

LOVE versus STAMPS

(By Stephen Golder.)

"I want a real holiday, Jack. It is ages since we have been away together. Surely you can get off this summer?"

He raised his head, and looked at her with blinking, near-sighted eyes.

"Not until September, dear. Two of the staff will be away during August, and I could not leave then, but I was thinking we might manage a week or so abroad—in Switzerland, eh?"

She clapped her hands.

"That would be delightful," she cried.

He smiled at her genuine pleasure.

"We could be in Berne for the International Exhibition," he added.

Immediately her face fell, and her mouth hardened.

"Is that why you want to go to Switzerland?" she exclaimed. "I might have guessed it was something to do with stamps!"

With a gesture of extreme annoyance she flung herself out of the room.

Jack Meadows sighed, then turned back to his work with a shrug of his shoulders.

It was always the way when stamps were mentioned. Mrs. Jack Meadows was jealous—wildly jealous of her husband's collection. During the first few months of their married life she had attempted to take some interest in her husband's hobby, but when he threw up his Government position in order to edit a philatelic journal, and spent practically all his time pouring over stamp news and stamp collections, she began to grow weary of the task. As the months passed her ennui changed to positive dislike. In her opinion Jack was simply wasting his time, and devoting hours which might have been spent with her, to his senseless collection. She refused to see that the collection represented a very substantial nest egg, which Jack was carefully saving up for her, and did not understand that it was a splendid investment. She was quite unreasonable and foolish, and succeeded in making herself very unhappy over what should have been a source of pleasure. She persuaded herself that she was a much neglected wife, and that her husband was wickedly extravagant and selfish.

It happened that night that Jack was called away hastily, and left a valuable book of exchanges belonging to a friend open on the table. Mrs. Meadows came into the study, still smarting under the new grievance of the proposed holiday at Berne. She took the book up and looked at the stamps, carelessly—fancying they belonged to her husband. She knew enough to realize they were worth a considerable sum, but just how much she had no idea. With a sudden wave of unreasoning childish anger, she tossed the little volume into the fire!

Immediately the deed was done she would have cut off her hand to get it back—but it was too late. Jack was a chilly mortal, and though it was July a bright little fire burned in his grate. With horrible rapidity the flames ate up the thin paper and with fascinated eyes she watched the last charred embers disappear up the chimney. Just at that moment, Jack's footstep sounded in the hall.

"Well," he said cheerfully, forgetting the little unpleasantness of an hour ago, "the fire looks cheerful and it is good to find you waiting in my den little woman! It is like old times, eh? You always came to meet me then, didn't you?"

His voice had no sound of reproach, but there was just a tinge of sorrow in it. A pang of remorse smote her. She turned toward him, her face raised to his, forgetting every-

thing except that this was her husband—the one man she loved.

At the end of another hour Jack turned to his writing table. Where were the stamps? Surely he had left them lying there? His wife saw the anxious look in his eyes—saw—and remembered! With a look of piteous entreaty she laid her hand on his arm.

"Jack, I—I burned them," she faltered.

"Burned them?" His voice was loud with horror. "Good heavens. Were you mad?"

"I was angry because you seem to care more for your stamps than you do for me," she stammered, "and even when we go away for a holiday you want to go to a philatelic exhibition."

He laughed bitterly.

"There will be no holiday this year," he said, roughly. "Those exchanges were valued at five hundred dollars, which will take all the cash I could have spent on the trip. You have indeed had your revenge."

Taking up his hat he went out, slamming the door behind him.

The next evening a crushed and penitent wife met him in the hall, and thrust a cheque for \$500 into his hand.

"How on earth did you get that?" he gasped.

"Never mind," she said, a little breathlessly. "I got it quite honestly, and promise me you will take me to Berne, for the Philatelic Exhibition in September."

"Not unless you tell me where and how you raised the money?"

He looked down suddenly at her hand. A valuable diamond ring, which had belonged to her mother, had gone.

"Darling—darling," he cried, "do you think I would let you make a sacrifice like that?"

For answer she threw herself into his arms. "Better to sacrifice anything than to lose your love," she sobbed.

Gently he drew her towards him.

"There was never any danger of that sweetheart. Now tell me where that ring was sold, and we will go at once and get it back. Then we will start saving up, ever so hard, and perhaps we may get our holiday after all."

That was the end of Mrs. Jack Meadow's jealousy of her husband's postage stamps. But whether they got to Berne or not—time will show.

MR. LUKIN JOHNSTON

Whose picture appears on the cover of this issue, represented the Vancouver Daily Province at the Washington Conference, and shortly after his return gave his impressions to a meeting of the local Journalists' Institute, of which he was first president.

Mr. Johnston's side-lights on and impressions of the happenings at Washington were of such an illuminating and suggestive nature that it was gratifying to find his address as given to the Vancouver Kiwanis Club, thoroughly appreciated. He claims to be a scribe rather than a speaker, but, as he warmed to his subject, his delivery left nothing to be desired. We suggest that other organizations who wish direct light on the procedure and outstanding personalities at Washington, should "book Mr. Johnston"—if they can.

GEO. T. WADDS

Photographer

337 HASTINGS STREET WEST

VANCOUVER, B.C.

SEYMOUR 1002