

Clothes and the Man

ANOTHER PIQUANT WAR-TINGED NOVELETTE

By Dorothy L. Warne

CHAPTER ONE

Mrs. Smith is of the lamp-post variety, therefore, as an almost invariable consequence, Papa Smith did not reach above her shoulder.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Mrs. Smith was pinning on her headgear in front of the cracked mirror that hung askew over the drawing-room mantelpiece.

"Christopher," she said, addressing something that appeared to have a slight resemblance to the male species grovelling under a table for lost papers—"Christopher, you must take Teddy and baby to the pictures this afternoon. The films are quite educational, and the little dears have been so good. I have to go to the stores to pick up a real bargain in crepe-de-chine robes at 18/11 $\frac{3}{4}$, reduced from 19/-, before Mrs. Fitz-french gets hold of it. *Christopher!* did you not hear me? Come and help me on with my wrap. Oh, and if the baker calls before you start take two loaves, crusty ones, and pay the bill. Now be sure and see that Teddy and baby don't stain their coats and gloves with chocolate, and keep to the side-walk—you are always so devoid of brains where your children are concerned. And" (sniff) "you might at least put on a respectable suit to take the family out."

CHAPTER TWO

Sergt. Smith (Bantam Battalion) is helping Mrs. Smith on with her coat in the drawing-room. The mirror is no longer cracked, a gorgeously gilded one has taken its place. Wonderful what can be done on a separation allowance.

"Chris, dear," she coos, "do you feel too tired to come into the park this afternoon? I have sent Teddy and baby out with Mrs. Jones' nurse; I knew you wouldn't want to be worried with them. Perhaps we shall meet Mrs. Fitz-french and I can show her what a splendidly patriotic husband I've got, not a slacker like hers. What's the shilling for? Oh, you dear old silly. As if I'd dream of worrying you with domestic arrangements. You think I ought to have a new coat? No, Chris, we must put away superfluous cash in the new War Loan. I don't care if Mrs. Jones has got a new fur one; it is only because her husband has got a commission—Home defense at that."

"Are you really feeling up to a little walk, dear? I'm just longing to show you off in Mudleigh."