

SPITE MARRIAGE

by Katherine Haviland Taylor

NOTICE: Bob Powers has left his wife, Marsha, and gone to Italy to finish his work there. Marsha and he had been on the verge of divorce; they have decided, however, that Mrs. Powers must not know of their trouble. Marsha, still in love with Bob, has even learned to knit washcloths to please her mother-in-law.

Chapter 30 THE LETTER

THAT evening Mrs. Powers wrote Bob of Marsha as if he were fourteen, and rather given to robbing birds' nests and or to washing little girls' faces with snow. She did not show the letter to Marsha.

It ran, after the start: "I wish I could be certain that you understand, fully, the rare qualities that are your wife's. I want to feel that you will always be deeply considerate of her needs, Robert.

"Her life has not been happy. She cried today when I told her of my deep and growing affection for her; her aunt had called. I cannot like Miss Moore. Her manner is both stern and bold.

"She is knitting a wash-cloth for you, Robert" (Robert understood that this last applied to Marsha and not to Marsha's aunt) "and, while the work is not, I write in confidence, the best, I want you to remember that it is her first wash-cloth.

"She has tried very hard to make it nice, so please write her enthusiastically of her wash-cloth. She knits it for you. Considering, I think the work is exceptionally good. She has had no training whatsoever in the housewifely arts.

"Miss Moore is a person who serves upon committees. She speaks to me loudly of a work with women which I would not mention even to you, my son. (I requested Marsha to leave the room; telling her to fetch my shawl. I then, I fear abruptly, led the conversation to safer channels).

"I have written that which I wished to write, but I want you to consider Marsha's needs. She loves you in a manner that makes her, perhaps, too dependent upon you. At times, as I speak of you, her eyes are extremely wistful.

"I sometimes worry over having parted you, Robert, but she assures me she could not be elsewhere, with me a trifle ill and in need of her, and that you would wish her by my side. I am certain, Robert, that your choice has been wiser than you know.

"On my knees I thank God each night for this daughter you have given to me; the dearest daughter, Robert."

And the writing was a little tremulous. Marsha laughed a little as she began to wrap up the wash-cloth; and then, because tears and laughter are sometimes not far apart, she wiped her eyes on it quickly before she turned from the desk and toward Mrs. Powers.

"It is a very strange looking thing," said Marsha, "and he will be sure to laugh at it!"

"Oh, no, dear! He won't. I have written to explain that it is your first work. I think perhaps—(a twinge of conscience troubled Mrs. Powers) "I did not show that letter to you. He will be very pleased."

THE wash-cloth was full of air holes and lumps and, for some reason that Marsha could not fathom, it had assumed the shape of a skull-cap that had been designed for a human who wore an adult wig.

"I shall write Robert directions for stretching it to shape after use," said Mrs. Powers, "it can be done!" And Marsha laughing unsteadily, had said that. It could, Bob was more of a genius than even she had supposed him to be!

Bob did not laugh at the wash-cloth; his mother was correct in thinking he would not. Instead he grew violently tender over the air holes and the lumps and the shape, which made him think of an oriole's nest. There are men who feel such emotion as they look on foolish, useless things over which the women they love have struggled.

He held it closely between his hands. For a second he held the absurd thing to his lips. Then he saw it again: Tarleton holding her close, kissing her.

That made him drop the wash-cloth to the floor staring at it. He put it in the top drawer of a crudely wrought, unpainted bureau. He formed the habit of taking it out each night before going to bed, to look at it.

The idea of Marsha's knitting troubling him absurdly, he became obsessed by the feeling that the new life might be too much for her; that

she might break down to settle into a nervous condition.

And if she did that, he knew that Geoff Tarleton would throw her over. (He had not needed that letter from his mother in which he had been asked to think of Marsha's needs.) Tarleton wasn't the sort who could love a sick woman or be patient with her. Bob lay awake too many nights worrying over the possibility of this.

Then he decided that if she did grow ill and Tarleton did throw her over, he, Bob, would ask if he might care for her, explaining that he would prefer to care for her, and that the care would be most impersonal.

That would quiet her fears; any fears of hers, made by the thought that he might "bother her in any way." He felt lightened by the decision and it started the kind of dream that even a wholly balanced man may indulge when overworked and lonely and divided by tropic jungles from the world where he belongs.

The fabric of stretched, torn and shocked nerves and loneliness helped him to make his pictures. He saw himself sitting by Marsha's bed and reading to her.

"Haven't you been sitting up rather long?" he heard himself say aloud one night. It appalled him. He'd known one chap—on a job in the East—who had begun by babbling and then—

BUT he could not stop the dreaming, although he could keep it from slipping to words. In dreams he drew her negligee close around her; he saw the white, smooth loveliness of her throat. Once and again dreams ended by his sitting, agitated with despair, his head in his hands. Dreams will, sometimes, end in this way.

He wrote, in parenthesis, "Don't wear yourself out knitting, please!" The rest of the letter was tremulous with gratitude and the letter should have been excused, from start to finish, by that sign she had informed him, would tell her of his sincerity.

He had, two weeks later, her flippant reply; "I know," he read, "that it looked as if I did it on a crowbar, but I didn't, and you mustn't agitate yourself over the strain. The people who receive them are more to be pitied. When you drop the needle (and they are very slippery) these funny looking holes get in. I wanted to put on patches, but your mother says it isn't done."

After that he stopped worrying about the nervous breakdown that, in his poor, tired mind, was oddly connected with knitting, but he found another subject for anxiety in Geoff.

He wondered how Geoff would treat Marsha? He knew a good deal of Geoff, and Geoff had, in the past, been known to deal rather harshly with people—women to be exact—who had worn his interest thin.

After Bob considered this from all angles he decided, and he meant it, that he would kill Geoff if he didn't treat Marsha well, and then he dismissed that particular phase of the Marsha-Geoffrey complication to go on to another.

If she had thought him somewhat the conqueror, the entirely knowing devil and the keeper of his secrets, would she—have married some one else—to let him kiss her? Perhaps, but he did not want that—"an affair."

Perhaps, even married to him, she would have loved him if she had felt him to be something of the rake. He, the judge and jury and the defense, weighed all aspects of the case. What might have happened if he had kicked this stone aside, or if he had rolled this boulder in front of her to block her path? If he had said, to Geoffrey Tarleton, for instance, upon that day, "No, you can't have her!" And to Marsha, "You are my wife!"

But of course that particular boulder was impossible for him to roll before her in order to block her path; no man would hold a woman against her will.

And yet perhaps he would. Bob strangely felt that perhaps Marsha needed just that—holding against her will.

Again the ghost of Tarleton rose before him. What would Geoffrey have done in that situation? Bob could see him tossing aside a girl to whom he had grown necessary, without a thought.

Oh well, thought Bob, one is not made to one's own specifications, like a bridge. He was no Tarleton; that was sure.

The situation in New York grows more acute, Monday.

AIR CONDITIONING OF AVERAGE HOME POSSIBILITY SOON

Average Six-Room House Can Be Transformed for \$1000 Now Is Estimate—Rapid Strides Being Made

By Max Buckingham, United Press Financial Writer. NEW YORK, Aug. 7.—(UP)—Air conditioning is reaching the point where the average home owner can afford what once was considered a business man's luxury, officials of the industry said today.

An average six room house can be air conditioned at a cost of around \$1000, one official said in making what he claimed was a "very rough" estimate. The "rough estimate" mainly is based on the fact that each installation differs in cost owing to differences in water, lighting effects from the sun, etc.

Growing industry. But air conditioning is growing. J. A. Dewhurst, secretary of the Air Conditioner Manufacturers' Association, told the United Press. The industry had swept forward by leaps and bounds lately. Many difficulties still are encountered, new problems are arising, the nationwide response has been great.

One of the difficulties overcome was in the first public reaction after theater audiences had visited theaters and then complained of colds. "The theaters installed machines and held the temperature around 70 degrees regardless of the outside weather," he reported. "This naturally brought criticism. Now it has been ascertained that the temperature should be about 15 degrees—more than that—lower than the outside temperature with the greatest consideration given to dehumidifying the air in the summer time."

Means Many Processes. Air conditioning to the average mind, means cooler temperatures yet Dewhurst told one company which installed such equipment so that the humidity could be stepped up to 100 degrees—the saturation point—in delicate tests being made. Air conditioning machinery also must be made for year around usage. In the summer time they are to cool, dehumidify, circulate, wash, filter, add fresh air and eliminate noise. In the winter they must be able to heat, humidify and the other things necessary in the summer time.

The scope of air conditioning now can be seen in the following: Railroads are air conditioning their better trains. In India a test is being made to air condition an airplane. Some of the major motor car companies, it is reported, are considering air conditioning of new motor cars. A company is manufacturing an air conditioned bed. A mine in Africa is being air conditioned.

Needed in Hospitals. In addition hospitals are considering air conditioning for operating rooms. At the time of an operation windows must be closed to keep out any dirt or any drafts. Nurses must stand by to wipe perspiration from the head of the attending surgeon. Condition of the air is far from pleasant.

"Air conditioning for hospital operating rooms would be a great boon to the medical profession, for not only would it increase the efficiency of the doctors but it would aid the patient," a prominent New York surgeon told the United Press today.

The principle of operation of air conditioning for the home is simple, after engineers have made the installation. It is still a strictly engineering feat of pumping and compressing air, but once the equipment is in the home the only necessity is to turn and watch gadgets somewhat similar to those used for modern heating equipment.

MEDFORD CHOSEN FOR CITY SURVEY

EUGENE, Ore.—Medford has been selected as the second city to be surveyed by the League of Oregon Cities, and a complete analysis of its finances, administration and other details will be made available to officials of other cities of the state, it was announced by Herman Kehring, executive secretary of the league and director of the University of Oregon bureau of municipal research and service.

Medford was selected as a representative of cities from 8,000 to 12,000. Charles McKinley, professor of political science at Reed college in Portland, will make a thorough study of all city activities. The information will be sent out from the Eugene office of the league.

Oregon City was the first city to be selected for the survey, and the work there has been completed by Professor McKinley. Selection of a city from 2,000 to 2,500 population will be made as soon as the work is completed at Medford.

Phone 542. Write now away your refuse City Sanitary Service.

THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



THE WOMAN WHO BELIEVES IN BEING PREPARED FOR ANY KIND OF WEATHER ON A PICNIC

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

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SMATTER POP—



By C. M. Payne

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—"Oil's Well That Ends Well"



By Hal Forrest

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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—"Where There's a Will"



By EDWIN ALGER

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THE NEBBS—Oh—Happy Day



By Sol Hess

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CCC FIRE FIGHTERS READY IN 4 MINUTES

CAMP UPPER ROGUE, CCC, Aug. 7.—(Sp.)—The 1747th Co. CCC, located near Union Creek, held drills Friday in preparation for fire fighting. A record 104 minutes to assemble 125 men and their 11 tools and equipment was set. At the same time the assumed fire only 11 minutes were required to issue out 125 men and 11 minutes, exclusive of 10 minutes time, to assemble and equip the men and place them on the fire line.

Bring Own Water. ARINGTON, Ia.—(UP)—Invitations for the annual reunion in drought-stricken Arkansas on August 7 will bear the information that each family must bring its own drinking water.

BREWERY PENALIZED FOR VIOLATING ACT

OLYMPIA, Aug. 7.—(AP)—The Northwest Brewing company, operating breweries in Tacoma and Walla Walla, was ordered by the Washington liquor control board to virtually close up shop for a week as a penalty for violations of the state liquor control act.

Finding the company guilty of having too many close connections with retail beer outlets the board ordered it to suspend all sales from its breweries and distributing agencies for one week, the suspension to become effective at 6 p. m. today.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

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