

## The Shop Opposite

By F. A. MITCHEL

"The shop opposite," said Mrs. Smith to her husband one morning while they were dressing, "has been at last taken. The sign 'To Let' has disappeared."

"Um," granted Mr. Smith, who was tying his cravat before the mirror. "The shop opposite has been opened as a meat and vegetable market," said Mrs. Smith to her husband a few mornings later while he was brushing his hair.

"Um," said Mr. Smith again. "Do you know, dear," said Mrs. Smith on a third occasion, "that the shop opposite is kept by a very pretty, ladylike woman? She has such a sad face."

"Why do you take so much interest in the shop opposite?" asked Mr. Smith.

"I admit that at first it was through curiosity, but now it is from a different motive. This sad faced woman is doing a very good business. She is selling much cheaper than the other stores, but delivers no goods. Every purchaser must carry home what he has bought."

"I don't yet see the motive you spoke of."

"I haven't got to it yet. What puzzles me is that, though there are many purchases, there are few buyers. I have been able to count only seven persons going into the store today, but some of them have gone in eight or ten times."

"You don't call that curiosity, do you?"

"No."

"What is it?"

"Interest."

"Um," said Mr. Smith, and he went downstairs to breakfast.

That was the beginning of what became, to Mrs. Smith, a mystery, but in which Mr. Smith took no interest whatever. If his wife told him that one little pale faced boy took out twenty packages during the day he simply remarked that the shopwoman had probably hired him to make deliveries. Probably she would set up a wagon after awhile.

"I tell you, dear," said Mrs. Smith one morning, when the shop opposite had been running several weeks, "there's something peculiar about that business. I never see any of the neighbors trading there. I've watched the persons who go in there and they are nearly all under twenty years of age. I know every one of them. There's a young fellow about eighteen, a girl about sixteen, a"—

"Surely, my dear, you were right when you said your motive was interest, not curiosity," said Mr. Smith ironically.

"I shall not say anything more to you about that shop, but you'll find out."

"I am quite content to await developments."

Two days after this announcement Mrs. Smith said to her husband:

"I was looking out the window yesterday and saw that pale faced boy coming out with so many bundles he couldn't carry them. He dropped one of them on the sidewalk, the paper broke, and what do you suppose came out on the flags?"

"What?"

"Oh, I forgot. I wasn't to say anything more about the shop opposite, was I?"

"I suppose it was flour."

"No, it wasn't."

"Sugar?"

"No. You needn't ask me more. I shall not gratify your curiosity."

"Interest, you mean?" And Mr. Smith left his wife with a slight show of impatience.

One morning Mrs. Smith got out of bed and, going to the window, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What is it, dear?" asked her husband.

"The shop opposite is closed, and a policeman is standing before the door."

"Well?"

"I do hope that poor woman hasn't got into trouble."

There was a brief silence, after which Mr. Smith asked his wife to tell him what had come out of the bundle that had dropped on the sidewalk.

"Dirt," she said.

"Dirt?"

"Yes, nothing but dirt."

Mr. Smith arose, dressed and went down to breakfast. His wife begged him to go across the street and ask the policeman what had happened, but he declined to go till after he had breakfasted. Then he sallied forth talked awhile with the officer and returned.

"Well?" asked his wife.

"Your interest in the shop opposite had a foundation after all. You know the jail is on the other street, and it backs up against the shop. Last night a prisoner escaped through a tunnel leading from the shop to his cell. His wife kept the shop, his oldest son dug the tunnel, and his children carried away the earth in paper bags."

"Perhaps," replied Mrs. Smith, "when I tell you hereafter that something is going on in the neighborhood you'll believe me."

"I don't see why they keep these stupid men on the police force when they can get women. One woman for such a service is worth a hundred men."

"My dear," said Mrs. Smith a year later, "the man who escaped through the tunnel is innocent. The real criminal has confessed."

## THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE

By M. QUAD

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"I ain't muddin' other folks' business nor never was," said the third sergeant as he placed a skillet of bacon on the winter hut fireplace, "but I'll go as far as to say that it don't look right."

"Of course it don't," said the second sergeant.

"What you fellows blowin' about?" asked the orderly sergeant as he came in for fire to light his pipe.

"You wouldn't guess in four years' time, and I won't keep your shiverin' and tremblin'. The captain's wife has come."

"And we was sayin'," said the second sergeant as he lifted his eyes from the coffee cup—"we was sayin' that it wasn't discipline and didn't look right. Jest think of a woman down here."

"By gosh!" whispered the orderly as he sat down to his smoke.

"Want, what you goin' to do 'bout it?" asked the third sergeant after a pause.

"Dunno."

A month had passed, and no calamities had occurred. Some of the men began to breathe easier and to wonder if they hadn't misjudged the kind faced and smiling little woman who was sacrificing a good deal to be with her husband for a few weeks.

It was a cavalry command, and every pleasant winter's day the captain and his wife had a gallop over the highways. One day an engineer was dispatched to see about repairs to a bridge spanning a creek flowing through the neutral ground between the armies, and the orderly sergeant of Company D was detailed with ten men as an escort. The bridge was reached and inspected, and the engineer and his escort were ready for their ride back when there came a sudden alarm. Half a mile down the road, where Captain Shattuck and his wife had debouched from a crossroad while taking an afternoon gallop, they had run full tilt against a Confederate cavalry scout. The enemy had shouted to the captain to surrender, and as he wheeled his horse to get away a bullet brought him out of the saddle. His wife would have pulled up her steed, but he took the bit in his mouth and was beyond control. As she went flying up the road the scouting party followed. They knew of the small detachment of Federals at the bridge and were hoping to make a surprise.

"It's the captain's wife, and the Johnnies are close behind her!" shouted the sergeant as the woman came into view with a great clatter. "Open ranks and let her through and then close up and give 'em hell Columbia!"

With a rush and a clatter the horse of the fugitive passed the blue clad troopers, but came to a dead halt a few rods beyond and turned about. A volley from the carbines checked the pursuers for the moment, but it was seen that they were strong enough to break through, and the sergeant gave the order to fall back to an abandoned log house a quarter of a mile in the rear.

"Men," exclaimed the woman as she looked from man to man, "do you know that your captain is back there, wounded and a prisoner? Are you going to leave him there?"

"It's too bad, ma'am, but they are three to one," replied the sergeant. "We'll be lucky if we ain't killed or gobbled up before help comes."

"But I'm going to ride back!" she cried as her pale face flushed and her voice had a thrill to it. "If you won't go with me to rescue your captain I'll let them take me prisoner and go to Richmond with him."

"Heavens, ma'am!" hoarsely whispered the sergeant, with admiration in his eyes. "But we'll have the captain or die! How far down the road was it?"

"Not over half a mile."

"And how many rebs in the party?"

"Not over fifty."

"Fifty rebs and ten of us! We'll never do it, but we'll die for the captain! Into your saddles, boys! You ride on toward camp with the engineer, ma'am!"

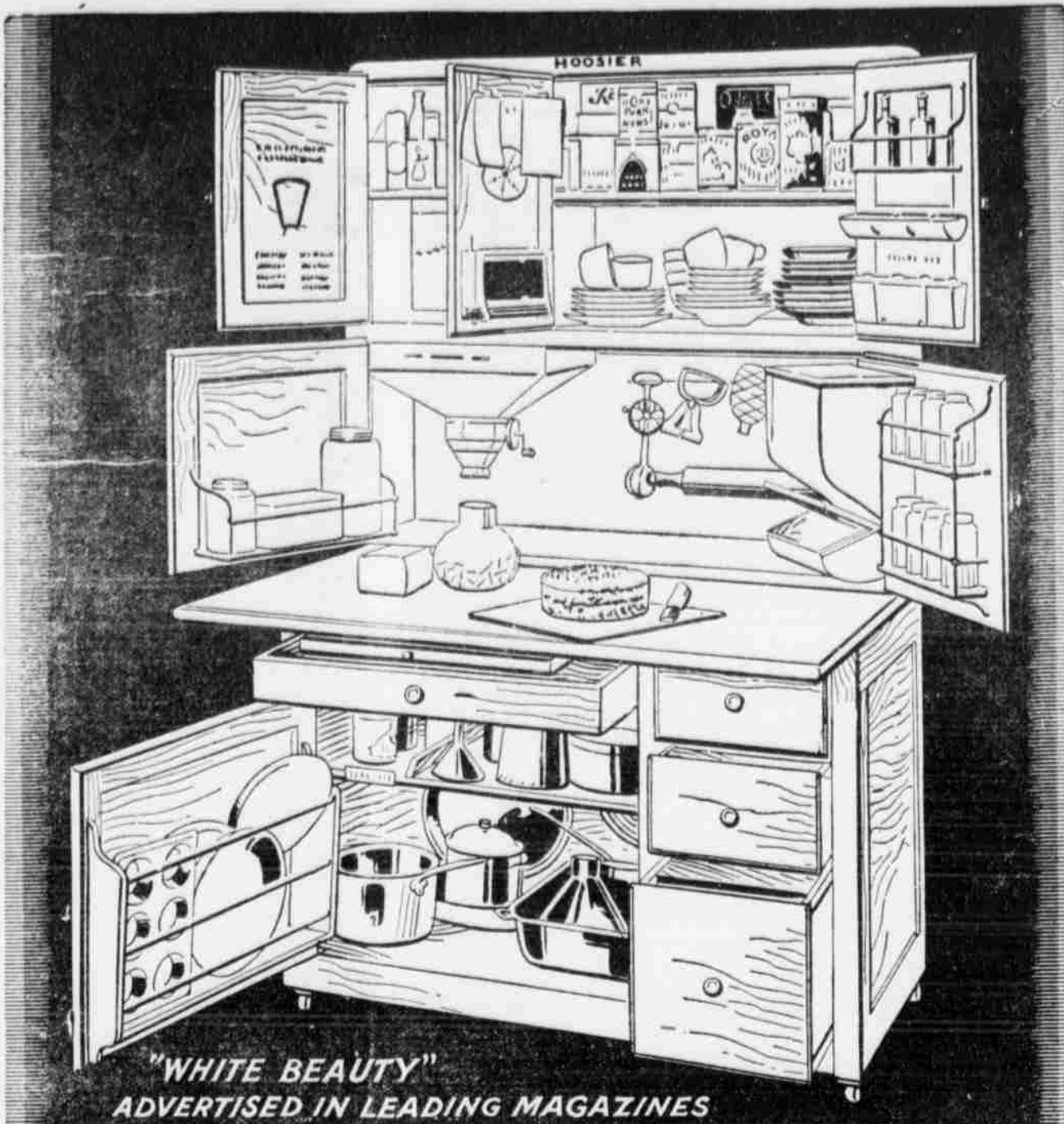
"Not a foot. I'm going with you. Some one give me a revolver."

"By twos—right wheel!" shouted the sergeant as he handed her his revolver and drew his saber. "Now, then, ride through or over them and don't stop this side of the captain or the devil!"

It was a curious spectacle the gray clad soldiers witnessed—a woman riding at the head of that charging squadron, a woman with white face and glittering eyes, who held her reins in one hand and used the pistol with deadly effect with the other. Through the thick of them followed the ten, and, fearing that the alarm might have already reached the Federal camps, the Confederates disappeared into the woods instead of pursuing. Down there beyond the bridge the captain was lying on the ground with a bullet in his shoulder and three men guarding him. The cavalcade swept up to them and surrounded them, and there were three prisoners instead of three guards.

"Lord, sir, excuse me, sir, but it was the captain's wife who did it all," said the sergeant as he returned to the colonel. "She not only saved her husband from libby prison, but we might all have been wiped out if we'd made a fight for it at the old house."

That evening the orderly sent to the second and third sergeants. "When you flush your grub out of the box, for we're goin' to swing our hats and give three cheers and a floor for the captain's wife."



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## Turns Down Union Pacific

The Union Pacific's application for a writ of mandamus to compel the county commissioners of Keith, Cheyenne, Deuel and Lincoln counties to reconvene and try once more to fix values of land for taxation purposes so that farm lands would be valued higher, to measure up to the valuation placed on railroad lands, was denied by the supreme court Tuesday morning. This, it is believed, means complete defeat for the Union Pacific which has put up a long fight to get the valuation on farm lands raised, to do away with what it claimed to be unjust valuation of railroad lands.

The railway company has failed during the past few years to convince the state board of assessment of the undervaluation of farm lands, so it turned to the supreme court for relief. The railroad was represented by Edson Rich and he was opposed by Senator Walter V. Hoagland of North Platte, George N. Gibbs, county attorney of Lincoln county, J. G. Beeler of Keith county and County Attorney Pfeifer of Deuel county.

The court held that in three of the counties, Deuel, Keith and Cheyenne, it appears that the county boards have taken final action and closed their assessment books, and that the right of appeal from the action of these boards has expired. Therefore the writ is denied. The railroad in effect is referred to these boards as the proper means of getting into court with its claims. In the case of Lincoln county, the court says it appears that the county board has set a day on which the Union Pacific may present its

claims and the writ is denied. In this case Lincoln county at first denied the railroad a hearing but after the road's attorneys reached Lincoln to take up the case with the supreme court, they received notice that the Lincoln county board had set a date for the hearing. The county board set the date as the last of the twenty on which the board is permitted by law to hear complaints regarding the assessments. Such a date, according to Edson Rich, representing the Union Pacific, is absurd. The road could hardly begin to present its case in the one day allotted to it.

It is understood at the statehouse that the Union Pacific, defeated in its efforts to secure a mandamus against the four counties in the western part of the Nebraska to compel an equalization of taxable property, will do as it did in Colorado.

In that state the railroad company figured out what will be a fair proportion of its share of the taxes and then made a proffer to the counties in which it operated. At the same time it enjoined the counties from attempting to collect any additional sum. The courts there ordered the counties to accept the tender, and when the case was heard on its merits they were permanently enjoined from collecting anything additional.

Word has been received from Miss Grace Burke, who is quite ill with typhoid malaria at Eureka Springs, A. K., announcing that she is improving and the doctors think her out of danger. She is very weak and will not be well enough to move home for some time. Mrs. Glenn Nye is reported convalescing nicely under the care of Dr. Kerr from her injuries she received last Sunday from a pistol shot. She is confined to the P & S. hospital.



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