

have come to call me for an early vote on Ship Subsidy." And the last words came to me over flying coat tails, as he strode down the corridor.

You know, Etta, I have never been the sort of wife who twitters about her husband, pecking at his coat lapels until one feels the hopping upon his shoulder to be a matter of imminent demonstration. Still, I did feel that to take hold of Amos's dear big hand just now would help a lot. The stretch of corridor between us seemed horribly symbolic of widening rift in the peace of our heart life. So, although the public spots of the Capitol might not appeal to anyone short of a George Bernard Shaw as appropriate background for a domestic Waterloo, I flew as if my soul depended on the charge to where Amos's broad shoulders momentarily blocked the progress of fifteen or twenty star gazing tourists passing out of Statuary Hall.

Amos plowed his way through as if he'd been a flying wedge from a football team breaking through a row of cornstalks; but, though I "honk-honked" and spluttered, they refused to play the part of sheep for me. And when I did finally get into the hall I found that Amos, instead of going straight across, had changed his course, following the rim of statues, and as I looked he stepped behind the severe lines of Frances Willard's bronze dignity and disappeared. For a moment I swept my eyes suspiciously round the circle of immutably attitudinizing greatness, wondering whether each of these heroic poses concealed some devious way.

You see, Statuary Hall was the original House of Representatives chamber, and there's a mysterious sense of the presence of those old fellows now enjoying the beautifying perspective of historical romance, and if you are a very foolish woman with a sore heart, you feel, in spite of the rush of messengers, the constant transit of very much alive Congressmen and Senators across the center path, and the everlasting squads of tourists slouching wearily behind clarion voiced guides, that the day of trap doors and underground duels and missing men could be easily revived here.

I felt I must find Amos. Then a guide, pointing with his stick (all Capitol guides have canes from that identical Mount Vernon tree) to the metal star in the floor which marks the place where once stood the desk of John Quincy Adams, exclaimed dramatically:

"Here the noble statesman, Adams, fell!" and a woman in his audience scanned the smooth domed ceiling and demanded with a practical, stewed prunes voice:

"Where'd he fall from, I'd like to know?"

I HEARD a laugh as catching as the measles, and came to into my modern surroundings as my hand was grasped by a Congressman whom Mr. Teale refers to with real affection in his voice as "Bishop, the highest liver and the best old good for nothing in the House." He is unfortunate in his appearance, because he's absolutely bald, and his figure suggests the contour of the unfeathered little birds that fall out of the nests in the spring. But life seems to spread out before him like a daisy field, and he never feels a bit impelled to investigate as to whether a daisy has an appendix or not. This unanalytical kind can be a great comfort and relief at times, I tell you, Etta!

"You look, Mrs. Rural, as if you'd been waiting twenty minutes for a trolley, and your husband was a stockholder, and you couldn't kick," he said.

"I'd be willing to lose a car; but it's the husband himself that's lost now," I replied, looking reproachfully into the chaste lines of Miss Willard-in-Bronze's face.

"And you came in here thinking to find him on a pedestal?" The Congressman laughed. "Well, he's coming on in a discouraging way to us old duffers who have lost our hair through years of sequestration under this mushroom roofed temple of fame. But why worry about a husband? Why, of course I'm a bachelor; but when I present my annual Sundry Civil budget for the Appropriations Committee, I feel it is pretty near and pretty much a part of me; yet when some fellows get up and chew it, clause by clause, into gun waste to swab out their own weapons, and then cast it aside, do you think I let it worry me? Not at all. I go home, away out to my lodgings, and brush up, and then all the way down to the hotel where I dine I think of all the things I am going to eat, and all the way back I think of how good all those things tasted, and I forget all about the Sundry Civil bill. It's a good receipt, Mrs. Rural."

"Maybe, only one's ancestors must have been awfully good to one to render it possible," I said. "I have a weight of inherited tendencies round my neck, which would make me worry all the way about what I could get cheapest, and whether it would agree with me, and all the way back torture me with regret that I had not been more economical, and I should require soda mints and hot water before morning. Besides, 'Sundry Civil' has a terribly

plural, unsanctified sound as an analogy to one's husband," I was cheered enough to venture.

"Well, when did this singular and canonized husband disappear?" he asked.

"Just a few minutes ago,—in behind the figures," I said, waving my hand vaguely in Miss Willard's direction.

"Aha! Let me see," he meditated, putting a forefinger to his head as authors have themselves photographed, "this is not a waxworks show; so said party could not have gone behind to wind the 'figgers' up. But I have a clue. Follow me!" he finished in a stage whisper.

And when we came upon a door behind the statues, he appeared as surprised as I was. Then he gave vent to his self appreciative chuckles. "Something tells me that this is the den of the jovial clerk of the House, and that here are dispensed tonics the formulae of which do not appear on Miss Willard's memorial tablet. In perpetuation of the first man's defense, I suppose, a woman's skirts do hide man's devious ways." He tried to throw compassion into his backward glance at Miss Willard.

BUT Amos—"I began; and behold it was the 'Open Sesame,' for Amos appeared in the doorway, a pill box, not a dagger, in his hand.

"Why, Beulah, I thought you had gone," Amos rather accused me.

"She thought you had gone for good," broke in the incorrigible Congressman.

"I stopped to get the Major to give me some quinine capsules," explained literal Amos Rural.

"Do you mean, Rural, you were foolish enough to be explicit in your demand on that dispensary? You should have staggered in, hand pressed to brow, and asked for the Major's best remedy. Then you would have been presented with some 'medicine' the pure food law can't impeach. You probably took time to explain your symptoms, and now the Lord knows what you're about to afflict your system with. I wouldn't abuse my works that way!"

Amos gave attention to all this scrambled comment from the little fat Brownie man, and nodded his head in humble acquiescence; but at the end he leaned over and, running his palm over the convex outline of the high living waistcoat, said longingly, "Ah, friend Bishop, if I only had what that cost you!"

I bounced like a rubber ball, expecting at least the spontaneous combustion of one Congressman; but instead the chuckle welled up as naturally as a periodic geyser.

"Oh, well, I wouldn't have your lean and hungry look for a good deal. But that's the way he side-tracks our eloquence on the floor, Mrs. Rural. We



The President Stood with Bared Head as the Cortège Went By.

descendants of Demosthenes get up and start a fine train of metaphor, and the first thing we know Rural turns a switching question on, and there we are in a siding, with our noses against a cold ledge of facts. My only hope is that his smartness will lead him into being a real railroad president some day, and then— Oh, the lot of a pup in an East Side alley is sybaritic compared to the life of a railroad magnate in this administration. So keep him a Congressman, Mrs. Rural, or at any rate keep him—don't lose him, again." And he rolled away with the rollicking gait of a hobbyhorse.

Amos pulled out his watch. I felt that opportunity held the door only on a crack for me, so I knocked hard.

"Please, dear, don't go away to-night!" I begged explosively.

"Why, my child, I thought you came up here to help Teale kidnap me." He smiled as indulgently



I Did Things Perfect Ladies Don't Do Under Excitement.

as if I was an inmate of the acute mania ward and he the visiting physician.

"But, Amos, you're sick." I made a feeble attempt to cloak my petition.

"Not a bit. It's the time when everybody from Hopeville guards against 'fever and ager,'" he protested.

We were walking out of Statuary Hall by this time, and the door of the House with its swarm of waiting card senders and passing Congressman loomed like an anthill mouth beyond. I felt as ineffectual as a Hague conference.

A dapper little man with ears that made him look like a wing-and-wing rigged dory came sailing by. He caught Amos's sleeve and whispered, "They tell me you're slated for the blessed Todd's toga."

"Haven't been notified to that effect yet, Senator," replied Amos.

"Well, give out an interview saying you don't want it. Decline an office before it's been offered to you, and you strengthen the impression of your availability for it." And with a good fellowship nudge he passed on.

Everybody, it seemed, knew more of Amos's affairs than I did. Well, I had better go home before my eyes got red. But I did get hold of Amos's hand to shake in parting. Then I went out the Senate end and took a car. At least I would not share my emotions, nor even an electric brougham, with anyone else!

Once back in the hotel I went about heavily heartedly putting Amos's socks and things in his bag; but I tried to stir my vapid pulse beats by spreading out on my bed the new gray tailor gown I was to wear making Cabinet calls that afternoon, Mrs. Todd having insisted that I attend to this important duty of a new Congressman's wife.

SO, with the fussing to look my best, and saying good by to Amos and Mr. Teale, and everything I was quite excited, and had that momentous sort of feeling that something was going to happen. Still, sometimes it's just because you haven't eaten enough, and my first Cabinet hostess certainly was not calculated to justify nervous tension. She was receiving in the great big ball room of the biggest hotel here, and although she might have been of reasonably normal size when the Secretary married her, she seemed to have had a lining of pure wool which shrunk rapidly, and at present she looks like the hickorynut faces we used to put on pen wipers. She was telling everybody that her husband was playing tennis with the President, and that they had been at college together. I heard her say this five times as I was approaching and passing in her line of guests; but only one woman made any reply at all, and she said, "How nice!" absent-mindedly, after she was three feet beyond the affable little hostess.

In fact, Etta, listening is an abandoned art in this traditional Wednesday afternoon hospitality of the Cabinet homes. The people come sailing in,—generally the Congressman's wives go about in bunches, like schools of fish,—and each one makes a snatch at the opportunity of a handshake to explain the weather or her husband's conception of Mr. Secretary's greatness, and the hostess makes a totally irrelevant rejoinder, as the unheeding guest goes her way in envious meditation as to whether this style is possible on a Cabinet officer's salary.

I was thinking of this when I reached Secretary Gaylord's drawing room and found myself in the wake of a dozen of the tourist type who delivered some branch of the family tree as their individual passport to this "open house" invasion. One had an uncle who had married the Secretary's cousin, once removed; another's husband had been born