

## Sister Mary, the Malicious Spinster

By CLARA DELAFIELD  
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"Rolf, Sister Mary's coming to spend two weeks with us. Now, listen, Rolf. Won't you try, during those two weeks, to treat me a little better than you do, so that she won't suspect there's anything wrong between us?"

"Yes, if you'll try to stop snapping and snarling at me while she's here."

"I've never snapped in my life, but a man like you is enough to try the patience of a saint."

Rolf sighed. After eighteen months of marriage he had decided that it was not all it was cracked up to be.

Jennie and he had had some happy times together, but they had had a great many more unhappy ones. In fact, they had reached the point where they had spoken of a separation. And between a separation and a divorce there is only a thread.

And Sister Mary! Rolf had seen her during his courtship—a shriveled, malicious spinster with a sharp tongue. She was said to be kind. Rolf had never found any evidence of kindness in her. Wherefore he concluded that he was in for a rough time.

Sister Mary duly arrived, looking more shrewish than ever. Immediately the sisters seemed to be in tacit alliance against him. He was conscious of some conspiracy. He hardened himself. He didn't care. Let them do what they liked.

For three or four days little happened. On the fifth Sister Mary and Rolf stayed at home, while Jennie went to church. Then Sister Mary unbuttoned herself.

"Rolf, I've changed my opinions of you," she said. "I'm sorry for you. When you married Jennie I pitied her. I thought you weren't the sort of man she needed for a husband. But now—heavens, how that girl's changed! Don't you see that she treats you like a dog, Rolf?"

Rolf was exuberant. "Oh, well, of course she has a temper," he said.

"A fiend's temper! Her true nature's coming out. A slatternly housewife, a shrew, a—"

"Hold on!" said Rolf, raising his hand. "After all, she's my wife, you know."

"You poor man, there's no reason why she should remain your wife a day longer. You're young, and you're unsuited to each other. Why don't you cut the knot and get your freedom? Yes, I mean just that. That woman's about the most impossible person I've ever known."

"Oh, it isn't as bad as all that," answered Rolf, angrily. "And if you feel that way about my wife, Mary, there's no reason why you should have to stay and bear with her, you know."

Sister Mary snorted and walked out of the room. Rolf fumed for a long time. Somehow Mary's attack on her sister—perhaps the disloyalty of it—made him feel better toward Jennie than for a long time past.

Next day he noticed a certain coolness on the part of the sisters toward each other, but he was quite unprepared for the terrific outburst that greeted his ears the following morning as he stepped out of the bathroom.

"Go!" cried Sister Mary's voice. "I wouldn't stay here another day if I was paid to, Jennie! I've had just about all I can stand between the two of you!"

Rolf dressed hastily and descended to see Sister Mary packing her suitcase in the hall. He tried to make peace.

"What's the trouble?" he asked.

Neither would tell him. Sister Mary relented a little, regretted that her visit hadn't proved a success and let Rolf call her a taxi.

He went back to find Jennie in tears.

"What is it, darling?" he asked, putting his arm around her.

"Oh, Rolf, that wicked woman was trying from the very beginning to bring about a separation between us, abusing you until flesh and blood could stand it no longer. Then I told her what I thought of her."

"Why—why, Jennie, pet, she tried the same game with me."

Suddenly suspicion leaped into his brain. "Jennie, do you suppose she—she—?"

"Oh, Rolf, do you think she—she's really kind, you know? Do you suppose she saw, and—?"

Leaning back in the taxi Sister Mary was smiling. "I never knew it to fail," she said to herself. "God bless 'em!"

### A Cycle of Life

When Mary was born they gave her a perambulator.

Then she grew up a bit and they gave her a velocipede.

When she got a little older they gave her a pony and cart.

When she was in grammar school they gave her a bicycle.

While she was in college the folks gave her a flapper.

At her wedding they donated an airplane.

Now she's starting in again with a perambulator.—Amherst Lord Jeff.

### Must Make God

"I guess I made a bad break," admitted the press agent to Dimpie Climpie, the movie queen.

"How so?" inquired the handy interlocutor, or play-up.

"I told her domestic staff was good publicity and insisted that she make a picture."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Now I gotta eat the pie."

## THINGS UNUSUAL

By T. T. MAXEY

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### THE OLD FAIRBANKS HOUSE

There is hardly a section that does not have its "old house." Most of them, however, take their hats off to the old Fairbanks (formerly Fayerbank) house, which stands in a cluster of stately trees in the little city of Dedham, Mass. With the exception of certain adobe, stone or shell houses in California and Florida, this probably is the oldest house still standing in the United States.

This relic of days gone by was built in 1636. It is perhaps the best example of Old English frame cottage construction to be found in America, was lived in up to about twenty years ago by eight generations of the Fairbanks family, retains its primitive simplicity, quaintness and picturesqueness and is now filled with heirlooms of the Fairbanks family.

Like many old-time structures, the main portion is flanked on two sides by wings and the pitch roof of the middle section extends very near to the ground in the rear. The front side contains eight windows and no two of them are alike. As if to have an individuality all its own, a time-honored practice was departed from in that neither the front door nor the chimney are in the exact center of the house. Curiously, also, the doorways are exceptionally low—persons of ordinary height having to bend slightly on entering.

"You call those dogs off!" said Millicent, standing with her back to the door. "That poor beast's not going to be killed."

She knew who the master was, Cyril Fordyce, the second son of Lord Chalilston, who now leaped angrily from his horse.

"Nonsense!" he shouted. "We've had a three hours' run. Open that door!"

"You dare to try to open that door!" said Millicent. "Or lay a finger on me and see what happens!"

"She's the American lady," whispered one of the whippers-in.

It was a stormy scene, but arguments and expostulations alike proved fruitless. Chagrined, almost beside themselves, the hunting party withdrew. As soon as they had descended the comb Millicent opened the door.

Instantly the huge form leaped out, knocking her over, and planting two sharp hoofs in her chest—and in a few moments the stag had vanished down the comb, sighted and hotly followed by the hunting party.

It was only when they had run it down and secured the trophies that they returned, to find Millicent lying unconscious in front of her door.

Fordyce leaped from his horse and lifted the unconscious girl across his saddle. Mounting behind her, he turned toward his father's place.

And thus, five days later, Millicent came back to consciousness in Fordyce Court, in small guest chamber.

It was a small one because the larger guest rooms were uninhabitable, through want of repair. In fact, when, two weeks later, Millicent was able to descend the stairs, she discovered that Lord Chalilston was one of the new known.

The descendants of the family have banded themselves into an organization to the end that this historic spot may be preserved.

## THINGS UNUSUAL

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### CHICAGO'S NEW UNION STATION

When the old Union depot in Chicago was opened in the '80s wise men regarded it as a "white elephant" and criticized the railroads for building it so big. If those sages could return and view the new one, to be opened soon, expressing utility and service in the highest terms, they would be struck dumb with amazement. This project covers 35 1/2 acres and the ground is valued at \$1,000,000 per acre.

To make room for it, scores of buildings had to be wrecked; 14 viaducts, having a total length of more than two miles, were rebuilt; one street was elevated several feet and widened 20 feet for about one mile, and a tremendous amount of excavating was necessary—approximately 100,000,000 pounds of steel alone being used in this work.

The depot proper will be 320 by 370 feet and extends 20 stories above ground—the upper portion to be used as a giant office building. The waiting room will be 100 feet wide, 270 feet long, and 114 feet high—with facilities for the use of travelers arranged easy of access. The portion containing the waiting, dining, ticketing, checking, and other public conveniences, and the train shed, outwardly appear to be separate buildings, but will be connected underground by the largest concourse in this country—all located on the level of the platforms which will serve the passenger tracks, or 16 feet below the surrounding streets.

Trains will be dispatched from both ends of the train shed. Five roads—the Burlington route, Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cincinnati, & St. Louis (the two latter combined forming the Pennsylvania system), Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, and the Chicago & Alton—will use this station.

The longest platform will be 1,500 feet; the longest track will accommodate 16 cars and locomotive. The train shed will have a capacity of 254 passenger cars and 20 locomotives.

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She came. Phyllis studied her for a while and then remarked, encouragingly: "You're not nearly so stout as I thought you'd be!"

"All right, my dear. If we can't do any better, we'll shoot craps."

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