HUMANS

BY THREE MEMBERS OF THE RACE

Illustrations by a Fourth

TALES OF A JEALOUS WIFE

XVI.—The Dove of Peace Hovers Over Blightville

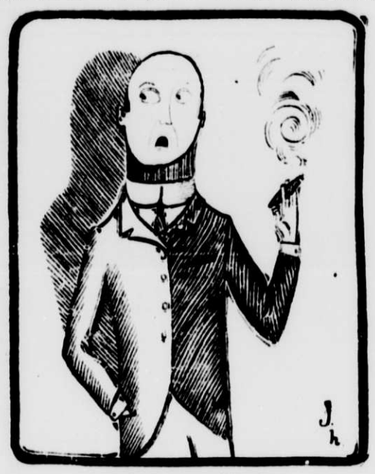
By THOMAS L. MASSON.

(Synopsis of previous chapters: Harold Peasely rescues the beautiful Miss Mildred Bagnett, belle of Blightville, from an auto accident and takes her home. He is discovered by his wife and her Aunt Jane coming out of the house. He explains that he has rescued Miss Bagnett for the sake of enlisting her powerful support as a guest at a reception Aunt Jane is planning in opposition to Mrs. Abercrombie Pelter, leader of Blightville society, who has also planned a reception for the same day. While Harold is talking Mr. Pelter is seen stealing up to the Bagnett house. Harold follows and sees him making love to Mildred, who scorns him and all other married men.)

HAROLD PEASELY stood transfixed with astonishment as the hard pillow from the lovely hand of Miss Mildred Bagnett descended upon Pelter's bald head. Then, concealing in his heart the awful sense of humiliation aroused by Miss Bagnett's scornful words—for it will be remembered that she had included him in her category of foolish husbands—he hurried off to join his wife and Aunt Jane, who were anxiously waiting for him. But on his way he saw the front door open and the discomfited Pelter hurriedly leave the house.

For a moment Harold stood there irresolute between two tragic possibilities. On the one hand he could go quietly back to Aunt Jane and his wife and discuss with them ways and means to get Mildred Bagnett to attend their reception. On the other hand there was Pelter.

Above all things Harold wanted quiet and peace and liberty to pursue his own tastes. This meant that his wife, Myrtle, must be so absorbed in some occupation that his occasional absences would not be noticed. He saw that with Aunt Jane arrayed against the Pelters a social suburban war would undoubtedly ensue and that class might be arrayed against class. This might involve him and his energies to such an extent that any liberty of action in the future might be very difficult to obtain. Just as he was about to steal away to the city he might be called upon to act as a scout or perform some prodigy of valor. He burned also with anxiety to get even with Miss Bagnett in the only manner worth while—by making her fall in love with him. He longed to turn her present scorn for married men



Pelter turned pale.

in general into a feeling of admiration for him in particular. Not that Harold was a bad man—he had not lived in the suburbs long enough to become thoroughly wicked—but he was a natural born flirt.

Suddenly a grand conception entered his mind. He would face Pelter. He hurried after that gentleman.

"Ha," he exclaimed. "So you've been up to something, eh? Just saw you coming out of yonder house. You are not the kind of man who calls on beautiful girls who have been injured in auto accidents without a purpose. What is the meaning of this?"

Pelter, who had not the remotest suspicion that Harold had seen him making love to Miss Bagnett and being trod upon like a human worm, smiled confidently.

"Ah, yes," he replied, "to be sure. Nice little girl, Mildred Bagnett. Some looker, eh? Awfully fond of me."

Harold grinned.

"I suppose," he replied, "that she prefers a gentleman of your vast wisdom and experience to these young unmarried dodging college boys who know nothing."

Pelter, startled for a moment by almost the very words he himself had just used to Mildred Bagnett, recovered himself instantly; he was too enamored of his own powers to suspect anything. Most married men, no matter how homely or ordinary they are, secretly cherish the idea that some woman outside of the family circle is desperately in love with them.

"Yes, yes," he replied, "I suppose that's it. You see, a charming young girl like that prefers maturity. I may say, however, that she was extremely grateful to you for having brought her home from that accident. She appreciated it greatly."

"Thanks, old chap," chuckled Harold. "These little encomiums from a handsome lady killer like you greatly cheer me up." Then, assuming an air of intense earnestness, he said:

"Look here, Pelter, do you realize everything?"

"What do you mean?"

"This. Pay strict attention, as it is highly important that we should understand each other. You are the most prominent citizen in Blightville and more important than any other man here except the man who takes care of my lawn and furnace; the happiness and comfort of more people depend on that man than on any other single individual I know; but you probably come next, and your wife is the social leader.

"Now my Aunt Jane, who has Von Tirpitz and Bismarck beaten to a frazzle, is going to give a reception on the same day your wife has chosen for hers, and she has everything arranged to beat Mrs. Pelter out. Present indications are that the battle of the Marne will be a Sunday school picnic compared to the meeting of these two opposing civilizations in the social atmosphere of Blightville.

"My aunt, as you may know if you read the local papers, is the only original Colonial Dame and has a line of ancestors that would make King George and Queen Mary green with envy. The crisis of this whole affair, your whole future and mine and that of Blightville generally, depends upon Miss Mildred Bagnett, who, as you also know, is the leader of the younger set.

"If she consents to come to our reception with her trained band of college graduates and tango-fists, the name of Pelter will be about as familiar as that of Rameses the Second. If she consents to attend your wife's reception you will still be the leaders, and Aunt Jane will permit no act, word or deed to escape her in venting her feelings."

Pelter laughed.

"It doesn't concern me," he said lightly, "whether we are leaders or not. I am not interested in the social life of Blightville. My wife runs that."

"Ah! That shows how blind you are. Don't you see that if your wife is beaten and has to retire, she will then be forced to turn away from society and seek consolation in other quarters? Think of what that means to you. You will have to spend your time with her."

Pelter turned pale.

"Do you mean that?" he muttered.

Harold pursued his advantage.

"Mean it!" he exclaimed. "Why, my dear fellow, it is inevitable. That is the ultimate fate of the husbands of all suburban society leaders, unless they adopt adequate means of defence beforehand. Your wife will insist upon your going to church with her, for they almost always turn to religion when society fails. During the long winter evenings, you will have to sit up and read aloud to her; you will even have to play golf with her."

Pelter groaned.

"This is awful!" he muttered. "I was blind to the future. Now I see it all. We must win. I must secure Miss Bagnett at once for our party. This is a case of life or death. But," he added wildly, "why do you tell me all this? It is to your interest——"

Harold smiled.

"My dear fellow," he said, "don't you see what

Taking her afternoon exercise.

I am driving at? There is only one way out of this difficulty for us if we both desire to be free. If you and I are to continue our little trips to town in search of the United States army, or for other moral reasons, if we are to go fishing together occasionally and in fact live the lives of free men, we must have these women join forces."

"Join forces!"

"Certainly. Peace must be declared between them at once. There must be an immediate reconciliation between Mrs. Pelter and Aunt Jane. We must be the humble instruments of an all ruling Providence and bring them together. Instead of two receptions there must be one."

"But who is to have precedence? How can you solve that problem?"

"Ah! I admit there are obstacles, but that should not deter brave men, convinced of the justice of their cause. Let us not cross that bridge yet. Let us go back to where my wife and Aunt Jane are waiting for me and put it up to them. Tell them that Miss Bagnett will stand by your wife and go to her reception and then suggest that as you are a man of peace it may be possible to effect a compromise. When Aunt Jane sees that Miss Bagnett has gone over to the enemy, she will think twice before mobilizing any further."

"I'll do it!" Pelter, in fact, was now ready to do anything. The prospect of reading aloud to his wife in winter and playing golf with her in summer was too much.

Harold escorted him rapidly down the road.

"You see," he continued, "my wife will be so much occupied and delighted with her social duties that she will be in the same class with Mrs. Pelter, and this will give me my freedom."

"I see it all," said Pelter.

At last, just as they came to the Peasely home in Laurel place, they caught up with Aunt Jane and Myrtle.

"Here is Mr. Pelter," said Harold breathlessly. "He has something important to communicate."

"Won't you come in?" said Myrtle.

They all filed into the house and, sitting down, faced each other solemnly. Pelter beamed upon Aunt Jane.

"My dear friend," he said, "I have just had a most delightful interview with Miss Bagnett. I was sent there by my wife to ask that wonderfully beautiful girl how she was after the accident, and incidentally she said that she would be pleased to attend the reception that my wife is to give on the 27th."

Aunt Jane fixed him with her eye.

"How am I to know that you are telling the truth?" she asked. "I have been informed by reliable people that you never had in a correct golf score."

Pelter bowed.

"That, madam," he replied, "is no reflection upon my character. No man who has lived in the suburbs for two years ever does hand in a correct golf score. Miss Bagnett is an old friend. She is coming to my wife's reception. You can absolutely bank on that statement."

"Why should you come here to tell me this?"

"Simply because, as a man and a Christian, I abhor war in any form, and it has occurred to me that it would be better if we could all get together and have one reception instead of two on the same day. It is along the line of greatest efficiency, besides it means harmony to all."

"Can you persuade your wife to do this?"

"I couldn't persuade my wife to do anything that she didn't want to do; she is an American woman. But I can put it to her in such a way that she will see the advantage in combination. I can tell her, what she already knows, that you have engaged all the material forces, such as taxicabs and caterers, and that your position as the only original Colonial Dame in Blightville will draw a great crowd away from her; she knows all that too well, and I think she will be glad to make up."

Aunt Jane sternly folded her arms.

"It must be thoroughly understood," she said, "that the advances do not come from our side. We are ready to keep on to the bitter end."

"On the contrary," said Pelter, "I am the guilty man. I will bear the full responsibility. Whatever humiliation comes, I will carry it. It shall be my humble province to act as mediator. What I seek is the eternal harmonies. It is all for Blightville."

While he spoke Aunt Jane's eyes grew soft. She gazed upon him almost tenderly.

"My dear friend," she said, "I am glad at last to meet one man who has no ulterior motive, and who displays such a noble spirit of self-sacrifice. Go to your wife. Our honor is in your hands. We are proud. We will arbitrate but not yield. I trust you."

Mrs. Abercrombie Pelter, all unconscious of the approaching crisis, was at that moment calmly taking her afternoon exercise, which consisted of rolling up and down the floor thirty times.

Harold took Myrtle aside.

"Wonder of wonders!" he whispered. "Who could have believed it? Still they are opposites. She is granite. He is soft and yielding like some of the armor plate furnished to the Government."

"What do you mean?" asked Myrtle.

"I mean that Aunt Jane is falling in love with Pelter."

(To be concluded.)

THE WEEK IN RHYME

By DANA BURNET.

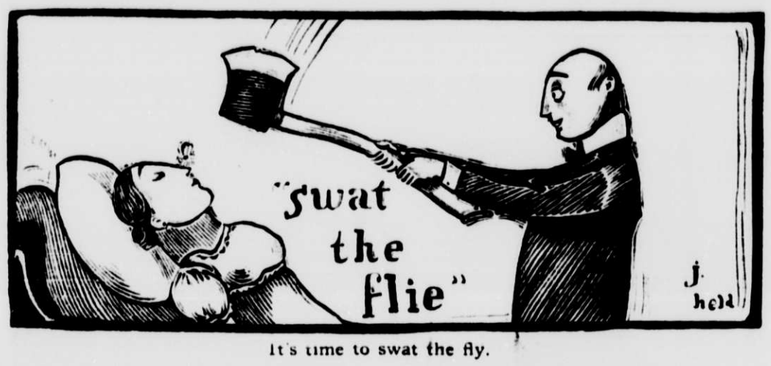
THE House of Representatives
Fulfilled its avocation
By adding new unwisdoms to
The folly of the nation.
One troop of cavalry is left
To guard us from disaster.
But Chairman Hay
Feels no dismay—
He should have been a pastor.

A pleasant Baby Week was had
In this enlightened section
Yet some folks say that poodle dogs
Are first in our affection!
A farmer's wife hath sued her lord
Because he sent her love notes.
Sir Lansing and
The German band
Are now exchanging dove notes.

Straw hats are now in season.

'Tis rumored that the G. O. P.
Will try to snub the Colonel,
For details of the casualties
See this attentive journal.
The bandits of the Rio Grande
Have struck for higher wages
They will not raid
While underpaid—
And how the peace talk rages!

Our modern universities
Are done with Greek and Latin.
We dare not guess what tongue they'll teach
In Newark and Manhattan.
Indeed, if Wilhelm had his way
We'd all be speaking German—
Straw hats they say
Are now au fait—
And some one saw a merman.



It's time to swat the fly.

Sir Woodrow tossed his pen aside
And motored to the circus.
We hear Japan has formed a plan
To lay in wait, and dirk us!
Nine college seniors told the world
They disapproved of kissing.
'Tis said the Czar
Likes caviar—
And Mexico is hissing.

Unexpurgated bathing suits
Will not be worn this season,
Which gives the ordinary girl
A chance to show her reason.
Spring fever dominates our rhymes—
We scarce can move to write 'em,
The well known fly
Must shortly die—
And so ad infinitum.

CONFESSIONS OF A MAN WHO DOESN'T OWN A DOG

By BURGES JOHNSON.

JOSH BILLINGS wrote: "There is no man so poor but what he can afford to keep one dog. And I have seen them so poor that they could afford to keep three."

I myself have owned as many as four, but I have owned them one at a time. True, there have been still other dogs that I did not really own which undoubtedly believed that they belonged to me; scrawny, motheaten pups, that established residence on my door mat and followed me at safe distances, wagging propitiating tails.

But it happens that now I do not own any dog. How long this condition may last I cannot say. But during its continuance I possess an oddly critical attitude of mind toward those that do.

I cannot understand, for instance, why my neighbors let their snappy pet live a day longer. Some time he will spoil a friendship, and what is a mere pup compared to a friendly bond between human beings?

I can vaguely remember that once when a dog of mine bit a small piece out of an acquaintance I felt myself deeply incensed against that man. I felt that if the facts were fully known it would be discovered that he had goaded my dog wholly beyond the patient creature's endurance, or that he had unduly tempted it just before

So poor he could afford to keep three.

meal time. In any case it was not the dog's fault.

But now I see things more clearly; that shivering little canine spider next door snapped at me and I am confident it is the dog's judgment and not my personality that is at fault.

"You've no idea how bright Toto is!" says its owner with gushing enthusiasm. "Why, only the other day we shut her out by mistake, and, would you believe it, she stood up on her hind legs so that her front paws just reached the window sill and she put her little sweetness black nose against the pane and called to us! Now wasn't that bright? Yes, oh, as clever as real folks, isn't oo, Toto precious?"

Aside from the fact that Toto once snapped at me and that she looks like a large boiled rat with the St. Vitus dance I wish to testify under oath that I have seen her waltz into an overturned wastepaper basket and whine to be let out at the bottom because she didn't know enough to turn around and get out the way she went in.

Yes, there were times, I admit, and they may come again, when I buttonholed acquaintances and related instance after instance to prove my dog's intelligence. Yet I like to recall in my own defence that whenever I did own a dog it was a whole one. I was no homeopathist as a dog fancier.

I seem to have acquired in these days a distaste for certain demonstrations of canine affection.

"Why Rover jumped right up and kissed you!" and Rover's owner looks at me admiringly and a bit thoughtfully too, as though discovering in me for the first time qualities she had not hitherto suspected.

I should think he did kiss me. No one knows better than I what a thorough job it was. Heaven help me to feign pleasure or even indifference until I can get to soap and water.

I can remember that once I encouraged my dog to dig. It amused me to pretend I was burying a bone until I had persuaded him to take up the task. But now I see the matter differently.

"Just watch Scotty dig!—isn't he wonderful?"

"But," I protest feebly, "those are my radishes."

"Ah, but the poor dear has so few opportunities. Come here, Scotty. Come right here! He doesn't mind very well to-day, but usually it's just wonderful the way he minds!"

What is the matter with me? In these disillusioned days a dog is no more than a dog—except in certain cases when he is much less. Ah me, I perceive that I must acquire another great Dane. He at least compels honesty.

If he digs a garden I cannot say, "Perhaps the cat did it." A shell from a 13-meter gun

Bit a small piece out of an acquaintance.

might have done it, but not a cat. If he kisses me on the cheek I either like it or I don't. There can be no such thing as indifference. Yes, I am suffering from a mild attack of dogophobia. Only the possession of a whole dog will cure me.

BRIDGE.

BRIDGE is an occupation that people indulge in in order not to see too much of each other.

American wives are popularly supposed, when they are not engaged in the occupation of exceeding their husbands' income, to be spending the rest of their hours in playing bridge.

There can be no doubt that bridge has been very beneficial to women inclined to talk too much—that is to say, in this respect it has probably helped all women a good deal. One cannot talk and play bridge successfully to the honor score.

One thing is certain: women in this country can play bridge and they can play it to win. Not all women can play bridge, but those that can play do so very well. And it is a singular thing that the short, stout, vivacious blonde, whom you wouldn't suspect of having the rudiments of any reasoning power, is always the one who can tell what card has been played at a critical moment three hands back; or who, while smiling sweetly and apparently thinking of anything else, carries off a no trumper and makes a little slam, while conversely the tall, dark, silent, morose and deep eyed lady highbrow, with the manner of a Herbert Spencer, is the very one who is most likely to trump her partner's ace or to revoke.

The difference between the playing of a man and a woman at bridge lies principally in their attitude toward the rules. A woman rarely gets beyond the rules; consequently her game does not improve beyond a certain point. Men, however, are pretty likely to disregard the rules upon occasions when they can save the game.

Timid bridge players are apt to make very good wives; it argues for a certain domesticity in tastes in a woman when she displays inability in carrying combinations of cards in her head, whereas the finished woman bridge player, who at the end of the game folds your hundred dollar bill and sticks it in her belt nonchalantly, may prove to be the kind of person who is willing to change husbands upon the slightest provocation.

As to the men, bridge is a very fair gauge of their temperaments and characters. The pompous middle aged and autocratic gentleman of explosive tendencies, who criticises your play violently, is in reality giving himself away. He is the sort of man who irritates, as a rule, upon his appearance. He doesn't stop to consider the fact that the best bridge player never would think of criticising even a bad partner, for the reason that bad play may be any suggestion that you are criticising him will naturally only make him worse.

On the whole bridge is a benefit to average human beings; it keeps them more or less silent when they would probably be talking about things of which they know nothing. And it is a kind of mild cold tea that bears the same relation to high ethics that smoking does to dipsomania.

OUR STORY.

"I LOVE you."

These words rang out in the lovely moonlight as Bertram Quixodeep, the long lost nephew, clasped to his honest sailor breast the lovely form of Mabel Longblossom. He had just just returned from the Philippines, where he had been captured by a band of savage American politicians and given up for dead.

"Tell me, my own, how did you escape after these weary years of waiting?" she asked.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Twenty-fifth column of our advertising department. Page 1801.

THE FABLE OF THE NEAR PATRIOT—Drawn by john held