



The Husbands of Edith

By GEORGE BARR M'CLUTCHEON

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PROLOGUE

This humorous tale, written in McCutcheon's best vein, is faultless in its morals, despite its title, and cumulative in its interest. It may be stated in strict confidence that Edith did not actually have more than one husband; consequently the gentle reader need harbor no apprehension on this score. Like all other estimable married women, Edith had only one husband, but circumstances arose through which it seemed necessary for her husband to be in two places at the same time, and how this was accomplished and what the outcome was—But wait a bit; let George Barr McCutcheon, the prince of story tellers, unfold the romance.

CHAPTER VII

The Would Be Brother-in-law. THE next morning, bright and early, Mr. Alfred Rodney, a telegram in his hand, charged down the hall to Mrs. Medcroft's door. With characteristic far west impulsiveness he banged on the door. A sleepy voice asked who was there. "It's me—Rodney. Get up. I want to see Medcroft. Say, Roxbury, wake up!" "Roxbury" came in shrill tones from within. "He— isn't he upstairs? Good heaven, Mr. Rodney, what has happened? What has happened?" "Upstairs? What the deuce is he doing upstairs?" "He's—he's starting! Do tell me what's the matter!" "Isn't this Mr. Medcroft's room?" "Yes—but he isn't in. He objects to the noise. Oh, has anything happened to Roxbury?" She was standing just inside the door, and her voice betrayed agitation. "My dear Edith, don't get excited. I have a telegram from—" She uttered a shriek. "He's been assassinated! Oh, Roxbury!" "What the dev— Are you crazy? It's a telegram from—" "Oh, heavens! I knew they'd kill him; I knew something dreadful would happen if I left— Here she stopped suddenly. He distinctly heard her catch her breath. After a moment she went on warily. "Is it from a man named Hobart?" "No. It's from Odell-Carney. Hobart? I don't know anybody named Hobart." "How was he to know that Hobart was the name that Medcroft had chosen for correspondence purposes? We're to meet the Odell-Carneys today in Munich. No time to be lost. We've got to catch the 9 o'clock train."

Secretly, Edith has ambitions. She has gone to the lord mayor's dinner and to the Royal Antiquarians and to Sir John Brodrey's and a lot of other functions on the outer rim, but she's never been able to break through the crust and taste the real sweets of London society. My dear Roxbury, the Odell-Carneys entertain the nobility without compunction, and they've been known to hobnob with royalty. Mrs. Odell-Carney was a Lady Somebody-or-other before she married the second time. She's terribly smart, Roxbury. "How, in the name of heaven, do they happen to be hobnobbing, as you call it, with the Rodneys, may I ask?" "Well, it seems that Odell-Carney is promoting a new South African mining venture. I have it from Freddie Ulstervelt that he's trying to sell something like a million shares to Mr. Rodney, who has loads of money that came from real mines in the far west. He'd never be such a fool as to sink a million in South Africa, you know, but he's just clever enough to see the advantage of keeping Odell-Carney in town, as it were. It means a great deal to Mrs. Rodney, don't you know, Roxbury, to be able to say that she dined with the Odell-Carneys. Freddie says that Cousin Alfred is talking in a very diplomatic manner of going to London in August to look fully into the matter. It is understood that the Rodneys are to be the guests of the Odell-Carneys while in London. It won't be the season, of course, so there won't be much of a commotion in the smart set. It is our dear Edith's desire to slip into the charmed circle through the rift that the Rodneys make. Do you comprehend?" They were seated side by side in the corner of the compartment, his broad back screening her as much as possible from the persistent glances of Freddie Ulstervelt, who was nobly striving to confuse his attention to Katherine Brock's eyes were devouring her exquisitely with a greediness that might have caused her some uneasiness if there had not been something pleasantly agreeable in his way of doing it. "Yes—faintly," he replied after an almost imperceptible conflict between the senses of sight and hearing. "But how does she intend to explain me away? I'll be a dreadful skeleton in her closet if it comes to that. When she is obliged to produce the real Roxbury, what then?" "She's thought it all out, Roxbury," said Constance severely, but almost invisibly. "I'm sure Freddie heard nothing of what you said. Do be careful. She's going to reveal the whole plot to Mrs. Odell-Carney just as soon as Roxbury gives the word, treating it as a very clever and necessary ruse, don't you see. Mrs. Odell-Carney will be implored to aid in the deception for a few days, and she'll consent, because she's really quite a bit of a sport. At the psychological moment the Rodneys will be told. That places Mrs. Odell-Carney in the position of being an abettor or accomplice. She's had the distinction of being a sharer in a most glorious piece of strategy. Don't you see how charmingly it will all work in the end?" "What are you two whispering about?" demanded Freddie Ulstervelt noisily, patience coming to an end. "Was what the devil is that to—brought Brock furiously. Constance brought him up sharp with a warning kick on the ankle. He vowed afterward that he would carry the mark to his grave. "He's telling me what a nice chap you are, Freddie," said she sweetly. Brock glared out of the window. Freddie sniffed scornfully. "I'm getting sick of this job," growled Brock under his breath. "I didn't calculate on—" "Now, Roxbury, dear, don't be a bear," she pleaded so gently, her eyes so full of appeal, that he flushed with sudden shame and contrition. "Forgive me," he said, the old light coming back into his eyes so strongly that she quivered for an instant before lowering her own. "I hate that confounded puppy," he explained lamely, guarding his voice with a new care. "If you felt as I do you would too." She laughed in the old way, but she was not soon to forget that moment when panic was so imminent. "I don't see how any one can help liking Freddie," she said without actually knowing why. He stared hard at the Danube below. After a long silence he said: "It's all Tommyrot about its being blue, isn't it?" She was also looking at the dark brown, swollen river that has been immortalized in song. "It's never blue. It's always a yel-

low ochre, it seems to me." He waited a long time before venturing to express the thought that of late had been troubling him seriously. "I wonder if you truly realize the difficulty Edith will have in satisfying an irreducible world with her absolutely truthful story. She'll have to explain, you know. There's bound to be a skeptic or two, my dear Constance." "But there's Roxbury," she protested, her face clouding nevertheless. "He will set everything right." "The world will say he is a gullible fool," said he gently. "And the world always laughs at, not with, a fool. Alas, my dear sister, it's a very deep pool we're in." He leaned closer and allowed a quaint, half-biting, wholly different smile to cross his face. "I'm afraid that you are the only being on earth who can make the story thoroughly plausible." "If" she demanded quickly. Their eyes met, and the wonder suddenly left hers. She blushed furiously. "Nonsense!" she said and abruptly left him to take a seat beside Katherine Rodney. He found small comfort in the whisperings and titterings that came willy nilly to his burning ears from the corner of the compartment. He had a disquieting impression that they were discussing him. It was forced in upon him that being a brother-in-law is not an enviable occupation. "Wot?" he asked almost fiercely after the instant Freddie had thrice repeated a question. "I say, will you have a cigarette?" half shouted Freddie, exasperated. "Oh! No, thanks. The train makes such a beastly racket, don't you know." "They told me at the Bristol you were deaf, but— Oh, I say, old man, I'm sorry. Which ear is it?" "The one next to you," replied Brock, recovering from his confusion. "I hear perfectly well with the other one." "Yes," drawled Freddie, with a wink, "so I've observed." After a reflective silence the young man ventured the interesting conclusion, "She's a stunning girl, all right." Brock looked politely askance. "By Jove, I'm glad she isn't my sister-in-law!" "I suppose I'm expected to ask why," frigidly. "Certainly. Because if she was I couldn't. Do you get the point?" He crossed his legs and looked insupportably sure of himself. They reached Munich late in the afternoon and went at once to the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, where they were to stay the Odell-Carneys. Mr. Odell-Carney was a middle aged Englishman of the extremely unattractive type. He was tall and narrow and distant, far beyond what is commonly accepted as bias. Indeed, he was especially slow of speech, even for an Englishman, quite as if it were an everlasting question with him whether it was worth while to speak at all. One had the feeling when listening to Mr. Odell-Carney that he was being favored beyond words. It took him so long to say anything that if one were but moderately bright he could finish the sentence mentally some little time in advance of the speaker and thus be prepared to properly appreciate that which otherwise might have puzzled him considerably. It could not be said, however, that Mr. Odell-Carney was ponderous. He was merely the effectual result of delay. Perhaps it is safe to agree with those who knew him best; they maintained that Odell-Carney was a pose, nothing more. His wife was quite the opposite in nearly every particular except height and angularity. She was bony and red faced and opinionated. A few snappy years with a rapid, prodigious volubility had brought her, in widowhood, to a fine sense of appreciation of the slow going though tirelessly unpractical men of the Odell-Carney type. It mattered little that he made poor investment of the money she had sequestered from her lordship. He had kept her in the foreground by associating himself with every big venture that interested the financial smart set. Notwithstanding the fact that he never was known to have any money, he was looked upon as a financier of the highest order, which is saying a great deal in these unfeeling days of pounds and shillings. Of course Mrs. Odell-Carney was dressed as all rangy, long limbed Englishwomen are prone to dress—after a model peculiarly not her own. She looked ridiculously ungraceful alongside the smart, chic American women, and yet not one of them but would have given her boots to be able to array herself as one of them. There was no

NEWS FROM OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL

Congress Takes Steps to Repeal Panama Canal Toll Exemptions.

Washington.—Initial steps to repeal the toll exemption clause of the Panama canal act as requested by President Wilson were taken in congress when the house committee on interstate commerce reported favorably a bill to strike out the provision. In the senate the committee on interoceanic canals decided to meet this week to consider the repeal of the president for a reversal of policy in the controversy which involves the Hay-Panama treaty, and in the opinion of the president the general foreign relations policy of the administration. While the house is debating the issue, the senate committee will consider whether to recommend a fiat repeal bill or to urge the compromise bill offered by Senator Chilton, of West Virginia, a member of the committee, which would authorize the president to regulate tolls and assess charges at his discretion wherever exemption is provided in the canal act. Developments of American policy as an influence in Mexican complications and the cause of universal peace are of vital concern to the Washington administration in its efforts to have repealed the tolls exemption clause in the Panama canal act.

Inquiry in Suspense. Technically the commission which was charged to investigate the killing of Benton continues in existence and Secretary Bryan said that its functions had simply been suspended. There is now, however, little idea of the commissioners would proceed to Chihuahua in the expectation of uncovering any evidence of value though it probably would be required to carry out its original instructions merely for the purpose of establishing the principle of the right of the United States government to act in this matter.

Intervention Plea Heard in Senate. The Mexican plea was lifted in the senate of the United States by Senator Fall, republican of New Mexico, who urged armed intervention for the protection of Americans and other foreigners in the stricken republic. Senator Shively, replying as acting chairman of the foreign relations committee, asserted that Senator Fall's policy would mean actual armed intervention and that intervention meant war. He deplored that the situation had thus been discussed, saying it would have a harmful influence upon the attitude and temper of the people of Mexico.

Indirect Taxes Growing. While customs receipts have fallen off under the new tariff, the internal revenue bureau is coming to the rescue with increased collections from indirect taxes. The total collected by the bureau from July 1, 1913, to January 31, 1914, was \$191,792,279, an increase of \$2,638,329 over the corresponding period of the previous year. The tax on tobacco brought \$47,680,435, an increase of \$2,371,258, and fermented liquors \$40,276,380, an increase of \$1,412,304. Distilled spirits, including whiskey, however, brought in only \$98,946,304.

National Capital Briefs. The income tax law bids fair to live up to the expectations of the administration by producing about \$60,000,000 annually in revenue paid by close to 425,000 individuals. Senator Ashurst has been notified by Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont that woman suffragists will declare war on him if he forces the vote on the constitutional amendment at this time. Colonel Goethals, builder of the Panama canal, declares that it is impractical to use the heavy machinery employed in the canal in building railroads in Alaska or in flood prevention work in the Mississippi valley. Twelve railroads of the east control 606 other roads, as to their financial management, rates or other means, according to testimony at the interstate commerce commission. The New York Central is said to dominate 204 lines. Senator Reed, of Missouri, introduced a bill which would authorize the creation of a commission to acquire for the government by purchase or condemnation the home of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello, Va.

Far-reaching inquiry into practically all phases of the industrial situation in this country with a view to making recommendations to congress will be undertaken by the federal industrial relations commission. The final chapter in the iron workers' campaign to destroy "open shops" with dynamite and nitroglycerin was written by the supreme court in refusing to review the penitentiary sentences imposed upon Frank M. Ryan, president of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Ironworkers, and 23 of the association's members.

CARL R. GRAY



Carl R. Gray, who recently retired from the presidency of the Great Northern Railway.

PRESENTS HOME RULE PLAN

Premier's Proposal Would Exclude Ulster Counties From Trial. London.—The British government's plan for the conciliation of the Unionists of Ulster in connection with the Irish home rule bill was laid before the house of commons. It met with a cool reception from the Unionists. The terms of Premier Asquith's offer were that a poll should be taken of the parliamentary electors of each county of Ulster to decide whether they should be excluded from the operation of the bill for a period of six years from the first meeting of the new Irish Parliament. This would undoubtedly result in the exclusion from Irish home rule of the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Londonderry and Down.

Bank Robber Takes \$2300 in Gold. Sacramento, Cal.—Taking advantage of the absence of the police, who were detailed to handle the army of unemployed, a lone highwayman entered the Oak Park branch of the Sacramento bank of this city during the noon hour, covered Gordon Culver, the teller, with a revolver and made his escape with \$2300 in gold.

Taft To Be Named Supreme Justice. Washington.—Professor William Howard Taft, of Yale, ex-president of the United States, will be appointed a United States supreme court justice by President Wilson. This information comes from an unquestioned authority.

MANY BELIEVED DEAD IN ST. LOUIS BLAZE

St. Louis.—That from 30 to 35 guests of the Missouri Athletic club perished in the flames that destroyed the building is the belief of officers of the club. First estimates placed the number of dead at 100.

Seven bodies have been recovered and from 23 to 25 occupants of the structure still are unaccounted for. Thirty-eight guests on the fifth floor were awakened by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Magill, who refused to leave the building until they had given the alarm to all within reach. Mr. Magill was house manager of the club. Mrs. Magill was seriously burned. The Missouri Athletic Club was in the heart of the retail business district of St. Louis. It was one block west of the terminal of the Ends bridge across the Mississippi river and a half block from Broadway, one of the busiest streets of the city.

Grape Growers Fight. Stockton, Cal.—Declaring that if the proposed constitutional amendment making California a prohibition state carries, the viticultural industry of San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere will be ruined the grapegrowers of this county have organized to combat the movement. T. R. Again Grandfather. New York.—Mrs. Richard Derby, daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, gave birth to an eight pound boy here.

Muncie, Indiana, Votes Dry. Muncie, Ind.—Muncie decided against saloons by a majority of 462 votes in the local option election.

THE MARKETS. Portland. Wheat—Club, 91c; bluestem, \$1.00; red Russian, 90c. Hay—Timothy, \$17; alfalfa, \$14. Butter—Creamery, 27c. Eggs—Ranch, 19c. Seattle. Wheat—Bluestem, 98c; club, 88c; red Russian 87c. Hay—Timothy, \$17 per ton; alfalfa, \$14 per ton. Eggs—90c. Butter—Creamery, 28c.

CROSS BOUNDARY TO RECOVER MAN'S BODY

Establish the Fact That Texas Rancher Was Killed by Mexican Federals.

Laredo, Tex.—A party of Americans who secretly crossed into Mexico during the night brought to the American side the mutilated body of Clemente Vergara, Texas rancher, and established the fact of his execution after he was seized by Mexican federals. The invaders were not opposed, accomplishing their search without the slightest violence, taking the body from a grave in Hidalgo Cemetery almost within sight of the Texas border. The seizure was divested of possibly grave aspects in international complications by reason of the fact that the party was virtually making use of permission granted officially by Mexican federal authorities several days ago. Vergara was shot twice through the head and once through the neck, his skull was crushed as by a blow from a rifle butt and the charred fingers of the left hand indicated that he had been tortured before being put to death. Vergara left his ranch near Balafax, Texas, Friday, February 13, and crossed the river into Mexico on a message from three federal soldiers that Captain Apolonio Rodriguez, of the Hidalgo garrison, wished to settle for 11 horses.

Washington.—Two departments of the United States government are engaged in seeking information as to circumstances under which the body of Clemente Vergara was found early Sunday on the American side of the Rio Grande. A telegram to the state department from American Consul Garrett at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, informed the department that the body had been found and that details would be reported by mail. The slow process did not satisfy Secretary Bryan, who promptly telegraphed the consul to make his report by telegraph. Meanwhile the war department has become interested and Secretary Garrison called upon General Bliss at El Paso for information.

ARM AMERICANS IN MEXICO Guns and Ammunition Are Shipped to Mexican Capital. Vera Cruz, Mex.—Following the recent dispatch from this city to the British and German citizens in Mexico City of machine guns and squads of trained gunners, arrangements have been made to place in the hands of all Americans capable of bearing arms weapons for self-defense in the event of an uprising in the Mexican capital. A shipment of 1000 rifles and a large amount of ammunition arrived here recently from the United States. The shipment was made with the concurrence of the Mexican government, but every effort was made to prevent the facts gaining publicity. The arms and ammunition chests were carefully divested of all marks indicating the character of their contents.

SACRAMENTO CLUBS UNEMPLOYED HUNGRY Sacramento.—Suffering from bruised heads and empty stomachs, 1000 members of the unemployed army, who had been camped in Sacramento for two days, are sulking in their "tents" on the far side of the Sacramento river, whether they were driven by Sacramento city and county officers. The unemployed were driven off the Southern Pacific railroad's lay by deputy sheriffs armed with pick handles, and by police. They at first refused to go, but several strong streams of water played upon them by firemen started them on the run toward Second street. Among those arrested after they had refused to accept transportation to the bay were: "General" Charles T. Kelly and Edward ("Rough-neck") Teasdale. Teasdale was arrested several times in San Francisco. Neither resisted arrest.

Clergyman Is Set Free. Tacoma, Wash.—After two hours of questioning by Judge Easterday, in the superior court, Rev. W. M. Jennings, of Mount Vernon, Wash., was ordered released from the Western Washington Insane Asylum on habeas corpus proceedings. Seven other ministers of Mount Vernon brought the action, alleging that the man had been railroaded to the asylum as the result of a factional church fight.

Steamship's Crew Rescued by Chance. Norfolk, Va.—Rescued from their drifting lifeboat by merest chance, the captain and 16 members of the crew of the American steamer Charlemagne Tower, Jr., which foundered off the Jersey coast were picked up by the steamer Bayford and brought to Newport News.

GEORGE W. GOETHALS



George W. Goethals, builder of the Panama Canal, who has been appointed Governor of the Canal Zone.

Brief News of the Week

Indirect taxes are making up losses sustained by the new tariff. Increases on tobacco and whiskey are partly responsible for the showing. The Apple Advertisers' Association of America has been formed at New York to increase the consumption of apples in this country and especially in foreign lands. The board of United States general appraisers granted the 5 per cent rebate on all imports carried in ships of American register. The board declared that the intent of congress was clear. An amendment to the city health and food laws of Tacoma, provides for the physical examination of cooks employed in restaurants and hotels. Fresh fruits, fish and other food must be kept under glass. Reports that three states in Brazil were in revolt, and that the capital, Rio de Janeiro, had been declared in a state of siege, were confirmed. Plans for the importation of eggs and meat from northern China and butter from Siberia, are announced in San Francisco. It is proposed to place a refrigerator steamer in service between San Francisco and Tien-Tsin, to carry eggs. Because they had opposed in congress the proposed building of the government railroad in Alaska, a mob of citizens at Cordova, Alaska, burned in effigy all of the members of the territorial Alaska senate. The action has aroused the resentment of people of Juneau. By the signing of an agreement between J. P. O'Brien, general manager of the O-W. R. & N. Company, and J. H. Young, of Horniston, representing the telegraphers of the line, the controversy over wage and working hour schedules which threatened to result in a strike, was settled. People in the News Jonathan Bourne, Jr., is too busy at Washington to visit Oregon and conduct a campaign, so that he has decided he will not be a candidate for United States senator in the republican primaries. George W. Vanderbilt, of New York, died from the effects of an operation for appendicitis. Through her social secretary, Miss Belle Hanger, Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, wife of the president denied a report that Miss Eleanor Wilson was engaged to Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo. Arthur Langowski, 21 years old, swore before the federal strike investigating committee at Denver that he received \$3 a day from the coal operators while exploding dynamite for the United Mine Workers of America. President Wilson's eyes have not suffered much from one year of political activity. He journeyed to Philadelphia to find out that his eyes were not falling him, and Dr. DeSchweinitz, his oculist, made only a slight change of lenses in the glasses he wears. Governor Walsh of Massachusetts has sent a special message to the legislature declaring that he will not accept an increase in his salary from \$8000 to \$12,000 a year. He said he would abide by the verdict of the election which fixed the salary at a certain sum. Professor William E. Ritter, head of the Scripps Institute for Biological Research of the University of California, attacks the present methods of teaching eugenics. He says thoughts of the body are considered at length, while thoughts of the soul are neglected. Five years in San Quentin was the sentence imposed in United States District Court on Captain A. D. Nelson, the pirate who attempted to hold up the steamer Willamette, commanded by Captain Charles Reiser, off the coast of Los Angeles county on December 21, 1913.