

# The Bee's Short Story

Service for Self  
By A. MARIA CRAWFORD.

"Just see what they have done to my buffet, John. They're perfect vandals. They pushed my new gate leg table against a big chair and chipped a piece out of one of the legs. Oh, I'm just sick from worry over these awful painters and wallpaper hangers. No, I don't want any meat. Just a class of iced tea and some salad, Neeta," she said to the maid who was serving luncheon.

Better have some of this steak, dear! You'll feel rested if you eat something substantial," said Dr. John Hodge to his pretty, complaining wife. "That salad and tea will not nourish your body sufficiently. It is just like stoking a furnace with paper—a flash of flame and no heat."

"Don't dictate to me what I shall eat," said Eleanor Hodge, peevishly. "I know what I want. If you had all this upheaval to look after, to watch these stupid old men who seem bent on ruining every piece of mahogany that I have, you wouldn't feel like eating red meat and potatoes, either. I tell you a woman has a hard time. Both of the maids were cross all morning because the men were here working on the house. I just wish that I hadn't attempted to do so much."

Her big, bearded blond husband looked at her appraisingly. "You wanted it done, you remember, Eleanor. I suggested that labor was high now, paints and paper, too, but you seemed so intent on having the house done over that I willingly put up the money. Don't worry about trivial things. Put on your hat and go on a call with me. It will do you a world of good to get away for a few hours."

"Something is sure to go wrong if I leave the place, John. There had been a lone in his voice that made her wary of any more complaints. "But I think I'll go, anyway," she rose wearily. "A few more scratches can't make much difference."

"The house is beginning to look fine," commented Dr. Hodge encouragingly. "I like the ivory ceiling in this blue room very much indeed."

"They made an awful mess stippling it. They dragged their ladders around so much. And they flecked some paint on the walls, too."

"Get your hat if you are going with me," said the doctor, rising. "I have to go out to Bull's Gap. It's a pretty run. I'm sure that you will enjoy it and come back refreshed and eager to take up your work here again."

"I'm thankful just to have a chance to sit down," she whined when they were seated in the smart eight-cylinder roadster. "I'm so tired."

The man said nothing, adjusted a key in the lock, stepped on the gas and pulled slowly out into the street. It was a cloudy day and a cool, stimulating breeze blew from the nearby mountains, carrying temporary relief to the sweltering city. They raced along the smooth road, between rustling fields of ripening corn, through singing, swiftly flowing little creeks, past ancient farm houses from whose placid fronts the white paint was slowly peeling away and so on to the low lying ridges that skirted the mountains beyond. In plowed fields men, and women, too, leaned on their hoes as the car dashed by and looked stolidly, perhaps enviously, at people who apparently did not earn their bread by the heaved sweat of their brows. Little children looked up inquiringly from their play, their round, rosy faces breaking into excited smiles when the doctor waved a friendly greeting.

Presently Eleanor looked around at him wondering. "Wherever you go, you carry sunshine and happiness," she said reflectively.

"Not always," he amended. "But I try, just the same. It is a doctor's business of life to substitute service for self."

"It ought to be everybody's business," she said, gravely comprehensive.

The petty worries concerning house cleaning and furniture warring paperhangers and painters seemed to submerge in the engulfing peace that stole into her heart and mind at sight of the quiet, shadowy country roads and inviting little lanes fragrant with summer bloom. Queen Anne's lace spread its fragile loveliness beside the dusty pike. Roses clamored riotously over sage-

gling rail fences. Birds called from orchards where mellow fruit hung like gold and crimson Christmas balls among the green leaves. Nature, with divine, world-old healing in her touch, soothed the woman's impatient, troubled soul.

They drew up before a tiny bungalow, nestling like a squat brown hen on the side of a ridge. There was a bed on the wide front porch. The doctor picked up his medicine bag and started up the rocky little path that led to the steps. Soon the waiting woman in the car heard the boom of his big, cherry voice as he told a funny story to the patient on the bed. His hearty laughter was echoed by a feeble, hollow sound that told its own sad story. It grew so quiet on the porch that Eleanor Hodge turned her head to see what had become of the doctor. He was sitting on the bed, little rubber tubes in his ears as he leaned over the patient, a stethoscope on the flat chest registering the stage of the unmistakable disease. Then all at once there came a paroxysm of coughing. A young girl, rose and held a little pan to the man's mouth. When it was over, she set the pan down and, cradling the man's head in her arm, turned the pillow and delicately patted the cool surface as she gently laid him down again.

The doctor's voice sounded again, telling a story of far countries which he had visited, of strange sights he had seen, of interesting people he had encountered. Eleanor Hodge reflected just what that visit meant to the sick man and to the watchful, waiting woman there. It was like a breath of the big outside world beyond the circling rim of their little circumscribed sphere, something to think about, something to make them forget, for a few minutes, the grim tragedy that stalked beside them there.

The girl walked awkwardly to the gate with the doctor, an ugly cotton shawl held clumsily before her. She could not have been more than 18. Her eyes were as blue as the summer sky above the little brown bungalow; her smoothly brushed hair, the color and sheen of corn silk, yellow in this fields.

"Do you think he can live until—the baby comes?" she asked eagerly. "I'd be so glad just to have him see it. He wants to stay that long so—so much, doctor."

The doctor laid his square, blunt-fingered hand kindly on her shoulder. "While there is life there is hope," he said. "If he does not have another hemorrhage, there is a chance for him to live that long," he promised her smilingly.

She fumbled in the pocket of her coarse blue dress. "How much do we owe you?" she asked, pulling out a worn, shining old black pocket-book.

"Nothing," he told her. "Buy something for the baby."

Eleanor Hodge smiled at the grateful girl through eyes that were suddenly blurred. "I'm going to send you a little dress," she said, chokingly.

She looked back at the girl as she walked heavily up the rocky path. A rising wind was whipping

her scanty skirts around her ankles, swollen a little and bulging over her rough low shoes.

A field lark sent shrill, vibrating notes across a meadow. A little rabbit scurried across the winding road.

Eleanor laid her hand on her husband's knee. "I complained over a bit of scratched wood that can be replaced; over flecks of paint, invisible to every eye but mine, on the walls at home. And she—she is watching him die, every day, hoping that he will live long enough to see his baby. I—I'm so ashamed, John, and sorry."

"She's a brave girl," he said. "The boy contracted T. B. during the war. Of course he ought not to have married. It's rushing him away. But he loved her."

"I'm never going to burden you with little household worries again. I'm going to count my blessings every day as one says a rosary," said the woman, contritely. "I'm going to learn, like you, to substitute service for self."

Motor speeding in Greece is stopped by the ingenious method of traffic police throwing a plank studded with spikes in front of the fast-approaching car.

## Children's Teeth

**THE** time to begin caring for the teeth is in childhood. One of a parent's first duties is to take a child to a good dentist early and have the teeth examined.

In this way irregularities can be treated, and the child saved from permanent disfigurement. Protruding teeth, "squirrel" teeth, irregular teeth, impacted teeth and other conditions that often occur should be corrected in childhood, and the child saved the permanent embarrassment of what is often called "an ugly mouth."

The "baby" teeth need watching, for the permanent teeth are influenced and affected by those which come first. It is a mistake to think "baby" teeth are of little importance. Neglect in childhood often means the loss of the second teeth in middle life.

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