

# MY MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

Adelle Garrison's New Phase of REVELATIONS OF A WIFE

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## CHAPTER 27

THE RETORT MADGE MADE TO DICKY'S COMMAND

I have heard deeply religious old people talk about the perversity of the human heart, but I never realized what it meant so vividly as I did when Dicky told me that he "did not choose I should give Bess Dean's clothes the tiniest encouragement" from mine.

I agreed with his viewpoint exactly. For I had seen and disapproved the girl's attempts to shock Mrs. Cosgrove, and also had recognized that the omission of her skirt and her appearance in the knickerbocker suit for the fishing trip, where there was no climbing or wading to be done, was an unnecessary fling at Mrs. Cosgrove's prejudices. And although I had planned to wear my own skirt, nevertheless, at Dicky's strictures and objection I felt a sudden impulse to defy him, to range myself upon Bess Dean's side, and dress in similar fashion.

"You needn't be so Grand Turkish about it," I said pettishly, and the next second was ashamed of my outburst. If Dicky had only chosen to ignore it! Instead, he looked me up and down with a familiar expression on his face, one of detached disapproval, which always rouses the worst in me.

### "The Trouble With You—"

"You're a wonder!" he said at last. "It would be mighty interesting thing to study the beatings of that alleged brain of yours, if only your bean could be trepanned or something like that so a person could look into it. Here I've been quadrupling in brass for days as Sir Galahad, Joseph, St. Anthony and Gladstone Dowle, and taking your part in everything that came up. Almost any other wife would appreciate the way I've been acting, but here, the first thing I ask of you, you make a thousand-foot ascension, and call me a Grand Turk. The trouble with you, my lady, is that I've never been Grand Turk enough. If I'd kept a tight rein on you all these years you wouldn't prance quite so much now."

If only some automatic muzzle could be contrived which at the first symptom of a family row would spring to the jaws of both husband and wife and clamp them tightly until their temper passed. I believe many a disunited family would be still happy. There is no cleverness so fiendish as that with which an angry husband or wife can find the raw spot on the other's nerves, and proceed to drop vitriol upon it. At Dicky's stinging phrases I forgot the long wonderful summer we had had, unspotted by recriminations, and I seized instinctively, almost sub-

consciously, the weapon surest to flick him upon the raw.

### A Mischievous Thought.

"I did not realize," I said icily, pretending to take seriously the reference to Sir Galahad which he had made jestingly, "that you were making so strenuous a sacrifice in repelling Miss Dean's fascinations. Pray do not let any thought of me stand in your way, for it doesn't matter a whit to me one way or the other. Another type of wife, as you say, would no doubt appreciate your heroic efforts, but, really, I cannot see any particular reason in your behavior why I should give up my own individuality in my dress."

I walked into the little bedroom as I spoke, and closed the door with more rudeness than dignity upon Dicky's retorting speech which began:

"Well, if individuality in dress for you means knee pants, let me tell you—"

The closing door punctured his report with a fall stop, I guessed with that part of my brain which was cool underneath the anger that he accepted the slamming door for what I meant it, a summary interruption to the quarrel. I did not wish him to finish his sentence, which I was sure would be a distinct command to wear the skirt to my mountain suit, for then my feminine obstinacy which I mentally camouflaged as self-respect, would have compelled me to omit it. And I knew that he was just as anxious to avoid a distinct issue as I was.

The slam I had given the door had given vent to a great deal of my choler, and the rest of it vanished as soon as I let my sense of humor out of the jail cell into which I had shut it at Dicky's strictures. The whole thing, after all, was so silly! Yet how to

mend it without giving in completely—something which my knowledge of Dicky had taught me was a most unwise thing to do after his outbreak—that was my problem.

I knew that if I could make Dicky laugh, even the remembrance of the quarrel would be blotted out, and with a sudden mischievous thought I slipped out of the bedroom door—every room in the shacks has an outside door—sped to Mrs. Cosgrove's kitchen, and whisked her away from the dishes to the privacy of her own room.

"Tell me," I demanded, "have you, by any chance, one of those old-fashioned skirts that almost sweep the floor in length?"

"Plenty of 'em," she returned. "I'm saving 'em till the fool fashions swing around so we have to sweep up all the dirt in the road again. Then I'll be right in style. If a woman could only be patient and not throw away her clothes she would be in advance of the latest about every seven years."

"Will you lend me one for a few hours?" I asked. "I promise not to injure it."

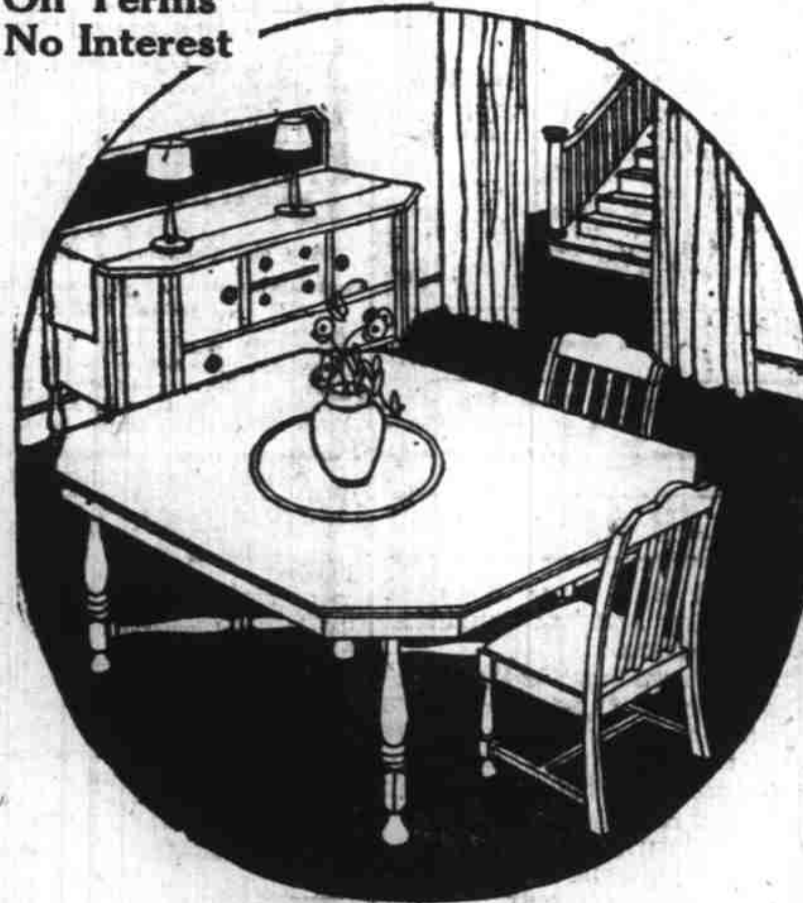
(To be continued)

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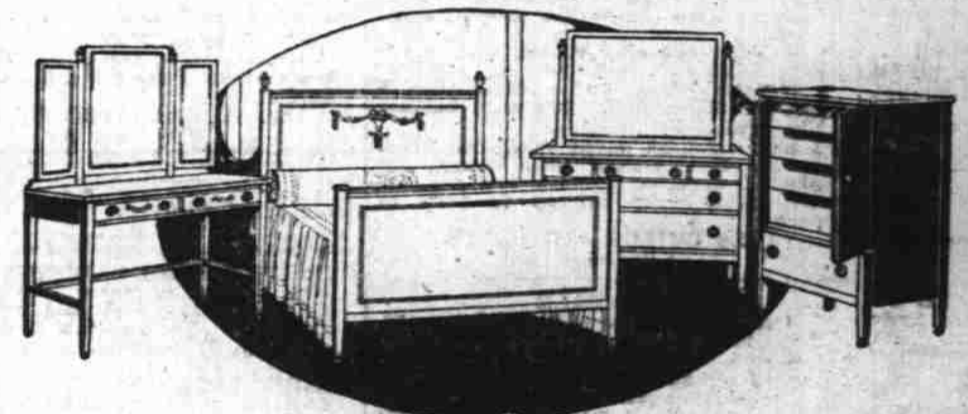
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