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a woman; while her mother pointed out with considerable fluency that matrimony was always less expensive than breach of promise actions. George gave way — having a horror of the fierce light of publicity which beats upon law-courts — and became very melancholy. Nor was he much restored to gaiety by the joys of married life; for Matilda rapidly developed a flow of small talk which astounded him; when George ordered her to bring him a cup of tea she prescribed herself a glass of beer; and when he called for his slippers she threw the dirty boots at his head and told him to clean them. Matrimony was not all bee-keeping and rose-pruning for George.

Still more tragic were affairs at Drivelford, where Nellie and Sidney had come to realise that, for them at least, the married state was unattainable. Old ladies can be very selfish sometimes, and in that stimulating atmosphere, which shared with many others the distinction of being the healthiest in the land, Miss Yard grew no weaker daily. She suffered from a slight cold last winter, but was all the better for it in the spring. Indeed in merry May-time she made the shocking suggestion that Sidney should teach her to ride the bicycle.

With such dispiriting examples as the Yellow Leaf, whose longevity was becoming a public scandal, and whose conduct was disgraceful, as he would