

Matrimonial Adventures

"Really Married"

BY  
Mary Stewart Cutting

Author of Little Stories of Married Life, "More Stories of Married Life," "Refractory Husbands," "The Wayfarers," "Lovers of Sana," "Little Stories of Courtship," etc. of La Ara Married, etc.

Copyright by United Feature Syndicate

PERSONALITY OF  
MARY STEWART CUTTING

No author is better known in this country for married life stories than Mary Stewart Cutting. She joined the Star Author Series of Matrimonial Adventures with deep interest for the plan. Every evening at sundown I sat with several other favored ones in her back parlor and listened breathlessly to tales that became in that circle unpublished classics—tales that were delightfully suited to the intelligence and entertainment of her hearers.

She has found a much larger, but I dare to say no more appreciative, audience in the years that have intervened. The other day a group of people sat around a table, and each person there spoke with enthusiasm of a different one of her "Little Stories of Married Life"—though, to quote her own words, she wrote only "the kind of stories everybody knows, like your bread and butter," and of people who "just naturally lived outside the city and took trains." Here is the universal touch.

Her own married life, to quote her again, was "the happiest she knows anything about." Her husband was a western man, and she had six children. It was her four older children who first appreciated her as an author—I was one of them.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

How does one solve a problem that can't be solved? Of course all problems are impossible of solution until you do solve them.

One never knows when the smallest happening may turn out to be a big thing in its effect on the mind of two people who love each other. In all the years that may come, never to be forgotten.

Sally, the blue-eyed, soft-cheeked wife of Carleton May, whose photograph with its firm lips and steady eyes reinforced her spirit from the little table beside her—the mother of the two curlyheads and the baby upstairs with Maggie, was busy with her own problem as she sat in the small front room looking out of the window, in the fast-darkening winter afternoon, at the flooded vacant suburban lots and the leafless bushes that trembled at the fierce slashes of the rain.

She was listening to the footsteps of her father as he paced up and down the narrow hallway; every now and then he called to her dejectedly: "It doesn't look much like clearing, Sally," and she replied:

"Oh, I think it does, father!" though she didn't think so at all.

How, how, she wondered desperately, could she make her commuting husband appear glad to go back to town this evening, after the half-mile walk home from the station in this icy slush and rain? There never were any taxis in this outlying part of the suburb. How had she failed to remind him in the unclouded morning that this and not tomorrow, as first intended, was to be the night of father's treat? Ever since luncheon she had tried repeatedly to get Carleton on a phone that had "gone dead." She knew intuitively that, unwarned, his first loudly spoken words in answer to her would be:

"Go in town tonight? You're crazy."

Oh, no enforced resignation on his part would suffice. There must be a glow of enjoyment to satisfy poor father, who had planned this festivity for his brief trip up from the South, where his health, since the death of his wife, kept him in the lonely winters; the thought of this pleasure given to those he loved would warm his heart for months to come.

He was a tall, soldierly old man, with a square gray beard and piercing eyes under bushy gray eyebrows. His old friends called him major, but he was mostly known here as Sally May's father; absent or present he was so much a father, always, as far as moderate means could afford, "doing something" for her and hers.

But this theater party tonight—for which the most expensive last-minute seats had been procured—and the prospective supper, while embracing Sally's and Carleton's young visiting cousins, Howard and Elynn Brown, here on their way to Florida, was really intended as a special treat for his son-in-law. Carleton was going through the struggles of a young man to support his little family, buying shoes, perforce, instead of theater tickets. He had, moreover, a chivalrous kindness for the major, which the latter deeply appreciated.

He came in now to stand beside his daughter, saying anxiously:

"I'm afraid Carleton won't want to go out in the rain again."

"Oh, he's indoors all day, you know," said Sally brightly. "And Howard and Elynn are looking for-

ward to it all so much—young people do love a treat."

"Yes, yes, that's true," responded the major with a pleasant smile.

He turned expectantly as a tall, dark, languid youth of sixteen strolled into the room.

"What is it, Howard?"

"I don't think I'd better go tonight," said Howard, briefly. "I think I ought to stay home, sir; I've got a cold."

"He hasn't at all, mom!" volunteered the wide-eyed, eight-year-old Carley, who had followed on his cousin's heels. "He says he's sick of theaters. He wants to stay home and read 'The Hound of the Baskervilles!'"

"If he has a cold—" said the major, oblivious of his grandson's remarks. Any plea of health was always valid to the major.

"Yes, you had better stay here, my boy; much better!"

"Well, Elynn will enjoy it anyway," began Sally comfortingly, as Howard disappeared, and stopped short as a tall, thin, abnormally short-skirted young girl came toward them with an agitated expression on her small, pale, snub-nosed countenance.

"Is there anything the matter, Elynn?"

"Oh, nothing, but—" Elynn was at the age when to make one of a family party of pleasure was nothing short of agony. "I do so hate to tell you and the major, but one of my neuralgic headaches is coming on and I think—I'm afraid—I ought not to go out in this weather. I know mother wouldn't want me to be exposed."

"No, of course not!" said the major hastily. In spite of his stricken countenance, "You mustn't be exposed on any account, my dear child. No!"

"I feel dreadfully about it, major dear," murmured the girl with a sharp look at Sally, who was fiercely silent. Two tickets cast away, and the major had paid seven dollars apiece for them to a speculator.

Little Maisie May with her outstanding crop of curls guilelessly added her version of the affair as Elynn ran upstairs.

"She told Howard she didn't want to go because she hadn't any sweetie!"

"Oh, if she would like some candy!" began the major with eagerness.

"She doesn't mean candy, she means a young man," said Sally.

"Never mind, father dear; we'll get some one else who would be glad to go."

Her heart was hot within her; it was exactly like Carleton's relations, they never put themselves out for anybody!

But all the more need for Carleton to stand by now. A saving idea occurred to her, solving the problem at once. Why hadn't she thought of it before? The rain was hurling itself at the window with renewed violence. She must manage to get to the Wakefields at the corner and telephone Carleton to have his dinner in town—as they would all have done but for the baby's needs—and meet them there afterward. He liked to come home and dress first, but he wouldn't mind this time. She must slip out without father's seeing her.

As she splashed through puddles in her articles, the rain rattling down on her umbrella and Carleton's mackintosh, her mind was uncomfortably reverting to the parting from her husband that morning—there had been something lacking. To married lovers each day differed extremely in glory—there is a deepening of the joy of affection, or an imperceptible lessening of it; there are the days that seem to make neither for progression nor retrogression, and yet of which it is dangerous to have too many; non-recognition may slide so far that what should be the thrilling pleasure of recovery turns into an irritation. It is a fact often overlooked, that, taking it by and large, there is no being more inwardly sensitive to the changes in domestic atmosphere than the unanalytical American husband.

Carleton had gone off that morning, after the vaguely unsympathetic conditions of the past week, with an indefinable effect of glad escape from household demands that impressed itself on her even in his kiss of farewell.

Sally was more in love with her husband than when, nine years ago, they had begun life together; she knew that his love for her had grown also. That was what it was to be really married. But she had a sudden consciousness now that she had perhaps been tiresome in asking him to do a great many things lately, from the first moment he entered the house until he left it; she didn't want him to be glad to get away from her! He never refused to do what she asked of him, but he had told her once that he was exceptionally busy at the office these days. She had a strange sense of their being out of touch. The rain beat in her face and chilled her heart. When she heard his voice she would feel better; he would say: "Stop imagining things."

She had another inspiration when Jimmy, the nineteen-year-old son and heir, came to her ring at the Wakefields.

"Oh, Jimmy! don't you want to go to the theater with us tonight? My father has two extra tickets."

Jimmy shook his head. "Thank you, but I've got a date myself. Mother's out."

"I only want to use your phone, if I may," said Sally. "Ours is out of order."

It seemed hours before Central got the right number, but at last—

"Oh, Mr. Truefit, is this you? This is Mrs. May speaking. Is Mr. May there?—What?—Went out after lunch and said he wouldn't be back at the office again?—Do you know where I

could reach him?—Had a good many

does to go to? No, it's nothing important, thank you! Good-by."

Out in the storm all that afternoon! As he himself would have expressed it for her, it was rotten luck.

She called up a couple of friends who might retrieve the party; one was in B. I., the other in Philadelphia. She tried vainly to get the promise of a taxi later. She carefully laid the coin for her city call beside the phone before leaving.

A rainy evening in town has, at least, its cheerful illumination of electric lights and flashing motors; there is a sense of populousness, of action, of speed. But in an outlying suburb a rainy winter night is the blackness of desolation.

The outline of a man bent forward against the storm was the only sign of life as Sally returned home. But her spirit obstinately rose now against failure. She would find some way to save the day yet.

The two children were having their early supper at the little round table under the big clock in the dining room. Carley looked up to ask: "What's the matter with grandpa? He walks up and down all the time and won't smile."

He looked very old and worn as he sought sight of Sally.

"Where have you been?" he asked anxiously.

"Only to the Wakefields for a minute. The rain isn't so bad when you're out in it," she lied.

He visibly brightened. "That's just what I've been thinking. Of course I don't mind weather, never did!"

Perhaps Carleton might feel that way too. She had a sudden buoyance of hope as she ran upstairs to change her things. She opened the door of Carleton's closet by mistake, and saw—The day had a curse on it, that was all there was to it! A glance and shown that his new shoes were missing—he had worn them into town. The fact covered a tragedy. Carleton was afflicted with a little toe on his left foot that had to be treated with peculiar consideration if a shoe—which, of course, must not be too tight—were the least bit too broad, the toe slipped back under its fellows, to be trodden into agony by them at every step. If Carleton had been out in the rain all the afternoon in those shoes—

Her loving heart swelled with pity for him. Oh, she couldn't ask him to take another step! She thought swiftly of the time when she had fallen on the ice and hurt her knee and he had carried her all the way home—of all the big crises in which he had so dearly come to her aid. She wouldn't sacrifice him now for anyone! If father had to be disappointed, he had to be; she would try to make up to him for it by her companionship.

She dressed hurriedly. There was only one thing left now for her to do; she must manage to speak to Carleton before the major saw him, to at least fend off the blow of his first inevitable words of horrified surprise and protest.

She hugged the baby to her, a little fat, warm bundle, as her one comfort in this dreadful, endless day, before putting him to bed.

"Well, you are all dressed, I see," said the major, sighing. "My, my, it seems to be raining harder than ever! It will be pretty tough on the boy to go out again tonight, and you won't want to go without him. I intended this for a pleasure you know, my dear, but I suppose we'll just have to give it up this time."

"Not a bit of it!" said Sally, with forced cheerfulness. "Waste all those lovely tickets? Not much!"

She went to the front door and looked out into the downpour; no signs of her husband! But the major had followed her.

She got away from him and slipped down the basement stairs to peer out secretly from the lower door.

"Where are you, Sally?" he called. "Come up here, my dear."

There began a wild game of hide and seek, Sally and the major each on the watch for the first glimpse of the homeowner. She swept the children out of her way, when, evading her father, she dashed up or down to either point of advantage.

"Don't put dinner on the table yet," she ordered Maggie.

Elynn was having hers on a tray in her room and trying a new complexion cream. Howard was still glued to the "Hound of the Baskervilles." The major settled into a steady walk forward and back in the upper hall, opening the front door at each round to look out, and Sally in desperation took her stand half in the wet airway. Would Carleton never come?

At last, at last, through the darkness of the deluge his figure materialized unexpectedly near, as, closing his umbrella he turned toward the upper steps. His arms were full of bundles.

"Oh, Carleton, Carleton! Come this way, down here!"

Her hands groped for him, dragged him to her. The touch of his dear body, even in his wet overcoat, seemed salvation, though he had an effect of resistance, as if the dividing haze of the last few days was still there.

"What's the matter? Let's get inside."

"No, no! wait a moment. I've got to speak where father can't hear. He is in the hall above waiting for you."

"Say it quick then! I've been out all afternoon in these infernal shoes. My toes—"

"Oh, I know it all, dear!" Her whispered words came in a torrent. "I tried to get you on the phone to remind you—this is the night of father's treat that he's been planning for

months—not tomorrow, as you

thought."

"Tonight! Holy mackerel!"

He stood staring incredulously at her in the ray of light from the half-closed door behind them.

"Well, you can count me out, then. You don't mean you want me to go back to town now?" His voice was outraged.

"No, no, dear! Don't talk so loud. I wouldn't have you do that for the world. I've been so sorry for you! But—but—" Her agonized voice broke. "Please, please don't speak that way to father. If you can only say something—I don't know what, to sound as if you were disappointed, it might make things easier for him. It's been such a dreadful day! Howard and Elynn have been acting up and won't go, and I can't get anyone else on those tickets, and father's broken-hearted on your account. I can't tell you how he's been watching the weather; it's nearly killed him."

"Let's get inside," said her husband again. He deposited his packages on the floor. "Here are the coffee, and the bacon, and the oranges."

For a moment her world hung in the balance. The small face raised to his white and drawn, with frightened eyes; so had she looked the night before the baby was born.

"Hello!" he said gently, as he stooped to kiss her. "Why, why, you mustn't get worked up like this over nothing!" He stopped short with his hand on her arm as the major's voice came from above in tremulous appeal.

"Oh, Carleton, Carleton! Is that you at last?"

At the note of tragedy Carleton registered, as they say, consternation; his jaw dropped; he looked wildly around as if for escape. Then his eyes met Sally's once more—A swift change came over his countenance, he drew his mouth down in a humorous resignation. A generous kindness seemed to emanate from him as enfolding as light, as he murmured:

"Well, what do you know about that?"

Sally caught her breath—always when she needed it, the miracle of his help was made manifest. His arm was around her as they went upstairs to meet the tall, thin old figure at the top.

"Carleton, you poor boy! You won't want to go out again!"

"Who minds a little rain?" said his son-in-law harshly. "Just the night, I'll say, to get off for some fun."

If you had seen father's face then—! Oh! Not a bit of it!

"What's this I hear?" Carleton continued. "Two tickets to spare?—I'll have to kick off this shoe, it's murdering me. No taxis, of course, I'll settle all this! Don't you worry, Sally, I'm not going to walk, I couldn't."

He paused for breath as Carley and Maisie hurried themselves upon him in welcome.

"Here, children, leave your Dad alone. I've got to get to the phone!"

"It isn't working," moaned Sally.

"Yes it is—Give me Mountain 1670. Hello—hello! Is this Mr. S. W. Wadsworth?"

—Well, Squatty, this is the president of the United Goldfish Creamery association. Yes, I supposed you'd recognize the voice.—The Missus still away?—Anything doing tonight with you and your kid brother? I thought not. The question is, can your car make this house and the 7:30 train afterward?—Fine! We're off on a theater bat, the major's party; two tickets to donate. The major's some prince, I'd have you know. Yes, it rains; we expect to land on Ararat. Are you and Jim in on this? We're only asking you on account of the car, y'understan?—Sally's horrified—What did you say? Take us all the way into town? Oh, that's too much! All right, we'll expect you."

He turned to his wife to say, "Never mind my dinner, all I want is to change and soak up my feet!"

It was a wonderful party. It wasn't only that the hilarious guests motored them all the way into town, or that Father, dear Father, beaming with a touching joy, sat between Carleton and Sally, and saw that no one lost a point. There was, beside all this, a deep inner glow of pleasure, an overtone of harmony that made itself felt even to those least aware of its cause.

As for the supper at the Bamboula afterwards—but why go into details? The Major never did things by halves. As Jim remarked, "Oh boy! That was some eat." If Sally felt a pang for Elynn, at a remembrance of the girl's face over the banisters as the gay party left the house, she sternly quenched it. Elynn would have to learn.

It was after their return—slugging all the way, Father's bus, mind you, joining in—that Sally, getting ready for the night, with her hair unbound, leaned against her husband's shoulder to say:

"I don't know how you manage it—you never fall me!"

"That's the big idea," he announced; the tender pressure of his arms around her voiced the unspoken words:

"And I never will!"

Careful.

Old Aunt Sally enjoyed a wide reputation among her acquaintances in Virginia for all the household virtues. She was as neat as the proverbial pin. Once, however, in order to sustain that reputation, she admitted resorting to deception.

A neighbor in passing discovered Aunt Sally industriously scrubbing her piazza floor and sought an explanation.

"Well," said Aunt Sally, "I kinder thought of folks see this plazy clean they wouldn't suspect how mah kitchen looks today."



Grip Left You  
a Bad Back?

DOES your back ache day after day with a dull, unceasing throb? Are you worn out, and discouraged—ready to "give up?" Then why not look to your kidneys. Chances are a cold or a chill has weakened your kidneys? Poisons have accumulated that well kidneys would filter off. It's little wonder, then, you have constant backache, headaches, dizzy spells, annoying bladder irregularities, and sharp rheumatic twinges—that you feel nervous, "blue" and irritable. Don't wait for serious kidney trouble. Get back your health while you can. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. Doan's have helped thousands. They should help you. Ask your neighbor!

"Use Doan's," Say These Grateful Folks:

J. L. Donahoe, retired engineer, 1014 Barady St., Falls City, Neb., says: "When I caught cold it settled on my kidneys and my back hurt when I bent over. At times my back felt heavy and my kidneys acted too often, especially at night. My rest was broken at night and I felt anything but a well man. A friend told me to use Doan's Kidney Pills and a couple of boxes gave me good and lasting relief. Doan's deserve the credit."

Mrs. Mary Lofholm, Loup City, Neb., says: "Doan's Kidney Pills are all they are claimed to be. I had been having some trouble from my kidneys and occasional attacks of backache. Every little cold I contracted seemed to settle on my kidneys, making the trouble worse. I got a supply of Doan's Kidney Pills and two boxes gave me such splendid relief that I have not been bothered since."

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

At All Dealers, 60c a Box. Foster-Milburn Co., Mfg. Chem., Buffalo, N. Y.

SICK HEADACHE

Take a good dose of Carter's Little Liver Pills then take 2 or 3 for a few nights after. They restore the organs to their proper functions and Headache and the causes of it pass away. THEY REGULATE THE BOWELS and PREVENT CONSTIPATION. Genuine bear signature. Small Pill, Small Dose, Small Price.

WAS THE FIRST AERIALIST

Flying Squirrel May Be Said to Have Been Forerunner of Parachute and Machine.

No, we are not referring to birds. We mean that shy creature, the flying squirrel. He was the first aerialist and was the forerunner of the parachute and the flying machine, asserts a writer in Our Dumb Animals. It is probable that he taught early experimenters as much about flying as did birds. Do you know any other four-footed animal that flies? This squirrel is by nature a fly-by-night, as he does most of his flying after dark, although he will fly in the daytime if occasion arises. Woodsmen sawing down trees have seen them appear from a hole in a dead limb and fly out to safety before the tree fell. This little animal uses his tail as a rudder to guide him in his flight. He is able to fly because of membrane connecting feet and legs on either side. Some flying squirrels are reddish colored, while others are gray. They are said to make good pets.

DYED HER SKIRT, DRESS, SWEATER AND DRAPERIES WITH "DIAMOND DYES"

Each package of "Diamond Dyes" contains directions so simple any woman can dye or tint her worn, shabby dresses, shirts, waists, coats, stockings, sweaters, coverings, draperies, hangings, everything, even if she has never dyed before. Buy "Diamond Dyes"—no other kind—then perfect home dyeing is sure because Diamond Dyes are guaranteed not to spot, fade, streak, or run. Tell your druggist whether the material you wish to dye is wool or silk, or whether it is linen, cotton or mixed goods.—Advertisement.

Rates of Exchange.

Bank Teller—Will you have it in rubles, marks or crowns?  
Visiting American—What's the difference?

Bank Teller—Six million of one kind, half-a-dozen million of another.—Life.

Avoid those who are always borrowing money and those who have none to lend.

Much unsteadiness is due to a steady income.

Use MURINE Night and Morning Keep Your Eyes Clean—Clear and Healthy Write for Free Eye Care Book Murine Co., Chicago, U.S.A.

Check It Today with FOLEY'S HONEY-TAR ESTABLISHED 1875 The Largest selling cough medicine in the World Insist upon Foley's

Grippe Physicians advise keeping the bowels open as a safeguard against Grippe or Influenza. When you are constipated, not enough of Nature's lubricating liquid is produced in the bowel to keep the food waste soft and moving. Doctors prescribe Nujol because it acts like this natural lubricant and thus secures regular bowel movements by Nature's own method—lubrication. Nujol is a lubricant—not a medicine or laxative—so cannot gripe. Try it today. Nujol A LUBRICANT—NOT A LAXATIVE

Ladies Let Cuticura Keep Your Skin Fresh and Young Soap 25c, Ointment 25 and 50c, Talcum 25c.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM Restores Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair, and Promotes Growth. Hindercorns Remove Corns, Calluses, etc., at once all pain, restores comfort to the feet, makes walking easy. 10c. By mail of all Druggists. Hindercorns Chemical Works, Patheon, N. Y. W. N. U., LINCOLN, NO. 11-1923.