

## DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN

Clubs Circles SOCIETY Suffrage Philanthropy

## Revelations of a Wife

My Heart and My Husband

BY ADELE GARRISON

## WAS MRS. STOCKBRIDGE'S STUMBLE AN ACCIDENT?

What method Kenneth Stockbridge and Alice Holcombe used to reduce Mrs. Stockbridge to order I had no means of guessing, but whatever it was it proved effective, at least for the time being.

The three walked away together and disappeared into the dining room. Mr. Stockbridge returned a few minutes later with smiling face, but eyes that were strained, full of uneasiness. Later still Alice Holcombe and Mrs. Stockbridge came back into the living room together, both chatting animatedly. I was quite sure that Mrs. Stockbridge had been crying, although the traces of tears were not visible. They paused before the chair where I still sat under the watchful eye of Mr. Donkers.

"Mrs. Stockbridge is wondering, Mrs. Graham, if the lion of the evening could not be persuaded to roar a bit for the visitors," Miss Holcombe drawled, while Mr. Donkers peered disapprovingly at her over his glasses.

"Oh, don't you suppose he will, Mrs. Graham?" Milly Stockbridge cooed with the infantile playfulness which she affects at times. "We're all just dying to hear him. Mr. Stockbridge tells me his speech to the pupils this afternoon was simply wonderful. You'll ask him, won't you? He can't refuse you, I'm sure."

Her face was all smiles and animation. Evidently she had promised her husband and Alice Holcombe to behave herself, also to remove the possible effect on Mr. Donkers of her former speech. But although she could control her face and voice, she could not quite manage her eyes, and when a few seconds later I inadvertently met them gazing at me intently my blood chilled at the cold, malevolence her look betrayed.

"I would be very glad to ask him, Mrs. Stockbridge," I returned courteously, "but I am sure it would do no good. If Mr. Stockbridge or you cannot persuade him to speak, my word would have no influence. Besides, my husband and I have a bargain never to ask the other to 'do stunts' as he would express it, in public."

Mrs. Stockbridge's invitation. "We'd better get Ken busy, then," our hostess returned, turning carelessly away, but not before I had caught a glance by no means careless from her black eyes. That she was plotting some mischief I was sure, and I would have given a good deal for a plausible excuse for leaving the house.

To my great surprise "Ken" evidently "got busy" to some effect, for a little later Mr. Stockbridge called for attention, and after a few preliminary words of introduction Dicky gave a clever, interesting, informal talk which seemed to delight his listeners. I was immensely proud of him, and could have throttled the obtuse Mr. Donkers, who persisted in accompanying Dicky's stories with whispered comments to me and inquiries for any further details which he imagined he would like to hear.

As Dicky finished and his hearers gathered around him with congratulatory remarks, Mrs. Stockbridge came to me and spoke. "Dear Mrs. Graham," she cooed, "would you mind coming out and relieving me at the fruit punch bowl? I sent Mrs. Gray, who has been there the most part of the evening, in to hear your husband, and she's still talking to him. If you would just stay there till she comes

back. People will be getting thirsty again presently."

"Of course," I said, rising promptly. "I shall be delighted to be of service to you." And I was, indeed, glad to escape the conversation of Mr. Donkers.

She led the way to the dining room, where on a low table was one of the most ornate cut glass punch bowls I had ever seen with the cups to match.

Mr. Stockbridge Appears. "This was one of my wedding presents," she said proudly. "It is wonderful," I murmured—and, indeed it was—in its own way. "You haven't tasted the punch yet, have you?" she asked. "I don't think I've seen you out here."

"No, I seldom drink anything that is so rich," I returned.

"Oh, but you simply must have some of this!" she said enthusiastically. "I made this myself. It is my own special recipe. Do take some. I shall feel awfully hurt if you don't."

She was fairly fawning upon me. I felt that I must get rid of her as quickly as I could, and I reached out my hand for the cup she was filling. As I did so, Mr. Stockbridge's voice sounded behind me.

"Fill me one, too, dear," he said quietly. Mrs. Graham and I will "touch glasses" to your health."

She looked up at him with blanched face, but stood her ground. "Certainly, if you wish it," she said in a low, meaning tone.

Her husband took the silver ladle from her hand.

"Let me try my hand," he said playfully. Then, as if by accident, he stumbled against the table.

The next instant the punch bowl lay in fragments on the floor.

What Happened After the Punch Bowl Was Broken.

As the full meaning of Kenneth Stockbridge's seemingly inadvertent action flashed upon me I unobtrusively dropped the cut glass cup filled with the fruit punch which Milly Stockbridge had ladled out for me. As it did so, shattered itself against the polished floor the only traces of whatever it was the half-crazed woman had tried to do were lost in the trickling streams of liquid running over the floor.

My gown had miraculously escaped being splattered. As I stepped back to keep the liquid from ruining my slippers I kept my eyes on my hostess, for I was filled with a very wholesome respect for her ability to make things unpleasant. True, I had no real proof that

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she had put anything in the fruit punch which would harm me, although her husband's face and action betrayed panic. The next instant, however, Milly Stockbridge surprised me indeed.

As if the crash of her cherished punch bowl had brought her to her senses, her face, first gray with fear and horror, broke up into frightened emotion. She swayed toward her husband with arms outstretched as a terrified child might have done, and the next moment she was sobbing against his shoulder, crying out desperately:

"Oh, Ken, I didn't mean to, truly, I didn't! But she made me so mad. I'm so glad you stopped me, but I didn't mean to. Say you forgive me, Ken, say it, you know it's because I love you so—say it, Ken, say it!"

Madge Explains. "Hush!" His voice was hoarse, but there was a tenderness in it that the man must have been a most superhuman to have achieved.

"People are coming; they will hear you. You know I forgive you—and love you. Now pull yourself together. Let people think you're upset because your punch bowl is broken. Everybody knows how you cherished it."

His eyes met mine above her shoulder, tortured eyes with a note of pleading in them. I knew what he wished, and spoke not to him, but to the woman whose face was hidden against his shoulder.

"I will explain things to anybody who inquires, Mrs. Stockbridge, so that you needn't be disturbed."

"Thank—you," I could hardly hear the words. Indeed, I hadn't waited for them, but went steadily forward to meet the two or three inquisitive souls who had heard the crash and promptly decided to investigate matters. The others, more composed or more well bred, were gathered around Dicky.

Luckily, even with Milly Stockbridge's reputation, the shattered punch bowl spelled reason enough to her friends for her agitation. Her husband was leading her toward the kitchen as the vanguard of inquirers met me.

Mrs. Stockbridge Reappears. "Oh, oh, that beautiful punch bowl!" the foremost woman exclaimed with a ghoul-like look at the remains of the bowl and the floor. "And her floor will be ruined, too; Milly is so particular about her floors. Something ought

to be done about it right away. I think I'll—"

I stopped her with a little authoritative gesture.

"The maid is coming in directly," I said. "And Mr. Stockbridge particularly requested that no one disturb Mrs. Stockbridge for a few moments. You know she is very nervous anyway, and the breaking of the bowl has completely upset her."

"I should think it would," observed another woman, the first speaker being occupied with glaring at me resentfully. "That bowl and the cups were the treasures of Milly's heart. They were wedding presents, you know, and the handsomest things in town."

"How did you say it happened?" The first woman eyed me with a glance that dared me to tell my story twice the same way.

"Why! Mr. Stockbridge offered to help her ladle out the punch, and as he did so stumbled against the table, upsetting the punch bowl."

"Ah, yes!" She nodded her head sagely. "Poor thing, he's so awkward in his lameness, he must be a great trial to Milly."

"Humph!" snorted the second woman. "Shoe's on the other foot, I should say. There's Christine now. How's Mrs. Stockbridge feeling, Christine?"

"She ban all right pretty soon," replied Christine stolidly. "Meester Stockbridge, he make her lie down. She get up pretty quick."

"Well! I suppose we might as well go back," the first woman said reluctantly, and with a sense of relief that poor Milly Stockbridge's secret was safe for the minute I followed their retreating backs into the living room.

So assiduously did they spread the news of the broken punch bowl that by the time Mr. and Mrs. Stockbridge rejoined their guests—she this time with distinct traces of tears upon her face—every woman in the room was ready with emotional condolences over her loss.

But Kenneth Stockbridge didn't leave his wife's side again. And when the evening guests had left and she started to accompany Miss Holcombe and me to the upper chamber where our wraps were he put a restraining hand upon her arm.

"Alice can do the honors, dear," he said tenderly. "You are tired out, and I am sure Mrs. Graham will excuse you."

LADY BOOT BLACKS

Y. W. C. A. girls in one of the New York City associations have turned temporary bootblacks, manicurists and beautifiers to their feminine employees in the Y. W. C. A. building in the unique effort to raise a goodly sum of money for the national campaign. Not only are pies, cakes and candies being sold in the tried and true style of previous years, but a shoe shining parlor has been set up in a conspicuous place to tempt the person hurrying the halls; a "beauty parlor," where shampoos, manicures and all the mysterious wiles are practiced, runs at high speed in the noon hour and early evening; and several button-sewers and darners take in all the weekly mending that is offered.

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