Matrimonial Adventures

"US"

BY

Booth Tarkington

Author of "Alice Adams," "The Gentleman From Indiana," "Monsieur Beaucaire," "The Flirt," "Penrod," "Seventeen," "The Magnificent Ambersons," "Penrod Jashber," "Ramsey Milholland," "Harlequin and Columbine," "Gentle Julia," etc.

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PERSONALITY OF BOOTH TARKINGTON

It had seemed impossible to see Booth Tarkington. I had been trying, and then he was coming toward me across the reception room of the hotel. He came quickly, his broad shoulders slightly bent. We sat upon a big blue couch, and he agreed to join the Star Author series of Matrimonial Adventures. He said he had never written a story on marriage and that he would like to.

Then we talked about writing, and his play that was being produced. He told me stories of the theater, and of themes he would write years hence. The Star Author series "Alice Adams," and I asked, "How did you know how Alice felt at the party?" "Why," he answered, "if you see a group of young men standing in a doorway, don't you know what they think? It's very simple."

And that's just it—to him it is all simple. He sees people as they are, but with such kind eyes—eyes that you feel have looked in many places and that know distant things.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

"Highland Place" was one of those new little cross-streets in a new little hooky neighborhood, "grown up overnight," as we say, meaning grown up in four or five years, so that when citizens of the older and more solid and soiled central parts of the city come driving through the new part, of a Sunday afternoon in spring, they say: "My goodness, when did this happen? Why, it doesn't seem more'n a year or so since we used to have Fourth o' July picnics out here! And now just look at it—all built up with bride-and-groom houses!"

"Highland Place" was the name given to this cross-street by the speculative land company that had "developed" it, and the only reason they had not named it "Waverly Place" was that they had already produced a "Waverly Place" a block below. Both "Places" were lined with green-trimmed, small white houses, frame or stucco, and although the honeymoon suggestion was architecturally so strong as a matter of fact most of the inhabitants held themselves to be "settled old married people," some of the couples having almost attained to a tin wedding anniversary.

The largest of the houses in "Highland Place" was the "hollow-tile and stucco residence of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Sullender." Thus it had been defined, under a photographic reproduction, with this caption: "New Highland Place Sullender Home" in one of the newspapers, not long after the little street had been staked out and paved; and since the "Sullender Home" was not only the largest house but the first to be finished of the "place," and had had its picture in the paper, it naturally took itself for granted as being the most important.

Young Mrs. William Sperry, whose equally young husband had just bought the smallest but most conspicuously bride-and-groom cottage in the whole "place," was not so deeply impressed with the Sullender importance as she should have been, since the Sperrys were the newcomers of the neighborhood, had not yet been admitted to its intimacies, and might well have displayed a more amiable deference to what is established.

"No," Mrs. Sperry told her husband, when they got home after their first experience of the "place's" hospitality, a bridge-party at the Sullenders—"I just can't stand those people, Will! They're really awful!"

"Why, what's the matter with 'em?" he inquired, "I thought they were first rate. They seemed perfectly friendly and hospitable and—"

"Oh, yes; lord-and-lady-of-the-manor entertaining the tenantry, I don't mind being tenantry," young Mrs. Sperry explained, "but I can't stand the lord-and-lady-of-the-manor style in people with a nine-room house and a one-car garage!"

"One-car it may be," her husband laughed, "but it has two stories. They have a chauffeur, you know; and he lives in the upstairs of the garage."

"So that entitles the Sullenders to the manor style?"

"But I didn't notice any of that style," he protested. "I thought they seemed right nice and cordial. Of course Sullender feels that he's been making quite a success in business and it naturally gives him a rather condescending air, but he's really all right."

"He certainly was condescending," she grumbled, and went on, with some satire: "Did you hear him allude to himself as a 'realtor'?"

"Well, why shouldn't he? He is one. That's his business."

"My lord, the realtor!" Mrs. Sperry cried mockingly. "There ought to be an opera written called 'El Realtor' like the one there used to be with the title 'El Janitor.' Those are such romantic words! 'Toreador,' 'Realtor,' 'Humidor'—"

"Here, here!" her husband said. "Calm down! You seem to have got yourself worked up into a mighty sarcastic mood, for some reason. Those people only want to be nice to us and they're all right."

Mrs. Sperry looked at him coldly. "Did you hear Mr. Sullender saying that his company had sold seven 'homes' this month?" she inquired.

"Oh, you can't expect everybody to know all the purist niceties of the English language," he said. "Sullender's all right and his wife struck me as one of the nicest, kindest women I ever—"

"Kind!" Mrs. Sperry echoed loudly. "She doesn't stop at being 'kind'! She's so caressingly tender, so angelically loving that she can't possibly pronounce a one-syllable word without making two syllables of it! Did you notice that she said 'yay-yus' for 'yes,' and 'no-oh,' for 'no'? I do hate the turtle-dove style of talking, and I never met a worse case of it. Mrs. Sullender's the sweetest sweet-woman I ever saw in my life, and I'm positive she lends her husband a dog's life!"

"What nonsense!"

"It serves him right for his realtor lingo, though," Mrs. Sperry added thoughtfully. "He ought to have that kind of a wife!"

"But you just said she was the sweetest—"

"Yes, the sweetest sweet-woman I ever saw. I do hate the whole clan of sweet-women."

The young husband looked perplexed. "I don't know what you're talking about," he admitted. "I always thought—"

"I'm talking about the sweet-woman type that Mrs. Sullender belongs to. They use intended sweetness. They speak to total strangers with sweetness. They wear expressions of saintly sweetness. Everybody speaks of a sweet woman with loving reverence, and it's generally felt that it would be practically immoral to contradict one of 'em. To be actually sassy to a sweet-woman would be a cardinal sin! They let their voices linger beautifully on the air and they listen, themselves, to the lovely sounds they make. They always have the most exquisite, by self-sacrificing reasons for every action of their lives; but they do just exactly what they want to do, and everybody else has to do what a sweet-woman wants him to. That's why I'm sure Mr. Sullender, in spite of all his pomposity, leads a dog's life at home."

"Of all the foolish talk!" young Sperry exclaimed. "Why, everybody says they're the most ideally married couple and that they lead the happiest life together of any—"

"Everybody says!" she mocked him, interrupting. "How often have you known what 'everybody says' turn out to be the truth about anything! And besides, we don't know a thing about any of these people, and we don't know anybody else that does! Who is this 'everybody' that's told you how happy the Sullenders are?"

"Well, it's just a general impression I got," he admitted. "I think I heard since one downtown alluding to Sullender's domestic relations being very fortunate and pleasant."

"Oh, you think so! Is that all? You don't really know anything about it, then?"

"No matter. You're wrong this time, Bella. 'The Sullenders'—"

But Bella shook her pretty, young head, interrupting him again. "You'll see! I do hope there won't have to be too much intimacy, but you can't live across the street from people very long on an neighborly like this, without getting to know the real truth about 'em. You wait and see what we get to know about the Sullenders!"

"Yes, I'll wait," he laughed. "But how long?"

"Oh, I don't know; maybe a year, maybe a month—"

"Let's make it a month, Bella," he said, and put his arm about her. "If we don't find out in a month that the Sullenders are miserable together, will you admit you're wrong?"

"No, I won't! But you'll probably have to admit that I'm right before that long. I have a sense for those things, Will, and I never go wrong when I trust it. Women know intuitively things that men never suspect. I know I'm right about Mrs. Sullender."

Her husband permitted the discussion to end with this, wisely fearing that if he sought further to defend his position Bella might plausibly accuse him of "always insisting upon the last word." And so, for that night, at least, the matter was dropped from their conversation, though not from the thoughts of Mrs. Sperry. Truth to tell, she was what is sometimes called an "obstinate little body," and, also, she appreciated the advisability of a young wife's building for future and lifelong use the foundations of infallibility. That is to say, she was young and therefore inexperienced, but she had foresight. Moreover, she had attentively viewed the matrimonial condition of her parents and aunts and uncles. Many and many a time had she heard a middle-aged husband speak to his wife of like years somewhat in this manner: "No, Fannie, you're wrong again. You're mistaken about this now, just as you were about James Thompson's adding machine in 1897; and you were wrong about painting the house, the year after that, too. Don't you remember how you insisted dark green was the right color, and finally had to admit, yourself, that dark green was awful, and light yellow would have been just right, as I all along said it would?"

Thus, young Mrs. Sperry, looking to times far ahead, had determined to be wrong about nothing whatever during these early years of her matrimony. Moreover, since argument had arisen concerning the Sullenders, she had made up her mind to be right about them, and to "prove" herself right, "whether she really was or not."

At a little before nine o'clock, Mr. William Sperry had departed (in a young husband's car) for his place of business, some five miles distant, in the smoky heart of the city; and not long afterward the thoughtful Bella, charmingly accoutred as a gardener, came forth with a trowel to uproot weeds that threatened a row of iris she had set out along the gravel path between the tiny white veranda and the white picket gate. Thus engaged, she became aware of a small presence fumbling at the latch of this gate, and she changed her position from that of one on all fours, who gropes intently in the earth, to that of one upright from the knees, but momentarily relaxed.

"Do you want to come in?" she inquired, looking out from the shade of her broad hat to where the little figure in blue gingham was mazed into stripes of sunshine and shadow by the intervening pickets of the gate. "Is there something you want here, little boy?"

She succeeded in operating the latch, came in, and looked attentively at her excavations. "Have you found any nice worms?" he asked.

"No, I haven't found any at all," she said, somewhat surprised by his adjective. "But I don't think there are any worms anywhere. Worms are all pretty horrid."

"No, they ain't," he returned promptly and seriously. "There's lots o' nice worms."

"Oh, I don't think so."

"Yes, there is, too!" he said stubbornly, and with some asperity. "Everybody knows there's plenty of nice worms."

"Where did you get such nonsense in your head?" Bella asked, a little sharply. "Who ever told you there are nice worms?"

"Well, there is!"

"But what makes you think so?" she insisted.

"Well—". He hesitated, then said with a conclusive air, settling the question: "My mother. I guess she knows!"

Bella stared at him incredulously for a moment. "What's your name?"

"My name's George. My name's George, the same as my papa," he replied somewhat challengingly.

"Don't you live just across the street?" she asked.

"Yes," he turned and pointed to the "George M. Sullender residence," and Bella thought she detected a note of inherited pride in his tone as he added, "That's where I live!"

"But, George, you don't mean," she insisted curiously, "you don't mean that your mother told you there are nice worms? Surely not!"

"My mother did," he asserted, and then with a little caution, modified the assertion. My mother just the same as—did."

"How was that?"

And his reply, so unexpected by his questioner, sent a thrill of coming triumph through her. "My mother called my father a worm."

"What?"

"She did," said George. "She called him a worm over and over."

"What!"

"And if he's a worm," George went on, stoutly, "well, I guess he's nice, isn't he? So there got to be plenty nice worms if he's one."

"George—"

"She calls him a worm most every little while these days," said George, expanding, and he added, in cold blood: "I like him a great deal better than what I do her."

"You do?"

"She hit him this morning," George thought fit to mention, upon this.

"What?"

"With a cloth's brush," he said, dropping into detail. "She hit him on the back of the head with the wooden part of it and he said, 'Ouch!'"

"But she was just in fun, of course."

"No, she wasn't; she was mad and said she was goin' to take me with her and go back to my grandpaw's. I won't go with her. She's mad all the time, these days."

Bella stared, her lips parted, and she wished him to continue, but remembered her upbringing and tried to be a lady. "Georgie," she said sorcerely, "you shouldn't tell such things. Don't you know better than to speak in this way of what happens between your poor papa and your mother?"

The effect upon George was nothing; for even at eight years of age a child is able to understand what interest an adult listener, and children deeply enjoy being interesting. In response to her admonition, he said simply: "Yesterday she threw a glass of water at him and cut him where he ear is. It made a big mark on him."

"Georgie! I'm afraid you're telling me a dreadful, dreadful story!" Bella said, though it may not be denied that in company with this suspicion there arrived a premonitory symptom of disquietment. "Why, I saw your papa yesterday evening, myself, and there wasn't any mark or anything like—"

"It don't show." George explained. "It took him a good while, but he got it fixed up so's it didn't show much. Then he brushed his hair over where it was."

"Oh!"

"My mother hates my papa," said George. "She still hates him."

"What for?" Bella couldn't stop this question.

"She wants him to have more money and he says what good would that do, because she'd only throw it around."

"No!"

"Yes," said George. "And she's mad because once he got so mad at her he hit her."

"What?"

"He did, too," George informed her, nodding, his large eyes as honest as they were earnest. "She said she was goin' to see my gramp'aw and she left me at home, but my papa catched her at the pitcher show with Mr. Grumbaugh—"

"Who?"

"Mr. Grumbaugh," George repeated, with the air of explaining everything simply. "So my papa made her come home and he hit her, and she hit him, too!"

"Before you!" Bella exclaimed, horrified.

"Sure!" George said, and looked upon her with some superiority. "They do it all before me. Last week when they had their big fight—"

He would have continued willingly, but at this point he was interrupted. Across the street a door opened, and out of it came Mrs. Sullender, lead ing a five-year-old girl by the hand. She called loudly, though in a carefully sweet and musical tone:

"George! Jaw-aurge! Oh, Jaw aur-gie!"

George looked across. "Yes'm," he shouted.

Mrs. Sullender nodded smilingly to Bella, and called: "Georgie, you dear little naughty thing! Didn't I tell you half an hour ago to come indoors and play with poor dear little Natalie? She's been waiting and waiting so patiently for you!"

George looked morose, but began to move in the desired direction. "I'm comin'," he muttered, and was so gross as to add, under his breath, "Doggone you!"

However he went across the street and up the Sullender hedge-evidently leading the two children by the hand, nodded again to Bella with a sweetness that was evident even at a distance, and re-entered the house, taking George and the tiny Natalie with her.

Bella remained upon her knees staring violently at the "Sullender home," but her thoughts were centered upon her husband. "Just wait till he gets home!" she thought.

But she saved her triumph until after dinner, and then had made him self comfortable upon the lounge in their tiny "living-room" and seemed to be in good content with his briar pipe.

"I had a caller after you left, this morning," she informed him suddenly.

"Who was it?"

"Mr. George M. Sullender."

"So? That's odd," said Sperry. "I saw him starting down town in his car just before I did. How did he happen to come back here?"

"He didn't," Bella said. "It was Mr. George M. Sullender, Junior."

"Who's that?"

"Their little boy," said Bella. "You've seen him playing in their yard with the little sister."

"Oh, yes. Did his mother send him over on an errand?"

"No. He came in to see if I'd found any 'nice worms,'" Bella said, and added, in a carefully casual tone, but with a flashing little glance from the corner of her eye: "He said some worms must be nice because Mrs. Sullender is in the habit of calling Mr. Sullender a worm, and Georgie thinks his father is nice."

Young Mr. Sperry took his pipe from his mouth and looked at his wife incredulously. "What did you say about Mrs. Sullender's calling—"

"A worm, William," said Bella. "She calls him a worm, William, because he doesn't make even more money than he does, poor man. The child really hates his mother; he never once spoke of her as 'mamma,' but he always said 'my papa' when he mentioned Mr. Sullender. I think I must have misjudged that poor creature a little, by the way. Of course he is pompous, but I think his pomposity is probably just assumed to impress his wife's mind. He has a recent scar that his wife put on his head, too, to cover up."

"Bella!"

"Yes," she said, reflectively, "I think he's mainly engaged in covering things up, poor thing. Of course he does strike his sweet woman, now and then, when he finds her at the movies with gentlemen he doesn't approve of, but one can hardly blame him, considering the life she leads him. It was last week, though, when they had their big fight, I understand—with the children looking on."

But at this, William rose to his feet and confronted her. "What on earth are you talking about, Bella?"

"The Sullenders," she said. "It was curious, I was just telling the front of their house taken off the way a curtain rolls up at the theater and shows you one of those sordid Russian plays, for instance.

"There was the whole sickening actual life of that domestic family laid bare before me; the continual petty bickerings, that every hour or so grow into bitter quarrels, with blows and epithets—and then, when other people are there, as we were last night, the assumption of sanctity, the false, too sweet sweetness and absurd pomposities—oh, what an ugly revelation it is, Will! It's so ugly it makes me almost sorry you were wrong about them, as you're rather likely to be in your flash judgments, you know, dear."

Bella (who was "literary" sometimes) delivered herself of this speech with admirable dramatic quality, especially when she made her terse little realistic picture of the daily life of the Sullenders; but there was just a shade of happy hypocrisy and covert triumph in the final sentence, and she even thought fit to add a little more on the point. How strange it is to think that only last night we were arguing about it!" she explained, "and that I said we'd not need to wait a month to prove that I was right! Here it is only the next day and it's proved! I was a thousand times righter than I said I was!"

"Well, perhaps you'll enlighten me—" he began, but she compiled so willingly that she didn't let him finish his request.

She gave him Georgie's revelation in detail, emphasizing and underlining somewhat with her own interpretations of many things necessarily only suggested by the child's meager vocabulary; and she was naturally a little indignant when, at first, her husband declined to admit his defeat.

"Why, it's simply not believable!" he said. "Those people couldn't seem what they seemed to be last night, and be so deceived. They were genuinely affectionate in the tone they used with each other and they—"

"Good gracious!" Bella cried. "Do you think I'm making this up?"

"No, of course not," he returned hastily. "But the child may have made it up."

"About his own father and mother?"

"Oh, I know, but some children are the most unnatural little story-tellers; they tell absolutely inexplicable lies and hardly know why themselves."

But at this Bella looked at him pityingly. "Listen a moment. There was all the sordid daily life of these people laid out before me in the poor little child's prattle, a hole realistic novel, complete and consistent, and I'd like to know how you account for a child of seven or eight being able to compose such a thing—and on the spur of the moment, too! No child ever makes up stories; they make 'em up about extraordinary and absurd things, not about the sordid tragedies of every-day domestic life. Do you actually think this child made up all he told me?"

"Well, it certainly does seem peculiar."

"Peculiar? Why, it's terrible, and it's true!"

"Well, if it is," he said gloomily, "we certainly don't want to get mixed up in it. We don't want to come into a new neighborhood and get involved in a scandal—or even a gossiping about one. We must be careful not to say anything about 'em, Bella."

She looked away from him, thoughtfully, for a few moments. "Of course these people aren't friends of ours—hardly acquaintances."

"No, but that's all the more reason for our not appearing to be interested in their troubles. We'll certainly be careful not to say anything about this, eh, Bella?"

"Oh, I suppose, so," she returned absently. "Since the people are really nothing to us, though, I don't suppose it matters whether we say anything or not."

"Oh, but it does," he insisted, and then, something in her tone having caught his attention, he inquired: "You haven't said anything to anyone about it, have you, Bella?"

"Anything?"

"You haven't repeated to anyone what the child told you, have you?"

"Oh, no," she said lightly. "Not to anyone that would have any personal interest in it."

"Oh, my!" William exclaimed, dismayed. "Who'd you tell?"

"Nobody that does the slightest interest in the Sullenders," Bella replied, with cold dignity. "Nobody that cares the slightest thing about them."

"Well, then, what in the world did you tell 'em for?"

"Why, to pass the time, I suppose," Bella said, a little offended. "Cousin Ethel dropped in for a while this afternoon and the whole thing was so extraordinary I just shocked her a little. What are you making such a fuss about?"

"I'm not," he protested feebly. "But even if the thing's true, we don't want to get the name of people that gossip about their—"

"Oh, my!" she sighed impatiently. "I've told you Cousin Ethel hasn't the slightest personal interest in these people, and besides she'll never repeat what I told her."

"Well, if she doesn't, it'll be the first time!"

"Will, please!"

"Golly, I hope it won't get back to the Sullenders!"

"Such horrible people as that, what difference would it make?" Bella demanded impatiently. "And how could it get back? Cousin Ethel doesn't move in Sullender circles. Not precisely!"

"No, but her close friend, Mrs. Howard Peebles, is the aunt of Mrs. Frank Dennis, and Frank Dennis is Sullender's business partner—"

"Oh, a realtor! is he?" Bella said, flirty.

William returned to the lounge but did not recline. Instead, he sat down and took his head in his hands. "I do wish you hadn't talked about it," he said. "Suppose—therefore—she began to be angry. "Do you think it's very intelligent," she asked, "to imply that I don't know enough not to make neighborhood troubles? You may not recall that only last night you were saying how glad you were that I was wrong about what sort of people these Sullenders are. Already, the very next day, you've had to confess that you were utterly mistaken and that your wife is wholly in the right. I suppose you can't even a little depressed about that and want to change the question to something else and claim I'm in the wrong about that. But don't you think it's a little bit childish of you, Will? Don't you think that the party you're taking your defeat is just a little bit—small?"

He was hurt, and looked up at her with an expression that showed the injury. "I'd hardly have expected you'd call me that," he said; "at least, not so soon after our wedding trip!"

"Well, I might have expected you wouldn't be accusing me of gossiping harmfully," she retorted "not quite so soon after our wedding trip!"

Young Mr. Sperry rose again. "Do you think that's as bad as using the epithet 'small' to your husband?"

"Epithet!" she echoed. "You charge me with using 'epithets'?"

"Well, but didn't you?"

"I think I did say you're excuse me," Bella said, with an aspect of nobility in suffering. And she proudly betook herself from the room.

It was a tiff. Next day they were as polite to each other as if they had just been introduced, and this ceremonial formality was maintained between them until the third evening after its installation, when a calamity caused them to abandon it. After a stately dinner in their sunlitten square feet of dining room, Bella had gone out into the twilight to refresh her strips of iris with fair water from the garden hose, and William reclined upon his lounge, solitary with a gloomy pipe. Unexpectedly, he was summoned. Bella called to him from the door and spoke loudly.

"Uh—Mr. and Mrs. Sullender," she said. "Uh—" And as hastily withdrew.

Perturbed, he rose and went out to the front veranda, where, with a slightly nervous hospitality, Bella was now offering chairs to Mrs. George M. Sullender and her husband. Mrs. Sullender smilingly, and in her angelic voice, declined the offer.

"No, my dear," she said; "we came in a moment to indulge in a lovely treat at closer range; we're just passing on our way to some friends in Waverley place."

"We'd be so glad—" Bella fluttered.

"No, no, no," Mrs. Sullender murmured sweetly. "We've only a moment. I'm so sorry you disturbed your husband—we're just going over for Bridge. I suppose you know most of the people in Waverley place?"

"No, I don't know any—"

"Well, of course we don't think a company so limited as Highland Park," Mrs. Sullender said, with a little depreciatory laugh. "I'm afraid it's rather—well, gossipy."

"Oh—" Bella said. "Is it?"

"I'm afraid so," the gentle-may nered lady returned. "Of course that's a great pity, too, in such a little community, where people are bound to be thrown together a great deal. Don't you think it's a great pity, Mrs Sperry?"

"Oh—naturally," Bella acquiesced "Yes, indeed."

"I know you would, of course it's just thoughtlessness. Most of the people who live there are so young. But we heard a really dreadful story only yesterday. It came from a very young newly married couple, and my husband and I were so sorry to hear they'd started in by telling such dreadful things about their neighbors. Don't you think it's most unwise, Mrs. Sperry?"

Mrs. Sullender's voice, wholly unruffled, and so indomitably tender as ever, gave no intimation that she spoke with a peculiar significance; but William Sperry was profoundly alarmed, and, with a sympathy that held no triumph in it, he knew that Bella was in a similar or worse condition.

"Yes," Bella murmured. "Of—of course I do."

"I knew you would feel that way," said Mrs. Sullender, soothingly. "It's unwise because gossip travels so. It usually always goes straight back to the people it's about. In fact, I don't believe I ever knew of one single case where it didn't. Did you, Mrs Sperry?"

"I don't—that is, well, n-no," Bella stammered.

"No. It's so unwise!" Mrs. Sullender insisted, with a little murmur of tender laughter. Then she took the arm of her solemn and silent husband, and they turned together toward the gate, but paused. "Oh, I meant to tell you, Mrs. Sperry—"

"Yes?"

"That dear little boy Georgie—the little boy you were chatting with the other morning when I called him in to play with my little girl—you remember, Mrs. Sperry?"

"Yes?" Bella gasped.

"I thought you made such friends with him you'd be sorry to know you won't see him any more."

"No?"

"Yes. Mrs. Sullender cooed gayly "Poor little Georgie Goldie!"

"Georgie—who?"

"Georgie Goldie," said Mrs. Sullender. "He was Goldie, our chauffeur's little boy. They lived over our garage and had quite a distressing time of it, poor things, but they finally got a shaded Goldie to move to another town where she thinks chauffeurs' pay is higher. I was sure you'd be sorry to hear the poor dear little boy had gone. They left yesterday. Good-night, dear! Good-night, Mr. Sperry!"

With that, followed by somewhat feeble good-nights from both the Sperrys, she passed through the gate with her husband and a moment later disappeared in the clean dusk of Highland place.

Then Bella turned to her troubled William. "She—she certainly made it plain!"

"Yes," he said. "But after all, she really let us down pretty easy."

"I—I," the young wife demanded sharply, "Did you say 'we'?"

"Yes," he answered. "I think she let us down about as easy as we could have expected."

Bella instantly threw herself in his arms. "Oh, William, do always say 'we' hereafter. "For be the kind of husband that won't throw this up at me when we're forty and fifty! Will, promise me you'll always say 'us' when I get 'us' in trouble!"

And William promised and William would.

PAINT HORRORS OF NEXT WAR

Scientific Means for the Extermination of Whole Nations Are Being Frankly Discussed.

When last January the five powers represented at the Washington conference adopted the Root resolution finding themselves not to use "asphyxiating, poisonous or analogous liquids or materials or devices," the end of chemical warfare seemed to have come, observes the Boston Herald. It had been arraigned by General Pershing and by one of the subcommittees of the conference as "abhorrent to civilization," and as a practice that should be prohibited by international agreement. As early as 1899 The Hague peace conference accepted a rule against the use of missiles intended to diffuse suffocating gases. And as a result of the war the whole world has come to know what resort to them means in terms of human suffering and permanently shattered human lives.

Yet at Geneva the other day Lord Robert Cecil announced the conclusion of the committee on disarmament to the effect that it was impossible to suppress entirely the use of chemicals and scientific weapons and that the only safeguard was to make the peoples of the world understand the horrors that might be expected from such methods. And as if to lift the veil from them he added that he had been made aware of at least one discovery of "a scientific means for the almost complete extermination of whole nations at a time."

It is not too much to assume that the new discovery relates to some improved method of broadcasting poisonous gases from the air, and if large-scale war occurs again whole nations as well as individuals may have to count with horrors now almost inconceivable. Notice that the speed and carrying power of aircraft have gone far ahead of anything known during the conflict with Germany. The British air ministry has just developed a new flying machine with an oil-burning, six-cylinder engine developing 1,000 horse power and capable of flights of 1,000 miles; it is to be loaded with bombs and torpedoes; will "climb at a tremendous rate" and shows a cruising speed of about three miles a minute.

The German experts are meanwhile studying air currents with a view to the development of the glider until, as a correspondent states, "wind-borne motorless flights, revolutionizing human transport, can be made for hundreds and thousands of miles." The new ship which is to come from the experiments "will be sailed," motorless, by its crew, soaring here and there in mighty windbends and extracting all the power needed from the air itself." Improbable of realization as that forecast seems, command of the air for the purposes of war as well as of peace is increasing by leaps and bounds

The Kitchen Cabinet

Conducted by Nellie Maxwell

Suitable is as necessary to the successful dinner as the right scene for the character—Lowell.

COOL, REFRESHING VEGETABLES

When the mercury is soaring up to the nineties, cooling dishes are the only ones that appeal to the appetite, but must have vegetables to give our food the proper balance and it not hot and steaming, then, if, beboves us to find some way of making them appetizing without the heat.

These vegetables may be prepared in the early part of the day and when dinner time comes a steak may be broiled or a few chops and dinner getting is a simple process.

With the wealth of delicious vegetables to be found at this season, one may have a pair for each dinner and never run low on ideas.

Peas are such a delectable vegetable that they may be served often in most families. One day cook them, drain them with cream, and serve in ripe tomato baskets. This dish not only gratifies the eye but will prove satisfying to the palate.

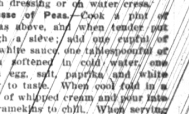
Peas in Aspic Jelly.—A pint of shelled peas will make six individual molds. Cook the peas in just enough water to cover them, adding a teaspoonful of sugar and a slice of onion; when tender drain and cool them. Soak one tablespoonful of gelatin in two tablespoonfuls of cold water, add one and one-half cupfuls of finely seasoned meat stock, or canned bouillon, boiling hot. Stir until the gelatin is well dissolved, then strain and chill but do not let it come to the point of congealing. Add the peas and a rather spoonful of chopped red pepper; stir occasionally until the jelly begins to thicken. Pour into molds wet with cold water and place on ice. Serve turned on sliced cucumbers dipped in French dressing or on lettuce cress.

Mousse of Peas.—Cook a pint of peas as above, and when tender put through a sieve; add one cupful of thick white sauce, one tablespoonful of gelatin softened in cold water, one beaten egg, salt, paprika and white pepper to taste. Mold and fold in a cupful of whipped cream and pour into little ramekins to chill. When serving garnish with a point of whipped cream topped with minced parsley.

"The tender morsels on the palate melt
And all the force of cookery is felt."

SUMMER SUGGESTIONS

In many places small boxes of tea of various kinds may be purchased in the bulk for a few cents. Just enough in them for a cup of tea. When traveling a cup of tea is quickly made with boiling water, dropping the bag and by the



a minute or two you will have a refreshing drink. Carry a box in your bag, for it will prove a comfort to some one, even if you don't care for tea.

The hot weather brings discomfort and loss of appetite. It is almost too hot to eat some days, but the body must be nourished. Let the meals be as simple and as easy of digestion as it is possible to plan.

Gelatin Ice Cream.—Take two cupfuls of thin cream, one cupful of sugar. Dissolve two tablespoonfuls of gelatin in one-fourth cupful of hot water, add with one cupful of milk to the cream and sugar and freeze.

Peach Cream Sherbet.—Measure two cupfuls of ripe, mashed, fresh peaches; add one cupful of sugar and stand on ice for three hours. Fold in one cupful of cream whipped until stiff and freeze. Serve garnished with chopped maraschino cherries.

Olyocka.—Scald one pint of milk, add one tablespoonful of sugar and the same of butter, and cool until tepid. Soften one yeast cake in one-fourth of a cupful of lukewarm water, combine with the first mixture, add a teaspoonful of salt and three cupfuls of flour. Let rise until the sponge is light, then add two-thirds of a cupful of butter, one cupful of sugar, a teaspoonful of nutmeg and four eggs beaten light; add enough more flour, six more cupfuls of flour, to make a stiff dough, roll out and cut into small thin rounds. Let rise half an hour and put into the center of each a teaspoonful of the following mixture: Four apples, cupful of raisins, three ounces of citron, all chopped fine. Moisten the edges of the cakes and press together in the form of a turnover. Let rise again until very light and fry in deep fat. Roll in powdered sugar. These cakes will keep two weeks.

Scotch Short Bread.—This bread is too rich for daily food, but is very popular for an occasional meal or to serve with tea. Take one pound of butter, one-half pound of sugar, two beaten eggs and two pounds of flour, a grating of nutmeg and a teaspoonful of grated lemon peel. Mix and roll to half-inch thick. Prick with a fork and bake in a hot oven.

Nellie Maxwell

Are a Lazy Race.

Probably the laziest people in the world are spanking, sturdy lads in the inaccessible mountain range between the Black and the Caspian seas. They have made no advance toward civilization in twenty-five hundred years. It is their invariable rule to observe holidays four times in a week, with saints' days as extras.

Appearances Deceptive.

You rarely always can tell much religion a man has from the length of his face.—Illinois State Journal.