over-exert herself. Now you'd better both hurry back to the house and take your showers."

After a refreshing bath and a change of raiment, Broderick joined Goddard in the library.

"Well, how do you like her tennis playing?"

"I certainly enjoy playing with her. She's a clean sport, and refused to take advantage of my accident. After beating her I couldn't very well say that she is an exceptionally good player, but it's the first time I've ever played a twenty-four game set."

They conversed for some time, then Broderick, with an apparent display of embarrassment, said, "There's something that's been worrying me, Doctor, and I'm anxious to know the truth—Is Eve dumb?"

"Dumb?" Goddard exploded. "I should say—But as usual, you'll have to judge for yourself. Come around to-morrow night at eight."

The First Muscale

WHEN he arrived the following evening, Broderick was ushered into the music room.

"I've arranged a private muscale, or rather recital. Eve will entertain us, if you care to have her do so."

"I'd be delighted," was the trite response.

"The first number will be a piano solo. Have you any special preferences in music?"

"I'm very fond of Grieg."

"Very well, we'll have the suite from Peer Gynt."

It was arranged with all the formalities of the concert hall. Eve was dressed in a modern decollete gown. She stepped to the grand piano and immediately struck the opening chords of the Morning Mood. The trill of the lark, the ripple of the brook, all were marvelously counterfeited in this superb combination of tones. Then followed the lugubrious strains of the Death of Asefi the weird, oriental cadences of Anitra's Dance, and last of all the grand climax of thundering chords which culminated in the Hall of the Mountain King.

"Thank you very much," was Broderick's sole comment.

"Next will be a vocal solo," the doctor announced. The younger man held his breath in blissful expectation. At last he was to hear her voice. He was not disappointed, for her tones were characterized by a rich mellifluence which appealed to his layman's musical sense far more than those of any professional diva.

The piece she sang was unfamiliar to him, but was fraught with intricacies in the form of runs and sudden transitions from low to high notes, which displayed

unquestionable technical skill. It fascinated him, but not nearly so potently as the exquisite lyrical orchid, "I love you truly," which she sang as an encore.

At the close of this selection, Doctor Goddard arose; and, offering a conventional excuse, quietly withdrew. Left alone with the perfect woman, Broderick experienced a singular shyness, which was entirely foreign to his nature, for he was usually quite at ease in feminine society. He wanted to pay her a compliment, yet hesitated lest it sound like the adulation of a sycophant. At last he said, "You have a beautiful voice, Miss Goddard."

Without a suggestion of conceit or feigned modesty, she answered simply, "I'm glad you like it. But I know you sing also. Won't you try this with me?"

She opened a sheet of music, which was by no means unfamiliar to him. It was a duet in which the woman's voice and the man's took alternate parts, finally blending into a united, harmonious appeal:

"Oh love, stay one moment, oh love, stay one moment;
One moment of ecstasy, thy heart throbbing on my
breast.
Life's long dream is o'er, life's dream is o'er.
Farewell, farewell."

So perfectly did their voices blend that an expert critic would have judged they had practised together for months. Several other songs they essayed, some complex, some simple; some sentimental, others humorous.

At last she turned to him with a smile and said, "Pardon my seeming inhospitableness if I remind you that my father is very exacting and insists that I retire promptly at ten. I know you won't be offended, and I hope we are good enough friends to be perfectly frank with each other. But before you go, I want you to promise to bring your violin with you next time you come."

"But I play only in a very amateurish way."

"We are both amateurs, and enjoy our art all the more because we pursue it for pleasure alone. From your singing, I know you have the soul of a musician. You'll bring your violin and your favorite pieces of music, won't you?"

"If you wish. And may I see you to-morrow evening?"

"I shall be very glad to have you call to-morrow."

The following evening Broderick found Eva alone in the music room. She rose from the piano bench to greet him.

"Father is working at some experiments, and asks to be excused."

A courteous bow was Broderick's response; but he did not stultify himself by any insincere expressions of regret.

"I see you didn't forget," she remarked anent the instrument case which he carried.

"No, I didn't forget, much as I hesitate to play before you. Please don't be too critical, will you?"

"I don't expect to have anything to criticise. Shall we try something right away? I just love to play ac-

companiments," and she struck the A key on the piano.

Imbued with the desire to make a good impression, and inspired by her faultless accompaniments, Broderick played with a brilliancy and fervor which astonished himself. Evelyn complimented him in the most cogent manner possible, by continually asking him to play more.

At the end of an exquisite Strauss waltz, she exclaimed, "Oh, wouldn't that be wonderful to dance to? I wish we could play and dance at the same time."

"Do you like to dance?"

"Indeed I do. I enjoy dancing better than any other form of amusement."

"There's the phonograph," he suggested.

"And we have the record of that very waltz. I'll start it while you roll up the rug."

A moment later, the phonograph began to send forth its regular cadences, and Eve fluttered into Broderick's arms. He was accustomed enough to the feel of a woman's body in close proximity to his, but Eve was unquestionably different. The fragrance of her hair, the gentle heaving of her womanly bosom, the touch of her fingers on his arm thrilled him with ecstatic, yet pure emotions.

And if she charmed him by her mere proximity, her incomparable skill as a dancer fascinated him. Though he danced with original abandon, following no set rules or conventional steps, she followed him as if her muscles were dominated synchronously by the same nerves which actuated his.

The great clock in the hall boomed out ten resonant strokes.

"The witching hour," smiled Eve. "I have a fairy godfather who is more exacting than Cinderella's godmother by two hours; and unless I obey him, I am in danger of losing the gifts he bestowed upon me."

Broderick took the hint and his departure.

The Proposal

THE daily meetings soon became a matter of custom rather than appointment. Though her chess playing, her athletic prowess, her music, and her dancing had in turn attracted and charmed him, Broderick soon discovered that he enjoyed conversing with her most of all. There seemed to be no subject in literature, art, science or philosophy interesting to him, which was not at least passably familiar to Eve. He learned that she had been abroad for a year, and had a fluent command of French, German, Italian and Spanish.

One evening the talk turned to John Stuart Mill. "What is your idea of perfect happiness?" she asked.

Fervently he responded, "My idea of perfect happiness is to hold you in my arms and press my lips against yours."

Surprised and hurt by his seeming rudeness, she frowned, "Oh, you don't mean that. It's so unworthy of you."

Genuine contrition gripped him. "No, I didn't mean it exactly that way. But if you ask me to paint a picture of Paradise, it would include a little six-room bungalow, presided over by the one perfect woman in the world.

There would be a lawn, and a garden, and two or three youngsters to rush out and meet me when I came home tired after the day's work."

"That's a little better."

"Oh, it's very commonplace, and rather lacking in ambition, I know, but I'm dreadfully selfish, and I think that the greatest happiness comes to a man through his own home and family. Now tell me what your idea of happiness is."

"Oh, I've had such lofty aspirations—altogether impossible and impractical, I fear. If I could only accomplish something really big—something which would be a blessing to all humanity—like the invention of the radio, for instance, then I should indeed be happy. But, of course, that can never be. So I do the next best thing, and get all the pleasure I can out of working with my hands for those whom I love. Would you like to see my workshop?"

Anticipating his assent, she led the way to a small room at the rear of the building. "Here is *my* room. I consider it more characteristic of me than my sleeping chamber. Father won't let me have all the apparatus I'd like, for fear I'll injure some of my precious members, but I manage to do some work in brass and leather."

Broderick cast interested glances about the room. He was struck with the neat orderliness, which nevertheless did not seem to remove the impression that it was put to frequent use.

As Eve saw him stop to inspect an object lying on the bench, an involuntary cry escaped her. A second look explained the cause. The article was a card case of leather, beautifully embossed, and Broderick was astounded to see his own initials worked in the cover.

"Oh, I didn't want you to see that. I made it for you. To-morrow is your birthday."

"Why, so it is. I'd forgotten it myself. How in the world did you know?"

"I got it from the application blank you made out for father."

"It certainly was thoughtful of you. I wish I knew how to express my appreciation. May I keep it now?"

"Yes, with my best wishes."

"Thank you. And now I want to talk with you about a matter of great importance to both of us, something which we both must have had in mind right along, though we have scrupulously avoided mentioning it. You know what I mean?"

"You mean father's proposal?"

"Yes, and I want to supplement it with a proposal of my own. First, let me tell you that I love you very, very much, so much that I can think of nothing else. Then I want to ask you if you, of your own free will, without thought of the obligations you owe your foster-father, agree to the proposition he made me. In other words, do you wish me to submit to the operation which he purposed to perform on me?"

"Not unless you feel inclined to agree of *your* own free will."

"But I do feel so inclined. I'd do anything in the world for you, Eve."

"Then it will please me very much to have you do

what father asks of you, otherwise I cannot marry you."

"And from now on, you and I are engaged?"

"Not yet. I have made a promise to father. Not until after—"

"I shall see him to-night, and tell him that the sooner he starts, the better it will please me."

The Operation

DOCTOR GODDARD had anticipated Broderick's decision almost to the minute. He had everything in readiness for the first operation, even to the man who was to provide the new member—a perfect right leg.

The scenes of the operating room were new to Broderick, who had not experienced a sick day since childhood. With undisguised interest he watched the careful preparations; and when the sickening reek of ether reached his nostrils, he welcomed it as a harbinger of new experiences. Heavy, irresistible drowsiness slowly took possession of him; then he had the sensation of falling, or rather drifting through space; and finally came a thought-free void.

When he again recovered consciousness, he found himself lying on a bed in a many windowed room, which seemed filled to the bursting point with sunlight. Doctor Goddard was bending over him.

"How do you feel?"

"Oh, all right. Just a little dizzy and sick to my stomach."

"That will soon pass off. Does your leg ache?"

This was the first reminder of the reality of the operation. At first he was not sure that he had a right leg, and he had to feel with his hand to make certain. He was surprised at the touch of his bare skin, instead of the bandages he had expected. Very cautiously, he wriggled his great toe. It seemed to work very naturally.

"May I move my leg?" he asked.

"Surely. You can do anything you want with it."

Broderick elevated his knee, twisted his ankle, and began to kick like a man whose foot has fallen asleep. Then he threw back the covers of the bed and sat up.

"Try to walk on it," suggested the doctor; and Broderick complied, with the tread of a man suffering from a severe attack of the gout. Five minutes of cautious limping brought him to a chair. Here he sat down, and began to examine his right leg. With a puzzled expression on his face, he appealed to the doctor. "Do you know, that leg looks exactly like the one I've been using for the last twenty odd years?"

Goddard smiled. "It is the same one."

"You mean you didn't perform the operation?" Genuine disappointment was echoed by the question.

"No, I didn't undertake it. Get into your clothes, and I'll explain."

"First," the doctor continued, "I want to apologize to you and to confess that I have deceived you from the very start. Eve is not an adopted child but is my own natural daughter. Moreover, she is not perfect, though she comes as near to it as careful nurture and training could make a woman. As for my scheme for creating a perfect being, that was but a yarn invented for the

occasion. It is accurate enough in theory, but I do not feel far enough advanced to undertake it in actual practice as yet.

"You naturally wonder what it is all about. To me, Eve's happiness is the most important consideration in the world; and I believe that she can only attain happiness through marriage with a man who is all that a man should be. There was just one thing concerning which I wanted to assure myself, and the story of the perfect woman was the last crucial test. This you have passed successfully, and you have convinced Eve and me that you possess the highest form of courage—the courage which prompts a man to risk life and limb in the interests of science and human achievement.

"Now, I suppose you would like to see Eve. You will find her in the room where you first met her. And, before you go, perhaps it might interest you to know that the nude figure you saw that first day, was nothing but a life-sized oil painting, which was so well done and so skilfully lighted that it looked just like a living woman. No doubt you've heard of 'Stella' and similar illusions."

With a mumbled commonplace of some sort, Broderick left the room, and, his mind teeming with intoxicating, puzzling thoughts, strode along the corridor.

He found Eve clinging to the curtains through which she had first stepped into his life.

Anxiously she greeted him, "Has father told you?"

"Yes. Everything."

"And now that you know, what do you think of me?"

By way of answer, he gathered her up in his arms, and crushed his lips to hers in a fervid, suffocating kiss. "That is what I think of you," he panted. "I love you a million times more, now that I know that you are a real woman, and that every part of you is your own dear self."

"But I'm far from perfect."

"To me, you shall always be more than perfect—my superperfect bride."

"Are you sure you have no fault to find with me?"

"There have been only two things about you that I objected to. One was that you were supposed to be created in an unnatural way, but that, of course, is removed now. And the other—"

"Yes?"

"You don't mind if I tell you? The other was the dominating influence which your father seems to have over you."

"Father dominating me?" she laughed. "My, but that's rich! Why, I just twirl Father around my little finger. He does everything I tell him to. Listen. I met you once at a party, years and years ago. You don't remember, because I was a mere youngster and therefore beneath your notice. But I have never forgotten; and—well—the fact of the matter is that you were picked out, not by father, but by *me!*"

THE END

What Do You Know?

READERS of AMAZING STORIES have frequently commented upon the fact that there is more actual knowledge to be gained through reading its pages than from many a textbook. Moreover, most of the stories are written in a popular vein, making it possible for any one to grasp important facts.

The questions which we give below are all answered on the pages as listed at the end of the questions. Please see if you can answer the questions without looking for the answer, and see how well you check up on your general knowledge.

1. Give a typical fourth dimensional equation. (See page 296.)
2. How did Carrel, the famous surgeon, join blood vessels in living subjects? (See pages 302-303.)
3. Can you give a resumé of the development of the basic laws of energy? (See page 310.)
4. What new alloy of high permeability has been discovered in one of the great electrical laboratories. (See page 312.)
5. What is plankton? (See page 366.)
6. What are the characteristics of the famous stone images on Easter Island? (See page 366.)
7. Where is the Agassiz triangle? (See page 368.)
8. What examples of the temperatures endurable by man can be cited? (See page 336.)
9. In Europe, the winter just past was of unusual severity. What other winters of great and prolonged cold are on record? (See page 336.)
10. Give some examples of low Arctic temperatures. (See page 336.)
11. Why did not the passage from Bering Strait to Baffin Bay in the middle of the last century demonstrate the existence of the northwest passage, finally traversed by Amundsen in an auxilliary motor vessel, "The Gjöa" in the present century? (See pages 346-347.)
12. What is the coloring matter in red snow? (See page 352.)