

A HOME HEROINE

EDWARD LESLIE kissed his wife fondly when she ran to the door to welcome him home from business, but when he reached their cozy kitchen he dropped wearily into the easy chair by the fire and rested his head upon his hand. He was tired after a long day's work, with nothing but a couple of buns to stay the inner man—tired and worried. They had been married now nearly twelve months, and they found house-keeping more expensive than they had anticipated, and the better times they had hoped for seemed as far off as ever. It was nearly the end of the month, too, and the rent would soon be due. The coal, also, had yet to be paid for, and then there was the interest on some "tickets" which must be paid, or his little wife would lose the little jewelry she treasured so, but which she gave up so willingly to help the man she loved in the hard struggle to get their little home together.

"Dinner is nearly ready, dearest," said she as she stroked his hair back from his forehead. "And you are hungry and tired, dear, and worried."

Presently the postman's sharp rap caused him to spring up and run to the door. He came back more slowly.

"It's from Uncle Mac," he said. "Well, I am surprised. He arrived in England yesterday morning, and—oh, good heavens! we must put him off. We can't do it."

Mrs. Leslie took the letter. "My Dear Godson Ted—I have come back to England after fifteen years in Australia. As things are not too well with me, I propose to come and stay a few months with you. I suppose since you are married fortune is smiling upon you, and they say three can be kept as cheaply as one. Expect me to-night at 9. All news then. Your affectionate uncle, MAC."

"Why, I always thought your Uncle Mac was doing so well, Ted," she said, slowly, as she finished.

"So did I," said her husband. "But, then, everyone abroad is always doing well. I must write at once and put him off."

"No, Ted, dear," his little wife said, bravely. "Because you are married I don't want him to think we are quite so poor. We will manage somehow."

But she sighed a little as she thought how quickly, even now, the weekly pay dwindled to a shilling or two before Friday night.

Barely an hour later Uncle Mac announced his arrival with a performance on the little brass knocker which startled several of Mrs. Leslie's quiet neighbors.

"Glad to see you, my boy. Glad to see you. Nice little place you got, but awkward to find. Took the wrong train at Broad street, so had to come up on the tram. And I say, Ted, my boy, why on earth don't they put the pavement all the way along the street? Half way down I got mixed up in a mountain of mortar, quite lost my temper, and nearly my umbrella. As I said to a man who came down with me, 'That's an infernal ugly looking thing—' Your wife, eh, Ted?" broke off Uncle Mac, as he caught sight of Nellie in the hall.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Ted," he said, walking into Nellie's dainty little drawing-room—the pride of her life—bringing with him sufficient of the much-sized mortar on his boots to build a small-sized villa. "Come over to the light and let me look at you."

"Nice face, but tired," he said, quite audibly, although intended only for himself. "Smart girl, but no strength or backbone. Novel and the sofa and pretty fal-lal-lal. Wonder why he married her?"

"Because he loved me and I loved him," said Nellie, proudly.

"I beg your pardon," said Uncle Mac, hurriedly. "Silly habit, speaking your thoughts aloud. Learnt it in the lonely bush. No offense. Hope you're happy and your love will last, but they do say when poverty comes in at the what-its-name love skoots out of the thimbley."

"That's wrong, my dear, isn't it?" said Edward, slipping his arm round her waist. "Poverty only make our love the brighter. But come, Uncle Mac, my little girl has some real old Irish stew for supper, and I'm sure you're hungry."

"You're right, Ted, my boy," cried Uncle Mac. "I'm absolutely ravenous."

"You won't mind the kitchen, will you, Mr. —?" Nellie began.

"Mac, my dear, plain Mac; that is, of course, Uncle Mac, to you," he replied. "Personally I prefer the kitchen."

During supper he kept them all merry with stories of his life in Australia, but Nellie's eyes noted with apprehension that his appetite was likely to be a serious strain on her limited resources.

"Good back, this," he said presently, with appreciation. "Knocks billy and changes hollow. But you're not eating much."

"I've plenty, thank you," she answered, but Uncle Mac silently noted that the meat had been served to her and himself, while her plate made a mere show with little else than a

... a week passed and one day she was just wondering whether she had an egg or her lunch now, when a ring came to the door and she ran up to find—Uncle

... to see me so soon, ah,

my dear?" he says cheerfully, "but the fact is, I've run out of cash, so I thought I would drop down earlier and have a bit of lunch with you."

"Have lunch with me?" cried Nellie in a horror-stricken voice. "I'm afraid I have nothing in the house, Uncle Mac."

"Oh, anything will do," he replied, carelessly, "and if you have nothing in the place, give me two bob, and I'll run down to the butcher round the corner and get a bit of steak, eh?"

"I'm sorry, Uncle Mac, but—Teddie went off in a hurry this morning, and—and he took my purse away in his pocket."

"Silly boy! Silly boy! And yet he doesn't know it," replied Uncle Mac ruefully. "For when I called at his office to borrow five shillings off him he said he had left all his money at home. But there," he added cheerfully, "I have a sovereign, and we must spend that. My lucky soy, must go."

"Your lucky sovereign?" queried Nellie.

"Well, I call it my lucky sovereign," said Uncle Mac, "because it was the first sovereign I ever earned, and it happened to have the date on of the very year I started to work as a boy of fourteen, I've kept it all these years."

"Oh, you mustn't spend that," cried Nellie. "To-night Ted will be paid and we shall be all right again. Come down stairs and have some more bacon."

Uncle Mac said he had never enjoyed any meal so much as he did that bacon, and after he had finished he proposed that they should go for a walk together.

"As we can't afford a tram ride," he said, laughing, "we will just walk round and think we are millionaires. Nothing like building castles in the air, my dear, when you are down in the dumps. If you can't actually enjoy the things wealth would bring you can look round the shops and see all the pretty things, and then by a little imagination just consider they are your own. Now, as money's no object, where shall we say we live?"

"Oh, at Highgate," cried Nellie.

"Why Highgate?" asked Uncle Mac seriously.

"Because there's such a lovely house there to be let. It stands in its own ground, and I've often looked at it, long before we were married even. I think I told you about it one day."

Finding the gate of the house open they ventured to look over it. Nellie waxed quite enthusiastic, and as they went from room to room she furnished them sumptuously in her imagination. The drawing room would be in gold and white with Louis XIV. style furniture.

"Never heard of him," said Uncle Mac, with conviction. "You must show me some of that on your way home."

Nellie replied with a laugh that she would show him the very thing she meant in Dormans & Brown's Emporium, and on the way back she pointed out many things she would like and have, "if only they had plenty of money."

When they got back Ted was waiting for his dinner, and while the chops were grilling Nellie told him the adventures of the day. During dinner Uncle Mac, amid many bursts of laughter, described the wonderful home in which Nellie would, in imagination live.

Uncle Mac started off early next morning to get work, or, as he said, "die in the attempt." Toward the end of the second week Uncle Mac obtained a "job." Of course, it isn't exactly the thing I wanted," he explained, "but then, beggars can't be choosers. I'm to get thirty-five shillings a week, so I thought, Nellie, I could pay a pound every Wednesday toward the housekeeping expenses."

Matters were so arranged, and Nellie began to feel quite rich. It was surprising how much help that extra sovereign was, and Nellie's nightmare of the end of the week began to vanish.

Uncle Mac continued to come down at 5, and Nellie and he still amused themselves by "building castles in the air" and with looking in the shops.

At last when everything seemed so happy, Edward came down one night with a hard, drawn look upon his face. He kissed his wife with great tenderness at the door, and with a shake in his voice said: "Come into the kitchen, Nellie."

"What is it, Ted?" she asked anxiously.

"I've got the sack, Nellie," he said, with a sob.

For some moments they stood in silence, then he sank on a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"Well, my little love birds," cried Uncle Mac, entering from the garden. "Why, what's the matter?"

In a few broken words Nell told him of this last and greatest trouble.

"Well, well," said Uncle Mac, when she had ended, "keep a brave heart, my dear, and things may be all well yet. I think Ted and I will take a little walk up the street and talk matters over."

When they came back she was lying on the bed, where she had been crying bitterly, but she tried to meet them with a smile.

After dinner she seemed to become tired and heavy, and she felt as though she must go to sleep. Presently her head nodded, and as she lost consciousness she thought she heard Uncle Mac say: "Cherry has to something." Presently, in her sleep she had a beautiful

dream. She thought that she woke up and found herself in the house at Highgate, furnished just as she always pictured it, and Uncle Mac and Ted were there, and they were talking and laughing joyfully.

"Isn't it a lovely dream?" she said turning to Uncle Mac.

"It is not a dream, my dear," he said softly. "I am not poor, as you think I am very rich. I have bought you this house and furnished it as you described, and we brought you here in your sleep. We shall all live here now—that is, if you will tolerate your old uncle—and to-morrow Ted will come up with me as manager to my business in the city."

"Is it true, then Uncle Mac?" she cried.

"It is all true, little woman, and you must forgive an old man's deceit, but I wanted to see the metal my boy's wife was made of, and—and that riches would not turn her head. But I know now, my dear, that as wealth has come in at the thimbley, love will not fly out of the what-its-name."—New York News.

CONCERNING THE OYSTER.

A Short Natural History Lesson on This Timely Subject.

Now that the oyster season has arrived a few remarks concerning this popular bivalve might not be amiss. Epicures naturally like to know what they are eating and if those who are addicted to the oyster habit will follow this brief scientific treatise closely they will be made familiar with the habits and eccentricities of the oyster.

The oyster belongs to the genus of lamellibranch mollusks of the third order monomya and may be at once distinguished by the bilateral symmetry of the heterogeneous convexity. The labial ganglia are very minute while the parietosplanchnic are well developed. We hate to say a thing like this about an oyster behind its back, but the truth may as well be told now, because some one would find out later, anyhow; there is no excuse for beating about the bush.

In spite of all the hard names applied to the oyster, however, it is considered one of the most toothsome dishes that come out of the sea. A few fat oysters in the prime of life, seasoned to taste with salt, pepper and a dash of vinegar, make a really appetizing repast; an oyster needs no other lubricants save the condiments mentioned above. If placed in the mouth it will be found that a well trained oyster will burrow its way down a man's gullet and into his vitals with the dexterity of a toboggan on a shoot-the-chutes.

The oyster is a creature of sedentary habits. It will sit in the mud by the month at a time thinking out beautiful and ennobling thoughts without assistance from outside sources. In addition it also possesses a great amount of persistence. The oyster never gives up; it will cling to a rock during the entire period of its existence without complaint or becoming discouraged. In fact, the oyster's motto seems to be, "Hang on."

There are various humane ways of killing an oyster, says the Ohio State Journal, all of which are highly commended by the clergy and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the country. For instance, an oyster may be stewed, fried, baked, steamed or pickled, according to the caprice of the consumer. If eaten raw an oyster should be stabbed before taken.

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OUR BUDGET OF FUN.

MUMOROUS SAYINGS AND DOINGS HERE AND THERE.

Jokes and Jokesters that Are Supposed to Have Been Recently Born—Sayings and Doings that Are Old, Curious and Laughable—The Week's Humor.

We had no anthracite nor coke. Our cook was new and green; Some one told her that she should soak

A brick in kerosene. She placed it in the stove—a roar—it seemed the roof was cleft. And now we show a shattered door Where our Nora left.—Chicago News.

Miss Flatter's Remark. "This is Mr. Fleeter, the famous hundred yard man, Miss Flatter." "Oh, Mr. Fleeter, I'm so glad to meet you! And do you play ping-pong, too, Mr. Fleeter?"

An Accident.



Were there any accidents in the football game?" "Well, a mule in an adjoining field broke loose and mixed with the game and was pretty badly hurt."

Blood Tells. Ethel—Oh, you dear little doggie; you! Mary—I think he's horrid. Ethel—So do I; but Jack says he's got a dandy pedigree.

His Experience. Hix—Every time I pick up a hairpin on the street I get a letter. I never knew it to fail. Dix—I did. I picked up one the other day and put it in my pocket, but I didn't get a letter. Hix—You didn't? Dix—No. But my wife found it, and I got a lecture.

Knew His Business. After putting her autograph on the hotel register the actress handed the clerk a package, saying: "Put it in the safe, please; it contains \$10,000 worth of diamonds." "Very well," replied the genial clerk. "I'll see that the safe is robbed in time to get an account of your loss in the morning papers."

The Diagnosis. Patient—Do you think I have the gout? Doctor—Hem! What's your income? Patient—About \$2,000 a year. Doctor—My dear sir, it's only an ordinary case rheumatism.

Reasonable Explanation. Customer—You charged me \$14 for this one garment? I think that's pretty high. Tailor—Well, the bill, as I made it out at first, was for \$13, but that is such an unlucky number I thought you'd rather pay a dollar more.—Chicago Tribune.

Similar but Different. First Passenger—Did you get out and stretch your legs when the train stopped at the junction? Second Passenger—Same thing. I had 'em pulled at the lunch counter.

Plenty of Experience. "Did your new cook have any recommendations to offer?" "Oh, yes; she said she's been discharged from some of the very best families."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Meanness of Brown. Green—Brown told an acquaintance of mine that he could have beat my time and married my wife if he had wanted to. Mrs. Green—The ideal I wonder why he didn't do it then? Green—Oh, I can readily understand why he didn't. He had a grudge against me.

Glad He Went. Homer—That preacher is all right. I wouldn't have missed the sermon this morning for a \$10 bill. Mrs. Homer—I'm glad to hear you say so, dear. It certainly was convincing. Homer—That's what I liked about it. It fully convinced me that I might be a great deal worse than I am.

Just So. "I read where the Queen of Serbie boxed the king's ears until they flushed," remarked the man with the paper. "Ah, a royal flush," grinned the poker player.

An Object of Pity. Mrs. Neighbors—Our new girl can't read a word of English. Mrs. Homer—What, not even the bargain advertisements?

Both Changed. Miss Eldersleigh—I hardly knew you, Mr. Roundabout. You have a different cut to your hair. Roundabout—Yes. And I see yours has a different hue.

Quite True. "Can't always have what you want in this world." "No, but that doesn't prevent you from wanting what you haven't got."

Added Attractions. "No, indeed," said the crafty passenger agent to the bride and groom. "Our company does not prohibit kissing on the platform, and, besides, I would call your attention to the fact that we have more and longer tunnels than any other railway in the world."—Baltimore American.

Suspicious.

"I suppose your chances of winning the affections of Miss Gay are as good as the next fellow's?" "I don't know. She called me 'Jim' very affectionately last night."

"You don't say? Well, that's promising, isn't it?" "Hardly, considering that my name happens to be Tom."—Philadelphia Press.

Plenty to Spare. "I see a Baltimore man his discovered that ordinary street dirt can be turned into fuel." "H'm! According to that, Chicago can supply the world with fuel."

Her Preference. "Darling, come and fly with me!" whispered the ardent young lover. "No, I am afraid of airships," replied the beautiful girl. "But if you bring your automobile around I'll think it over."

Doubtless True. Smith—I wonder if Seeker really puts principle above party success, as he says? Jones—Undoubtedly. At least he has run for office a dozen times and has never once been elected.

The Biggest Expense. She—I ought not to have married such an extravagant man. He—But, my dear, the man whom you married couldn't be anything else.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Short Account. La Montt—I hear that Cheaply's money is all in his wife's name. La Moyne—H'm! She must have an awfully short name.

Then He'd Have To. Singleton—My physician says I should lead a strenuous life. Wederly—That isn't a difficult matter. All you have to do is to get married.

Wanted to Know. "We have some nice shot silk up stairs, madam," said the polite floor walker. "Who shot it?" asked innocent Mrs. Hogan.

Business Ups and Downs. Junior Partner—Your wife called you up six times over the telephone to-day. Senior Partner—That means she'll call me down a dozen times to-night at dinner.

Envious Nell. Nell—So you are engaged to Cholly, eh? Bess—Yes, I've met my match at last. Nell—Oh, I don't know. I imagine poor Cholly will find himself outclassed.

His Excuse. Mrs. Perch—I declare, Mr. Perch, you're intoxicated again. Mr. Perch—All wrong, m' dear (hic) got caught in a whirl-pool. Just dizzy; that's all.

A Plot. "I see an eminent authority on freshets says that in all the rivers of the country the water is going to be extremely high this winter." "Fudge! I'll bet the ice trust started that story so it'll have an excuse for keeping the price of ice high next summer."—Philadelphia Press.

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NEWSPAPER GROWTH.

Marvelous Development of the American Press.

Weed, Bennett, Greeley, Prentice and Raymond—the grand "we" of the old school—were in a small company when they virtually ruled public opinion, says the St. Louis Republic. There were only 254 daily papers in existence in 1850. To-day there are 2,226. In 1850 the combined circulation of the papers was 758,454, while in 1900 the circulation of the 2,226 was 15,102,156. The aggregate number of copies issued during the year 1850 was 426,409,978, while in 1900 it was 8,168,248,749. It must be admitted that this growth in circulation has followed a change in the so-called mission of the newspaper. A half century ago as statesman felt secure unless he had the editorial support of the papers. The press did not then, as now, express and lead public opinion, but formed it. To-day the highest calling of the newspaper is to truthfully furnish the news. No daily can make editorial expression the leading feature and survive. Railroad, telegraph and cable have made communication so easy that the desire of the people for the latest news has made the circulation of the better papers increase by leaps and bounds.

With the betterment of transportation facilities the weekly press has failed to keep pace with the daily. From 1880 to 1890 the increase in the daily was 25.9 per cent; from 1890 to 1900 it was 30.2 per cent; while the increase in weekly circulation dropped from 23.7 per cent between 1880 and 1890 to 14.7 per cent in the last decade.

There was \$192,443,708 invested in newspapers and periodicals in 1900. They had 27,579 salaried employees, who received \$21,015,791, and 94,694 wage earners, who receive \$50,333,051. Material cost \$50,214,904, and the money value of products was \$222,983,569. There is no way of promoting the actual value of the product in promoting advancement and saving the cost of mistakes which ignorance makes at every turn.

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