

The Neglected Wife

THE Neglected Wife was running away! Running away with the Other Man into a beautiful world of romance, full of flowers and sunshine—and all sorts of other things with charming names.

Her pretty face was pale, she had a curious, trembling feeling about the straight line of determination, and it was with determination that she drew down the blind—shutting out the dying light of the November afternoon—turned up the gas, and set about making her preparations.

As she moved round the pretty room which she and the Neglected Husband had furnished together hardly a year ago, she told herself that he would thoroughly deserve what he was going to get. Would he miss her, she wondered, pausing an instant in her occupation? No—her face hardened—his work was enough for him! Why, for the last months she had scarcely seen him.

It was too bad! Not for this had she married! True, he had warned her that a doctor's life was a busy and exacting one, but never had she thought that things could be as they were. Work, work, work, morning, noon and night—yes, night, too, for of late he had even taken to sleeping downstairs in the surgery, because he said the night calls were so frequent and would spoil her rest. Absurd! If he had really minded he could have made some arrangement, get some one to help him or something. And in the rare moments they spent together he was grave, preoccupied, took no interest in the things that interested her. Oh! it was unbearable!

She lashed herself into fury, still moving about her task. What did he care for her work? It was his own that was so important. He hardly knew that she had any work. What was her pretty talent for writing, to him? He seldom had time for more than indulgently smiling glance over the graceful trifles of verse which some day were to make a book and their author's name at the same time—the Other Man had said so.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing in them to read otherwise than with smiling indulgence, for in all her butterfly days the poor, pretty little Neglected Wife had never once seen life at it is. But this she did not know. And the Other Man was perhaps more complimentary than truthful.

How about this bracelet! these earrings, rings and brooches? She would like to take them with her. They were all gifts from the Neglected Husband, it is true and—did wives who were "running away" take their husbands' presents with them? She did not know.

The bracelet he had bought her in the Palais Royal when they were on their brief honeymoon in Paris. It had cost more than he could afford, but as he clasped it on her wrist he had said tenderly that she was worth the expenditure. Ah! she was, in those days! Those earrings, sparkling on their velvet bed, were bought out of the earnings of his first big case after their marriage—they had not been cheap. This brooch was a birthday present—her birthday; this pendant another—his birthday. These trifles marked other days here and there, the last not so very far behind her. She sighed and returned the things to the jewel case on the table. No. She decided that wives did not take their jewels when they left the giver.

Tucked away among other belongings she came upon a copy of Tennyson. That, too, had been her husband's gift during their engagement. She turned the pages rapidly. Why, how he had pencil marked lines here and there! She had forgotten that! He must have been fonder of poetry than she had thought—it was a loving hand that made those marks. Well, perhaps he was—of other people's. Not of hers! Hers was nothing to him. She hardened herself again and put the book back among the things that must be left behind. Soon want of appreciation and neglect would be left behind, too. She would be with some one who could understand and admire her, love her as she deserved to be loved, see her as she was.

After all, it was only a handbag that she could take with her now. The Other Man had said that he would buy her all she needed. And later—when the

big step was taken—no doubt the rest would be sent to her. The big step! What would it feel like to have taken it?

But it grew late. No more time must be wasted. She took down a dark costume, dark furs, a dark hat and veil. Dark colored things seemed suitable for a wife who was running away. They undoubtedly were the proper wear.

She donned the clothes, fastening them with fingers which had begun to tremble in a most unaccountable manner, regarding herself in the glass meanwhile with tragically widened blue eyes.

Now all was done. One last look round, and then—to make the plunge.

But as she took the last look, a sound in the hall downstairs made her start. Had some one thrust the latch-key in? Yes, the outer door shut with a bang, a voice called her name, quick footsteps sounded on the stairs, and her husband was in the room.

"We've saved her, Ruby!" he said excitedly; "we've saved her. She'll live, thank God! And thank God the strain is over! But we have won. He pushed the hair off his forehead with a gesture of relief.

"What—what do you mean? Who will live?" the girl stammered, her brain working desperately for a way out of the trap in which she found herself. Who would have dreamt of his returning at this hour—the first time for weeks and months?

"The case I told you of, child! Surely you've not forgotten? The case I've been so desperately anxious about this last month. Lord! but I have had a time of it. Over and over again I thought she was slipping through our fingers, and I believe it would have broken my heart if she had. But she's safe now. She was such a pretty young thing before her illness, so gay—she reminded me of you, and that was one reason why—" He broke off and drew back, seeing she was not listening. "Sorry, little woman," he concluded, "I shouldn't talk shop, should I? But I'm a bit beside myself. Forgive me. Are you going out?"

"Yes," she said, hardly knowing what she did say. "I'm going to the Cliffords." But the lie hurt her, for she was not a bad woman—only a vain and foolish one.

His face fell. "Must you go? I hoped you would be at home. I've got an evening off. Colquhoun is back again; going to look after his own patients and mine, too, for once. It's such a long time since we've had an evening together. Can't you stay?" he asked, wistfully.

But his words only helped her to rally resentment to her aid.

"No," she answered bitterly. "I can't stay. I'm going out. It is not my fault that we've not had evenings together. Day after day I spend mine alone, and you never even ask how I spend them. And when you do come in all you think of is your patients. I don't count. I've had more than enough of it!" She turned away and began moving blindly about the room again.

He looked at her drearily for a few moments. Then—"You are unjust!" he said; turned slowly from her, and went downstairs.

Five minutes later she also stole down, handbag in hand, and out into the raw murk of the evening. The sitting room door was ajar as she passed and she saw him sitting there alone. His face seemed to have grown older and sterner than it used to be.

A taxi passed her as she stood hesitating on the pavement outside. Should she take it? No! Taxicabs carried one so—fast. Ah! a hansom—that would be better!

As the cab jingled away with her she took a letter from her bosom, longing hungrily for the familiar thrill with which letters in this hand-writing had never failed to supply her hitherto. Their writer was a master of his craft. His charmingly artificial prose and gracefully fantastic poetry had made him something of a celebrity in his own section of the literary world.

But for once he failed to hit the mark.

The little runaway wife, searching for the thrill which should bring her comfort, searched in vain tonight. Searched in vain among the faultlessly

perfect sentences and tuneful phrases for something—something which an obtrusively insistent thought told her had been in the rough, unpolished lines of other letters, received a year ago—short, rugged letters burning with the white fire of a strong man's love.

Her eyes fell on the lines, "So, my bird, my little singer of sweet songs, we will take flight from this land of gloom, and somewhere, far from its cloudy shores, build a nest together beneath southern skies!" Only a few hours ago these very words had filled her foolish little soul with ecstasy. Now, they seemed a trifle vague—unsatisfying. Somehow the "building of a nest beneath Southern skies" seemed to her at this moment a thing less desirable than the going back into an ordinary homely room in the "land of gloom," where a tired man was sitting lonely and dull, brooding over a fire which he was almost certainly letting go out.

Ah! There ahead glittered the lights of the station. How near they were! The Other Man would be awaiting her there.

Suddenly her hand shot up; the trap flew open.

"I—think I'll get down here," she gasped.

She left the amazed driver looking wonderingly at just double his proper fare, crossed the road and in five minutes' time was hurrying back over the way she had come, as fast as the fastest taxi would take her.

The latchkey was still in her pocket. She slipped it in, crept lightly through the hall—the sitting room door was shut now—upstairs to her room.

How strangely unchanged it looked—considering that a century had passed since a silly woman had left it and started off on the road to—what? But the silly woman had come back—come back home.

She unpacked the little bag with impatient hands, hiding it away. She tore off the unsuitably dark garments, put on her daintiest house frock, combed out her curly hair, fastened the sparkling earrings in her little pink ears.

Then she went down. He was still sitting where she had left him. The room looked cheerless and as she had expected, the fire needed attention. He was gazing into its dull embers listlessly, the book he had been reading lying beside him, face downward on the floor.

He did not look up as she opened the door, but when a bright little vision passed him to go down on its knees, hearth brush in hand, between him and the forgotten fire, his whole face changed.

"Childie! You," he exclaimed. "I thought it was one of the maids. You've come back—I am glad! What happened?"

"Nothing—nothing happened," she said, rather breathlessly. "I just came back. I thought you would be lonely and—cross—and—I knew you'd let the fire out—and—"

But tears were splashing on the hearth brush and the shovel, and the fire was not getting made up properly after all. So the neglected husband leaned forward and drew the Neglected Wife up bodily into his arms.

"Look here, little woman," he said, "you and I have been going the wrong way and work lately, and it's got to be different. I've been seeing it all since you said what you did just now. I've been a thoughtless brute, very likely, wrapped up in my own profession. But you haven't troubled as you might to enter into the difficulties or understand what the strain of it is sometimes. We've been drifting toward shipwreck, dear, but there's not going to be any shipwreck if my wife will help me steer. See, little one. Will you help me steer?"

"Oh, I will, I will; yes, I will!" she sobbed hysterically, winding her arms tightly round his neck, and wondering whether she would ever have the courage to tell him how very near they had been to the shipwreck of which he spoke.

And it was not until a maid came in to lay the table for dinner that the fire (which really was neglected) got the attention it needed.

But on the following day the wife who was not neglected had another kind of fire, attended to by nobody but herself. And in it she burned, besides a great many beautifully expressed letters full of exquisite sentiments, a quantity of poems—not Tennyson's

Farm Manure to Give Best Results

BE SLOW in purchasing high-priced commercial fertilizers. Farm manure gives better yields, according to experiments at the Nebraska station. The agronomy department advises that economic results from the use of expensive commercial fertilizers cannot be expected until the normal soils of the farms are kept in the best physical condition by means of proper and timely tillage. The vegetable content of the normal soils in many places is low and the farmer can improve them in this respect before attempting any costly commercial fertilizers. Many farmers who applied various high priced fertilizers and combinations thereof last spring failed to obtain any results for their extra labor or financial outlay, possibly partly due to the dry weather.

PROHIBITION AND THE HOP FARMER.

The Hop Growers' Convention at Aurora on Saturday, June 6, discussed an article which appeared in the "Oregon Statesman," and admitted that the statements made there were true. Here are some of the things which the brewers and hop growers who dominated the convention admitted:

Less than two per cent of Oregon hops are used in Oregon. More than half of them go out of the United States. Prohibition would not hurt the hop market. The largest brewery in the state has been advertising imported hops. If the state went dry and no new market was found for hops, only two hop pickers out of a hundred would lose their job. Or, to put it in hours, the average hop picker gets in about 14 days' work, so he would lose about two and a half hours work if Oregon went dry.

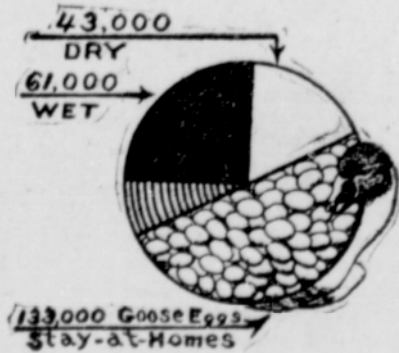
Hops do exhaust the land. The crop and the price is uncertain. Raising hops is gambling with the plow. Because it exhausts the land, it is the most expensive crop that can be raised. Only ground that overflows can raise hops year after year, and it costs so much to fix up a hop yard that you cannot rotate the crop. The largest hop growers in the state have gone bankrupt. Others are getting out of the business and putting in more stable crops. Washington state was first in hop growing; she is now sixth, because her soil is exhausted.

Milk the Farmers.

We might add to this that the hop buyer milks the grower, just as the grower milks the land. He contracts for hops at 25 per cent below market, advances 20 per cent to pay the pickers, and skins the farmer. Brewers and hop buyers are running the growers' organization. They do all the speaking, plan all the moves; the farmers only put up their dollars. These hop growers are getting well paid for doing their work of organizing the farmers to pull the hop buyers' chestnuts. The farmer pays for the privilege of being a cat's paw.

Brewers' Best Servant.

The crowning act of service, however, is done by the farmers, their wives and their children on election day. Oregon stayed wet in 1910 simply because the farming people did not go to the polls. In eleven rural counties less people are registered now with women voting than registered in 1912 without them. If the farmers stay at home Oregon goes wet. The farmer and his wife are the chief reliance of the brewer, who expects them to stay at home on November 3. He is basing his belief on what happened in 1910.



Hatch the Goose Eggs in 1914.

Oregon voted wet in 1910 because half of us stayed home. (See Cut).

400,000 Voters in Oregon This Year.

If 300,000 vote, Oregon is dry. If only 200,000 vote, Oregon is wet.

Talk Your Neighbors Into Voting.

Vote DRY and EARLY.

November 3rd, 1914.

(Paid Advertisement.)