The Bee's Home Magazine Page

SILK HAT HARRY'S DIVORCE SUIT

It is Considerable Position at That

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Drawn for The Bee by Tad

Married Life the Third Year

The Engagement of a Friend of Helen's Brings Out an Old Scandal.

By MABEL HERBERT URNER.

The engagement has been announced of Miss Louise F. Mason to Beverly Clay Elkins. Miss Mason is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William F. Mason of — East Sixty-fourth street. Mr. Elkins is a member of several prominent clubs and is well known in the city.

"Oh, Warren, Louise Mason is engaged!" handing the paper to him across the table.

He read the item in the social column as he sipped his coffee.

"Humph. She might have done better than Beverly Elkins."

"Do you know him well?" Helen's voice expressed her interest.

"See him occasionally at the club."

"Don't you like him? Tell me something about him."

"Oh, he's all right, I guess, but I wouldn't have picked him out for a husband for Louise Mason."

"But he's well off. He can take care of her, can't he?" Helen asked the question hesitatingly. She always resented the idea that money was an essential part of marriage, and yet she knew Louise would never be quite happy without the luxuries to which she had been raised.

"Yes, I guess he has money. He may be a decent enough chap, too, but he was never popular at the club. You know he was mixed up with that Gorman scandal a couple of years ago."

"Oh, was that Beverly Elkins?" asked Helen in dismay.

"That's the man."

"Do you suppose Louise knows?"

Warren shrugged his shoulders. "Suppose she must, if she reads the papers. They were full of it there for a while."

"Just what was it, dear? I've forgotten. Mrs. Gorman shot him—didn't she?"

"Oh, they faked up some kind of a story about an accident or a burglar or something of the sort. But no one ever believed it. She shot him all right."

"But dear, if he tried to shield her after she shot him—that was very fine of him, wasn't it?"

"Oh he wanted to hush it up—wanted to keep it out of the courts.

"The whole thing was pretty unsavory."

All that day Helen's thoughts were of Louise Mason. She was an unusually sensitive girl and Helen could not quite reconcile her engagement to Beverly Elkins. He was a man of strong personality. Even from the few times Helen had met him, she realized that. But she never quite liked him. He aroused in her a feeling of distrust.

She remembered one evening she and Warren had sat in the row behind him at the theater, and she had been struck by his face in repose. He had a curiously hard, almost cruel profile.

The play had been a delightful light comedy with many situations of real humor, and Helen had noticed that not once had he smiled. He sat with folded arms, with his somber, unsmiling eyes fixed steadily on the stage. There seemed a curious brooding primness about him. One could easily imagine that there had been some great tragedy in his life, which he was never quite able to forget.

And now Louise—Louise with her light joyous, fun-loving nature—was to marry this man! Helen had never seen her with him, and only once had she heard her speak of him, and that had been over a year ago.

"Oh, he's so 'clerical,'" had been her comment. I'm almost afraid of his cynicism, it's so brilliant and so merciless."

Helen wondered is love had now softened that cynicism, and if it had taken any of the hard grimness from his face.

When Warren came home that evening he threw in her lap an evening paper.

"Thought the papers would rehash that old story. They've got a whole column tonight."

"About Louise's engagement?" breathlessly.

"About the Gorman scandal."

"On the second page there," as Helen turned hurriedly through the paper.

It faced her suddenly in bold, glaring type:

"BEVERLY ELKINS TO WED
"Well-Known Clubman Who Figured Prominently in the Gorman Scandal Several Years Ago to Marry Miss Louise Mason.

"Announcement has been made of the engagement of Beverly Elkins to Miss Louise Mason, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Mason of — East Sixty-fourth street. Mr. Elkins will be remembered as one of the principals in the Gorman case, which caused so much comment at the time.

"On September 6, 1909, he was found unconscious in his dressing room with a bullet wound in his chest. It was afterward discovered that Mrs. John K. Gorman had been in his apartment that evening. He had sent away his valet early in the afternoon, and it was not until he returned late that night that the shooting was discovered.

"When Mr. Elkins recovered consciousness in the hospital, he refused to make any statement beyond that he had no knowledge of how or by whom he had been shot. He claimed he was standing by the table in his dressing room when he heard shots behind him, and as he turned a shot was fired, but that he had not seen his assailant.

"This story, of course, was not believed. It was evident that he was trying to shield Mrs. Gorman. He denied that Mrs. Gorman had been in his apartments that evening or at any other time, but the police found a package of her letters among his effects which belied this statement. It was thought at first that the wound was a mortal one, but after a tedious illness Elkins recovered.

"Shortly afterward Gorman sued for a divorce. But as Elkins was in Europe he could not be made to appear. The trial was a long and sensational one."

"Oh, dear, that's dreadful!" and Helen let the paper fall to the floor. "That will almost kill Louise! Do you suppose they will let her see it?"

"Don't see how they can help it. Pretty hard to keep papers away from any one nowadays."

"But what cruel thing to write up just now—and she's so sensitive to public opinion!"

"Then she oughtn't to marry a man like Beverly Elkins."

"But, dear, if she loves him"—

"Then if she loves him enough it shouldn't make any difference. Don't suppose Elkins is much worse than a lot of other men. Only his escapade happened to get out." And with an air of dismissing the subject he took up the paper and turned to the stock market.

Helen got out her mending basket and for a long time sewed in silence, her thoughts still on Louise. At length she asked:

"Dear, was Mrs. Gorman a very beautiful woman?"

"Believe so. Never saw her."

"And what became of her?"

Warren shrugged his shoulders.

"You suppose she really loved him?"

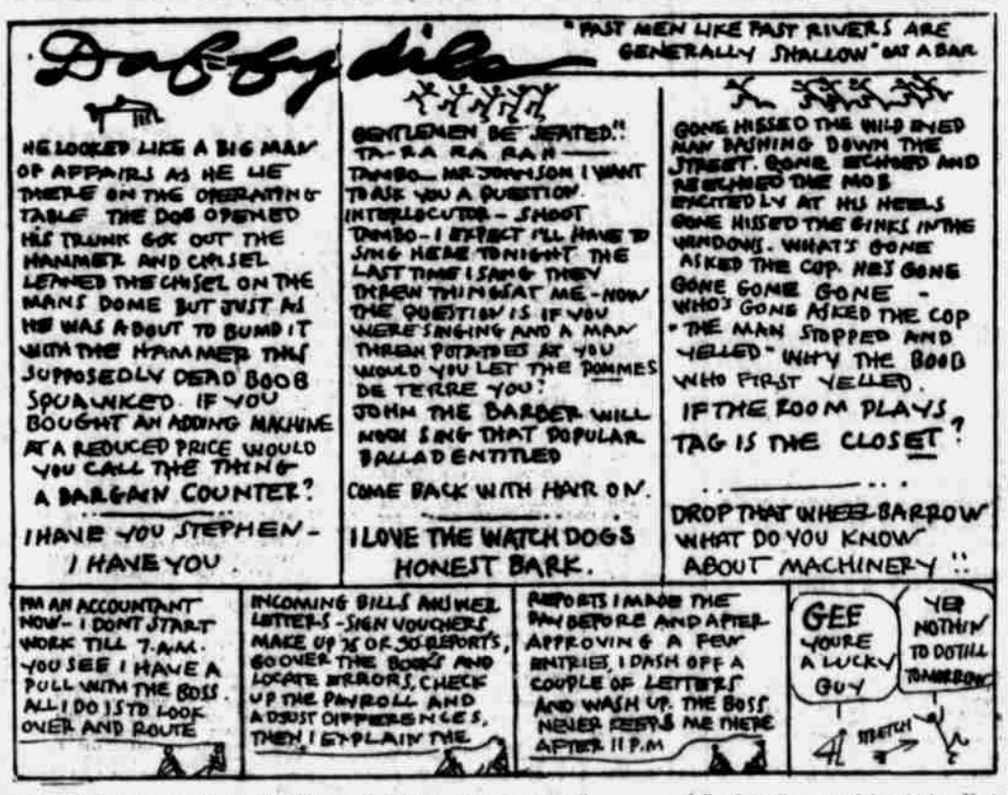
Another and more impatient shrug.

Again Helen sewed on in silence. She felt strangely depressed. She could not keep her thoughts from this tragedy. Even after her marriage the memory of how her husband has been involved with this other woman would always hang over Louise.

Then she thought of the many other wives whose complete happiness in their husbands' love was marred by some such knowledge. The newspapers were daily full of similar scandals which affected the happiness of some home.

And there came to Helen a sudden rush of gratefulness that at least nothing like this had ever touched her life. With the sweet and complete trust that was such a beautiful part of her love, she believed absolutely that Warren's life before his marriage was as clean as it had been since.

Yielding to one of her swift impulses, she dropped her sewing and going behind Warren's chair, leaned over and rested her lips against his hair—a caress to which he was so accustomed that he did not trouble to look up.



Why a Good Woman Clings to a Bad Man--Woman's Ruling Passion is a Desire to Reform Some One

By DOROTHY DIX.

Why do graceless good-for-nothings seem to have a peculiar fascination for women? Why will a wife cling to some worthless, drunken reprobate of a husband with a devotion that nothing can lessen, while she will get up and leave for a trival cause a perfectly upright and worthy man who is a good provider? Why is the black sheep invariably mother's darling among all her children?

To answer these questions we have to go back to the Garden of Eden and our first mother, who risked Paradise to find out about wicked things she had no business knowing. The same curiosity about forbidden things is still rampant in every innocent and ignorant feminine breast, and the man who is reputed to be wild and lawless still fires her fancy as the serpent did Eve's, because he represents to her the world of things whose doors are closed to her.

Heaven knows that, in reality, there is nothing romantic in the drunkard, or the gambler, or the roue, or the ne'er-do-well. He's a sordid enough figure—to any who look at him with clear eyes, but the imagination of foolish women make of his vices a prince's cloak to wrap him in, and turn his weaknesses and shiftlessness in high spirits. Literally no good, honest, industrious, every sort of a man can compete in a woman's favor with a scamp, and no man has so potent a way of wooing as he who has the story of a dark and sinister past to tell.

And, curiously enough, the better the woman the worse she likes the man to be. That is why saints so often marry villains. The woman who has seen much of the world, and who knows that pasts have a way of coming home to roost, and that there is nothing romantic or dashing about a man who comes staggering along, fuddled with drink, or who gambles away the grocery money, picks out a good, clean thrifty man when she wants a husband. But the unsophisticated woman, who knows nothing of the realities of life, falls a victim to the blandishment of the scamp.

Of course, in explanation of why women seem to have a peculiar mania for loving unworthy men, it may be said that the black sheep very often has graces and charms of personality that his white brother lacks. It is a truism that vice is generally more attractive than virtue, and all of us know from personal experience how much more lovable certain people are who have nothing but their faults to recommend them, than certain other people who are models of all the virtues.

We have all seen some men who was a light in the church, an example in the community, the very pattern of probity, and honesty, a man whose wife rode in her automobile, and had a fine house, and rich clothing, and everything apparently that the heart of woman could desire, die, and leave a widow who made scarcely a pretence of regretting him.

Such spectacles make us marvel at the illogic of women, and say that a man has small encouragement to go straight, or to work his fingers to the bone supporting a wife, if he expects her to love him in proportion for what he is, or does for her. The answer is that love isn't a matter of volition, and the man who gives his wife sympathy and tenderness sometimes gives her more than he who gives his wife sealskins and diamonds.

Another reason why black sheep have a fascination for women is because the ruling passion with the sex is reformation. No woman can see anything, or anybody, without a consuming desire to make them over according to her own way.

The man who is already walking in the straight and narrow path offers small opportunity for the exercise of the pleasures of reformation. The most his wife can hope to do is to make him cut his hair another way, and buy another style of collar, and let her pick out his neckties; but the drunkard, or the gambler, or the man with a past is like a free ticket to a picnic to her.

She has a vision of altering his entire manner of life, weaning him away from all of his former associates, quenching his thirst, curing the itch of his fingers for the pasteboards, blinding him to all other women, and leading him up to the higher life, during all of which proceeding she is having the time of her life. That is why, when a bad man makes a little, ignorant, unsophisticated girl his mother confessor, and tells her that he only needs her influence to make him another man, that is all over except sending out the wedding cards.

Still another, and the crucial reason, why women love scamps is the eternal mother love that is at the bottom of every woman's heart, and that is the guiding impluse. Women may admire strength in a man, but the weakness makes an appeal to the very core of their being that strength never does. They may revere the man who stands alone, like a rock against the storm, who has the ability to achieve and command, but they take the poor derelict of life, wind beaten, broken, helpless, in their arms, and hide his shame upon their breasts.

They may glory in the triumphs of the successful man, but it is the failure who comes limping home defeated for whom they make a crown out of their tenderness and pity.

Because he needs her love more than her strong, clever, healthy children, the mother loves best the one that is sickly, or deformed, or feeble minded. Because he needs her patience and her love most, the mother loves her wayward son most. Because all others have turned away from him and he has no other home, she keeps the light burning in the window for the prodigal, and has the warmest welcome for him when he comes creeping back in rags and tatters.

God gave to women this divine power of forgivness, this fountain of love that flows the more the more it is drawn upon—this brooding tenderness that takes in and shelters all the weak and erring.

And men may well thank God that it is so.

The Amateur and the Professional

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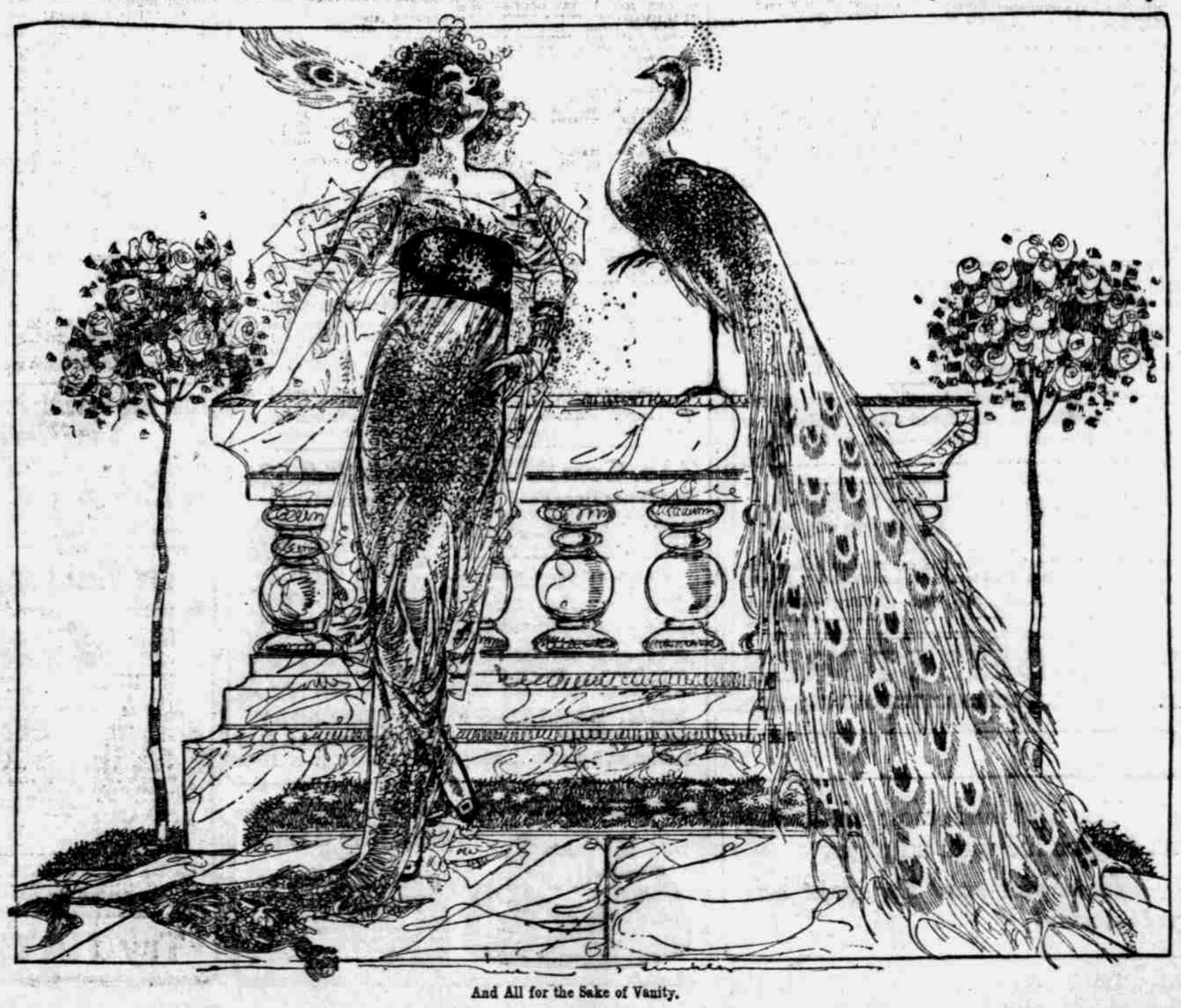
By Nell Brinkley



And All for the Sake of Vanity.