

husband, heartily, pinching the cheek that had grown suddenly red. "I knew you could do it if you made up your mind to it. I have great faith in your ability, Mary. There's my car. Good-bye.

"And I am a hypocrite! Who ever would have thought it, or believed I'd be afraid to tell my husband anything?" and little Mrs. Swift wiped her eyes as she laid the roll of bills away. "I must try to deserve his commendation hereafter. I must manage better than I have done. Oh, dear, I never realized before that I had a miserly streak in my nature. I'm getting so I grudge every cent I spend."

That afternoon she sat down to make out a bill of fare for the week, carefully planning each item. "We must have a chocolate cake—but there, butter is thirty-five cents and cake isn't very wholesome, anyway, unless it is sponge-cake, which doesn't need butter—but eggs are twenty-five cents a dozen. Ginger-bread will answer. Then we will boil a ham—oh, no, I saw by this morning's paper that hams are sixteen cents a pound, and smoked shoulders only twelve. I wonder if shoulders are just as good. We'll try one anyway. Pies—just then the door burst open and a whirlwind entered the room—two whirlwinds, in fact, for Maizie forgot her increasing inches and lengthened skirts in the excitement of the moment. "Only look—engraved invitation, and Jack's got one, too, and it's going to be the swellest affair they've ever given, and that's saying a great deal, you know, mamma."

"If it was anywhere else under the canopy I wouldn't go, 'cause I hate girls parties good and plenty. But they know how to do the square thing by us fellows up there—act like we were just as important as if we wore curls and white dresses."

"What are you talking about, children? Whose party is it? Come here, Jack," and the mother drew her long-limbed youth to her side and put her arm about him as she straightened his tie and smoothed his hair.

"Elise Benham's birthday party next Thursday week, and mamma I'll have to have every stitch new—all the girls are going to."

"My Tuxedo suit is all right, but I'll have to have new shoes—patent leathers, mum, and silk stockings. You won't give me long trousers, so I want the space between my short ones and the ground to look as decent as it can—there is a good deal of it, you know, now."

Mrs. Swift slipped her unfinished memorandum in her pocket. What did such pitiful economies amount to in the face of young America demanding two party outfits at one fell blow?

"We will see," she began, weakly. "Oh, mamma, don't take time to see," implored Maizie, sitting down on the mother's lap with coaxing face close to hers. "We've never been invited to anything like this in our whole lives! It's as gorgeous as a party for grown-ups, and you wouldn't want to see your only children looking like poverty's new, would you? All the girls say my clothes are lovely, they think you have the most exquisite taste, and they all just envy me. I should die with mortification if I was the only one who wasn't appropriately gowned."

The funny mixture of child and young lady in the speech would have been amusing to the mother if it hadn't been tragic under existing circumstances.

Before she could reply Jack chimed in: "If I can't have what I want I won't go. Don Springer wears pats and silk stockings

whenever he dresses up, and they are no richer than we are."

"Be still, children. You are not usually sent from home unsuitably clad, and I think you needn't borrow trouble. Jack, sit down with your books awhile and Maizie go to your practicing. I shall have to think, there will be some plans to make."

There was only one thing to do. John said the economics mustn't touch the children. It would take every cent she had, and next week's savings to get them ready. "But then I can do without my going-away bag," said the little woman, cheerily. "It was foolish to plan for it—useless extravagance. My old one will do nicely with a little polishing. Then my walking shoes are perfectly good. I'll wear my slippers in the house and my shoes out of doors and save those for our trip. I'll have my nice hat to fall back on as a sort of piece de resistance, and my new gloves shall be faultless in fit and quality. I shall still have enough to buy some souvenirs for my friends who are not to go."

The next ten days were busy ones, and the roll of bills melted away like magic, until not a vestige remained. But the children were like pictures in their party garb, and when John had expressed his pride and pleasure in them and added: "You deserve all the credit mamma," she blushed like a girl and remembered the empty treasury without a pang.

"I'll buy my hat next Monday afternoon," Mrs. Swift promised herself, "then the money cannot be spent for anything else. I think I'll adopt that plan from this time on." So the six dollars were placed in her purse instead of the little drawer, and Mary bustled about getting things in shape so that Bridget could steer the domestic ship in her absence without fear of squalls.

"Is is gin' down town ye are, mum? Will ye stop by the coal-yard and order up the load of coal, if ye please? I've not enough for me ironin' to-morrow."

A sudden chill struck the mistress. "Why, Bridget, it can't be that we are needing coal again. I thought we had at least enough for another month!"

"Indade then ye have not. It's yourself has had the benefit of ivery lump of it. What with the ironin' and that bakin', it's no wonder if it's gone. You can't ate your cake an' kape it, too—no more ye can coal, mum."

"Very well I will attend to it. I may change my mind about going out this afternoon, but I will telephone the order."

Fifteen minutes later Mrs. Swift has brought her last summer's hat out of hiding and was critically examining it.

"How fortunate that I am handy about such things. I don't believe I shall need a new hat at all; these materials are good and can be used again as well as not. It would have been wasterful to buy another and let this lie unused. I'll get my handsome gloves and pretty new collars, there save all the rest to spend in St. Louis.

But the next week brought in an uncommonly large gas bill. Mrs. Swift remembered with a pang that John's wallet had looked flat that morning, and she had imagined he looked worried. So she paid the gas man and bade farewell to gloves and collars, remembering thankfully that the ones she already possessed were not past use. "And I'll have my souvenir money, which is the most important," she added, happily.

At twelve o'clock John came home. "Get your bonnet on, little woman, and bring your purse. We'll run down town and

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"But, John, this is so sudden! I can't!"

"Yes, you can. I find I can leave more conveniently now than later. Sister Marion will be over in an hour to stay while we're gone. I stopped by to let her know your plans. Hurry, Mary, let's catch the next car."

"Why, John, you—I didn't expect.—You never go shopping with me and I've got my things already."

"Your new toggery all bought? dress and everything?"

"Not exactly new, but plenty good enough."

"Not good enough for you unless it's very good, indeed, and new from head to foot. I'll advance what you lack. Get your things on, dear. I insist."

"John, I can't I—." The sweet face flushed, the brown eyes filled as the little woman pointed to the empty desk drawer. "I didn't deserve your good opinion," she said, her voice breaking. "I tried to but I failed. By the time I'd attended to the coal and the plumber and the children and gas and everything it took all. Oh, John, I'm so sorry I am extravagant, but I've done my best." The big tears fell at last and the trembling hand hid a burning face. But not for long. It was soon transferred to a broad shoulder, and a pair of arms both strong and tender lifted the little figure.

"I should think so, Mary; I should, indeed. It is a wonder I didn't send the taxes and office rent to you for collection. Coal, gas and plumber! Why, dear, did you think I wanted you to do all that? Bless your heart I'll teach you a lesson or two yet. I have large faith in your ability, as I told you, but I don't expect even you to make six dollars do the work of sixty-six. Stop crying, sweetheart, and come with me. We are going shopping—do you hear? My wife is to dress to suit me this time—to have whatever she wants, and if I ever say 'economy' to you again I hope somebody will give me what I deserve."

It might have been their bridal tour for the happiness it held. Though for that matter, no bridal tour ever travelled meant to the newly-wedded pair what a journey together—be it long or short—means to two who have mutually learned through the vicissitudes of years what love really is.

The little woman in her new brown dress, her "really nice" hat, her "faultless" gloves, her silver-mounted going-away bag, filled with dainty belongings, could only accept it all blissfully and remember that in her pretty new purse was money enough for souvenirs for every friend she possessed.