

From the Ashes of Yesterday

By Kydd Eggie

IN the comfortably furnished dining room of a suburban home, Edward Shorey and his wife sat at breakfast. The only sounds to break the stillness were those occasioned by the musical contact of the china and silver as the meal progressed; or by the rustle of the morning paper, behind which Mr. Shorey had buried himself.

As the meal finished, Mrs. Shorey broke the silence by asking, somewhat apologetically, "Edward, will you have time to send a man up to the house to-day to see about that plumbing?"

After a pause, her husband answered, without lifting his eyes from the paper, "Oh, yes, I'll try to find time to-day, Mydra."

A frown passed over the wife's face, for this was about the fifth time she had received just such an answer to that question, without apparent results.

The man folded his paper, pushed back his chair, and arose from the table remarking meanwhile, "It looks as if it were to be a fine day."

"Yes, I must try to take the children out while the sun is bright," answered his wife, without enthusiasm.

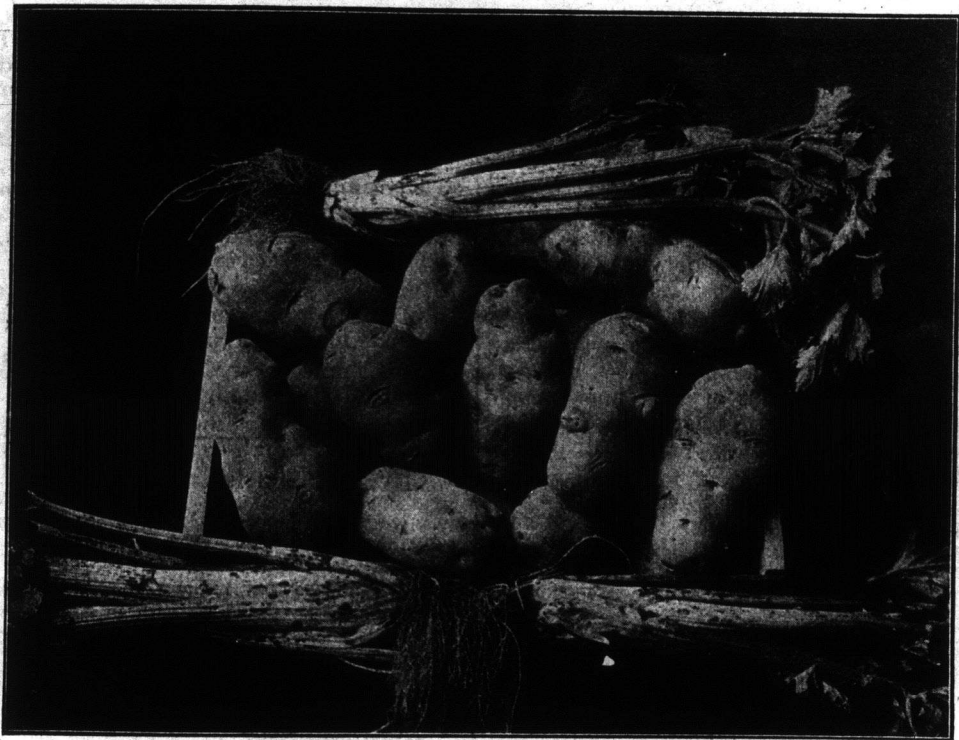
"But thinking about what kind of things, muvver," persisted Betty, standing with wide-open eyes waiting for her answer.

"Well, Betty, I was thinking of your grandmother and all the dear people far away that we are going to see some day. Mother left them all five years ago when she married daddy and came here to live."

Mydra took her other child into her arms and sat down beside Betty; then continued, speaking more to herself, it must be confessed, than for the child's benefit. "It was such a pretty wedding and oh, I was so happy," went on Mydra dreamily. She was completely aroused, however, by the touch of Betty's arms about her neck and a voice appealing: "But you is lots gladder now, muvver, cause you has got me, isn't you, muvver?"

The mother was strangely moved, and it was after an effort to control her voice that she gave the little one the answer and caress that she wished.

"Bless you, darling, mother's happiness is all wrapped up in you and baby—and daddy," she added, softly. Then



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"Very good, very good. Well I must be off. Good morning, Mydra," said Mr. Shorey, and then he was gone.

Mydra went to the window and watching him go down the street, murmured softly, "We have been married five years to-day, I wonder if he will remember—probably not until he is reminded of it."

"Oh I wish he would turn and wave to me from the corner this morning as he always used to do but those days are so long past," she added with a sigh, as her husband disappeared from view, and she set about her morning tasks without joy.

In spite of the fact that Mydra Shorey's hands were completely occupied all forenoon with the duties of housekeeping and the care of her two small children, her thoughts strayed to other days when the privilege of sharing a home with Ned Shorey had seemed an ideal thing. When this home had been the vision of the future, their great love for each other had been the atmosphere which made it wonderful, so now when the home was a reality, apparently devoid of that love, it seemed a very common-place thing. Mydra realized that with all her efforts to keep the house pretty and scrupulously clean the essential quality of a home was lacking.

"Why is you so quiet, Muvver?" queried the four-year-old Betty, as she followed her mother about the house, giving her usual assistance in the way of upturning rugs, leaving little finger-marks on the windows or furniture, and upsetting dishes, with the pious conviction that she was "Helping Muvver." "Oh mother was just thinking, dearie," answered Mrs. Shorey, absently.

rising and putting the baby down, she said cheerily, "See, Betty, here comes Postie," and the child ran gleefully to the mail box, returning with her chubby hands full of mail matter.

"How many letters to-day, dear?" asked Mydra, as the mail was put into her hands.

Foremost amongst its contents was a bulky letter from her mother and the home-folk, brim full of good wishes for many joyous returns of the anniversary. It breathed such peace and love in the assurance that such a happy bride had fulfilled all their prophecies, by developing into a charming wife and mother—how they longed to see Ned and her in their own home with their babies. "Oh, mother, I am so glad you cannot see how nearly I have failed," thought Mydra wildly, "I have been too tired or too busy to think about trying to make myself charming, and anyway, Ned never takes any notice of how I look or feel any more."

Mydra was overcome with feeling to which she longed to give way, but instead, set bravely about finishing her work.

During the succeeding hours, as she reviewed the events of their marriage day and of their life together, a longing awoke for the re-establishment of the affectionate and sympathetic companionship that had been Ned's and her's until this indifference had enveloped them.

"I will conquer my pride and make the first overture," she thought, and immediately set about her plans for the campaign, with a lighter heart than she had carried for many a day.

After planning and beginning the preparation of a nice little dinner, embodying some of Ned's favorite dishes, she

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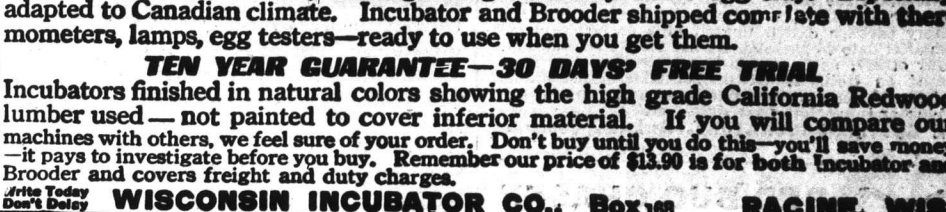
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