



Love in A "Cottage-on-Wheels"

An Artist's Bride Who Is Taking a Year's Honeymoon in a Kitchenette Wagon Tells How They Live on \$5 a Week and Are Happy, Healthy and Economical

Afternoon Tea and Ironing Day in the "Cottage-on-Wheels." On the Right is a Photograph of the Whole "Caravan."

LAST August Miss Berenice Logue and William O. Schmelke, a well-known New York artist, were married. Miss Logue had been Mr. Schmelke's model for some of his most successful work.

"How shall we spend our honeymoon?" they had asked when the date for the wedding was set. How they answered the question and what has happened to them since the day they set forth with Oswald, their "durable horse," Mrs. Schmelke, after more than six months of honeymooning, here entertainingly relates.

By Berenice Schmelke

WHEN we decided to marry, Billy and I decided also that we were going to be really happy on our honeymoon. Of course, so the poets and all say, the happiest way to spend a honeymoon is to become a "love-in-a-cottage."

But we also wanted to travel on our honeymoon. How could we travel and have our love in a cottage at the same time?

Picture us thinking heavily! Ah! That's the idea! We would have love-in-a-cottage-on-wheels!

And that's what we're having.

Automobiles were too fast and too expensive. Besides one could hardly call an auto a cottage on wheels. What we wanted was a horse and a caravan. That is what we got. As we had decided to extend our honeymoon for a year at least and travel all over the South all the time we wanted, of course, we bought the most durable kind of horse we could get.

We have him still. His name is Oswald. He was a dray horse pulling coal on the Brooklyn docks, where we saw him first and were charmed by his strength and size—he weighs 1,500 pounds—so we bought him for \$200. After more than six months of traveling he is in perfectly good condition, although not quite so heavy.

Our caravan cost \$200 to have built, also. The inside measurements are 9½ feet long by 5 feet wide and 6 feet high, with roll-up canvas curtains back and front, and a little window in each side. The general effect is that of a small paper box wagon, the weight being 1,400 pounds. It could have been built very much cheaper and lighter if made with rounded canyons top like the old-fashioned prairie schooner which the horse traders use down South, but it would not be so cozy and homelike, especially in rainy weather. It pays to have it well built in the beginning because we have had no accidents with the wagon besides a few rips in the canvas which we mended ourselves.

Our furniture is simple and inexpensive, since we built most of it ourselves. Under the driver's seat are two shelves with our books and a box for provisions, dishes and odds and ends. The lid projects, and serves a double purpose, being a desk on one side and an ironing board on the other.

The bed is two mattresses, one laid

on the other, to form a couch in the day, leaving a floor space three feet wide. At the back is our chiffonier, just a box with shelves, covered with crotonne and with a mirror above, and opposite a little stove—the smallest size we could buy—which cost eight dollars. The rug, couch cover, cushions and curtains are all green to match the walls.

My kitchen utensils are aluminum and so have not shown the slightest bit of wear. We carry a little fifteen dollar phonograph, the especial delight of stin;le country folk, many of whom have never heard one before, and a chafing dish for quick lunches and candy makings. However, I think our whole interior equipment cost less than fifty dollars.

After we had gotten everything together we had to decide how much we wanted to spend every week. We decided at last to allow ourselves five dollars a week to run our establishment. Two dollars of that is for horse feed, usually oats, corn being very much more expensive in the South. We almost always manage to get an armful of hay for the night from neighboring farmers for a few cents, and more often for nothing at all.

We repair the harness ourselves. Anyone can do this by carrying a supply of rivets and bits of old leather. Fuel costs us nothing, as there is always an abundance of wood, and when we are near a railroad track we have the added luxury of coal.

We usually spend the remaining three dollars for food. It is less expensive to notice what the people in each place eat and follow their example. For instance, the southerners make great use of sweet potatoes, which are twelve cents a peck, bacon at eleven cents a pound, rice, cornmeal and hominy, and they are all the best of their kind. I am collecting every new recipe that I discover, and my cook book will be one of the most complete of its kind, and unique.

And, oh yes! If you ever go caravaning never forget to take a medicine chest



Oswald, the "Durable Horse."

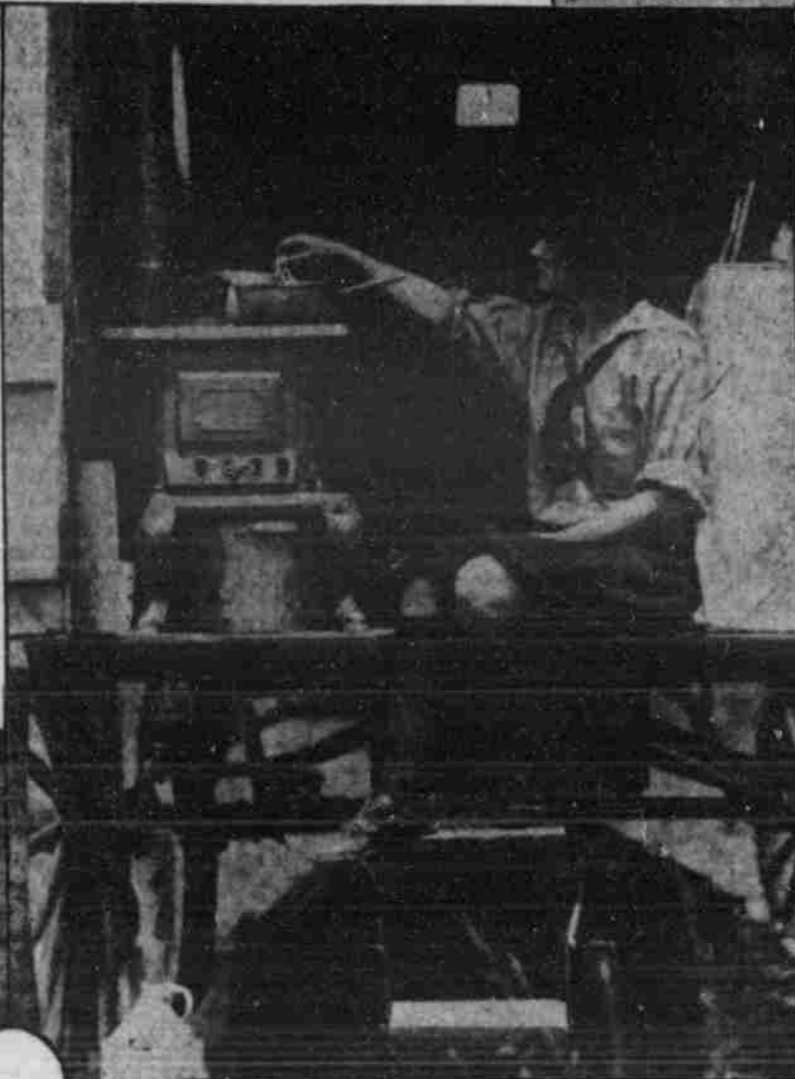
with full directions for use. We have a tiny one, which, although we have never had to use it, gives us great confidence.

I am writing this now from "somewhere in Florida." We have been more than six months on our wedding journey and it has been just perfectly lovely—every bit of it.

Adventures? Lots of them. And, to go back again to the automobile idea, so many people have asked us while on our way why we didn't take an auto instead of a horse, "so as to travel faster." The reasons why we didn't were, as I have said, the expense, our preference for the gypsy style and the fact that we didn't want "to go faster." But since then we have discovered that our way is the only way! Besides being cheaper, which it is, of course, in spite of the steady rise in the price of feed the farther south one goes, there are the discouraging roads in some States. There are still a great many so-called automobile roads which are impassable except by the lighter cars, and the despairing expressions on the faces of the owners give one the impression that their efforts are far from pleasant.

For example, on the road from Dumfries to Fredericksburg, Va., there is a frightful mud hole, the mere existence of which in dry weather is enough to cause suspicion. Every passing automobile sticks in it, until several rough, uncouth natives appear, build a bridge of planks, which are strangely near at hand, and push the car over. Whereupon the frantic and perspiring owner pays them and goes on his way.

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Dinner Almost Ready.

They then break up the bridge, throw the planks into the gutter, and after deepening the mud hole, if they think it necessary, disappear until the next victim appears.

We were so angry with their duplicity that we rested two or three hours, and then attacked the mud hole ourselves, and owing to the enthusiastic aid of the noble Oswald, pulled through with flying colors.

There have been many trials like the Dumfries mud hole, and still our horse has not lost his Pickwickian girth, or his complacent disposition. I doubt if an auto with so heavy a load as ours would have done so well.

Ever since we started we have been wonderfully fortunate in finding such delightful camping places at night, in spite of the uncomfotableness of finding ourselves on very private property where we shouldn't be at all. One night in New Jersey we camped quite innocently near a convict's camp, until a man came up to inform us that if the authorities, whoever those mysterious beings are, knew we were there we would be arrested on the suspicion of helping convicts to escape. Can you imagine anything more thrillingly criminal than that? So we stayed, but we were unlucky, because they didn't discover us after all.

Another time we stayed on the property of the Newark Water Supply without realizing how very sacred and private water supply property is, until an excited guard came rushing up to destroy us. But we argued and argued, and finally he

PHOTOS BY INTERNATIONAL FILM SERVICE.
Mrs. Berenice Schmelke Cooking Dinner on the Stove of the "Cottage-on-Wheels."

went away, but I am sure we are the only people in the United States who ever set up house-keeping on the Newark Water Supply!

Those were the days when it hadn't occurred to us to ask permission to spend the night on private property. We used to select a desirable spot, take possession and then wait for the advent of the owner, who always turned up, and then trust to our personal charm and his good disposition to let us stay. He usually did, but it is so much simpler and more satisfactory to ask first.

This is not so true of the South where land is less valuable, houses fewer and people not so suspicious of strangers, except the Southern gentleman in Maryland who was going to shoot Billy for carrying me off, and yet who allowed his own wife and daughter to drudge themselves to death on his farm.

We have camped perfectly happily and socially in the same grove with Italian organ grinders, horse traders and gypsies, although we generally avoid the latter, they having never been sufficiently taught the law of mine and thine. We have chatted with a Civil War veteran who remembered Grant and Lee in Spottsylvania Courthouse; we have swapped experiences with a horse trader who had been gyping for ten years; we saved a peanut factory from burning to the ground in Virginia; we witnessed a regular old-fashioned negro baptism in a river, which had all the weirdness of a heathen rite, and we discovered a still with some sure-enough, dime-novel moonshiners in North Carolina.

Despite our good intentions and discussion of expenses before we started out, we soon discovered that neither of us has a grain of sense about finances. It has only been for the past few weeks that we have been keeping accounts. Before that, as long as there was any money to spend it went recklessly, and after that we lived with painful economy for a time until we caught up with our schedule. It is possible to live this alternate lean and fat life to a much greater extent in a "cottage on wheels" than in a plain cottage. Simplest food seems luxurious out of doors, and there are very few

things one can spend money for on long, mysterious roads, where there are only tree taverns for birds and the jealously guarded treasure hoards of squirrels. But since the accounts we find that we can live perfectly comfortably on our five dollars a week and usually with some left over.

Sometimes when we are near cities we find ourselves yearning for civilization. This means extra expense, for civilization seems to include theatres, restaurants and unexpected costs. So then we march up to the city editor of the best known paper and offer him our story for a sufficiently modest sum, which is simple, not troublesome, and pays for the celebration. We stopped in this way at Baltimore, Washington and Richmond, returning to the last several times to admire the beautiful Capitol building with its graceful lines, set in a sunny park. But why do they have convicts in stripes wandering about the lawns sweeping up the leaves and keeping children off the grass?

These are our only expenses, food for ourselves and the horse, luxuries, and horseshoes, for our horse loses his shoes with startling rapidity, the reason being, I think, that the southern blacksmiths are used to shoeing only mules and smaller horses, and so do not use sufficient effort to nail them firmly.

As I write there is a hunt going on in our woods, and unfortunately we seem to be the centre of it. About eight foot-bodied men and ten or twelve dogs have been pursuing one small, shabby rabbit all morning long, with the most blood-curdling howls, which they use for signals. There is a certain class of men here who never have any work to do at all. They go about in rags, and seem to be half fed, but there isn't one who can't afford his rifle and his hunting dogs. In the north there are a great many people so poor that they can't afford the luxuries of life. Here, when a man is poor, he can't afford the necessities, although he always finds a way to get the luxuries. It sounds like an attractive system, but it produces the most unattractive specimens of humanity, the chief end of whose existence is the capture of the "possum and the rabbit."

We do not suffer the slightest discomfort from bad weather. In fact we rather look forward to a few days of rain as a rest. We put our horse in some good natured neighbor's barn—there are always such in the South—build a cosy little fire and close either the back or the front curtain according to the direction of the rain. The wagon is perfectly waterproof and nothing has ever suffered from dampness or rust.

When it was warmer we used to put on our bathing suits, and go out in the rain for a cold shower.

We have both gained slightly in weight and are greatly improved in health, due to keeping early hours and simple food, and best of all, the open air. We are going to continue our journey all through Florida, and from that on our plans are very indefinite.

But wherever we go we've proved one thing: Love in a cottage-on-wheels is just better and more interesting than lust plain love in a cottage.