

The Story of Waitstill Baxter

(Continued from page 6, Col. 3)

down to the bridge to open his store. The day, properly speaking, had opened when Waitstill and Patience had left their beds at dawn, built the fire, fed the hens and turkeys and prepared the breakfast, while the deacon was graining the horse and milking the cows. Such minor "chores" as carrying water from the well, splitting kindling, chopping pine or bringing wood into the kitchen were left to Waitstill, who had a strong back or if she had not had never been unwise enough to mention the fact in her father's presence. The almanac day, however, which opened with sunrise, had nothing to do with the real human day, which always began when Mr. Baxter slammed the door behind him and reached its high noon of delight when he disappeared from view.

"He's opening the store shutters!" chanted Patience from the heights of a kitchen chair by the window. "Now he's taken his cane and beaten off the Boynton puppy that was sitting on the steps as usual. I don't mean Ivory's dog" (here the girl gave a quick glance at her sister), "but Rodman's little yellow cur. Rodman must have come down to the bridge on some errand for Ivory. Isn't it odd when that dog has all the other store steps to sit upon he should choose father's when every bone in his body must tell him how father hates him and the whole Boynton family?"

"Father has no real cause that I ever heard of. But some dogs never know when they've had enough beating nor some people either," said Waitstill, speaking from the pantry.

"Don't be gloomy when it's my birthday, sis. Now he's opened the door and kicked the cat. All is ready for business at the Baxter store."

"I wish you weren't quite so free with your tongue, Patty."

"Somebody must talk," retorted the girl, jumping down from the chair and shaking back her mop of red gold curls. "I'll put this hateful, childish, round comb in and out just once more, then it will disappear forever. This very afternoon up goes my hair!"

"You know it will be of no use unless you braid it very plainly and neatly. Father will take notice and make you smooth it down."

"Father hasn't looked me square in the face for years, besides my hair won't braid and nothing can make it quite plain and neat, thank goodness! Let us be thankful for small mercies, as Jed Morrill said when the lightning struck his mother-in-law and skipped his wife."

"Patty, I will not permit you to repeat those tavern stories, they are not seemly on the lips of a girl!" And Waitstill came out of the pantry with a shadow of disapproval in her eyes and in her voice.

Patty flung her arms around her sister tempestuously and pulled out the waves of her hair so that it softened her face. "I'll be good," she said, "and oh, Waity, let's invent some sort of



"He's opening the store shutters."

cheap happiness for today! I shall never be seventeen again and we have so many troubles. Let's put one of the cows in the horse's stall and see what will happen! Or let's spread up our beds with the head at the foot and put the chest of drawers on the other side of the room, or let's make candy! Do you think father would miss the molasses if we only use a cupful? Couldn't we strain the milk, but leave the churning and the dishes for an hour or two, just once? If you say 'yes' I can think of something wonderful to do!"

"What is it?" asked Waitstill, relenting at the sight of the girl's eager, roguish face.

"Pierce my ears!" cried Patty. "Say you will!"

"Oh! Patty, Patty, I am afraid you are given over to vanity! I daren't let you wear eardrops without father's permission."

"Why not? Lots of church members wear them, so it can't be a mortal sin. Father is against all adornments, but that's because he doesn't want to buy them. You've always said I should have your mother's coral pendants when I was old enough. Here I am, seventeen today, and Dr. Perry says I am already a well favored young wo-

man. I can pull my hair over my ears for a few days, and when the holes are all made and healed even father cannot make me fill them up again. Besides, I'll never wear the earrings at home!"

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" sighed Waitstill, with a half sob in her voice. "If only I was wise enough to know how we could keep from these little deceits, yet have any liberty or comfort in life!"

"We can't! The Lord couldn't expect us to bear all we bear," exclaimed Patty, "without our trying once in a while to have a good time in our own way. We never do a thing that we are



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ashamed of or that other girls don't do every day in the week; only our pleasures always have to be taken behind father's back. It's only me that's ever wrong, anyway, for you are always an angel. It's a burning shame, and you only twenty-one yourself. I'll pierce your ears if you say so and let you wear your own coral drops!"

"No, Patty! I've outgrown those longings years ago. When your mother died and left father and you and the house to me my girlhood died, too, though I was only fourteen."

"It was only your inside girlhood that died," insisted Patty stoutly. "The outside is as fresh as the paint on Uncle Barby's new ell. You've got the loveliest eyes and hair in Riverboro, and you know it; besides, Ivory Boynton would tell you so if you didn't. Come and bore my ears, there's a darling!"

"Ivory Boynton never speaks a word of my looks, nor a word that father and all the world mightn't bear." And Waitstill flushed.

"Then it's because he's shy and silent and has so many troubles of his own that he doesn't dare say anything. When my hair is once up and the coral pendants are swinging in my ears I shall expect to hear something about my looks. I can tell you, Waity, after all, though we never have what we want to eat and never a decent dress to our backs, nor a young man to cross the threshold, I wouldn't change places with Ivory Boynton, would you?" Here Patty swept the hearth vigorously with a turkey wing and added a few corn-cobs to the fire.

Waitstill paused a moment in her task of bread kneading. "Well," she answered critically, "at least we know where our father is."

"We do indeed." We also know that he is thoroughly alive."

"And, though people do talk about him, they can't say the things they say of Master Aaron Boynton. I don't believe father would ever run away and desert us."

"I fear not," said Patty. "I wish the angels would put the idea into his head, though, of course, it wouldn't be the angels. They'd be above it. It would have to be the 'old driver,' as Jed Morrill calls the evil one. But whoever did it the result would be the same—we should be deserted and live happily ever after. Oh, to be deserted and left with you alone on this hill-top, what joy it would be!"

[Continued next week.]

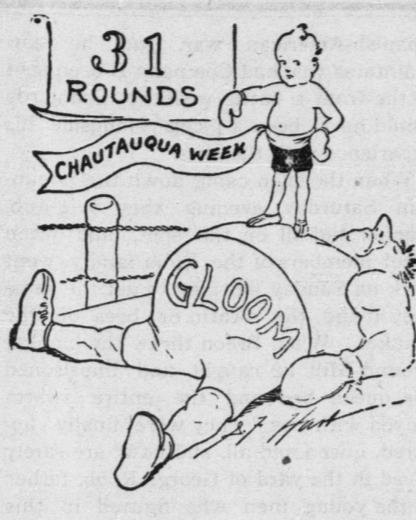
Returned to Life in Coffin.
To be buried alive in the cemetery of Hochwald, in the canton of Soleure, was the fate of an elderly Swiss lady. After the burial ceremony the grave diggers were about to fill in the grave when they heard knocking in the coffin. Instead of rendering immediate help they fled in terror to inform the doctor and the priest. When the doctor arrived at the grave the coffin was opened and it was found that the woman, who had turned over, had died.

Old English Rowing Costumes.
English rowing men a century ago wore costumes far different from what they wear now. In 1805 it was the correct thing for them to wear a green leather catskin cap with a market and trousers of nankeen. In the first university race at Henley, in 1829, Oxford won, wearing blue checks, while Cambridge was in white and pink waistcoats. Broad-brimmed, heavy straw hats came in a little later.

Mr. Wayback Learns Something.
Mr. Wayback—"Be yew the waiter?"
Waiter—"Yes, suh."
Mr. Wayback—"Dew yew know, I've been a-wonderin' all along why they called these places chop houses. I know now. Will you please bring me an ax? I want tew cut this steak."

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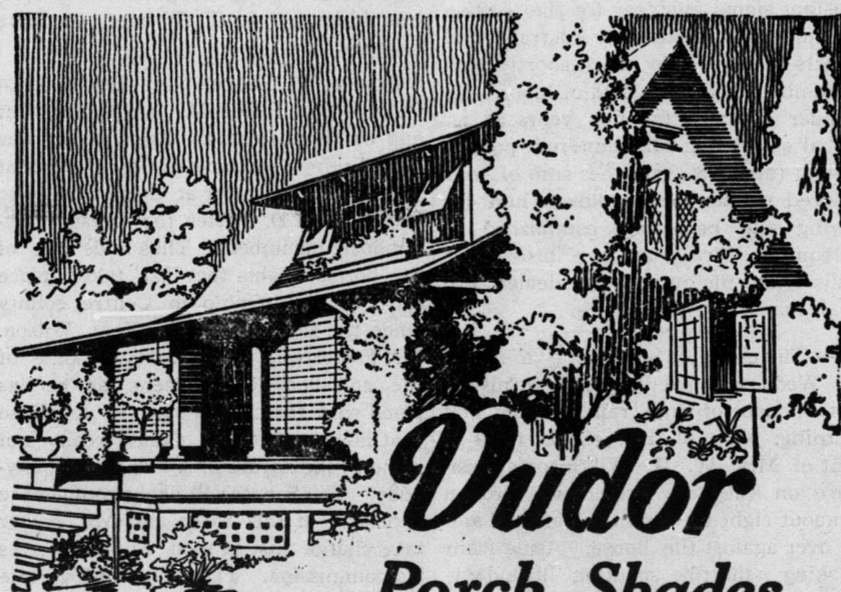
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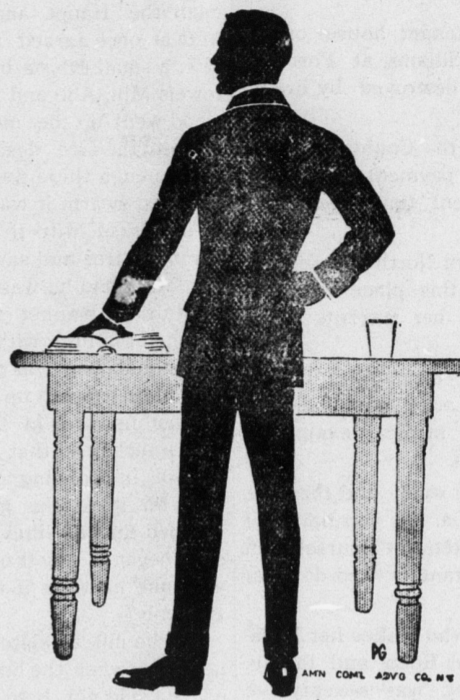
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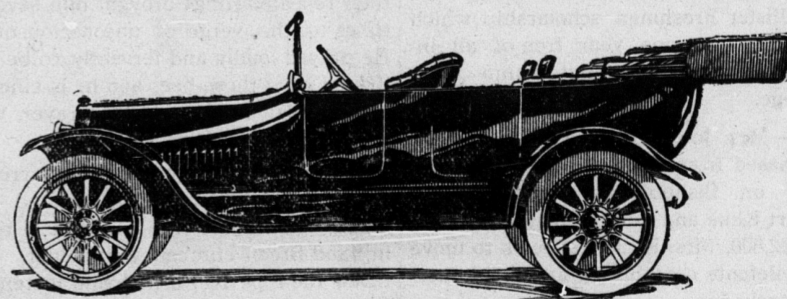
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