

A JEALOUS WIFE

By ADELE E. THOMPSON

(Copyright.)

"Helen, dear, I have something to tell you."

"Yes, Robert," and though the lip trembled a little, unseen by him, the voice was bravely cheerful, "I think I can guess what it is."

"Can you?" and the happy look on the boyish face, such a boyish face still for all its 25 years, grew still brighter. "Of course, I have written you about Lillian, the dearest girl in the world; but it seems so wonderful to think that she loves me as dearly as I do her, and I wanted you to be the first to hear it," and Helen listened while he sang a lover's praises, and smiling, hid the little pain in her heart that would come with the realization that this only brother had found one nearer than herself.

"There have always been two of us," he concluded, "you and I; but now there will be three, Lillian, you and I."

"No, Robert," she said, even more cheerfully than before, "there will be two still, Lillian and you."

"Nonsense, Helen," he protested, hotly. "Nobody is ever going to crowd you out; we have come too near each other for that. When I come to tell Lillian all you have been to me, mother and sister, both, and all I owe to you through these years, I know that she will love you as well as I do."

Helen smiled a little dubiously; she could not say to him that some one else would have opinions and a voice concerning the home; and she had no desire by look or word to mar the few hours they were to have together after an absence of months.

Helen did not come for the wedding; but after they were settled in

But not entirely hers; there was the little Helen. And as the child grew beyond the years when she could conveniently be put to sleep or sent to the nursery, loving, lovable, always ready to spring into her father's arms, the baneful root in Lillian's heart took a fresh start. Every caress he gave to Nellie she felt herself defrauded of, every fond word a robbing of her right; to herself she said she could not bear it, that her own child should come between them, and at times she almost hated the child for it.

One day there was white crape on the door, and a white casket was carried out of their home.

Lillian shed many tears, she felt the keen stress of grief; but yet deep down, far deeper than Helen's death, lay the thought that she would hardly have owned to herself, but was none the less present, that now, for the first time, Robert was hers alone, no longer was there right or claim beside.

And yet, impalpable as the thinnest breath of vapor, not to be grasped or defined, but none the less present and felt, was the shadowy something that seemed to have come between her and Robert in the hour when she could claim him as hers, and hers only. At first she recognized this with an incredulous petulance that in turn gave place to a vague alarm. Not that he was less tenderly kind or attentive—the more so, if anything; but he went his way as if no longer touched by her moods; frequently he said he had writing to do, and shut himself in the little room that had been Nellie's play-room, now made into a "den," it almost seemed; but then it could not be that he was living a life of his own apart from her.

At last one evening petulance and alarm flamed into speech, and as he was leaving the room on the plea of "writing a little while," she threw herself before him. "Robert," she cried, holding him fast, "what is it? What has come between us? What are you doing?"

"I am writing on the book you have often heard me speak of," answering the last of her questions.

"But I don't want you to write that book; I hate it," the tears beginning to gather. "You are so changed to me, and now for that to come in. You have never been the same since Nellie died; I always knew you loved her the best; I wish I could have died instead of her. You never loved me, or you would not make me so miserable."

"Lillian," and there was a note in his voice she had never heard before, "I married you because I loved you; I have loved you always; I love you now. You are sweet and true at heart. The trouble has been that you wanted and exacted of me what I did not ask of you, what no one has a right to demand of another, my whole and only love. Love is like a fountain, the more freely and in larger measure it flows, the purer and fuller it is; choke it up, and it either diminishes or becomes unhealthy. This, your selfish jealousy—forgive me if I speak plainly—has done for both of us. Because of it you hardened your heart to Helen, who would gladly have loved you, and loving whom would have made your own life the richer, and led me to weakly fall in the gratitude and devotion I owed to her; because of it you were an untender mother to Nellie; you neither gave her your own love nor allowed me to show her mine, for the lack of which her whole young life was clouded.

"Do not think that I blame you alone for this; I blame myself even more, that seeing it I weakly yielded, that I was not strong enough, clear-sighted enough, to have crushed it for you as you would not for yourself; but as it is, it has spoiled my home and marred my happiness and filled my heart with remorseful memories. "You say that I have changed to you since Nellie died. It is because I have thought of these things since then as I never did before, and have come to some conclusions that it were well for both of us had I done so long ago. In the future I shall give to you, as I have always had it in my heart to do, the best of my love and confidence and care; but at the same time I shall remember that I have my own life to live, and give to its duties and claims what I feel they deserve. You ask me, Lillian, what has come between us? It is the only thing that ever could have come—yourself."

She had loosed her hold on him and dropped into a chair; he bent and gently kissed her and left the room.

For once Lillian's usual flow of words failed her. If there had been a trace of passion in his tone—but there was none—it was the pitiless calmness of his words that had chilled her heart as with an icy touch. Heavy draperies at the windows shut out the wintry storm outside; in the grate the fire glowed red; warmth and light were all about her, but she shivered in their midst. And this was her Robert, who had used his words with, it seemed to her, as little of ruth as an executioner's sword. Listening, she followed his steps as they passed up the stairs; then the door of his study closed, and its sharp click to her echoed: "What has come between us? It is—yourself."



"What Has Come Between Us So?"

their home, yielding to Robert's repeated letters, she went on for a visit. Lillian received her with sweet frostiness, so subtle as to be felt rather than observed.

Robert had built such hopes on the results of this visit, but somehow, if he began to talk to Helen of the days when they two were alone in the world together, Lillian was apt to develop a headache that shut her up in her room; and if Helen petted him in her old loving way, Lillian would show her displeasure by punishing him with a cold if not sulky silence, that made the household atmosphere anything but cheering.

In time another guest came into the home. "I'm sorry," Lillian said weakly as Robert bent over her and the other, the tiny head, "that it isn't a boy. They say that sometimes men love a daughter better than their wife; but it would break my heart if you should love the baby best. Promise me that you never will?"

"What a foolish Lillian," he answered; "of course I never will."

When it came to naming the baby he had his way. "There never can be but one Lillian to me, so Helen it shall be," and he wrote "Aunt Helen" wonderful stories of the beauty and brightness of Baby Nellie.

After a little he began to catch a note, a something, between the lines in Helen's letters that vaguely troubled him, and one day there came a letter in a hand so changed he hardly knew it; she was sick, would he come to her?

Lillian was in her room with a cold and slight fever when he carried the letter to her. "Surely you are not going to leave me here sick," she exclaimed. "How can you be so cruel? If Helen is very badly off she could not have written herself. Well, if you go, only wait till morning; half a day won't make any difference."

Robert hesitated, he felt impelled to go at once; but if he crossed Lillian, it might make her so much worse that he could not go at all. In the morning, as he was stepping on the train, a telegram was handed him—"Helen is dying."

"You are too late"—he felt the rebuking accent in the nurse's tone—"and she was so anxious to see you."

Lillian wrote him a letter full of love and sympathy; she said to everyone: "Dear Helen, how sad it is." At the same time down in her heart there was a little feeling that she never put into words or even concrete thought—now he is wholly mine.

SENSATIONAL CLOTHING OFFER

—any winter Suit or Overcoat in this store at **FIFTEEN DOLLARS**

—all blue and black Suits and all the finest Rogers, Peet & Company Clothing included. Nothing reserved or held back. Come early, pick out any Suit or Overcoat and pay only

\$15.00

REMEMBER
the
HALF-PRICE SHIRT SALE

REMEMBER
the
CUT-PRICE SHOE SALE

REMEMBER
all
BOYS' CLOTHING One-Fourth Off

Mayer Bros.

- BIG FIGHT COMING.**
Trouble is Brewing for Building Trades in New Jersey.
Organization of the Master Builder's Open Shop Association of New Jersey, was recently effected at a meeting of a number of contractors at Newark, N. J. A registration office for all classes of mechanics will be opened for the purpose of helping members of the association to secure workmen. It is certain that a fight is coming in the building trades that may spread all over New Jersey.
- BARBERS SUSTAINED.**
The St. Louis court of appeals last Tuesday handed down a decision sustaining Judge Wallace of Kansas City in reference to Sunday labor, at least so far as it applies to barbers. The Barbers' Union of St. Louis pushed the case against a non-union shop that persisted in keeping open on Sunday.
- CONVENTIONS IN 1908.**
Where and When Trades Union Gatherings Will Be Held.
January 31, Indianapolis, Ind., United Mine Workers of America.
April 6, Toronto, Canada, International Association of Fur Workers of the United States and Canada.
May 3, Brockton, Mass., International Union of Cutting Die and Cutter Makers.
May 5, Youngstown, Ohio, Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.
May 11, New York City, Actors' National Protective Union of America.
May 11, St. Louis, Mo., American Federation of Musicians.
May 11, —, United Brotherhood of Papermakers of America.
May —, Detroit, Mich., International Tin Plate Workers' Protective Association of America.
May —, York, Pa., National Print Cutters' Association of America.
June 1, St. Paul, Minn., Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders of America.
June 1, Detroit, Mich., International Association of Steam and Hot Water Fitters and Helpers of America.
June —, Washington, D. C., International Union of Journeymen Horse-shoers.
June, Mobile, Ala., International Printing Pressmen's Union.
June 1, Columbus, Ohio, Chainmakers' National Union of the United States of America.
June 1, St. Louis, Mo., International Association of Marble Workers.
June 8, —, International Ceramic Mosaic and Encaustic Tile Layers and Helpers' Union.
June 8, Cincinnati, Ohio, International Brotherhood of Bookbinders.
June 8, —, International Brotherhood of Tip Printers.
June 8, Milwaukee, Wis., The Commercial Telegraphers' Union of America.
July 4, —, Amalgamated Leather Workers' Union of America.
July —, Atlantic City, N. J., National Brotherhood of Operative Longshoremen's Association.
July 6, Buffalo, N. Y., International Jewelry Workers' Union.
July 6, Cincinnati, Ohio, Brush-makers' International Union.
July 7, Baltimore, Md., Glass Bottle Blowers' Association of the United States and Canada.
July 7, Buffalo, N. Y., Amalgamated Window Glass Workers of America.
July 13, Toronto, Canada, International Piano and Organ Workers, Union of America.
July 13, Indianapolis, Ind., Lithographers' International Protective Association.
July 13, Minneapolis, Minn., Theatrical Stage Employees' International Alliance.
July 18, Holyoke, Mass., American Wire Weavers' Protective Association.
July 20, New York City, International Steel and Copper Plate Printers' Union.
August 3, Buffalo, N. Y., National Association of Heat, Frost, General Insulators and Asbestos Workers.
August 4, Detroit, Mich., International Glove Workers' Union of America.
August 6, Detroit, Mich., International Brotherhood of Teamsters.
August 10, Detroit, Mich., International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen.
August 10, Boston, Mass., International Typographical Union.
August 10, Boston, Mass., International Stereotypers and Electrotypers' Union.
August 11, Indianapolis, Ind., Shirt Waist and Laundry Workers' International Union.
August 24, Milwaukee, Wis., United Garment Workers of America.
September 1, —, Table Knife Grinders' National Union.
September 2, Milwaukee, Wis., American Brotherhood of Cement Workers.
September 7, Denver, Colo., International Association of Machinists.
September 8, New York City, International Photo Engravers' Union of North America.
September 10, Boston, Mass., Splinters' International Union.
September 14, Montreal, Canada, Journeymen Stonecutters' Association of North America.
September 14, Philadelphia, Pa., International Union of Steam Engineers.
September 14, Philadelphia, Pa., International Brick, Tile and Terra Cotta Workers' Alliance.
September 15, Salt Lake City, Utah, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.
September 17, New York City, Pocket Knife Blade Grinders and Finishers' National Union.
September 21, Indianapolis, Ind., United Association of Plumbers, Gas-fitters, Steamfitters and Steamfitters' Helpers of United States and Canada.
September 21, Indianapolis, Ind., International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers.
October 5, Washington, D. C., Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union.
October 5, St. Louis, Mo., International Union of Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers.
October 20, Cohoes, N. Y., United Textile Workers of America.
November 9, Denver, Colo., American Federation of Labor.
November 10, Bangor, Pa., International Union of Slate Workers.
November 12, Vinalhaven, Me., Lobster Fishermen's International Protective Association.
December 7, New Orleans, La., International Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-Way Employees.
December 7, Brooklyn, N. Y., National Alliance of Bill Posters and Billers of America.