

A Parting Dinner

By ALAN HINSDALE

"Our marriage," said the wife, "has been a mistake. The sooner a mistake is rectified the better. I am going to leave you."

"That's not a bad idea," said the husband. "A bit of freedom from this new life that neither of us has yet become used to will give us a breathing spell, and if we come together again we will appreciate each other all the more for it."

"That 'if' is well put in."

"And if we don't come together again just think of the fun we'll have!"

"Fun?"

"Yes. I can remain out at a poker party till 3 o'clock in the morning if I like, smoke and drink to my heart's content, spend no end of time sitting on a stool before a glove counter with a pretty girl on the other side smoothing down my fingers with her soft hand"—

"If these things are so delightful to you why did you marry?"

"I haven't come to your own enjoyments consequent on the break yet. You can sit all day beside your mother, holding her hand and listening to her advice to you how to manage a husband. Won't that be just too nice for anything?"

"If you loved me one-tenth as well as mamma does there would be no need of a separation."

"Oh, I could never compete with a mother's love! That is not to be expected. I suppose that's what gives her a right to tell you just what course to take respecting your husband. Now that you're going to leave me, her advice with respect to me will be no longer necessary, and I wonder what you and she will talk about when you nestle down for a morning chin-chin."

She was inclined to think that, the one interesting topic being removed, the chin-chin would be rather dull, but she did not say so.

"There's one thing I propose to do," continued the provoking husband. "As soon as you are gone I'm going to take down these curtains. I have endured them simply for your sake. They shut out the light."

"Indeed, you will do no such thing!"

"Why so? It will not matter to you whether there are curtains here or not. I shall make a smoking room of this, and you have always declared that when smoke gets into curtains it's hard to get it out."

"A smoking room of this cozy apartment! Why, I arranged everything here myself!"

"So you did, and a delightful room you made of it. I remember when I first saw it I thought how many delightful seances we would have here. I little thought that a few short months would end it all."

"Whose fault is it?"

"Mine."

"Why don't you do better?"

"I can't. I'm naturally wicked. If I were not you wouldn't need to leave me."

"Of course I don't want to leave you, but you can't expect me to endure such treatment forever."

"Certainly not. I deserve it all. But it's sad to think of my having to dismantle this pretty room for a lot of fellows who will throw cigar and pipe ashes all over the carpet and"—

"They will do no such thing! If you're going to have those horrid men here I—I—won't"—

"Won't go?"

"Yes, I'm going. I have come to that decision after long and careful deliberation."

"And consultation with your mother."

This was a home thrust.

"If there is any one who knows what is best for the child she has cared for and loved from babyhood it is surely her mother."

"I agree with you. Therefore the laughter should never leave her mother."

"The daughter is not expected to marry a—a"—

"Brute! But we are wasting time. When do you go?"

"Are you in haste to be rid of me?"

"Not at all. I merely wish to make arrangements for your departure. Will you permit me to see you to your mother's house?"

"Who said I was going to mamma?"

"Very well. I will take you wherever you wish to go."

"You'll have to dine elsewhere today. I have made no preparations for dinner here."

"Suppose we have a last dinner at Skinners, with a bottle of that wine you like so well?"

She hesitated, and he suggested that she telephone her mother that she would not arrive till after dinner. This last reference to her mother, though highly respectful, called a frown to the wife's brow. Nevertheless she went to the phone and sent the message. Then she dressed for the dinner and came downstairs looking very lugubrious.

"Have you sent your baggage?" he asked mildly.

"No!" she snapped.

They dined with handsomely dressed ladies and gentlemen to detract their attention from their troubles, and music soothed them, and the wine warmed them. The dinner was excellent, and they spent an enjoyable evening together. When they drove away he made no mention of the fact that she had expected to go to her mother, but directed the driver to take them to their own home.

And that was the end of the fracas.

Some Bible Languages.

Some of the languages the Bible has been translated into are Accra, Anett-yum, Arrawack, Azerbaijan, Bulu, Cal-muc, Chippewayan, Coptic, Dajak, Dikele, Eromanga, Gitano, Gujerati, Haussa, Iaian, Ilocano, Khassl, Kinka, Koordish, Kusalen, Lepcha, Lifu, Malagasy, Mallseet, Mandingo, Mic-mac, Mpongwe, Muskokee, Namacqua, Narrinyeri, Ojibwa, Otiyeherero, Pampanga, Pangassnan, Pushtoo, Rarotengan, Ruk, Scheetswa, Tcheremisian, Tchuwash, Tschl, Wogul.

Why He Remained Home.

Model Husband (boastfully) — Yes, gentlemen, I've been married ten years and never spent a night away from home yet.

Doubting Thomas—Large and interesting family, eh?

"Only three of us."

"Have one child, eh?"

"No; the other is my wife's mother."

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And in a dish, with onyons and peper,
We shal thee dresse with strong vynegars.

—London Standard.

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