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Farmer Stebbins at Ocean Grove.

DEAR BROTHER JOHN:
We got here safe—my worthy wife an' me. An' pitched our tent within a grove contiguous to the sea;
We've harvested such means of grace as grow within our reach;
We've 'told all that mornin' talk, we've heard the Bishop preach;
An' every thing went pleasantly, until we had a whim—
My wife and I—one breezy day, to take an ocean swim.

We wouldn't ha' ventred on't, I think, if Sister Sunnypokes hadn't urged us over an' ag'in, an' said she knew the ropes. An' that's safe an' sweet it was in ocean rills to live! An' short within the foaming surf, an' ride the created wave!" An' so we went along with her—my timid wife an' me—
Two inland noodles, for our first acquaintance with the sea.

They put me in a work-day rig, as ne'all is done—A wampus an' short overalls all sewed up into one. I had to pull an' fuss an' jerk to make the things go round. You are aware my peaceful weight will crowd three hundred pounds.

They took my wig an' laid it up—to keep it safe, they said—
An' strapped a straw-stack of a hat on my devoted head.

They put my wife into a dress too short by full a tw'pence at the "Bloomer" style, an' looked a bit absurd.

You know she's rather tall an' slim—somewhat my opposite—
An' clothes that are not cut for her are likely not to fit.

But as we was we vent'red in—my faithful wife an' me—
An' formed our first acquaintance with the inconsistent sea.

Miss Sunnypokes she went ahead, a-lookin trim an' sweet; She'd had her bath! suit all fixed an' trimmed from head to feet:

An' went out an' grabbed the rope, just as she told 'em to do.

An' with came next, a-lookin' scared, scarce knowin' what to do.

But Sister Sunnypokes to me a smile o' sweetness gave,

An' said, "Now watch your chance, an' jump—here comes a lovely wave!"

I must ha' jumped, I rather think, the wrong time o' the moon;

At any rate, the lovely wave occurred to me too soon.

It took me solid, with a roar an' unexpected shock; It beat the stoutest pair o' horns there is in all my flock.

An' then, to top the circus out, an' make the act more fine,

I tried to kick the lovely wave, relinquishin' the line.

On country fairan' action days, in walkin' through a crowd,

I'm rather fit to jostle 'gainst—perhaps it makes me proud!

But I know that wave discerned how sureness never pays:

An' seemed to shout, "How small is man, no odds how much he weighs!"

It sat on me, it jumped on me, in spite of right or law;

An' whaled an' whirled me all about as if I'd been a straw.

An' then it laid me on the beach, right thankful for my life;

An' scrubbin' up, I gave a gaze to find my faithful wife.

But she had sort o' cut the wave, with all the edge she had.

An' stood a-holdin' to the rope, uncommon moist and sad.

While Miss Sunnypokes, with smile, was lookin' proud an' gay;

A-floatin' on her dainty back, some several rods away.

She looked so newish-prettie there (an' known it too, the self).

The crowd was all admiring her, an' so was I myself.

An' while again I grasped the line beside my wife o' truth,

My eyes did rove to Sister S., her beauty an' her youth;

When all at once another wave, tremendous broad an' deep,

Came smashin' down on wife an' me, an' tossed us in a heap.

Head over heels, all in a bunch, my wife across o' me,

An' I on some unlucky folks who happened there to be;

My hand slipped off, an' left my bald head bare.

When we got out, if I'd ha' spoke, it would ha' warmed the air.

We drank a good part of the sea—my gaspin' wife an' I—

While Sister S., still floated soft, a-gazin' at the sky.

We voted that we'd got enough, an' crawled out of the way

Before another wave arrived, an' bid the sea good-day.

We looked as like two drowned rats as ever such was called,

With one o' em a mighty fool, particularly bad.

But, like a woman true, she said—my watchful wife

"We will not mind; there's others here that looks as bad as we."

Now Sister Sunnypokes, by-n'-by, came back into the sea;

As sleek or sleeker than before, an' asked us when we went.

Says I, "My dear good Sister S., please do not now pretend

You didn't see our v'yage through, and mark its

If you would play the mermaid fair, why, such I'd have you be;

But we're too old to take that part—my faithful wife an' me."

—Will Carleton, in Harper's Weekly.

MARY'S BLUNDERS.

"Dear me! Aunt Sadie, is Mr. Covert ill? Yes? Then I cannot take my music lesson to day."

"You seem to feel happy for that relief."

"Oh, dear, no! I rather prefer taking my lesson."

Aunt Sadie glanced sharply at her niece, but that young lady's face was calm enough.

"It strikes me," observed the old lady, "that you do not dislike Mr. Covert as much as you seem to."

"I never expressed any aversion to him," replied Carrie, demurely. "In fact," she added, as she molded the biscuits she was making with deft fingers, "I think I like Mr. Covert very much."

"Humph!" sniffed Aunt Sadie, contemptuously. "He is only a poor masso teacher, and you cannot afford to marry a poor man with no prospects."

"Well, I declare!" flared Carrie. "Do you think it follows as a consequence that I must marry a man I like? Aunt Sadie, I am surprised at you!"

And Carrie took up the pan containing the dozen little round balls of dough and pushed it "into the oven with such a bang that the old lady dropped her knitting and almost fell from her chair by the range. Then Carrie flounced out of the room indignantly and went upstairs to dress. Ten minutes later she came flying back to

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the kitchen, and her pretty little face wore a look of great consternation.

"Land eakes alive! What's the matter, child?" cried Aunt Sadie.

"I have lost my garnet ring, Aunt Sadie."

"Perhaps you left it on the table before kneading your biscuit dough," suggested the old lady.

"No," tearfully replied the unhappy little cock "I am sure I did not; and I have searched all over my room. It was a present from papa when he got the pastorate of his new church; and I am doubly anxious to find it because Mr. Covert wished it on my finger!"

"There, now, you are going off at a tangent about that man again!" exclaimed Aunt Sadie, in an impatient tone.

"I don't care; he's real nice, and he is good, and he is handsome, and I like him, and you are adverse to him, Aunt Sadie, because you thought he was coming here to carry away your daughter Mamie for his wife, and he is undeceived by me."

"There, there! That will do, miss!" cried the old lady, starting up angrily.

"I vow, this is nice talk for a minister's daughter! You should respect your elders."

"I am sorry," retorted Carrie, "that poor papa's teaching does not make a deeper impression on your mind—at least enough so to teach your conscience the fault of looking down on Mr. Covert because of your disappointment."

"Well!" gasped Aunt Sadie, with an incredulous stare at Carrie over the tops of her spectacles. "I'd always heard that as a general thing ministers' wives and daughters ain't the most exemplary of mortals; and now I believe it. The very idea of you—you, Carrie Ray, talking to me in this way! It beats anything I ever heard of before! What my religious principles are is none of your business—do you understand stand? and when my sister Sally—your mother—married Parson Ray, I kinda suspected some such goings on as this here, twenty years ago!"

The ring was forgotten now, but the biscuits in the oven began to burn, and scorching them, with a scream of dismay Carrie turned from her angry aunt, opened the oven door and took out the pan. There were a dozen beautifully browned biscuits in it—one or two slightly scorched, but not enough so to spoil them.

"I s'pose those things are for your father's supper?"

"Half are," returned Carrie, "the balance for Mr. Covert."

"Good land sakes alive!" commenced Aunt Sadie.

"Here, Mary," called Carrie to the servant in the dining-room, "take these half dozen biscuits I have wrapped up in a napkin to Mr. Covert, down the street, number fifty-four."

"Yes, ma'am; an' will I say who they're from, ma'am?"

"Leave word," whispered Carrie, "that they are from Aunt Sadie Hall."

"All right, ma'am!" rejoined Mary, who suspected a joke. And taking the biscuits off she went.

"I feel so sorry I quarreled with the old lady just now, axin' for your blessed self an' Miss Mamie, sture. Faith, ha was that wild I wouldn't let the likes av him in, an' bedad we had a tussle which ended in me myself givin' him theer an' then an' landin' him in the airy, whin I schlammed the dhure in his omnianry face, so I did, or yet might ar' ave been killt! If he'd a kem daicintly an' axed ter see yez, gracious only knows what'd a happened!"

"Who was that man?" asked the old lady, in bewilderment.

"I don't know, ma'am, for he's on'y moved into this strate; he lives beyant in that elegant house, number forty-five, an' a more deervin' man I never seen."

"With my compliments!" echoed the bewildered old lady. "Why, you are bereft of your senses, girl! Who did you give biscuits to this mornin' wid your compliments?"

"With my compliments!" repeated Carrie, "I am a loving pair of arms and the ladies would have died had he not barred their exit by standing in the doorway. Then there sauntered other footsteps in the hall, and before Aunt Sadie could resist the stranger had her in his arms and was crying:

"Sadie! Sadie! At last I have you again!"

"My husband!" she cried. "Oh, thank God!"

Yes, it was Aunt Sadie's husband, and the old lady clung to him, weeping for joy.

"And, William, here is your little Mamie."

There was no fear of the supposed madman now, and Mamie found herself in a loving pair of arms and felt her father's tender kisses with happiness indescribable, while Carrie looked on in astonishment.

"So you thought me dead, eh?" said Mr. Hall. "Well, it was all a mistake. I received severe injuries in that rail-road accident, but soon recovered, owing to the good care I received at the hands of the miners' wives to whom I was carried. They persuaded me to stake out a claim in their mining regions, and I did so. I was not rich, you know, Sadie, and I saw prospects of sudden wealth in mining, and my hope was realized after years of work. Once the gold fever was on me I could not leave there until I accomplished what I meant to do. I would have written you, but resolved not to do so until I could return and say 'I am rich,' or 'I am a beggar.' The surprise to you now is more delightful, isn't it, my dear?"

"But the suspense you kept me in!" she remonstrated.

"I thought that, too—but I knew you would not remarry during my absence."

"But that isn't what I mean," she expostulated.

He laughed and kissed her, saying he knew it was not.

"I was at the gate of my new house, and was making up my mind to come after you," he continued; "for I learned your place of residence by seeing Ben here at his church, and inviting him to call on me, and he not knowing me the white, either, when Mamie passed by. I knew who she was, despite her growth into young ladyhood while I was away—for she is the image of you—and I ran after her—with what result you know."

At this juncture Mr. Covert walked in. He was young and handsome, but somewhat pale.

"Ah! Covert," cried Mr. Ray, "you are up?"

"Yes, Carrie's biscuits half cured me," he said, laughing.

"This, then, is the gentleman," said Mr. Hall, "for whom the biscuits were intended? You see, sir, your name was written in pencil on the napkin, with your address, and I saw there was a blunder on the servant's part in delivering them to me. And when Mr. Hall came to my house I showed it to him and he took the parcel to you; so it went all right, after all."

For answer, her aunt burst into tears. Carrie looked at her in surprise.

"Dear Aunt Sadie, have I offended you?" she asked with a troubled look, as she kissed her affectionately.

"No, Carrie, that is not it. I know I am a burdenome old creature, but I have been harassed by so many doubts and fears since my husband went away that I have often wished for the peace of heaven. You don't know what I mean?"

"My gracious, what's the matter?" cried Aunt Sadie.

"Oh, dear me!" panted Mamie. "The funniest thing happened to me just now! I was returning from Ada Gray's house, and passing No. 45 of this street, a tall, thin gentleman in a long white duster ran out after me, waving his arms frantically, and called for me to stop. He looked so strange that I became frightened and ran, and would you believe it? the wretch had suddenly enough to chase me. I passed Uncle Benjamin, who