

philosophically. They grumbled, half fearfully, at scrambled eggs three times a day. Lem pulled his chair toward the table with great force one day on seeing the inevitable diet, and remarked with enthusiasm: "Gee, but it did smell good as I came by Mrs. Welch's this noon. I do believe she was a-makin' some of that raisin bread you used to make, maw, only yours was always better'n hers. She's got a lot of jell, too. Ain't you goin' to make none of that chili sauce this year, maw? There's lots of tomatos in the back yard."

The water must be deeply troubled when the best quality of oils fails of its mission. The grim lines about Mrs. Buzzy's face did not relax at this bit of flattery. "You'll be chilly enough this fall, I reckon. Maybe you'll git a frost of coal keeps a goin' up."

This was not encouraging to a boyish appetite yearning for goodies and incapable of understanding sarcasm, and Lemuel flung himself out of the door after Susie, and took what consolation there might be in freeing his mind to her.

"We're having a bird of a time since maw went into politics, ain't we? Don't believe we've had anything but eggs fer two weeks. I wonder ef maw's payin' the hens for workin' overtime. I'd like to know what in blazes maw thinks she's goin' to do about the situation, as she calls it. She needn't think she'll yank paw out of his tracks for all he's so quiet. She just acts to me like she's nutty."

"Oh, Lem, you'd not ought to talk so 'bout maw, and anyways you don't have it as bad as I do. Look at this old dress I have to wear to school. I ast maw yesterday when she would make my plaid dress, and she sed she hadn't no idee when she'd get the time. Said she was tired of us all makin' a slave out of her for our backs and our stomachs, and givin' her no thanks, neither. She fights with everybody, too. I heard her tell the milkman she was gettin' plum sick o' hearin' men talk; that none of them didn't have two ideas to rub up against each other in support of their convictions. How many convictions, do you think, Lem?"

"Not unless they're the same things as wheels; she's got them all right. I tell you the ducks that keep the women out of politics is long-headed all right. Ef it worked on all of them like it does on maw, us men would have to leave the country. I don't see how paw can take it so cool. He jest keeps tellin' me to never mind, and to keep quiet and say nothin', and that maw will come out all right, but I have my doubts. I believe she's headed for the lunatic asylum."

Mrs. Buzzy was conscious of her family's attitude, but, unheeding, continued her grim struggle toward the light. She was not much more comfortable than they, although she scorned to acknowledge it even to herself. She had burned her bridges, and the expanse of darkened waters ahead seemed no more easily crossed than what she had left behind. Her household gods which once had satisfied every need of her nature, now seemed mean and unworthy the devotion of one who cared for emancipation. So she reduced her duties to a sliding scale, which continually dropped lower until Mrs. Buzzy only did the things she could not escape from. While the flames in the kitchen range died down and grew cold, and the voice of the sewing machine was still, she plodded doggedly through the leading editorials in all the papers, to the utter confusion of her mind, which probably established no precedent in the condition of the average mind. She poured over the brilliant covered books setting forth the reasons for the faith which should be in men. She starched the judding one day instead of the pillow

shams, as she eagerly perused a pamphlet which outlined somebody's foreign policy. She attended political meetings. She listened eagerly to speakers on both sides of the fence. "Fer," she said, "I ain't one that holds with folks usin' only one eye an' ear, ef the Lord's give 'em two."

"Maw," said Thaddeus one evening, setting his bucket down on the kitchen table, "I concluded that 'full dinner pail' must be one ov your little jokes when I opened mine this noon. I had to borrow a fried cake off Bill Gorgan to fill up as fer as the third rib."

"Ef you ain't satisfied with yer hired help, Thaddeus Buzzy, you're welcome to git somebody else quick as ye like. How long is it since Bill Gorgan was full 'stead o' his dinner pail?"

Mr. Buzzy winked furtively at Lemuel as he followed him to the front porch. "Maw's gettin' worse every day," the young mar said, gloomily, "an' she don't know a derned thing fer all her hangin' over them books. I heard her talkin' to Mrs. Welch one day, an' she thinks the Filipino is some kind of nuts."

"So they air, Sonny, Maw's all right—and turrible hard ones they air to crack, too—but you keep quiet and don't say nethin'. She'll git over this some day terrible sudden. You see."

Shortly after this the announcement was made that two of the leading political lights of the city would discuss openly for the benefit of the doubtful, the political situation from opposite points of the compass. Mrs. Buzzy's heart beat high; here was the solution, the silken thread to lead her through the misty labyrinth of her doubts, the hands to build the bridges to guide her into the sure haven she sought. Alas! for the gorgeous tints of that old "iridescent dream."

By 7 o'clock of the eventful day the clouds which had hovered weakly all afternoon drew themselves together, and nature expressed herself in such a copious flood of tears that she might have dampened the ardor of the most enthusiastic proselyte. But if nature had any sinister designs against the education of Mrs. Buzzy, they were frustrated, for the lady, after a hurried clearing away of her supper dishes, opened the wardrobe door and took down her waterproof cape and her hat, and began drawing on her overshoes. Mr. Buzzy, who was comfortably reading his paper, looked up in surprise.

"Why, Judy, you don't 'low to go to that meeting in all this rain? You'll get your death of cold."

"Well, I be goin', rain or shine; but I am glad to see you settin' to home comfortable. Don't you never get your feet damp, Thaddeus, even ef some one was rippin' up the flag or makin' a present of the hui country to Victory." It's a good thing somebody in this house hee sprawl enough to git out and try to onderstand a few things, ef you ain't." Here the front door was brought to with a slam which served as an exclamation point for Mrs. Buzzy's remarks.

About 9 o'clock, after the manner of considerate helpmates, Mr. Buzzy retired, leaving the lamp burning dimly and the door on the latch, and proceeded to fall into the profound sleep of one whose conscience has ceased from troubling. Mr. Buzzy was aroused earlier than usual next morning by a vague conscience that something was amiss. He looked about the room. The lamp still burned, emitting the sickly odor of an ill fed lamp wick. Mrs. Buzzy's clothes lay in a damp heap on the floor, while she, with tooging arms and burning cheeks, was muttering incoherently, and made no reply to Mr. Buzzy's anxious queries. Hurriedly dressing himself he went to Lemuel's room, and with very little ceremony shook the lad from his heavy sleep.

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