

Bellefonte, Pa., Oct. 15, 1897.

SIGNS.

The melancholy days are here,
The signs are everywhere,
The woodland leaves are turning here,

A POST-ADOLESCENT ELOPEMENT.

Mrs. Jephtha Quilter had gone to the door several times and looked out in a dissatisfied way at two people, a man and a woman, talking across the front fence.

"For the land's sake, Jephtha," said the younger Mrs. Quilter to her husband, who sat in the back door, resting after his forenoon's work on the cultivator.

"What are ye a-watching 'em for, then?" inquired Jephtha, with reason.
"Jephtha Quilter, if you ain't got any more spunk nor pride than to see your mother standing out in the front yard,

"Well, what can I do? You don't expect me to go out and order mother in, and order old man Haydon off, a man I've known all my life, back in Illinois?"

"You're just as blind as—well, as a man. I reckon I know when a woman's got marry in her head. This coquette's 's been goin' on fer two months, an' I say your daughter is full of airs and prinkin' as a sixteen-year-old girl. It's just plum disgustin' and ought to be stopped."

"How are ye goin' to stop it? Both of 'em are of age."

"You give me 'leave, and I lay I'll stop it. If you'll promise not to say a word, whatever I do."

"Well, I dunno," began Jephtha, doubtfully. "I won't have mother harried."

"I'll not do a thing to harry her; you leave it to me, and I'll just put a flea in old man Haydon's ear."

"Outside, Mrs. Mary Quilter stood looking across the fence and smiling in the face of her elderly admirer, who was praising her nasturtiums in the way they clambered up the palings."

"My 'sturtiums never would do that a-way, nothing I could do for 'em. They jest persist in layin' down like as they had the heart to hold their heads up in this Kansas wind, 't' mebbe it's on account of 'im that planted 'em."

"Now, Mr. Haydon, do you mean to say that you ain't got heart enough to hold your head up?"

"You know mighty well what 'ud put spunk enough in me for anything," said the man, significantly.

"Mrs. Quilter blushed like a girl. Her peachy cheek had yet the color, if not the contour of youth, and her hair which shone as she stood bareheaded in the sun, had not a gray thread. Yet she was fifty-two."

"I know," she said, softly, "but it does seem foolish for two old people like us to be talkin' about marryin'; besides, I know Jephtha and his wife would be mortal opposed to anything of the kind. Though I will say, that a person who has lost her companion is a lonesome person, I don't care how many children she's got."

"That's jest it. The heart don't never grow old—you know that. It may not, so to speak, bound so tumultuous as when we're younger, but it keeps up a steady throbbin' that is comfortable in the long run. An' what's our children got to do with it? They are grown an' married an' took up with the cares of their own families, an' us two jest left out in the cold, so to speak."

"Why, Maria," began Jephtha, but a kick under the table made him finish his protest in a cough and strangle over his soup.

Mrs. Mary had flashed a startled look at her daughter-in-law, but she said quietly: "Why, yes; I would like to go, but I didn't 'low I ought to spend the money just now, though I s'pose some of it might be comin' to me as rent from the place."

"Well, as to rent," retorted Mrs. Jephtha sharply, "the Lord knows it ain't worth much, an' 'countin' board an' everything. But I know you want to go, an' now would be a good time."

The younger woman was surprised at her mother-in-law's ready consent; she had expected some slight opposition.

"I'll start, Wednesday, on the noon train, Maria."

"Why don't you go on the night train, then you won't have to lay over in Kansas City?"

"No," answered Mrs. Quilter, with an unusual obstinacy, "I'd rather go in the afternoon."

The following day Mrs. Jephtha found it convenient to loitering at the nasturtium beds as Mr. Matthew Haydon strolled by, and after a few common-places, she remarked carelessly:

"I s'pose you knew mother Quilter is goin' back to Illinois on a visit? Ye didn't? Now, I s'posed she had told you. Well, I s'pose she's kind of bashful. I tell her 'tain't nothin', but you see folks have pledged her so much about you, that she's got plum disgustin' an' says she'll put a stop to it. She 'lows it makes her ashamed to have folks makin' remarks about her at her age. Yes, she is goin' to start to-morrow afternoon. 'Tis redic'ous, ain't it, that some folks is such busy-bodies that old friends an' neighbors can't pass a friendly word without anything 'ben' thought of it? This town jest beats all the places I ever see for gossip. An' mother Quilter says she wouldn't marry the best man et ever lived, lessen ever 'hair of his head was strung with gold, an' you know yourn ain't, Mr. Haydon. Though I will say that mother Quilter is rather graspin' to talk that a-way."

Wednesday afternoon Jephtha Quilter and his wife saw their mother safely off on the train. When the noon passenger stopped at the first station out, Mr. Matthew Haydon, wearing a bran new suit and a cerulean necktie, and carrying a new valise, got on board. His freshly-shaven face shone with contented soap and delight.

"If that wasn't done the slickest ever seen," he said, as he sat down by Mrs. Quilter and took her hand boldly in his. "They act'illy helped us off, and paid the bride's fare by gum, 't' he chuckled. "Now we got two hours to wait at Kansas City, we'll go up-town an' get the license an' get married there, an' go on to Illinois to pay your sister a visit for our weddin' tover."

All went well with the elderly Lochinvar, and when the Chicago and Alton pulled out of Kansas City that night it carried Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Haydon bound as tightly in the bonds of matrimony as the State of Missouri could tie them.

Now this story might end here, where it not for complications which grew out of a weakness of Mr. Haydon's, which years had not been able to cure. He possessed as much inquisitive curiosity as a woman; and when, about eleven o'clock, the train came to a stop and he heard threatening voices, and then a pistol shot or two, he could not refrain trying to find out what it was all about.

The matter really was, that the train had been held up by train robbers in one of those historic "cuts," famous for so many similar adventures. When Mr. Matthew Haydon, clad only in his shirt and trousers, stepped off on the ground, someone promptly snote him over the head and laid him senseless on the damp earth.

The train was miles away, and the robbers dispersed with their booty, when he recovered consciousness. Bitterly he lamented his curiosity, as he darted out to find some place of shelter. About a mile distant he saw a light twinkling through the darkness, and made his way in that direction the best he was able. It proved to be the small railway station at Blue Creek, and the night operator, who had heard nothing of the robbery and hold-up, was rather startled when an elderly party, wearing neither shoes nor hat, burst in upon him at such a late hour. Mr. Haydon's gray hair stood up with merriment and fright; a large bump, not down in the phrenological chart, glistened over his left eye.

"Who in the Sam Hill—?" began the telegraph operator.

"Now an old man is more sensitive to ridicule, especially concerning matters of the heart, than a young man; so that when Mr. Haydon was questioned instead of telling the straight truth, he tried to hide the fact that his unlucky curiosity had separated him from his bride. He said: "I don't know how in the world it happened, unless I jest walked in my sleep, and I hain't done such a thing sence I was a boy 't' I know of. But I was a passenger on that Chicago and Alton train, and I didn't know I was out of it until a half hour ago, when I come to a-sittin' by the side of the track an' my head a-feel fit to bust, an' I knowed I was left and set to light. Say, mister, ain't there some way to telegraph to that train an' stop it? I've got a—a friend on board who will feel powerful uneasy."

"Oh, that will be easy enough! We can send a telegram to Slater—well, the passenger reaches there at twelve-thirty—and you can have your friend wait for you, or at least satisfy his mind. What's your friend's name?" he asked, turning to prepare a blank.

"As I our hero was past that adolescent period of versatility in the art of equivocation. The old man had until now lived a life as straight as a string, and he found the tangled web of the prevaricator more complicated than he would have believed. He did not wish to give the name of his wife, nor did he wish to run the risk in any way of the accident being found out by all his friends at home. He did the clumsiest thing that he could have done. He went on lying in the expert way he had begun.

"As shore as you live, I'm that dazed that I can't remember our names," he said.

"What!" exclaimed the night operator, growing suspicious. "How in Halifax am I to send a telegram, unless I know who to send it to?"

"Can't you jest telegraph to the conductor, the lost is found," or something of that kind? He'll know it means me."

The operator looked at his visitor a few moments with well-defined suspicion in his glance, then carefully edging his way back of the little counter to his instrument he nervously ticked off:

"Station agent at M.—Send somebody down here at once. Crazy man off at No. 4."

M—was six miles away. "Now, said the operator soothingly, 'can't you remember your friend's name?" He would endeavor at least to keep the suspected lunatic's mind occupied.

"No, I can't," said Mr. Haydon, snappishly. "But jest send the telegraph, will ye, I'll pay the expense. No, I can't either, for I've left my pocketbook—Lord, Lord, how long will it take? Send it any-how; I tell ye I'm good for a hundred times the amount," and he glared so wildly that the operator sent this message to the agent at Slater:

"Tell conductor on No. 4 that the man lost off the train is here and inclined to be unmanageable. Have sent to M—for help to secure him."

"There, now," he said again in a pacifying tone, "jest sit down and keep calm a few minutes, until we get an answer," for he heard the whistle of the engine from M—.

The engine pulled up to the platform, and three men got off. "Jerry" was a big Irishman who walked cautiously up to the supposed lunatic.

"Now thin, will ye go quietly wid us, or must we use force?"

By this time the unlucky bridegroom's tribulations had indeed made him slightly hysterical; and supposing the men were trying to joke with him, he made a lunge at the grinning Jerry that would have done credit to a youthful pugilist.

Jerry and the two others caught him by the arms and legs, and the more the poor old man tried to explain, the more his ravings were taken as evidence of his dangerous insanity. He made a violent struggle all things considered, but he was finally thrown into the baggage room and the key turned.

"Begorra, but he's a stiff tussler fer an old 'un!" said Jerry, puffing with the exercise; "but it's the madness that makes 'em so strong."

As may be supposed, the newly made Mrs. Matthew Haydon was almost distracted when the conductor communicated the contents of the telegram to her. She had missed her lord, but had modestly refrained from inquiring about him, until his prolonged absence began to make her anxious.

But, under the advice of the conductor, she boarded the return passenger, which passed them at Slater, and set out for Blue Creek.

It will be kinder to pass over the remon and explanations which were necessary at that place.

As Jephtha Quilter was down on his knees kindling the kitchen fire next morning at five o'clock, Mrs. and Mr. Matthew Haydon presented themselves at the door. Jephtha's mother wore a chastened yet determined look that he had never seen there before.

"Yes, it's me and Mr. Haydon, and we're married an' got the license to prove it. I've b'en through a heap sence I left here day before yesterday, Jephtha, an' I tell you right now that I ain't in any humor to take any cuttin' up about it. No fussin' ain't goin' to unmarry us, an' that might as well be understood first, as last. An' another thing—you an' Maria's jest make up your minds to rent the eighty across the creek an' move over there right away, 'cause two families never did do well in the same house, an' it's natchal that I should have my own house now. There needn't be no no hand feelin's, an' I oughter had 'bout enough worryin' these two days to las' me the rest of 'y life, an' for a few days I 'low to have enough on my hands a doctorin' that bruse on Mr. Haydon's forehead 'bout any 'other explainin' things." By Sallie F. Toler, in The White Elephant.

Dinner Fads.

Hostesses Are on the Alert for New Methods of Entertaining.

A RAINBOW DINNER.

The tables are dressed with flowers representing the colors in the rainbow, each tint being represented by a strip of flowers upon the innapagne, the rich brown of the roasts and the varicolors are tied at the ends. As many colors as possible appear in the meats, vegetables, and salads, the brilliant red of radishes and beets, the tender green of crisp lettuce leaves and asparagus tips, the lively pink of ham boiled in champagne, the rich brown of the roasts and the varicolors are tied at the ends. As many colors as possible appear in the meats, vegetables, and salads, the brilliant red of radishes and beets, the tender green of crisp lettuce leaves and asparagus tips, the lively pink of ham boiled in champagne, the rich brown of the roasts and the varicolors are tied at the ends. 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