

MY POOR WIFE.

BY J. P. SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

"Don't, Paul—don't stare at me like that!" cried my wife, leaning forward on her chair and laying her small hot palm across my eyes, with a gesture half scared, half petulant, that irritated me vaguely. "I—I don't like it, dear."

"I beg your pardon, Helen," I responded somewhat huffily, drawing back. "I really was not aware you objected so pointedly to my looking at you."

"I don't—I don't!" she broke in eagerly. "How could you imagine such a thing? It was the expression of your face, Paul, that took me back for the moment, when I turned my head and found you sitting there watching me with such a critical, searching sort of look, almost as if you—"

"As if I what, sweetheart?" I asked, appeased by the caressing touch.

"As if you saw something in me you could not quite make out, and did not like at all—at all! But I was mistaken in that, wasn't I, Paul?"

Then, after a moment's pause, as I did not reply—

"Sure it was only foolish fancy on my part? Say it was only that—ah, say it was only that, love!" she whispered in the soft drawing brogue I was learning to like.

"Well, dear," I answered slowly, "as you press me so, I must admit I was a little surprised, after leaving you in the lawn romping with the dogs in the very ecstasy of high spirits, declaring that even the twenty-first of June was too short a day to be happy in, to find you half an hour later sitting here alone, to all appearance a prey to the profoundest melancholy, your eyes perfect wells of despair, looking as if the burthen of existence was too heavy to be borne another summer's day."

"It was heavy—so heavy! You are right. I could not have borne it much longer. For the last twenty minutes I—I have been your widow, Paul."

"Oh," I said, with a feeling of unaccountable relief, stroking her tumbled silken hair, "I see! You were my widow, madam—a very flattering and satisfactory explanation of your appearance indeed! But, dear, don't you think, all circumstances considered, it is rather premature for either of us to do the weeds even in spirit yet?"

She was nineteen, as fresh and as hardy as the mountain heather she had lived among all her life. I was twenty-five, stood six feet one in my stockings, and had not known an hour's illness since I had the measles many years before.

"That was not the kind of widowhood I meant," Helen said, looking at me with a touch of pathetic reproach in her strange eyes. "Your death, your mere bodily extinction, Paul, would not grieve me for long; I should cease to mourn you soon enough."

"Mrs. Dennys," I exclaimed, in mock indignation, "explain yourself, please! You surely would give me the conventional year of crape at the least?"

"No, I wouldn't—not a year, not a week, not a day, for I would die the same moment you did. Do you think I could live and you dead, husband?"

"And yet you say you were my widow for full twenty minutes, true daughter of Erin?"

"That was because I had lost you in a way that severed us in life as well as in death."

"Lost me in a way that severed us in life as well as in death? This is dreadful weather for conundrums! I give it up!" I responded languidly.

"I—was widowed, Paul, because I had lost your love—because you cared for another woman more than for me," she returned, in a low voice, looking at me with eyes full of tragic denunciation, as Rebecca might have looked at Ivanhoe, as poor La Vallere at Louis when she bade him her last good-by outside the convent gates.

I laughed a little too boisterously, I felt, and drew her to my side.

"To be sure, to be sure," I assented volubly, "I never thought of that solution! How long is it since I first learned to care for you, ma belle? That day you and I slipped down the mountain side through the yellow broom?—let me see—seven, eight, why, nearly nine months ago! A long spell of constancy—almost time I should be wearying for another love, isn't it? Some men, you know, would like a change of wife with every change of coat; but as I happened to be of rather conservative kidney, I think I ought to be able to wear one wife to three coats at the least, and I believe I courted you in the very cloth your fingers are caressing now. It's getting a bit shabby, to be sure; but—"

"You may treat my words lightly," she interrupted, leaning over me with half-closed eyes, a bright pink spot burning on her cheeks. "I still stick to my opinion, something tells me I shall lose you, as I say—some day!"

"You lose me? Oh, no, no! Whatever happens, no matter how bitterly you may make me suffer, you could not lose me that way."

"Am I to thank the gods, I wonder? What, Helen! Through treachery, desertion, indifference, brutality even, you will still cling to me like a limpet—eh? Are you sure, quite sure there is no other way but commonplace dissolution through which I can shake you off? Think, wife—think!" I retorted banteringly, when, to my surprise and alarm, the look of scared, almost agonized, melancholy stole over her dark winsome face again, her arms tightened convulsively round my neck, her burning lips were pressed close to my ear, as she gasped out—

"You know—you know—you have guessed how you can lose me, then? I—I feared you would—soon—soon. Oh, they ought to have told you in time! It was wrong—wrong. I tried to tell you often, but the words wouldn't come. I—I am not to blame. Oh, Paul, Paul, my dear, if you had not taught me to love you so well—I—I—"

CHAPTER II.

Thoroughly startled I sprang to my feet, roughly lifting her from the floor whither she had sunk, and held her firmly before me.

"Helen," I cried, "do you know what you are saying? What—what is the matter with you? This is the way you went on that day, at Lucerne, shortly after we were married; what do you mean? I—I insist on an explanation! Speak out at once—I tell you at once!"

She looked at me with gleaming eyes, and utterly colorless face, her lips moving, but no sound coming.

"What is it?" I repeated, my wrath rising, horrible suspicion blackening my mind. "How have you deceived me? What have you done that I—I should have been told of before I married you? Helen, speak, or by Heaven, I'll—"

"I have done—nothing," she answered, standing straight before me, not the least sign of fear in her face. "You may kill me if you like, I shan't mind much; but I have done no harm, you should know that well. One day of my life was as dull, innocent, uneventful as another until I met you."

"Then what do you mean by these hints and wild words? Why—why do you thus torture, and try to raise a demon in me, little me?" I asked, very much ashamed of my brutal outburst.

"Tell me, Helen?"

"I don't know—I don't know," she replied, bursting into tears and laying her white face on my shoulder.

"I mean—nothing—nothing. What should I mean? I—I can't help it, I suppose. Oh, pity me, pity me and bear with me if you can, dear boy! It's—it's not all my fault. My poor mother was like that before I—I was born."

"Your mother, dear?" I asked presently, when she was quite herself again, and apparently as much ashamed of her outburst as I was of mine. "I never heard you speak of her before. Do you remember her at all?"

"No; she died when I was a baby; but I often heard Molly speak of her," she answered quickly.

"And your father?"

"My—my father?"

"Yes, did you not know him?"

"After a slight pause she said—
"No, I did not know him. I believe he died even before her. He was an Englishman, and they knew very little of him at home. Granny did not like him, I believe. Paul, let me sit up; Miss Stopford is coming up the avenue."

I retired to a distant window, and took up the field; but my eyes wandered from the close, cramped print to the heads of the girls beading over their work, and thought what a charming picture they made in the chastened golden light, and how reflectively my wife's dark tumbled locks threw out the smooth coronet of burnished gold that crowned Edith's stately head.

She was a most beautiful woman—tall, fair, with soft blue eyes heavily lashed, and a faultless profile. Never before had I seen her look so attractive as she did on that evening while she directed Helen's little clumsy brown hand across that square of oatmeal cloth on which such wonderful birds, butterflies, and flowering vegetation were to blossom into life. Her dress, of a light blue stuff, trimmed with delicate lace, fitted her exquisite appearance, her every movement, that was most soothing to the senses that lazy summer day. I felt as if I could have watched her with unsatiated pleasure for hours at a stretch—"a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and divinely fair"—while Helen, my wife, was a most distinct child of earth, small, dark-haired, dark-eyed, with unformed babyish features, and a skin which, though pure and healthy, lacked the delicate peach-bloom of the other. Was she ordinarily pretty or almost plain? I still asked myself that question after nine months of matrimony, and could arrive at no satisfactory solution. For Helen was seldom the same, either in mind, manner, or looks, two hours together.

One hour she would look, even in the most partial eyes, dull, commonplace, hopelessly unattractive—the next, for no apparent cause, her appearance would change, her cheeks glow, her eyes gleam with a light that I vaguely felt for a moment would, in most men's opinion, dim Edith's placid beauty into insignificance. She had certainly very strange eyes—I never could ascertain their exact shade. Sometimes they were deep, dark, still, like water in heavy shadow—again, they were all life with flickering tawny lights, as they were that moment, when raised to Edith's in rueful expostulation.

"Oh, Miss Stopford, please don't ask me to change my wool again! Let me finish to the stalk in this brown yellow."

"My dear Mrs. Dennys, impossible! You have only three shades in the leaf as yet, and I have changed my wool as many as three-and-twenty times in a single spray of virgin vine."

"Have you? Then I'll never be an artist in crevices!" laughed Helen, the cloth dropping lazily from her hands; whereupon Jim, her little terrier, thinking the lesson over, jumped briskly up on her lap, upsetting her workbasket, the contents of which rolled over the waxed boards—scissors, tapes, needles, bodkins went right and left. A stout reel of black cotton traveled languidly my way, and, stooping to pick it up, the golden hair of the only woman I ever loved brushed my forehead deliciously.

"Meet me at the end of the cedar-walk in half an hour," she said in a quick whisper, with downcast eyes, fumbling for the reel that I, in my agitation, had dropped again. "I have something to say to you."

I nodded, lay back in my chair, and instinctively held up the paper to shade my face from observation. When my wife called me over to drink a cup of tea, I glanced apprehensively into a mirror to see if the color had faded from my temples yet. No, it was still there, burning brightly, even through my tanned skin.

"Meet me at the end of the cedar-walk in half an hour," I repeated stupidly, again and again, as I strolled across the lawn towards Bretton Hall, the residence of General Stopford, Edith's uncle, and my grandfather's brother. "What does it mean? What can she have to say to me? I can't understand it."

(To be Continued.)

THE ROMANCE OF ALUMINUM.

Aluminum is a metal which we are supposed to owe to modern science; but a curious passage of Pliny's works, which has hitherto received but little attention, indicates that it was discovered once before, as long ago as the first century of the Christian era. During the reign of Tiberius, a certain worker in metals appeared at the palace and showed a beautiful cup composed of a brilliant white metal that shone like silver. When the artificer was presenting it to the Emperor he purposely dropped it on the floor of the chamber. The goblet was so bruised by the fall that it seemed irretrievably injured; but the workman took his hammer, and in the presence of the court repaired the damage without delay. It was evident that this metal was not silver, though it had almost the same brilliancy, besides being much more ductile and considerably lighter. The Emperor questioned the artificer closely, and learned from him that he extracted the metal from an argillaceous earth. Tiberius then asked if anyone besides himself knew the process and received the proud reply that the secret was known only to himself and Jupiter. This answer was sufficient. The emperor had reflected that if it were possible to obtain this metal from so common a substance as clay the value of gold and silver would be greatly reduced, so he determined to avert such a lamentable catastrophe. He caused the workshops of the discoverer to be wholly destroyed, and the luckless artificer was seized and decapitated, so that his secret might perish with him. It is thought that this metal must have been aluminum.

Disarm a critic and he will kick you,

PATRIOTISM IN TYPE.

BOUNDING BILLOW LAUDS DEWEY'S TARS.

Printed Aboard the Flagship—Journal Issued by the Sailors Aboard in Battle Songs and Vigorous Thirteen-Inch Editorials.

From Chicago News: As an example of exultant journalism, Bounding Billow, the organ of Admiral Dewey's men-of-war-men, printed on board the flagship Olympia, is possibly the most decided type that issues from a press in the dreamy orient. Copies of the fifth number of the publication, replete with patriotic editorials and stirring battle songs, have reached Chicago and show that the lapse of weeks since the tars of the Pacific squadron added new troubles to the burden of Uncle Sam's statesmen have not tempered their joyous spirits or the elation over their prowess. From title page to the last epic Bounding Billow is replete with victorious chronicles of the sailors' achievements, coupled with not a little valuable information concerning the exact movements of the American and Spanish squadrons before and during the famous battle.

The paper is a well-printed pamphlet of sixteen pages, a model typographically and with well-written contents. The title-page is executed in colors, the first illustration being the liberty bell, mounted on two 8-inch guns and draped with the national emblem. An American eagle perched on the globe, with laurel branches on either side, is surrounded by the black-letter inscription, "We came, we saw, we conquered."

Bounding Billow is edited by L. S. Young and printed by H. B. Glover, both of the flagship. The editorial announcement states that it is published at intervals in the interest of American men-of-war-men. The fifth number details the movements of Dewey's ship from the time of the departure from Mirs Bay until the last Spanish ship was sunk. General Basilio Augustin y Davilla's bombastic proclamation to the Philippines is reprinted with the caustic answer delivered by the editor on the Olympia's gun deck. A translation of the Diario de Manila's account of the battle, accompanied by editorial comment, is an interesting feature of the issue. There is a poem dedicated to "Maon of Illinois," which begins:

Hail patriot, Columbia's sons that sail the mighty sea
Accord these thanks for thy brave stand for war and liberty.
In the Diario de Manila's account of St. Francis.

HIS WEAPON WAS EMPTY.

Negro Robber Captured by a Man with an Unloaded Gun.

A gentleman of this city who lives out near the Bayou St. John had a peculiar experience a few nights ago. His house is somewhat isolated and has a kitchen several yards in the rear of the dwelling. On the night in question he was awakened by a noise, and taking his pistol from a bureau drawer slipped on some clothes and went out to investigate. As he approached the kitchen a burly negro sprang out of the rear door and darted across the back yard carrying a bundle under his arm. The gentleman is something of a sprinter himself, and he immediately rushed after the fugitive. For a few moments it was nobody's race, but the fleeing thief was unfamiliar with the ground, and presently he was trapped in a blind alley. His pursuer was at his side in a couple of bounds, and leveled the pistol at his head.

"Throw up your hands, you scoundrel!" he cried. The negro hesitated and there was murder in his eye as he glanced at several handy clubs lying near, but the gleaming muzzle cowed him and he did as directed. The bundle contained a few old garments taken from the kitchen, and not desiring to bother with the courts the gentleman told him to begone. When the nervy suburbanite returned home and told the story his wife turned pale. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed, "why that wretch might easily have killed you in such a lonely place. How could you be so foolhardy?" "Oh, pshaw! my dear," replied her husband, "there might have been some danger, I admit, if I had been unarmed, but you see, I kept him right under my pistol, and if he had budged I'd have filled him full of lead." Before going back to bed it occurred to him to take a second look at the weapon. It was empty!—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The Latest Story About Verdi.
Here is a charming story about Verdi, just hot from Italy. A farmer, living in the depths of the country, was very desirous to hear one of the illustrious composer's operas. So, better late than never, he took his ticket, traveled up to Milan, and, securing a good seat, heard "Aida." He was very much disappointed, and wrote to Verdi to say so, adding that he did not like the music at all, and that under these circumstances he hoped that Verdi would see the reasonableness of at once returning him his money. There was his railway fare, his ticket of admission, and his supper at Milan, for which he inclosed the bill. The grand old maestro entered fully into the humor of the situation. He wrote back a polite letter regretting that his music had failed to please, inclosing the railway fare and the price of admission. But he added that, as the farmer would have had to provide himself with supper at home, he could not admit the justice of that part of his claim, and he absolutely declined to pay for his supper at Milan.

Ruskin and the Beggar.
When Ruskin was at Rome there was a beggar on the steps of the Pincio who begged of him every day as he passed, and who always received something. On one occasion the grateful beggar suddenly caught the outstretched hand and kissed it. Mr. Ruskin stopped short, drew his hand hastily away, and then, with a sudden impulse, bending forward, kissed the beggar's cheek. The next day the man came to Mr. Ruskin's lodging to find him, bringing a gift, which he offered with tears in his eyes. It was a relic, he said; a shred of brown cloth, which had once formed part of the robe of St. Francis.

TENT STOVES FOR SOLDIERS.

Quartermaster Smith Will Order Two Thousand for the Barracks.

Tents will be opened today by Quartermaster G. C. Smith of the St. Louis depot for 2,000 conical wall tent stoves, and on his recommendation the contract will be awarded by Quartermaster General Ludington. Not since 1896 has the government invested in tent stoves, when 1,200 were purchased through the St. Louis depot. From a civilian's way of thinking the army tent stove is most unique. It has the form of a frustrum of a cone, is constructed out of No. 14 United States standard gauge common annealed plate iron, and is in one piece, except the collar and door. The aperture for the door is six inches high by six inches wide, and the covering is sufficiently large to lap over. An "A" shaped vent is at the bottom of the stove, directly under the door, and is two inches high by three inches wide. The general dimensions of the stove are as follows: Height, to top of collar, 28 inches; outside circumference at top, 13 inches; distance from bottom of door aperture to base of stove, 14 inches; weight, 19 pounds. The cost to the government for those on hand was \$1.23 each. "It is not likely that all of the 2,000 stoves will be used at Jefferson Barracks," said Quartermaster Smith. "I think several hundred will be plenty. The remainder will be shipped to other army camps. The stove was adopted for use in the army September 18, 1894, and is by far the simplest device that could be used in a tent."

A Royal Priest.

Prince Max, of Saxony, recently appointed bishop of Kulm, is said to be the only person of royal birth now in holy orders. A few years ago the prince suddenly resigned his commission as a cavalry officer in the German army and betook himself to the cloister or seminary at Eichstatt, asking there for admission in order that he might study for the priesthood. His uncle, the king of Saxony, in vain urged him to give up his purpose. In the seminary he endured without complaint all the restrictions imposed by the rules, declining to be favored by any relaxation of discipline, even when his health was affected by the strain of unaccustomed privations. After leaving Eichstatt the prince went to London as a missionary priest, laboring there in that part of the Whitechapel district where poverty most abounds. Having been raised to the office of bishop he will soon, it is said, be elevated to the college of cardinals. The last imperial prince holding the office of cardinal was Archduke Leopold of Austria.

REMARKABLE DOGS.

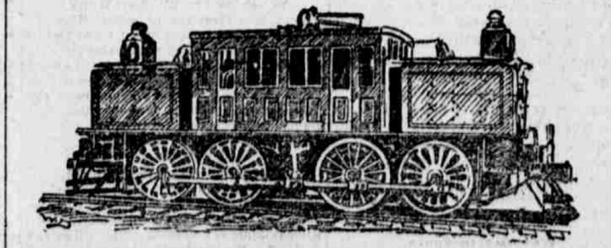
Lapp dogs are about the size of a Scotch terrier and look very much like the lynx, with long shaggy hair or varied tints. They will fight off the wolves from reindeer. The dogs of Lapland, Iceland and Greenland have a long hair, curled tails, pointed noses and ears and remarkably irritable tempers. In Alaska the breed of dogs is reddish-brown, and the animals are as much like wolves as dogs; they are voracious and hardy and a team will draw 500 pounds. Forty frozen herring or one salmon will support a dog for a day. They are not at all affectionate and such a thing as saving a man's life is unheard of among them. Labrador has dogs so fierce that a log of wood is tied to their backs to render them less dangerous. The head weaker dogs. In Kansas the dogs are severely trained to work as loads across the ice. The dogs are not sourced, consequently they are not brutes and they are not killed by stunning the snout. The head, which is the intellect.

A GREAT LOCOMOTIVE

Doctor Raub Claims to Have Effected Wonderful Economics and to Have Increased Their Efficiency.

The run by rail between New York and Washington is soon to be reduced to three hours. This revolution in railway travel is to be brought about by the Baltimore and Ohio railway company by means of a new locomotive, invented by Dr. D. C. Raub. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad is to be equipped with the engines as rapidly as they can be built. A speed of eighty-two miles an hour has been attained, the run between Port Jervis and Jersey City on the Erie railroad, 88 miles, being run in an hour and 12 minutes, including seven minutes for stops. Doctor Raub gives the following interesting account of the evolution of the new locomotive, and a description of it: "Looking for symmetry of construction and stability of movement as the first requisites of a perfect engine, and in order to determine which engine possesses these properties in the highest degree, I hung a series of them from a large crane. I found that all were out of bal-

ance because of the motive power being all placed at one end. I found that each engine tested was carrying about fifteen tons of dead weight, which caused a terrible 'pounding,' that racked both engine and the roadbed. Reasoning that all this lost power might be saved by putting the motor machinery in the center of gravity, after a lot of experimenting I designed and built an engine whose actual performances have confirmed my theories. I have such faith in my idea that I built the first locomotive at my own expense in the Grant locomotive works, Paterson, N. J. The finished engine weighs sixty-two tons, has eight sixty-two-inch drivers and a speed capacity of eighty-two miles an hour. It consumes less fuel and draws more cars than any other locomotive on the tracks. My claim that it will outclass other engines is based upon sound mechanical principles. Being perfectly balanced it neither pounds



nor oscillates. By a unique arrangement of the boiler flues the waste products of combustion are used as fuel. Two tubular boilers are provided with return flues which by radiation superheat the steam within the boiler. The smokestack is really only a draught and an outlet for exhaust steam, for it never emits smoke or sparks. The engineer stands in the middle of the engine." The Raub engine was tested on the Erie railroad for several months. In his report upon it General Superintendent J. H. Barrett says, in part: "An Erie engine of 14,400 pounds of tractive force failed to move a train of 240 tons of weight, when the Raub engine of but 7,000 pounds of tractive force went away with it without any difficulty. The Raub engine raised 150 pounds of steam within fifty-six minutes and with but 1,500 pounds of bituminous coal, while each of several Erie engines required two and a half hours of time and three tons of coal to raise 125 pounds of steam. The Raub engine made occasionally eighty-two

miles per hour with ten laden gondolas, 300 tons, and neither pounded nor oscillated unduly nor discharged any live sparks, cinders, ashes, gas or smoke." Mr. Barrett conceded to the Raub engine the following gains: "Fuel, 50 per cent; freight power, 40 per cent; of wear and tear, 60 per cent." The Raub locomotive compares, it is claimed, as follows with the ordinary type: Ordinary—Weight, 75 to 80 tons; coal consumption, 165 pounds per mile; steam maintained, 125 pounds; speed per hour, 50 to 60 miles; cost, \$10,000 to \$12,000; market price, \$14,000 to \$18,000. Raub—Weight, 75 to 80 tons, with water and coal; coal consumption, 35 pounds per mile; steam maintained, 135 pounds; speed per hour, 80 to 100 miles; cost, \$12,000; market price, \$20,000.