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## The Lady of Lyons— Up-to-Date!

### How a Clerk in a Real Estate Office Won His Wealthy Bride by Fairy Tales of Wealth and Family, and the Sad Sequel

for her hand. Mrs. Kirkman steadily refuses to see him and at family and friendly conferences the matter of the annulment of the marriage is considered.

In the play the despised bridegroom goes to war and returns a general. In real life the real estate employe is dolefully and not very successfully going about his duties, caring little whether customers buy bungalows or not. He hangs his head as he passes his sister's abode or not. In the play of the Lady of Lyons relents and goes back to her bridegroom. In the play the Lady of Manhattan says with every sign of truth that she hates him and never wants to see him again. Claude Melnotte was in his bride's eyes handsome in his uniform of a general. George Kirkman, now that his becoming white flannels must be laid aside, looks oddly shrunken and countrified, his bride thinks, when he comes to the city apartment to ring the bell, but is never admitted.

It was the Lady of Lyons's first marriage. 'Twas the lady of Manhattan's second.

Walter Phelps Dodge, author, lawyer and son of a millionaire, wedded her, but took back his gifts of diamonds and laces to her, because he said, his first wife's spirit came to his bedside and demanded them. The bride fled in fright and secured a divorce on the grounds of spiritual cruelty in the Pennsylvania courts. She was recuperating by the sea from the shock of this unhappy marriage when Claude Melnotte II. began his ill-starred wooing.

Mrs. Helen Steck-Dodge-Kirkman the New Lady of Lyons.



**I**f some enterprising theatrical producer were to put on "The Lady of Lyons," Lord Lytton's famous drama, the most appropriate person to take the title role would be Helen Steck Dodge Kirkman.

Indeed, the unfortunate Helen has played the part so well and so faithfully that as a result she may now be found in her fashionable New York apartment nursing her wrongs and poulticing her pride.

For this modern Lady of Lyons has a pride as great as that of the original Lady of Lyons.

She has a beauty as bewitching. And a mind as credulous. And relatives as relentless. Her awakening from dreams of honor and affluence is as bitter. And all has come about in just the same way and through the same motive.

The heartbroken Lady of Lyons and her counterpart, the equally heartbroken Lady of Manhattan, had suitors who loved well but not truthfully, and who erected homes for their brides which neither their bank accounts nor the facts justified. The young men bulidied airy and unsubstantial structures to dazzle the maids of their hearts. And when the maids discovered that they had been deceived they did precisely the same thing. Both went straight home to mamma.

Helen Steck Dodge is the Pauline Deschappelle of this second drama of the Lady of Lyons, daughter of Edwin Steck, the Pennsylvania operator of coal mines, and who is affiliated with the Pennsylvania Railroad, she has lived in as handsome a home in Germantown as the haughty and beautiful Pauline in Lyons. To them both came wooers. Claude Melnotte, the peasant lover in the play by Lord Lytton, described:

A palace litting to eternal Summer its marble walls from out a glossy power.

The wooing by George Kirkman, the employe of a real estate firm at Interlaken, N. J., was less poetical but quite as fervid as that of the

peasant's son disguised as the Prince of Como, in the drama of love and disappointment. It was, according to well authenticated rumors, of this fashion:

"Darling Helen, after the first of August I shall be a member of the firm and will be able to take care of you as luxuriously as you are in your mother's home. Come with me to-morrow to call at our home. My mother is away but my sister will be delighted to receive you."

Next day he escorted the lovely girl who looked so charming in her Summer gown of pale pink batiste and her broad-brimmed hat that drooped, heavy with its weight of pink roses, about her face, to call at his home.

"There it is," he said as they turned a corner and came upon one of the most attractive bungalows in the seaside city. It was as nearly palatial as a bungalow can be, stretching half way down the block, its square brown outlines and huge piazza crowded with swinging couches, gay hammocks and easy chairs, suggesting all the luxuries of the Summer home of wealth in a mood of relaxation. They sauntered past it that the Lady of Manhattan might better view its breadth and the effect of the awnings that spread green as the boughs of a giant shade tree at the windows.

"She is entertaining guests, but it doesn't matter. Come on," and with his fingers resting daintly beneath her elbow the pair mounted the steps and were greeted pleasantly by a young woman who rose at sight of them and came forward with a smile.

"Mrs. Steck Dodge—Mrs. Blank."

Young Mr. Kirkman, in his white flannels, sat silent but smiling. When they sauntered back to the hotel where she was staying with her mother Claude Melnotte II. said:

"And now, darling, since you've met my family, why not be married at once?"

"I would, George dear, only I am afraid mamma would not be pleased."

"Let's be married first and tell her afterwards."

An afternoon spin with her sister and the sister's admirer, a New York broker, had become a daily institution. Mrs. Steck, complaining of a headache, told the quartette to get on as best they could without a chaperon that afternoon and darkened her room, sought her smelling salts, and fell asleep. While mamma nap, girls elope. Mrs. Steck's younger daughter did not elope, but leaving her sister and the New York broker on some pretext for a half hour they went to a clergyman and were married. When Mrs. Steck

awoke she faced startling news and a new son-in-law.

She cried a little, as mothers do at weddings, or when news of weddings is suddenly broken to them, but the new-made bride comforted her with little pats and kisses and this logic:

"Mamma darling, you know I am only twenty and entitled to another chance for happiness. After I married Walter Phelps Dodge and was driven out by his spook wife I determined to marry a young man next time and to marry for love."

Mrs. Steck, who is a fond indulgent mother, dried her eyes, kissed her daughter and said: "Well dear, I hope you will be happy. And George does seem a nice boy. Of course, you met him on the hotel piazza and without an introduction, but now, since you've met his family—"

Soon after, Mrs. Steck and her elder daughter returned to their apartment near the park and Riverside Drive. The honeymoon of the Lady of Manhattan began. It lasted for three days. At the end of that time there was an eclipse of the honeymoon. At least it was hidden by a storm of tears.

The bride hurried back to New York. She rushed into her mother's apartment, flung herself upon her breast and burst into tears.

"Mamma," she sobbed, "I have married an impostor. That lovely girl wasn't his sister at all. And he hasn't any m-money; hardly a cent. We went to a miserable little room like a cell, in an inn. There wasn't any bath room. Oh, it was dreadful!"

"If she wasn't his sister who was she? Helen dear, are you mad?"

"Yes, I am, mamma, but not in the way you mean. When I asked him why his sister didn't call he said it was a joke. I went to see her and she said, 'Yes, I had never met him but once before, when his firm was selling me the place. I wondered at the time why he called.' I asked him why he lied about his income, making it out to be several times larger than it was, and he said: 'A man's got a right to lie to a woman when he's making love to her. All's fair in love.' Then, mamma, I came

George Kirkman, the Second Claude Melnotte, Did Most of His Wooing in a Borrowed Automobile. Here He is with Mrs. Steck-Dodge.



straight home and I'm never going back to him. I hate him."

George Kirkman followed his bride to the city and tried to see her. He saw, instead, her mother and sister. "We are sorry, but Helen won't see you," they said. He went away and telephoned her. Her replies over the public communicator were in effect the angry words of Pauline to her new-made lord:

"This is my bridal home and thou my bridegroom! O fool, O dupe, O wretch! I see it all.

The bride's family sent detectives to Asbury Park to make inquiries

about the intruder. One detective reported that his father, who was dead, had once been a shoe string peddler, that his mother kept a boarding house. Whether these were true or not, they flung the bride into an abyss of hysterics.

Claude Melnotte had the grace to be sorry for his victim. Said the peasant's son:

"Thy father's arms shall take thee to thy home. The law shall do thee justice, and Thy right to bless another with thy love.

The young real estate clerk and errand man, less noble than the poet, rages in jealousy. He fancies every man to whom his twenty-year-old bride used to bow prettily is a suitor

"Oh, the visions she had on the porch as he talked. Autos and castles and everything money could buy float-d around her—in talk. Bubbles, bubbles that burst at last with a bang!"

