

Married Life, to Date

By MABEL HERBERT URNER

Helen opened the door to the grinning French maid with the coffee and rolls. The girl looked uncertainly around for some place to set the tray, for on the only table Helen had unpacked her travelling bag.

"Wait, you can put it here," and Helen hurriedly cleared off the table. The maid, who could not understand or speak a word of English, put down the tray, chattered something in French, and hurried out.

"Breakfast come?" called Warren from the bedroom.

"The tray's come, but I shouldn't call it breakfast," answered Helen, viewing it with disgust. "Just see how they serve things here."

It was certainly not an attractive tray. There were only coffee and rolls. A roll and a blackened spoon and knife was thrust in each of the thick, chipped coffee cups. There was a small plate of butter, a brown earthenware coffee pot, a pitcher of hot milk, a saucer with a few lumps of sugar and nothing else. There were no napkins, and not even saucers for the cups.

"Well, they don't believe in essentials, that's certain," was Warren's comment as he surveyed the tray.

"Look at that silver!" exclaimed Helen indignantly, taking the blackened spoon and knife from one of the cups.

"I'd hardly call that silver. But come on—draw a chair up there. It's after nine and I ought to be out of here."

Helen spread a fresh towel on the table to serve as a cloth, and arranged on it the meagre contents of the tray.

"Here, dear, this is as good as paper napkins," taking from her trunk some crumpled tissue paper.

"Oh, don't be so darn particular," pouring out his coffee, while Helen wiped out her cup and spoon with the paper. "You've got to put up with a lot of things when you travel."

"I can put up with almost anything if it's clean. But I don't think this place is clean. Hadn't you better tell them as you go out that we're not going to stay?"

"No time to look up any other place," he frowned. "I'm here on business and got to be on the job. We can put up with this for a couple of weeks—won't be here longer than that."

Helen flushed. "Dear, I can't stay at this place. I tell you it isn't clean. I can't eat here," pushing back untouched the cup of muddy brown coffee.

"See here, the place for anybody that's as blamed fussy as you—is at home! If I'd had any sense, I'd left you there."

"But can't I find other rooms?" pleadingly. "I haven't anything else to do—I can start out the first thing this morning. Dear, you said we did not have to stay here if we didn't like it."

"Well, I like it all right. This is good enough for anybody. We've got two big rooms right on the Boulevard, within a stone's throw of the opera house—what more do you want?"

He pushed back the shabby red velvet arm chair, crumpled the tissue paper into a ball and threw it on the table as he rose.

"Now I'll be back here about half-past six, and we'll go out to dinner. You can fool around the shops or do anything you like—but we're going to let well enough alone and stay right here. Understand?"

He strode into the bedroom, brushed his hat, jammed it on his head, got some papers out of his suitcase and started for the door.

"Now, you've got enough money?" Helen nodded.

"Well, the American Express company is right around the corner—they will tell you how to get anywhere. You

might stop in there and see if there's any mail for us."

An Appalling Thought.

Helen followed him to the door, realizing that when Warren went out of the street, he would be lost to her—there would be no way she could reach him until 6 o'clock. To be left alone the first day in a foreign city seemed suddenly somewhat appalling. Warren kissed her hurriedly, and drew away from her clinging arms with a curt:

"Now, take care of yourself. Don't get run over. You have to look where you're going here—these cabmen'd sooner run over you than not. Go to the Bon Marche. That's a big shop—you can spend most of the day there. When he had gone, Helen glanced around with a dismayed sense of her loneliness. And this place—she hated it! The strong morning sun lit up the shabby carpet and the dusty, worn, red velvet furniture. The bedroom with its now disordered bed and untidy washstand was even less attractive.

A few minutes later Helen, armed with her guidebook and a book of French phrases, locked her trunk and started out—determined to find other rooms in spite of what Warren had said.

She knew the Continental Hotel was very near, for he had pointed it out as they drove from the station. When she entered the lobby, it was with a sigh of relief. At least this looked more like the hotels at home. One of the clerks who spoke English informed her that they had not a single room vacant and would not have for the next ten days.

From there Helen went to the American Express company. She paused to view the opera house which the guide book said was in the heart of Paris.

It was a majestic building, but Helen was not in the mood for sight-seeing this morning. The wonder of being in Paris had somewhat dulled by what she considered the wretched place at which they were stopping. For Helen had none of the instincts of a real traveler. Her first demand was for cleanliness and comfort—to her the joys of sight-seeing were secondary.

Some Mail.

The American Express company was a big, hospitable building on the corner. Two-thirds of the Americans in Paris have their mail sent to this office, and when Helen entered a dozen or more were there writing letters and taking advantage of the guide books, dictionaries and bureau of information. At the mail window Helen asked timidly if there was anything for Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Curtis.

The clerk took down a big package of letters from the "C" pigeonhole, shuffled over them quickly and threw out three for Warren and one for herself. Helen went to a desk by the window and eagerly opened the letter from her mother.

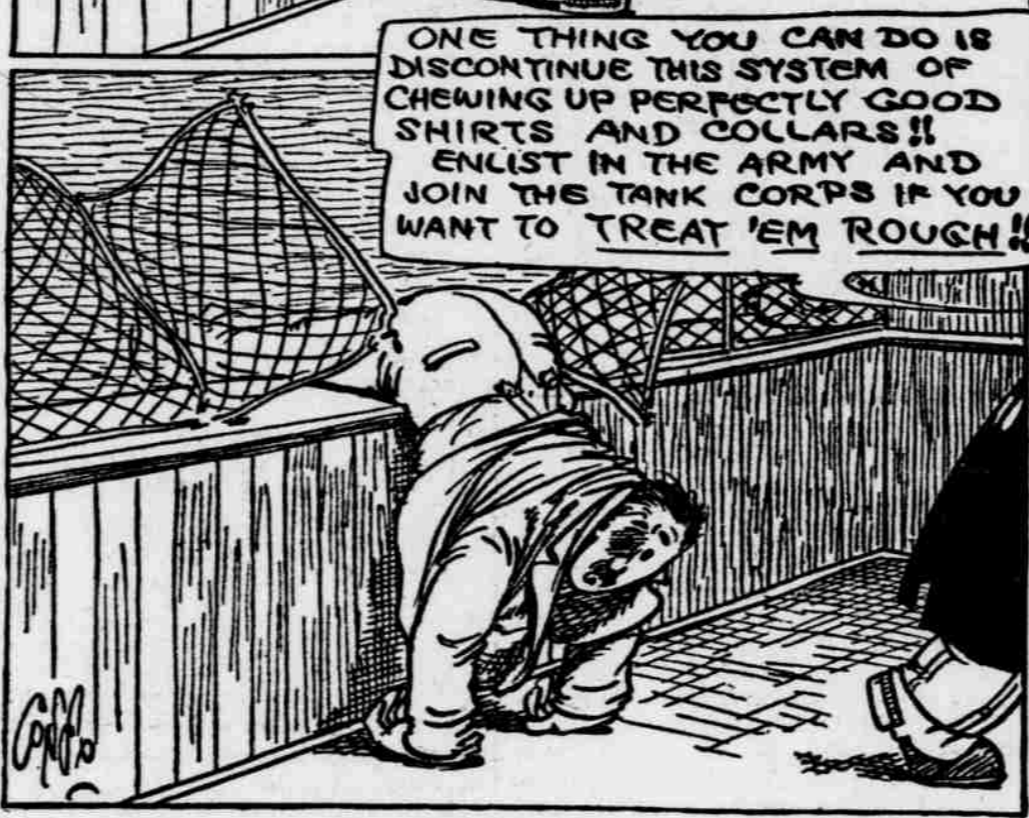
Carterstown, Mo., June 24, 1913.
My Dear Helen: I am writing this several days before you sail so that it will be waiting for you when you reach Paris. Do hope your voyage will be a smooth one and that you will not be seasick.

I am sending you a clipping from the Daily Trumpet. I don't know how they get the news out here, but you see they do. Everyone here thinks it's fine that you can travel so much. To go to London last year and to Paris this year—that's more than anyone in Carterstown can do. Did I tell you that the Episcopal church had made up a fund to send their pastor, Dr. Eldridge, abroad this summer? The two Dobson girls are going also. But they're all going on a cheap line from Montreal. You are very fortunate to be able to go on the best line and in such grand style.

I know you will enjoy all the sights in Paris and the many beautiful shops. Send me a postcard when you can. I

THE OUTBURSTS OF EVERETT TRUE

By CONDO.



will not expect you to write much, as I know you will be too busy.

I hope Warren will be successful in his business, as you write that this is only a business trip.

With love to both. Mother.

The clipping from her home town paper, Helen read with an amused smile:

"Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Curtis, of New York city, are sailing for Paris on the Kaiser Wilhelm. Mrs. Curtis was formerly Miss Helen Allen, of this city and has many friends and relatives here. Mr. Curtis is a prominent lawyer in New York. We hope that their trip will be a pleasant one."

She slipped the letter back into the envelope, wondering if they would think Warren and she were traveling in such "grand style" if they could see the room she had left this morning.

A Daring Plan.
Helen looked up quickly as two American women sat down nearby. "You're staying at the Ritz, aren't you?" she asked the other one.

"Oh, no, we discovered the most wonderful little hotel this year. We've two beautiful rooms for only twenty francs a day. Everything's so clean and the service is perfect. Perhaps you know it—Hotel Roncoray, 10 Rue Montaigne."

Helen hastily scribbled the address in the back of her guide book, then

gathering up her mail went deliberately over to the information desk and asked what bus would take her to the Rue Montaigne.

Two beautiful rooms for twenty francs a day, and they were paying sixteen at that dreadful place! Helen's lips were suddenly set in a little grim line of determination. If this hotel was as that woman had described it, she would brave Warren's wrath and engage the rooms. She would even retain them with a deposit—a deposit large enough to insure their taking them.

It was rarely that Helen ever took even the slightest initiative without consulting Warren, that when a few moments later she climbed on the bus that was to take her to the Hotel Roncoray, her heart beat fast at her own daring.

RAIN FLOODS POST OFFICE BASEMENT; PUMPS IN SERVICE

Elevator service in the federal building was stopped for several hours yesterday afternoon, when backwater from a sewer flooded the basement of the post office. It was necessary to make use of a gasoline engine to pump the water from the basement to prevent serious consequences. Workmen are to be put at work repairing the sewer at the earliest possible time.

RED CROSS CAROLS WILL BE SUNG IN MALLORY CT. TODAY

The Christmas carol sing takes place at Mallory court this afternoon in honor of the Red Cross Christmas drive. The event will be under the direction of Charles Troxell, who has consented to assist the committee of the Red Cross in charge of the Christmas carol entertainment, and the War Camp Community Service, who have endeavored to promote the success of this affair. Mr. Troxell is associated with Y. M. C. A. and entertainment work at Fort Barrancas, Dr. L. deM. Blocker will make a seven-minute talk in honor of the occasion.

The programme will be composed of other various features that have been announced from time to time, including John Frankie, George Ball and Miss Lillian Jacoby, who makes her farewell appearance before leaving for France. The Naval Air Station quartette will also be a feature, as will be singing by the high school girls under the guidance of Mrs. Benn. In case of inclement weather the sing will be held at the Keyser auditorium.

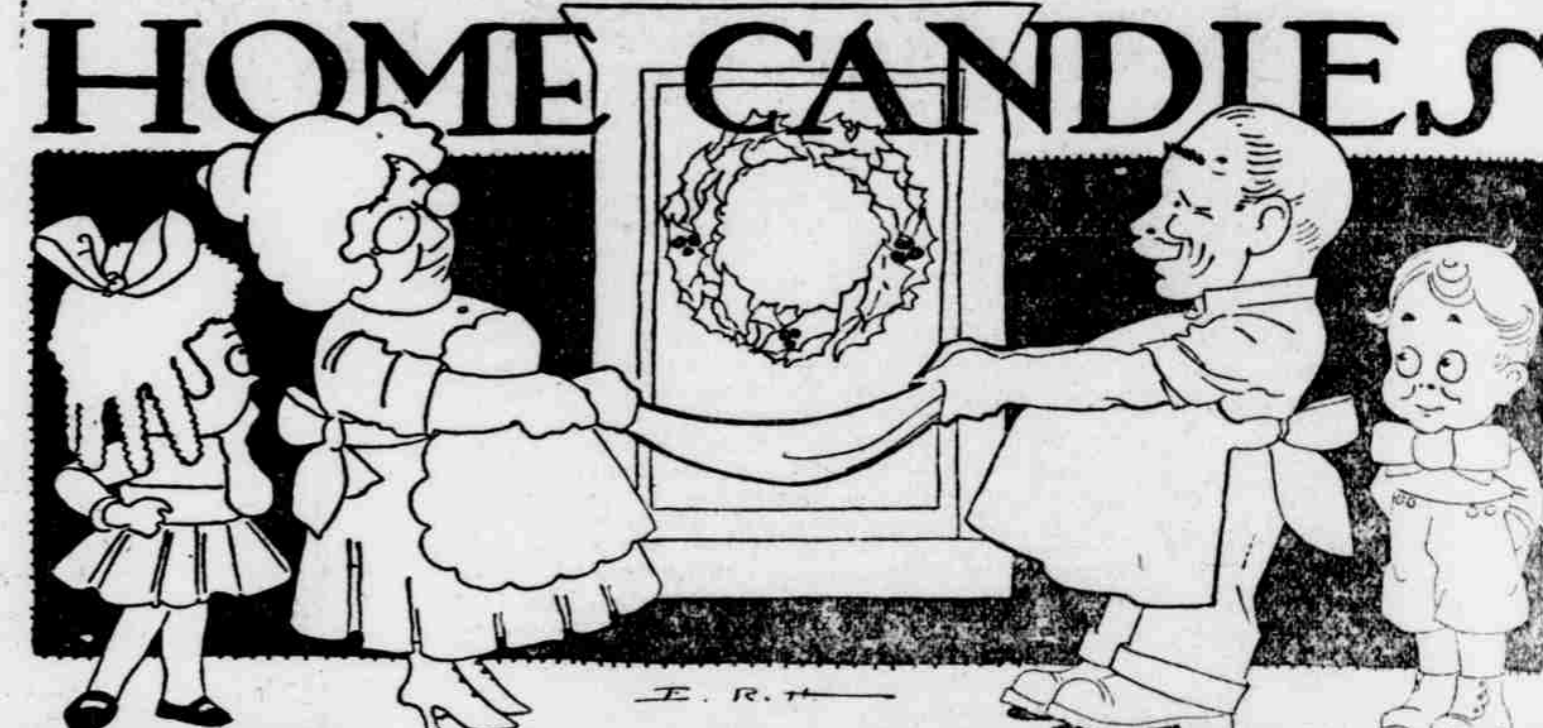
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