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THE BEST WIFE IN THE WORLD.

"The best little wife in the world!" said Herbert Ainscourt.

"Of course—I dare say," responded Mr. Porters. "But what's your exact idea of the best wife in the world? Jones says he's got the best wife in the world because she keeps his stockings darned, takes him to church three times a Sunday, and never lets him have an opinion of his own. Jenkins says he's got the best wife in the world because she keeps all the money, draws his salary for him, and makes him live in the back kitchen, because the parlor is too good for the family to use."

"Oh! but Daisy isn't a bit greivous—little submissive, self-sacrificing thing that hasn't an idea except which is reflected from me. I tell you what, old fellow, I'm the master of my own house; I come when I please. Daisy never ventures on a word of reproach."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself, larking around at the clubs as you do, dissipated bachelor fashion."

"Ashamed! What of it?"

"Why, I suppose you owe some duties to your wife."

"Where's the harm? My wife doesn't care."

"Probably you think so because she is quiet and submissive; but if she were to object—"

"Object! I'd like to hear her try it."

"Now look here, Ainscourt, your wife may be a model wife, but you certainly are not a model husband. People are beginning to talk about the way you neglect that pretty little blue-eyed girl."

"I'll thank people to mind their own business. Neglect her, indeed! Why man, I love her as I love my own soul."

"Then why don't you treat her as if you did?"

"Oh! come, Porters; that question just shows what a regular old bachelor you are. It won't do to make too much of your wife unless you want to spoil her."

Mr. Porters shook his head.

"That sounds fishy. I don't like the ring of the metal."

And he went away leaving Mr. Ainscourt to finish his game of billiards at his leisure.

"What a regular old fish-bug Porters is!" laughed the latter. "Always poking his nose into somebody else's business. There's one comfort—I never pay any attention to what he says."

Meanwhile Mrs. Ainscourt was waiting alone in her drawing room, her two little white hands tightly locked in one another, and her fair head slightly drooping—dear little apple-blossom of a woman, with blue wistful eyes and curly flaxen hair, looking more like a grown-up child than a wife of twenty-one summers.

"O dear!" sighed Daisy, "it is so dull here. I wish Herbert would come home. He never spends any time with me now—days, and I practice all his favorite songs, and read the newspapers, and I can talk about the things he is interested in, and try so hard to be entertaining. It's very strange."

And then her oval face brightened into a sudden brilliance, and the sparkles stole into her eyes; for the wife's quick ear had detected her husband's footsteps on the stairs. The next moment he came in.

"Well, pet, how are you?" with a playful pinch of the cheek. "There are some bon-bons for you. Where are my light gloves?"

"O, Herbert! you are not going away again?"

"I must, Daisy. There are a lot of fellows going to drive up to High Bridge and I'm one of the party. You can go over to my mother's to dinner, or send for one of your friends, or something—There, good bye, puss; I'm in a deuce of a hurry."

And with one careless kiss pressed on the quivering damask rose of a mouth that was lifted up to him, he was gone. Daisy Ainscourt neither went to her mother-in-law, nor sent for one of her girl friends. She spent the evening all alone, pondering on the shadow that was fast overgrowing her life.

"What shall I do?" thought the little timid, shrinking wife. "Oh, what shall I do?"

But child as she was, Daisy had a strong, resolute, woman's heart within her, nor was she long in coming to a decision.

"Daisy," said her husband to her the next day, "you have any objections to my attending the Orion Ball Masque?"

"Are masked balls nice places, Herbert?"

"O, yes, everybody goes; but I thought I'd show you the compliment of asking whether you disapproved of it or not?"

"Can I go with you?"

"Well, ahem—not very well, this time, Daisy. You see, Mrs. Fenshurch really hinted so strongly for me to take her that I couldn't help it."

"Very well," assented Daisy meekly, and Herbert repeated within himself the pain of praises he had chanted in Mr. Porters' ears: "The best little wife in the world!"

But notwithstanding all this, Mr. Ainscourt was not exactly pleased when at the self-same Ball Masque, during the appearance of unmasking, he saw his wife's innocent face crowning the picturesque costume of a Harvarian peasant girl.

"Hallo!" he ejaculated, rather ungraciously, "you here?"

"Yes," laughed Daisy, with a girlish smile. "You said 'verybody went.' And oh, Herbert, isn't it nice?"

Mr. Ainscourt said nothing more, but Mrs. Fenshurch found him a very stupid companion for the remainder of the evening.

He was late at dinner the next day, but as late as he found himself more peculiar than his wife, and the solitary meal was half over before Mrs. Daisy tripped in, her easel case trailing over her shoulders, and her dimpled cheeks all pink with the fresh wind.

"Am I behind time? Really I'm so sorry? But we have been driving in the park, and—"

"Well! Who are we?" growled her husband.

"Why Col. Blair and—the Colonel Adair that you got out with so much."

"Now look here, Daisy!" ejaculated Mr. Ainscourt, rising from the table and pushing back his chair: "Adair isn't exactly the man I want you to drive with."

"But you go everywhere with him."

"I dare say—but you and I are two different persons."

"Now, dear Herbert," interposed Daisy, mildly, "I'm a bit proud, and the associates that are good enough for my husband are good enough for me. Let me give you a few more oysters."

Ainscourt looked sharply at his wife. Was she really in earnest, or was there a mocking undercurrent of satire in her tone? But he could not decide, so artless was her countenance.

"I'll talk to her about it sometime," was his internal decision.

"Daisy," he said carelessly, when dinner was over, "I've asked old Miss Barbory to come, and spend the day with you to-morrow."

"Oh, have you? I'm sorry, for I am engaged to to-morrow."

"You! Where?"

"Oh, at D. H. H. I've joined a Woman's Rights Club, and we must be there to organize."

"The deuce take woman's rights," ejaculated the irate husband.

"Of course I don't believe in 'em, but it's the fashion to belong to a club, and such a nice place to go to evenings. I shall all here of evenings, Herbert."

Herbert's heart smote him, but he answered resolutely: "I beg you will give up this ridiculous idea. What do women want with clubs?"

"What men do I suppose?"

"But I don't approve of it at all."

"You belong to three clubs, Herbert."

"That's altogether a different matter."

"But why is it different, Herbert?"

"Hem—why? Because—of course any body can see why—it's self-evident."

"I must be very blind," said Mrs. Ainscourt, demurely, "but I confess I can not discriminate the essential difference."

Herbert Ainscourt said no more, but he did not at all relish the change that had lately come over the spirit of Daisy's dream.

She did change, somehow. She went out driving, here, there, and everywhere. He never knew when he was certain of a quiet evening with her; she joined not only the club, but innumerable societies for a thousand and one purposes which took her away from home almost continually. And Mr. Ainscourt chafed against the bit, but it was useless, Daisy always had an excuse to plead.

Presently her mother-in-law bore down upon her—an austere old lady in black satin and a chestnut brown wig.

"Daisy, you are making my son wretched."

"Am I?" cried Daisy. "Dear me, I hadn't an idea of it! What is the trouble?"

"You must ask him," said the mother-in-law, who believed—sensible old lady—in young married people settling their own difficulties. "All I know it is the bare fact."

So Daisy went home to the drawing room, where Herbert lay on the sofa brooding to read, but in reality brooding over her troubles.

"What's the matter, Herbert?" said Daisy, kneeling on the floor beside him, and putting her soft, cool hand on his fevered brow.

"The matter? Nothing much, only I am miserable," he sullenly asserted.

"But why?" she persisted.

"Because you are changed, Daisy."

"How am I changed?"

"You are never at home; you have lost the domesticity which was in my eyes, your greatest charm. I never have you to myself any more. Daisy, don't you see how it is embittering my life?"

"Does it make you unhappy?" Daisy asked, softly.

"You know that it does, Daisy."

"And do you suppose I liked it, Herbert?"

"What do you mean," he asked.

"I mean that I passed the first year of my married life in just such a lonesome way. You had no domesticity. Clubs, drives, billiard playing, and champagne suppers engrossed your whole time. I, your wife, pined at home alone."

"But why didn't you tell me you were unhappy?"

"Because you would have laughed at the idea, and called it a woman's whim. I resolved, when we were first married, to suffer neither time nor breath in ill-complaints. I have not complained. I have simply followed your example. If it was not a good one whose fault was that? Not mine, surely."

"No, Daisy, not yours," he assented.

"I don't like this kind of a life," went on Daisy. "It is a false excitement—a hollow diversions; but I persisted in it for the same reason, I suppose that you did—because it was the fashion. Now tell me, Herbert, whether you prefer a fashionable wife or Daisy?"

"Daisy a thousand times Daisy!"

"But Daisy can't get along with a theatrical-going, club-loving husband."

"Then she shall have a husband who finds his greatest happiness at his own hearthstone—whose wife is his dearest treasure—who has tried the experience of surface, and finds it unsatisfactory. Daisy, shall we begin our matrimonial career anew?"

And Daisy's whispered answer was—

"Yes."

"But what must you have thought of me all this time?" she asked him, after a little while.

"I know what I think now."

"And what is that?"

"I think," said Mr. Ainscourt, with emphasis, "that you are the best wife in the world."

THE OYSTER.—The oyster has a fixed abiding-place, and therefore cannot escape its enemies very well. It cannot move. Wherever the young animal falls there it has to live and grow, or there it must die and rot away. Hundreds of young oysters perish, as I may say, almost before they are born—that is, the spat may be swept away by a rough sea and fall on a place so thoroughly uncongenial to its growth that the young ones all perish. As is now pretty well known to even the general reader, the oyster emits its spat in the warm Summer months, at a hot temperature and a moist condition of the atmosphere being thought—but, as some think erroneously—to be the most suitable conditions for securing a large spat.

As has been said, the oyster is an hermaphrodite, and each individual yields a large quantity of spat, quantity in the best season, as the annual goes on brooding and exuding this matter, which naturalists call spat, for many successive days. It looks like melted tallow, and is about the consistency of cream. Whether the spat be the young of the oyster is a disputed fact, but the substance certainly contains the infant animal, which, as seen by the aid of a good microscope, appears wonderfully perfect.

The spat, or fatty substance, is said to rise upon emission to the surface of the water, and to float about for several days, or, as some say, only for a few hours; then it falls to the bottom, and whether or not a crop of oysters be obtained, depends entirely on the condition of that fall; if the spat all on a muddy bottom, then the young animals are drowned in mud and lost. If, on the contrary, the spat falls on a rocky or shelly bottom, then a great crop will undoubtedly be the result, because that is just one of the proper conditions for insuring the growth of these animals. A spat, it is obvious, may be tossed hither and thither by the waves, and ultimately become lost. An oyster bed throws off a greater or lesser supply of spat every year, but none of it may, for the reasons given above, be utilized.

A TORCHING STORY.—The other day, in the afternoon, before dinner, about the time people were going to bed, a small boy 30 years of age, the only daughter of an old maid, who lives opposite the post office, on the same side of the way, but does not live there now, was alarmed by hearing a dumb man crying murder, while being beaten by a man who had no arms, and a blind man was seen creeping through the blinds at them. A few minutes after, another excitement was raised by a man with no legs kicking a boy through a stone wall, slightly killing two dead pigs, which the he had hatched two days after.

A man, tried in Boston for stealing a horse and wagon, being called upon to speak for himself, said, "I have nothing to say in particular. The fact is, when I get half or two-thirds drunk I think everything belongs to me." There are some very sly people who act as if they think just as this man does when he is drunk.

"Have some dumplings, sir," "No, sir, thank you," was the reply; "but I will thank you for a little more that 'ere tart."

AND SHORT STORIES.

ON LITERARY AND SOCIAL TOPICS; STORIES OF TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE; CURIOSITIES UPON ART, BOOKS, AND KINDRED THINGS.

Upon all the various subjects that pertain to the pursuits and recreations of the people, whether of town or country, we are our foremost posts.

A distinctive feature will be a fuller treatment of science than is prevalent in popular journals. In this branch the Publishers secured the services of the ablest and most authoritative thinkers, men who combine large and accurate knowledge with the power of clear and impressive language. Education, in its various branches, and the public schools, will receive the consideration to which it is undoubtedly entitled.

Illustrations will form an important feature in the plan of the Journal. Nearly every number will be accompanied by either a

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After parting with him, I would my way to the hotel which was cleared a little off from the busy thoroughfare. It was a large building, and had a very old and dingy appearance, and, in fact, did not look very inviting to the traveler, but as I expected to remain only a short time, I concluded to accept the accommodations, as they were much cheaper than could be found elsewhere.

I entered the bar-room, and after registering my name and eating a little supper, I