

Matrimonial Adventures

His Wife's Visitor

BY

Henry Kitchell Webster

Author of "Roger Drake," "Captain of Industry," "The Traitor and the Loyalist," "The Whispering Man," "A King in Khaki," "The Sky Man," "Jane Madness," "The Real Adventure," "The Through-brook," "An American Family," "Mary Villiston," "Real Life," etc.

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HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

Like so many of America's big authors, Henry Kitchell Webster began writing at an early age. His first work brought forth stories of mystery-thrillers; he specialized in plot.

Then he turned from that form of fiction to material with more substance. For one of the leading magazines he traveled in the tropics and wrote articles, not purely for local color, but studies of the life with a sociological background.

Later came his novels with their portrayals of real people and real problems, showing the power of Mr. Webster's mental equipment, for he is a widely cultivated person with a knowledge of the drama, music and literature. He speaks with authority on all of these subjects.

Mr. Webster is one of the authors who takes a long time at his writing, and the story that follows, written expressly for the Star Author Series of Matrimonial Adventures, was in process of development during a trip through Europe. "His Wife's Visitor" shows how very clever husbands sometimes are!

The telephone rang for the third time since they had sat down to dinner. The maid, in her hurried haste to placate the tyrant, set down the dish of fried eggplant from which George had been about to help himself on the sideboard out of his reach.

George and his wife sat listening in silence. The maid returned and said, "I think it's for you, Mrs. Tait." George sighed and produced the evening paper, which had been tucked under his leg against this precise contingency.

He didn't particularly care about the news, of which he had already read the unexciting headlines, but he did want to register a not unnamable protest against these continual interruptions of their dinner. Emily insisted on making a more or less formal meal of it. She'd have been mildly annoyed with him if he'd gone to the sideboard and helped himself to the eggplant while the maid was at the phone.

Her eyes flashed at him, but the entrance of Anna procured him a polite answer. "I couldn't very well write to him when I'd never seen one of his plays."

"Ever read 'em?" he asked. "They are published, I suppose."

She shook her head and waited until Anna went out; then she swooped upon him. "I never thought you'd be so silly," she declared, "as to be jealous. And about a man I haven't thought of for twenty years."

points she insisted upon, and about the seriousness with which she took her committees and her classes and her clubs. It did not behoove her husband to rail, no matter how often they called her from the dinner table to the telephone.

He had had time to think as far as this, his mind slipping rapidly past the familiar landmarks just as his eye slid down the columns of the newspapers, before he perceived that Emily was not, this time, talking to any member of her drama committee, nor to any citizen of Avonia, nor to anyone she'd had the slightest expectation of hearing from. It was a man—George could tell that from the quality of her voice—and he seemed to be throwing her into a good deal of a flutter.

"Why—why, yes," she was saying. "Oh, but we'd love to have you! . . . Yes. That'll be fine . . . We certainly will. Only I'm afraid you won't find us very exciting. . . . Four o'clock Saturday then."

George, as she returned to the table, fastened his gaze upon the paper. When she was rattled she liked to be allowed to take her time. She sat down a bit heavily in her chair, drew a couple of long breaths, resumed her knife and fork, and then asked, "Did you hear any of that?"

"Not much," he told her. "I thought you sounded sort of surprised."

"I should say I was," she admitted, "when I hadn't heard from him for nineteen years. Calling up on the long-distance to ask if he can come and spend Sunday with us! Surprised?"

"Who?" George wanted to know. "I don't know why he should want to. He certainly won't find any material for a play in us. Still, it'll be nice to see him again. I don't suppose I'll know him."

"Look here," George demanded, "whom are you talking about?"

"Oh," she said, as if she had just heard his questions; but it was another moment before she answered it. "Why, it's Charley Hawkins—Hawthorn Hawkins—George, you know who he is!"

"I know who Hawthorn Hawkins is, but why do you call him Charley? And why does he call us on the long distance and propose to spend Sunday with us?"

he concluded, "I don't believe it's much of a mystery. Some old friend, most likely, that he told he was coming, sent it along so that you could surprise him. You'll read 'em tonight, I suppose."

She said she would, unless he wanted to go out somewhere with her; but he said he must go back to the office and work. "I'm going to be pretty busy between now and Monday," he added.

She looked at him sharply. You're going to be here tomorrow when he comes, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes, I'll be here—you bet." It was so evident, though, that the last brace of words had escaped him involuntarily that she forbore to remonstrate.

They kept rather carefully away from Charles Hawthorn Hawkins as a conversational topic that night. Next morning, however, just before he left for the office, George unobtrusively broke the ice by saying, "Don't count on him too much, Emily. He may not come, you know—send you a telegram this morning."

She asked hotly why he said that, and added, as the suspicion struck her, "I believe you've been telegraphing him, yourself, not to come." But this injurious charge she at once retracted.

"They're supposed to be sort of temperamental and changeable, that's all," he explained, "and I thought he might change his mind about this."

"You wish he would, I suspect," she observed.

"Yes," he answered, unhappily, "I suppose I do."

She gazed at him a moment in mute exasperation. Then her expression softened and she gave a reluctant laugh. "I think you're the most ridiculous person in the world," she said. "I suppose you think he's coming out here to break up our happy home and get me to run away with him?"

it, and after an hour of this, she bade them good-night. This was insincere, so far as it was addressed to George, for she fully intended staying awake until he came to bed, and asking him a few questions, but her modest share of the unwanted alcohol made her sleepy, and she never knew how late the two men—and the bottle of Scotch—sat up.

She got no chance next morning, either, for a private talk with George before they met their guest, and in consequence George's calm announcement of the day's program and his total elimination of himself from it fell upon her like a thunderclap. She caught him alone a few minutes after breakfast and asked him what he meant by it.

"I don't mean anything by it," he protested. "I have got to work all day, just as I told you. Hawkins understands all right. I told him about it last night. He's got to leave this afternoon and there's no good Sunday train from here, so it seemed decent to say that you'd drive him over to Rockport."

"You're simply—throwing me at his head?" she protested.

She detected a touch of bravado in the way he said, "Nonsense! He came to see you, didn't he?" But Charley was already coming downstairs with his bag, so there wasn't time for anything more.

Well, the events of that day were in George's head, then, whatever they turned out to be.

George bade their guest a cordial, almost paternal farewell and, clapping his hat a little too much on one side of his head for a Sabbath morning and an hour when he was certain to meet their neighbors going to church, strolled down the street in the direction of his office.

It was seven o'clock that evening when she stopped their car at the curb after her return, alone, from the fifteen-mile drive to Rockport. George was reclining, very much at his ease, upon the Gloucester swing on the veranda.

"Hello!" he called to her. "You back already? Had a good day?"

She chose to regard his second question as of a piece with the first, and she came up the front steps before she spoke at all.

The American Legion

(Copy for This Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.)

WHAT LEGION POSTS CAN DO

Essay Contests, Participated in by Children, Bring Out Many Good Suggestions.

Carrying out a national program of activities in community affairs American Legion posts in many localities are holding essay contests among school children. The post at Monson, Maine, recently held a contest among children of the seventh and eighth grades on the subject, "What the American Legion Can Do to Better Our Town."

The essay, in part, follows: "The erection of a soldiers' monument would keep alive in the minds of the small boys' admiration of bravery and patriotism. This would also make the town look better and would show other towns that we had contributed our share towards defeating the Kaiser."

"Clean streets is another item of great importance. The children could be encouraged by the Legion to keep the streets and sidewalks free from all kinds of waste matter."

"Another thing of importance is a public playground where children of all ages could go and play any time that they wish to. This playground would require a supervisor to keep the grounds in good condition and to introduce proper play. This would keep the children off the streets and therefore there would be less chance for accidents."

"A band stand would be a very nice thing for the town to have. We have a very nice band, but there is no good place to play outdoors, while if they had a band stand, they could give concerts at least one night in every week."

"A gymnasium would be of great value to the young people of this town. There is no place where sports can be enjoyed here. There could also be a public swimming place where children could learn to swim."

"Among some of the important things is to have a good hall which would add to the town a great deal, as there is no hall to have entertainments and socials given by the town unless they use the halls owned by private parties."

"The Legion men could open up the quarries that are now out of work, which would draw young men as well as men with families to come here and live."

"They could also help stimulate Americanism among the people of Monson by example and by patriotic entertainments."

LEGION EXTENDS GLAD HAND

Placing in Federal Position Member of Canadian Body One Example of Comradeship.

The hand of the American Legion is always extended in fellowship to veterans of the allied armies. In many cases this is done in daily association and in comradeship, and in others, in actual aid and financial assistance for the former comrades-at-arms.

GREATER RESPECT FOR LAW

Legion Probation Plan Saves Many Detroit Ex-Service Men From Stigma of Prison Terms.

Judge Thomas M. Cotter of the Recorder's court of Detroit, Mich., acting on suggestion of the American Legion, has successfully put into operation a probation plan, which has instilled in the minds of many former service men a high regard for the authority of the law.

The system was suggested in 1919, following discharge from military service of many thousands of men, of whom some were forced to appear in police court on minor charges of misdemeanors. Under the plan inaugurated many of these men were spared the stigma of a prison sentence, due to a far-sighted policy instigated by Judge Cotter.

Only the word of the man himself, with a promise to be a better citizen, and the word from some American Legion official is necessary to save the man from sentence. The plan works remarkably well, according to the re-



Judge Thomas M. Cotter.

ports of the court. Out of 847 former service men who appeared before Judge Cotter, only six or seven appeared in his court to answer charges for violation of the statutes.

The plan has been adopted in every police court in the city of Detroit. At the time of the institution of the probation system Detroit was filled with bolshevistic propaganda, and the success of the Legion system indicates the turning point of many former soldiers from disregard of law and order to a high respect for the law's authority.

FROM CONVICT TO COLONELCY

American Legion Acts to Obtain Pardon for Man Who Made Record in British Army.

Kenneth F. Thomas had been convicted and was serving a term in a Virginia penitentiary on a charge of bigamy at the time of the outbreak of the World war. While employed in one of the prison farm projects he escaped, made his way up to Canada, where he enlisted and was soon in active service.

He established a splendid war record, reaching a colonelcy before discharge. During this time he kept the Virginia authorities informed of his movements, and promised that he would return and serve out his term as soon as the war was over.

Recently the man returned to Richmond and declared that he was ready to complete his prison term, admitting his identity, and acknowledging his war record. Delay in return, it is said, was due to the fact that for two years he has been in a hospital recovering from the effect of wounds.

His splendid record for bravery and attention to duty won high esteem of the British army officials. The American Legion has taken up the fight to obtain pardon or parole for the man, and the case has been presented to the governor of Virginia by interested Legionnaires.

Roy M. Hancock Among Missing.

Diligent search is being made for Roy M. Hancock, formerly a private in the Motor Transport Corps of the army, a World war veteran. Mrs. Hattie Hancock of Chattanooga, Tenn., waited in vain for word from her son following the war. Government officials had him classified as a deserter. Early in April Mrs. Hancock received word from the state hospital for the insane at Fort Sum Houston, Texas, that her son was a patient in that institution. On the heels of this information came word that he had escaped and no trace has been found of him since that time. Hancock is twenty-eight, five feet nine inches in height, dark hair, and has a horseshoe tattooed on his right arm below his elbow. In the emblem are the words "Good Luck." Following the government's discovery that the man was a mental patient and not a deserter, he was given an honorable discharge.

Donation of Memorial.

Officials of the Illinois department of the American Legion, state officials and prominent Chicagoans gathered recently at Cicero, a suburb of Chicago, for the unveiling of a monument to the soldier dead of the city. The monument was given by a Cicero real estate dealer and bears the names on bronze plates of those Cicero men who made the supreme sacrifice. Dedication exercises were under the direction of the Legion.