

# In the Realm of Women—Some Interesting Features

## The Luck of Geraldine Laird

BY KATHLEEN NORRIS,

Author of "The Story of Julia Page," "Heart of Rachel," "Josselyn's Wife," "Sisters," etc.



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Miss Eva Lowe, Carleton Place, who formerly held a position in the office of the clerk-treasurer in Renfrew, has become the wife of George W. Leacock, Winnipeg. The marriage took place at the home of the bride's parents in Carleton Place. The Norman Hamilton residence, Renfrew, has been purchased by A. L. Handford for occupation by his brother, Wilber W. Handford, and family. The Renfrew council has ordered that restaurants should close at midnight on week days and at 7 p.m. on Sundays.

"Oh, but, Jerry," Louis had argued, "there's a distinct charm about the cramping and the smallness! It would spoil it all to make it something different—something adapted! I love its clumsiness—really I do!"

Tonight Geraldine felt that she loved it, too. There was an exquisite coolness and cleanliness about the earthen floor of the one large room; the tiny deep windows shone in the sunset, the high hearth, upon which Deanie could sit, with little dangling sandals, was decorated with the field-blooms of the late Summer, Queen Anne's lace, Michaelmas daisies, as blue as pale summer skies, goldenrod and yarrow. The polished heavy old black table wore no cloth, there were blue bowls in a row on the mantel, and a gay pink-and-white gingham draped the deep, dark bed. Everything was simple, useful, primitive.

"Won't we have to move these flowers, if we're to have any supper?" Geraldine asked of the farmer's wife. Mrs. Simmons, blue-eyed, affectionate, with immense bones and a childish smile, nodded wisely. "Everything was simple, useful, primitive."

"I cook for you at my house," she explained. "Too hot here." "But it's pretty hot at your house, for you and the children," Geraldine persisted pleasantly. The big Swedish woman really disliked the solitude that made her children's claims in any way comparable to those of the owner's friends. It belittled her own high estate as the owner's servant. She grimaced nervously, and said nothing more.

Geraldine and Deanie performed a brief toilet in the only other room the cabin contained—pouring some warm water from a marvelous old blue pitcher and wiping their faces on linen towels as thick and soft as velvet. She presided at the farmhouse supper; a simple supper, that kept unfolding, she remarked to the diverted Louis, in a mysterious and satisfying manner, from a small beginning. There was in evidence merely a great bowl of rice when they sat down.

"Huldah isn't?" She was shocked. "But—she lives here with him?" "Of course she does; those boys are theirs," he answered, contentedly. "But—why aren't they married?" "I don't know—don't want to, perhaps."

"But, Louis—that's—that's disreputable!" Geraldine argued. "They don't think so!" "No, I suppose they don't! But you ought to make him marry her, Louis." "My dear child—it's the other way! He's twenty years older than she is. He's frantic to marry her."

"Oh! Geraldine did not find this very palatable, either. "What a—what a funny thing!" she said discontentedly. "They seem so nice." "They are. They're the best sort," he answered. "Oh, but Louis, to do a thing like that!"

"Well, think a moment, my dear. Isn't there something rather fine about people who don't need iron bands to keep them together?" "No, there isn't!" she said briefly. "We have only one life to live here," he said presently, "and the love of a man for a woman is a wonderful thing. They love, they give—and they shut the world from their holy of holies as they would shut a cup of tea from a noisy party."

"What does it matter? If I finest thing in our lives; why should what the world says pollute it?"

"Huldah thinks that is food!" Louis said in a disgusted tone of voice. "Well, and so it is!" Geraldine laughed, pouring creamy milk for Deanie, and splitting open the hot, heavy rolls. "And sweet butter, Louis, and what's this—cheese?—cheese, and those oily things, there are fish—now, don't hurt her feelings!" she besought, as the amiable Huldah returned. "Just wait and see!" Huldah brought boiled eggs, laid only an hour or two earlier, and rich diamond-shaped cookies for Deanie, and a dark plummy jam. "Why, we shall burst!" Geraldine murmured, "there's enough for ten here! Please, Louis—"

"Gooh, Huldah, where's the meat?" her employer demanded, half-impatient and half-whimsical. "Meat? She was aghast. She went and brought delicious hot corn, a dozen small blue cobs steaming on a platter, and sliced tomatoes, and lettuce, glistening wet and stiff. Last came a platter of tepid mutton, sliced and ungarlished. She's got about as much gump-tion—"

"Lord, what a way to serve a meal!" "Oh, it's delicious! The vegetables are simply heavenly!" Geraldine assured him. "For goodness' sake, smile at her, Louis! You know she's never had any training like Marie. And if you were alone she probably

would give you bread and milk and cheese, and you'd be perfectly content!" He softened, enjoying the feeling that she made him soften.

"She told me the other day that she and Simmons aren't married," he said, whose Deanie had flashed away for a last look at the cows, and he was seated beside Geraldine on the step, smoking in deep content.

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—an endless chain of nothings told and retold. She has wrapped herself in a cocoon, like the silk worm, round and round and round; she is winding herself about until she can neither hear nor see anything beyond her enveloping case. She is hopeless, because unlike the silk worm she will not wake up and eat her way out. When she first went to the small town there was quite a flutter of excitement over her advent, a brilliant pianist, a singer and a university graduate was a great acquisition for that small community. The minister's overworked wife, the doctor's pretty young bride and the very modern school teacher were ready to follow her leadership, but instead, with all the gifts she had to bestow, she slumped down and began to weave a cocoon.

She isn't very happy in the small town for even the patient wife of the minister has become tired at last of listening to "the many years of edging, and why, and what the neighbors said."

If she wants companionship she will have to unwind herself, or eat her way out, for the average woman of to-day is no cocoon dweller.

It is a curious fact that while women of the lower classes in Siam have always enjoyed the greatest freedom, participating and competing with men in the business and pleasures of life, the ladies of the royal household have been kept in the background, appearing at only the most private social gatherings and never at public or official functions.

As all former sovereigns had in their harems the cream of the aristocracy of the country, and, as they inevitably felt a hesitant chivalry about exhibiting their "wives" in public, they barred all women of rank from sight. The sovereign is expected to have in his harem a member of every influential family in the country, for it is considered that in no other way could he be in such close touch with the people of his kingdom.

Polygamy has, therefore, been considered an obligation of royalty. But, curiously enough, the present reigning monarch is a bachelor, the first and only bachelor who has sat upon the throne of his fathers in twenty-five hundred years. And thereby hangs a tale, for marriage by a Siamese sovereign has meant not the simple taking of one wife, or a dozen, or even a hundred, but the wholesale adoption of a thousand or more. The young king's father and his father's father, and each of the long line of kings preceding them, had many wives. His father had between seven and eight thousand. And when the young crown prince returned from his long stay in Europe—he had passed a third of his life there—he was told by his royal father that there had been selected for him a number of court beauties from which he could take his choice of a hundred or two for his harem. But the prince would have nothing to do with this wholesale acquisition of a husband's holdings. "When I marry," he declared to his astonished father, "it will be to one wife and to no more, and she shall be the one queen of my heart and the one queen of my realm."

—From "The Land of the White Elephant," by Frederick Dean, in Asia Magazine.

WELLINGTON BUDGET. Horses Killed by Lightning, But Were Insured. Wellington, Aug. 14.—Mrs. Sherry has returned from Toronto, accompanied by Miss Norma Jackson, Margaret Squire, Lindsay is the guest of her grandmother, Mrs. M. Squire. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Shurie are away on a motor trip. Mrs. L. K. Shourds is visiting at Brighton. Mrs. Samuel Trumppour is visiting at Mrs. Vandewater's, Brighton. Mrs. Helen Rankin was the guest of her uncle and aunt, J. E. Cronk and Mrs. A. Wilson, last week.

Miss Florence Farnell and Hope Young were married on Wednesday, the 5th. They are at Syracuse spending their honeymoon. Mrs. Potter, Dundas, is visiting Mrs. Edna Raynor and other relatives. Mrs. Bartlett, of Auburn, N.Y., visited her mother, Mrs. Thomas Hand, last week.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Ross Platt have moved to their new home at Markham, where Mr. Platt is to manage that branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia. Dr. McCullough and Dr. Broad are both fitting up offices in the Fitzgerald block.

Frank O. Weir, lay reader, will conduct services at St. Mary Magdalene Church, Picton, on Sunday, Aug. 17th, while Rev. F. Louis Barber is away on his holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Jones are entertaining their son and family from Buffalo, N.Y. Mrs. Woodman Thomas and two sons have been visiting at Lindsay and Oakwood. Joshua McFaul lost a pair of valuable horses by lightning on Thursday last, but the Liverpool & London Insurance Company paid him \$400 for the loss.

Miss Agnes Mandeville, nursing sister at the military hospital in London, is spending a holiday with her mother here. Mr. Thomas of Hillier, was married on Wednesday to Miss Dora Fidler. Mrs. (Dr.) Dean and baby, of Brighton, are with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. K. Shourds. The death took place in Chicago on Tuesday of William Hay, sr. He had long resided in Renfrew, holding a position as accountant with M. J. O'Brien, but of late years lived with his son in Chicago. R. M. Hope, late manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia, in Chatham, N.B., has arrived in Perth, and will take charge of the Bank of Nova Scotia. F. G. Miller, B.A., principal of the Almonte High School, has resigned. He goes to Owen Sound.

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