

AUGUST 10, 1919

TWENTY MILES OUT

by Louise James Bargelt

Susan Decided That It Would Be the City for Her If She Ever Married. She Did Not Care for a Suburb.

ATASTE for suburban life is frequently a matter of cultivation. Women usually find it harder to cultivate than men, and the younger the woman the slower to develop is her appreciation of its fullest and completest joys.

Such a case in point was that of a Susan MacMahon. Suburban life to Susan spelled everything she didn't want, never had wanted, and never, never would want.

Not that she often expressed this and similar convictions for public consumption. It would have grieved her mother and angered her father. They had come to the suburb for Susan's sake, and her viewpoint would have been much lamented. She was their reason for exodus from town. Married people almost always have a reason for coming to the suburbs. A definite reason is a comfortable thing in case actualities do not measure up to expectations. After three or four years you can hear the women regaling each new arrival in the suburb with their individual and particular reasons.

But Susan MacMahon had none of the consolations of well doing to sustain her. She had been raised in the city and bred on city pavements until she had reached what she considered years of discretion and the beginning of all life and fun. That is to say, precisely 16½ years, in terms of calendar time, and the smell of smoke and the bustle of crowds was sweet to her soul.

And the suburb she hated with as deep and abiding a hatred as any girl with Susan's natural sweetness of disposition could possibly treasure. She had spent ten years in it, and in that single decade of years, life, as she told herself, had passed her by. She had been robbed of all the gayeties of girlhood, the natural inheritance of youth, buried out in the prairie stretches of a new and struggling suburb, twenty-seven miles from town!

She hated the long ride to the city on the

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too infrequent trips she was able to make. She always had to sit with some married woman, who was very likely to regale her with all of the myriad worries and woes of matrimonial existence.

But though the distance was long enough in the day time, it was nothing to what it seemed after the theater. At the door of this grievance lurked a near approach to tragedy. Susan always had to invite the man to stay all night; that is, on those rare occasions when she was invited by some masculine cosmopolite for supper and theater afterward. There was no returning train he could possibly catch after depositing her at the door of the MacMahon bungalow, five blocks from the station. Susan was blonde, and Susan's particular type of prettiness did not stand the morning light well. In her heart Susan was convinced that she had lost several suitors through this criminal neglect on the part of the railroad authorities to schedule a return train to town.

The number of people in Garden Bloom, however, who were interested in theaters was a negligible quantity. Most of the dwellers of Garden Bloom were feverishly pining for their lares and penates. All of the family resources in summer were directed toward the buying of screens and seeds and interior decorations, while the resources of winter were speedily absorbed in such necessary luxuries as storm windows and coal, kindling, and metal sashes. Susan remembered once a remark of a patient little woman who referred fondly to the night her

