

A Compromise

By ELMER WENTWORTH

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Bob Brackett, a lone bachelor, needed some articles with which to decorate his room. He inquired of a lady friend where such things were to be had, and she recommended the Woman's Exchange. Bob went there and made his purchases.

The same evening on returning from business he found them all in his room. Opening the package, he put a bureau scarf in its place, a centerpiece on his table under his reading lamp and a scented moucher case on his dresser. Then he sat down in his easy chair and surveyed the scene.

"By Jove," he exclaimed, "one would think a woman had done it all! What a feminine appearance the room has! There's everything a woman would provide—that is, everything except pillowshams. Pillowshams I'll never have. They're well named. They're a sham indeed—put on in the morning to look pretty, taken off at night, folded up and laid where they won't be stepped on. Of all the confounded feminine nonsense I ever heard of pillowshams are the worst. If ever I'm married there's one thing my wife shall never indulge in or force me to indulge in—pillowshams. Confound them!

Bob went to bed leaving a fire burning in the grate that illuminated his room and lay awake enjoying his newly acquired decorations.

"I can almost fancy myself married," he said, "and a nice little girl keeping house in this very room with me. It's one of a suit, and I could have the whole. Just think of coming home for dinner instead of stopping at a cheap restaurant, finding wifery at the door ready to throw her arms around my neck; dinner ready; with my arm around her waist we go into the dining room and while we eat talk over what has passed during the day.

"Dinner finished, we go into the living room. I light a sign, we read and chat, and so spend the evening.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed, "I've forgotten to put a handkerchief in my nightshirt pocket."

He got out of bed and went to the bureau where he had left his moucher case and felt for a handkerchief. The size he used at night was on the bottom of the pile, and with it he pulled out a slip of paper, which floated to the floor. Picking it up, he took it to the fireplace and saw by the light something written on it in a feminine hand. It read:

If my work falls into the hands of a bachelor this is to inform him that single blessedness and the joys of living at such work as this don't suit me. Marriage is the natural lot of both sexes, and I don't see why a woman shouldn't seek a husband as well as a man seek a wife. I am twenty years old, have a pliable disposition and believe that the husband should lead, having his own way in everything. Miss Williamson of the Woman's Exchange has my address. I have authorized her to give it to any gentlemanlike young man who calls for it.

"Well, now, I like that!" exclaimed Bob. "What a lot of practical sense in it! And she'll tell her husband how his own way about everything! Splendid! If fate throws us together there's one thing there'll be no trouble about—the pillowshams. She can have her own way about everything else."

Bob went to sleep dreaming of how the place would look if something came of this slip of paper and the very next day went again to the Woman's Exchange for a feminine article with a soul, a body, and a living body at that.

Three months from that date Bob Brackett and Louise Harwood, a very lovely girl—at least Bob thought she was—were married and went to live in his room till the other rooms in the suit became vacant and they could rent the whole. After a short wedding trip they returned to the apartment, and the bride began to survey it with a critical eye.

"Wouldn't you think," asked Bob, "that a woman had fixed it up?"

"Well, yes, so far as it goes."

"What's wanting?"

"Well, some curtains to the windows for one thing."

"That's so. I never thought of them. What else?"

"Those pillows should be covered."

"Rham."

"Louise," said the husband, squaring himself, "if there's any one thing I always detested it's pillowshams. No pillowshams for me, thank you."

"But you wouldn't have the pillows perfectly bare, would you?"

"Put on cases of the finest Brussels lace if you like, but when you get 'em on keep 'em on. I don't propose to take a sham off my pillow every night. fold it up and put it somewhere."

"I'll do all that."

"Nobody'll do it. I've sworn no shams shall be on my pillow over the pillowshams and a frequent reminder to the wife that he should have his own way in everything he proposed to propose, some kind of a pillowcase that would look well, but would not be injured by being used to lay one's head on. But before he could do so his wife interrupted him, saying:

"All right. We'll compromise."

"Well!" said the husband inquiringly. "We'll compromise on pillowshams. There was a pause, after which the husband remarked, "I give it up."

AN INCENTIVE TO MARRIAGE

By DOROTHEA HALE

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There is something about the portal of matrimony that seems to require new conditions. A set humdrum state is not likely to be conducive to wedlock. This is especially true of those who are passing out of the heyday of youth. If a man growing into bachelorhood or a woman into spinsterhood wishes to change their condition their best chance is to take an ocean voyage at a season when they will meet other travelers. Probably there are more marriages contracted on shipboard in proportion to the size of the passenger list than in any other community. But after a couple have mutually resolved to cast their lot together let them not take any more such trips separately or what has been accomplished may be undone.

William Martindale had come to his thirty-fifth year without being mated and was looking forward to a lonely old age with horror. Not being very closely tied down to business he resolved to take a trip abroad in order to relieve that ennui which begins to show itself in bachelors and spinsters while they are crossing life's equinoctial line. Miss Susan Eldridge, aged thirty, had given up trying to make up her mind to marry some one of the single men she had long known and concluded that if she could not be interested in a household she might at least enjoy a change of scene.

Mr. Martindale and Miss Eldridge met on a steamer running from New York to Naples. They left the American coast in chilly weather and found the contrast on reaching the balmy atmosphere of the gulf stream delightful. They sat on deck most of the day and occasionally in the evening, rising and falling with the swell, listening to the swish made by the meeting of the waves and the vessel and each other's chat, now watching a bird sailing above and wondering how it dare fly so far from land, and found it all delightful.

"What an interesting woman!" remarked Mr. Martindale to himself. "If I had before met a girl like that, I would by this time have been the father of a family."

"Had the young man I have known so long," remarked Miss Eldridge, "had a tenth part of the soul this man possesses I would not now have the prospect before me of finishing my life an old maid."

On the Mediterranean trip the steamer usually stops at the island of Madeira. Mr. Martindale and Miss Eldridge went ashore together and entered a garden filled with tropical plants redolent of flowery perfumes. When they came out of that garden they were engaged.

The rest of the voyage was like sailing in the heavens on a balmy moonlight night. The critical fashion in which they had previously viewed members of the opposite sexes from a matrimonial point of view was replaced by an ideal appreciation of either induced by an atmosphere entirely different from any to which they had been accustomed. They landed at Naples, strolled together through the exhumed streets of Pompeii, sat on the cliff overlooking the Mediterranean at Corrento and drove together to Amalfi. And it seemed to each that the other resembled some divinity perpetuated in marble in the galleries they frequented.

They separated at Rome to meet later in America, where they were to make arrangements for their wedding. The intervening time had passed. Mr. Martindale had arrived at home, and Miss Eldridge was sailing up New York bay. She paced the deck with a brow on which lowered a mental disturbance. Mr. Martindale, she knew, was on the dock waiting for her. Why did she not wear a happy expression at the expected meeting?

And Mr. Martindale—why did he walk through the long dock house with a perplexed look on his face and shudder as he caught a glimpse of the ship on which stood his fiancée? They met. Each strove to put on a smile of welcome, expression of heaven born love. The effort was a failure. Each retained a secret which must be sooner or later broken to the other.

"I can endure this no longer," said Miss Eldridge as they rolled over the stony streets in a carriage. "I could never act a part. I must confess at once."

"Confess?"

"Yes. I thought I loved you. I was mistaken. On the return voyage I met the man who at once I felt was born for me and for whom I was born. Forgive me for the wrong I have done you. I couldn't help it."

A long sigh—a sigh of relief—escaped from Mr. Martindale.

"Your confession," he said, "has taken a great load from my mind. I, too, on my return voyage met a girl who charmed me and, I blush to say, won me from you."

For a moment that amour propre, that dislike for being supplanted, to which we are all subject kept her silent, but when she thought of the complication she had escaped she said smilingly:

"Oh, how fortunate!"

Both of these persons had met others with whom they might have mated, but it needed that something furnished by a voyage to induce union—something that is as common on the ocean as sea sickness, though much pleasanter. Unfortunately all persons who desire to be mated cannot try it, because it is expensive.

A DIPLOMATIC MISSION

By MARJORIE CLOUGH

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"Count," said the minister of foreign affairs to a young diplomat who had entered his service, "I wish you to get ready to leave Berlin tonight. Changes have occurred in China affecting the German, French and English interests there. If we reach England before the French cabinet can send an emissary England will act with us, for we can so represent the matter that it will appear to be to her interest to do so. If France is ahead of us England's action will be reversed. Here is a suit case containing all the papers you will need. Go at once to London and, without waiting to make a toilet, thence to the foreign office in Downing street. Endeavor to make the minister commit himself before you leave him."

Count Otto von Holwig left Berlin on the evening train for Ostend, intending to cross the English channel at that point. On the same train was a lady who, on coming to one of the main stops, alighted from her car and, passing along toward the rear, looking in at the open doors, finally entered the compartment occupied by the ambassador. She took a seat and threw her head back on to the cushion with every appearance of suffering.

Besides Von Holwig there were two men and a woman in the compartment, all of whom cast glances toward and appeared to take an interest in the suffering woman. She held her handkerchief to her face so that they could not see what she looked like and now and again emitted a low groan. The other woman in the compartment asked if she could do anything for her, but the invalid without speaking repulsed her by a wave of the hand.

Presently the sufferer started up and exclaimed, "It's all gone!" The men noticed that she was beautiful, and the smile she wore was a winning change from the evidences of agony she had given vent to. "And now," she added, "I must explain to you good people. I am a sufferer from facial neuralgia. When one of the attacks leaves me I need a brace." She took a gold mounted flask from a bag and several tiny glasses. Filling one of the glasses, she handed it to one of the men, who took it. Then, filling another glass, she handed it to the next man, who tried to get off. But a certain winning, dominating force that was about her prevailed. The next man she offered a drink was Von Holwig. He declined, and the lady could not persuade him. She then gave a glass to her woman fellow passenger, who after a fruitless effort tried to get it back.

After all who held glasses had emptied them the lady brought out a box of cigarettes, which she likewise passed around. This also she count refused. But the lady gave him a look as if to accuse him of insulting her by this second refusal, and he gave in.

When the train stopped again the lady who had facial neuralgia left the compartment, closing the door behind her. A fat old gentleman opened it to enter and paused. There were three men and a woman asleep. The compartment was full of cigarette smoke. The old man called a strange odor pointed to the sleepers.

"There's been a robbery here," said the guard. "These people have been drugged. Ten to one all their money has been taken." He shook one of the men, who gradually opened his eyes and looked at him dazed. Then another and another was aroused, Von Holwig among the number. He awoke with a start and looked about him for his suit case.

"Lost anything, sir?" asked the guard.

Von Holwig, white as a sheet, did not reply for some time, then answered, "No." He knew that he had been tricked by a woman and did not propose to give away state secrets. He left the car, sat down on a bench and tried to recover from both the effect of the drug he had smoked and the ruin of his career as a diplomat.

On the boat at Ostend on which passengers were gathering to cross the channel to Dover a gentleman stood looking anxiously up the way that led to the steamer. Now and again he would take out his watch impatiently and note the time. But five minutes remained before the boat would start, and the gentleman had given a sigh, indicating that some one he was looking for would not come, when a cab, the driver lashing his horse, came galloping down the street. The gentleman hurried to the dock and handed out a lady, who held in her hand a suit case.

"Good," he said. "You have won, and you shall have your reward. Go to Paris and report that your mission was successful, and there is good reason to believe that upon the foundation you have laid I shall be able to bring England to our views."

The next morning before dawn M. Cavier, representing the French government, drew up before the London residence of the secretary for foreign affairs, called him out of bed and announced that certain affairs in China required his immediate attention. The secretary discussed the matter in a dressing gown, and the French ambassador when he left carried with him the assurance that such orders as he desired would be issued.

THE PRINCIPAL WINNER

By F. A. MITCHEL

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When the American troops were fighting their way across Cuba, Captain Timberlake, commanding a party of flankers, noticed a coffin lying not far from the road.

That evening in camp Captain Timberlake was chatting with the events of the day with the adjutant and the major of his regiment, talking about who had been killed, who wounded, how the Spaniards fought and how they had the advantage of the Americans in the matter of arms and smokeless powder, when Timberlake spoke of the strange sight of a coffin lying beside the road.

If men have not the curiosity of women, and the statement has been denied by the latter, they have a trait equally peculiar. Men, especially those who lead eventful lives, are prone to bet about everything which is a matter of opinion or hazard. The question came up between these officers whether there was a corpse in the coffin or whether there was not. One of the party had noticed a cemetery on the way not far from the line of march and suggested that a funeral had been interrupted by the fight, and the mourners had fled and the coffin spilled out of the hearse. There was doubtless an unburied corpse in it.

Now, the outcome of this suggestion did not result, as might have been expected, in the burial of a corpse, but a bet. The major made the suggestion, and Captain Timberlake offered to bet him \$10 even that the coffin was empty.

The stakes having been put up, Captain Timberlake called Pat Mulealey, a recruit picked up just before leaving the States, and told him to go back half a mile and look out not far from a bridge over a creek for a coffin. He was to discover whether it contained a corpse or whether it was empty.

A full moon stood about an hour high and made all nearly as light as day. A desultory firing was still going on, but had nearly died out. Pat crossed the bridge and about a hundred yards beyond saw the moonlight reflected from a number of points on the brass ornaments on the coffin. Pat went on till he got near enough to see what the object was, then stopped. A coffin probably with a dead body in it at night in a lonely spot did not appeal to him. He was wondering how he could determine what he had been ordered to discover without getting any closer to the casket when the lid seemed to lift of itself, and the moon lighted up a white face.

"Howdy mother!" cried Pat, crossing himself, and, turning, beat a hasty retreat. Reaching the other side of the creek, he paused for another look behind him. What he saw froze the marrow in his bones. The corpse was coming with its coffin on its shoulder.

Pat tried to run, but for a time his legs refused to carry him. It was only when the specter reached the hither side of the bridge and seemed to be coming right down on him that his terror had a different effect, and with a howl he set off like the wind for camp.

Captain Timberlake, the major and the others were sitting in a circle waiting for the decision of the bet when Pat approached. As he drew near them the soldier reentered himself, and he slowed his steps till he came down to a walk. Approaching the group, he saluted.

"Well, Pat," said his commander, "who has won?"

"If ye please, sir, what's the bet?"

"The major bets the coffin has a corpse in it. I bet that it is empty."

"The corpse was in it when I went there, and now it's out of it."

"What do you mean?"

"The corpse got out when I was lookin' at the coffin, and now he's comin' with it on his shoulder."

"There was a burst of laughter.

"O! got me pay in me pocket," pulling out a roll of bills. "O! I bet it all that he is."

Several men standing about, ready to take advantage of the greenhorn, covered his money 10 to 1. The bets had barely been made when a man with a coffin on his shoulder approached and asked half in Spanish and half in English where he could get a pass.

There was another burst of laughter.

The captain looked around for Pat. He was nowhere to be seen.

"I've won and Pat has won," said Timberlake. "Now we'll hear this man's story. But first let me tell you something I happen to know. The poor class of Cubans hire coffins for their dead. The body is placed in the coffin before the funeral and taken to the cemetery in it. There it is removed and buried without any covering. Since the lid is not screwed down they use hinges. This man was not going to a funeral; he was carrying the casket away from a cemetery after the corpse had been taken out of it."

"You are right," said the Cuban. "I was carrying the coffin from the cemetery when the battle began. To escape the bullets I lifted the lid and got inside. I stayed there till the firing had nearly died away, when I proceeded on my journey. But now there are soldiers everywhere, and I would like a pass to get home."

He was sent (leaving his load till his return) to headquarters, where he secured his pass.

Pat was the chief winner, all bets being decided in his favor.

A SINGULAR VEHICLE

By ELLINOR STEWART CATON

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A seedy man, out at the elbows and looking as though he had slept the night in the park, stopped a gentleman on the sidewalk and said:

"My friend, you haven't seen a family consistin' of a woman and four small children—two boys and two girls, the girls lookin' like me and the boys like their mother—go ridin' by here today in a two story frame house painted yellow?"

"Excuse me, my friend. I'm in a hurry."

The wayfarer passed on, leaving the seedy man standing looking after him as though he felt very much hurt. Leaning up against a tree box, he waited for another person to question. A lady came along, and the man, pulling the rim of his hat, accosted her.

"Beg your pardon, ma'am. Have you seen anything of a poor woman with four children enjoyin' themselves on an afternoon ride in a yaller house on wheels down this here street?"

The lady looked sorrowfully at the man, took out her portemonnaie, picked out a silver coin to the value of 10 cents, gave it to him and walked on. He looked at the retreating lady, then down at the coin in his hand, and didn't seem to understand.

The next person to whom he applied was a benevolent looking gentleman with mutton chop whiskers and spectacles.

"I'm lookin'," said the seedy man, "for a family"—and stopped short.

"Well, my good man, tell me about what family you're looking for."

"I've told that to two persons already, and they don't seem to know who I'm talkin' about. I thort I'd just call 'em a family to you, so's I wouldn't mix you up, and say nothin' about the rest of it."

"But how can I help you to become reunited to this family without your telling me more about them?"

"Well, if you're sure you'll understand, I'm lookin' for 'em to ride by here about this time in a yaller house enjoyin' themselves—"

"In a yellow house?"

"Yes, two story, shingle roof."

"My good man," said the other after contemplating him thoughtfully for some time, "tell me where you live. I'm going to take you home."

"My residence is anywhere from 74 Union street to no number at all at present, Hopkins street."

"Poor fellow!" sighed the benevolent man.

"I tole you you wouldn't understand me. None of the others did. What's the use of my tellin' people all about it? They only think I'm gone daff."

He looked very much troubled. Taking out his bandanna handkerchief, he blew his nose sonorously.

"Come with me," said the benevolent man coaxingly.

"I don't want to go anywheres with nobody. I just want to catch my wife and children as they go by and enjoy the rest of the ride with 'em."

"I think I can take you where you'll learn all about it. Come."

"Where you goin' to take me?"

"Oh, I'll take you where you'll be cared for."

"I don't want to be cared for. I want to know whether my family has gone past. There's a puff of smoke blowin' around the corner now. I shouldn't wonder if it's them!"

"I see. They're coming in an automobile. You confused it with a yellow house."

"I didn't do no such thing. The smoke I'm talkin' about comes out of the chimney."

The gentleman assumed an authoritative tone. "Now, my man, either walk with me to a police station or I'll call a policeman and have you taken there by force. You're off your head. I don't know whether you are a dangerous lunatic or not, but you need to be shut up, if not for the public good, for your own."

"I knowed it," said the man lugubriously. "I knowed if I tole you the bull thing I'd get myself into trouble."

"Will you come?"

"Who are you anyways?"

"I'm the president of the Society of General Charities. Now you know that I intend you no harm. I wish to help you."

"But I don't need no help. There's another puff of smoke. I reckon they'll be turnin' the corner purty soon. Will you wait a few minutes? If they don't come along just as I said they would I'll go with you."

"Instead of waiting I'll go with you. If you are satisfied the smoke you see comes from another cause than what you suppose, perhaps you will go with me."

"Reckon I'll risk it."

They walked down the street to the one where they saw the smoke and, turning into it, saw a windlass pulled around by a horse. Ropes led from it to a two story yellow house about 100 feet away, which was being moved in the middle of the street.

"There she are!" exclaimed the seedy man. "Come on. I'll show you the family."

The gentleman hesitated. Then, with an expression of disgruntlement, he was about to go on his way when he changed his mind and followed the other. Sitting in a window darning stockings was a woman, while children were running about.

LOVE FOR PASTIME

By RUTH GRAHAM

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Whether in the main we are retrograding or improving, there is one matter in which men have been steadily growing better. That is in their treatment of women. Half a century ago among young men of the world there was not the high sense of honor in the treatment of women there is now.

In the days of palatial steamboats, as they were called, on the Mississippi Roland Storms, traveling between St. Louis and New Orleans, met on the boat Adele Southwood, a young girl seventeen years old. Storms, who was ten years Miss Southwood's senior, had considered making a "conquest" now and then one of those accomplishments that was to be expected of a young swell of the period. To him love was a game in which all was fair. If beaten at it he would have considered that nothing remained for him but to take the consequences. If he beat the girl it was her part to grin and bear it.

Miss Southwood was not only ignorant of such warfare, but was a girl of deep feeling. She and Storms would sit on the guards during the day looking out upon the ever changing panorama, now passing under some high bluff, now sailing above the surrounding lowlands on a river built up by the levees. In the evening they would go up on to the hurricane deck, watching the lights on the shore go by and when the boat stopped to "wood up," looking down on the line of deck hands in the glare of pitch pine knots transferring a wood pile to the boat for fuel.

All this was new to Miss Southwood, and what was not only new but much more fascinating to an impassible girl was having a young man in constant attendance, saying pleasant things to her one moment, talking seriously the next and finally laughing at her for being so matter of fact. In this way he kept her in a puzzled state as to whether a mature man was really falling in love with her, a chit of a girl, or whether he considered her merely a child. Storms before reaching the Crescent City talked love to her—such love as pertains to the emotions without any prosaic references to marriage. But she was too unsophisticated to consider this. To her it was spontaneous love, something she had never experienced before and the more serious features of which were still a blank to her.

At New Orleans the two parted. Miss Southwood to remain there for the winter, which was coming on. Mr. Storms going by the gulf of Mexico to Texas. The young girl considered that the event of her life had occurred, the young man that a pleasant episode had occurred to relieve the tedium of steamboat travel. This is what he considered it at the time. He did not know that a seed had been planted in his heart which was not destined to germinate for a long while. He knew that this case was in some respects different from his many other affairs, but he did not consider it any more serious.

It was four years before he met Miss Southwood again. He was walking on the principal street of Cincinnati, swinging a cane, a "beaver" on his head, a velvet collar on his frock coat, a profusion of cravat on his bosom, his tight trousers strapped down over his instep, in short, dressed for a swell of the period, when he met, incased in a diminutive bonnet of pink silk, one of the sweetest faces he had ever beheld. It belonged to a lady about twenty-one years old, and she was looking at him intently. In an instant he recognized the girl he had flirted with on the Mississippi and flitted at New Orleans.

Naturally he was embarrassed. There was no expression in Miss Southwood's face sufficiently defined for him to tell how she felt toward him. He stopped to speak to her, standing uncovered, and asked if he might walk with her. Receiving permission, he joined her, stammering things to her which she, on her part, received with composure. She had been through the agony of getting over a first love and a first flit, and he could see no traces of suffering, of reproach or of forgiveness. All seemed to be neutralized or, rather, fused into an absolute nothingness.

Storms walked with her some ten minutes, at first trying to regain his equipoise, then to discover some indication of the young lady's feelings toward him. In the latter he failed. But since there was no indication of unfriendliness he made bold to hint that he would like to renew the acquaintance. Before parting Miss Southwood invited him to come to see her the next afternoon at 2 o'clock. He accepted, and they parted.

At the appointed hour Storms, having summoned up all his will power, courage, adroitness to win again and win to keep what he had won and thrown away, went to call on Miss Southwood. He found a number of guests present, and a few minutes after his entrance the lady stood up to be married.

This was Roland Storms' last affair of the heart. He never took any interest in another, for he never recovered from this one. He died a bachelor and an old man.

Since that day, while youth is the same and affairs of the heart are the same, what would have then been considered a feather in a fashionable young man's cap is now held to be dishonorable.

Their Secret

By EDWARD TURNER

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I, being a clergyman, was called upon last summer to marry a boatman about fifty years of age to a woman of thirty-five. The man was a bachelor, the woman a widow with a son about sixteen years old.

"Are you the second husband?" I asked the groom after the ceremony.

"I'm the second or the third, I'm not sure which," he replied, a pained expression passing over his face. I asked him to explain, but he seemed reluctant to do so. I was about to turn away from him when he said:

"You're a clergyman and a good man to confess to. If you'll keep the secret I'll tell you."

"Do as you please about telling me. If you trust me with the secret I shall certainly keep it."

"When I was about as old as my wife is now," he began, "she was a thin slip of a girl, all arms and legs, like a colt. But she was purty, all the same, and soon after that flitted out. There was a mighty soft spot in my heart for her. But I, bein' a man of thirty and she a striplin' of fifteen, I wouldn't 'a' said anything about it for the biggest ship that floats. I watched her grow up, thinkin' that when she got older I might muster up courage to ask her to marry me. But to a young gal like that there's a heap of love makin' before she's even twenty."

"Her father had a feller picked out for her. His name was Pillsbury—Jack Pillsbury—a mighty good young man. He was first mate of a tramp, and every time he came in from a cruise he brought home a lot of money to invest. But there was another feller the little gal wanted, and he wanted her. But Maggie—that's her name—was mighty fond of her father and was bent on doin' what he wanted her to do. She shipped Jim Holden, the feller she loved, and married Jack Pillsbury."

Jack kept on goin' to sea, and so did Jim. Jim was awful cut up at losin' Maggie and wouldn't marry any other gal. She was well satisfied with Jack and always looked for him to come back from his cruises. But after awhile he went on a cruise that he didn't come back from. He was due in a year, but three years passed and he didn't show up.

After awhile, when it looked as if Jack must be dead—the ship he sailed in was never heard from—Jim Holden began to pester Maggie to marry him. She held out for a long while, but at last gave in. They were married, and the boy you saw just now come along. Jack and Maggie didn't have any children. Maggie was happy with Jim, except that she was always worryin' about not knowin' whether she didn't have two husbands. You see, she didn't know positive whether Jack was dead, and if he wasn't she was living with a man that she warn't married