A BACHELOR HUSBAND

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "Richard Chatterton," Etc. Copyright, 1926, by W. J. Watt & Co.

THIS BEGINS THE STORY THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Marie Chester and Christopher
Lauless were raised together, and
when her father died they married;
she because she loved him and
thought he loved her; he because he
thought he loved her; he because he
thought he money the arrangement brought him. On their honeyment brought him. On their honeyment brought him. On their honeyment honey the life of a Bachelor
Husband his friends expected. A
Mrs. Heriot throws herself in his
say, and Marie experiences a growing affection for Dakers, known as
Feathers, a friend of her husband.
Marie on returning home is saddened
not at Chris' moroseness, but at her
realization that she lacks Mrs.
Heriot's power to sway him. Chris
goes to St. Andrews for golf with his
goes to St. Andrews for golf with his Heriot's power to sway him. Chris goes to St. Andrews for golf with his boon companions, leaving the disconsolate. During Chris' absence peathers tries to keep Marie amused by outings, on one of which they meet the scandal mongering Mrs. Heriot. Chris' return home brings additional constraint. He affects fellowsy at her cool, attitude and faally, to please him, she consents to go on a party with him, Mrs. Heriot and Feathers. As she does not play golf she is somewhat isolated while the others are playing.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES 117HAT was to become of her? The bond of marriage which she had at first believed she could tolerate because growing into a fetter, and she felt that he would give anything to be free

he would give anything to be free

If it.

She had thought herself miserable then Chris was away in Scotland, and the sat up then with some show of when Chris was away in Scotland, and yet she knew she had been happier then than she was now, when his presence in the house was a constant worry to ber, and left her with an eternal sense

She had tried hard to get used to it. and failed. Surely there must be some other way of escape for them both. Across the hills she thought she heard mebody calling to her, and she scram-med to her feet with a sense of guilt. Time had passed so quickly—she sup-posed they had got back to the club-house and were looking for her. Feathers' coat had fallen to the

grass, and as she stooped to recover it a litter of papers and odds and ends tumbled out of one of the pockets. Marie went down on her knees to gather them up, smiling at the motley collection. There was a bundle of pipecleaners and a half-empty packet of cigarettes, a bone pocketknife, some papers that looked like bills and a sheet from a bridge scorer with something folded between it—something that fattered down to the grass—a dead

The color flew to Marie's cheeks as she stooped to pick it up. It was a faded blossom of love-in-a-mist—the flower she herself had given to Feathers he last time they drove this way. She held it in her hand for a mo-

ment, her eyes a little misty, then she unfolded the page from the bridge scorer and put it back in its place, and on the inside of the paper, scrawled in Feathers' writing, were the words, "Marie Celeste," and the date of the day she had given it to him. Marie sat down on the grass with a little feeling of unreality. Why had he

little feeling of unreality, kept it? She shut her eyes and conjured up his kind, ugly face, and all at once it was as if a burning ray of light peneted her mind, showing her the thing

he had never meant her to see. He loved her! She could not have explained how it was that she knew or why she was so sure, but it came home to her with a conviction that would not be denied. He loved her.

How blind she had been not to have known all along! A hundred and one little incidents of their friendship came crowding back to her, fraught with a new meaning and significance. He loved her, and his was a love so

well worth having; a love that would make a woman perfectly contented and happy, that would allow of no room for jealous doubts or bitterness, that would be like the clasp of his hand. trong and all enfolding. She had often thought with faint envy

f the unknown woman whom some day te might love, and all the time she was that woman !

The little dried flower had betrayed his secret, and the knowledge of it sent a wave of such happiness through her heart that for an instant she felt as she were floating on clouds far above all the bitter disappointments and dissionments that marriage had brought

d-the wonder of complete happi-

said a voice behind her, myself." and she looked up with dazed eyes to her husband's face.

mixed up with it. "Mr. Dakers left on passionately: "It seems as if I me his coat, and the things all fell out must lose all my friends. It isn't fair!

Then Chris said abruptly: "It's a you came if you're so easily tired." She started and looked up at him.
What do you mean? I'm not tired.

All her weariness had forsaken her. then away by new and happier houghts. He houghed grinaly:

on the desire his company. She hardly shadered him.

They had tea outside in the shade a tree. Mrs. Heriot was very quiet. The his cooked rather sullen.

Have you got a headache?' Marie in the face again, and yet her whole desired sympatherically. She fall that the locked rather has been desired by the face again, and yet her whole desired sympatherically.

Heriot's sister broke in spite-"Headache! Of course she

hasn't. She lost the game, that's all, and it always makes her sulky."

Mrs. Heriot flushed.

"We'll take you on again after tea and beat you," she said. "We never should have lost, only Chris slacked off."

She shot him an angry glance.
Fenthers took no interest in the conversation. He had had one cup of tea, refusing anything to eat, and sat back in his chair, his hat tilted over his eyes, smoking hard.
Marie hardly glanced in his direction, but she was nainfully conscious

tion, but she was painfully conscious of his every movement. Her thoughts all the time were picking out little in-cidents of their friendship, translating them anew, hugging their meaning to her heart.
She did not know that Chris was

watching her closely—would not have, cared if she had known. For once she had been lifted above the level of pain and disappointment to which marriage with him had relegated her.

I'resently another man strolled up and joined them. He knew both Chris and Mrs. Heriot, it seemed. He asked if there was any chance of a foursome.

Chris indicated Feathers.
"My friend here is going to play. Sorry."

Feathers looked up.

"I'm not keen—I'm quite happy
where I am. Mrs. Lawless and I will
where I am. Mrs. Lawless and I will

keep one another company. Shall we?" he asked, glancing at her. first believed she could tolerate because Marie nodded. Her heart was racing, and she was afraid that every one

would see her agitation. Chris laughed.

energy.
"Nice place here, isn't it?"

"Yes-very." "I wish you would play golf, Mrs. Lawless."

me? I don't know the first thing about "Who do you suppose would teach "I shall be delighted to offer myself

for the post, if Chris has no objection."

Her brown eyes shone. "Why should he? He would not care to teach me himself."

It seemed as if she saw Feathers now for the first time. He was no longer Chris' friend, the man she had hated for having brought her castle tottering earthward. He was no longer even the kind friend he had been to her—he was the man t the man who loved her.

Her thoughts seemed to travel so fast ahead, weaving all sorts of impossible day-dreams for the future "I'll speak to him about it," Feath-

ers said briefly. His kind eyes dwelt on her face. "I thought you said you were tired," he said, suddenly. "I don't think I have ever seen you look better in your

She laughed and flushed.
"Haven't you?" She looked away
com him across the green slope up which Chris and the others were disappearing.

"You ought to have played." she said irrelevantly. "Why didn't you? I am sure you would have enjoyed it better than sitting here."

She asked the question intentionally, hoping with almost childish engerness that he would say he preferred to be where he was. She knew it would be only the polite thing to say, although in her heart she would understand that in this instance he was sincere. But Feathers die ay it. He was filling his pipe with tobacco, ramming

it down into the bowl with careful pre-"I don't care for mixed games," he aid. "Mrs. Heriot always loses her said.

temper so shockingly."
"Does she?" She leaned her chin in her hand and looked at him with rather wistful eyes. She wondered what the would say if she told him about that little dead flower. He broke into her thoughts.

"Has Chris told you that I am leav-

The words gave her a terrible shock the color drained away from her face, eaving her eyes very piteous against

its pallor.
"Leaving-England" she echoed the words in a whisper.
"Yes," he went on, ramming tobacc into his pipe, hardly conscious of what

he was doing. "You remember that I told you I al-ways went with the tide. Well, three weeks ago it washed me up in London, and now it's washing me of again. I'm going to Italy."
"Oh-what for?" she asked the ques-

tion without expression.
He shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know; nothing in particular. I've been before, of course. I'm just he longer had a place in her thoughts.

She gave herself up to the sweetness of a dream that could never be realgoing to take a stick and a knapsack,
which is a supply around the country sleep and walk around the country, sleep anywhere—ent anything—and enjoy

"I wish I could come with you." The She had not heard his step over the and Feathers raised his eyes at last. soft grass, and he was close beside her.

It is saw the pallor of her face and the distress in her eyes, and his heart best distress and odds and ends back into gan to race, but he only said very gan it was a said very gan it. "You'd soon get tired of livquietly: "I was just coming back," she said.

"I was just coming back," she said.

She tried desperately to control her told the said to the said t

of the pockets-I hope I've found them First there was Mr. Atkins, and now

She scrambled up.

"Let me take it." Chris said. She "Yes." She laughed recklessly. "He made a little involuntary movement as went away because " oh, I sup-

Somebody loved her—that was the fully choosing his words:

reat joy and wonder of the world. She so longer felt herself unwanted. There was one man to whom she was not serily a tic and a nuisance.

Then Christian and a nuisance. little hoarse, but its very steadiness seemed both to conceal and reveal more than an outburst of passion would have

done, and Marie gave a little stifled cry. And Feathers went on, speaking in

He mighted grimly:

"Feathers told me that you were tired and had stayed behind to rest."

He searched her face with vague suspicion.

Marie answered rather sharply:

"There seemed no object in my trudeing round behind you all; I was not playing and I did not understand the same quiet voice:

"You see, Mrs. Lawless, I know the world, and you do not! I know what a mountain of regrets one lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things will be world."

"There seemed no object in my trudeing round behind you all; I was not playing and I did not understand the same quiet voice:

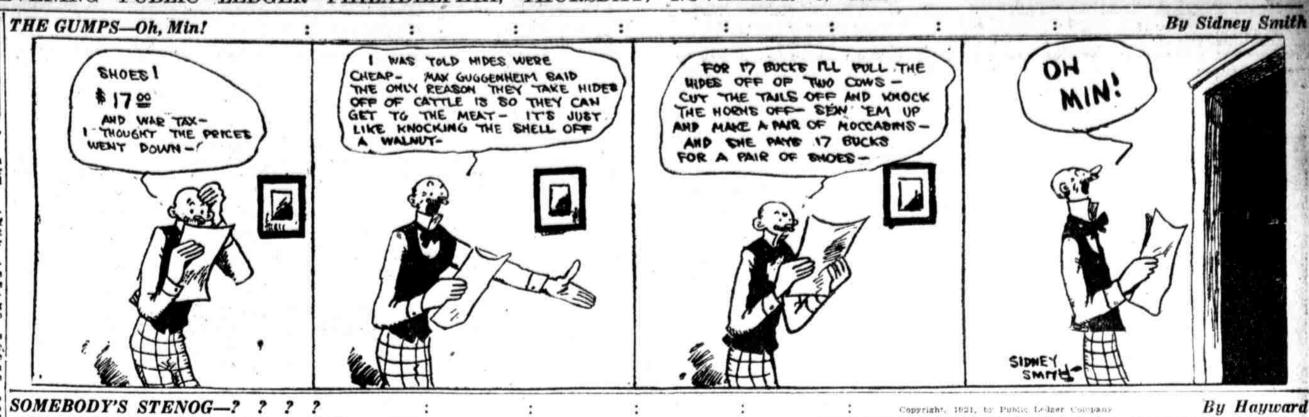
"You see, Mrs. Lawless, I know the world, and you do not! I know what a mountain of regrets one lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets other things were a mountain of regrets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the future if—if one forgets out lays up for the f playing and I did not understand the ing failed to make you happy; but tame."

* but my failure will be worse than

She quickened her pace a little as his, if I—if I try to deceive myself be clubhouse came in sight. She did with the belief that I can * * can

day she could even be nice to this went him from walking out of her life, as she knew he intended doing.

CONTINUED TOMORROW







The young lady across the way says she likes basketball all right but the real excitement comes when two good football teams cross bats.

