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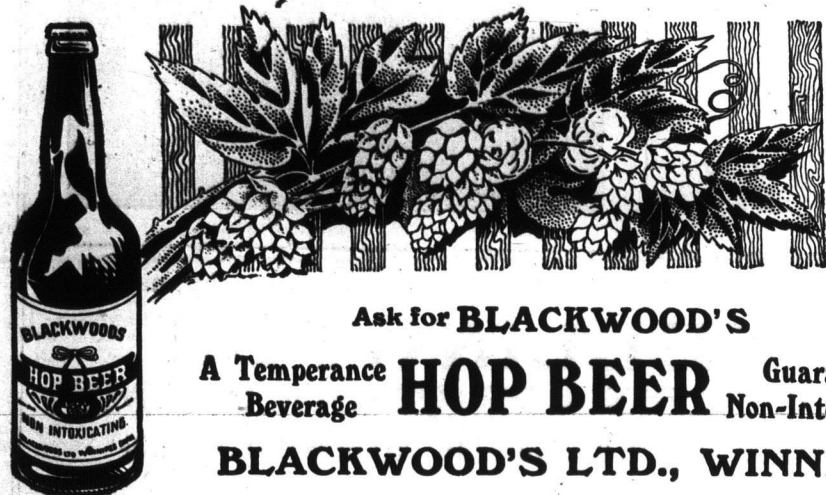
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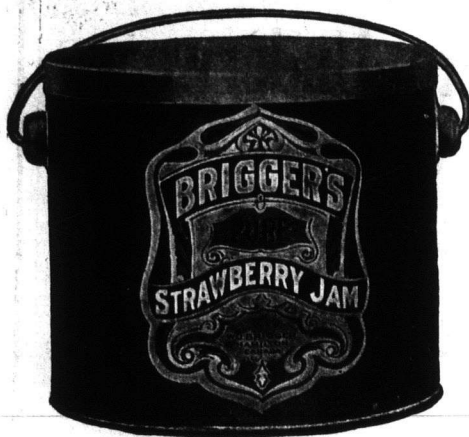
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At this instant the curtains of the smoking room parted and the Pullman porter entered.

"Your berth's all ready, Major," said the porter.

My companion rose from his chair, straightened his leg, held out his hand and said:

"You can understand now, sir, how I feel about these continued outrages. I don't mean to say that every man is like Aleck, but I do mean to say that Aleck would never have been as loyal as he is but for the way my father brought him up. Good-night, sir."

He was gone before I could do more than express my thanks for his confidence. It was just as well—any further word of mine would have been super-

fluous. Even my thanks seemed out of place.

In a few minutes the porter returned with, "Lower four's all ready, sir."

"All right, I'm coming. Oh, porter."

"Yes, sir."

"Porter, come closer. Who is that gentleman I've been talking to?"

"That's Major Sam Garnett, sir."

"Was he in the war?"

"Yes, sir, he was, for a fact. Got more'n six bullets in him now. I jes' done helped him off wid his wooden leg. It was cut off below de knee. His old man Aleck most generally takes care of dat leg. He didn't come wid him this trip. But he'll be on de platform in de mornin' a-waitin' for him."



Queen's Own, Toronto, in firing line, Aldershot Army Manoeuvres.

A Second Proposal.

By Ethel Stefana Stevens.

Professor Richard Cowan, D.Sc., F.R.S., had another housekeeper, and her ways were not his ways. The wheels of his household no longer ran smoothly, for the days of ideal housekeepers have vanished, and in their stead has come a weary succession of inefficient widows and spinsters who know neither the meaning of peace nor the rudiments of economy.

Once, a year ago, under the excellent rule of Mrs. Colepepper, he had almost been unaware of the daily machinery of his household. Now he found himself forced to consider questions of domestic misrule and dissension to such an extent that the even tenor of his well-ordered and scholarly mind was uncomfortably disturbed. Mrs. Colepepper had married—and at fifty-two. It was preposterous behaviour, and ever since her departure everything had been at sixes and sevens.

The professor moved irritably round the room. He must tell Mrs. Montgomery that she must go, and tell her that evening. It would put him off work for a week, of course, but the woman was impossible, and it must be done. He would go round to his cousin's; he could not face the impending scene without some moral support. John's house was his haven of refuge in these troublous days; John's library was a very abode of quiet and comfort, and John's young wife a serene, presiding goddess, who was always ready to help the professor to solve his domestic problems with practical and tactful advice.

John and his wife were lingering over the dinner-table—they dined late; and John's wife fussed prettily over the professor as she made him sit in the big armchair by the fire and brewed fresh coffee for him over the bright blue flame of her little silver apparatus. She always prepared the coffee herself, and it is a fine art only perfected by the elect among women and wives.

"Then I must hurry out," she said. "Marion Bel-stairs has a bridge-party next door, and I have promised to make a fourth for an hour until her brother comes."

"I will hear all about your troubles when I come back, Richard," she called back over a chignon beruffled shoulder. "You and Jean will smoke in the library till then, won't you?"

A moment afterwards she and her pale blue cloak had vanished.

"What does she mean?" John asked.

The professor sighed.

"I am sending Mrs. Montgomery away. She drinks, I am positive, and you know I don't notice these things unless they are very apparent and unpleasant. And I am very busy on these radium tests. I ought to tell her to-night. It's a great nuisance."

"And you're looking out for squalls, eh? This is the fourth, isn't it, old man? You see unlucky. Have a cigar."

"I shouldn't mind," the professor continued in gentle, plaintive tones as he lit the proffered Havana, "if it did not interfere with my work. It upsets my whole nervous system. I find it impossible to concentrate."

John smiled. "You should invest in a permanent housekeeper," he said heartily.

"How?" asked the professor.

"Marry." The professor looked at him blankly and then somewhat testily replied, "Rubbish!"

"Not at all," John persisted. "Why shouldn't you? It is not right for a man of your age to be single when there are so many pretty and charming women without husbands. We've all got to cave in. You know, old chap, sooner or later, and the sooner the better. When you're older—and you're close on forty now!—there won't be so much choice about it."

"But," the professor objected irritably, "women interfere with work. They make the house uncomfortable. One has to have an At Home day: calling, and all the rest of it. I admit, however, that it would save me trouble in the house."

"Have you ever thought Mouse a trouble?" ("Mouse" was John's pet name for his pretty little wife.)

"Oh," and the professor sighed. "But Dolly is different."

"Of course she is," her husband assented, with a comfortable air of proprietorship. "But you might find that your wife was 'different,' too. You'd better take the plunge, old man. It would be the making of you. You're getting middle-aged before your time."

The professor smiled, and he had a pleasant smile, too, which ruled out the thoughtful puckers on his studious forehead and brow.

"No woman would have me," he said, a trifle wistfully. "I'm a fossil, John, by now. And I shouldn't know how to set about it."