

The Married Life of Helen and Warren

Warren Inherits a Clover Sash and Helen Buys an Antique Plate.

An old frame house once white, now a paintless grey. An unkempt yard with straggling shrubbery and a discouraged fir tree.

On the sagging gate hung a piece of cardboard crudely lettered: "A FEW ANTIQUES FOR SALE."

From across the muddy road Helen sighted the alluring sign. The word "Antiques" was always an irresistible magnet.

"Dear, let's go in. They might have some wonderful old things."

"Now we're not going to miss our train for any old junk," grumped Warren, who had come out to look over some suburban lots.

"They run every hour! We might find a wall clock for the bedroom. You can pick up things in these old houses for almost nothing—and we're right here," pleadingly.

With grumbling reluctance, he followed her across the rain-slushed road, through the obdurate gate, and up the shrub-fringed path.

Glowingly expectant, Helen pulled the old bell that gave a remote tinkle.

The door was opened by a harsh-featured old woman in a rusty black gown.

"We were just passing and saw the sign," explained Helen.

"You can come in," peering through her glasses, "I'm only selling a few things to help my taxes. Showing them into an old-fashioned sitting room."

Helen's heart beat fast as she glanced about. A find! A real find! The place was crowded with antiques. Everything was old from the book ends to the finest colored prints. And over the fireplace hung a banjo clock!

"My grandfather built this house—it's just as he left it. It's mighty hard to part with things that's been in the family all these years."

"I must be," sympathized Helen, wondering what she would ask for the clock.

"That's my grandfather," pointing to a faded photograph in an old round frame. Excuse me a minute, there's somebody at the back door."

"What wonderful things," whispered Helen excitedly, when she was alone.

"I knew there'd be something in this old house. I'm crazy for that banjo clock. But don't say a word—let me do the buying."

"Don't worry, I'll not let in. But you won't pull off any bargains. Let me see that clock. I'll give you \$100—it looks like a wise old bird."

"Dear, they don't value antiques in these small towns. Oh, that quaint footstool—and that luster vase—Sh-sh, she's coming now."

When the woman entered Helen was examining a fire-screen, purposely showing interest in something she did not intend to buy.

"Yes, my grandmother worked that. You don't see them like that often."

"What would you want for it?" anxious to get a line on her prices.

"Well, I refused \$80 last fall. But I've had such a hard winter—the weasels carried off all my chickens—I'll take that for it now."

Eighty dollars! Helen's hopes of bargain prices were rudely shaken.

But perhaps, because she mentioned this first, the woman thought she wanted it most and priced it accordingly. Other things might be cheaper.

"That's a nice old sofa," still ignoring the things she really wanted.

"Yes, that's a genuine 'Duncan Phyfe' piece—and in perfect condition."

Duncan Phyfe! So she was well up on Colonial furniture. Helen's hopes ebbed.

"Does that clock run?" with careful casualness.

"Oh, yes, it just needs oiling. That belonged to my great-grandfather."

"Pity that piece of veneering's off. What do you want for it as it is?"

"As it is?" sharply. "You don't get a clock a hundred years old without a scratch. Just to pay my taxes I'll take seventy—but it's worth much more."

Seventy! And Helen had hoped to get it for about \$25.

The footstool was \$30. The luster vase, badly nicked, \$20.

Warren, staring out the window, was whistling derisively under his breath.

"Well, we were just passing and thought we'd stop in," began Helen, planning a graceful exit.

"I've got some things in the dining room," quickly. "Some china that belonged to Aunt Matilda that I'll sell cheap. I don't set so much store by her things as I do by grandfather's."

The dining room was also crowded with old-time treasures. The sideboard and corner cabinet filled with blue Staffordshire.

Helen's heart missed a beat as the woman took out a platter of "Washington Crossing the Delaware."

"You can have that for \$70—that's giving it away. But as I said, I never set much store by Aunt Matilda. And since the weasels carried off my chickens—I've got to sell something."

A "Washington Crossing the Delaware" platter for only \$70!

"What do you think, dear?" feigning reluctance to conceal her eagerness.

"Don't ask me," shrugged Warren. "Don't know anything about this stuff."

"Well I—I guess I'll take it." Then opening her purse, "Seven dollars?" fearful it was 17.

"Yes, seven. And here's something else that belonged to Aunt Matilda, taking from the sideboard a ruby glass tumbler. You can have that for three."

"Very well, I'll take it," trying to say it carelessly. "And how much is this?" examining an old octagonal decanter on the sideboard.

"I ought to get \$40 for that—but I'll let it go for \$30."

Um, didn't belong to Aunt Matilda, mumbled Warren under his breath.

"What's that?" she turned sharply.

"What do you say?"

"We'll have to go getting along," ignoring her, he glanced at his watch.

"You won't take that fire screen?" as they returned to the sitting room.

"No, I think not—not this time," Helen gave her a \$10 bill.

"Well, I've got to sell a few more things to make up my taxes. If any of your friends drive out this way, I'd be obliged if you'd give them my address."

"Yes, we will. Dear, you write it down while she wraps those."

"Jove, forgot to fill this pen!" Warren had drawn out his note-book.

"There's ink on that desk—115 Maple Road. I'll go get some more."

"Something phony here," growled Warren, as the woman disappeared. "She's puttin' something over. She's got too blamed much of this stuff—I don't believe it's right."

"Right? Why what do you mean, dear?"

"Bet that plate's a reproduction. For the real stuff the sky's the limit to her prices—this Aunt Matilda story sounds fishy."

"Warren, you're always so suspicious! How could this poor old woman way out here, get reproductions? Why you can see they're all family things. She didn't like this aunt—that's why she's willing to sell her things cheap."

"I don't fall for that yarn. Darnation!" as his dipped pen left a blot.

Fumbling among the papers on the desk for a blotter, Warren paused with a muttered exclamation.

"Why, dear, what're you doing?" amazed Helen, as always so punctilious about other people's letters he deliberately scanned the one before him.

"Read that! You needn't have any qualms. She's put one over on you."

The brief communication Helen grasped at a glance.

"My dear Mrs. Hubbard:—We are shipping you another dozen of the ruby glass tumblers, but regret we are out of 'Washington Crossing the Delaware' platters. Expect a shipment from the factory in a few days, and will then fill your order."

"Very truly yours, 'The Bridgeport China Co.'"

"Now what about your poor old woman and her aunt Matilda?" he scoffed.

"I won't take them!" flamed Helen. "She'll have to give my money back!"

"Huh, you'll never get your ten out of that old girl. She'll not give up—"

"I found this other platter that belonged to Aunt Matilda."

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longed to Aunt Matilda," as she re-entered. "I thought you might like the pair."

"I think not, and I—I've decided not to take these after all," stammered Helen. "We're not going right home—and they'll be so hard to carry."

"Why that's all right. I can send them—if you'll pay the expressage."

"No, I—I really don't think I want them after all. They're not just what I thought and— Well, I don't want to take them."

"That's not the way I do business," bristling. "A sale's a sale! After wasting my time pricing everything in the shop—I mean the house—"

"You spilled the truth that time!" exploded Warren. "It's a shop, all right—fixed up to land suckers. This stuff's all planted here to sell. Aunt Matilda's platters!" with a snort.

"Aunt Matilda turns 'em out by the gross in Bridgeport, Connecticut!"

"Why—what do you mean?" she spluttered, her face brick red.

"Better put those letters away when you've got customers. But I'll hand it to you! That weasel story's a peach!"

Levied with rage, the old woman fairly shrieked maledictions after them, as they made their way out.

Again in the muddy road, Helen clung shudderingly to Warren's arm.

"Why did you egg her on? I was almost afraid of her. I never saw anyone in such a rage!"

"Peppery old hen," he chuckled. "Worth the ten to hear her squawk."

"But who'd have thought it? In this tumbled old house, way out here—"

"Huh, lot of motoring out this way. She's rented that house and chucked it full of stuff to sell. Whole place, sign and all, is a plant. Did you see that bunch of bills from antique dealers? Bet she does a roaring business."

"And I'm out ten dollars for a cheap platter and goblet," mourned Helen.

"You got off easy. Might've been stung for fifty. Darn clever stunt—salting that old house. Her stage-setting was great! The screen her grandmother made and her grandfather's clock! But she didn't fool me," with masculine egotism. "I was wise to her game from the first."

Then as he swung Helen over a muddy pool.

"Never mind, Klitten. I'll stake you to the ten. Worth that to call her bluff. Ha, ha, wasn't she peeved when she found the jig was up? She saw you were an easy mark like a lot of the boobies who're dippy on antiques—but she wasn't countin on ME!"

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Next Week—Warren a Fretful Invalid.

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As March winds, flying dust and dirt, are apt to injure any complexion, this information will be of special value right now. If you have any cutaneous blemish, it's easy to remove the disfigurement with ordinary mercurized wax. Applied nightly, the wax gradually removes freckles, pimples, moth patches, sallowness, or any surface eruption. The affected cuticle is absorbed; a little each day, until the clear, soft, young and beautiful skin beneath is brought wholly to view. Ask the druggist for one ounce of mercurized wax, use like cold cream at night, and remove in the morning with soap and water.

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Old Faithful, one of the more prolific of the geysers, usually erupts every 65 minutes. The water is thrown out to a height between 130 and 170 feet for four minutes. The estimated discharge is 200,000 gallons at each eruption.

Bootleggers Bury Booze.

Defiance, O., March 17.—Bootleggers are working a new stunt here in an effort to avoid arrest. They bury their stock in the ground, near the outskirts of the city. Landing a prospective customer, they have him wait near the buried goods while they go on ahead and get the liquor.

Cat Kills Giant Snake and Brings Body Home

Old Washington, O., March 17.—Killing a blacksnake five feet long, "Bruiser Bill," James Warfield's cat, dragged the reptile's carcass home.

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To get the best results, take "Seventy-seven" at the first Chill, Sneeze or Shiver.

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