

Uncertain, Coy and Hard to Please

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE



They ain't no reg'lar bath tubs, but me an' John every Sunday strips off, shipboard an' pours buckets of water over each other.

"Yep," said the old boat builder, "brother John an' me is out of the tourist business. We figured, there bein' not much doin' in our own like that we might put up log cabins on the old place for folks to stay in overnight, or mebbe a week at a time. Most everybody that's got a piece of ground between here an' Machias does it, an' makes money, so they tell me, but I guess the women folks does the most of the tendin' to it. I thought once that puttin' a boat together so she would ride the water like a duck was quite a leetle trick, but it ain't nawthin' to fixin' up a camp so it will please a woman.

"Bein' mechanics from boys up, buildin' the cabins wasn't no trouble. We just drew along the rud a piece an' see what the shacks that the farmers had built was like; then we come home, got the lumber from town, an' built us five of 'em. There they be now. Take a look at 'em and tell me if you ever seen anything that could beat 'em for the right draft an' beam. They's everything into 'em. Hot air stoves for chilly weather, pictures of the world's biggest battles that we got out of a history book our grand dad left us when he died an' an' all the tin ware an' chiny anybody needs to get a meal together with.

"Just to give the place a home like touch, we took a trip around some of the farms an' got some things to put pretty 'em up, like tidies for the chairs an' artificial flowers an' wall mottoes. When we had everything ready an' invitin' we put up a sign: 'Camps, night, day an' weeks if you want 'em' out by the big rud and sure enough right away folks begun to come in.

"But they was a kind of folks that was different from any me an' John had ever see. The first was a woman about sixty with a husband a little older. Before she would even look at one of the camps she began to ask questions of me.

"'Are these places clean?' says she. 'They don't look it.'

"'They're bran new, ma'am, I says. 'Never been lived in.'

"'Are the furnishings adequate?'

"'They're the adequatest furnishings money can buy,' I says wonderin' what she was talkin' about.'

"'Very well, I'll look at them.'

"I was goin' along, but she waved me away. 'I'll let you know our decision,' she says, an' takin' the bunch of keys I give her off she went, her husband trailin' along behind her.

"I was just thinkin' how pleased an' surprised she'd be, when back she come, hot foot.

"'There's no bawth in that first cabin,' she says. 'Have any of them bawths?'

"'Well, no, not exactly.'

"'Just what do you mean, by not exactly?'

"'I mean they ain't no reg'lar bath tubs, but me an' John every Sunday strips off, ship-board fashion an' pours buckets of water over each other. They ain't nothin' like it for givin' you a appetite for breakfast.'

"I don't know yet what made the old dame so mad, but she just red-dened up like she'd been insulted, says, 'Come on Henry' to the man, an' off they go to their car.

"I felt pretty low about the bus-

ness for a while, an' then pretty soon another couple shows up.

"'We want a cottage by the shore,' says the woman, who was young an' kind of movin' pictur' lookin'.

"'Not too near the shore,' says the man.

"'As close as it can be. What's the use of coming to a place like this if we can't see the river?'

"'You won't be able to see the river for the fog in the morning, if you don't take that shack up on the hill.'

"'Very well. You can go there and I will take the cunning little one by the beach.'

"'Just as you say. But don't expect me to rescue you if a bear comes snooping around.'

"'Then what does the girl do but bust out cryin' an' says the feller is a wuss brute than any bear, an' as soon as she can get to a railroad station she is goin' home to her mother. So she hops into the car, an' he climbs after her an' that's all of that.

"'It was beginnin' to look as if the business wasn't goin' to go so well when along comes two old ladies chuggin' down the road an' one yells to us if we have a camp empty.

"'When she finds we has five of 'em she an' her friend starts to look 'em over, an' by an' by we hear high words about the furnishin'.

"'It seems one of 'em was sore because they wasn't no hooked rugs on the floor, an' the other wanted a fire place. They thrashed that out, by an' by decidin' to go back to the first cabin they'd looked at, an' there they got into a dispute about whether the cook stove would draw or not. After ten minutes they decided to find out by lightin' a fire into it. It drawed all right, but the old on- claimed it only drawed because the wind was blowin' down river, an' would smoke like a volcano when the wind shifted.

"'Then pretty soon, when they had moved to another cabin we could hear 'em arguin' over why they ever come here at all, an' one of 'em said the other should of come to the place that was recommended to 'em by her Cousin Alec, an' the other said that Cousin Alec was only about three-

quarter witted, an' that his trouble seemed to run in the family.

"'Then they both of 'em comes out of the house single file an' stalkin' right past us they gets into the car, squabbles a while about who was goin' to drive, and then up the rud they go.

"'It was two days later before anybody else showed up, an' then it was a woman with three daughters, who was pleased with the first cabin we showed 'em an' real sociable. They was all over the place, makin' friends with the dog an' the cow an' askin' all sorts of questions. They stayed the first night an' would of stayed the second all right if it hadn't turned foggy. It was about midnight when they was a rap on our door an' there was two of the girls standin' there shiverin' but terrible mad.

"'Before I had a chance to say anythin' or ask 'em anythin' the oldest spoke up an' says: 'Why don't you do something about that cow. Listen to the poor thing.'

"'I don't hear no cow,' I said. 'The only cow we got is in the barn.'

"'Well, it's somebody's cow, and we just can't bear to hear it crying that way. You must find out about it at once, or we shall leave.'

"'Well, I'd heard other fellers in the business say that guests must be pleased at any cost, so I slipped on some cloe' an' went out with them. We started down the rud without hearin' nothing, an' then we come up over a little hill an' one of the girls says, 'There she is now, poor dear.'

"'Where?' says I, pretty puzzled.

"'Right out there. Do you mean to say you don't hear it?'

"'Then of a sudden I knew what it was all about. Three miles up the river the fog horn was goin', an' them girls was out on an errand of mercy to get me to put it out of its misery.

"'The next day I says to Henry: 'Henry! Tomorrow you an' me is goin' to take down that sign on the rud an' retire from the outdoor hotel business. That feller that said that women is uncertain coy an' hard to please was smarter than Solomon an' Dan' I put together.'

Nome Named by a Mistake

Washington.—Nome, Alaska, recently almost entirely destroyed by fire, is an outstanding example of a town named by mistake. In early maps of Alaska one cape was left nameless and an official to whom the draft was submitted penciled beside it the query "name?" A copyist transcribed the scrawled question as "Nome," and the name stuck. When the gold rush came in 1890, the little settlement which had previously been called Anvil City, adopted the name of the cape, 11 miles to the east.

"Nome is only about 120 miles southeast of Cape Prince of Wales which marks the American side of Bering strait, and less than 150 miles from the mainland of Asia," says a bulletin from the National Geographic society headquarters in Washington.

"For years it has been the nearest town of any importance to the Old World. The town sprawls along the sea shore and the Snake river where that stream flows into Bering sea, about midway of the Alaskan west coast.

A Town Built of Wood.

"The buildings of Nome have al-

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ways been predominantly of wood, and even the streets were paved with boards to combat the almost bottomless mud of the tundra on which the town sprang up. There has always been an autumn exodus from Nome to 'the States.' This was particularly marked in the early days of the town's life when the proportion of fair-weather citizens was large.

"The town lies wholly unprotected on the north coast of the icy, storm-swept Bering sea close to the Arctic circle, and is frozen in and snowed in for about seven months of the year. At times the snow drifts up to the eaves of the houses. Chief placer mining, the community's chief industry, depends on the use of water, all activities must close when the water congeals. Nome's last boat usually leaves for Seattle about October 15, and none arrives until the middle of the following June.

"Gold was discovered in one of the creeks inland from the site of Nome, in the autumn of 1898. When the ice released its grip on the Bering coast the following spring, thousands of gold-seekers rushed in. Then came the astounding discovery by a United States soldier that he could pan gold from the sands of the beach.

Glamor and Tragedy Marked Nome's Life.

"News of this paradise for the poor miner, where it was not even necessary to file claims, spread rapidly over the world even in those radioless days. Miners in other Alaska settlements and western United States, dropped their picks, store clerks quit their jobs, seamen deserted their ships, gamblers left their old haunts, laborers laid down their tools, and even women left comfortable homes to seek their fortunes in the Nome sands.

"In two years Nome became the largest city in Alaska territory. In the summer of 1900, it had 20,000 inhabitants. They came from all parts of the world—a colorful group who emblazoned Nome's name indelibly on the pages of Alaskan history.

"Life in Nome was at once glamorous, sordid, thrilling, and tragic. Unscrupulous adventurers plied their shady tricks on innocent prospectors. Claim jumping, sometimes with the connivance of officials, was common. Gamblers grew rich from miners' gold bags and pocketbooks by the use of crooked gambling devices. No one had time to think of sanitation, so many lives were lost through typhoid, diphtheria and other diseases.

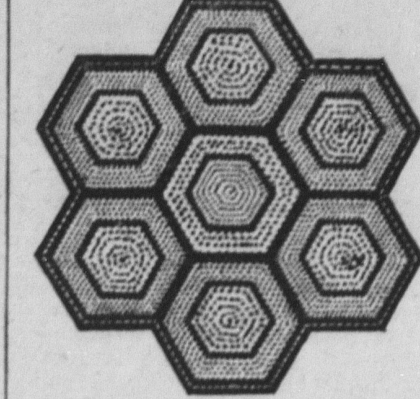
"Meanwhile Nome's glamor aroused the imaginations of such writers as Rex Beach and Jack London. And why not? The Nome gold rush ranks with the most remarkable stampedes in American mining history. The city grew like a mushroom. Thousands streamed in by boat and wagon and afoot. Hotels, banks, and stores, all of wood, rose along muddy lanes. Increased traffic on the streets made them knee-deep mire, so the town covered them with sturdy boards for safety of pedestrians.

One of the Greatest Gold Stampedes.

"After the golden sands of the beach were exhausted, dredges were brought in and the mining took on an industrial aspect in the creeks some miles inland. Nome's population began to dwindle. By 1903 thousands of gold seekers had died or vanished.—some with purses bulging; others

Crocheted Rugs in Quilt Designs

By GRANDMOTHER CLARK



During the past years patchwork quilts have been the big article of interest to the home needleworker and now we have the crocheted rug in quilt designs. The beauty of these rugs can only be appreciated after you have seen one of them. Crocheted rugs have the best wearing properties.

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Our book No. 24 on crocheted rag rugs in quilt designs contains 20 rugs shown in colors with instructions. Write our rug Dept. and send 15c for this book. Address Home Craft Co., Dept. C, 19th & St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Mo.



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