

# Mrs. Mainwaring's Husband—A Short Story



A GROUP of people had assembled to watch the guests come out from the annual conversation at the Scribblers' Club. They were not many in number, only those specially anxious to see those of their fellow creatures who had become more or less celebrities, had braved the fog of a winter evening.

Glimpses into the brilliantly-lit hall, showed groups of men and women talking together, the rippling sound of laughter was every now and then distinguished when the door opened to allow of some departure, for the night was still young, and the "Scribblers" as a rule were late birds.

A tall, dark man came slowly down the steps, his overcoat thrown open over the immaculate evening dress of the well-bred Londoner. His appearance spoke of distinction, proclaimed him the well-bred man of the world, his face betokened individuality, his chin alone would have been enough to tell even a casual observer that here was a man of determination, a man above his fellows.

"Who is that?" said a woman in the crowd of onlookers to her companion; "looks as if he were somebody, doesn't he?"

"Oh no!" was the reply, in a voice in which surprise and amusement were blended; "he's nobody at all, only Mrs. Mainwaring's husband!"

The man coming down the steps heard distinctly what was said, and an ugly look flashed into his dark eyes.

"Cab, sir?" asked an attendant standing at the door.

Edward Mainwaring waved him impatiently aside; he did not feel he had the patience to drive, walking was easier, his brain felt clearer when his body was in motion. Quickly he strode along through the gathering fog, which seemed imperceptibly to thicken as he neared the luxurious flat in Chelsea which was his destination.

The light burnt low in the hall as he entered.

"Your mistress not at home yet?" he said to the maid who emerged sleepily from the kitchen regions—rather a superfluous question, to which he hardly waited to hear the reply. "You can go to bed, I shall wait up for her myself," and he shut the dining-room door behind him.

There was not much need for him to have asked such an absurd question, he said to himself miserably, as he sank into one of the luxurious chairs. Was not his wife the centre of the brilliant scene he had just left? He could

close his eyes and see the tall, handsome figure, and that wonder in her face which never seemed to have left it since the time of her marvelous success. Again he heard the soft voice replying to some more than usually audacious compliment from one of the group surrounding her, the music of that low sweet laugh—the same laugh she had given in those long-ago days when he knew he was all the world to her, and he had condescended to be a little loving to her—the woman who was working so hard for that success which so far seemed only somewhere, in the distance, like a chimera of their imagination.

Now it had come in real earnest; tonight Mrs. Mainwaring was the guest of honor at the Scribblers' Club, the much-coveted blue ribbon of a literary woman's career. How distinctly he could remember how she looked as she stood up to answer the toast of the evening—herself.

The light danced in her eyes, there was a quiver about the sensitive mouth as if she were nervous, then confidence gained with utterance, and she made a speech brilliant in wit, great in eloquence, perfect in style. And he—her husband—stood afar off.

If, like Peter of old, he did not weep bitterly, it was not for want of feeling bad enough to do so, but of course appearances had to be preserved. How long they had struggled to keep up appearances in quite another way on the tiny income which was their portion before this wave of success came along! how hard they had both worked to make the pot boil—that pot with which they so light-heartedly set up house in the days of their poverty—their youth—and what now seemed to him—their happiness, though perhaps he had not always been as considerate of her as he might have been, as others were now. But then, of course, a man had so many worries to contend with; now he also was successful, to a moderate extent, in his profession. He thanked God that at least he had not to be dependent on his wife's earnings, although to give to him out of her scanty store in those hard-up times had always seemed a quite comprehensible joy to the man of such a different nature. No, it was well he had not to profit by the success which he looked on with such jealous eyes, the success that had slowly, surely come between them like a snake in the green grass of plenty. Lately he had not even read her work. Somehow he felt angry about it, could not bear to think of it. A copy of her last book—the one which had brought so much increase of fame—lay upon the table. He took it up, and looked at the cover. "A Flame of Fire," by Ida Mainwaring. "Mrs. Mainwaring's

husband"—again the voice came mockingly back to him, and he flung the volume down upon the table.

Yet why should he not read it? it would pass the time until his wife returned, and after all, it was rather silly for the husband to be the last man to read the famous authoress' literary productions.

He opened the book half way through, and commenced reading with an inward protest. By-and-by he forgot everything, the lateness of the hour, the dying fire, even his unreasoning jealousy, in an absorbing interest in the book. Surely, surely, this woman knew humanity with almost an uncanny knowledge! Something seemed oddly familiar to him in the plot, the situations of the story, a phrase here and there sounded as if he must have dreamt it; then bit by bit it all came back to him—it was their own love story he was reading, their brief courtship from a woman's point of view.

Why had he not thought of it sooner? Of course, he would have guessed at once, but there seemed so much added, the little frills of imagination with which a woman always endows what are merely episodes in some men's lives, courtship and marriage.

He supposed he had been as much in love as most men—he remembered how her appearance fascinated him, how his heart beat quicker when he first clasped her in his arms, with a lover's embrace. But still, it never appeared of much consequence, when, owing to what seemed some more important engagement, he had frequently to break his word about meeting or coming to see her—how could he tell it would have affected her as it did the woman in the book—how was he to know women took these little things so hardly? Then afterwards—in the first year of matrimony—he had sometimes called himself a fool for marrying young; but that night he had gone too far to draw back and retain the honor of a gentleman, the night he had wrung an admission of affection from her trembling lips; that had, of course, settled the question. After all, he had done what seemed right in marrying her, and, after all, perhaps it was best for a man to be married, it kept him out of mischief. And he had always cared for her, of course he had. With a sudden pang he realized that now he loved his wife a hundred thousand times more than in those long-ago days, now when it was too late. First the hard pull of poverty brought them nearer together, in a way, then the success which surrounded their lives, now fired his heart for her with a passion he had never deemed conceivable in those calmer days of their early married life.

He threw the book down upon the table, and leant his face on his hands. How long he had remained in this position he knew not, when he was startled by a light touch on his shoulder.

"Are you asleep, Edward? Why did you sit up? It was foolish of you; didn't you know I always carry a latch-key?"

"A token of woman's independence," he sneered jumping to his feet.

His head felt strange, as if he had awakened from a dream.

"I suppose so," she laughed lightly, "we business-women could hardly do without them, anyway."

"And I suppose everybody must be a business-woman nowadays."

"She looked at him with frank surprise in her eyes."

"How funny you are tonight, Teddy! whatever is wrong with you?"

It struck her as a terrible thought—had he been drunk? but no, the very idea was absurd.

"Mrs. Mainwaring's husband," the scornful phrase came back to him like the lash of a whip. He almost hated his wife as he looked at her in all the brave beauty of her evening finery. She threw her sable cloak upon a chair, and came near him.

"Teddy!" she said with real alarm. "What is wrong—won't you tell me?"

"This!" he cried, taking the book he had just thrown down in his hands again, and with trembling fingers opening it at the passage he had just read. "How could you make 'copy' of what surely ought to be most sacred in a woman's heart, if she has any womanliness left in her, if she is not so eaten up by love of the world's admiration, so ruined by success, as to forget she is a woman?"

"Teddy!" she cried with growing terror. "What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? This—that you have made money out of those long-ago days when you at least pretended to love me, before this curse of success came between us."

"The love on my side did not need much pretence," she said a little bitterly, "it was so horribly real, it was yours—that was pretence."

"Mine! how? I married you—"

"Yes—because you were too much of a gentleman to draw back when you had gone so far, and knew you had won a woman's heart. But you were merely carried away by the impulse of the moment, you never really loved me. Do you think I didn't know that my writing was not a child born of bitter birth-pangs, my success a flower watered by a woman's tears? I married you because I was so infatuated I

could not help it—but I always knew you did not return my love. Then came those days of struggle, when I vowed to get on, if it were only to show you that others could appreciate me. Slowly, surely success came—and with it, as I had dreamt, your love increased, fanned by the flame of jealousy—the only rival you had ever known. Men never care for what they can get easily, I became precious in your eyes only when my life became filled with an opposition power."

"I wrote that book for the first time in my life from nature, thinking perhaps you might condescend to read it, and recognize the love we had both outlived, the love you never felt. But your jealousy was such you could not even bear to read my writing—till now—now—the night which has crowned my womanhood as well as my ambition, for now I see you have learned what love is—too late."

"Too late?" The man looked up at her with grey, miserable eyes.

"Yes—now perhaps you will understand what suffering is. Love is a hard, hard lesson if it is real; to love truly one has to learn humility, to strip oneself of self, as I did many a day, when I was ready to count myself of no account for your sake. This you could never do. You were angry, jealous that the world should count me of more value than you. Had you loved truly, it would only have been an unspeakable joy to you to have shared in my success."

"To love truly one has to come in all humility," he said, slowly.

"Yes; many a day I did so to unseeing eyes, laid my heart, naked and unashamed, at the feet of your indifference. Read that book to the end, and see."

"Does it end happily?" She did not answer his question.

"Does it end happily?" he repeated, taking her by the shoulders.

"Read and see," was the answer almost too low to be heard.

"Ida, tell me it is not too late. I have learnt my lesson in all humility—the lesson you have taught me—it is not too late yet—my wife—my wife—"

Slowly and surely his arms crept round her, and she was sobbing against his heart.

"And in future I suppose I must just be content to be 'only Mrs. Mainwaring's husband'!"—he laughed happily, after a silence too sacred to be broken.

"And I proud to be Mrs. Mainwaring!" And she looked at him with shining eyes.—Mrs. Irwin Smith in M. A. P.

## Rockefeller as an Author

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER has turned author, and in the October issue of "The World's Work," published by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, he gives some "Random Reminiscences," that are in effect a defence of the Standard Oil Company. In discussing the modern corporation Mr. Rockefeller says:

"Beyond question there is a suspicion of corporations. There may be reason for such suspicion very often; for a corporation may be moral or immoral, just as a man may be moral or the reverse; but it is folly to condemn all corporations because some are bad, or even to be unduly suspicious of all, because some are bad. But the corporation in form and character has come to stay—that is a thing that may be depended upon. Even small firms are becoming corporations, because it is a convenient form of partnership."

"It is equally true that combinations of capital are bound to continue and to grow, and this need not alarm even the most timid if the corporation, or the series of corporations, is properly conducted with due regard for the rights of others. The day of individual competition in large affairs is past and gone—you might just as well argue that we should go back to hand labor and throw away our efficient machines—and the sober good sense of the people will accept this fact when they have studied and tried it out. Just see how the list of stockholders in the great corporations is increasing by leaps and bounds. This means that all these people are becoming partners in great business. It is a good thing—it will bring a feeling of increased responsibility to the managers of the corporations and will make the people who have their interests involved study the facts impartially before condemning or attacking them."

"On this subject of industrial combinations I have often expressed my opinions; and, as I have not changed my mind, I am not averse to repeating them now, especially as the subject seems again to be so much in the public eye."

"The chief advantages from industrial combinations are those which can be derived from a co-operation of persons and aggregation of capital. Much that one man cannot do alone two can do together, and once admit the fact that co-operation, or what is the same thing, combination, is necessary on a small scale, the limit depends solely upon the necessities of business. Two persons in partnership may be a sufficiently large combination for a small business, but if the business grows or can be made to grow, more persons and more capital must be taken in. The business may grow so large that a partnership

ceases to be a proper instrumentality for its purposes, and then a corporation becomes a necessity. In most countries, as in England, this form of industrial combination is sufficient for a business co-extensive with the parent country, but it is not so in America. Our federal form of government, making every corporation created by a state foreign to every other state, renders it necessary for persons doing business through corporate agency to organize corporations in some or many of the different states in which their business is located. Instead of doing business through the agency of one corporation they must do business through the agencies of several corporations. If the business is extended to foreign countries, and Americans are not today satisfied with home markets alone, it will be found helpful and possibly necessary to organize corporations in such countries, for Europeans are prejudiced against foreign corporations as are the people of many of our states. These different corporations thus become co-operating agencies in the same business and are held together by common ownership of their stocks."

It is too late to argue about advantages of industrial combinations. They are a necessity. And if Americans are to have the privilege of extending their business in all the states of the Union, and into foreign countries as well, they are a necessity on a large scale, and require the agency of more than one corporation."

### THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

A remarkable Congress has been sitting in Oxford recently.

"The International Congress for the History of Religions," says the Morning Post, "aims, no doubt, primarily at the advancement of a difficult and abstruse branch of learning. But it will have the indirect effect of extending the outlook upon human life or many people who have no pretensions to learning and no opportunities of research. The Presidential address of Sir Alfred Lyall will be read with unusual interest and curiosity, for its author has in broad outlines reviewed the history of the chief religions of the world in their relation to the history of the States among whose peoples they have prevailed."

"No State," said Sir Alfred, "in civilized countries now assisted in the propagation of doctrines, and ecclesiastical influence was of very little service to a government. We could even at the moment discern a movement towards constitutional reforms in Mohammedan Asia, and if it succeeded it would be interesting to observe the effect which lib-

eral reforms would produce upon the relation of Mohammedan governments with the dominant faith and on which side the religious teachers would be arrayed."

The Principal of Brasenose (Mr. C. B. Heberden) gave the welcome on behalf of the University. "The importance of the subjects which this congress had met to promote had long been recognized in Oxford. More than fifty years ago one of the greatest Oxford men of the last century, in his famous book on certain Epistles of St. Paul, had an essay on natural religion, in which he pointed out the great value of the study of the religions of the world in many ways, and, in particular, he said that the scientific study of the Jewish and the Christian religions was hardly possible taken by themselves, that it must be taken in connection with the histories of the other religions of the world. That, he supposed, was a statement which would be generally accepted nowadays, but it was a notable observation at the time it was made; and that Jowett kept this in his mind was evident, for later in his life he was engaged in writing on the various religions of the world an essay which, unfortunately, never came to completion."

"What Jowett foreshadowed and desired was carried out on a large scale by another Oxford man, a friend of his, whose memory must be in their minds that day—Max Müller—partly in his writings on comparative religion, in which he familiarized people with the importance of the subject; but partly and still more in his editions of Sacred Books, which he began exactly sixty years ago with his edition of the Rig Veda, and then the publication of the great series of the Sacred Books of the East, of which he was the editor, and to which he so largely contributed. They in Oxford might feel some legitimate pride in the fact that the University Press should have issued those fifty Sacred Books of the East covering the religions of India, China, Persia and the Semitic religions. And so it was a proper thing, when just twenty years ago the Gifford Lectures were founded, he was one of the first of the four lecturers who were appointed."

"A new era had arisen, in which, as Professor Tylor (author of 'Primitive Culture')—whose presence, as honorary president, was hailed with the most cordial expressions of welcome—had said, 'no religion lies in utter isolation from the rest, and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues, which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence.' To develop these clues is one of the chief functions of such congresses as this now sitting in Oxford," says the Telegraph.

Some piano covers would be more admired if hermetically sealed.

## The Decline of Grammar

UNDER the title of "Grammar and its Reasons," Miss Mary Hall Leonard, long a teacher of English, has compiled a series of essays which have just been brought out in book form by A. S. Barnes & Co. One may wonder after reading its pages whether the impatience under restraint of the American people, which so many observers note, is in any degree related to their essential lawlessness in reference to grammatical forms. The writer quotes the saying that a French family settled in England and edited the French language, and adds that a truer statement of the case would be that the Normans found it too much trouble to learn the Saxon inflections and so ignored them. At all events, we have a language full of exceptions and contradictions and complications, making anything like an explanation of them an extremely difficult task.

Everywhere we have the remains of inflections, and so of a formal grammar. Miss Leonard calls attention to the remnant of the old English dual found in "twin" and its contraction "twain," and to a trace of it in the reciprocal pronoun phrases "each other" and "one another." But this is all that is left of the dual, which in other languages occupies a distinct place between the singular and the plural. In gender, the writer points out that "ess" is the only living feminine suffix; that is the only one that can be used for new word forms, and that this is rarely done. Other feminine suffixes are no longer used in word making. The modern practice is to ignore the feminine form wherever sex is immaterial to the character of the office. The words "authoress," "postmistress" and "executrix," seem to be falling into disuse. This is in marked contrast with the German language where "a gentleman writes a masculine letter of feminine love to a neuter young lady with a feminine pen and feminine ink, on masculine sheets of neuter paper, and encloses it in a masculine envelope with a feminine address to his darling, though neuter, Gretchen."

Only seven words in the English language show any difference between the nominative and the objective case, making those forms which are of such great importance in the grammar of other languages little more than a remnant in ours. The writer, after tracing the history of the possessive sign, holds that it should rarely be added to names other than those of persons, although she recognizes as in a measure stereotyped, "a day's work," "the sun's rays" and "life's end," but dissents from the modern journalistic practice of carrying it

much further. She believes in limiting the possessive to the idea of ownership, saying "my brother's picture," should be used in reference to one belonging to him rather than of him, while recognizing that either is technically correct.

As to whether we should say "The house is being built" or "is building," the writer acknowledges the superior authority for the latter, but points to the impossibility of such a clause as "the boy is whipping." The earliest known instance in the use of "is being built" is found in a letter by Southey in 1795. "Being built" really signifies completion, such as "being built of stone," rather than the continuous constructions. "Is" is also made an auxiliary of its own participial "being." In spite of these objections "is being done" and other phrases like it have evidently come to stay, to the displacement of the older forms.

The subjunctive mood is another of the nearly extinct remnants of a more grammatical age. The author finds the subjunctive "were" to be still a required form of the English language, but little else of the mood is left. Towards the split infinitive, she is rather tolerant, and brings out the interesting fact that Macaulay in 1840 wrote, "In order fully to appreciate the character of Lord Holland," etc., but that in 1842 he brought out an edition of his essays, carefully revised, in which the same phrase reads, "in order to fully appreciate the character," etc. This change evidently showed his maturer judgment. She acknowledges that where splitting the infinitive of some gain in meaning or in energy, that merit is likely to overthrow all artificial bulwarks against its use.

In brief, almost anything that English-speaking people seem disposed to do in the way of modifying their language, they are likely to succeed in making reputable usage. "I do not think so," because less egotistic, is likely to find favor instead of the more precise "I think it is not so." The author regards as open questions for the future to consider whether "me" shall be used attributively, whether the subjunctive shall be relegated to forgetfulness, and whether the general sense of a passage rather than the strict number and form of the subject shall determine the agreement of nouns, verbs and pronouns. In fine, any study of the reasons for taking any particular course in grammar will be largely an accounting for what is actually taking place.

You may lead an actor before the curtain, but you can't keep him from making a few remarks.



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