

MALE VS FEMALE
In Pastures Green

Mrs. Summersox didn't need to be told what had happened. In spite of all her protests he would insist on lighting matches on his trousers, and now he had forgotten that all he had on was a thin pair of pyjamas. She stuffed a corner of the blanket in her mouth and began to take an interest in life.

"Did you light this fire last night?" came from the icy kitchen.

"Indeed, I did not," was the reply from the cosy depths of the blankets. The cheerfulness of her tone was not lost on Mr. Summersox.

"Well, it is burned out," he bawled.

"Hadn't you better come back and put on your clothes?" she asked in a choking voice. "Probably there was a live coal in the ashes and it started the fire after we went to bed. Do be sensible and come and put on your clothes."

If the world was one vast storehouse of fur-lined overcoats Mr. Summersox wouldn't have put on another stitch after realising that she was laughing at him. No, by thunder. He would show her. Disdaining to make any reply to her chirpy explanation of the calamity, he went down cellar for more kindling. For a couple of minutes he made a noise like a railroad wreck, and as he returned to the kitchen he was whimpering to himself:

"You needn't tell me! I don't believe C-Cook or P-Peary ever went to the P-Pole. B-r-r-r!"

In the darkness of the parlour bedroom Mrs. Summersox laughed a noiseless laugh. She hadn't had so good a time since she had left the city. She could already see visions of a detached house in Rosedale, with a subdued husband, who was thoroughly cured of his foolish hankering for the country. Meanwhile, the lids banged, paper rustled, and coal rattled. Despite the condition of the temperature Mr. Summersox was evidently working with feverish haste. After a pause, during which he watched the lighted paper flare up and die out, he suddenly yelled in desperation:

"Where do you keep the coal oil?"