AUBREY'S ARRESTED INDIVIDUALITY

What soured existence for Aubrey Devine was the fact that his wife was, in one important matter, unreasonable. She declined to go before the world as the bearer of his name. Her argument was two-fold. In the first place she claimed that, as Adelaide Brewster Moggs, she was already carrying a sufficient weight of name for one weak woman and that, in a world which contained Virginia Terhune van der Water, Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, and Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale, there was not sufficient space for Adelaide Brewster Moggs Devine. In the second place, Adelaide Brewster Moggs was not so much a name as a trade-mark. The public had grown accustomed to welcoming the utterances on The Future of Woman by Adelaide Brewster Moggs, and to spring an unexpected Devine on them would perplex and annoy them. It would be as if they were suddenly confronted at their favorite vaudeville house with Eva Tanguay Robinson or Irene Franklin Chesterfield-Bodsworth.

Aubrey yielded the point, and with it his individuality. It is true that one or two intimate friends down-town knew him as Devine, but to the world at large he was "I-forget-his-name, Adelaide Brewster Moggs' husband." Earnest sociologists who tripped over Aubrey in dark corners of the Devine apartment on the occasion of Adelaide Brewster Moggs' weekly salons, in relating the episode to their wives, would not say that they had stubbed their toe on Aubrey Rockmetteller Devine, they would say that they fell foul of Miss Moggs' husband. Newspaper reports of meetings graced by the presence of America's leading exponent of Woman's Rights would record a speech from Miss Adelaide Brewster Moggs, "who was accompanied by her husband." Sometimes a snapshot of Adelaide would appear in a Sunday paper, with Aubrey at her side. The legend beneath it would run "Miss Adelaide Brewster Moggs, the famous champion of Womanhood, with her husband."

This preyed upon Aubrey's mind. It gave him a feeling of disembodied spirituality which was most unpleasant. Sometimes he had to pinch himself to make sure that he was there. When signing a check he would often pause an instant to remember what name he ought to write.

He began to brood. Lying awake at night, he would try to think up ways of making a name for himself. He went at it systematically. He made a list of the most prominent men in the country, men who had made names for themselves, as follows:

President Wilson, William J. Bryan, Jack Johnson, Vernon Castle, Billy Sunday, George M. Cohan, John D. Rockefeller.

Could he follow in these men's footsteps? No, and, briefly, for the following reasons:

He did not know how to wait watchfully. He disliked grape-juice. He could not box. He tripped over his feet when he tried to foxtrot. He did not perspire readily. He had no father. He had a good digestion.

Sometimes he thought of committing a murder or robbing a bank, but refrained because the sight of blood always made him feel faint and there seemed, for a novice, to be so few opportunities of robbing banks.

But one morning Fate relented. Genevieve O'Grady entered his life.

One really scarcely knows what to say of Miss O'Grady. She was employed by the Mammoth Store, and, except on very rare occasions, hardly ever had to work more than eleven hours a day. And she was in receipt of the excellent salary of five and half dollars a week, ample for a young girl who does not keep an automobile and has mastered the art of living on bread and weak tea. Looking at it with the eye of a dispassionate observer, one would have said that life was one long round of enjoyment for the girl. She had the whole day to herself except from eight in the morning till seven at night, and nothing to do with her money, after feeding and clothing herself, except squander it on her personal pleasure.

Yet this child of fortune, in a silly mood, flung herself off the side of a ferry-boat into the whirling waters of the Hudson River. Of the dozen or so spectators of the incident, all had some remark to make about it. One said, "What did she do that for?" Another said, "Would you look at that!" Others declared that somebody ought to do something about it.

The only person present to take definite action was Aubrey Rockmetteller Devine.

To Aubrey this chance seemed sent by Heaven. Pausing merely to remove his hat he plunged in and swam to where Miss O'Grady, now repenting of her rash act, kicked and called for help. The only doubt in his mind was the exact way in which the papers would feature the thing.

They might say:

DEVINE'S DASHING DEED

DARINGLY DRAGS DAMSEL

FROM DIRE DESTRUCTION

Or possibly,

DEVINE DID IT

Saw, Seized, Saved Suicidal

Shop Girl

Or again,

DARE-DEVIL DEVINE

DIVERTS DEATH

BY DROWNING

As he reached her, Miss O'Grady came up for the third time and twined herself clingingly about him. They returned below the surface together.

Just about the time when the only really suitable headline for the incident would have been

DEVINE SWALLOWS ALL

OF THE HUDSON RIVER

help arrived.

After they had done all that first-aid-for-the-apparently-drowned stuff on Aubrey, they took him and the dripping lady to Park Row. There the reporters all had a good look at him.

"Why, I know that man," one of the news editors finally exclaimed. "It's — it's — I've forgotten his name, but he's Adelaide Brewster Moggs' husband."