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THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

## The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady

By Edith G. Bayne

**J**ACK, dear?" observed the Angel behind the urn, with rising reflection in her tone. There was no immediate response from the being behind the newspaper.

"Jack?"

And still no response, after a reasonable interval of waiting.

"Jack!"—insistently this time.

"Uh?"—reluctantly came a grunt, at last.

"I need a new hat."

"I've simply got to have one for Mrs. Climber's tea!"

"Whassat? New what?" suddenly and alertly Jack asked, peering round the sporting page.

"A new hat, I said," persisted the Angel, stirring her coffee and looking very fetchin' in a rose negligee.

"My soul! Another!"

The Angel looked aggrieved.

"What do you mean—another?" she demanded, taking a third lump of sugar.

"A new hat, eh? Whassa matter with the old one?"

"What old one? They're all old."

"That last one with the bunch of whadda-yuh-call 'ems on the side."

"Oh that. I've had it four months, Jack! And you ask me what's wrong with it."

"You look mighty good in it."

"It clashes with my suit. Mrs. Newman next door has just bought one the very same shape, anyway, so I can't wear it again. I wish you could see the perfect dream Lil Deaver has."

"Perfect scream is right. I saw her to-day."

"Dream, I said. She paid ninety-five for it. It's made of—"

"All right. How much you going to hold me up for?"

"That's a dear! I knew you would. Oh, I couldn't say off hand. O' course, I wouldn't go as high as Lil, but I wish you'd come down town with me dear, and help me choose. You know—"

"Not on your life!"

"I always dress to please you—or I try to. Please," said the Angel in her coaxingest voice.

Jack made a face at the sporting page, threw the paper aside and pulled out his wallet.

"Fifty do?"

"For a start."

"If that's a start what in hominy do you call a finish?"

"Don't be horrid! I can't tell what I want till I try a few hats on, can I? Oh I saw such a darling in Holbrook's—all pansies and gold tissue! And in Mills and Gill's there's a French model, a white satin shape with a single rose on the side and a row of—"

"Hully, Mackerel! It's ten past eight!"

"Wait. Don't go for a minute," the Angel pleaded as he rose abruptly after pulling out his watch. "Yes, I'll take the fifty now and I'll meet you at three and we'll go right over to Holbrook's."

"This is my busy day."

"You always have an excuse! Three, remember."

"That means four," grinned Jack, darting for his coat, hat and gloves. "All right, chicken. Some men have picked a lemon in the garden of love, but I picked a peach. You can have anything in reason."

And four-forty it was after all. The Angel fluttered into Jack's office with profuse apologies at that hour and bore him away on the tide of late afternoon shoppers. Then came a series of raids on millinery shops, Jack standing somewhat disconsolately in the office as the Angel "tried on" and "tried on" and "tried on!" At Holbrook's she seemed inclined to linger longer, flitting from one table to another—examining, disparaging, exclaiming—while the sales girls stood about and awaited her pleasure, or put in differential remarks, leaving her customers to wait on the colonel's

lady. To Jack's ears in a steady line of patter came this:

"Pleatings of satin under the brim—crown raised a little here—yes it was pretty, perfectly sweet in fact, but somehow it didn't seem to be becoming—I'll try the Prince of Wales blue I think—you have such lovely hair—oh no, the brown isn't being worn as much this season—brim of a contrasting shade Isobel—you'll find it in the second drawer—Mrs. Van Lorne took such a fancy to it yesterday, but she chose the burnt ochre model instead—spreys are so chic Mrs. Alison—Isobel get the black lace model—oh no certainly not, you could wear young girl's things yet—something high on the side seems to be necessary—after all, I think I'll try on the cream lace one—we could take out the roses and put in a bunch of—Jack, dear, do you like me in this?"

And the last remark occurred frequently, the Angel seated in a little den of triplicate mirrors and viewing herself with a bonnet mirror as well.

"How does this look, dear?" cried the Angel for the twentieth time.

"Fine, Say! When are you going to break away?"

"Do you think I've got it too far back?"

"It's gone quarter-past."

"Jack! Would you rather the roses were on the left?"

"Those red things? Are they roses?"

"Don't be silly. This is a bargain."

"Eighty-five-fifty reduced from 'ninety-five,' glibly put in Isobel, the tall, thin sales girl.

"All right. Get it and let's beat it. There goes a bell."

"First gong," said the short, plump sales girl, as she tapped an impatient foot on the thick green rug.

"I haven't decided about the roses."

"Try a spray of lilac, Mrs. Allison."

"I believe I will."

Isobel goes to seek the spray, and there's another wait. When she comes back the Angel thinks the shade is a little deep. It might make her look sallow you know. It ends finally by her sticking to the roses. Another gong sounds and covers magically begin to spread themselves over counters and tables. The Angel sighs and begins to collect gloves, purse and parcels.

"Shall we send it in the morning?" asks the girl, hurriedly.

"Oh, I love to take it!"

Another five minutes and at last they're all ready. The girl rushes back with the box and Jack's change from a two-hundred-dollar bill. He looks surprised at finding fourteen-fifty only.

"This all?" he demands.

"Oh Jack? I forgot to tell you the hat was one-hundred and eighty-five-fifty!" said the Angel, placidly. "We read the ticket wrong."

"Well, I'll be—" Jack commences, but the elevator-boy takes the rest of his breath away in a swift descent to the ground floor.

Mrs. O'Grady was busily engaged in the interesting occupation of dishing up mulligan stew. Six little O'Grady's were ranged round the big kitchen table noisily demanding "grub," the baby hammering on his high-chair with a spoon. Mike was drying his face and hands on the roller-towel.

"Sling on the maynoo, Judy," he said as he hastily parted his hair at the cracked mirror above the sink. "Sure it's twelve-fifteen already!"

"I will that," Judy said agreeably. "An' its foina stew too let me tell ye, Mike O'Grady! Sit in, do."

Mike cast a suspicious glance at her as he drew in a chair and attacked dinner. He hadn't been married eight years without learning a few things. Judy was about to "make a touch."

And he was right, for no sooner had her better-half stoked the greater part of his meal into him than she opened up.

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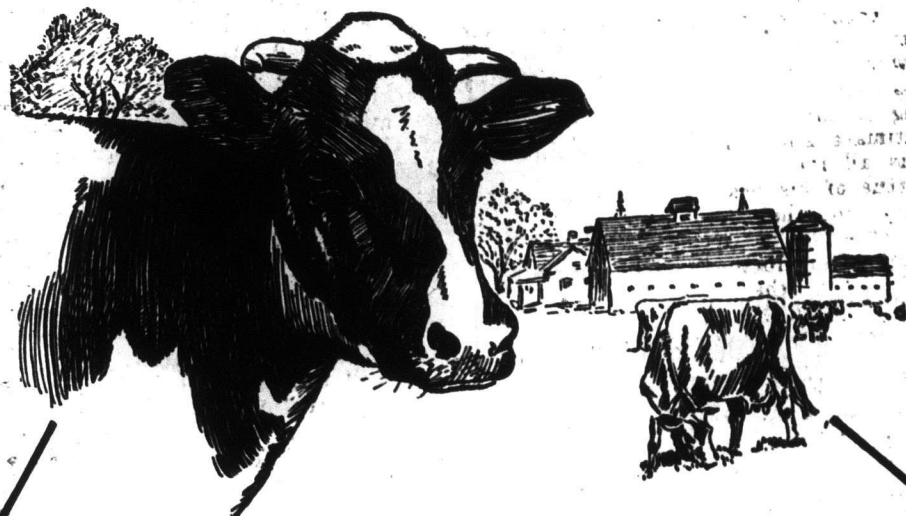
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