

THE GREAT AMERICAN APPLEBURYS

BY HARRY COLWELL

PART II

As written for and presented by
The American Broadcasting Company

(Copyright, 1929)

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT

BY

WILLIAM H. CHAPMAN

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Author of "The History of the United States"

Published by the

Author of "The History of the United States"

*

C O M P A S S I O N A T E M A R R I A G E

Being one of the tales of "The Great American Appleburys"

By Harry Colwell

*

*

C A S T O F C H A R A C T E R S

(In order of speaking)

FLORA APPLEBURY, the wife.

HERMAN APPLEBURY, the husband.

TILLIE, the Applebury's
Scandinavian maid.

ALICE, Flora's niece.

JIM, Alice's cave man.

*

*

SCENE: The Applebury domicile, a typical
American home in a typical American
city.

TIME: A week-day evening.

*

*

(Copyright, 1929)

By Harry Gilwell

SOUND EFFECT PLOT

1. Door slam.
2. Door bell.
3. Crockery crash.

COMPASSIONATE MARRIAGE

By Harry Colwell

FLORA: (Sounds of violent weeping)

HERMAN: Well, for goodness sake, Flora, what are you bawling about?

FLORA: (Weeping) I -- I got a letter today--

HERMAN: Well, I get letters every day but I don't cry about 'em.

FLORA: D-do-don't try to be f-funny. It's too terrible!

HERMAN: Why, I'm just trying to cheer you up, Flora. Good heavens, what awful thing was in the letter? Are they going to fore-close the mortgage or repossess the car?

FLORA: No--- no, it isn't that.

HERMAN: Well, you know they can't take the furniture, because I had all the windows and doors cut down after it was delivered so they couldn't get it out again without breaking it up. So I don't see what you've got to worry about.

FLORA: Oh, Herman, please be serious! I feel so bad!

HERMAN: Come on, honey, tell me about it. You look bad, too; your complexion's all run together and settled in the low places. You look like a neglected watercolor.

FLORA: I-- I got a letter from Alice---

HERMAN: Well, that ought to make you feel good. Here you've been wailing for two months because she wouldn't answer your letters and now you're weeping just because she does. What's the matter, is she sick?

FLORA: N-no, worse than that.

HERMAN: Well, what is it then? Has she failed in domestic science or flunked in biology, or didn't she make the sorority?

FLORA: Oh you wouldn't understand. Men never can understand those things. O-oh-oh dear. (Weeping)

HERMAN: Come now, Flora! Wait'll I put on my cravenette and you can weep on my shoulder.

FLORA: Boo- hoo-

HERMAN: Well, for heaven's sake then tell me so I can cry too. Is she going to have an operation?

FLORA: N-no, worse than that, worse than that!

HERMAN: Well, I give up!

FLORA: S-sh-she's going to get m-married-----boo-hoo!

HERMAN: Well, what's wrong with that? That might happen to anybody.

FLORA: But she's only a girl!

HERMAN: Well, suppose she is-- we've always known that. Why, I suspected it the first time I ever saw her. It's not her fault. That's another thing that's liable to happen to anyone. It's one of the risks we take in being born. Besides, do you suppose any man would want to marry her if she wasn't? Unless you want to be a party to misrepresentation and fraud you ought to be mighty glad she's a girl.

FLORA: Oh, Herman, stop! I knew you wouldn't understand. She's only a girl and---

HERMAN:

Only a girl! Do you know what that means nowadays? You tell any girl that. Say, it would be like splitting kindling on a keg of dynamite. Girls today are loaded with gun cotton. They remind me of a marshmallow-- soft and sweet, covered with talcum, but too many and you soon get tired of 'em.

FLORA:

But she's only nineteen.

HERMAN:

Only nineteen! I'll bet she knows so much more now than you do at your age, that she's old enough to be your great grandmother's half-sister's uncle's aunt.

FLORA:

Oh, I know, Herman, but you don't understand. Alice was my sister's only child and she made me promise that I would always look after her. And I thought we were doing the best thing when we sent her away to school, but now just see what's happened.

HERMAN:

Well, what's happened? You just said she was going to get married. What's wrong about that? I notice you weren't too good to get married. That sort of thing has been going on for ages-- you can't stop it now. It was invented by women in the first place. And why moan about her? There's lots of others in the same fix.

FLORA:

Oh, but Herman, you don't know, its the kind of marriage.

HERMAN:

The kind of marriage? Why, there's only one kind, the kind you pay for and don't get; the kind that keeps you harnessed to a pay roll, the kind that ties you to a three room apartment or a forty foot lot and a five room house or a ten acre farm all your life. It's the kind that keeps you walking the streets all day and the floor all night; it's--

FLORA:

No, no, NO, Herman! This is different. It's that DREADFUL COMPANIONATE marriage.

HERMAN:

H U R R A H!

FLORA:

What are you hurrying about, you monster?

HERMAN:

Why shouldn't I hurrah! What do you suppose the slaves did in 1863 when Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation? Did they cry about it? No, but the slaveholders did. That's why you're howling now.

FLORA:

Why Herman Applebury, it is not!

HERMAN:

Oh, yes it is, but you wouldn't admit it even to yourself.

FLORA:

Why, Herman.

HERMAN:

Then what are you kicking up such a fuss for? It's just your woman's instinct that you don't understand yourself. But I do. (Oratorically) You've held man bound and fast under contract for ages, and now that he's slipping away from your domination and soaring up--up the heights of freedom on his new elevator, companionate marriage---why---

FLORA:

It's no such thing--

HERMAN:

Oh, it isn't, hey? I'll prove it! Who got up this new family entrance to marriage anyway, a man or a woman?

FLORA:

Why, a man, of course, but---

HERMAN:

There you are! A man did! And who did he get it up for?-- Why, for men of course. Any woman had the same chance, but did she take it? I'll say not! You might as well expect a banker to move his money into a tent, or the grocer to leave the top off the molasses barrel during the fly season.

FLORA:

Now see here, Herman, just a minute---

HERMAN:

Of course the women don't like it. What do you expect? If you leave it to a mouse to invent a new mouse trap, he'd make one he could get out of, wouldn't he?

FLORA:

It's positively shameful the way you talk. You would think that marriage was a kind of device, something you could move around any way you wanted, like a lawn mower.

HERMAN:

Well, it is like a lawn mower. It trims you just the same, doesn't it? And the greener you are, the easier. It is a device that was invented to legalize social customs and has been handed down to us like the calendar, or the tides, or the deck of playing cards we use. Nobody knows who started 'em, but everybody gets into the game sometime and wins for a little while, maybe, but sooner or later they lose, like any other gambler; and the reason is that you have one partner so long she loses interest in your play and starts looking at the other fellow's hand, and then---

FLORA:

Herman Applebury, have you any idea what you're spouting about? Are you discussing Hoyle or Holy Matrimony?

HERMAN:

No, I'm giving you the straight on Holy Matrimony according to Hoyle. Just hold your horses now, I'm coming to the point. It's a big one and I want to put it across. You see everybody's put up with old fashioned marriage just like they do with sulphur and molasses in the springtime. It's supposed to be good for 'em, only there's more sulphur in it than molasses.

FLORA:

Herman, I'm proud of you; you never expressed yourself so well before, nor said so little. Go on, possibly you might strike something that will make sense.

HERMAN:

That's all right, Flora. I don't expect you to exactly follow me. Women can think only in a straight line. When they come to a curve you have to blindfold 'em, carry 'em around the corner and start 'em off again towards an objective they can see. That's why---

FLORA:

You'd better land on your objective pretty soon before you get lost in your abstractions and have to call on me to help you out. Go on with your sulphur and molasses.

HERMAN:

I wasn't talking about sulphur and molasses. I was just saying that it was originally just an invention, when along comes a fellow with something he calls "companionate marriage" and everybody gets violent over it and calls it a terrible invention, but it's no invention at all.

FLORA:

Well, what is it then?

HERMAN:

Why it's just a discovery, a harmless discovery that we can get along without the invention---

FLORA:

What do you mean, Herman Applebury? Are you daring to advocate---

HERMAN:

Don't get excited now! I'm not advocating anything. I'm just saying that somebody has discovered a kind of marriage that sees no harm in being companions; in fact it kind of encourages it and admits the possibility of being friends even though married. That's where the discovery comes in. Isn't it grand?

FLORA:

Well, I see nothing new about that.

HERMAN:

No, it's just unusual. But who is Alice going to marry?

FLORA:

That's the worst of it, I don't know, but she talks about somebody by the name of Jim, and that's what worries me, not knowing what sort of a person this Jim is.

HERMAN:

Well, that just proves that you should have different kinds of marriage for different kinds of people instead of trying to fit 'em all with just the one stock size. For some people a self-adjusting, double-action evaporated kind of marriage is the only thing they can use while others wouldn't be satisfied with anything but the steel-riveted, iron-clad and galvanized variety.

(Knock on door)

FLORA:

It's Tillie -- Come in Tillie.

(Door opens and closes)

FLORA:

What is it?

TILLIE: (Hesitatingly)

Aye-aye yust want to tell yu somet'ing.

HERMAN:

Go ahead, Tillie. What is it?

TILLIE: (Still more
hesitant)

Aye got somet'ing aye want to tell yu.

HERMAN:

Well, well, go ahead, tell us anything you want. We probably won't understand it anyway.

TILLIE: (Bursting out)

I'm going to get MARRIED.

HERMAN:

Great Scott! Is this an epidemic?

FLORA:

Why, Tillie, how does this happen?

TILLIE: (Vaguely)

Aye don't know.

HERMAN:

You don't know! Great Heavens, what do you know? Do you happen to know what the man's name is?

TILLIE:

Aye tank so.

HERMAN:

You think so! Well you better make sure or you're liable to go to the wrong address-- and get yourself thrown out. That's one of the first things you should do before you get married-- try and find out who it is you're marrying. It saves lots of trouble and attorney's fees afterwards.

TILLIE:

Yah, Mr. Applebury.

HERMAN:

Of course, Tillie, I've only been married once myself and perhaps I've a lot yet to learn, but you can't live all your life with one woman and not know a lot more--

FLORA:

If that's your idea, Herman, I'm a failure because I don't believe you know even as much as when I married you. Tillie, who is this man?

TILLIE:

Michael, Patrick, Timothy, Shamus, O'Gilligan.

HERMAN:

Is that a man's name? It sounds like the biographical section of an Irish Encyclopedia.

FLORA:

Why, that's Mr. O'Gilligan, the policeman on the beat here!

HERMAN:

So that's it. I've seen an officer hanging around this house for the last month and I was worried for fear he was a special detail sent out to capture that teaspoonful of brandy I've had hidden in the eye-dropper since 1920. So it's courting he's after, not crime.

TILLIE:

Yah, aye tank so, Mr. Applebury.

HERMAN:

Well, just when does this-er-catastrophe take place?

TILLIE:

Aye don't know.

HERMAN:

You don't know! Why, Tillie, that's important! Don't let him get away without setting a date. That's terrible! You should have---

FLORA:

Now, Herman, please have a little delicacy. You know young love's tender feelings are easily bruised.

HERMAN:

Well I'm just trying to help her, Flora. Someone has to and I understand the technic of these things. I'm just calling her attention to the little weaknesses in these preliminary negotiations so she'll get a fair covenant. Tillie, you're just like a negotiable instrument payable to bearer, without any date. You get a date on this transaction just as soon as you can or you'll find yourself a floating debt. The best thing you can do under the circumstances is to present yourself for payment and be immediately married and cancelled.

FLORA:

Herman, why do you persist in filling her mind with such rubbish?

HERMAN:

Rubbish nothing! It's just good common sense.

FLORA:

But you talk as if she were a sight draft.

HERMAN:

Well, look at her, doesn't she look as if she had been drawn at sight,-- like a cartoon. She has what you call a hasty appearance, like a quick job.

FLORA:

Mr. Applebury likes to joke, Tillie. Don't mind him. I never do. I suppose you will have a Lutheran ceremony?

TILLIE:

No, ma'm. Aye tank ve have companionate marriage.

HERMAN:

You hear that, Flora! It's even gotten into the kitchen.

FLORA:

Oh, Tillie, surely not that!

TILLIE:

Yah. He say it best until aye get little more money saved op and then ve gat married again.

HERMAN:

That's the stuff! He talks like a painter-- let it weather for a year and then give it another coat.

TILLIE:

Dot's vhy aye come to see yu. He say yu should give me more money.

HERMAN:

What! Say is this fellow a suitor or a promotor? What's he trying to marry, a wife or an income?

TILLIE:

He say dot's vhy we have companionate marriage, den I keep right on vorking and get more money.

HERMAN:

Money! Sure, he's looking for money, not matrimoney, and he's moving his cash register right into our kitchen. He wants us to support his wife for him and pay him something besides. You go back to that Irish loafer and tell him if all he wants is the special income features and the disability and sick benefit clauses of companionate marriage we'll fix him up with a combination subscription to the Youth's Companion and a life insurance policy, but if he wants a real wife and all the discomforts of home he'd better submit himself to the usual matrimonial handcuffs.

FLORA:

Mr. Applebury is quite right, Tillie. We might increase your wages just for you, but not to turn over to a companionate husband. That wouldn't be fair to you, because as a policeman he already has a good steady income.

TILLIE:

But he say ve must put much money in bank and have bigger insurance when ve marry because his vork is dangerous and he might get shot or somet'ing.

HERMAN:

Well, that's all right, Tillie, but you can't depend on that. Many a woman has married with the same hope, but it doesn't always work out. You must be sensible. Every husband's work is dangerous.

FLORA:

Mr. Applebury is right again, Tillie. The average husband doesn't know just how dangerous his work is. After you become a wife you will sometimes wonder why we let them live.

HERMAN:

You run along now, Tillie, and forget this foolishness. What we need in this country is not a recognition of a companionate marriage but some remedy for an exasperated marriage.

FLORA:

Yes, I think some branch of the government should develop some relief measures for aggravated wives.

HERMAN:

Well, the Secretary of Agriculture should have some data on aggravations and the Bureau of Animal Husbandry can furnish you statistics on husband.

(Door bell rings)

FLORA:

I'll see who's at the door.

(Door opens)

FLORA:

Why bless me if it isn't Alice!

ALICE: (Excitedly)

Oh, Aunt FLORA, let me in, QUICK!

(Door closes)

FLORA:

Heavens, yes! What IS the matter, child?

ALICE: (Breathlessly)

Oh I've had such a TERRIBLE time. I REFUSED to marry Jim and he got so VIOLENT I was afraid. I just HAD to run away and come to you. I'm SURE he is after me!

HERMAN:

Now, NOW, Alice, don't get HYSTERICAL. Remember you are in my house and under MY protection. Who IS this young WHELP?

ALICE:

He's NOT a young whelp. He's a PERFECTLY WONDERFUL boy, and I LOVE HIM. But he's JUST CRAZY---

HERMAN:

Oh, you LOVE him! Maybe that's what made him CRAZY.

ALICE:

He is NOT crazy.

HERMAN:

You just SAID he was crazy.

ALICE: I meant he has the most TERRIBLE temper. But he LOVES me,
he LOVES me!

HERMAN: Oh, I SEE. THAT'S why you thought he was crazy.

ALICE: I mean he's crazy about ME. He's FRIGHTFULLY IN LOVE.

HERMAN: Well ANYBODY who's in LOVE is CRAZY.

FLORA: Herman! Are you trying to drive the POOR CHILD FRANTIC?
Can't you see she's DESPERATE?

HERMAN: I never saw ANYBODY in love who WASN'T desperate. That's
PART of it. I'm just trying to CALM her, to SOOTHE her.

FLORA: You don't soothe a WOUNDED HEART by rubbing SALT into it.
Alice, you KNOW we want NOTHING more than your HAPPINESS.

HERMAN: YES, even if it includes MATRIMONY. We'll even overlook THAT.

FLORA: Be still, Herman! Alice, if this is the RIGHT SORT of a young
man, with GOOD PROSPECTS and you LOVE him and he loves YOU,
then WHY do you run AWAY from him? WHY don't you MARRY him?

ALICE: (Weakly) I--- I don't know.

HERMAN: Great Scott, there's a WOMAN for you! Alice, that proves to
ME that you're no longer a GIRL. You're NOW a WOMAN. You're
INCAPABLE of making up your OWN mind.

FLORA: Will you keep OUT of this? This is a WOMAN'S affair.

HERMAN: A woman CAN'T have an AFFAIR without a MAN in it SOMEWHERE.

FLORA: Tell me, Alice dear, WHY don't you know?

ALICE: Well-- we were both still in school and Jim is working his way
through and won't get his degree until next year, so he thought
we should have a COMPANIONATE marriage---

HERMAN: THERE you go, Flora. TWO companionate marriages in ONE day, right in our OWN house! It's getting as POPULAR as the CROSS-WORD PUZZLE used to be.

ALICE: Well, I thought at first it would be all right because I heard it allowed only the MINIMUM of INTERFERENCE from a HUSBAND.

HERMAN: According to your Aunt Flora, INTERFERENCE is just another NAME for a HUSBAND.

ALICE: And I couldn't BEAR the thought of LOSING my FREEDOM.

FLORA: Now DEAR, DON'T worry about losing your FREEDOM. That's just an old fashioned NOTION about marriage. You'll have ALL you have NOW, plus ALL of HIS. Look at US. WE'RE both free. I'M free to do anything I choose, and HERMAN is free to do anything HE wishes-- that I LET HIM.

ALICE: (Beginning to cry) Well, anyway, I just lost my NERVE, and HAD to come home. And Jim lost his HEAD. I'm afraid he's followed me and will do something DESPERATE.

HERMAN: Good Lord! ANOTHER weeping woman on the premises! I'm going to hire you out as a couple of MOURNERS!

FLORA: HERMAN! Can't you have a LITTLE sympathy? Weren't you EVER in love?

HERMAN: Yes, I guess I MUST have been. But it's too late to CRY about it NOW. See HERE, Alice, brace UP! Jim didn't just NOW lose his head. He's been WITHOUT one ever since he FELL in LOVE. BUT you never happened to NOTICE it before.

ALICE: (Weeping) I KNOW, Uncle Herman, but EVERYTHING seems all MUDDLED UP.

HERMAN: Now, NOW, little girl DON'T cry. It isn't muddled up at all. It's just a GOOD, FIRST CLASS, LOVE affair. Don't you know you

CAN'T have a real HIGH GRADE LOVE affair without getting it all TWISTED up? THAT'S what makes it GOOD! Don't you know that you HAVE to shed a few tears into a ROMANCE to give it the proper amount of LUBRICATION, or it will DRY UP and BLOW AWAY?

FLORA: For ONCE in your life, Herman Applebury, you are talking SENSE.

HERMAN: My Lord, my WIFE says I'm talking SENSE! Is this a DREAM? She must be in love, TOO.

ALICE: Oh, I HOPE you're right, Uncle Herman.

HERMAN: I KNOW I'm right. Why, I can remember when Flora's father broke a bottle of KETCHUP over my head and kicked me down THREE flights of stairs. It was the FINEST THING in the WORLD for me. Why, it just put me in TRAINING to take the BRUISES I've been getting EVER SINCE.

(Door bell rings,
followed by im-
patient pounding
on door.)

ALICE: (Hysterically) Oh, that's JIM! What WILL I do? He'll do something WILD, I know!

HERMAN: Now you just leave this "JIM" person to ME. I'll handle him all right.

ALICE: Oh, uncle, DO be careful! He's TERRIBLY big and STRONG. He made ALL the TOUCHDOWNS on the team this year.

HERMAN: Well I'VE made a FEW touchdowns MYSELF. I don't care if he's as big as an ELEPHANT and as strong as an OX. Just DON'T WORRY about your UNCLE HERMAN. He can take care of HIMSELF, and you TOO. Now go on upstairs, BOTH of you!

(More violent bell
ringing and door
pounding.)

FLORA: (Fading out)

All right, we'll go, but DON'T make a MESS of things like
you USUALLY do.

HERMAN:

Don't worry about ME!

(Door opens)

HERMAN:

WELL, young fellow! What do you think YOU are trying to do,
break into JAIL?

JIM:

Is MISS ALICE HILL in here?

HERMAN:

No, sir, she is NOT.

JIM:

I just SAW her through the WINDOW.

HERMAN:

See here, do you think I have to LIE to you?

JIM:

No, you don't HAVE to, but you DID.

HERMAN:

Are you trying to insinuate---

JIM:

GET OUT OF MY WAY, before I BREAK you in TWO.

HERMAN:

Don't you DARE come in here.

(Sounds of slight
struggle and door
closes.)

HERMAN:

How DARE you---

JIM:

Are you MR. HERMAN APPLEBURY?

HERMAN:

I certainly AM! Now, see HERE, this is MY house and---

JIM:

I don't care WHOSE house it is. It doesn't INTEREST me. I'm
HERE to get ALICE, Mr. AppleSAUCE, and if you GET IN MY WAY
I'll turn you into a PINT of CIDER.

HERMAN:

Look HERE--

JIM:

You BET I'll look HERE. Before I'm through I'll look ALL OVER THE PLACE until I FIND her. She's my PROMISED WIFE, she's wearing my RING, she BELONGS to me, and she KNOWS it.

HERMAN:

Don't give ME any of your BLUSTER---

JIM:

Bluster won't be what you'll get, boy! It'll be a BLISTER!

HERMAN:

YOU'RE the kind of a BURGLAR that would try to SWINDLE A YOUNG GIRL with this COMPANIONATE MONKEY BUSINESS. IT'S YOUR kind that would like to take all the RIVETS out of good old-fashioned WEDLOCK. You like to convert it into a LOTTERY with the tickets all MARKED so you could drop out when you didn't draw a winning number. You'd like to turn the MOTHS into the MARRIAGE CONTRACT, you'd---

JIM:

JUST A MINUTE, now, Mr. AppleJAM, I'VE got something to say---

HERMAN:

I don't care WHAT you say. It's YOUR sort that run over the earth CHEATING poor DEFENCELESS WOMEN with CRAZY "something-for-nothing" schemes in matrimony. There's ALWAYS A PRICE to pay for ANY marriage that's WORTH WHILE. Look at MINE! WHY I'M THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD!

FLORA: (Distance)

Good for YOU, Herman.

JIM:

THERE she is, I see her on the STAIRS now. LET ME PASS.

FLORA:

You better let him come up Herman. He's all right.

HERMAN: (Dramatically)

THEY SHALL NOT PASS.

JIM:

You'll either let me BY or LISTEN to what I have to SAY.

HERMAN:

Get OUT of my HOUSE! I'll do NEITHER.

JIM:

Then if you won't HEED what I SAY, perhaps you'll HEED what I DO. I WARN YOU, GUARD YOURSELF. I'M GOING OVER THE TOP.

(Sounds of brief struggle, a SMACK and a crockery CRASH)

ALICE: (Estatically)

Oh, JIM, You're WONDERFUL! It must be MARVELOUS to be able to STRIKE anyone as HARD as you HIT Uncle Herman!

JIM: (Modestly)

Oh, THAT'S nothing.

FLORA:

Come, Herman! WAKE UP, dear. I think we're going to have another WEDDING.

HERMAN: (Dazedly)

WEDDING? (! !) W-wh-what happened.

FLORA:

You're a DEAR!

HERMAN: (Still dazed)

A-a- WHAT?! I must still be out of my HEAD!

FLORA:

I said you were a DEAR. Why, you made the most WONDERFUL speech on MARRIAGE I ever heard. It was BEAUTIFUL and you're just SWEET.

HERMAN:

Lord be PRAISED! My chin is way around UNDER my EAR, but I DON'T CARE. AT LAST, I've found a REASONABLE kind of MARRIAGE.

FLORA, ALICE AND JIM:

What is it, Herman?

HERMAN:

C O M P A S S I O N A T E M A R R I A G E ! !

T H E E N D

(Copyright, 1929)