

Hired Wedding Garments.

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove, or so says a minstrel whose barp notes, less grand than those of Tara, have yet a pretty, old-fashioned melody of their own. And, possibly, this wide-reaching sovereignty may have helped to sweeten the atmosphere of No. 91 Ridge street for the fastidious Norman Keith, pacing the filthy pavements for as short a space either way as would permit him to turn. Some weariness even then was necessary to avoid stepping on various mud-encrusted children who wandered between the doorsteps of "M. Schneider, Ladies' Tailor," and the gutter; or being jostled by sorrow women passing with shawls over their heads, or unclean, freight looking men in long beards and coats and shabby tall hats.

He had been waiting now nearly an hour for the reappearance of his wife—upstairs with M. Schneider. "Ah, dere, Mister Dude!" said a glib, urbane, portly man in a brown frock coat, and strong words rose to his lips. "But just then a tall young lady, brown-eyed and rosy-cheeked, came quickly down the steps. She smiled, and he straightway brightened, for they had been married but a few months, and it was an unadorned belief of his that the sun, moon and stars shone in her smiles.

"Here, take my arm. We must force a way through this mob. What a beastly piece! Even to hang on to the platform of a Grand street car will be bliss after this. For heaven's sake, Isabel, is there no dress-maker up town, that you come to this man in such a quarter? How did you ever hear of him?"

"Oh, it was Mrs. Halton found him from something she saw in the paper, and lost her way the first time, but has all her dresses made there now. My dear, his price is absurdly low, and such a beautiful fit. It would give me a beautiful fit. I know, to attend his proceedings again. As it is a tailor, however, you will find his gowns better fashioned, more quaint, more pleasing, more commendable than some industrious woman's work. What a crowd in that little den when we went up, and a surly brute he looks. "He is a little rough," Isabel admitted, twists and twirls you about like a dummy when he is measuring. "He does—lightning gathering." "I wish you would not go like that. With glasses it makes you resemble Emily Bay, and you know, dearest, like Ben Bolt's sweet Alice, I tremble with fear at your frown."

Her laughing coquetry did not wholly dissipate the cloud. "Oh, see here," she said, pressing his arm a little closer. "Is it not delightfully ridiculous? Is a small shop window, near Grand street, was an inscription: "Wedding Outfit to Hire." A draggled white satin gown hung side by side with a rusty dress coat, and on a cushion in front lay a pair of soiled white slippers and crushed and tawdry orange flower wreath.

"To hire?" repeated Isabel, with her pretty, low laugh. "Imagine hiring one's wedding suit and returning it next day." "It is droll," he assented, peering at the things and forgetting his irritation. Just then their car came along, and they made a little rush for it, and succeeded in getting on. But by ill chance she was squeezed into a corner in a decidedly rough-looking crowd of passengers, and he, near the door, could see but the top of her little toque, and stood next a man whose breath was violently suggestive of the cup which cheers, and also inebriates.

So his grievance had a chance to reassert itself, and when, at the end of a lengthy ride, they were walking the short distance to their apartment he said, a trifle peremptorily: "Now, Isabel, I hope this is the last trip to that den. I cannot spare another afternoon to go with you, and, of course, you cannot go without an escort. But, as you have been there twice to be measured, he can send you home the gown now, and if he doesn't—you are not quite a Flora McFlimsy."

"How do you know that?" innocently. "Supposing that my wedding outfit was hired, and I am trying to acquaintate a few gowns gradually." "Try to acquaintate a few ideas instead," he replied with impertinence. And having, with lackeylike, let themselves inside the friendly shelter of their door, he stooped to kiss her by way of stimulus. It was high time they should hasten to dress and dine, as it was their evening for receiving a few friends, men who eschewed them every Thursday, a select detachment from Norman Keith's Bachelor Club, "The Night-blooming Cereus."

The rules of the club forced him to resign on marriage. "But I don't mean to give you all up," he declared, "and Adams, you and Clay, and some of the others must come to my rooms once a week."

Itching Skin

Distress by day and night. That's the complaint of those who are so unfortunate as to be afflicted with Eczema or Salt Rheum—and outward applications do not cure. The source of the trouble is in the blood—makes that pure and this itching, burning, itching skin disease will disappear.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

rides the blood of all impurities and cures all eruptions. rub each other the wrong way, but I can make it appropriate otherwise if you will help me to cook, for our bony-handed slaved retires early; and I have invested in a delightful chafing-dish and a little book with fifty recipes for it.

And now a gay little supper, with many cooks who did not spoil the broth, was an understood ending to informal talk and occasional music. Adams, the journalist, having been to a 'frat night,' did not make his appearance on this occasion until the alcoholic lamp was already lighted.

"Isn't the omelette from afar and said 'Ha, he!' he declared, entering. "It is 'aux fines herbes,' and has a suspicion of ham in it. But why should we work so conscientiously through the 'Fifty Recipes,' Mrs. Keith? That last kidney stew 'an Madere' was just perfection.

"We must not repeat ourselves," Isabel pronounced inexorably, until we have tried each of the fifty in turn." She had tied an apron over her gray and silver and tucked up her sleeves daintily.

"Oh, come, come," cried Clay, with impatience, "the play's the thing. Restrain your greediness for a while, Adams, and tell us about it." "Fairly good; some effective situations; Mrs. Dean does very well, but a trifle plot, which always vexes me. Young couple passionately attached; some trifling light as air; coqueness, suspicion, estrangement, outsider's meddling, and a general wrong-headedness and careful avoidance of saying or doing the obvious thing, which makes you long to shake them all. True to life, perhaps—I'm a bachelor myself—but seems impossible with sanity."

"You count too assuredly," said Clay, "on an invariable 'meas' in corpore sano, and don't allow for indisposition, mood, circumstances, and the thousand and one guests which whip humanity about." "I do," said Adams obstinately, "but I call it all wrong-headedness, if I have the wit—or what it takes—to acquire a treasure, I might have the sense to keep it. Murpherson, you lazy animal, stop sketched Mrs. Keith as 'la belle chocolatiere,' and get up and hand the coupe around."

The boyish-looking artist laughed and blushed. His admiration of Mrs. Keith's poses was an open secret. "Speaking of marriage," said her husband—take care, Isabel, that's hot—Mrs. Keith and I saw something odd today. He described the 'wedding outfit' window. "Suggestive idea, is it not? A humble couple returning the festal garb, donned for a day only, and going back to paraded and dingy attire. Speaking broadly, and as in unregenerate bachelor days, I think the analogy might be pardoned."

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"Sure," said the observant Mary Ann, the mistress will be in soon. She said she was going way down below Grand street, but would be back before you."

He did not answer, but a slight hardness settled about his mouth. He went down the front steps again, reflecting bitterly: "My wishes evidently have small weight."

He walked round the block, and one or two cars passed without her, and then he saw her slipping from another. It was a boyish thought to come to a lawyer of eight years' standing, but he had nursed his wrath until it was quite warm; and he suddenly turned up the collar of his coat, pulled the soft hat he had picked up over his eyes, and stationed himself just round the corner, where the metropolitan gait was a mere mockery. "My lady comes at last," he muttered, in ironic quotation, "timid and stepping fast."

"The last time I met you you had a scheme that you were sure would make money." "Yes, I remember." "Did you ever put it through?" "Didn't have to. It fell through."

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Table with columns: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun, P.M., A.M.

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