

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 housekeeping 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, me 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-sold 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-dal-lals. 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. Learn 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's-its-name love skoots out of the thingummy."

"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.—er—?" 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 larder.

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

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

Nearly a week passed and one day Nellie was just wondering whether she would have an egg or her lunch now, or wait till 5, when a ring came to the door, and she ran up to find—Uncle Mac.

"Bit surprised 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 sov. 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, laughingly, "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 he 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 the way home."

Nellie replied with a laugh that 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, Nell!" 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: "Carry her 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 thingummy, love will not fly out of the what's-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 parietoplanchic 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 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.

LAUGH AT THE "TOMMIES."

Boer Prisoners Played a Clever Joke on Their British Guards.

When the 5,000 Boer prisoners were confined on the islands of the Great Sound, Bermuda, there was a constant rivalry between the wits of the burghers and those of their guards every whit as keen as that displayed by the contending generals on the far-off African battle-fields. Now it was a "take-off" on the Tommies, now a laugh on the lirsute burghers, and things had about split even until the eventful night when not only the whole English camp but the English fleet as well fell victims to the plotting Boers.

A British sentry was stationed on a promontory overlooking the sound, when something suspicious caught his eye on the calm surface of the water between himself and a battleship lying at anchor. Not wishing to arouse the whole camp on a false alarm, he watched the object for some minutes. Suddenly his heart jumped into his mouth. The object was not only moving slowly through the water, but it had taken the shape of a man on a raft. Was it a prisoner escaping?

"Guard turn out! Sound the alarm! Searchlight! Searchlight!" he shouted.

The English camp was astir in a moment. The alarm was sounded and the armed Britons came flocking from every quarter. Signals were made to the battleship, and in a few moments she was a scene of commotion. Her great searchlight was turned on the ocean and lighted up the promontory with the brightness of noonday. Boats filled with armed soldiers shot out after the escaping Boer. Then the searchlight fell upon the raft, as it did so a roar from 5,000 Boers told the British that they had been taken in as British soldiers had never been taken in before.

The supposed prisoner escaping, says the Detroit News-Tribune, was a dummy dressed up in burgher's clothes and tied to a raft.

Biggest of A I Cotton Mills.

What is to be the biggest cotton mill in the world is to be located soon near Kansas City, Mo. The investment will reach about \$10,000,000.

All some city people know is whether their part of town is reached by a green or yellow car.

ROYAL SKIN BARED TO TATTOO MAN'S NEEDLE.



The proudest sovereigns of the world are not proof against the tattoo germ. Most of the rulers of Europe have succumbed to the fad and the number is growing. Even sedate Queen Alexandra, of Great Britain, can show her mark. It is a spray of forget-me-nots done in green and blue, on her right forearm.

A fire engine drawn by three prancing horses is indelibly frescoed on the left shoulder of Princess Waldemar, of Denmark. She is an enthusiast on fire fighting and honorary member of a Copenhagen fire company.

When Queen Olga, of Greece, was made admiral of the fleet, she had an anchor tattooed in blue on her right arm. Prince George, of Greece, has a hideous dragon, twenty inches long, tattooed across his chest.

Prince Henry of Prussia, also a recent American visitor, has admiral's shoulder knots tattooed on his shoulders. King Oscar, of Sweden, and most of the German Princes can show their parti-colored badges of courage.

Grand Duke Alexis, of Russia, could pose as a tattooed wild man in a circus.

Women all over Europe are submitting themselves to the tattooing needle.

GIVING THE RED BIRETTA.

In the last consistory three red hats were bestowed on three cardinals who were last year elected to the purple. One of these is Archbishop Skrbensky of Prague, who is the youngest member of the sacred college, being only 38—a most exceptional age to be thus honored.

The see of Prague has, together with one or two others, a special privilege—that of wearing the red biretta from the moment he is created. The usual rule is that a cardinal, although enjoying all the privileges of his position and ranking with his colleagues, is not allowed to wear his red hat until it is actually bestowed, which is often quite a year after.

Many years ago Prince Swarzenberg, cardinal and archbishop of Prague, says the Rome correspondent of the Pall Mall Gazette, happened to be in Rome when the consistory took place, so was invited by Gregory XVI. to come and receive his hat from him personally. The cardinals to be thus honored all gathered, black birettas in hand, which made the red one held by Prince Swarzenberg most conspicuous. The prelates of the chamber remonstrated, saying he had made a mistake and must exchange for a black one, but he insisted that it was his privilege and that he intended to go thus into the papal presence. Things were becoming most strained and heated, as neither side would give way, when a clever person dexterously suppressed the red apple of discord and thus forced the cardinal to go into the presence empty-handed. As to whether he was within his rights or not has never, I believe, been decided.

To Meet an Interesting Demand.

In response to an ever increasing demand for skilled woman labor, New York is soon to open a trade school for girls. Besides getting half pay pupils will have a chance to learn more than one trade, and thereby become practically independent of the fluctuations of fashion in the industrial world. For example, girls who declare a preference for the machine room will, if they stay long enough, be taught almost every variety of work which can be done by a machine, from lace to leather, while candidates for the pasting room may become equally proficient in the manufacture of milady's opera fan and bonnet box, of lamp shades and bookbindings. Thus, if bonnet boxes become a fad on the market or fans go out of fashion, a girl who learned to make them at the trade school will be able to turn, without loss of time or money, to making lamp shades and to book-binding.

What He Was Doing.

The other day the proprietor of a large hotel advertised for a cellarman. The next day an Irishman applied for the vacancy. As it happened, the landlord knew him to be a man from the town, and also to be the biggest drinker in the place. Being pressed for a man, owing to the busy season, the landlord engaged him, on the condition that Pat was to keep on whistling when working in the cellar. The next day Pat started on his new job, and he hadn't been in the cellar more than five minutes when he stopped whistling. The landlord, suspecting that his man was drinking, shouted out to him from the bar:

"Pat, what are you doing now?"

The reply came back at the top of Pat's voice:

"Changing my tune, sor."

The Training Tip

The performance was over and the proprietor of the dog and pony show requested the audience to remain a few moments while he said a few words:

"Now, boys, you have all seen what my dogs can do. Will you be surprised when I tell you that some of your dogs can do the same things? Now, then, I am coming here again in six months. If any of you can, by that time, train a dog to stand on its head, play dead or dance, I will give him fifty dollars for the dog."

"I took notice that you were particularly pleased with the little dog that played the part of a policeman. Eighteen months ago I bought him from a little boy. I paid seventy-five dollars for him, but now five hundred dollars could not buy him. Your dog may be as easy to train as he was; try it."

"Here are some little pamphlets telling you how to care for and train dogs; they are only five cents apiece; who'll buy?"

The boys of Belltown raised a great shout when Tom Bowen stepped forward and handed the man a nickel. Tom's dog had the reputation of being the nearest to a good-for-nothing in town; but Tom loved him and believed in him when no one else did. He acknowledged that the animal was no bird dog, although its mother had been a famous setter; neither was he a watch dog; and he was mortally afraid of cats—a fault which, all boys know, places a dog away down below par.

Tom's brother Ned owned a magnificent maltese, which answered to the musical name of Muziah. If Tip possessed a pet aversion, it certainly was this same Muziah. When the table scraps were scraped out into an old pan, he stood afar off until the mighty Muziah ate all the choice bits and all the plainer fare that he could hold.

Then—if there were any left—he would be permitted to slink up and carry the remaining bits behind the woodpile.

When Tom went home from the show he called Tip, and the two repaired to the hayloft, where the dog was duly informed of what was in store for him. A rusty red tail wagged acquiescence and the training of Tip was begun.



TIP DOING THE DANCE.

Tom made a secret bargain with his mother, consequently the price of a new pair of pants was in his pocket next morning. As Tom and Ned started for school, Ned was not long in discovering a good-sized patch on the seat of Tom's trousers. "I say, Tom! what's up? How come you with those old breeches on? Didn't father get you any new ones?"

Tom shook his head, ran his hand back over the patched part of his apparel, and said, "Oh, that's all right! I can't see it, you know." When Tom reached the playground, he was made the butt of much good-natured fun. However, the thought of what his purse contained and its purpose comforted him.

Thereafter, for weeks, Tip was fed on fresh meat in the hayloft, while, outside, Muziah whined pitifully. No one knew excepting Tom and Tip what went on in that hayloft. The mother had a pretty good idea; but, you know, mothers never give you away.

Tom wore patched clothes to school all winter, and was always on the lookout for small jobs, whereby he might earn a nickel, or, perchance, a dime. The butcher down on the corner got all of Tom's earnings, and Tip waxed fat on the best the butcher had.

At last spring came, and with it the dog and pony show. With beating heart Tom took Tip around to the tent specified for candidates. How relieved he was when he found that the trial was to be made before no one but the kind-faced professor himself! Tip went through the ordeal right bravely, and was locked up with a porterhouse steak, while Tom went in to witness the afternoon performance.

After it was over the proprietor announced that he had bought one Belltown dog from Master Thomas Bowen, who would come forward and show what the dog could do and then receive his fifty dollars.

What an excitement there was among the boys, as Tom took a seat on the platform and began playing a lively tune on a French harp. The red curtains parted and in rushed Tip. After a gesture from Tom, he raised himself on his hind legs and began to dance. That was all; but he did it well.

How the crowd cheered as Tom pocketed the fifty dollars. Then he went behind the curtains with Tip to bid him a long farewell.

The Flora of Alaska.

According to a report of the special agent of the Department of Agriculture in charge of Alaska investigations,

a traveler may go from one end of the Yukon to the other in summer without seeing snow. On the other hand, vegetation, large forests, and wild raspberries, red currants, huckleberries and cranberries will be found in profusion. In places the grass grows as high as a man's head. There are several places along the coast, at the Sitka and Kenai experiment stations, and at many points in the interior, where practically all of the cereals of the temperate zone, most of the vegetables, and a considerable variety of cultivated flowers have been grown with much success for several years. Fine spring wheat has been raised at Sitka for three years past. At Rampart, sixty-five degrees north latitude, winter rye sown in the autumn came out in the spring in perfect condition, though the temperature fell to seventy degrees below zero in the winter; the grain matured by Aug. 1. Barley sown in May was ripe by the middle of August. Oats and potatoes thrive in many places. Cattle are kept at every considerable settlement, except at Nome. The Alaska Commercial Company has for many years kept cattle, sheep, and Angora goats at Kokaik, they requiring but little food or shelter, except in an occasional storm during the winter.

JEWES WHO WEAR PIGTAILS.

Hebraic Colony in China Who Have Forgotten Even Their Ritual.

It is not generally known that there is a colony of Jews in China—Jews who wear pigtails, bear Chinese names and speak the Chinese language exclusively and who have forgotten the God of their fathers and neglected their ancient ritual of worship until it has been entirely lost to them. But there is such a colony, and its people have puzzled oriental scholars for many years.

Recently it has been established that they entered China—or, rather, their progenitors did—about the year 319 A. D., in the reign of the Emperor Mingte II, and formed a colony about 700 miles from Shanghai, on the Hoangho, or Yellow river.

At one time these Jews were a power in the land. Their city grew in population until its inhabitants numbered about 5,000 Jews alone, and they became so wealthy that they were able to loan money to the Emperor, who so esteemed them that he built for them a synagogue. Two of them, whose names have been lost in the passing years, were especially honored by the emperor. One he made the treasurer of a great province and the other was a general in the imperial army.

In the golden days of Judaism in China they prospered, and when their magnificent temple was destroyed by fire they rebuilt it in greater magnificence. In a land where there are many fine temples theirs was one of the most splendid. It was 350 feet long and 150 feet wide.

To-day their temple is a mass of ruins. Stone by stone, almost, it has been torn down by those whose care it should have been to preserve it. The story, even among the heathen, is that they forgot the worship of their God and He forgot them. They grew poorer and poorer with the advancing years during which they failed to keep the Sabbath of their religion and were finally forced to sell all they had for food and clothing. Stone by stone, almost, their temple was demolished, to be sold to builders or other temples and houses; their sacred books were disposed of for what money they would bring; they had no place for worship, and gradually their religious rites were forgotten and even their language so neglected that it has now become a mere memory and they themselves a people lost among the heathen of the Orient.

They are only a handful now, Chinese men in all that outwardly marks one of that nation, says the New York Tribune, except that every one bears the facial characteristics of the Jews. There is a trace of their old religion left, but so very little and so garbled and mixed with the religion of the land that only experts can detect it.

PRICE WAS A KISS.

Young Man Had an Excellent Chance to Buy a Dog.

A handsome bachelor of Baltimore, well known in social and educational circles, acknowledges the truth of the following story: He was driving with a very pretty and attractive young woman, when on the outskirts of the city they met a lad of about 12 years leading by a chain a singularly ugly but finely bred bull terrier. The pretty girl went into raptures over the dog, and her escort determined the animal should be hers.

"Say, sonny," he called, "what will you take for your dog?"

"Nothing," replied the lad.

"Nonsense," cried Mr. Blank, "here's \$5 for him."

"No, I won't. This here dog ain't for sale."

"Ten," said Mr. Blank, and then, growing desperate, "fifteen, twenty." But the owner still refused.

All the time the conversation was going on the youth, although talking to the man in the buggy, kept his eyes fixed on the other occupant of the vehicle, and at last he said, gravely: "I don't want yer money, but if you'll just give that lady there a kiss you may have the dog."

Mr. Blank was speechless. He stared at the boy an instant and then put the whip to his horse, starting him off at a run.

The story goes that a mile was gone over without a word being spoken when as the horse's rapid gait became slower as it turned down a country lane the pretty girl turned ever so slightly and said, shyly: "Oh! Mr. Blank, why don't you buy that dog?"

—Baltimore Sun.