

CHARITY.

Once in a race I stood well front, And I saw the prize was mine that day...

WHO DID THE WOOLING?

BY FRED WARNER SHIBLEY.

It somehow leaked out in the Big Creek section that Martha Ann Todd proposed to Jim Simpkins.

How the story got about no one exactly knew, for Martha certainly never told it herself, and as for James, he was never known in the whole course of his existence to have told anything.

The facts in the case were that Martha Ann and James were engaged. Both Mrs. Todd and Mr. Simpkins had given this news to the world at Aunt Jane Wormley's meeting of the Big Creek Ladies' Aid.

Martha Ann was good to look at. She was not handsome. She was not pretty. Her eyes were neither bright black nor soft blue.

She was now probably twenty-seven years of age, perhaps younger—it doesn't matter. She was a woman, healthy, energetic, a farmer's daughter who had worked all her life and was proud of it.

That was a big day in the life of Martha Ann when her father came home with a six-spot organ on the wood sleigh.

For months she labored over this problem. Every once and while of a Sunday evening, as they strolled home together to the creek, she would throw out a "wheeler," but he never understood.

Whether looking up so continuously heightened her coloring or not, James thought she had never looked so beautiful and altogether womanly before.

Finally he gathered all the apples in his reach, and so had to come down to get a new position. But with each downward step, down to his courage, and it was only by a superhuman effort that he managed to say:

Martha Ann could have cried then and there. James said no more, and the apple gathering went on in silence.

If she could induce him to declare his love, all well and good; if not, she must draw him out. If he would not draw she must tell him the old story herself.

It was the evening of Easter Sunday. The day had been bright and sunny. The services at the church had been in spring, and James had come home with her for supper.

After a meal which would have warmed the heart of a cynic, let alone a healthy farmer like our hero, all the folks retired to the parlor, where a rosy fire was glowing in the grate, the dry maple logs burning slowly, but determinedly, and every coal which dropped holding its color for an hour.

The organ was opened, and first the pieces sung by the choir that day were played over, as Martha Ann said, "Just to hear how they sounded there home."

Her father Todd sat near the hearth, one knee overlapping the other, his eyes looking clear up through the ceiling, past the bed room on the second floor, past the stars in the keen spring sky, past the boundaries of space into that "beautiful land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign," which Martha Ann was singing about.

Mother Todd sat in her rocker near him, her arms folded on her motherly bosom, her round, fair, good old face beaming with perfect rest and peace.

James stood by the side of the singer and joined in the chorus now and then, for he had a robust bass voice, which "might amount to something," which Martha Ann said, "had he only had the high train of the choir."

And so the early evening passed, and pretty soon the old people went to sleep in a fitful way until the worthy sire "allowed it might do for young folks to set up, but for as he was concerned, guess he'd crawl off to bed."

He blushed crimson at this. Was it possible? Was this really Martha Ann? Was he Jim Simpkins? "Come and set down right aside o' her, and watch the flicker!"—well, I'll be eternally!"

"Look there, right side the dog. Can't you see the little house there and the vines trailing up over the roof, and the old clothes hanging on the line there—see it, James, bucket, beam, everything just as natural as life, and what's them bendin' over the well? They may be lovers, James, a bendin' over the water just as we are over the fire."

"You got ternal good eyes, Martha Ann, ter see all them things. 'Praps I ain't no imagination, but I can't see nothing but some coals a breathing sorter like as if they hated ter give in."

Martha Ann continued her rapt attention of the drama in the fire, and James began to get to the sofa.

By and by she lifted her hand and brushed back her hair, and then it fell on the floor of her companion.

James groaned in spirit. The perspiration trickled down his forehead and settled in a drop on the tip of his nose, as if undecided whether or not it were best to fall.

"Oh, Martha Ann!" he said again, plaintively, "how could yer think of such a thing?"

She removed her hand from his and turned her face, now flushed warm by the fire, until her eyes met his and asked, as if with the greatest wonder:

"Why not?"

"It's you I was t', Martha Ann—his tongue was getting into line—'It's you as I have been a planning this year or more to ask, but somehow you was a sweet lookin' and so quiet that I somehow couldn't do it—Surely the un-erly vocal powers were getting very obedient."

"You see I don't know how to tell it, but I love you. I love you with all my heart, and allers here, and I've wished and wished I could tell you, but I couldn't, bein' so stupid. But I've told you now, and I'm glad, for I ain't no room in my heart for no one else."

He was quite choked up with emotion now, yet in his eyes were a new boldness, a new inspiration, and he leaned eagerly forward for her answer.

It was now her turn to be confused. The wily Martha forgot her cunning of speech, forgot her well-laid plan, and the first she knew the tears were rolling down her cheeks. She had no words to say.

She allowed her head to sink slowly toward his breast, and, hiding her face there with his strong arms about her, she gave herself up to the soft passion of tears.

And then he raised her tenderly and kissed her over and over again—how, he never knew and will never be able to explain to himself, for he had no need to be told she loved him and was his for all time.

And so they sat silently while the fire flickered and grew passionate in turn, and the old clock ticked with a gladder tone, and even the breathing of the god of night in the lilacs became subdued.

And so, heart beating against heart and hand clasping hand, they sat, too full of the spirit of love to say aught.

And this is how they became engaged. Yet still the people of the big creek section are wondering, "Did Martha Ann really propose?"—Star-Sayings.

Lightning Calculation. W. P. White, living near Liberty Square, who is twenty-three of age, has been surprising the people of Lancaster City, Penn., by some wonderful exhibitions of his skill as a lightning calculator.

THE JOKER'S BUDGET.

TESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

In New Jersey—At Eleven O'clock—Making Sure—Trouble Again, Etc., Etc.

IN NEW JERSEY. Youthful Enthusiasm—You say you often go fishing. Do you get many bites around here?

AGED WALTON—Lots—mosquito bites. AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

MAUD—What is the difference between you and that clock, Mr. Siasse?

MR. SIASSE (taking the hint)—None at all, Miss Maud. At 12 o'clock it will be going, and so shall I.—[Kate Field's Washington.]

MAKING SURE. Scene: A cheap restaurant in Rome.

"Waiter, have you any cats in this establishment?"

"Yes, sir; two fine ones."

"Bring them here!" The waiter does so.

"Now leave them there and order me a nice rabbit stew."—[Philadelphia Times.]

TROUBLE AGAIN. "You dress that dog of yours too loudly," observed the exchange editor, scowling at the animal.

"You mean, I suppose," answered the financial editor, fiercely, "that he ought not to have that brass band around his neck?"

"No, I don't," rejoined the exchange editor, waving his shears defiantly. "I mean that I can hear his pants."—[Chicago Tribune.]

STRATEGY. Mrs. Plotter—George, you were talking in your sleep last night.

HER HUSBAND—Er—no—my dear, you must be mistaken. I—I—any way—

Mrs. Plotter—Any way, I want \$20 for a new dress. (She gets it.)—[Chicago Saturday Evening Herald.]

THE FALL OF MAN. Miss Parsons—And so Adam was very happy. Now, Willie, can you tell me what great misfortune befell him?

WILLIE—Please, Miss Parsons, he got a wife.—[Centent.]

THEY USUALLY DO. "Did you make much on your last stock deal?"

"No; lost \$700."

"But I thought that MacDollars gave you a pointer."

"He did, but it proved a disappointment instead."—[New York Continent.]

QUITE ENOUGH. Mrs. Johnson—You bad boy (whack); ain't you ashamed to deceive your mudder?

"Whack." You only hab one mudder in this world, sah! (Whack.)

Cutie—One mudder's a nuff!

HARVARD HUMOR. Stoughton—Hollis, what on earth are you staring at?

HOLLIS—Staring? Can't you see that man in the water?

STOUGHTON—My dear fellow, your eyesight is very poor. That's only a buoy. —[Harvard Lampoon.]

FIGURATIVE ZOOLOGY. Little Harriet for the first time saw a tame rabbit twitching its lips as it munched a cabbage leaf.

"Oh, look, mamma," he cried, "the rabbit's winking at me with his nose." —[Kate Field's Washington.]

LIVES THERE A DAD. Lives there a dad with sole so dead Who never to a youth has said,

"If you don't leave this gal of mine You'll be laid up with injured spine!"

THE ACME OF TERROR. "It was as terrible as—" said Blood-bumper in his exciting narration. "It was as terrible as—"

"Oh! worse than that. It was as terrible as a woman with a sprinkling hose." —[New York Sun.]

HE WAS NOT A PURCHASER. Colonel Lotts (of Boomville)—Five years ago, sir, you could have bought the site of this thriving city for a mere song.

VISITOR—I couldn't. I can't sing.—[Harper's Bazar.]

CAREFUL ABOUT COLORS. Amy—I have such a headache! What would do it good?

Jack—Try a cup of green tea.

Amy—Oh, no, not for the world! Green doesn't suit my complexion at all.

A WARNING TO THE TENDERFOOT. J. Cholmondeley Phipps (en tour over the plains)—When I gaze around, don't you know, over these boundless, rolling plains, stretching on every side to the horizon, without a vestige of human habitation, I am positively filled with awe.

Broncho Bob—Filled with ore, eh? Well, don't let the boys find it out, or they might stake you out for a mineral claim.—[Munsey's Weekly.]

HE GOT IT OFF. Mr. Saphed (to himself)—Here's a good thing, I'll read it again, so I can remember it. Let me see. Where is it? Ah, here it is. "General Butler says he has often been called a rascal, but he thanks heaven no one ever called him a fool." First rate. I'll get that off at the De Beutes' to-night.

Mr. Saphed (at dinner at the De Beutes')—Aw, Miss De Beute, do you know I'm like General Butler in one thing?

Miss De Beute—Yes, I've noticed you squint a little.—[Good News.]

THE WAY OF THE WORLD. "Laugh, and the world laughs with you,"

HAD A BUGLE.

There were just three families in the "future great city" of Dakota, and each had a shanty. On the one occupied by the founder of the town was painted, in large letters: "One million dollars to loan on bond and mortgage."

This struck me as rather odd and I asked the man for an explanation.

"Well, you see, it's for the looks of the thing, to help the town along," he replied.

"But suppose some one should ask for a loan?"

"Can't be done; only three of us here, you see. One of 'em couldn't put up a bond for three cents, and the other hasn't got a blamed thing to mortgage!" —[M. Quad.]

NOT TO BE IMPOSED UPON AGAIN. "Papa—Ah, you see the trouble is that I don't know yet whether you two ought to figure among the assets or the liabilities."—[Life.]

NO OBSTACLE THERE. She—You will ask papa, will you not; or must I?

He—Oh, I have seen him. Fact is, he made the suggestion that it was about time for me to propose.—[Indianapolis Journal.]

IT DID INDEED. Her Father—Mr. Sissy, I told you you must not call her there, sir, there is the front door.

Sissy (with dignity)—Very well, sir; I go; but—this lets me out.

THE SECRET WILL DIE WITH HIM. Young Wife (with innocent pride)—I made this pudding myself, Harold.

Young Husband (consoling)—Never mind, Imogene. Nobly will ever know it but me.—[Chicago Tribune.]

THE PRESENT AGE. "We have passed the stone age, the bronze age, and so on," said the teacher.

"Now what age is the present?"

"The shortage," replied Freddy, who reads the papers.

BESIDE HIMSELF. Cora—John, you must be beside yourself this evening.

John (eagerly)—I would be beside myself, my darling—I'm better half—were the ceremony performed!

DEBTS OF THE STATES. Interesting Figures from a Census Report.

The reduction of State debts has been one of the most marked features of the decade 1880-1890. The census figures show this in graphic form.

In the North Atlantic group New Jersey is the only State whose debt has been increased, and now it amounts to only \$1,022,602, or 71 cents per capita.

The debt of Massachusetts has been reduced from \$20,785,206 to \$7,267,349—from \$11.66 to \$3.25 per capita; that of New York from \$7,653,222 to \$2,308,229, or from \$1.51 to 38 cents per capita; and that of Pennsylvania from \$13,392,405 to \$4,090,792, or from \$6.13 to 78 cents per capita.

In the South Atlantic division the reduction has been comparatively small, except in case of North Carolina (from \$15,422,045 to \$7,708,100) and Maryland (from \$11,118,966 to \$8,434,398). The total debt of the South Atlantic division is now \$86,106,630, while that of the North Atlantic division is only \$25,162,539. It is only fair to say that the District of Columbia, with its debt of \$19,781,050—the second largest State debt in the Union—is reckoned with the South Atlantic division.

The North Central division of States shows a small reduction. Ohio has knocked off about \$1,000,000 and Missouri nearly \$8,000,000; but Indiana has increased her debt from \$1,998,178 to \$8,540,615, and Michigan hers from \$3,252,758 to \$5,308,294, while the others are nearly stationary. The total debt of this division is \$41,633,437.

The South Central division, including Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, is pretty heavily burdened, but the total has been lowered from \$81,689,768 to \$64,077,692. The greatest reductions were in Tennessee, from \$29,031,387 to \$17,492,474, and in Louisiana, from \$23,437,640 to \$16,008,585. Kentucky, Alabama and Mississippi have remained about as they were.

The Western division of States naturally shows a slight increase in the total debt, though not an increase per capita. The debts are all small, that of California (\$2,527,624) being the only one over \$900,000, and the per capita debt of the whole division is only \$2.02. Montana has no State debt at all, and Oregon's amounts to only \$2,337.

The States owing the largest debts are: Virginia..... \$31,067,137 Tennessee..... 19,781,050 Louisiana..... 16,008,585 Alabama..... 12,413,916 Missouri..... 11,759,832 Georgia..... 10,449,542

Total..... \$118,972,536 So these six States and the District of Columbia owe considerably more than one-half of the total debt of all the several States, which is \$223,107,883.

The largest debts per capita are: District of Columbia, \$85.86; Virginia, \$13.76; Louisiana, \$14.31; Arizona, \$12.70; Nevada, \$11.13; Tennessee, \$8.50; Alabama, \$8.20; Maryland, \$8.09; and New Hampshire, \$7.15. The rest are all under \$6.—[Mail and Express.]

Attended His Own Funeral. Captain Ben Wakefield of Biddeford, who lost his life recently, once attended his own funeral, being one of the few men who have had the privilege.

He had gone on a fishing trip down on the Grand Banks and had been away from home a good while without his family hearing from him. The same season had proved very disastrous to a number of other fishermen who went out from thereabouts, and the vessel Captain Ben was in had her share of hard luck, and the report reached home that she, with her crew, was lost. Time passed and Captain Ben did not return, until at last his family gave up all hope that he had been saved and a day was set for the memorial services. The services were held in the church at Cape Porpoise, the minister had offered prayer for the missing fisherman, who was supposed to have found his grave in the sea, and was just beginning his sermon when Captain Ben walked into the church.—[Bangor (Me.) Commercial.]

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Yours respectfully, W. LOCCOTT WITTER.

DR. R. J. KENDALL CO., COLUMBUS, Ohio, April 4, '90. Dear Sirs:—I have been using your Kendal's Spavin Cure for some time, and I have done so ever since. My horse has a very bad spavin that made him lame. He would not move in a day. I recommended your Kendal's Spavin Cure. He cured the spavin in just three weeks.

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