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A LACONIC WOOER.

Mrs. Abigail Widgin, a baxom widw of four and forty, sat sewing in he winter sunlight which fell through the stand of geraniums and petunias before her sitting room window. A cheerful wood fire burned on the hearth, its flames reflected in the glistening brass fire dogs glistened only ess brightly than the sunbeams them All work neatly and promptly Exeselves.

Mra Widgin was a roly poly little woman, with snapping black eyes, cheeks like Baldwin apples and hair in which only a few white threads disturb ed the raven gloss. There was an air of determination, it is true, in her firm lower jaw, but this was so overshadow. ed by the general posiness and jollity of her face as to be hardly perceptible, and even a close observer would have pronounced Mistress Abigail, as she sat placidly sewing in the afternoon sunlight, a dame as gracious as she was

The clock in the corner ticked montonously, the cat on the hearth rug alternately slept, and then, awakened by a sudden snap of the fire, awoke to purr lustily until drowsiness again overcame her. The widow sewed on with perfect composure and scarcely a firmer cu ve of the mouth betrayed the fact that she was keenly debating some important matter in her mind. Only from time to time ber glance was raised to the dial, and when at length the sound of footsteps crunched on the snow without was heard, the quick, comprehensive survey which the black eyes made of the room indicated some desire that everything should be right and trig for the coming guest, and showed, moreover, that the newcomer

had been expected. A moment later and Tilly, the trim maid, had ushered into the room a dapper little man with a markedly legal air, shrewd, twinkling eyes, and a shining

"Good afternoon, Mr. Sharperson," the widow said, briskly, rising with hospitable alacrity. "I began to fear you were not coming."

"Good afternoon," the gentleman

returned, allowing his hand to be shaken vigorously. "Sit down by the fire," pursued the widew, bustling about with the desire of doing something, yet not quite knowing exactly what to do. "It must be a cool day for all the sun. The snow crunches too much for one not to know that. You found it so, didn't you?" she concluded, knowing by experience that nothing short of a direct

question was likely to elicit a response

from the taciture lawyer. "Yes," he answered briefly. "Uncommon cold. I should say." went on Mrs. Widgin, seating herself opposite her guest and spreading out her plump hands to the blaze as if talking of the temperature made her more sensible of it. "Colder than usual for the season, don't you think

"Perhaps."

"Oh, it certainly is much colder." No response.

"But then it is, after all, the time of year, when one expects severe weath-

Still no reply. "The days begin to lengthen,' you

know the prover's, 'the cold begins to strengthen.' " Still unbroken silence on the part of the lawyer, and the hostess was forced

promising topic. "You brought the papers for me to sign, I suppose, Mr. Sharperson."

"Yes." "Of course, you know that they are all right. I trust it all in your hands. I never did know anything about mort gages."

It was in Mr. Sharperson's mind that for one who knew nothing about legal documents the widow had managed her property with remarkable shrewdness, but it not being his custom to waste superfluous words by putting his thoughts into speech, he made no remark.

"I will sign whatever you tell me o," his client continued with really touching confidence. "It is hard for a woman to have nobody but herself to self a trifle more firmly than before. lean upon. I'm sure you don't know what I should do without you."

Again no response. "I quite depend upon you." Still no reply, unless a faint sniff. more or less scornful, might be so con-

"Where are the papers ?" Mr. Sharperson rose with great deliberation, and from the green baize bag which, on entering, he deposited upon the table, produced a small package of legal papers. He turned again smile. t the willow and fire, his eve dwell. ing appreciatively upon the cherry pro- ter look for a husband, portions of both, as, without speaking "Yes." he handed the documents to Mrs. Wid-

"Are there four of them ?" she askd, with some appearance of surprise. "! only expected three."

no further exclamation.

The widow unfolded the papers while he lawyer watched with professional narrowness, and as she looked them over the color flushed yet more in her somewhat florid cheeks,

"Did you succeed in celling that tenacre lot to Mr. Woodhoffler ?" she exclaimed. "How perfectly splendid! Why, Mr. Sharperson, I am positively getting to be quite an heiress. Isn't there some mistake ?"

"And the sale is really made ?" "Yes." "For three thousand ?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Sharperson, I have the greatest mind I ever had in the world to kiss von. "

The widow was so astonished at hav ing elicited a monosyllable of such a character from the bachelor that she almost forgot to bridle, but fortunately remembered in time what was expected of her sex.

"Really," she simpered, "you are positively dreadful! I wouldn't have believed it of you !"

She paused to give him an opportunity of adding something more, but Mr. Sharperson had already exceeded the ordinary limits of his habitual reticence, and by a not unnatural recoil was now more silent than ever.

"I shall soon begin to look out for

fortune hunters," remarked Mrs. Widgin, archly. "I hope you'll protect me from them when they come." Mr. Sharperson's looks expressed such entire willingness to undertake

the defense of his fair client that he

evidently did not feel it necessary to put it into words. "I don't know," pursued the widow, gazing abstractly into the fire, but I shall have to look about for somebody to take care of me. What do you say

Mr. Sharperson ?" "Certainly; you. You know my business affairs perfectly, and can advise me better than anybody I can think of. Now to be perfectly frank, what say you to my being married a

"Oh, you think I ought not to talk not, but you'll at least allow that there might be circumstances which would make it best for me to marry again."

"I've been a widow five years, and if the right man turned up-" She paused with the secret desire to

by that operation his taciturn tongue might not be loosened. "If," echoed he significantly, as she "Why, of course," she retorted, "you

will allow that there must be a right

shake the gentleman opposite, to see if

man somewhere, if one could find him." "And perhaps," continued she, a mischievous smile revealing to the lawyer's eyes a quite new dimple, entire life. He rose from his chair hitherto wholly unsuspected, in her with the utmost deliberation, took a cheek, "and perhaps you would even step across the wide hearthrug to the let me come to you for legal advice in

my choice, if I paid well ?" "Certainly." "Well, then, advise," cri ed the wid

ow desperately. She had been perfectly sure for two or three months that Mr. Sharperson to abandon the weather for a more was longing to propose to her could he but get the words over his tongue, and she had said to herself that this afternoon he should do it if feminine wit could devise a way. Anything short of deliberately proposing herself she was prepared to do and she began now to fear lest she should be forced to e-

ven that extreme measure. Now when everything had been so admirably worked up to a speaking point for him, instead of uttering the decisive word the lawyer only smiled and was silent. To tell the truth he was as eager to get the important question asked as the widow, could he but overcome his natural laconic habit and the bashfulness which just now exaggerated it. Mrs. Widgin's mouth set it

"That is always the way if one really wants advice. If I didn't you'd probably be ready enough to give it." This was so olviously absurd that they both smiled, and both, pretending to move nearer the fire, moved their chairs a little nearer together.

"I see," Mrs. Widgin said with an air of mock despair, "I shall have to make it a catechism. Do you think I had better get married; yes or no ?" "Yes," he replied, with a significant

"Have you any idea where I had bet-

Where is it P"

"Here in Westerly? Oh, very well, Mr. Sharperson, but who is there in "Four," he said, but he volunteered Westerly for me to marry? I assure you I wouldn't think of Mr. Snithers, with his five small childr n; I never could endure Mr. Green, the tailor : I'm sure you don't mean me to marry Mr. Church, the butcher; and Mr. Stinchfield is too odius for anything. You see, don't you, that I can't marry any one of them ?"

> "Yes." "Well, who is there ?"

"Me." "You !"

"Me." It was done at last, and if the lawyer could but have so far conquered the habit of half a century of bashfulness as to foilow up his advantage, everthing

would have gone on swimingly. He was, however, almost stupefied by his own temerity, and while the widow on her side of the fireplace cast her eyes down coyly, believing that now at least he would take the initiative, Mr. Sharperson on his side none the less abased his glances out of sheer bashfulness.

"Heavens thought the widow, slily reconnoitering out of the corner of her eye, "have I got to get up and rush into his arms? Was there ever so aggravating a man created ?"

She coughed softly, she patted the hearth with her trim slipper tip, secrely determined that nothing short of the most absolute desperation should make her break the silence this time. At length when there seemed an em inent prospect that the pair would con-

sume the remainder of their mortal ex-

istence in staring wordlessly into the

coals, and just as the widow reached that point when she felt that she must speak or go mad, Mr. Sharperson did renew the conversation.

"Well ?" he queried.

"Well" she echoed. "Eh !" The lawyer was wholly unprepared for having the burden of the thrown upon him, and beyond this rather incoherent exclamation could say nothing. The widow looked at the hre and looked at her taciturn

"I must say," she observed, with a touch of sarcasm in her voice, "that I have seen more ardent lovers."

Mr. Sharperson looked rather abashed at this and indeed began to feel that so plainly about it. Well, very likely if his suit for the rich widow's hand was to have any chance whatever of success it must be urged with more vigor. He aroused himself by great effort and with some warmth :

"That showed it more." "Come," the widow thought with some complacency, "we are getting on: it is something to elicit a speech of that length from him."

"Very well, that showed it more, if you will. How am I to judge," she continued, smiling, and glancing up in a manner which no man with blood in his veins could have resisted, how am I o judge but by what I see ?" For re ply Mr. Sharperson committed the most remarkable deed of his

Aloud she said :

side of his hostess, threw his arms aound her with great heartiness and apparent satisfaction. "Mercy !" cried Widow Widgin, making ineffectual efforts to disengage herself. "Who gave you leave to kiss me? I never saw such impudence." But the other, having once tasted the sweets of her lips apparently enjoy-

ed them far to well to abandon the

feast so easily, and proceeded with unc-

tion to kiss her again. "I declare," she exclaimed, yielding with good grace to what she evidently could not help, "by the way you go on one would actually think we were engaged.".

Whereupon the lawyer gazed at her with great satisfaction and proprietorship shining in his twinkling black

"I HEAR you called on your girl last night, Earl," said a down-town youth to one of Avondale.

billious tone. "Have a nice time ?" "No." "Did you see her."

the corner two squares away."

To enter safely into the married state the contracting parties should understand human nature, and, above all, their own disposition, and then compare them frankly and candidly.

purpose of circulating the Bible was old gry out on the Tho upson range "Good! Now we are getting on, organized in 1805, under the name of had died and left him a cool \$1,000, the British and Foreign Bible Society. | 000.

In a Panther's Claws.

NO 50.

A Bombay shikaree narrates how he once actually fell into the claws of a panther, and lived to tell the tale After describing the incidents of the hunt up to the time when the beast broke cover, he says:

"I had to wait until the panther was within a few feet of me, and I then put my rifle down to his head. expecting to roll him over like a rabbit [as I had succeeded in doing on other occasions,] and then placed my second bullet pretty much where I pleased. To my horror, there was no report when the hammer fell! The next moment the panther, with an angry roar, sprang on me. Hanging on with the claws of one forepaw driven into my right shoulder and the other around me,he tried to get at my head and neck, but I fortunately prevented this by raising my teft arm, which he instantly seized in his huge mouth. I shall never forget his starp, angry roar, the wicked look of the greenish vellow eyes within six inches of mine the turned back ears, his foetid breath upon my cheek, and the feeling of his huge fangs closing to the bone through my arm above the elbow.

"I endeavored, by giving him my knee in the stomach, to make him let go. Those who have ever kicked a cat can imagine what little effect this had. It was more like using one's knee for a football than anything else. The panther, with a roar, gave a tremendous wrench to my arm, hurled me some five paces down the side of the hill prone on my face, bringing my head in contact with a tree. Stunned and insensible, I lay some seconds on the ground, and the brute, thinking me dead, fortunately did not vorry me, but, passing over me, went for the retreating police constable, who had brought me into difficulty. I remember when I came to, raising my head from the ground, leaning my forehead against a tree, and smiling with a certain feeling of satisfaction, when my eyes caught the retreating torm of the constable and the pursueing panther down the hill, and I thought the policeman's turn had

"The civil surgeon of the station probed the teeth wounds in the arm, and found that at the back of the arm ran right to the bone and was an inch and a half deep. The two wounds on the inner side, in or close to the biceps, were, one an inch and a quarter and the other an inch deep. The claw wounds on the right shoulder were not serious, and had fortunately just missed the large artery near the collar bone, injury to which would have resulted in my bleeding to death in a very few minutes.

Two Americans.

Some years ago an emigrant from the United States kept a small restaurant in a town situated in one of the greatest stockraising districts of South Australia. He was presumably the only Yankee in those parts. There was an enormously rich old stockman who came into town from his lordly cattle ranche at intervals, whose nationality was a matter of doubt, though he usually passed for a taciturn and uncommunicative bachelor Scotchman. One day this wealthy but solitary old

remarked: "American, arn't you ?" On being answered in the affirmative the millionaire cowpuncher walked away without another word.

Regulary once a week ne reappeared, silently ate a hasty lunch, and made "We are." he said .- Boston Courier. the same sterotyped inquiry, receiving the same emphatic. "Yes, siree !" in reply. At list there came a time when the eccentric old customer did not return. A month went by -two. At "Yes, I called," he asnwered, in a last a wagon stopped at the door, and the old fellow, pale and wasted with sickness, was helped out and supported into the saloon. He called for his usual steak with a weak but dogged deter-"Yes, saw her laaving the house mination, ate a morsel and then totterwith another fellow just as I turned ed up to the counter. As he paid his bill he whispered, hoarsely:

"American, aren't you!" "You bet," replied the proprietor, pleasantly. Stretching out his shaking hand, the odd customer said:

other word. Three days afterwards ceal his emotion. The first society for the exclusive a lawyer came into our young country

"Shake ! So am I !"

Santa Claus and the Mouse

One inch makes a square. Administrators and Executors' Notices \$2.50. Transient adver-

tisements and locals 10 cents per line for first insertion and 5 cents per line for each additional insertion.

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forming the publisher, and the newspapers are sent to the former place, they are responsible.

ADVERTISING RATES.

One Christmas Eve, when Santa Claus Came to a certain house, To fill the children's stocklugs there,

He found a little mouse "A merry Christmas, little friend,"

Said Santa, good and kind,
"The same to you, sir." said the mouse!
"I thought you wouldn't mind. "If I should stay awake to-night And watch you for a while." "You're very welcome, little mouse," Said Santa, with a smile.

And then he filled the stockings up Fefore the mouse could wink— From toe to top, from top to toe, There wasn't left a chink.

"Now, they won't hold another thing,"
Said Santa Claus, with pride.
A twinkle came in mouse's eyes, But humbly he replied: "It's not polite to contradict,

Your pardon I implore, But in the fullest stocking there I could put one thing more. "Oh, ho!" laughed Santa. "Silly mouse! Don't I know how to pack? By filling stockings all these years I should have learned the knack.

And then he took the stocking down From where it hung so high
And said: "Now put in one thing more;
I give you leave to try." The mousie chuckled to himself And then he softly stole

Right to the stocking's crowded toe And gnawed a little hole! "Now, if you please, good Santa Claus, I've put in one thing more. For you will own that little hole Was not in there before."

How Santa Claus did laug and laugh! And then he gayly spoke: "Well! you shall have a Christmas cheese For that nice little joke!"

Christmas Items. The best Christmas presents are those that will beautify a home for a

life-time.

Christmas is the only holiday of the year that brings the whole human family into common communion .-Charles Dickens.

It is good to be children sometimes.

and never better than at Christmas.

when its mighty Founder was a child Himself .- Dickens. The only time in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem, with one consent, to open their

shut-up hearts freely .- Dickens. The Christmas cards this year are beautiful, and it is a pleasant custom to send them to friends, but the best card we know of, says the Mobile "Register," is one tied on to the leg of a turkey, with the name of some deserving poor man or woman written on it. who is not able to buy any Christmas

Watching the Children.

Each mother or teacher is an agent of Divine Providence, says a clergyman. Now, what is said of Moses holds good of any child. Each child is a great trust, and "she who guards and preserves one soul saves a whole world." Each mother and teacher, each tender guardian of a child ought to act as a messenger of Divine Providence, and who knows what influence she may be destined to wield by the task assigned her? Who can tell but she may be destined to mould the soul of a genius, who is to flood humanity with new light of Heaven, or to kindle a flame which is to reveal to the world new summits of bliss and rectitude? In order to perform their duties, parents and educators ought to manifest two chief angelic qualities. First-Patience in waiting and watching the child's progress, and, second, kindness and sympathy in penetrating and following up the nature of the child. Few mothers know how to deal with their children. The more love they feel for them the less patience they show. They want to mould and fashion them as though they were a piece of wax and had not a soul, an image of God, with an individuality of its own, which rechap entered the restaurant of the man quires to be studied and found out. from the states. When he left he look-The chief fault in training lies in overed hard at the proprietor, and simply doing in having rules and perscriptions ready to shape character, life, purpose and destiny of the child. Your cast iron moulds harm and ruin all genuine

A CANADIAN, meeting in Canada a gentleman from Louisville, kindly asked: "How is your health, and how did you happen to leave so flourishing a place as Louisville ?" "Well," said the exiled Louisvillian, "it was very unfortunate, but I blame myself entirely. Instead of getting a city office I went into business. My necessities compelling me to steal, I stole. Then I had to git. If I could have got some place I could have stolen from the city I might have been at this moment a happy man, at home and in the bosom of my family. Stranger, if you ever go to the United States, don't go into business; go into politics !" The Canadian was so touched that he immediately loaned the gentleman from Then he tottered away without an- Louisville \$5 and turned away to con-

> Scholars are trequent to be met with who are ignorant of nothing save their own ignorance.