

THE WOOING OF BETSEY.

BY ED MOTT.

HOW they do it I can't imagine, said the man from over Sinnehomahone way.

"Is there anybody here who knows Toby Groo—Toby Groo, of Lonesome Hollow? It doesn't matter. Only if anyone wants to buy a nice, snug little place the Toby Groo place is for sale.

"Toby," said I, "what's up?" "It's all up," said he. "All up with me!"

"Meaning Betsey?" said I. "The same," said he. "What did it?" said I. "Education," said he. "Education?" said I.

"There's nothing better to have in a district," said he, "than education, provided you keep it in bounds. It's all right and proper among the rising generation of human folks, but when you come to spreading it among bears you're carrying it too far. That's my opinion," said Toby Groo. "Education is what does me up with Betsey. Education among bears!" said Toby.

"And away he went from the Sinnehomahone; and when a fellow has the heart to leave the Sinnehomahone country, you can make up your mind that he's done up bad. And the Toby Groo place is for sale. And what led up to it was this:

"The Bricktons are great people over on the Sinnehomahone, you know. Great people. Been there for generations. The greatest of the present generation is Betsey, although she isn't very big and isn't twenty years old yet.

"Takin' her from the ground up," as Uncle Jabez Fiddler puts it, "an' considerin' o' her fer gen'ral' scrumptiousness, Sinnehomahone can't turn out the eka' o' Betsey Brickton."

"I want to give you a pointer on Betsey, though, so that if any of you should happen to buy the Toby Groo place and go over on the Sinnehomahone and be somebody, you'll know how to act and keep out o' trouble. Betsey has got a red head. An amazing red head. Now I rather like that red head of Betsey's, and a good many other folks do, but Betsey thinks it's a drawback. She is sensitive about it to a degree. In the soft Sinnehomahone tongue, she's as tetchy as nettles about it. And Betsey is so full o' snap and fire that it isn't safe to mention torchlights, or bricks, or anything of that sort around where Betsey is, for she takes it as a personal slur on her topnot, and the way she flares up and gives it to you is something to remember."

"It's a cotion to peppercass! Jabez says. 'Everybody knows this, and is careful not to get Betsey's red head between them and her if they want to keep on the right side of her. Betsey Brickton is popular, though. So popular that there ain't a young chap on the Sinnehomahone that wouldn't be happier than a bear in a bee tree if he could shine up to her and know that Betsey liked it. Toby Groo, as far as money went, was the best catch for a girl of all the young fellows on the Sinnehomahone spread. Not badlooking, and not much over twenty-two. But he wasn't overpopular, because he was what Uncle Jabez calls a beetle high in his dealin's, and rather inclined to get the best end of a dicker, even if he had to stretch a point. For all that, old Billy Brickton, Betsey's father, got it into his head some time ago that Toby Groo's money would be a good thing to have in the Brickton family, and so he did his best to help Toby get on the right side o' Betsey, Toby being not only willing but more than eager. He was crazy after Betsey."

"All the same Betsey didn't care for Toby not a little bit, nor for anyone else in particular. Toby kept pestering Betsey to marry him, and her father talked her almost blind about it, until one day, a month or so ago, after Toby had asked her for about the nine hundredth time if she'd marry him, she snapped out:

"Yes!" "When?" said Toby, tickled all but to death. "When I find a bear that can spell my name!" said Betsey.

"Then Betsey laughed and laughed, for she judged that she had settled the business then and there, and Toby went away feeling mighty glum and way down in the mouth."

"If none o' y' fellows knows Barnaby Beestuffer, of Sinnehomahone, there is a large waste place in your life. Barnaby Beestuffer is a citizen to whom all Sinnehomahoning points with pride. He has genius such as could only have germinated, sprouted, grown and blossomed on the storied Sinnehomahone. Barnaby has a little clearing, but he seems toil, and devotes all his time to taming bears and snakes and coons and wildcats and porcupines, and such indigenous products of the Sinnehomahone soil, and teaching them tricks and capers. About the time that Betsey Brickton told Toby Groo what'd have to happen before she'd marry him there was a show in the hall over to the county seat, and Barnaby went over to see it. One of the actors was an educated pig. It could play cards, spell out things by stringing little blocks on the floor with letters painted on 'em, and do lots of

other amazing things. The spelling took Barnaby's eye more than anything else the pig did.

"Pigs kin I'm to do that, K'n they?" says Barnaby. "Then I'll bet a farm that b'ars kin I'm to do it, to, an' a' durn quick, an' I'll I'm 'em!"

"When Barnaby got back home he started right in to teach one of his young bears to spell as well as the learned pig could. One day as he was practising his bear on a lesson, Toby Groo happened to be going by Barnaby's clearing. Barnaby was feeling pretty sore against Toby on account of a little dicker in steers they'd had a few days before, in which Toby had got a good deal the best of Barnaby.

"What are you doing, anyhow, Barnaby?" "Givin' my b'ar his spellin' lesson," said he.

"Can you teach him anything you want to?" said Toby.

"Bet ye I kin!" said Barnaby.

"Could you teach that bear to spell Betsey Brickton?" said Toby, turning hot.

"Barnaby had heard all about the answer Betsey had given Toby, and knew at once what Toby's little game was.

"Kin I I'm that b'ar to spell Betsey Brickton?" said Barnaby. "I kin fer money."

"Can you teach that bear to spell Betsey Brickton for ten dollars?" said Toby.

"I kin I'm that b'ar to spell Betsey Brickton for twenty dollars, spot cash!" said Barnaby long.

"In how long?" said Toby.

"In two weeks," said Barnaby.

"Toby tried to get Barnaby to do it for fifteen dollars, but Barnaby stuck out for twenty, and Toby made a bargain with him. When the two weeks were up Toby went over to Barnaby's and was delighted to find that the bear could lay out the blocks that spelled Betsey's name, and could do it in short order without a skip or a break.

"He danced fer joy an' felt so rippin' good," says Barnaby, "that I feel like kickin' myself all around my clearin' an' then rollin' 'round in a bullepe full o' porcupines 'cause I didn't tell him I'd bet ter hev five dollars more!"

"Next day Toby drove to the Brickton place.

"Betsey," said he, "don't you want to ride over and see Barnaby Beestuffer's menagerie? It's worth seeing."

"Betsey said she'd just as lief as not, and she got in the wagon and went along. She was tickled all to pieces at

the cute things the animals and the snakes did, and Toby said:

"That was pretty hard lines you held me to about marrying, wasn't it, Betsey?"

"Think so?" said Betsey, laughing. "Oh, I don't know! I didn't want to hurt your feelings by saying 'No,' plump out!" said she.

"I suppose you'll stick to what you said about marrying me?" said Toby.

"If you see a bear that will spell your name you'll stick to what you said?" "Certainly," said Betsey. "Why not?"

"Then Toby nodded to Barnaby and Barnaby nodded to the bear. The bear jumped for a pile of blocks that lay on the ground, and the next second put a big letter B at Betsey's feet.

"I guess Betsey must a begun to smell a rat," Barnaby says, "fer when she see the letter B she sort o' turned pale."

"The bear followed the B with an E and then dropped a T after the E, and kept on putting down letters till he had Betsey spelled out as proper as Betsey could have done it herself. Betsey got cold and shivery, and had to take hold of the fence to steady herself. Toby stood by, grinning and gloating. Then the bear brought out another B. The second name was begun right, and it kept on right. Betsey couldn't keep her eyes off the proceedings, although she saw the bear sealing her fate, letter by letter. B-R-I-C-K-T-O the bear laid down, and Betsey was so near fainting that she grabbed both hands on the fence, and Barnaby jumped to catch her if she fell.

"Only one letter more! Toby said, 'and the strain'll be over, Betsey. And then you and I'll get married!'"

"The bear put down the last letter. It wasn't an N. It was a P. And there was spread out in a line of big black letters that anybody with half an eye could read, 'BETSEY BRICKTON!'"

"Betsey's face quit being white in a second, and flashed as red, almost, as her hair was. She turned on Toby, and Barnaby says that he actually saw fire shoot out of her eyes. Nobody knows what she would have done to Toby, because he didn't wait to have it done. He jumped the fence and into his wagon, and away he went. And that is why, as near as the facts can be got at, the Toby Groo place is for sale, terms easy.

"They say, over on the Sinnehomahone, that Barnaby Beestuffer, seeing a chance to get even with Toby on the steer dicker, had educated two bears and rung the wrong one in on Toby when the time came. Barnaby doesn't deny it nor admit it, but when anyone charges him with it he just sits and grins. But don't you wonder at those bears, those Sinnehomahoning bears?" "N. Y. Sun."

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BASIS OF MARRIAGE.

Without Love There Can Be No Happiness in Times of Trial.

One girl who wrote to me recently said: "Wouldn't a marriage based on friendship, on good comradeship, and on thorough respect be a happy one?"

I don't know. It might be a placid one, it might be a respectable one, but a marriage without love cannot be the one for which you or I were intended, writes Ruth Ashmore in Ladies' Home Journal. Comradeship and respect and a thorough liking might be all that were necessary during the sunny days, but what would they amount to when the gloomy days came?

And do you think if a man were trying to solve some great question, were trying to drive from his soul the demon of unbelief, that he would turn to the good comrade for help? No; he would go to the woman who loved him, and whom he knew knelt down every night of her life and said a prayer for him.

When people are suffering, mentally or physically, they do not turn for help or sympathy to that one whose speech is brilliant and witty and whose brain is strong, but they reach out, like a little child, to that one who loves them best, and whose heart is overflowing with sympathy and pity. Friendship is a great blessing, but it cannot take the place of love. And, if either a man or a woman marry, believing that a friendly feeling will be sufficient in their united lives, they surely in time will realize only too sadly the possibility of love coming to them, and the dread of a tragedy if he should be greeted with joy. Therefore I say to you, my girl, in building up your life, you need as foundation for its shelter the corner-stone of love and no other will answer. If in its place you put friendship, mental sympathy, or good comradeship, the house will topple over when the wind of misery comes, for its foundation stone will drift away, carried along into the sands of indifference, and you will stand alone weeping for that one who is not, and having around you only friendship and its kindness, while you long for love and its sympathy.

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