

WIFELY COUNSEL

By ED. CAHN

MRS. KRAUSSMAN looked up from her sewing as the door opened and her husband stumbled in. She sprang to her feet with a cry of horror, for Dave's eye was swollen and black, his nose showed signs of recent and copious bleeding which the stains on his shirt and coat-sleeve amply corroborated. His hair was in wild disarray and in one hand he clutched all that remained of his beloved brown derby. He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"Heavenly daylight! Dave! What on earth have you been doing? You look like you'd been in a fight! Have you been mixing it up with Jaffee & Janowitz? Your bad temper will get us all killed some day."

Dave's answer was a miserable moan.

"Dave! You don't mean to tell me you lost your job?"

"Oi *tzuris*, Minnie. You might as well know it now as later again. A job I ain't got no more as what a rabbit has and I won't never get another. Jaffee & Janowitz will give me such a name to the trade that nobody will want me to so much even as sweep it out the place—and Berger! Oi! Oi! He nearly made us all arrested. Sam Posner he is a murderer at the leastest. I wisht it he'd a kilt me while he was about it. The rent it is soon due and I aint go no *mazumen*, the last what I had it in my pockets I give it to the taxi man what brung me home. My head is soon going to pop it open."

Mrs. Kraussman proceeded to apply first aid to the injured. "A fine *fader* you are, coming home looking like a order of hamburger steak! A nice example for Sadie and Ben! Well, fighter, begin at the commencement and tell me how all this comes to be."

The kiss that accompanied the words took a large part of the sting away and served to hearten Dave for the recital.

"Sam Posner he got the idee that that bummy Julius Salinger was a better designer than me and he didn't give Berger no rest till Berger fired me out and took Salinger in. But, for all he is a *shulik*, he got me in by Jaffee & Janowitz. I never knew Salinger was a friend of his and I thought all the time it was only Berger's fault that I lost it my job with him. Oi! the deceitfulness of that Sam. That *dappes* Salinger don't do nothing but turn out frosts for Sol to put the name Esther B. onto, and Sol don't do nothing but roast Sam Posner that it was all his fault. Nobody but me can suit Sol Berger, the ingrateful old *schlemihl*! Salinger he ain't satisfied because Sol's all the time jumping on him and he don't give Sam no rest neither; so Sam right away gets busy and tells me that Sol wants me back again and I belief him like a idgit."

"Also he tells Salinger that Jaffee & Janowitz want him back again. Before he stoled it my job he worked for them you know. Well, Salinger he beliefs it which shows you he also is one idgit besides me. I let Sam get me fired out by Jaffee & Janowitz and Salinger he lets himself get fired out by Berger. Then, when we gets together in Sol Berger's office we find out that Jaffee & Janowitz don't want Salinger and Sol don't want me! That *dumm* Posner's not said a word to neither one about taking us back—and there you are, out in the cold! Salinger he takes it himself a punch at Sam, and Minnie, I guess you can see it the rest for yourselves."

"I should say I could! 'Specially that lovely black eye you got."

"The only good thing about this *sank* is that I gave Sam the mate to it, and that Berger fired him too, he aint got a job neither. Maybe after this now he will not get so fresh with his schemes."

"If you think all that scheme was Sam's you're forty miles off the track," cried Minnie, her voice trembling with anger. "He hasn't got sense enough. This is some of his wife's meddling. She has been hinting to me that you ought to get up some new models. I told her that I guessed old Sol Berger's Esther B. waist as you designed it would sell all right enough if Sam was any kind of a salesman, and I know it made her mad. She thinks that husband of hers is the smartest traveling man on the road, instead of what he is, a great big fat dub. I'm going to tell her what I think of her and her dirty little tricks this very day. Perhaps she won't feel so clever now that Sam's lost his job, too."

"I dunno, I wish Salinger didn't a-went and punched Sam. He meant it good I think," said Dave, forgivingly.

Minnie stamped her foot. "Heavenly daylight! No wonder we never have anything, you are so easy. Where are you going now?"

"To get it this here eye painted out. I got to get

a moves to myself and get it a new job."

"Dave Kraussman, you come right straight home as soon as you get painted. You need a rest to-day more than a job."

SHORTLY afterward, Mrs. Kraussman was entering the apartment of her former friend, Mrs. Sam Posner, her eyes flashing fire. Agnes looked every whit as angry, but greeted her civilly enough and ushered her into the sitting-room. Sam Posner lay upon the couch, his head bandaged and his face turned to the wall.

"Well, Agnes, what do you think of the way that nice, kind, little plot of yours worked out?" began Minnie, refusing to sit down.

"I don't know what you mean, Minnie Kraussman, but I'll tell you in a few short words what I think of your husband for beating up Sam this way when Sam was trying to be a friend to him!"

"I like the way you handle the truth! Very friendly it was to get Dave fired out of two jobs, and it's all your fault. I know it is!"

"See here, Minnie!" began Agnes, hotly, but Sam silenced her by sitting up and pulling off the bandages.

"Now, girls, my head aches enough without listening to a jawing-match between you. There is no use of your being enemies just because me and Dave and Salinger tried to punch each other's heads off over a general misunderstanding. I'm sorry, Mrs. Kraussman. I was only trying to do Dave a kindness, and I give you my word, Agnes didn't have a thing to do with it. Don't worry about Dave; he'll soon get another job."

Minnie began to sob and Agnes's heart melted.

"Now, Minnie, don't cry. I'm not mad at you if you are not mad at me. This isn't our fault. Sit down, dear. It was all that horrible Julius Salinger's fault in the first place. Sam says Dave never thought of hitting him until Salinger started it. Anyhow, they are all quits because all three have black eyes and no jobs. The best thing we can do is to think how we can get Dave's and Sam's jobs back again. Julius Salinger can starve to death for all of me, the ol' wretch."

"Dave can easy get on somewhere, he is such a fine designer," said Minnie, drying her eyes, "but it will be hard for him at first. He's been so long with Sol Berger that they know each other's fussy ways and got along well until this Salinger comes along. Dave ought to be in business for himself."

"Did anybody ever have so much trouble as us?" exclaimed Agnes, bitterly.

"It's terrible, but we ain't so bad off as poor Mrs. Goldburger. Her husband is dead a week now and while he was sick his business went right down to nothing, and now his machines and things are going to be sold for what they'll bring."

"Is that the Goldburger that made waists in a small way—on East Broadway?" asked Sam.

"Yes."

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, Sam. Why can't you and Dave buy those machines and go into business yourselves—together? Dave knows all about the manufacturing end and you could sell the goods," suggested Agnes.

"Dave's got no capital," objected Minnie.

"He's as well off as I am, but I don't want to go into business for myself until I could be more than a shoe-string merchant—you know that, Agnes."

"All the same, Mr. Posner, it wouldn't cost anything to look into it," interposed Minnie. "As soon as Sol Berger hears that you are even thinking of starting up for yourselves he will picture you getting all his best customers for yourself, and want you back again."

"Yes, Sam, and want Dave, too. I bet he is sorry he fired you already, and the new designer, whoever he is, won't last."

"That's right. It wouldn't be a bad idea to buy Goldburger's stuff, just on speculation—but I guess Dave's got no more use for me and wouldn't go partners."

"Nonsense! Shall I tell him you want to see him up here to-night?"

"Sure! Don't forget."

MRS. KRAUSSMAN hastened home to acquaint her husband of this new turn of affairs. He had returned from the barber-artist's establishment, where blackened eyes were made as good as new, presenting quite a respectable appearance, and he paid the most flattering attention to all she had to say.

"I think it I should go me down by Goldburger's old loft and looks it over the ground first before

I see Sam to-night—don't you, Minnie, *liebchen*?"

"Should a person say their prayers?"

Posner made a similar observation and received similar encouragement from Agnes, consequently, he and Dave encountered each other at Goldburger's and lost no time in burying the hatchet. Together they minutely inspected the modest and forlorn little premises, and then they repaired to the dingy bakery near by and over coffee and *mohn kuchen* laid their plans.

It was more than a week after the fray when Mrs. Berger chanced to meet Mrs. Kraussman.

"Have you heard the news, Esther?" cried Minnie.

"News? No. What is it?"

"Sam Posner and Dave are going together as partners in the waist business. They've got Goldburger's old loft, the machines and everything."

Then, Esther Berger heard for the first time the story of the fight.

"Of course, Esther," finished Minnie, "I suppose Mr. Berger he maybe won't like it when Sam gets some of his old customers to buy from us, but you and Agnes and me has got to stay friends. It's hard enough to be real friends with your husband's boss's wife, but we always did it, and now that Sam and Dave are their own bosses, sure we ought to get along better than ever."

ESTHER, thoroughly angry at Sol for keeping her in the dark about all this, hastened down to his office. She found Sol in a rage, the very sight of which calmed her instantly.

"Well, Sol, I see you are sississiling mad. What's the matter?"

"*Masser*? There aint nothing the *masser*, y' know, Esther, only my new designer he is drunk and he just now ruined a lot of new stuff on me! For fellers like him, a man don't got to be a boss, but a Keeley Cure. I didn't want it to bother you, Esther, but sinct Sam Posner and Dave Kraussman seen fit to turn it my office into a rough house, I fired it Sam and I aint found nobody to take his place. Looky at that pile of letters! From customers they are, wanting to know when he is coming to their towns. You'd think it, Esther, it was Posner himself they wanted to buy instead of my line of waists. Everything is quick going to the *Teufel*, that's all."

"Oh, no, Sol, that isn't all, that isn't the half yet. I just seen Minnie, already, and she tells me Dave and Sam have bought it out Goldburger's place and they are going as partners to make waists."

"Oi *Gewoldt*! Sam will get himself all my best customers. *Ach*! Kraussman he could work like a tiger when he wants to, and for himself! I betcha he will work it nights and days like a whole family of 'em. In the end they will be buying me out cheap, Esther!"

"Then you better buy 'em out now. Stupid you are getting Sol. You know Posner has not much money and Dave is a *schnorrer*. This thing is all a big bluff to scare you. You can believe me, if I am only your wife. How I know is that neither of them girls comes near me—they knew it I quick enough see through it if they did. Just the same, though, Sol, it's a dangerous bluff. They want to come back by you, but if they can't, they will sure hang on and they might get themselves a success. You better go see them and ask 'em back. It wouldn't ruin you to raise their salaries each both a little. But I know it you don't care for my advices, I'm going now."

"Aw, Esther! Don't be mad with me because I didn't tells you before."

"Only dogs gets mad, but mens gets foolish. Are you going to see them boys or aint you, *jah*?" and Mrs. Berger gave her spouse a look that spoke volumes.

"Well, Essie, needs I gotta when *der Teufel* is shoffuring, but I'd rather take it a good *potch* in the face."

"That's what you want," replied Esther, and she left, vastly relieved.

Sol, after several false starts, at last resolutely put his pride in his pocket and called upon Kraussman and Posner. Minnie had told them of her encounter with Esther, and so they were expecting him. Sol swept the loft with an all-absorbing eye, and then planting his feet wide apart and thrusting him thumbs into the armholes of his waist-coat, he began: "Boys, this here maybe is a bluff, but it sure don't looks like it, and anyway, what d'ye say to coming back to me, both of youse?"

After a great deal of skirmishing, Sol agreed to relieve them of their Goldburger option and gave both a substantial increase in salary.

Sol, in high good humour, carried them off to drink to harmony and success; then proposed another toast:

"Here's to the three cleverest wives in the whole world, by Golly! Without them, we wouldn't none of us got shoes to our backs!"