

THE TRADE ADVENTURE OF A DESERTED WIFE.

A Real Romance of the Business World.



MARY HILTON always was impressionable. She is as much so today as she was when, as a country girl, she fell in love with the photograph of Harry Hilton. When she went to the theater and saw him act she was not disillusioned. She thought he was the handsomest man in the world, and she thought he was a wonderful actor. He was fairly good looking, but he was only an ordinary player. A lot of girls fall in love with actors—or think they do. It is a disease with them—like the measles—and lasts about as long. It was not so with Mary Hilton.

She met her actor-hero, and a year or two later they married. For a time their life was ideal—or so it seemed to Mrs. Hilton. Actors, as a rule, do not make good husbands. Hilton was no exception. His wife was mild and kindly and home-loving. He was blithe, gay care-free. A man of the stage, if he is handsome and attractive, has many admirers and gets a lot of flattery. He has to have an unusual amount of sense or the flattery will turn his head. Absence makes the home ties looser. The actor on the road must be very constant, or he is likely to slight the wife at home.

When Mrs. Hilton had been married three or four years she thought it prudent to go on the stage. She wanted to be near her husband. Long absences nearly broke her heart. She studied in a dramatic school for a while, and then got a small part in the company in which her husband was engaged. For a time she was happy, but not for long. She was not suited for the stage. She was intelligent, graceful and good looking—but she lacked the dramatic spirit. She did not act, she simply tried to act. If it had not been for her husband she probably never would have been engaged.

They played together a few seasons, he getting a fair salary and she getting a nominal sum. Then she discovered what all her friends had known for a long time. The marital ties were frayed to the actor. After that season Mrs. Hilton remained home. Her husband's affection was dead. Another woman engaged his attention. For a few years Mrs. Hilton suffered all the sorrows and bitterness of a neglected wife. Then came the crowning disaster of her romance. She was deserted! Left without support!

She was living in a New York hotel when this blow fell. Of money she had only 85 cents. She never had earned a dollar in her life, except the little that had come to her from her work on the stage. She knew she could not earn her living as an actress. She had no one to turn to in this extremity. She had to earn her bread or starve.

There is one thing a home-loving woman always considers first as a means of livelihood when she is in such a predicament as Mrs. Hilton was placed. A boarding-house appears to her to be the one thing she is best qualified to conduct. It offers a refuge to her, and there is a promise of profit. Mrs. Hilton had some old furniture from her childhood home. She had some jewelry, too. She pawned the jewelry, paid her bill at the hotel, rented a small house, brought her furniture to town and opened a boarding-house. It was desperately hard. Good servants are scarce. They are rare, indeed, in New York. Boarders are finicky and hard to please. Some are dishonest and do not pay their bills.

The year that Mrs. Hilton conducted her boarding-house was like a nightmare. She had a desperate time paying the accounts of the butcher, the baker and the landlady. Then, in despair, she gave it up. She was poorer than when she started. She had only one recourse left—her needle. She had been taught to sew and she sewed very well. She knew Mrs. Osborn, the dressmaker, who for a season or two ran a playhouse in New York. Mrs. Osborn gave \$10 a week to her and she toiled with the other dressmakers in the workshop in East Forty-sixth street. The \$10 a week was barely enough to keep body and soul together, but she was earning a living, and that was something to relieve the dreariness of her existence. It was a long, long time before there was a ray of sunshine for her. But when it came she was overjoyed. She got a raise! Her weekly wage was increased to \$15 a week!

That increase in pay was a great and stimulating influence in her life. It was an evidence of success, the first she ever had received. She stockinged with more energy after that and then she began to dream. She worked so hard and proved herself of so much value that more reward came to her. She got \$20 a week, and then she got \$25. She husbanded a fair share of her

earnings, for she was planning for the future. When she had been with Mrs. Osborn three years she resigned. She had met many of her employer's patrons, and had come to know something of their needs. She thought she saw an opportunity to branch out for herself. She rented one room in a side street off Fifth avenue and she opened a shop of her own. It was a shop the like of which there was not another in all the city of New York.

One day she sent out to nearly 1000 of the rich women of the metropolis an announcement of her undertaking. It took nearly a year of her savings to pay for the beautifully engraved stationery she ordered. Her announcement told those to whom it was addressed that she would do repairing of silk stockings and of torn or injured lace work. She was to do art work and mending. The most artistic mending that human hand could accomplish would be her specialty.

There are a lot of extravagant women in New York. There are many prudent ones, too, even among the very rich. Some women spend fabulous sums for stockings and remarkable sums for lace work with which they garnish their dresses. What these lace accessories to the dresses cost may be imagined when it is said that many of the stockings that came to Mrs. Hilton for "treatment" cost from \$50 to \$75 a pair. They had inlets of the finest real thread lace, of cobweb-like texture, and most difficult to handle. Exquisitely hand-embroidered silk stockings of the very sheerest mesh and most exquisite sheen were handled by her with a skill that amazed and delighted the owners. Thread lace handkerchiefs, wedding veils, rose point lace, some of them heirlooms for many generations, were made almost as good as new by her delicate touch and expert knowledge of the mending needle.

She is a remarkable needlewoman and she did the very best within her power on this work. She pleased her patrons so well that they were glad to tell their friends of her rare ability. Orders came to her, slow at first, but gradually in larger numbers. Soon she had all she could attend to with her own hands. She did not under-value herself. She charged well for what she did. Within six months she had to have assistance. It was difficult to find as accomplished a needlewoman as herself, but she got one. Every bit of lace and every stocking that came to her for mending got the greatest of care. She gave no reason for complaint to those who employed her. Then she had to get more assistance. Her little shop became crowded. She could get no more room

in that building, and she hired space in the building next door. Her patrons were so well pleased with her work for them that they asked her to do other things for them. Some of them wanted her to make the daintiest of negligees for them. She did. Then they wanted indoor gowns, bedroom frocks and a variety of garments that it is hard for a man to describe. Her chief difficulty at this time was in discovering women of the refinement of taste and touch to make the filmy, charming confections with all the exquisiteness of detail that would win the highest appreciation of the purchasers.

There are so many women of unlimited means in this city who can afford to indulge their fancy for exquisite things that they know no other woman will possess and that cannot very well be duplicated that Mrs. Hilton felt she had a field all to herself if she gave distinction to everything she turned out of her shop. She is an artist—an artist with her needle—and in order to safeguard her business she would employ no woman who did not measure up to her requirements.

Her business grew so that it embarrassed her. She had to have more room or she would drive many of her patrons away. So she did a thing that was daring, a thing she never would have thought of a few years before. She leased the whole building next to the one in which she started repairing stockings. It was one of those old-fashioned brownstone dwellings, four stories high. She had the front torn out and a Colonial front built in its place, simple, chaste and beautiful.

The ground floor she had fitted up for a store. The building was so close to Fifth avenue that this store brought a handsome rental. She took the rest of the building for her own business. The entrance to her establishment had an old style knocker in keeping with the Colonial scheme of the exterior of the structure. The front bedroom on the second floor she made a private office. The great front room on the second floor, which had been the parlor, she transformed into her business reception room. She lined one of the walls with bookcases and mirrors of the old style. The frames of these mirrors are decorated in Colonial form with picturesque pastoral scenes, in which charming ladies in costumes now quaint, but none the less charming, appear. She had a great old-time fireplace built in with an inglenook, in which deep lounging seats on either side of the fireplace. She had flowers throughout the room, growing plants in copper jardinières, a grand piano and a variety of pictures. The furniture was artistic and old. Most of it came down to her from her ancestors. On the first floor there was an extension which probably was used as a kitchen in the days when the house was a private residence. Mrs. Hilton used the roof of this extension for a roof garden and an open air tearoom in the daytime. It was enclosed in lattice work and

had an awning cover which could be rolled up when not in use. At night in summer she uses this roof garden as an open air bedroom.

Everything about the establishment speaks refinement, elegance, good taste. Everything is in keeping, from the old style door plate to the simplest detail of the lined glass of the bookcases. There is little show of the business of the proprietor. The people who go there do not appear as purchasers in a shop, but as callers to consult an artist upon some work. There is, of course, a show room in which they see some of the delicate fabrics which delight their hearts.

It took a lot of experience for Mrs. Hilton to risk so large an expenditure as she did in this building, but her judgment has been vindicated. Her business has grown and she has made money until now she is in easy circumstances. She has her own automobile and she has her own country place, and she has a private secretary. Whatever spare time she has she employs in hunting the country over for additional decorations for her rooms. She loves old things. She has a spinnet, an old four-poster bed, a clock that is more than a century old, pewter and brass ware over which a collector would go in ecstasy, mirrors that were ancient when our great-grandmothers were young, china of the rarest make, chairs and willow ware of a former age, and much more of the kind that connoisseurs go into raptures over.

She mends laces and she mends silk stockings just as she did in the little room where she started, but the mending makes only a very small portion of her work today. The bulk of her labor is in the creation of the charming intimate garments that women wear only in the privacy of their rooms. She has made a business all for herself. Everything she turns out is hand made and of the finest of needlework. Everything she makes costs a lot of money—but the people who buy have no need to count their dollars. Now she is crowded for space again. She needs more room. Maybe she will buy the house next door and use that as an annex. She finds the greatest difficulty today, as she did soon after she started, in obtaining help of the rightest class. She wants no one who is not her equal as a needlewoman, and they seem to be extremely scarce. She tries to employ only gentlewomen who have been known luxury and who have become reduced in circumstances. She realizes that women who have been happy and who have known affluence have the best realization of the desires of those wealthy women who patronize the establishment.

As she has known privation and struggle and sorrow, she has a deep sympathy for all who are suffering or sorrowing. She has a great love for animals. One of her pets is a brindle bull—a thoroughbred—she is devoted to her. She has trained him not to bother cats. She has a black cat, Nig, whose favorite resting place is on her neck. He climbs up on her and stretches out with his forepaws down one side of her neck and his hind paws down the other until it seems as if she was wearing a black necktie. She always keeps a bowl of milk close to her roof garden for her pensioners. These pensioners are the waifs and strays of the wide world of the neighborhood. She does not want a poor little deserted mother cat to go hungry.

In her love for helpless animals she is a good deal like Cora Dow, of Cincinnati. Mrs. Hilton does not tell, but her friends do tell, of how she has bought poor, overworked, broken-down horses, that she saw struggling with heavy loads in the street, and how she has sent them away to spend the rest of their days at her country place.

Not long ago the husband who deserted her died. It is eight years since she started in business for herself. She attended his funeral at the Little Church of the West, where the church where actors wed and in which the funeral services of many of them are held.

Mrs. Hilton has today the first photograph she saw of her husband—before she met the man who became her husband. She has all the pictures of him she ever gathered. They are her treasures. He is, to her, today the same as he was the day they met. She thinks of him as the handsomest man and the most successful actor of the world has known. At the funeral she saw the woman who won him from her and she saw their child. There is no bitterness in her heart against the kind and woman, for she can think unkindly of no one who loved Harry Hilton. (Copyright, 1912, by Richard Spillane.)

FINDING HOMES FOR STRAY CATS.

Portland Has Rescue Home Which Is Solving the Cat Problem by Caring for the Homeless Felines and Locating Good Firesides for Them. Hundred or More Pussies Have Gay Time in Country Home Near City Limits.

Do you want a cat? If you do and are not too particular about pedigree you probably can find one to suit somewhere about the kitchen or the door yard or under the house at Portland's rescue home for stray cats, which has been opened at the home of Mrs. Lillian Short, on the Taylor's Ferry road about a mile west of the Riverview Cemetery. Out of a hundred or more pussies, each looking for a good home, it probably will be possible for you to select one to suit even to the most minute parentage.

There are big cats, little cats, long cats, short cats, yellow cats and black cats, tom cats, pussy cats, plain cats and most all other makes, grades, sizes and colors and each and every one is anxious to be introduced to someone who has a good warm fireside. There is nothing particularly elegant about any of them as regards pedigree or parentage nor is any of them unusually attractive or valuable, but they are cats just the same.

Few people know that Portland has a full-fledged rescue home for stray cats, yet it has been established many months and has been doing a rushing business in solving Portland's stray cat problem. To the efforts of those behind it many a neighborhood can extend thanks for the discontinuance of the stray cat pest, and many a peace loving citizen can rejoice over the termination of midnight back fence serenades.

The Oregon Humane Society which is supporting the rescue home has not given it a name yet. Some call it a cat infirmary, others a cat exchange and still others a cat farm. Neighbors of Mrs. Short call it other names. But whatever the name it is certainly well supplied with cats. They loiter all over the kitchen floor in Mrs. Short's home, which has been turned over

to them; they grace the front porch and the rear, the dining-room, the hearth, the doorway, the barn and the nearby mountain side. It is hard to leave the house without stepping on a cat of some kind. The only time the landscape is not decorated with cats is when there is a stray dog in the neighborhood. At such times there is not a puss to be seen on the outside. The only evidence of the catdom then is seen under the house in the form of long rows of big round eyes. If the dog gets too near the house there is generally a chorus of hiss, hiss, sounding much like a disturbed hornet's nest or an incipient volcanic eruption. At such times there is much excitement in Portland's cat infirmary.

No Place for Dogs. But such occurrences are unusual, because most peace-loving dogs as well as many trouble seekers have found that the cat farm is not a good place in which to start "something." Even the big bull pup of a near by neighbor that took exception to the farm when it was first established, has learned that it is an exceptionally fine locality to leave alone. Since he tried to amuse himself by chasing a couple of kittens and was ridden home by a mother cat, with long claws and sharp teeth he has attended strictly to his own affairs in his own backyard.

Every other dog in the neighborhood learned the same lesson. It is only occasionally that a new dog in the neighborhood or a tramp dog ventures into the place.

The cat home was established by the Oregon Humane Society as a means of protecting cats which happen to lose out at the family fireside and become victims of small boys, big rocks and other circumstances. The cat without a home is always welcome. It aims to be gathered up as many of the stray

cats of the city as possible and give them training in fireside etiquette preparatory to their being turned over to persons desiring them as pets. Families of kittens are taken and raised for pets and cats which become crippled or injured in fights or as the result of violence on the part of boys are given medical attention.

The home has become one of the important branches of the humane work of the humane society. Besides keeping a careful lookout for new inmates the society members and workers are always busy providing ways and means of getting cats and would-be owners together.

Portland, the same as other big

cities, has a cat problem. It is as much a problem to know how best to keep the town from becoming overrun with stray cats as it is to keep down the dogs. The dog problem is solved by the dog-catcher, who has humane ways of killing the canines off, but the cats cannot be handled so well in that way. They generally confine their wanderings to the night time and are hard to catch. Stray cats are considered as much a nuisance as stray dogs, not only because they are on earth but also because they are given to night entertainments. Dogs show themselves in the daytime and are nuisances in many ways. Cats appear at night and

are a nuisance in one particular way.

Most people consider their class of music tiring and immodest.

Cats Have Great Follies. The cat farm furnishes a place where the cats can enjoy all their back fence escapades without causing any discomfort to very many people who are trying to sleep. There are plenty of fences, window sills, roofs, trees and other places at Mrs. Short's home and the only hearers are the trees and occasional wandering hoot owl.

Just how many cats there are at the rescue home nobody knows, not even Mrs. Short, but suffice it to say that there are plenty. Mrs. Short knows

many of them by their first names, but new families at the home are so frequent that it is hard to keep tab on either the names or the numbers of all. The count of one day generally is supplemented the next by new arrivals from outside or within the home.

Efforts to take a census of the population at the home are most effective along about meal time when, at the sound of Mrs. Short's call there is always a generous response from every direction. The "meow" call has a strange charm for the pussies. They certainly make short work of milk, meat and other varieties of cat food which are placed in long pans in front of the house. From the first call until the pans are all carefully cleaned up there is a most interesting display of feline appetites.

Feeding time is generally accompanied by fusses which sometimes end up in fights. Each cat seems to have his heart set on getting his full share of the meal and as much of the share of the rest as possible. The result varies each day, but generally it is a free-for-all fight, which is accompanied by a snow storm of cat hair. The farm has its leaders in the form of ill-natured male cats. It is necessary oftentimes to feed them separately. It is within the circles of leaders that most of the fights originate. In these fights new leaders are often created.

The home is provided with a hospital where sick and crippled cats are cared for. Many a poor little kitten more dead than alive is brought to the home and is nursed by Mrs. Short until it becomes strong. Cats with broken legs and injuries of other kinds are very often received and are scientifically treated. Among the cast now playing about the kitchen and doorway are several that have been taken to the home with broken ribs or legs.

A maternity ward is maintained in a corner of the kitchen. Here newly-born kittens are cared for until they get large enough to join the older cats.

Presiding over this ward is Bobbie, an Australian bobtail cat that was picked up on the waterfront some time ago suffering from injuries received in a hard luck. Soon after arriving at the farm Bobbie became the mother of a family of bobtail kittens which have grown up now. The mother is so fond of kittens that she adopts and cares

for all that come to the home without their mothers. She takes great interest in raising kittens and makes an exceptionally good maternity ward nurse.

Pranks of Playful Cats. Among the blooded cats that have been taken to the home is Cora, a coal black short haired tom that was picked up on the Taylor's Ferry road one dark stormy night last winter. His favorite pastime is catching snakes in the woods and taking them to the house to amuse the kittens. Each one he gets tired he carries it back and hunts up another.

Dolly Grey, another inmate of the home, is one of the favorites with Mrs. Short. Last spring a setting hen on the farm hatched out three chickens and Mrs. Short placed them in a basket behind the stove. Dolly Grey took an interest in them which resulted in the chicks adopting the cat as their mother. They followed her about for a long time and she was very anxious to protect them and keep them clean. She is the chief game hunter of the ranch. Almost daily she brings in a ground mole or a chipmunk for the entertainment of the kittens of the farm. There are many other cats which do various kinds of tricks and help to entertain the kitten population. Each one has come to the farm as a stray or cripple or helpless orphan.

The home is provided with a prison where bad cats are punished by being locked up in a general pen with chickens and ducks or in solitary confinement. There are five solitary cells and oftentimes several cats occupy one. The most common offense at the farm is fighting, although chasing young chickens and running away from home are common charges for which cats are punished. Sometimes young kittens have to be locked up because they run away from their mothers.

The cat home of Portland is probably the largest of its kind on the Coast. It is growing daily in size and importance. By those who have inspected its operation it is considered one of the best means of solving the cat problem in a large city, its effect being not only to prevent cruelty, but also to lessen the number of bothersome strays which have always been one of Portland's pests. In some of the Eastern cities similar rescue homes have been established and are doing good work. In New York City there is a large cat farm. In that city and also in Chicago, it is estimated that at certain times of the year the cat population runs into the millions. In Portland it has been estimated that at times there have been no fewer than 100,000 cats running at large.



THE PENITENTIARY AT PORTLAND'S RESCUE HOME FOR STRAY CATS.