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IT WAS ANOTHER SHIP IN DISTRESS

(© by D. J. Walsh.)

BETTY BRITTON looked wistfully up into the face of her tall young husband as he flung down his napkin and arose from the breakfast table. After an instant's hesitation Dick came round to Betty's chair, bent and kissed her. Then, whistling noisily but without a single word to her, he hurried off to his day's work.

Dick's silence was getting on her nerves. For three whole days now he hadn't spoken a single word to her. Until he spoke she wouldn't. If he wanted to be stubborn, she could be stubborn, too.

Dick's kiss, punctually and dutifully delivered, had become a mere form, an artificial nothing. Each hour of silence seemed to be pushing them a little farther from each other.

From the moment of Dick's departure until his return, Betty was alone. They were new to the place and hadn't yet made any friends.

Betty killed all the time she could. She put the small apartment in perfect order, changing the position of the furniture as far as possible. Then she put on her things, took her basket and went to market. The mere sight of Betty's alert and smartly-clad young figure brought joy to the faces of butcher, baker and candlestick maker.

Coming back with her well-filled basket, Betty was astonished to find a little tableau being enacted upon the front steps of the quiet apartment house, where she lived. A woman sat upon the steps, a shiny new suitcase beside her. The woman was old and very stout and her clothes looked as if they had done duty for best for a long time.

"You must get up from here, lady!" Betty heard. "Nobody sits down on front steps in a respectable street like this. We can't let you sit here any longer, lady."

"I'll sit where I please and how I please," retorted the sitter. "Go away and mind your own business, if you've got any."

"I can't allow it!" cried the janitor's wife. She was terribly flustered, poor thing, because the old lady had already been sitting there an hour.

"Mrs. Olson is right," Betty said quietly. "If you are tired you can come inside."

"I'm tuckered out. I'm subject to spells, too," said the old lady, rising to her feet. "I thought, maybe, one was coming on when I sat down here. It's a good ways to walk from the station. Why, they make railroad stations so pesky unhandy, beats me."

"My goodness! You didn't walk all the way from the station!" cried Betty.

"I did. First off, I kinda enjoyed walking, there was so much to see. Policemen kinda helped me when I got where it was thick. I kinda wished my boy was a policeman. He lives somewhere round in this neighborhood. Ever run across anybody by the name of Dick Britton?" She looked anxiously at Betty.

"My goodness!" gasped Betty. "Dick's my husband. You must be our dear Aunt Mary!"

"I don't know how dear I am to Dick," sighed Aunt Mary. "I thought I'd come and see, anyway, if he'd got over his mad. So you're the girl he married? You're pretty, anyway."

Betty took Aunt Mary up to her apartment. She made her lie down and babied her with cakes and good hot tea. Aunt Mary admitted that she hadn't had bite or sup since she got her own breakfast by lamplight.

Meanwhile, Betty milled over the increasing complexities of her own problem. Here was Aunt Mary, an unexpected visitor. Dick had always been a little reticent about Aunt Mary—"the best ever, present company expected, but set. First, she didn't want me to get a job in town. Then she didn't want me to marry anybody but Edna Pratt, a neighbor girl. Don't know as Aunt Mary will ever forgive me." Not only had Aunt Mary forgiven Dick, but she had come all the way from Pine Grove to see him. Betty felt that as a rival to Edna Pratt, she must make good in Aunt Mary's eyes. But how could she excuse the fact that she and Dick were not speaking? But, forlorn hope! Maybe Dick would give in! That would settle things nicely.

By 6:30 Betty's cheeks were flaming with suspense. Aunt Mary sat comfortably with her tatting, waiting to surprise Dick. All afternoon she had talked about Dick, how he'd been set in her lap to take care of when he was only a couple of years old. Aunt Mary had raised him best she knew how, but Dick was awful stubborn.

"I'm a bit stubborn myself," vouchsafed Betty.

Aunt Mary shook her gray head. She sighed tempestuously.

"Well, maybe you'll get along in spite of that," she said.

At 6:35 Dick bounced in, his cheeks fresh, his eyes bright in spite of more than ten hours of bucking in the world. He saw Aunt Mary, paused.

"Well, for cramp's sake!" Then he had her in his boyish embrace.

After a moment Aunt Mary said, "Don't you see your wife, Dicky?" But Betty had fled to the kitchen.

At dinner both Dick and Betty devoted themselves to Aunt Mary. But the pained, puzzled look deepened upon Aunt Mary's sweet old face as she glanced from one young person to the other.

After dinner radio helped out—some. Every time Betty saw Aunt Mary shake her head doubtfully, she felt as if she could scream.

Breakfast time. Dick hurried through cereal, and pancakes, and bacon. Betty pretended to be busy with things, Aunt Mary looked as if she hadn't slept a mite. She merely tasted her food. Once or twice she acted as if she were going to speak out about something. But she held in until Dick was out of the house.

"Now I want you to tell me what's the trouble 'twixt you and Dick. It makes me feel awful bad, Betty. Human nature being what it is, you can't expect married folks always to agree. But when you see a nice little matrimonial bark like yours going straight onto the rocks—" Aunt Mary wiped a tear off her cheek.

Betty's eyes filled. She put her arms about the dear old figure. Her lips were moving in confession when the telephone rang. Betty leaped and snatched the receiver.

"Dick! Oh, you darling! Yes, she's just asked me—I'll tell her—" Betty turned to Aunt Mary, her face glowing with joy. "Dick just telephoned from the corner drug store. It's all off. He's given in."

"What do you mean?" gasped Aunt Mary.

"Well, we had a—sort of spat. Dick said I was the stubbornest. I said he was. We—we've been having a try-out. The one that spoke first had to pay up. I get the waffle irons, but I shall get Dick the smoking stand, just the same—"

Aunt Mary interrupted.

"You hush up, both of you!" she laughed. "I'll see to the waffle irons and smoking stand myself."

The King's Girls

During the Seventeenth century in New France, the French government sent out shiploads of young women of a marriageable age to meet the shortage in Quebec. Over a thousand, known as "the King's Girls," were thus transferred to the new colony, in charge of nuns. Marriages took place by the score soon after the arrival of a new detachment in Quebec, the government giving a money grant and certain privileges such as remission from taxes for some years. Bachelors who refused to marry were heavily fined. Many of the old families in Quebec today originated in this novel matrimonial manner.



In office at Chestertown every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday; office hours 9 a. m. to 4 p. m.

DR. JULIAN T. POWEL
OPTOMETRIST
Chestertown, Maryland.

KENNEDYVILLE

Mr. and Mrs. Norman Bramble and two children, Ruth and Norma, of Newark, Del., spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bramble and family.

Mr. Jacob Bramble spent the week end with his brother, Mr. George Bramble, and family in Philadelphia, Pa.

Mrs. Hilda Bennett and friend, Mr. Pippin spent Sunday with her sister, Mrs. Jacob Bramble.

Miss Lula Van Dyke is suffering from a fall, her sister, Mrs. Aca Crew, is with her.

Miss Katherine Urie spent the week end with her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Urie.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hill entertained Dr. Humphreys and wife on Sunday.

Mr. Walton Redmile and family visited Mr. and Mrs. Harry Redmile the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nickerson entertained Mr. and Mrs. William Dempsey, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Caldwell, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Jarvis and Mr. and Mrs. James Weer and children on Tuesday evening.

Miss Dewees spent the week end with her friend, Mrs. Howard Clendaniel.

Dr. and Mrs. Humphreys spent Thursday here.

Mrs. George Glenn visited Baltimore the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. John Rollison spent Sunday with her brother, Mr. Joseph Trew in Quaker Neck.

Miss Francis Hill spent the week end with her aunt, Mrs. Ada Hitch at Queenstown.

Mrs. Lula Dukes, of Chestertown, spent a part of last week with Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Dukes.

Mr. William Hill and friend, of Philadelphia, visited relatives here last week.

Mrs. Susie Shallcross was a visitor here last week after spending some time in Wilmington and other places.

Mr. and Mrs. William Hopkins and children spent Sunday in Chester.

Mr. Arnold Willis visited his children in Philadelphia last week.

Mr. David Nickreson and sister, Miss Katherine Nickerson, spent the week end with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nickerson.

Mr. Charles Jarvis and family and other friends, of Wilmington, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hill.

Service in Grace Presbyterian church at 7.30 preaching by Dr. John Humphreys. All invited.

Service in the M. P. Church next Sunday: Sunday School at 10 a. m.; Men's Bible Class the same hour; preaching at 11 a. m., by Rev. Mr. Brown. Christian Endeavor at 7 p. m. preaching by the pastor at 7.45 p. m.

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