A LOVELESS MARRIAGE

By RUBY M. AYRES

Author of "A Man's Way," "The One Uniounted," "A Bachelor Husband," etc. Copyright, 1982, by Public Ledger Company

TRIED to refuse; I stammered that had no dances to spare, but he the card from my reluctant hand, there were four numbers dis-He scribbled his in tin's against two

He scribbled his infina against two shem, bowed, and went away.

My dancing partner looked after leard ruefully.

"In Elsa going to marry him?" he had.

"Oh. I don't think so." I answered wells. "She likes him; but she is only

shild." "Many men marry young girls," he had no reply. Were Richard's attentions so marked, I wondered, that many people commented upon

We walked across the lawn silently. When we were right out of sight of the dancing he stopped, laid a hand es either of my shoulders, and looked

"The west on angrily:

"It is most under dividing nonmanse. She's only a child. I'm fond of her, but more because she is your daughter than for any other reason. Why, she was a baby when I first aw her. Don't you remember?"

"I knew that the question you were speaking about?"

I told him.

I knew I ought not to listen; I have done as you wished. God help us both!"

He went away without waiting for me to answer; perhaps he knew that I could not have spoken to have saved my life.

I went to my room, but I did not look the door; I knew how useless it would be.

I knew Elsa would come before she went to bed that night. I sat and listened for her steps.

I'resently I heard them; they came flying lightly along the landing, and

There was a tragic silence; I could ear Richard's heavy breathing through he warm summer night. The bank had topped playing, here and there voices ad laughter broke the silence.

Then he took my hands in his.

"What do you wish me to do?" he

CHAPTER XLIII

I wonder if any other mother has Married to a man whom I didn't bre; robbed of the son I adored. I tood there in the summer night, clinging to Richard's hands, tormented to now what was the right thing to do.

Whatever I said, he would do it, I

I broke out desperately.
"I can't decide—I can't—don't ask And then once again temptation came

rd would take me away from Francis.
Ind give me the shelter of his love.
I was like a drowning soul clutching desperately at a straw, with the full knowledge that it meant clernal destroyed.

"I can't-I can't!" I said again. And then through the night came a

"Mother! Mother!" Mother! Mother!"
It was Elsa, and yet in the distance, softened by the gentle stirring of the breeze, it sounded like her brother's voice—so like that for a moment I held my breath and longed for it to come again, so that I might cheat myself into the belief, for one little moment, that it was indeed my own boy come back.
"Mother! Mother!" ne back. "Mother! Mother!"

And now it was nearer. I took my hands from Richard's and

took my hands from Richard's and stood waiting.

"I've been looking for you everywhere," she said breathlessly. "And—" Her eyes fell upon Richard.
"Have you two been dancing?" she saked me.
"I'm alraid we haven't." I answered

the airaid we haven t. I answered senty. I put my arm around her and kaped her flushed cheek. "I'm afraid we have been talking about you, darling. Mr. Tempest is here."
I put her hand into his, tia, it want a noble sperifice. God, who

Tank t a noble sucrifice. God, who an ace into each aching, jenious heart. even though it was to my own

Then I turned and went away through I made my way back to the marquee. ad laughed and chatted and smiled. ad did my best to be bright and

as at me with a sort of wonderment has at me with a sort of wonderment has at me with a sort of wonderment has a thing had ever happened to you." he asked acce when we were alone. "I've never happened before, and if so, how it ended.

I forced myself to look at it dispassionately. I thought of the wedding has which I must be smiling and cheerful the change to enlow myself.

as the altar steps with Elsa: I tried to face the good-by that would follow when we sent them away on their hon-extended to leave him. "what do you think to fellow Tempest had the check to me this evening? Why, that he no intentions toward Elsa—that was years too old for her and a severy one won; I can't face it—I can never face it." I told myself with stony despair. Elsa weald be so proud and happy every one won; I be congratulating her and me. Ri hard would be my son-in-law!

It was indicrous, not to be thought of.

hed about, and making her think he

d. I told him she'd have a nice
fortune some day, but—

Money would earry no weight with

I said,
hushered usband laughed.

Busband laughed, shuddered at his coarseness; he do nothing whether it would mean answered me.

But he went away, and I was left alone again with my thoughts.

It was getting light; I lay down on the gray dawn. of ne consequence that she tired brighting before they had been hers bong.

sapest is an old flame of yours,"
bend went on. "Why don't you
le him? Surely you want your
salid to be happy?"

Wronged! His wife is stolen. His life is ruined.

For twenty years in prison he meditates revenge on the mon who had wrecked his happiness and falsely sent him into servitude. His foe is dead, but leaves i daughter.

What shall he do? Prison gates unbar. He is free, he is rich. Read his decision in

The Vengeance of Henry Jarroman

Two or three men who were staying with us for the night were talking and

laughing loudly outside with Francis.

I had not seen Elsa since that moment I put her hand in Richard's.
Some one came across the parquet flooring and stood beside me: I knew who it was, though I did not look round; then he spoke.

"I know."
"She'd be the first to laugh if I told the door of my room burst open.
"I'm the voice of one who tries to she whispered. "Richard says he loves

"Iknow."

"She'd be the first to laugh if I told her what people were saying," he went on in the voice of one who tries to ressure himself. "We've been friends—only friends. She wants a boy of her own age, not a middle-aged man with his life behind him. She'd be the very first to laugh at the absurdity of it if she knew.

"Oh, Richard." I said brokenly. "I don't think so. Oh, I am afraid that—itst"—I could not go on. I had never felt to sorry for Elsa as at that moment.

"Marjoric!" He spoke my name roughly. "What are you saying. You on't mean that she—that she"—that she"—is alid brokenly.

"She'd be the first to laugh if I told her to war and held her to me, and we're engaged." I raised her in my arms and held her to my breast.

"I'm so glad, darling, so glad," I said.

I was glad—for her happiness. I tried not to remember that the man she loved was my Richard. "I told him how sfraid I had been that he did not really care," she went on in a muffled voice. "And he was so kind. Oh. I am so happy—so happy!"

I broke down then; I cried, and begged her to love me a little, too.

"I haven't any one in the world."

I haven't any one in the world."

I haven't any one in the world."

I haven't any one in the world. "I'm the happiest girl in the world."

There was a tragic silence: I could

-spare me a little in your great happiness. She drew away from my arms and

looked at me with a frown.
"Of course I love you," she said. Then he took my hands in his.

"What do you wish me to do?" he shed. "I leave it to you to decide. he is your chi'd—and my only wish is please you. Tell me, Marjoric, what hall I do?"

"Of course I love you," she said, with a tinge of impatience. "How funny you are. Other girls' mothers aren't as funny as you."

"It would make so much difference to me if you'd love me a little." I went on wildly. I was starving for a kind word—for the clasp of loving arms.

Elsa seemed to be considering the decide such a tragic awkwardir

> "I hope you're not going to be like the story-book mother-in-law to Rich-ard," she said. "Of course, he's such a dear that he'd never say anything, but he's the sort of man who wouldn't want you fussing around and coming to stay with us for ages and ages. I don't mean to be unkind, but of course, you understand what I mean, don't

I felt as if she had struck me: I o me as it had come that summer night down in Devenshire.

I had but to say the word and Richard would take me summer and Richard Richa

CHAPTER XLIV

I often look back over the years of my married life and wonder if I might have made something better of them-if I might have been more patient with Francis, and showed him more affec-

Possibly there are women in the world who could have altered him completely. One so often hears it said: "Oh, he would have been all right, married to a different woman But I could never pretend to be other than what I was; I could never show affection which I did not feel, and I am afraid that it was difficult for me to hide an aversion.

I never loved him, and as the years passed I seemed to think less of him than ever.

He knew it, too, and the knowledge made him bitter against me; he never lost an opportunity to sneer at me and

hurt my feelings.

I suppose I am essentially a weak vomon; I had a friend once, married to a drunkard, who used to come home and swear and knock her about, and she loved him stendily right through it all. She told me many, many times that nothing he ever did could change her

love for him. I am not like that; perhaps it would have been better for us both it had been. The night Richard asked Elsa to be

engaged to him I never went to had.
I was so ashamed of my pain and jealousy: it was bitterly humi lating to think that I - a woman of forty-with a More than once I found Francis look. her heart out because that old love of he

the chance to enjoy myself.

ful. I tried to picture Richard Tempest

Lajor myself, when I was dancing at the alter steps with Elsa; I tried

to picture Richard Tempest

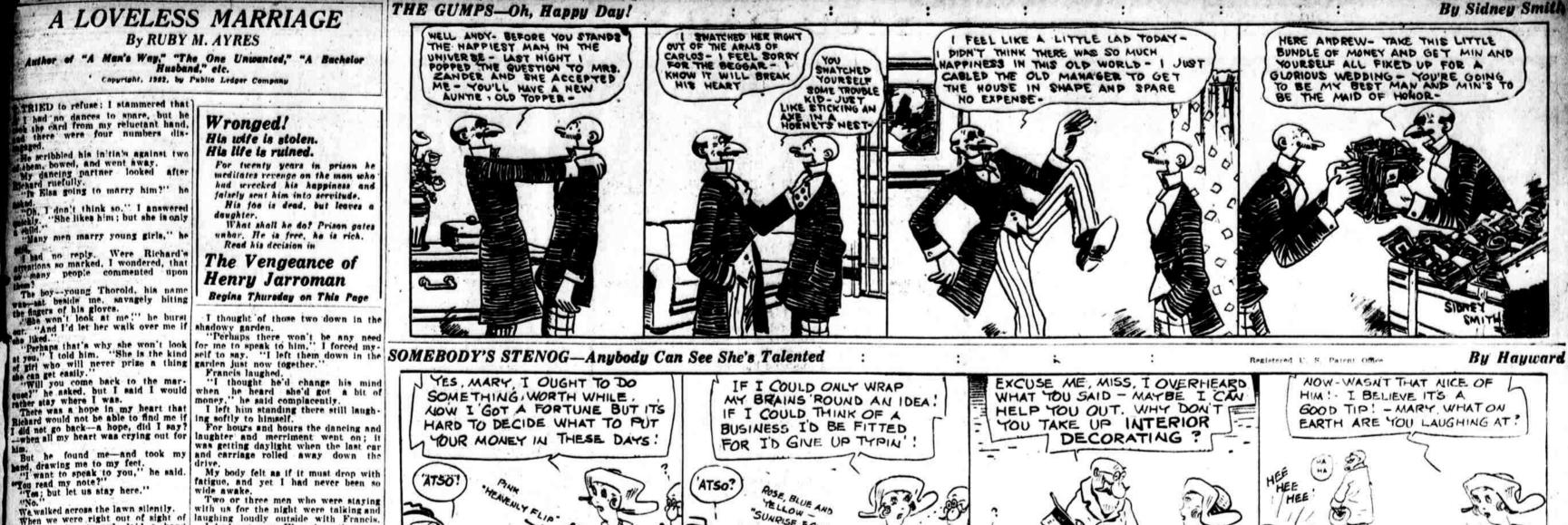
at the alter steps with Elsa; I tried

It was ludierous, not to be thought of, Some one tried the handle of my door ; my husband's voice spoke : "Is there maything the matter, Mar-

'No, nothing, Why do you ask?"

the bed and watched the gray dawn fi tering through the half-drawn blind. Birds began to twitter; the whole world was waking up. In the fields across the road a cow lowed sleepily.

CONTINUED TOMORROW



IF I COULD ONLY WRAP

IF I COULD THINK OF A

BUSINESS I'D BE FITTED

FOR I'D GIVE UP TYPIN'!

ROSE, BLUE AND

"SUNPISE ECLAIR

TELLOW

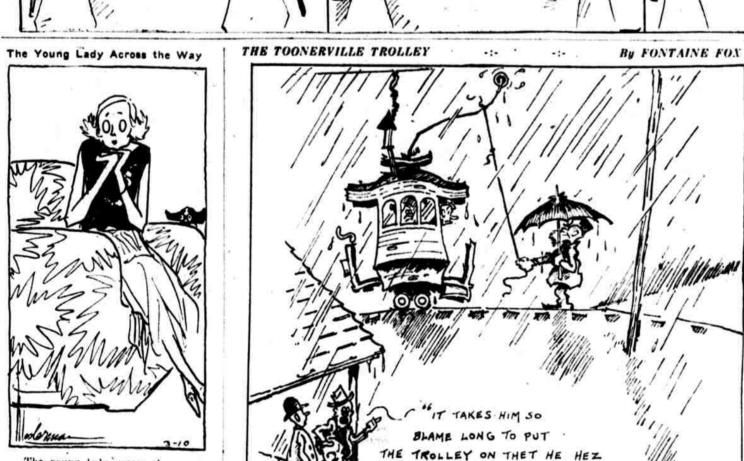
MY BRAINS ROUND AN IDEA!

T' HAVE THET UMBRELLY -

THEY'S A HOLE IN IT FOR

HIM T' LOOK THROUGH

By Hayward Registered U. S. Patent Office NOW-WASN'T THAT NICE OF EXCUSE ME, MISS, I OVERHEARD WHAT YOU SAID - MAYBE I CAN HIM! - I BELIEVE IT'S A HELP YOU OUT. WHY DON'T GOOD TIP! - MARY WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU LAUGHING AT? YOU TAKE UP INTERIOR DECORATING ? HEE HEE AND RED LOVE NEST



The young lady across the way says her father is awfully modest and never boasts about his money and she overheard him say that he had had his property appraised for taxation at less than half its value,



-E-HATWARD . 14

PETEY-Still at Pinehurst



- GENUWINE DIAMONDS! THAY LADY MUST'A DIROPPED IT-THEY'RE EASY WORTH \$ 20,000.0 - HERE'S WHERE I GET MY HOTEL MONEY - MY LUCK HAS CHANGED !" { OH, ,, LA DEE .. · A Voisha



grown-up daughter, should be eating ber been tent daughter has been been been been to the family

