

FOR THE TIMES.

The Gossips in Trouble.

"WHAT? no, you don't say so! Squire Richards goin' to marry agin, and his wife only dead three months! Goodness me!"

"Tis awful! You may well be astonished, Mrs. Wilkes; it is terrible to think of! Such deception! Why at his wife's funeral, one would have thought him actually broken-hearted; and then the crape on his hat is half a yard deep!"

"Ah, me, Mrs. Hanson, there is no dependence to be put on 'pearances! The world gets sunnier and sunnier every day, and it can't be covered up with silk, or broadcloth. As I said to my husband, Mr. Wilkes, the other night; says I, 'Simon, things are comin' to an awful pass! Everybody will get into the State's Prison in two years, at this rate!' And says Simon, says he, 'I don't doubt it, Mariah!'"

"And you and Mr. Wilkes were right, perfectly right, it is just so! But this dreadful conduct of the squire's has made me more conscious of the truth of it! Strange that a sensible man should behave so!"

"Yes, it is wonderful! but how did it get out, so quick? The squire ain't no hand to tell of things, you know."

"Betty Higgins found it out, last night. She was taking tea at the widder Town's; you know she's almost always a-visiting somewhere, though I wouldn't mention it to a living person except you, Mrs. Wilkes; and while they were at supper, the squire rode by in a new buggy—going toward the depot! People don't get new buggies for nothing, you know?"

"No, they don't, Mrs. Hanson—vidderers especially."

"Well, he wasn't gone more than half an hour, before he came back, driving upon the gallop—he didn't use to abuse his horse when poor Mrs. Richards was alive—and lo and behold! sitting in the new buggy with him, and his arms actually around her waist in broad daylight! Was a little girlish-looking woman, in a pink dress and green silk bonnet! Only think of it—a pink dress and a green silk bonnet! and his arm around her! It is abominable!"

"My gracious! goodness! I want to know?"

"Yes, it's every word of its as true as our minister's discourses, and Mr. Sampwell never exaggerates—he's a fine man, Mrs. Wilkes; and the widder Town and Betty run up to the garret—they can see Squire Richards' house plain from the widder's garret windows—and the squire drove up to the front door, as if the side door wasn't good enough! and then he got out of the buggy and lifted the woman out on to the door-stone! Took her right into his arms, in broad daylight, and lifted her on to the door-stone!"

"My goodness! as if she couldn't get out herself! It's indecent now, ain't it?"

"To be sure it is! and he a middle-aged man and a member of the church! Mr. Sampwell ought to know of it, so that he could preach a sermon on the duties of men to their families. Only think of poor, dear, dead Mrs. Richards' little daughter Elmetta being ruled by a step-mother hardly older than herself. It will break the poor child's heart."

There was a long and impressive silence, during which the two amiable ladies regaled themselves with numerous pinches of snuff from a box, which had made its appearance in the lap of Mrs. Wilkes. No doubt it helped to digest the momentous matter.

"Wal," recommenced Mrs. Wilkes, "I think sich doin's is awful! Gettin' married agin afore his wife is cold! Now, I 'spose he'll say that he needed a housekeeper, but that's no excuse, for my Mary Elizabeth or your Julia Ann would have been glad to have gone. Mary Elizabeth is a ter'ble favorite with little Elmetta, and Mary Elizabeth is a grand hand at managing children!"

"Yes, Mary Elizabeth is a fine girl, Mrs. Wilkes, but her health isn't hardly good enough to take so much care as there would be in Squire Richards' family with all his company; but then Julia Ann could have done it well enough. Julia Ann is a remarkable hand for children—can't help learning of them something all the time she is with them. Her example is so beautiful, you know."

"Well, for my part, I think somebody ought to go and talk to the squire about it. It ain't right for us—sisters in the church—to let him go and ruin himself and darter a—marrying nobody knows who! He ought to be reasoned with!"

"That's just what I think, Mrs. Wilkes, and I called over here on purpose to ask you to go with me to the squire's, to-morrow morning, and talk with him about it. It's the best we can do."

"I'll go, and be glad to! I hope I'm never backward in doin' my duty."

"Well, I must be going; I've made a

long call;—to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, it's best to go early; I'll call over for you. Do come and see me, Mrs. Wilkes! You know it's an age since you've been to our house."

"Dear me, Mrs. Hanson, I don't come half as often as I want to, but I'm ashamed to keep comin' all the time. As I told my husband, Mr. Wilkes, the other day, says I, 'Simon, I'm actilly afraid I shall wear my welcome out over to Mrs. Hanson's.' And says he says Simon, 'I shouldn't wonder if you did, Mariah!'"

Eight o'clock, the following morning, found our friends Mrs. Wilkes and Mrs. Hanson standing on Squire Richards' front door step, (the side door wasn't good enough for the lady in pink, and of course it wasn't suitable for ladies of their "calibre,") awaiting to be admitted. A frouzy-headed Irish girl answered their rap.

"Is Squire Richards in?" inquired Mrs. Hanson.

"In? to be sure he is! Safe in bed, ma'am! Is it after seein' him that ye are?"

"Yes; we called to see him on important business," replied Mrs. Hanson, frigidly.

"Sure thin and I'll be afther callin' him; though the ould jintleman's sound asleep—for I hurd him snorin'! but jest now when I come forentin his bed-room door. Come in with yees!" and Biddy ushered the ladies into a room where the breakfast-table was standing in waiting for the family.

"Hum!" said Mrs. Wilkes, looking significantly at the table, "she can't be no great thing laying abed till breakfast time! Poor Mrs. Richards! she used to be up in season!"

Just at this moment, the squire entered in elegant *dishabille*—that is without a coat, and minus shoes and stockings. He advanced, holding out his hand cordially.

"Good morning, ladies—good morning; I'm a little late, you see. Hope you'll excuse my toilet; the fact is, I sat up rather late last night, and felt drowsy this morning. Fine morning, isn't it?"

"Very enchanting," returned Mrs. Hanson, who greatly prided herself on the elegant propriety of her language, "it is beautiful enough for a morning in the gorgeous land in the Orientals! But to change the subject; we called on a matter of business—"

"What's the difficulty now, Mrs. Hanson? A new carpet for the parsonage, or is fifty dollars wanted by the Missionary Society? Come, speak out!"

"Ah, squire, it's wuss than that!" put in Mrs. Wilkes, no longer able to keep silence, "it's something that concerns your everlastin' and eternal well-bein'!"

"Indeed! Well, go on." The squire, nevertheless, looked as if surprised. Mrs. Hanson drew a long breath, and began;

"Squire, we called to see if you were thinking of marryin' agin? We—"

"You weren't going to propose to me, were you, ladies? I should be exceedingly happy to receive such proposals, but I should have Deacon Hanson and Major Wilkes in my hair forthwith. It wouldn't do, ladies!"

"No, we supposed you had already made your selection of the person who is to fill your dead wife's place, and we called to talk with you about her. We have understood that she was in your house, and if agreeable, would be pleased to see her. Our interest in yourself and your motherless child has induced us to this."

Mrs. Hanson spoke with solemn dignity, and evidently intended to impress the squire powerfully with her manner.

"And we want to know where you got acquainted with her, squire; and how old she is; and if she knows how to do housework!" said Mrs. Wilkes.

"How did you learn anything of this?" asked the squire, evidently somewhat nonplussed by the extraordinary knowledge of his affairs displayed by his visitors.

"We heard of you're ridin' out with her, squire; she drest all in pink, with a green silk bunnet! Don't look very well, squire, to see a man of your age riding out with such a young gal!"

"Well, ladies, suppose I should take a notion to get married? You couldn't blame me, I don't think. Here I am with no housekeeper, and an Irish girl to oversee things, and my home is none of the most orderly. Elmetta needs some one to care for her, and it wouldn't be in nature for a father to be unmindful of the interests of his child!"

"Why, no, of course not. But then, if you needed a housekeeper, my Julia Ann would come and look after things. She's a capital manager and very fond of children. She and Elmetta—sweet little thing!—would get on admirably!"

"Yes, or my Mary Elizabeth either! She'd be tickled to death to come! She thinks so much of Squire Richards and his little gal. And, if I do say it, Mary Elizabeth is as nice a gal as there is anywhere!"

"Mary Elizabeth's health is too feeble for much exertion, Mrs. Wilkes; you don't do right to put anything hard upon her, you know she has a pain in her side half the time!" Mrs. Hanson was determined to have it understood that the hope of the Wilkses was only an ornament to the world.

"Well," said the squire, at last; "I don't know what to think about it! I don't believe Elmetta would give up this 'lady in pink,' as you call her, at all; she's taken a wonderful liking to her."

"Where did she come from, squire? You hadn't told us anything about her yet!"

"To be sure, Mrs. Wilkes. Well, I found her in a milliner's shop! In the city of Portsmouth."

"In a milliner's shop! then she's a milliner, is she? Well, I never!"

"Will you be kind enough to favor us with an introduction? I should be happy to see her before I form an opinion of her character." Mrs. Hanson's tone was very patronizing, and so the squire seemed to think, for he hesitated but a moment before he said,

"Well, Mrs. Hanson, it will be an advantage to her to form the acquaintance of two such estimable ladies as my present company; and I will be very glad to present her to you forthwith. Pray excuse me for a moment."

"Stop, squire!" shouted Mrs. Wilkes, "what's her name?"

"Jennie Ray," returned the squire, disappearing in the passage.

"Jennie Ray! a reg'lar story name! She's some city highflyer, I 'spose!"

"Very likely, Mrs. Wilkes; but I see the squire's mind is made up, and it's no use to say anything. We must make the best of her."

Just as Mrs. Hanson let fall this magnanimous speech, the door opened, and the squire appeared.

"Ladies," said the squire, bowing politely, "permit me to present to you Mrs. Jennie Ray, my daughter's wax-doll, which I purchased at Portsmouth, last week, and which arrived day before yesterday at the depot by express! The cost of it was forty-five dollars, and at present I have no intention of making it my wife!"

Poor Mrs. Wilkes! Mortified Mrs. Hanson! With burning faces they took their leave; and since then, I believe, they have miraculously minded their own business.

"Squire Richards was somewhat eccentric, and knowing how busy-bodies gossiped about him, and having purchased a large-eyed, wax-doll for his little daughter, the idea struck him that it would be a fine joke on the scandal-loving people of Wheatfield, to take it from the packing-case and ride home with it in his buggy—in full view of the public. We have seen the result."

The squire is still unmarried, and bids fair to remain thus; his widowed sister having established herself as mistress of his family.

Mrs. Wilkes and Mrs. Hanson wouldn't like to have their unfortunate mistake made public, and I wish it, as a particular favor, that those who read this little sketch will keep it as private as possible.

More Cold Weather.

Mr. Henry G. Vennor, the Canadian weather prophet, writes as follows from Montreal to the *Albany Argus*, under date of February 5: "The second cold period in February will reach us on the 22d, 23d, 24th and 25th days. This, it is probable, will be extremely cold along the valley of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, northern United States, and to the westward. February will certainly end cold. The second heavy snow storm of the month should, by my theory, come on us about the 15th, and this bids fair to be heavy, with drifts and fairly cold weather. We have yet to get our heaviest snow falls of the winter, and some of these are certain to extend through March. Up to the 15th the weather should be moist."

Fees of Doctors.

The fee of doctors is an item that very many persons are interested in just at present. We believe the schedule for visits is \$3.00, which would tax a man confined to his bed for a year, and in need of a daily visit, over \$1,000 a year for medical attendance alone! And one single bottle of Hop Bitters taken in time would save the \$1,000 and all the year's sickness.—Ed 8 2t

Do you feel that any of your organs—your stomach, liver, bowels, or nervous system, falters in its work? If so, repair the damage with the most powerful, yet harmless, of invigorants. Remember that debility is the "Beginning of the End"—that the climax of all weakness is a universal paralysis of the system, and that such paralysis is the immediate precursor of Death.

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A Reading Lesson.

THE following anecdote has been read aloud by a number of persons, including several professional gentlemen, half a dozen college graduates and as many school teachers, not one of whom made less than six mistakes in pronunciation, some reaching twenty-five. It has been amended by the addition of a few more words of difficult pronunciation, and is now presented to give others an opportunity to distinguish themselves in the same way:

A jocund sacrilegious son of Belial of epicurean tastes, who suffered from bronchitis, having exhausted his finances at the annual joust, in order to make good the deficit, resolved to ally himself to a comely, lenient and docile young lady of the Malay or Caucasian race. He accordingly purchased a callopie, a coral necklace of chameleon hue, and a turquoise ring, and securing a suite of rooms at a hotel he engaged the head waiter as a coadjutor. He then dispatched an erudite letter of the most unexceptional chirography extant, with a sentimental hemstitch attached, inviting the young lady to an orchestral concert.—She was harassed, and with a truculent look revolted at the idea, refused to consider herself sacrificable to his desires and sent a polite note of refusal, on receiving which he procured a carbine and bowie knife, said that he could not now forge fetters hymeneal or be inveigled into matrimony, went to an isolated spot in a state of squalor severed his jugular vein and discharged the contents of his carbine into his abdomen with a grimace at the gallantry of his acquaintance. He succumbed, and was irrefragably dead, and neither vagaries nor pageantry were permitted when he was conveyed to the mausoleum, followed by his enervated canine.

She Managed It.

The present Belgian prime minister, Mr. Frere Orban, when he was a poor law student and named only Frere, fell in love with the daughter of a Frere, aristocratic family, named Orban. She returned his love; but her parents opposed him. When he was about to be examined, she said to him:

"If you succeed, come in the evening to the box at the opera, in which I shall be with my parents and some of their friends."

"But will they admit me?" asked the poor student.

"I will take care of that," replied the girl.

Frere passed the examination with great credit, and presented himself at the box. His sweetheart rose as he entered and kissed him, in the presence of the whole company. After that there was nothing for the parents to do but to announce an engagement between them. When the marriage took place, he added, by request of the parents, their more aristocratic name to his own.

Pass Along the Root.

Instead of asking the blessing on sitting down at the table, a certain family have for years been following the custom of repeating verses from the Bible, each person repeating one, commencing with the head of the family. A few days since a young man in the family brought to dinner with him a friend who was not aware of the custom, and was ready at all times to get in a word of merriment. When they sat down at the table the young friend was placed next to the head of the family, who began the worship by repeating, "The love of money is the root of all evil." The friend took it that the remark was made to him, and replied by saying, "Well, pass along the root." A sensation all around.

A Foolish Child.

A sensation was caused at Bradford Sunday forenoon by the sudden revelation that J. M. Jones had clandestinely married, a few weeks ago, Miss Eva Jacobs, a girl only thirteen years old.—The mother fainted when it was made known to her, and is now in a precarious condition. The girl admitted the truth of the alliance, and Jones having been sent for declared that he had married her and commanded the girl to accompany him immediately. When the family attempted to interrupt him he drew his revolver and threatened to kill any one who interfered. Legal proceedings will forthwith be instituted against him by the enraged family.

A Great Work.

The work on the tunnel under the Hudson river, at the foot of Fifteenth St., N. Y., is being pushed forward as rapidly as possible. The original plan of building one tunnel 26 feet in width by 24 in height has been given up as impracticable, and work is begun on two separate tunnels, which will be 15 feet each in diameter. Both tunnels will be incased with iron and then arched on the inside with brick, from Jersey City to the shore on the New York side of the river. It is estimated that this change in the original plans will cost the company an additional half million of dollars.

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