By Sidney Smith

## A BACHELOR HUSBAND

By RUBY M. AYRES Author of "Richard Chatterton," Etc. Copyright, 1920. by W. J. Watt & Co.

HE DID not open Marie's letter till he got back home, and he read it in the deserted drawing room where she and Miss Chester had so often sat together. The house felt like a tomb now, he thought wretchedly. He wished

never to see it again.

Marie's letter was very short:

"Please do not try to see me. ean't bear it. I want time to think things over and decide what to do, I send for you if ever I want you .-

That was all; but it was like a death warrant to him. If ever she wanted him! His heart

told him that she would never want him He had had his chance and rown it away. During the days that followed, in his Hatress and loneliness, Chris fell back

a great deal upon young Atkins.

After Miss Chester's funeral and the closing of the house it was Chris' suginto rooms together. Chris hated the idea of his own company, and he knew that as long as he lived he would never find another friend to take Feathers'

friend's tragic death; he could not pear to speak of him. He even put away like grip.

"Oh. Tommy—please!" She sounded "Oh. Tommy—please!" She sounded

He was at a terribly loose end in

those days and young Atkins was just in her voice, the right sort of companion for himalways cheery and bright and full of Atkins said. the optimism of vouth. He had quarreled badly with his father and had been cut off with the

proverbial shilling. "Not that it matters," he said philo-

He had decided to go to America.

He had decided to go to America.

She fell into his mood, and they made their plans like eager children.

It was only when young Atkins was something for Marie if he helped her just starting away that she caugh his him. Though he did not know any-thing like the whole of the story, he was shrewd enough to piece together the was shrewd enough to piece together the few little bits which Chris sometimes doesn't riean that my summer has

He was intensely sorry for them both and would have given a great deal to have helped put things right. Once, unknown to Chris, he hired a motorunknown to Chris, he hired a motor-bike and went down to see Marie and your life." his sister.

together up and down the little lawn.

It was autumn then, and the bosom
of the river was covered with brown It was autumn then, and the bosom of the river was covered with brown and yellow leaves from the trees on its broke out vehemently. "I wonder you end of sungher.

He thought Marie was pleased to see

him—certainly the color deepened a lit-that rushed to her eyes.

manner, and she listened gravely, some- heart-forever." that they were sharing rooms—much more expensive rooms than he could possibly have afforded alone; but Child

Millicent had left them together for a little while, that Marie said suddenly : "Tommy—do you know that it's a month today since—Mr. Dakers died?"

He laid a hand on hers in clumsy

saved your life twice." He realized too late that he had spoken tactlessly, but to his surprise she only smiled—a wise littl smile which be could not fathom.

she said softly, almost happily it seemed. There was a little stlence, then he broke out again.
"It seems a lifetime since we all met

for the first time down at that bally old hotel, doesn't it? You and I, and Chris, and poor old Feathers."

months," she told him.
"Is it?" he cleared his throat nerv-"Jove! said again, reminiscently.

eyes dilating.

had said too much, for he made an-

'I'm going back—to Chris.''
To Chris!'' he could hardly To Chris!" he could hardly believe He gripped both her hands. "Hoo.

other attempt to escape.

"Yes." He twisted his cap with agi-"For only you two gentlemen, sir?" "Yes." He twisted his cap with agitated fingers. "He went back to his Knightsbridge rooms after—well, after Miss Chester's house was sold, you know, but of course you do know."

She shook her head.
"I have not seen him for a month."
Young Atkins looked wretched. He knew from the little Chris had told him that this separation had been her own wish, and therefore he could not out of the house."
"For only you two gentlemen, sir?" she had asked amazed, and Tommy had said: "No—I shan't be there—there's a lady coming." Then seeing the faint disapproval in her eyes, he added chuckling: "Cheer up! It's all right! She's his wife!" He had told her enough of the truth to enlist her sympathy. packed his bag, and promptly proceeded to lose Chris as soon as he had got him out of the house.

own wish, and therefore he could not out of the house.

understand her attitude now.

"I'll call for you at the club at six.

"I'll call for you at the club at six.

"I know he's jolly miserable, any"I know he's jolly miserable, any"I know he's jolly miserable, anyChris frowned as he turned away. He way." young Atkins broke out explosively after a moment. "He never goes anywhere—he just sits and smokes and thinks. He's changed so! It's rotten! And he used to be such a cheery soul." He seemed afraid all at once that he had sain the streets looked dull and uninviting, so he took a taxi and went

Marie went with him to the gate.

"Your sister has been so good to me," she said suddenly. "I don't know what I should have done without her. I shall miss her dreadfully when I go away."

He looked up in swift distress.

"But you're not going! You mustn't! She's ever so pleased to have you with ber. Where are you going?"

She looked away from him down the dusky road, and there was a little eloquent pause before she said slowly:

"To Chris!" he could have to the man to go to when he might have everything in the world he wanted, and a wife to smile at him from the other side of his own table! He missed Marie a hundred times a day—her step about the house—her voice—even the sight of her slippers and small personal belongings.

He took off his coat and hat in the hall and went upstairs. There was a light in his rooms, and he could catch a glimpse of the table laid for dinner, and flowers \* so many flowers there are med.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

Can Love Survive Middle Age?

Charles Shirley, more than half way through life, thought maybe it couldn't. He was frankly bored with life, with himself and with his wife

Bertha Shirley, a coy forty that tried subtraction by cosmetics and girlish ways, added to her husband's disbellef in the permanency of love by alternate archness and nagging. If it hadn't been for Margery, thirty in years, fifteen in spirits, romance might not have stirred anew in Charles. The suburban community called her a "husband snatcher." But was she?

"THE MAN WHO WAS TIRED OF HIS WIFE" answers the question, beginning

TOMORROW ON THIS PAGE

He had suffered acutely over his friend's tragic death; he could not bear to speak of him. He aren but thousand hoorays!"

She disengaged have the state of him. He aren but the speak of him.

more like her old self now, he thought with some emotion. There was a sufbad spent together.

"I never want to play the beastly game again!" he told a man who questioned him about it in the club one with the clu

There was a note of nervous shrinking "It's his birthday tomorrow," young "I know. I've been thinking of tha

all day."

He caught her round the waist.

"You darling! Tomorrow then! I'll

"You darling! Scarce. We were going make myself scarce. We were going to have an extra dinner by way of sophically. "I've got about two hun-dred a year the mater left me, and I celebration—he wasn't keen, but it was I can always knock up another my idea! I'll pretend to let him down, ndred."

husband through the dark days before arm for a moment, and her face was

He pooh-poohed her words scornfully.
"Nonsense! As if summer doesn't
ever come again! Why, next year will

They were both silent for a moment. He found them in the garden, pacing listening to the monotonous lap, lap of crether up and down the little lawn. the river as it flowed swiftly along be-

and yellow leaves from the trees on its broke out vehemently. I wonder you banks. There was an acrid smell in the can bear to have been so near to it after \* \* \* there I didn't mean that: I'm such a blundering ox.' She smiled through the sudden tears

"I've never minded it like that, somethe in her pale face when she first out.

If we never minded it like that, somehow, Tommy, It's never been as terrible to me as—as perhaps it should be.
I've often thought is never been as terrible to me as—as perhaps it should be.
I've never minded it like that, somehow, Tommy, It's never been as terrible to me as—as perhaps it should be.
I've often thought that those dreadful
minutes when it seemed as if—the end
of everything had come for—for both of
us—when Feathers was so brave—so
wonderful! Washed everything mean
and small and unforgiving out of my ann, rattling on in his usual haphazard and small and unforgiving out of my

She looked up at the dark sky over-

more expensive rooms than he could possibly have afforded alone; but Chris had insisted on paying the difference.

It was just as he was going, and Milliant had been been as the was going, and whose her had been now without thinking of him, and wondering if somewhere—he still thought of her.

It was she who had led him into temptation—she still had that to tell to Chris—if he cared to listen.

month today since—Mr. Dakers died?

He started and flushed in confusion.

"Is it? A month! Hov, the time flies, doesn't it?"

"Yes." She was looking out across the open country at the back of the little house, and he thought he had little house, and he sadness in anyone's to the house.

to the house.

The voice of the river was still in her ears, with its bitter memories, but

eomfort.

"It was a fine sort of death, anywat." he said in desperation. "Just the sort of death a man like Feathers would have chosen " Marie—he was a new look of contentment in her eyes as she turned for a moment at the door, and looked up at the stars. "I'm going back, dear," she said in a whisper, as if there was some one very a whisper, as if there was some one very a whisper, as if the duety exeming who

CHAPTER XXVII

close to her in the dusky evening who could hear. "I'm going back, dear."

"But ah! the little things for which I sigh.
As each day passes by,
The open book, the flower upon the floor, As each day phases.
The open book the flower upon the fi
The dainty disarray.
The sound of passing feet.
Alas, the little things of every day!
The slient eve, my awest.
The lonely waking.
Alas! alas! for little things
My heart is breaking.

hris, and poor old Feathers."

Chris woke up on the morning of his birthday with the very real hope in his heart that the post might bring him some message from Marie Celeste. She how time flies," he had never before forgotten his birthday, iniscently. They sat silent for some minutes, then he rose to his feet, and said that he must be going.

"I told Chris I would be in at seven." he said unthinkingly, then stopped furious with himself for haven the new half of the resulting mentioned the new half of the seven. "What's the matter with you that

stopped, furious with himself for having mentioned the name he had sworn to avoid.

She looked up quickly, her brown eyes dilating.

"What's the matter with you that you're so fond of the house all at once?" be demanded disgustedly. He had previously had a heart-to-heart talk with their landlady and given her many in-Are you living with time structions with regard to flowers and a lavish dinner that night.

He did not know that she had writ-ten that last note to her husband more there." "And mind you're

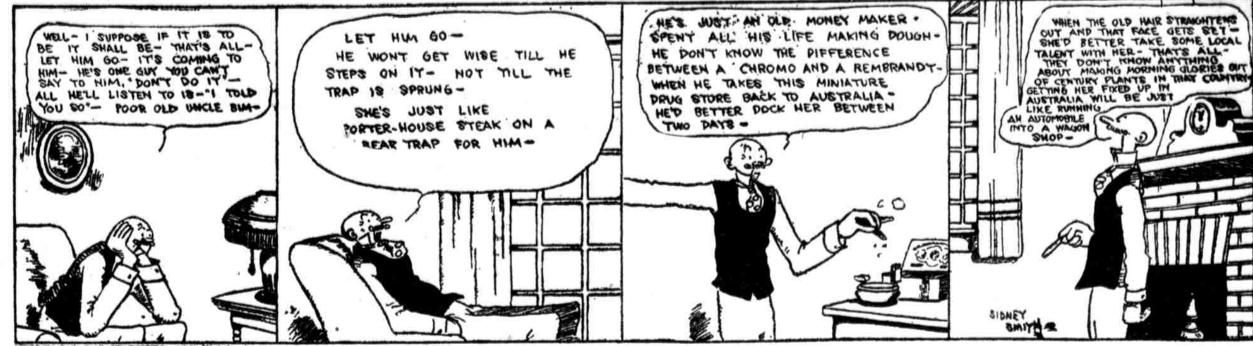
with her old childish way of reasoning, she had argued to herself that if
he really cared for her nothing on earth
would keep him away; and once again
she had been disappointed. He had apparently agreed without a word of demur—he had never attempted to approach her.

"I know he's jolly reterable are
"I know he's jolly reterable are in hour before.
Chris was there an hour before.

uninviting, so he took a taxi and went

home. He echoed the word in his

THE GUMPS—A Peek Into the Future







We asked the young lady across the way if she favored the feministic school and she said she never even heard of it and expected to go



A DOUBLE EXPOSURE







By C. A. Voight

GASOLINE ALLEY-Avery as a Peacemaker

