

Any One Too Old to Enjoy a Woolly Lamb for Christmas Is Too Old to Be in the Game

# The Call's Magazine and Fiction Page

## THEIR MARRIED LIFE

For the First Time Since Their Marriage Warren Gives Helen a Real Christmas Gift

By MABEL HARRIET URNER

"AND I didn't give her a thing!" Helen took the scented, hand embroidered glove case from its tissue paper wrappings and looked at it disconsolately. To find on Christmas morning that some one to whom you have sent nothing has remembered you with an expensive gift is, to say the least, disconcerting.

"Look, dear," insistently, for Warren, who was going over some cards and letters, had not troubled to glance up. "It's an expensive one, too! Is it too late to send something? Lots of the Christmas mail won't be delivered until tomorrow anyway! She wouldn't know, would she, that I sent it after I received hers?"

"What's that?" he demanded, encrossed in a letter.

"Patiently Helen repeated her question.

"Well, if you didn't care enough about the woman to give her something in the first place, why do it now?"

"But don't you see, she thought I would, or she wouldn't have sent this."

"Uh-h," contemptuously. "Well, you can't get anything. No stores open today."

**WARREN IS CRUEL.** "Oh, I've got plenty of things right here! That lace collar and cuff set Mrs. Dalton sent yesterday. It's real lace, too, and I'll never wear it. I'll send her that!"

By George, you're about as small as they make 'em. You've got the rottenest ideas of gifts of anybody I ever knew."

"But, dear," flushed Helen, "that isn't wrong! Mrs. Dalton wants me to get as much pleasure as I can out of her gift, doesn't she? And if it gives me more pleasure to give it to Mrs. Barclay than to keep it myself, isn't that all right?"

But Warren's disgust for this logic was too profound for expression.

"You breakfast'll get cold, ma'am," ventured Nora, as for the third time she suggestively passed the toast.

The mail had come just as they were sitting down, and Helen had not yet touched her breakfast. There was a great pile of Christmas cards and letters and a number of small packages.

"Oh, Warren, what an expensive card! From George Thornton. That's a real little water color! What a waste to put so much money in a Christmas card—a thing that nobody keeps."

"Who are Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Wallace?" asked Warren, puzzling over a card.

"Don't you remember? We met them at the Stevens'. She called here several times. I'm glad I sent them cards. Oh, they're so large—they're almost as large as the size of a pair of silk stockings. Why will people send stockings and gloves when they don't know your size? But they're a lovely quality—I suppose I can exchange them."

"Did you send cards to the Merwins?" asked Warren suddenly.

"No, I DIDN'T! Did they send us any?"

Warren's answer was to toss over a card. "And you forgot the Gordons, too! Like to know whom you did send to?"

Helen started to say that he, too, wanted to remember the people who remembered them, but she decided such a remark might not add to the enjoyment of their Christmas morning.

"And now the Hoovers are fixing their cards like ours," triumphantly, as she drew from a small card envelope Mr. and Mrs. Hoovers' calling cards, tied together with a tiny red bow and the simple phrase "Merry Christmas" written on one of the cards.

Last year Helen had conceived the idea of sending her card and Warren's in this way. It made a simple and dignified Christmas greeting, in quite as good taste as the usual gaudy, over decorated cards. And it was a clever idea, Helen thought, and a saving of both time and money.

This year several of her friends had adopted the same plan, but when Helen suggested they were copying her, Warren had scoffed at her "unmitigated conceit."

"Here's a picture of Ferguson's kid," he announced, tossing over a Christmas folder on which was pasted a Kodak picture of "John Kent Ferguson, age 3 months," and under it this rhyme:

"I wish you were a little boy,  
"Cause if you were, you see,  
This might be a dandy toy,  
Not just a photograph of me."  
"What a sweet baby! Do you suppose they wrote that verse?"  
"Bum enough. Why don't somebody write a few decent Christmas rhymes? Here's an old timer. Ought to've had 30 days for perpetrating this chestnut."

"It was Mrs. Stevens," coming back to the table. "Mr. Stevens gave her another diamond ring—a carat and a half stone."

Helen did not add that Mrs. Stevens had asked what Warren had given her and that, not having the courage to admit he had given her nothing, she had deliberately lied and said "A check."

Helen knew Warren's attitude always was that, if he wanted to give her a present, why wait until Christmas? If he gave her what she needed when she needed it, how foolish to rush around and get something she didn't need at the one time of year when shopping was so difficult!

And yet Helen had never ceased to expect or rather long for "something" from Warren. She would rather have had one little unexpected gift from him than all her other presents. In spite of herself there was a lump in her throat as she went on opening the packages.

"No, that isn't for you to play with," crossly, as Pussy Purr-Mew reached a playful paw for a narrow red ribbon that hung over the table. The next second the kitten had clutched the ribbon, pulling down the whole mass of letters, cards and boxes.

With tail erect, she scampered away while Helen patiently gathered up the things.

**A MESSAGE.** "Let's go into the library, dear, so Nora can clear off the dishes," and Helen took the mass of Christmas mail in to the library table.

Just then the door bell rang. It was a messenger boy with a box, addressed to "Mrs. Warren E. Curtis."

Helen signed the receipt and opened the box, her heart beating fast. It might be from Warren!

It was a large silvered thermos bottle, but the card tied to it read, "With the season's best wishes from Carrie and Fred."

"Oh, how dear of them!" trying to hide her disappointment. "And it's something I've always wanted!"

Instead of starting off for his usual Sunday and holiday morning walk, to Helen's surprise, Warren now settled himself with the newspapers by the library table.

They were to dine at his mother's at 3. An awful hour, thought Helen, who loathed dinner in the middle of the day. It was after 10 now and she went into her room to look over the dress she was going to wear, for her clothes must be in perfect condition when she dined with his people.

"Aren't you going to straighten up this table?" called Warren. "This stuff looks like the devil if anybody comes in."

"Yes, dear, in just a minute." Helen came back and folded up the tissue paper, stacked up the cards and letters and put the presents in the boxes.

"Why, Warren, what's this? Where did this come from?" holding up a small, unaddressed package.

Wonderingly she opened it, then she caught her breath as she saw the velvet jeweler's case. She touched a spring and the lid flew back, disclosing a glittering pearl and diamond lavalliere!

For a moment she gazed at it in speechless amazement, then turned to Warren with a breathless: "Look! Look! How did this get here? It's some mistake! Nobody intended sending me this!"

**A SURPRISE.** Warren was looking at it with an expressionless face.

"How did it get here?" persisted Helen, excitedly. "Was it wrapped in some of those boxes by mistake? How shall I find who it belongs to?"

To these excited questions Warren maintained a stolid silence. Then Helen caught a glimmer of something in his face. Could it be—

The next moment she rushed into his reluctant arms.

"Oh, why didn't you tell me—why didn't you tell me!" sobbingly. "Oh, I didn't dream—"

"Huh, you were pretty dense. And I had to hang around here all morning so it wouldn't be pitched out with that paper and stuff."

"Oh, dear, I love you—LOVE you so! It means so much—so much more than the thing itself—however wonderful it is! Oh, my dear—my DEAR!"

"Now, it don't call for any maudlin heroics!" intolerant as ever of an emotional scene. "You wanted one of those gewgaws—now you've got it. See here, pushing her away, 'you're witting down a perfectly good collar! I've spent enough on your Christmas without increasing the laundry bill."

## When Cupid Is Santa Claus

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BY NELL BRINKLEY

## :-: Once Upon a Time :-:

By FRANCES L. GARSIDE

COME, gather closer, children, dear, and listen to these Christmas tales I am about to relate. Once upon a time there lived a little girl who was never satisfied. She wanted a whole lot of things for Christmas, and when she got out her stocking to hang it up in front of the fireplace, she was mad when she saw how small it was.

"It will never hold all I want," she grumbled. "I wish I was a woman and wore stockings big enough to hold something."

Then she remembered that she had seen a pair of her grandmother's stockings in the closet, and when no one saw her she got them out, and hung them by the fireplace instead of her own!

And when Santa Claus came down the chimney that night, children, dear, he saw those stockings, large and thick and sensible, and thought they belonged to an old lady! So he put in them a pair of spectacles, knitting needles, a night cap and a bible!

And lots of us, children, dear, who want a whole lot of things as we pass through life, and are not satisfied with what is our share, are going to catch it some day just as this little girl did.

Once upon a time a little girl and a little boy looked in a book and saw a picture of a kindly faced old man. He had red cheeks, a big jolly stomach, and a long beard, and he carried

a sack on his shoulders filled with toys.

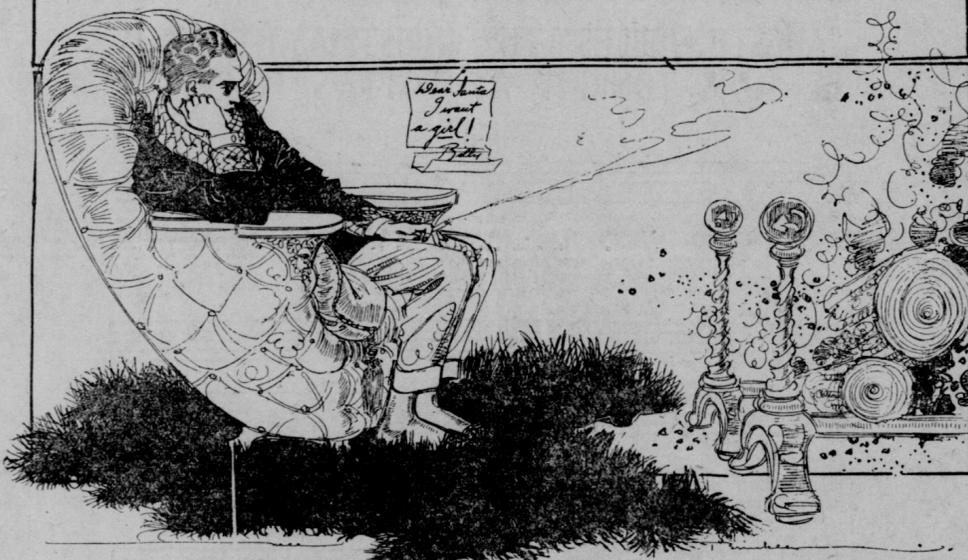
"That is Santa Claus," their mother explained, and ever after that his picture was looked upon with great love.

They wrote letters to him, they talked of him, they dreamed of him, they wished he would come to their house to live or that they could go to live in his house where all the rooms were hung with sugar plums and filled with toys.

"We don't see," they grumbled to their mother, "why we had to be your children. Why couldn't you have let us stay in the hole in the tree where you said you found us, and let Santa Claus find us?"

But she only smiled tenderly at their complaints, and at night when they lay asleep dreaming of their imaginary saint, a real saint, tired and worn, sat up late dressing dolls and scheming and planning means to buy them the things they wanted. She denied herself new clothes, and wore her old hat, and stood between their wishes and their father's complaints that he wasn't going to give a cent to the Christmas tomlowery and on Christmas morning was rewarded by their gratitude to an imaginary Santa Claus and the cross looks of her husband.

For it is not, children, dear, till you have grown up and must be Santa Claus to your own children that you realize what a pitiful experience Christmas means to a mother.



A THRILLING STORY OF SOCIETY BLACKMAILERS

You Can Begin This Great Story Today by Reading This First

Alene Graham, the beautiful daughter of U. S. District Attorney Gordon Graham, is beloved by Captain Lawrence Holbrook, a soldier of fortune, free lance and all around good fellow. Alene loves him, but because of some secret in her past, she refuses to marry him. While Holbrook is at her house she receives a telephone message from Judson Flagg, a lawyer and notorious blackmailer of society. Holbrook begs Alene to tell him her secret. She refuses and makes him leave her. The message from Flagg has made her frantic, and she is at a loss to know what to do. Alene goes to Flagg's place, and he offers to sell her letters, written by her and to her, which establish the fact that she was the victim of a mock marriage several years before. Flagg demands \$1,000 as the price of the letters. The girl has not the money. The man struggles with her and Alene kills him with a bill file. As he dies he clutches her emerald brooch and, with Satanic malice, takes a flashlight photograph of her.

Now Read On (NOVELIZED BY) A. Waterbury Continued from Yesterday

The chief smiled, and a glint of steel came into his eyes and over the settled lines of his mouth.

mind ye, in the most sacred confidence. You'll give it?"

Father Shannon smiled. "You know well you can trust me, Larry."

"Well—then—I AM Dugan's Expedition!"

"You, me lad?"

"Yes! And Dempster is going to talk to me about it—seriously—as soon as that phone call's done for."

But something else was done for, and Chief Dempster would never again talk of Dutch Dugan's expedition to Captain Harry Holbrook.

With that confidence of his mind, for Larry Holbrook was sure that Father Shannon would know how he must always carry guns to a people from the Rio Grande to Patagonia if a despot were setting himself up against them, Larry turned to other matters.

"How long will you be in Washington, father?"

"Indefinitely, I hope. Why?"

the life of the girl Holbrook loved on a moment as casual as this.

**THE TWO DETECTIVES.** "A murder!" exclaimed Father Shannon. "Larry, ye rogue, where will you be finding your interests next? I'm thinking you'll be of more service to the living if I go home and get a good night's sleep now—but, if you lads need me, you'll know I'm on call."

Out into the night went Chief Dempster and Captain Shannon, speculating casually about the crime and the criminal. In the background of Holbrook's consciousness always was the thought of the slender girl he loved—the girl of whose love he was sure—and of whose mysterious refusal of him he was sadly soon to know the cause. And as they traversed the silent midnight streets of our nation's capital, the girl of whom Holbrook was ever dreaming was cowering in her room, struggling to forget the horror she had endured that evening—and wildly questioning herself again and again, "What have I done?"

In Judson Flagg's chamber of horror all was just as it had been half an hour before. The police had come quickly in answer to Tommy's wild shouting; the machinery of the law was in motion. Judson Flagg, master criminal, was at last victim instead of vanquisher—the deadly foe of society had perished and the law he had always managed to evade was back of him now—it would trace the door of the dead. The law, which he had twisted and distorted to his evil uses would proceed coldly and systematically to trace its latest criminal. They say "dead men tell no tales," but in Judson Flagg's hand there was still gripped in that final clutch of death an iron bill file and a girl's emerald brooch.

In death, as in life, Judson Flagg was an insatiable—an implacable—foe.

"Say, chief, I'm showing a touching trust in your case—just where am I so blindly going—who's your murdered man?" asked Holbrook as the two men hurried through the blackness of night to the blackness of death, and the horror of what the den of the spider would soon disclose to Lawrence Holbrook.

"A lawyer—a blackmailing chap—we could never get our hands on him, he was too wise to be caught with

the goods; and now he's been caught—perhaps by some one he thought he had trapped," speculated the chief. "Oh, yes—I forgot you had been away so long and wouldn't know the secrets of our underworld, Larry. Well, the man's name probably won't mean anything to you either. It is Flagg—Judson Flagg. He was the vilest blackmailer at large—and now he's done for!"

When we see the shadows of death they lie always behind, never before. Holbrook felt no stir of premonition that the death of Judson Flagg was inextricably woven with the life—or death—of the girl he loved.

**A SLIP.** "Oh, yes. I have managed to hear of Flagg even in the short time since I returned. In fact, I suspect him of having been the blackguardly author of the announcement of my engagement to Miss Graham."

"Blackguardly?" The announcement of your engagement to Alene Graham?" asked the chief in surprise. Later this idle remark would do great harm to both Holbrook and Alene.

"Oh, solely on her account. I regretted it for her—and I almost traced it to Flagg—but you know it is harder to run down a rumor than to dodge a creditor, and he sidestepped it."

"Oh, here we are, Larry, the sensation mongers are on hand already. See the woman trying to break through the dead line the police have established, and see the edifying sight of 'one of the finest' threatening her with his club."

Continued Tomorrow

### Household Suggestions

When custards are wanted in a hurry it is often difficult to serve in a glass dish. To prevent this make the custard in the ordinary way; turn the glass dish for a few minutes over a basin of boiling water to steam. The custard can be safely poured in without the risk of breaking the dish.

Should the inkpot be accidentally upset on tablecloth or carpet, pour a little cold water over it at once. The ink will float on the water, and when cloth or carpet is rubbed dry no stain will show.

In wet weather clean the windows with chamois leather in the usual way, then sprinkle a little flour on the polishing duster. The result will be an easy and brilliant polish.

Used in water as a daily gargle, borax keeps the throat healthy. Used in water for cleansing the teeth, it "disinfects" them and prevents their decay.

To make linen easier to write on when marking it, dip the piece to be marked in cold starch, and the pen will write without scratching.

### Do You Know That--

The same species of flower never shows more than two of the three colors, red, yellow and blue. Roses, for instance, are found red and yellow, but never blue; verbenas are red and blue, but not yellow.

During the last 10 years more than 220,000 persons are said to have been killed in India by snake bites, while tigers, leopards and wolves have accounted for 14,000 deaths.

Since women's suffrage was granted in Illinois there have been three elections, and on each occasion less than 10 per cent of the women voted.

A bee, unladen, will fly 40 miles an hour, but one coming home laden with honey does not travel faster than 12 miles an hour.

Grapes contain from 42 to 26 per cent of sugar—more, that is, than any other fruit.

Austria was the first country to adopt the system of postcards. This was in 1869.

If eyelashes are cut, the eyes are weakened.

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