

He and She A-Shopping Go



mushrooms. There might not at first seem to be any connection between broiled mushrooms and purple ties, but there was a decided one. For, providing Ethel with broiled mushrooms sous cloche meant economizing.

He recalled the saying of Bob Steers, his chum in the office: What was the good of going to a swell guy on Broadway to buy your ties and paying three or four per when you could get just as good, if not better, at any of the department stores for 75 or 80 cents on special bargain days? Personally he hated department stores, but if he was going to pay for broiled mushrooms he might as well get used to the idea.

But he pushed the thought away from him for the time being. It was not until he wore another hole in the lilac socks and discovered a moth feeding on the seam under the collar of his evening clothes that he broached the subject to himself again. "I might as well make the plunge," he said feverishly. "If I've got to get moth balls, too, I suppose they keep moth balls there. I've seen candy counters advertised."

It was about this time that he got a list from his sister. The list contained the names of sundry household and personal articles, she wanted him to get. When they separated after their try at living together, she keeping house and he paying for same, he told her with tears in his eyes that if there was anything in the world he could ever do for her all she had to do was to call on him. And this was the result!

He recited the items of the list over to himself and tried to understand them. Of course he could ask Ethel, but she had expressed a disbelief in his sister's existence once when he had intimated—just intimated—that it was due to her unexpected presence in town that he could not keep an engagement to take her and four of her friends to dinner.

He wondered if men ever went to department stores. Of course Bob Steers must have gone or he wouldn't have known about the neckties, but did any one else besides Bob and himself venture?

He went to the department store region and waited around for a while looking at the four entrances of the store selected, not a single figure met his view of the masculine persuasion. Should he go in or should he wait another day?

He might just as well wipe his brow, and he took off his hat and wiped his brow. What was the hurry anyway? He guessed his brown orb that Ethel had spoken of would flash just as flamboyantly in the face of a waiting world if he didn't set them off.

THE MAN WITH THE LIST.

HE man looked at his lilac socks darned with black and concluded that it was time he did a little shopping.

"That's the worst of a change of season," he said worriedly as he noted also that he needed half a dozen hemstitched handkerchiefs and four collars. He wondered if he could make his handkerchiefs do until Christmas, for some one always gave him furnishings of this kind at Christmas, but concluded that as long as he had to replenish his wardrobe he might as well do it altogether and not trust to chance. Once before, he remembered, he wore his neckties until they were stringy because he imagined that a certain girl would remember the date of his birthday after he had written it clearly in her birthday book the week before and left it open on her desk.

But she didn't and he had to go and buy them himself. That was the time in his career when he determined never to depend on a woman for anything. It was a resolution he would advise every young man to make and keep.

The thought of those neckties—those he did not get—set him thinking again. He would have to get a purple tie. Ethel had said so, and what Ethel said went.

That was the charm about Ethel; she



"WE HAD A LITTLE QUARREL."

made you think, brought out your best points, even those you were unfamiliar with. He might never have known that purple was his color if it had not been for her interest in him.

There was only one weak point about Ethel so far as he had discovered. She was pretty, bright, well-gowned, always said something flattering and never nagged, but she was so inordinately fond of broiled

for another twenty-four hours in a purple rim, and as for the things that sister wanted he'd think it over.

The next day he found himself on the sidewalk with an impression such as he had the time he was operated on for appendicitis and was just recovering from the chloroform. He didn't know what had happened, but he felt queer and light.

He recalled perfectly making the plunge

through the door, but how was he to know that it was a special bargain day? That must have been what it was. Of course that was it.

He'd never say anything again about a woman's lack of endurance and courage. Women—he didn't know anything about them. He did when he was 22, but every day his knowledge got less and less. The very type of woman who would fall on your shoulder and weep if you spoke a cross word to her or you were unpunctual in keeping an engagement could fight her way with elbows and fists through a crowd like that and nearly bite off the head of any strange woman who dared to intimate that she was standing on her feet.

How did he ever happen to lose his grip on things, anyway? Recollection was certainly hazy.

He recalled that just as he was walking with a show of perfect poise down the aisle he saw a sign "Fifty Cents Today—Special" and below it a purple tie, and made for it. Just at that moment, apparently, all of New York, Brooklyn, the Bronx, West Chester and some outlying suburbs had been moved by the same economic impulse and had fought for possession of the same bit of ground and the same article that he had noticed hanging down from the sign.

There certainly was no chivalry in women. They were brave enough, he'd admit that always, but they were not chivalrous. If anything were needed to prove this, his hat awry, his cuffs dangling from his coat,



THE DAY'S WORK.

his collar unbuttoned, his perspiring brow would do it.

Well, he wasn't a fourflusher. He could look Bob Steers in the face all right. He got what he aimed at in spite of sharp elbows, frozen looks, stout, wedgy women, the impact of a solid mass of protesting humanity that apparently resented his intrusion there and the satirical questions of a blond girl, whose hair would get anywhere she started for five seconds before she could.

He had paid more than he had intended, a bill and all the silver in his pocket, but what else could he do when he had seized the tie, torn it from its fastening and made his way back to earth through the struggling crowd? Probably it had cost him all told \$3.50, but he got off cheap, considering.

He looked at it.

It was a purple belt with four holes and a pearl buckle, suitable for a matronly person whose waist girth was about 38.

He slammed it against the elevated railroad pillar and it fell into the road. An automobile ran over it and a chauffeur, with a politeness that he would never have exhibited if it had been merely a dead body, got down from the machine, picked it up and—

The chauffeur did not hand it to him. Something in his face apparently prevented.

That night the man wrote a very effusive letter to his sister in which he assured her that there had been such a run on burlap that there wasn't a bit left in town, and as for madras and chintz, while the stock seemed to be all right and of the proper colors and consistencies he did not dare send them without her approval, as she had forgotten to enclose samples, and the floorwalker of one of the stores said the very best of his stock was always put aside for out of town customers who wrote to them directly. He enclosed a small check.

The woman had been feeling rather out of sorts. Coming back from the country after a long summer of fun there is always

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away immediately. It's an outrage to come way from One Hundred and Thirty-third street, nearly in Harlem, and be treated this way!

"Can't help it," said the girl, unmoved. "Them's me orders."

The strange woman who kept at her side while she fought her way out sympathized loudly.

"If women only run these places we'd see quick enough what we could have. It's an outrage. Men janitors to pick out the wall paper of your flats and men owners to tell you whether a shirtwaist fits you, 'til it's tried on! Ain't it a scream?"

The woman found the stranger so interesting that they took luncheon together, after she had asked 3,000 questions of the shopgirls, sent home ten articles C. O. D. and three hats on approval, acquired a bag full of samples, had a talk with the head of the costume department and tasted all the advertised articles in the grocery upstairs. She had also been used to experiment on by six demonstrators, who had new ways of fixing the belt, stock, veil and shoestrings.

On their way to the elevator the stranger called the woman's attention to a middle-aged man who had been for half an hour making frantic gestures at a shopgirl at the glove counter, and having finally succeeded in obtaining her attention, had said: "Yes, the same size, please. It's four years since I got the last pair. Just a little quarrel."

"So like a man," said the stranger. "Telling his heart secrets over the counter to a girl that's got about as much interest in him as in the price of Consolidated Copper and'll laugh at him the minute his poor old back is turned. Ain't they pitiful creatures around loose that way? Probably's been buying her gloves No. 58 and having quarrels four years long for half a century. Some day when he's called on to send a wreath of white roses with a cluster of forget-me-nots in a case of immortality he'll probably wake up from his dream."

They stood fifteen in line and waited three-quarters of an hour for luncheon in



"JUST LOOKING."

the dining room upstairs. The stranger ordered lobster croquettes and a glass of milk and the woman a small steak, French-fried potatoes and a cup of coffee, with bar-bis-du-jelly and cream cheese for dessert.

"I've decided not to take any of those hats I had sent on approval," she confided to her vis-a-vis, "so I feel as if I could treat myself."

"Awful rich cooking," said the stranger. "That's the worst of having men run a place like this. It takes a woman to do it right. I expect I'll pay for this with acute indigestion and won't be able to finish my paper on hygiene and sanitation tomorrow for the club."

At the door of the department store they shook hands warmly.

"Happy to have met you," said the stranger. "I've enjoyed my day. In fact I ain't had as good a time since Adam's grandmother was a protoplasm, as my husband would say."

"It has been simply perfect," said the woman, "if it wasn't for having to go home in the crowded cars."

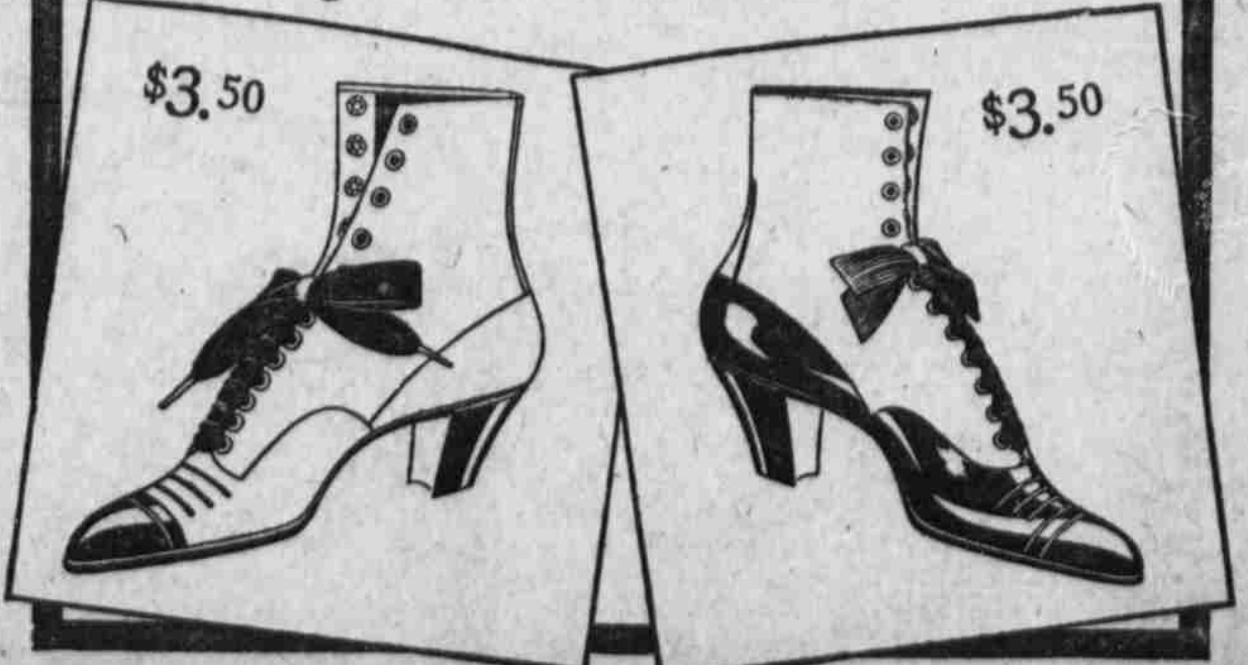
"That's the worst of having men mixed up in municipal affairs—filthy streets, crowded cars, no schools to speak of. But the time'll certainly come when women'll show 'em that it's possible to go out in public without having your toes trod on and your temper spoiled."



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