

On the sleeping porch upstairs was an electrical player piano wired so that at the pressing of a button it would play for the porch below. Carl loved innovations and gadgets. When I played that piano all the dogs gathered and "sang"—Teddie, the St. Bernard; Laddie, the collie; and Flambeau, the singing air-dale, who howled the scale. Many a belated Speedway guest, hoping to sneak in quietly, pressed what he thought was the porch-light button and the entire household awoke to the blaring of "After the Ball," followed by nine other tunes before the piano stopped. I was still in my teens when Carl sent me to Grand Rapids with a bundle of architect's prints and orders to furnish our new homes. It never occurred to him to doubt my ability, and he asked it of me in that reassuring way that always made people do what he wanted. When he sent me to buy, largely, lavishly and without thought of cost, the furniture, draperies and rugs for three large houses, I could not know it was the first of countless such buying trips, and that for years I would be choosing fittings and matching samples for Carl's houses, country clubs and hotels. He left everything to my judgment. His only stipulation was that I was to buy large-sized furniture—"No sissy furniture a man won't dare sit on." Also he laid down a flat edict against antiques. His final injunction was: "And don't forget a couple of good-sized brass spittoons." That was the first time I rebelled against Carl. How we argued! But Carl won, and I came back from Grand Rapids with the three housefuls of furniture—and the spittoons.

For years I fought against these brass horrors. No matter where I hid them, Carl always brought them out. At a social occasion I was trying to make impressive, Carl appeared with one and a delighted, "Look, honey, someone must have hidden this behind the screen."

I was learning many things about Carl in these first months of marriage. The spittoons and the peanuts and his swearing were all surprises. During our courting days he had succeeded in hiding from me the fact that he smoked strong cigars and that he swore as casually as other men used ordinary speech. I did my best to reform him, but I forgave easily.