

Mr. Croaker

By MARTHA V. MONROE.

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"I wouldn't be John Croaker's wife for anything," said Mrs. Busby to Mrs. Emmons.

"Why not?"

"He's well named. He's a croaker, true enough. Besides, he's a grumbler, always snarling. The nicest man in this town is Ernest Schoefield. He always has a pleasant word for every one, is always smiling, and—"

"I have no use for him."

"Why not?"

"I prefer Croaker. Somehow I never feel sure of Schoefield's nice sayings. When Croaker grows at me I know what I'm getting."

"I reckon that's because you're kind of queer yourself."

Mrs. Croaker had trouble at times with her husband. When she asked him for \$5 to buy some needed article he would say, with a grumbling tone: "You can't get anything but the cheapest for \$5, and there is no economy in cheap things. If you're going to get it at all, get the best." Then he would hand her double the amount she asked.

A little daughter, Alice, the only child of the Croakers, would occasionally get a pleasant word from her father, but she was the only one who ever succeeded in doing so. Andy Schoefield, a son of the Schoefields mentioned by Mrs. Busby, was a school-mate of Alice's, and the children were growing up to be lovers. Andy's father didn't like the match and warned his boy against it. As for Croaker, he simply croaked as to the horrible future in store for the couple, since neither of them would have anything on which to begin life.

"Why, Ernest Schoefield is rich," protested Mrs. Croaker.

"How do you know?" snarled her husband.

"Why, everybody says he is, and he's just bought a \$3,000 automobile."

"Oh, he has, has he? Has he paid for it?"

When Andy Schoefield became of age and Alice was nineteen it was evident that their hearts were set upon each other. It was about this time that Mrs. Busby and Mrs. Emmons met one morning at the greengrocer's.

"Isn't it awful about Mr. Schoefield?" said Mrs. Busby.

"What's awful?"

"Why, haven't you heard? He's failed and stuck all his intimate friends. And such a nice man too!"

"Well, Mrs. Busby, you know I don't fancy these people that are so nice to everybody. Their niceness is usually only skin deep."

"They say he was living beyond his means."

"Just so. That kind of persons usually do. It's their disposition to look on the best side of everything, so they don't see the dark side. If they'd keep an eye on the dark side they'd come out better in the end. The bright side don't need watchin'."

"And just think how hard it is on the young lovers, Andy Schoefield and Alice Croaker. Everybody said what a nice thing her being engaged to Andy was. Mr. Schoefield gave out only a day or two before he skipped that he was going to give the couple a house."

"Reckon that was to keep up confidence."

"Well, I'm sorry for Alice. I should think she'd want to get married if only to get away from that crusty old father of hers."

"Oh, I don't think Mr. Croaker's so bad! I kind of like to have him snarl at me once in awhile. I know he ain't foolin' me, and that's more than I know of these people who are always givin' me soft soder. Good mornin', Mrs. Busby!"

Mrs. Busby went away muttering,

"The reason she likes old Croaker is she's one of the same kind herself."

The Schoefield failure threw the Schoefield and the Croaker families both into a painful condition. First there was the disgrace attached to

Andy's father running away to get rid of criminal proceedings against him; second, Andy hadn't a cent laid up; third, to mention marriage under the circumstances to Mr. Croaker was considered by Mrs. Croaker and Alice to be equivalent to shaking a red rag before a mad bull.

However, Andy had a position paying him \$20 a week, and on this the two resolved to be married. Mrs. Croaker broke the news to her husband, expecting some violent expressions, and she got them.

"They're going to be married on \$20 a week, are they? That's about enough to pay house rent."

"They can board at first, and if you can spare, say, \$100 for clothes for Alice she won't need to spend anything in that way for a year or two."

"A hundred dollars! That's all rot."

"Well, fifty then."

Mr. Croaker went off to his den, where he kept his desk, and coming back, handed his wife a check for \$1,000.

"Why, pa, what does this mean?"

"Trousseau," grunted the old man and went away grumbling about the folly of young people trying to bite off more than they could chew.

A third meeting occurred between Mrs. Busby and Mrs. Emmons.

"Mornin', Mrs. Emmons. Have you heard about that \$10,000 house that crusty old Croaker gave his daughter when she was married?"

"No; did he? I always said I'd rather have that man hit me than another man talk soft to me."

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Heart to Heart Talks.

By EDWIN A. NYE.

FLOWERS FOR FATHER.

This true incident, which at the time was printed in the Madison (Wis.) newspapers, is worth retelling.

President Roosevelt was holding a reception in the office of Governor La Follette at Madison.

Two little girls edged their way through the crowd. Although not as well dressed as some of the other girls, their raiment was neat and clean.

Governor La Follette noted the presence of the children and asked them if they wanted to meet the president.

Abashed because of the attention paid them, the girls shrank back, but the governor pressed them. Finally the elder one said to the governor: "We don't want that, but we would like something else."

"What would you like?" kindly in-

quired the president.

"We'd like that flower," volunteered the smaller one. "Papa is sick at home and couldn't come, and we'd like to give him a flower."

She was given the flower, a large American Beauty rose, and was so happy she broke down and cried.

Then willing hands stripped several of the roses, and the little ones were given all the flowers they could carry—and a carriage to go home in.

Not much of a story?

Perhaps not. Only there is in it the touch that makes the world kin—kin it may be for an impulsive moment, but kin.

Some of those reception guests saw only the little girls, excited, flushed, tearful, happy. Others saw this picture:

A sick chamber lacking many comforts—the wan face of a father, a lonely waiting for his little ones, a brightening look when the tots came home in the carriage—loads of flowers, tears, joy.

And those precious kids!

In the midst of the stirring spectacle they did not forget father. While others were moved by the magnificent toilet-of the grand ladies and by the presence of the notables, these faithful dears desired but one thing—a flower for sick papa.

And that father?

Whatever his circumstances, he was richer than Rockefeller.

Manuscripts.

The word manuscript means hand-written. Inscriptions upon stone and metal wax were, of course, "made by hand," as directly as words are written on paper, but none of these records appears ever to have been called manuscript. This word was restricted to copies made on parchment, vellum, paper and similar material which could be folded or rolled.

BRIDGE CLUB HAS MEETING.

O. W. Eastham and Mrs. M. D. Latourette Win Prizes.

The first meeting of the Tuesday Night Bridge Club for this season was held this week at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Jones, and a most enjoyable time was had.

The evening was devoted to bridge, and the prizes, a silver salad fork and a doily, were won by O. W. Eastham and Mrs. M. D. Latourette. Refreshments were served.

The decorations of bright colored autumn leaves and roses.

Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. John Adams, Mr. and Mrs. O. W. Eastham, Dr. and Mrs. Beattie, Mr. and Mrs. B. T. McHain, Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Straight, Mr. and Mrs. George Hankins, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Latourette, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Shewman, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Porter, Miss Pratt.

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Hotel Arrivals.

The following are registered at the Electric Hotel: G. R. Young, Portland; J. A. Spalding, Portland; L. Desenberg, San Francisco; Edwin Gray, New York; S. H. Evans, Rudolph Grossenbacher, Mr. Wilson, J. C. Barnhart and wife, B. M. Waller and wife, E. A. Woodworth, Buffalo, N. Y.; C. L. Featherstone, Chicago; C. A. Rodgers, Portland.

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REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS.

Lenora C. and Henry Atwater to Arthur W. Luther, lots 4, 5, 6, Tract 2, Woodmont; \$1,832.

J. W. Coughlin to Henry R. Math, lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, block 12, Nob Hill; \$1.

Matthias and Wilhelmina Kluge to Rudolph Grossenbacher, lot 8, block 17, Windsor; \$125.

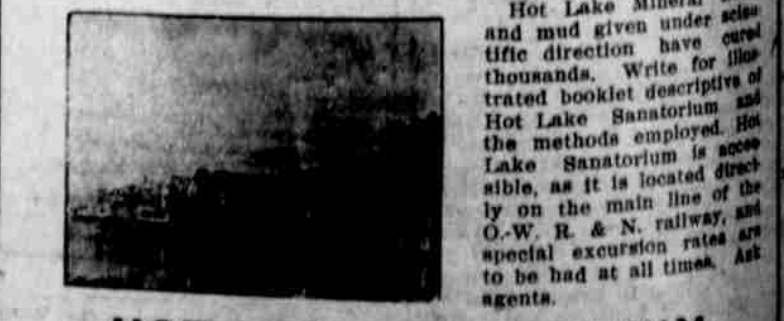
Emil Wiesse to W. A. Coplin, 100 acres of section 28, township 1 north, range 3 east; \$1.

Arthur A. Havill and Mrs. Heurten to Sarah E. Nelson, lots 2, 3, 6, block 11, Robertson; \$10.

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