Peachblow: A Marital Extravaganza-By Rupert Hughes

One of the Series of Evening Public Ledger Original Short Stories on Married Life by the Best American Fiction Writers

EVEN if it had not been set down in to his car, ran them to the nearest par-Holy Writ for a fact, there would son and said, "Shoot!" be no escaping the truth of "To him that hath it shall be given."

cludes "her." Which is more than bady but Peachblow, he is able to do outside the dictionary. had-and therefore got.

The Lord Himself, they say, was surprised when He saw her. Her carthly father was so stunned with pride that he called her "Peachblow." And with good reason. She was born just about the time when the Peachblow vase was exciting the world.

The unknown genius who was the author of that masterplece never dreamed when he put it in the fire that it would come out so wonderful.

the curious, unforeseen, unintended! beauty of this girl when she was born. They had selected the name of Ellen Anne Green for her before they saw her. but afterward they called her Peach-

Such a peculiar luster she had with with her out of the kiln of mystery,

So He gave her a power He had never her occult power. empowered her to change her mind and his mind." cry again from the start! She could She said this in the very presence

through the animal whims of childhood, phinstone. and the parent-obeying, teacher, obey- As soon as Peachblow spoke a curing, custom-obeying years.

ing mainly about matrimony.

Some were not married and wanted to be, but dreaded it and could not find but one of our little California eartha satisfactory mate. Mates were admirable, adorable or advisable, but who were married seemed to be forever pointing out what martyrs they were and how well they stood it : or else were longing to try a new form of martyrdom with somebody else.

It was amazing to Peachblow to hear the women complaining of so many things in the wedded estate and yet all conspiring to decoy the unmarried ones into the trap that held them-like captured mice; like misery in love of coin-

three flances at once, she began to long for that ancient form of monotony

a heauty had to be. For beauty can- a better husband than a lawyer?" finally transpiring.

Peachblow longed for the Joys, the Esquire.

est lover in all the world."

She cast about for the person most it to: worthy of that distinction. The man who seemed to be the lend-

ing lover in respect to quantity and quality was known to all the world as Claude Winsor. So she said: Her father and mother exclaimed

'The first argues skill," she mused; Judges bent their heads and wept se-

"but the second is an obstacle. I do cretly on the papers where Judges make wish he had never been married." There was an audible click and buzz.

a peculiar jolt in the universe, a dizzy feeling as if some one had thrown the world into the reverse gear, then set it back in high. The family said: That's funny! Did you notice anything?"
Then they forgot it and returned to as

the popular sport of denouncing the mo-tion-picture people and crediting them with fiery enthusiasm. His cases often

Peachblow was blue for several days, to go with him. and then she chanced to read, in the newspapers, this:

children that used to play in front of their bungalow are the children find his mother and father-in-law and

quoth Peachblow. "I will blow's hysterics. Los Angeles and her mother to come

Her parents indulged in mental pinheels when they heard her decision. But nothing could change Peachblow's mind. She went out to Los Angeles, and sent one of her photograph to Mr. Winsor with a request for an interview. That photograph was letter interview. That photograph was letter of introduction enough, and she was invited to call at the great man's

When she stood before his eyes he "Do you want to go into the movies?"

"Well," she said, "I'm going to marry into them." "Indeed? And who is the lucky

"You."
"Really!"
"Uh-huh."
Being used to the silent drama and ding superfluous titles, he said nothbut took her by an elbow, her

The person then did them an irreparable injury-or what would have In our dictionary "him," of course, been irreparable in the case of any-

For a time the marriage was happy This is a bit of a story of a her that and she reveled in the luxury of being leved by an expert. But then he went back to his profession and morti-

Peachblow found herself the chattel of a husband who left her arms early in the morning and hastened to the them, pursued them, risked his life to save their lives, gazed into their eves with an arder that transfixed all beholders; who faded out of every picture And so the mysterious Petter who with a dying duck look of undying affecplaces souls in the furnace of human tion for some highly artificial beautybodies was enchanted and amazed by and then came home at night worn out with love and wanted to go to the American Legion prize fight!

After a few months Peachblow sent for her mother and father and listened to their "I told you so's" with great

They agreed with her that life with the glow of a glaze yet the aura of a such a husband was impossil's, and enmist that the Potter longed to show gaged the best divorce lawyer in Los her how he loved her by endowing her Angeles. While they were bewaiting with some intentional gift surpassing the inevitable newspaper horror, the even the fortuitous charm she brought headlines and all the hideous details of divorce, Peachblow felt a renewal of

even granted Himself-that of annulling "Divorce nothing!" she said; "I'll what had been and making it as if it just forget him. I'll just unmarry myhad never been. He authorized her and relf quietly, and erase my memory from

rub out the past and do it over again! of Mr. Winsor, who had called with She learned of her awful power only his lawyer to center with Peachblow, by accident and not until she had passed her parents and their lawyer, John El-

ous look came over Claude Winsor's Then she found herself in the world face. Again the earth joited and spun of grown-up women. They were think- backward, then raced forward once

"It's nothing," said Mr. Elphinstone, nunkes. Quite nothing at all."

He slipped his arm about Peachblow rarely all three at once. The women to sustain her, and found the attitude singularly comfertable. Together they watched Claude Winsor staring at them with a look of bewilderment. Then he bowel and said:

"Pardon me. I entered the wrong set -house, by mistake."

He staggered out and the next thing he knew he was sitting on his porch dandling his baby before his original home and this made it necessary for wife while the publicity man took snap- Mrs. Penchblow Lapius to entertain her bad," he urged. shots for the magazines.

said Elphinstone.

not last long with an ugly soul ferment- 'And so in a short time expensively was another man's wife. And she woning and going sour inside, any more engraved cards conveyed the informa- dered, till her wonderment grew to be than an apple can entertain a worm or tion that Mr. and Mrs. Greene an. a bitter conviction. a rose a canker without a blemish nounced the marriage of their daughter. Worse yet, he was the slave of the Ellen Anne, to John Elphinstone, telephone. At no hour of the day or

think I'd like to be loved by the loving. Penchblow agreed with this in its simplest implication; then she amended

"There's nothing like it because nothing else could be so bad."

She had a husband who tore himself from her society of mornings and "I think I'll marry Claude Winsor," went forth to do battle for women clients over whose wrecked lives he waxed so eloquent that his tears were rivaled by those of the jury, and strong

> idle marks to pass away the time. Elphiustone not only spent hours upon hours in his office with exquisite clients whose hands he patted, and whose charms he expatiated on before the courts, but he came home and told |

He wrote briefs as impassioned and full of imagination as any scenario with fiery enthusiasm. His cases often with inventing more novel sins than took him to distant cities and it was not always convenient for Peachblow

There was such a strain upon her natural jealousy that she had to consult "Mr. and Mrs. Claude Winsor an- a physician. Dr. S. Q. Laplus, who nounce that a curious error has been had a charming bedside manner and made in the public attitude toward their soothed her by suggestion rather than by knife or nostrum.

After one notorious lawsuit in which

never have lived together, never have been anything but friends, which they still are, and might not be if they had been married.

After one notorious inwant in which they wreek by his defense of a wayward lady who had bankrupted her husband been married. affections. Elphinstone came home to the physician trying to restrain Peach-blow's hysterics. When Elphinstone marry this bachelor." And immediate approached her solicitously she cowered be father to get her a stateroom to screamed: "Go away; you are no longer a hus-

Elphinstone was seized as by visible hands and haled backward to his own office, where he awoke with a sol ting headache and a strange gap in his Peachblow, once more miraculously

restored to maidenhood, said "After all, a doctor is the world's most useful citizen. I believe I should enjoy being a wife to one."
"Barkis is willin", "said the physi-

cian, who was unusually well read for a doctor. He persuaded another physician to take care of his patients and went away on a bridal tour of all im-

WHEN he came back Dr. Lapius found that his overworked substi-tute had let all his patients get well, tute had let all his patients get well, and he had to buckle down to the task of restoring them to a state of profitable disorder.



Peachblow vowed that she would never get married at all, but after a season or two of flying about with all sorts of lovers, and involving herself in announcing your engagement to her?"

The acoustics were such that she could hear what went on in the office. The halest and heartiest women constantly entered the parlor in a state of such a comfortable parsonage that she their woes to their spiritual adviser.

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The acoustics were such that she could hear what went on in the office. In backelorho ets of lovers, and involving herself in embracing my daughter as it you were stantly entered the partor in a state of such a comfortable parsonage that she their woes to their spiritual adviser.

Such a comfortable parsonage that she their woes to their spiritual adviser.

These were genuine woes beyond the going into trade "I see no objection." murmured ter that Penchblew grew frantic with Peachblow who felt a sudden emptiness suspicion. She remembered all too She was a good girl at heart-as such in her life. "After all, who could make vividly how gentle and soothing her husband had been with her when she

night was he safe from the hateful summons to harry to the rescue of some wanted to do her share in the world, to multiply and all that sort of thing.

THOSE who have experienced it say of ten it was a woman, and in no Live cases out of ten was Peachblow over DE. urged to come along.

She so lost her taste for material medicaments that she longed for spiritual help, and went to her rector. dear I-r. Clarence Yost, to confess her

She was set upon a divorce, but he was horrified at the thought.



It is the quality of understand-ing the other fellow's feelings that gives Rupert Hughes such a large hold on the American public.

He began to write at the age of seven and has been at it ever since. A short time after he left Yale he had six months' experience on a newspaper. After that he was an editor on various magazines until a liftle more than ten years ago, but during those editorial years he did a great amount of writing at night. It is impossible to chronicle all of his succession what there cesses in short stories, novels, plays and moving pictures. He is also the author of a musical encyclo-pedia. "Peachblow" is an ex-travagansa on marriage. It has, pedia. It has travaganza on marriage. It has none the less, an underlying sugboth husbands and

When does human nature

crash under the strein of

fear and tragedy? Must it

pull down all loved ones

in disaster?

"Now an annulment would not be so discovered that the feminine portion of blow could not regard them as anythe congregation took her marriage to thing but a hypocritical excuse

To her intense confusion Penchblow reach of scalpel or tonic, but Peach-

hets for the magazines.

Mr. Elphinstone clung to Penchblow

The acoustics were such that she

And the forting forting forting to the properties of their dear vector as a personal invasion of their rights.

The acoustics were such that she

And the forting out a hypocritical excuse for their dear vector as a personal invasion of their rights.

and he once more assumed all the sighed: "It doesn't seem to charms of an unwedded clergyman, eligible and available.

MERCHANT was Peachblow's sible." A next first husband; handsome junior member of the firm of Wanafield & Son, at whose great department store she had long run up bills for her father to protest against and pay.

But when she called at his office she found him so surrounded with stenographers, buyers, mannikins, cloak, models, designers and other women customers and aides that she could hardly get

His heart was given to providing as many women as possible with beautiful garments and embellishments of every intimate sort, with perfumes and ribbons and lipsticks and what not. He thought about fashions and he was so weary of feminine charms and their enchantment that when he came home to his Peachblow he left at once for one of his exclusively male clubs in order to keep his sanity.

A small shoe shop man was Peachblow's next experiment. But, when she went by his store and peeked in at the window, she always found him kneeling before some woman, or trying to crush a No. 6-E foot into a No. 4-A shoe; and she simply could not endure it. A plumber she married was forever

puttering about other people's homes in the most personal crannies, and she gave him up. An iceman followed him through her well stick to the first wretch she hap-

his kitchen doors to visit. husband in town who did not have to though he be. spend a large part of his time and at-

resolved to marry some homely old farmer who lived in a solitude. Ezra Hepple was the happy manfor a time. And he was so content with even keep a hired girl to cook for the

He rose at 4 A. M. and bragged about then with delight. it. He woke her up to brag about it. Penchblow herself was shaken. She The fact that he had gone to sleep at found herself staring at a dishpan as dusk did not abate his pride. The only if under an hypnotic spell. She heard poetry he knew was something ending her husband's voice from the dining with "healthy, wealthy and wise." She room door. It was the voice of Claude knew he was neither wealthy nor wise, Winsor, the star supreme of the cine-

Her jealous little soul had its wish at last.

But a wish ceases to be a wish as soon as it is achieved. Like the candy in the bonbon dish, it is apt not only to turn sour but to wreck the appetite as I see that there's a ton of fan-mail that you haven't answered.

turn sour but to wreck the appetite as well.

Peachblow's latest installment in her serial husband never cast an interested eye on any other woman. But this curiously made his interest in her unimportant; robbed him of suspense and her of the drama of anxiety. He was unskillful, uncouth, illiterate in femininity.

No other woman cast an eye in his direction. But that was because he had nothing attractive about him. And the man who is unable to interest his wife.

Toor Peachblow, having no rivals to fear and having a husband who made in o perilous comparisons, began to discontent. But the frying pan is for-

no perilous comparisons, began to neglect herself. Her beauty wilted from lack of attention. Her incomparable complexion began to yield to farm food

woman marries; every one of the brutes has his own specialty in being impos-

BY THIS time Peachplow had so disorganized the muchinery of the universe that the world was in the garage half the time, and all the angels exhausted.

It is not such an easy matter for even the angels to keep everything going, especially when it goes backward frequently. There was talk of a strike in heaven and celestial society was prefoundly disturbed. The oldest angen were forever talking of the last big revolution, when Lucifer and his whole party were thrown overboard.

But how was the dreadful situation to be changed? The Lord did not want to cancel one of his own generous gifts to one of his most beautiful creatures. But heaven was cessing to be heaven for all its deserving tenants.

At the height of this dreadful cosmic crists Peachblow in a frenzied state of despondency, while slaving in her kitchen, chanced to catch a glimpse of herself in the casual mirror in the round bottom of a big dishpan. She had long ceased to peruse her own looking glass, The vision that stared at her from

that tiny surface shocked her into sorrow too deep for hysterics. She meditated on her own image: "Every husband is worse than every other husband. A woman might as

much-trodden heart, but he, too, had pens to marry. I was luckiest when I had the most lovable of men, and I Discouraged by her inability to find a wish I had him back again, movie actor "This hateful power of mine has been tention upon other women, Peachblow my ruin. It's best to let nature take her course. The one thing I most wish

had never been is my ability to make things as if they never had been." As she exhaled this last sigh, a dis-Peachblow's society that he would not tinct earthquake was registered on every seismograph in the world. The heavens shook, at first with surprise,

but she was afraid he was healthy. matic firmament. The world might
Her jealous little soul had its wish at share his silent beauty with her, but his

BREAKING

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

Author of "Dangerous Days," "K," "The Amazing Interlude," and many other striking and successful novels.

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY A man's soul.

town,
E. DICK LIVINGSTONE, in whose mem-ory there is a wan, and who is determined yn, ard who is determined base to Noreda, his child-order to bridge the gan white this had been to bridge the gan which the his thirth wear, and weer. He to be love della were sincerely, Lyske, actress, who, ten the very sincerely.

Alleysle, actress, who, ten
to was mixed up in a curious
hashand, leass, had been who
was pergally believed, by a
tork, a rich noning man about
had disappeared timediately
believed he perished in a

ECORY, Beverly's brother and whose researches line him up FRED

with a sister, an extravagant Elizabeth's brother-in-law. 188. WHEELER, tunical AmeritrRE, a rich wouth whose so-it mather wishes him to marry with whom he is smitten.

HE SWORE in a whisper. The maid inch or wond sent her off. In view of his new determination even the maid became a danger. She was the against the law. And Dick's own oblisame elderly woman who looked after gation to the girl at home. his own bedroom, and she might have known Clark, Just what Providence and kept him from recognition before this he did not know, but it could and there was a local on the branch not go on indefinitely.

After an hour or so Bassett locked

lunch. He was not hungry, but he wanted to get out of the room, to think without that quiet figure before him. Over the pretense of food he faced the was the biggest story of his career, was characteristic of him that, before to the end the result of its publication.

He did not believe, for instance, that either Dick's voluntary surrender or fine word disclosure of the situation necessarily meant a conviction for murder. To convict a man of crime he and ran over several pages of it. Then did not know he had committed would be difficult. But with his customary is seven to the desk, pulled the register toward him he shoved it away, turned and saw him.

"Reen way haven't you?" he asked.

"Bill staped in front of them and nodded. "All right. Now get this—I want everything decent and in order. No excitement. I'll come out behind him, and you had Bill stand by. Outside I'll specificate the saw the shoved it away, turned and saw him.

"Been way haven't you?" he asked. abandesing it, he should follow through be difficult. But, with his customary thoroughness, he followed that through Lyingston acquitted was once would be known to the world as Clark. The new place he had so painfully made for himself would be

the resources Clark could have commanded, added to his personal popularity, a first degree sentence would his auter, beloved by everybody in have been unlikely. Not a life, then, perhaps something greater than a life.

> It came to him, then, in a great light of comprehension, the thing David had tried to do; to take this waster and fugitive, the state of mind wiped clean by a shock and illness, only his childish memories remaining, and on it to lead him to write a new record. To take the body he had found, and the always untouched soul, and from them make a man.

And with that comprehension came conviction, too, that David had succeeded. He had indeed made a man. He are absently, consulting his railroad schedule and formulating the arguments he meant to use against Dick's determination to give himself up. He foresaw a struggle there, but he himself held one or two strong cards-the ruthless undoing of David's work, the involving of David for conspiring

He was more at ease in the practical arrangements. An express went through on the main line at midnight, the Sheriff sitting forward and watchline at eight. But the local train, the unblinking eyes, Bassett's anxiety turnrailway station, too, were full of ed to fear. He found his heart leaping After an hour or so Bassett locked possible dangers. After some thought the door behind him and went down to be desided to get a some thought when the room bells rang, and the clerk. he decided to get a car, drive down the with a glance at the annunciator, sent the car back.

situation. Lying ready to his hand ments for a car, and on returning notified the clerk that he was going to leave, but he could not carry it through. It and asked to have his bill made out. lar?" After some hesitation he said: "I'll pay or so, three-twenty too, while I'm at it. "Ye Friend of mine up there, going with

> "Been way, haven't you?" he asked.
> "Yes I took a little horseback trip into the mountains. My knees are still not on speaking terms



The maid tapped at the door. He

being, had suddenly turned to sinister proportions in his mind.

And, as the minutes went by, with ing the lobby and staircase with intent, main line with Dick, and then send the boys hurrying off. His hands shook He went out at once to make arrange- all the time Wilkins was holding him

"Yes. I'll tell you about it as soon as —Bill! Is Alex outside?"

speak to him, and when we walk off, just fall in behind. But keep close." Bill wandered off, to take a stand of extreme nonchalance inside the en-trance. When Wilkins turned to him The Sheriff chuckled. Then he again Bassett had had a moment to adjust himself, and more or less plan his

around and take him to the station. schemes for getting Dick away before These backs are the limit to ride in." it shut entirely. The disaster to his plans thus threat- It might be better, in one way, to

is this business you're on confidential?" quiescent under the circumstances was some to you, and as you're leaving seemed to be the best thing. True, he anyhow-it's the Jud Clark case again." would have first to get Livingstone to be seen all over the country for the next not underestimate its difficulty, there

aged to keep his face impassive.

"Yes. But I never saw a hysterical the hotel, now that the alarm had been Indian. Well, a little while ago an given. Indian woman named Lizzie Lazarus When he found Dick still sleeping he blew into my office. She's a smart made a careful survey of the second woman. Her husband was a breed, floor. There was a second staircase, dairy hand on the Clark ranch for years. but investigation showed that it led Lizzie was the first Indian woman in into the kitchens. He decided finally these parts to go to school, and besides on a fire-escape from a rear hall winsmart, she's got Indian sight. You dow, which led into a courtyard littered know these Indians. When they aren't with the untidy rubbish of an overblind with trachoma they can see further crowded and undermanned hotel, and and better than a telescope."

Bassett made an effort. Clark?" he asked.

was a reward out for him, and I guess wire screen. There was a red fire exit it still stands. I'll have to look it up, lamp in the celling nearby, but he could for if Maggie Donaldson wasn't crazy not reach it, nor could he find any wall some one will turn him up some day, switch. Nevertheless he knew by that probably. Well, Lizzie blew in and time that through the window lay Dick's she said she'd seen Jud Clark. Saw him only chance of escape. He cleared the standing at a second story window of grating of a broken box and an empty and he felt them cold and moist. And this hotel. Can you beat that?" flower pot, stood the screen outside the

with a flow of unimportant chatter. don't know. In some ways it would be don't know. In some ways it would be packed his belongings.

Watching for any one in particu-like him. He wouldn't mind coming Dick was still sleepir "Watching for any one in particular watching for any one in particular?" he managed, after five minutes ar?" he managed, after five minutes are.

"Yes. Pil tell you about it as soon as thought he could get away with it. He didn't know fear. Only time he ever showed funk was when he beat it after the shooting, and then he was full of plans began to go awry, for Dick's bedy was twitching, and his face was pale and covered with a cold sweat. From wondering how they could get away. "A man doesn't play jokes with the hangman's rope." Bassett commented dryly. He looked at his watch and rose. "It's a good story, but I wouldn't more like a stupor than sleep. He sat down by the bed closer to sheer fright. wear out any trouser seats sitting here down by the bed, closer to sheer fr watching for him. If he's living he's watching for him. If he's living he's taken pretty good care for ten years not to put his head in the noose; and I'd remember this, too. Wherever he is, if he is anywhere, he's probably so changed his appearance that Telescope other he must get a doctor. He turned

Can evil identity be lost in good? See how this throbbing story of mystery, regeneration and love solves

these problems.

ened steadled the reporter, and he man- keep Livingstone there in his room until the alarm blew over. On the other "Thanks," he said. "I'll let you hand, Livingstone himself had to be know if he's able to travel. Is this- dealt with, and that he would remain "Well, it is and it isn't. I've talked unlikely. The motor to the main line "Sort of hysteria, I suppose. He'll agree to go. That done, and he did was the question of getting him out of

where now two or three saddled horses

waited while their riders ate within. "What's that got to do with Jud When he had made certain that he was not observed he unlocked and "Well, she blew in. You know there opened the window, and removed the "Not for pure invention. Hardly." wall, and then, still unobserved, made "That's what I said at first. But I his way back to his own bedroom and

so painfully made for himself would be gone. The story would follow him, never to be lived down. And in his particular profession confidence and respect were half the game. All that would be gone. Thus by gradual stages he got back to David, and he struggled for the motive which in y behind every decisive human act. A man who followed a course by which he had nothing to gain and everything to lose was either a fool or was actuated by some profound self-ishness. To save a life? But with all

To be continued Monday