

Women AND THEIR INTERESTS

"Their Married Life"

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Helen hummed a little tune as she bustled herself about the house waiting for Warren to come home. For once she had stayed in the house all day and rested, and she was anxious to tell Warren that she felt quite like her old self. At the customary click of the latch Helen flew to meet him. It was Christmas week and she, for one, had determined to avoid anything that might lead to a quarrel.

"Is it cold out, dear? I have been in the house all day; haven't even been out for a walk, aren't you pleased?"

"You really ought to get out for some air," commented Warren, struggling out of his coat.

"I know it, but I thought you might take me for a walk to-night after dinner."

"Can't do it to-night, Helen—have to go out myself."

"Oh, do you—where?"

"Well, it's a long story. In a round about way I have heard that my name has been proposed at a lodge—the same one Mr. Stevens belongs to, you know—and I am going down to talk things over."

"But Warren, you aren't thinking of belonging to a lodge, are you? Ever since they have been married Helen has been afraid of some subject like this coming up. Some women did not mind if their husbands liked to be away with the men one evening in the week, but she hated the idea. Surely she ought to be able to make Warren happy at home."

"Sure, I am thinking about it—what's your objection?"

"We go out so much as it is now, Warren," began Helen lamely. "She knew that there was no adequate reason she could bring up, but she wished vaguely that Warren would decide against it."

"I know we go out enough now, but we always go together, don't we? A man likes sometimes to be with other men."

"But, dear, I thought you liked to go around with me. I thought all husbands liked to be around with their wives."

"Of course, I like to be with you," said Warren impatiently. "Is that any argument to bring up?"

Helen was silent. She hardly knew what to say, but she was hurt at the idea of Warren wishing to go anywhere without her.

"Is it?" he continued. "You make me tired, always bringing up an argument without anything to support it."

"I didn't bring up an argument, Warren, but I must say I don't think it's necessary to join a lodge right now. You have spoken about it before, and as long as you have kept it off this long, why join one now?"

"For the very reason that I have kept out of it as long as I have. This is just it, you women think your husbands ought not to have anything in their lives that does not include petticoats."

"But, you know you said just the other evening that we were practically all our evenings taken now. We never have any time to stay home and just talk."

"Precious good thing if we get into an argument as soon as we begin," Helen was silent again, but Warren with his temper up kept on talking. "You needn't think Louise would act this way about Bob. In fact, Bob belongs to a bowling club that takes him out one evening a week anyway, and it is the only right way for a man to get away from his home occasionally."

Warren had hit upon a tender spot with Helen. She realized that Warren in a way was right, but at the same time she knew that she could never become reconciled to the fact that he had suddenly decided to join a lodge. It seemed as though he wanted an excuse to be away from her.

Through dinner they were silent. Helen hoping against hope that Warren would change his mind; Warren silent and grumpy, his mind occupied entirely with the food he was eating. Helen knew that she had taken just the wrong tactics to make Warren stay at home, and yet there was no way of getting out of it without giving in and saying it was all right for him to join a lodge.

"Have any of the new magazines come yet?" he inquired, as they went into the living room.

"Yes, there are two in my room; I'll get them."

"I'll get them; I'm going in to dress."

Warren stalked out of the room, and Helen turned toward the window, her eyes filling with angry tears. He was going then, after all. Well, there was nothing for her to do but to make the best of it. She dashed the tears away and followed him into the bedroom.

"Here is something I can do for you?" Warren turned to her, surprise all over his face.

"Never mind," he said hastily. "I'll do all right."

"All right," said Helen, calmly walking toward the closet and getting out her long coat, "then I'll take my walk. I really ought to have some air."

"Are you going alone?"

"Yes, yes; I don't need any one. I asked you because it might be more pleasant, that's all."

She slipped into her coat and a second later the door closed behind her. Once out in the air her spirits rose as she walked briskly along. Warren must be dumfounded at her actions. Anyway, she would show him that if he insisted upon joining a lodge she would show her indifference. After all, it might be rather pleasant to have an evening all to

one's self. The short walk did her good, and by the time she returned Warren had gone.

"How long ago did Mr. Curtis leave, Nora?" she asked as she passed the dining room door.

"A few minutes ago, ma'am," said Nora as she stopped to put some glass into the china closet. "He seemed worried about you, ma'am, wanted to know if I thought you'd be in soon. He waited as long as he could."

Helen could not help smiling. He had waited as long as he could, but he had gone out just the same. Then she sat down in the living room and began to reason with herself. She must keep on with her treatment of Warren if she wanted to get any results. He was right, too, about getting out alone one evening. A man never loves a woman more than when she makes the least demand upon him. That is, after marriage anyway. And if Bob loved Louise the way he did and still had bowling club one night a week anyway, surely she could afford to spare Warren. It was the principle of the thing that worried her. Suppose she wanted to get out for a reason. But then if he did he would contrive a way just the same.

After a while she went in to see if Winifred was asleep. Winifred went to bed before Warren returned in the evening. Helen had always insisted upon this and Warren knew that she was right and so did not interfere. Winifred was sound asleep and Helen drew the silk comforted up close about the small flushed face and tipped out again. Tired of reading she finally decided to go to bed, there was nothing to stay up for anyway.

Pussy Purr Mew had curled up in the chair beside her, and Helen picked the big cat up in her arms and took him out to the kitchen. He purred drowsily as she laid him down gently on his little rug and went back into her own room. Nora had gone out and Helen felt strangely lonely. Perhaps if she had been a little nicer about the affair Warren would have decided to stay home. She fell asleep thinking about it.

It seemed hours later when she opened her eyes slowly. The light was burning in the hall and Warren was getting out of his clothes quietly. Sleepy as she was, Helen could not help thinking how thoughtful it was of Warren to undress without a light. She stifled an impulse to ask him if he had had a good time, and lay quietly looking at him with half-closed lids. After a time he finished and came out to the bed. She felt that he was looking down at her, but she did not move. Warren was not given to sentiment, but he bent down and kissed her cheek softly, and then got softly into bed. Helen stirred as though she had just waked up.

"Did you have a good time, dear?" she said sweetly.

"Fine," he answered, as though ashamed of the feeling he had just shown. "I suppose you had a good walk, too, after the fit of temper you displayed. That's once, anyway, that you had your everlasting nagging for nothing."

"(Another instalment in this interesting series will appear here soon.)"

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several times, but Kane merely grunted. He was busily pondering over some method of extricating John Dorr. Suddenly the car swerved around a corner, dived down a steep hill and came to a stop before a big gray building—the boarded up residence of an absentee. Reaching back, Drake opened the door, and Ruth sprang out. A figure darted across the sidewalk, and she felt herself clutched by the arm.

She looked into the gleaming, cruel eyes of Wilkerson.

"I've got you now!" he said triumphantly.

"Oh!" moaned Ruth, shrinking back in terror.

"Yes, indeed," Wilkerson taunted her.

But at that moment he heard another voice, stern, commanding and familiar. He looked around into the muzzle of Tom Kane's revolver.

For the moment they faced each other, while Ruth shrank back still farther. The old man's eyes gleamed, and his trigger finger seemed to rest on the trigger with a precise and delicate touch.

"You here?" said Wilkerson with an oath.

Suddenly the old man's temper flared up. The other saw death in his eyes, turned on his heel and ran as fast as he could up the street.

Without a second's hesitation Kane swung his weapon round till it covered Drake, covering at his wheel.

"Now you drive us back to the hotel," he thundered. "And if you make a false move I'll drill you as sure as God gave me good shooting eyes."

Drake saw that he was helpless and sulky waited till they were in and then turned his car back toward the center of the city. Tom Kane sat grimly just behind him with his gun ready. And his mind was plotting things together. Suddenly he saw a policeman on his beat and realized that luck was playing his cards for him. He ordered Drake to halt and halted the officer. To that somewhat astonished individual the cook explained briefly that that the chauffeur was in it. Though Drake strenuously denied the charge the policeman decided that it was a case for the captain.

"I'll just ride in front here, and we'll go to headquarters," he remarked.

"You can cut up that gun, old fellow,

ne was sure that his tool had not betrayed him so far. But he knew that minutes were precious. He must get into communication with the young man and assure his silence. He could not do this without Mrs. Darnell's help.

As he expected, she flew into a towering rage, but her keen mind saw that Drake must be pacified, and she managed to control herself at last. She read the account carefully and then looked through the rest of the paper for some item about John Dorr. Her eye lit upon an advertisement, which she read twice before speaking; then she pointed it out to Wilkerson. He, too, read it:

FOUND.—Deeds to certain mining property. On proof of ownership same will be returned. Reward expected. S. J. C., 201 Hill street.

"They must be the papers," he acknowledged. "Fell probably threw them away for fear of their being used as evidence against him, and some one picked them up."

"This time I shall see to the matter," Jean said sharply. "Whether they are the papers or not, we must be sure."

"Other people will see that ad.," he suggested.

"All the more reason for hurry," she snapped. Then she called her maid.

"Estelle," she said, "I want you to dress for the street and go on an errand for me. It is very important, and you must hurry."

"Yes, madame."

"And if you show good judgment you shan't be sorry. You know how Miss Gallon dresses and acts. I want you to impersonate her for a little while."

"But, madame—"

"There is no danger at all," Mrs. Darnell went on. "All you have to do is to go to this address and get those papers."

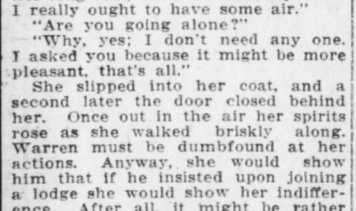
The maid looked at the advertisement and finally consented to go to the Hill street address and see if they were really Ruth's deeds and if so recover them. In a few moments she had departed on her errand, and Wilkerson and Jean once more resigned themselves to waiting.

Estelle tripped along the street to a car line and took the first car that came along, which, the conductor informed her, crossed the street she sought.

Arriving at her street, she got off and found herself in a neighborhood inhabited by very poor people. She looked with disgust at the tumble-down shanties and dirty shacks that littered the rubbish heaped yards. Two blocks up from the car line she found her number, a house slightly better kept than most. But she noticed in the yard an upturned ash man's cart. In the rear was a rickety stable. She entered the gate and rang the bell.

(To be continued Wednesday.)

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IF IT'S ON THIS PAGE IT'S WORTH WHILE

Bowser

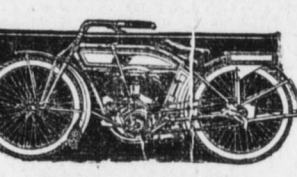
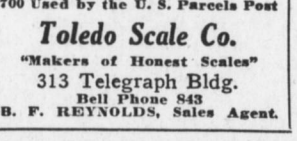
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