

THE TIMES.
An Independent Family Newspaper,
IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY
F. MORTIMER & CO.
TERMS:
INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.
\$1.50 PER YEAR, POSTAGE FREE.
50 CTS. FOR 6 MONTHS.

To subscribers residing in this county, where we have no postage to pay, a discount of 25 cents from the above terms will be made if payment is made in advance.

Advertising rates furnished upon application.

Sixteen Old Maids.

BOSWORTH was a nice little village of some five hundred inhabitants, and boasted of three churches, the Congregational, Baptist and Methodist, while a handful of Unitarians gathered occasionally at the town hall, and a few Adventists went to the next village, five miles distant, to worship. The three first mentioned societies were as distinct from each other as black is from white. Not only were they not on visiting terms with each other, but the three stores showed that they did not even trade together. The oldest inhabitant could not remember when this was not so; but the time had come for a revolution, and with this our story has to do.

Miss Betsey Bailey, an elderly maiden lady, was sitting alone in her quiet home, when all at once she broke out with:

"Well I do declare. Here we be living alone in this heathenish way year after year, and we consider ourselves Christians. It's a shame that five hundred people can't live in harmony, when so many of us are church members."

The cat, which was sleeping quietly on Miss Betsey's lap, jumped down, for Miss Betsey had gesticulated in that direction in such a manner as to inflict quite a rap on the sleeping tabby.

"Well, I declare," said Miss Betsey, "if I didn't get so eloquent as to scare the cat. I think I must have been born for a female orator."

After this she sank back in her chair, apparently asleep, but was not; her mind was busy over a plan which she meant to put into immediate operation. It was very late that night when she arrived at a final conclusion, and of course she must wait until morning before she could begin. So excited had she become that it was long past midnight before she retired, and then it was not to sleep.

Early next morning she called on her most intimate acquaintance and neighbor, Miss Sarah Jenkins.

"Sarah, I've got a notion, and it's so seldom that I'm ever troubled with such a thing that I had to come right over and tell you before I lost it. Do you feel able this morning to take hold of one of the grandest, noblest and brightest ideas the world has ever pondered on?"

"Why, Betsey for land sakes don't scare a body to death. You are not going to set the river afire, are you?"

"Not so bad as that, I hope; but if we don't turn this town upside down inside of three months, then my name isn't Betsey."

"We? I hope you don't mean to include me in this grand scheme."

"But I do. You are the very one I want for my right-hand man."

"The idea of an old maid like me lending aid to the grandest and noblest—"

"Hold on, Sarah, don't repeat that sentence, please; the very walls have ears, and I would not have a word of this get out for the world. All you've got to do is to listen to me, and when you've heard my story you'll agree with me to the letter. If you don't, I won't ask you to help me a bit. Just hand me your knitting and I'll knit and talk; I was in such a hurry to get here this morning that I forgot my work. I can't talk though, unless I'm doing something."

Betsey then proceeded to lay the scheme before her friend, who, when she had concluded, not only agreed to help her, but offered some very valuable suggestions. So eager were they with plans that the noon hour slipped by and

three o'clock came before either of them thought of dinner.

Next morning Sarah and Betsey were again together, this time prepared for a walk. Both these ladies were Congregationalists, and many of their neighbors were surprised to see them stop at the house of Eliza Simmons, one of the staunchest sisters of the Methodist persuasion. It couldn't have been over an hour before the town was alive with the news.

The orthodox were shocked, the Methodists opened their eyes in wonder, while the Baptists stood aloof in dignified silence. For one whole day the people talked of nothing else but this breach of sectarian etiquette. The next day they had something else to talk about.

These three ladies, in company with Margaret Stiles, another Methodist sister, called upon the West sisters, Mary and Martha, two of the leading ladies of the Baptist society. They not only called, but they stayed all the forenoon and took dinner.

This was on Saturday. On Sunday those six ladies occupied Miss Bailey's pew in the Congregational church. The little flock was so astonished that they paid little attention to the sermon, and the minister went home with the feeling that not a dozen persons in the whole congregation could tell what the text was.

Bosworth was now in a state of intense excitement. Such a thing had never happened before. Many of the Congregationalists called on Miss Betsey and on Miss Sarah, but all they could learn was that the ladies went with them by a special invitation.

On Thursday night the six ladies attended class at the Methodist vestry.—Not only that, but Miss Jenkins and Miss Martha Stiles both took part in the meeting.

What was to be done? Something, certainly, for this things could not exist long. The Baptists visited the Misses Stiles, but all the information to be gained was that they went to both places by invitation, and that Martha felt moved to speak and did so. And the Methodists were no wiser for having called upon the erring sisters.

The next Sunday saw more mixing of the sects, and Monday night there was a gathering at Miss Betsey's residence of all the ladies engaged in the conspiracy. Sixteen ladies were present and—was it chance?—all were maiden ladies of fifty years and over. From this time forward there was a great intimacy between these ladies. In vain they tried to induce others to join them; at the end of three months their band still only numbered sixteen persons.

Betsey and Sarah talked the matter over, and concluded to open another chapter of their plan. They were not disappointed in getting only sixteen ladies to join them; in fact that was nearly double the number they had hoped to get in the beginning.

A few days later a notice appeared on the door of the Baptist store to the effect that it had been sold to Miss Betsey Bailey. About the same time one appeared on the Congregationalist store saying it had been sold to Miss Sarah Jenkins. Both stores were closed, and the people had to go to the only other store in town, the Methodist, if they would buy anything.

Both the ladies next called on the Methodist brother, and he readily agreed to take all the goods from the other two stores if he could thereby get the whole trade of the town. He knew from bitter experience that one store was all that the town could support, and he at once began to help the ladies in their scheme, though he was totally unaware of the part he was taking, looking only at the fact that he could make more money by the change. This plan of the ladies was a partial success, for the inhabitants fell right into this arrangement because they could not help it.

Still they would not visit nor attend any but their own church; and three months more passed and still only the sixteen maiden sisters belonged to the visiting company. Now chapter number three was opened.

One morning the train brought to the village a very pretty young lady and three large trunks. Such a thing was not a common occurrence, and the depot loungers soon spread the news,

stating, too, that Miss Bailey was also there to meet her, and that the young lady called her auntie. It soon came out who she was and it was rumored that her stay in Bosworth might be permanent.

She was the daughter of Miss Bailey's sister, who had died when Rosie was only four years old. Miss Bailey claimed the child then, but her father wished her to remain with his folks, and Miss Bailey was forced to give up her claim for the child. Her father was now dead and she had come to live with Aunt Betsey, whom she had always loved as mother. At first she was rather lonely, but when Monday night came and with it the sixteen unsectarian maidens, she had enough to think of. She was of course admitted to the council, and was much amused at the state of society. When the meeting adjourned, she said to her aunt:

"Don't the young people visit?"

"Not outside of the denomination to which they belong."

"Don't a Baptist ever marry a Methodist, or anything of that sort?"

"Not within the memory of the oldest inhabitant."

"I don't see how it is possible for a town to survive with such goings on," said Miss Rosie, more to herself than her aunt.

"We don't survive we merely exist; the town has been worse than dead ever since I've been here, and we maiden ladies have been trying to do something to improve it."

"I think auntie, you have done well, but you have started at the wrong end; let me help you."

"Certainly you can. I have hoped ever since I got your letter that you would help us in some way when you came. Do whatever you wish, and I will lend all the aid in my power."

Rosie did not unfold her plan to her aunt, but at once began to carry it out. The next Sunday saw her at the Congregational church, dressed in the most becoming manner, and every one pronounced her the prettiest girl they had ever seen. After church she went to the Sunday school, learning the names of all the young gentlemen and ladies near her own age. Next Sunday she was at the Baptist church, attending both church and Sunday school. And the next was devoted to the Methodist society.

Then there was a stir. Miss Rosie Anderson was going to give a party at her aunt's residence, and had sent notes of invitation to all the young people of the town, without regard to sect. The invitations were given out a month before the time of the party, so that everyone had a chance to talk it over, as Rosie said, and have their minds made up about it.

The Sunday following the giving out of the invitations, the soprano of the Baptist church was sick, and the fact not being known until nearly time for meeting, no one could be found to sing. Rosie was present, and when she heard of the difficulty, volunteered to sing for them. The leader gladly accepted her offer, not stopping to think what the good people would say when they saw a Congregationalist in their choir.

When they rose to sing the opening piece, Rosie stood up in full view of the congregation. The minister looked horrified, while the deacons covered their faces to think that the Baptists should get so low and sinful as to allow a Congregationalist to sing in the sanctuary. But when she sang the solo that fell to her, the hands dropped from the faces of the deacons, and the expression of the minister's face changed to one of extreme pleasure. Rosie was a beautiful singer, and her voice rang out clear and soft, the organist forgot to play, so enrapt was she in the singer, and Rosie carried her part through without the aid of the organ. Never before had any of them heard such a voice, and they could hardly wait for the time to come when she would sing again that day, but when she came down from the gallery the minister took her by the hand and said:

"Miss Anderson, you have contributed much to the good of the services this afternoon, and I'm very much obliged to you for it."

"You are entirely welcome, Mr. Bush. I think when one has talents they

should be used for the benefit of all who may need them."

"My idea of it exactly," said the minister, and the two walked out of the church and down the street together. Meeting Miss Bailey near her residence, Mr. Bush was introduced to her, and complimented her on having such an accomplished and pleasant young lady in her family; he hoped that he might have the pleasure of seeing both the young ladies present at his church occasionally.

Rosie sang again at the Baptist church the next Sunday, as the regular singer was not well enough to attend. When she rose in her seat she had the satisfaction of seeing many Methodists and Congregationalists in the audience, and although she felt a certain pride in thinking that they came to hear her sing, she felt happier at the thought that she was to be the means of assisting to carry out her aunt's scheme.

That evening the Methodists had a Sunday school concert, and Rosie played their organ. She was now on the best of terms with all the young people of the village, and had no doubt that her party would be a success.

And it was. More than fifty were in attendance, which included every young lady and gentleman in town. Aunt Betsey outdid herself in preparing the supper. Everything was perfect, even the ice cream from the city, which was quite a luxury to the villagers.

At 12 o'clock the party broke up, and Rosie, by her managing, sent several Methodist maidens home with Baptist beaux, and otherwise mixed up the sects and sexes at her will.

A few days after the party, Miss Bailey was surprised to receive a visit from Mrs. Bush, wife of the Baptist minister. They spent a very pleasant hour together, when they were interrupted by Mrs. Deacon Wilson, of the Methodist church, and both ladies remained to tea. The ice was now broken, and calling between the different sects was as common as though it was not a new thing at Bosworth.

Everything now working to Rosie's satisfaction, she had time to think of her own troubles. When she came to Bosworth, she was by no means a happy girl. Her father was a very strict man, and a young gentleman to whom she was quite partial, had not found favor in his eyes, much to the mutual grief of the young people. Her father's sickness was quite long, and so close was her seclusion till the time of his death that she had not seen Edward Bently, nor did she see him before she came to Bosworth. She had written to her acquaintances, but they only knew that he had graduated from college and gone away.

About this time Mr. Bush's health failing, he asked for a year's vacation, agreeing to fill the pulpit during his absence. This leave was, of course granted, and the congregation were awaiting anxiously for the new minister. All they knew was that he was a young man and came from a church in the city of Alliston, where he was the colleague of the Rev. Dr. Howland, one of the most eminent preachers of the Baptist persuasion. Of course they expected something more than ordinary ability, nor were they disappointed.

But with the sermon they had nothing to do. They wished to make a good impression upon the minister, so Rosie was sought out and invited to sing for them, with her usual good nature she accepted. Her position was such that she could not see the minister from where she sat, but when the choir rose to sing she found herself face to face with Edward Bently.

To say she was surprised would not half express her feelings. She turned first white, then red, and finally sank back in her seat utterly powerless to sing a note.

The minister of course knew nothing of this little affair of the gallery, for the singers went on with the anthem after a moment's hesitation, and by the time they came to the solo, which Rosie was to sing, she was ready to go on with her part. As her voice rang out clear and soft, a look of startled surprise was noticed on the minister's face, and a few at least, of the congregation were aware that something extraordinary had happened. Rosie now quite calm, sang her solo sweetly to the end, but when the

minister arose to read the opening exercises some thought they observed a slight tremor in his voice. Only one in the congregation knew why there was such an earnestness in the prayer that was offered for the bringing together of friends long separated, most of them thinking he had reference to the long separation of the churches of the town.

When the services were ended, he hurried from the pulpit, and met Rosie as she came down from the gallery. There was a greeting that rather surprised those of the congregation who saw it, but a few words of explanation from the pastor set their minds right, and before night the whole town knew that Rosie was the affianced wife of Edward Bently, the new Baptist minister, and that it was a love affair of long standing.

Everybody went to the wedding, which was in the Congregational church, and everybody went to the reception at Miss Bailey's, which was the grandest affair Bosworth had ever known.

At the end of the year Rosie bade farewell to the little town to go to her city home. But even she, so far distant from the little village, will ever have pleasant memories of the assistance she gave in the religious revolution of Bosworth through the enterprise of sixteen old maids.

How Ladies Dress in Persia.

She wore a bright red skirt, richly embroidered with gold lace; it was very full and short, barely reaching to her knees; a loose jacket of blue velvet, also much trimmed—this time with silver lace; the sleeves were made of cashmere shawls, buttoned by about twenty small buttons. She wore several necklaces, most of them very massive, studded with fine turquoises. On her head she wore a white shawl, with a band of jewels round her forehead, and at one side a large pearl star. She had on both arms at least a dozen bracelets—some handsome ones, some only bands of colored glass. Her feet were covered with coarse white socks; her shoes were green leather with scarlet heels.—Some of the ladies wore bright red trousers, reaching to the ankle; but this was quite the exception. They wear a long veil reaching from head to foot, generally made of some small print or muslin. I ought to mention that every lady wore a small leather case around her neck, containing some earth from Mecca and verses from Koran. The faces of my hostess and friends were much decorated, the eyebrows broadened and carried quite across the nose. Some had small designs tattooed on the cheeks. The hair is very long and thick, generally dyed red; it is worn plaited in many thin tails, twisted with gold thread.—The hands are well shaped, but nails and palms are stained a dark red.

Who Mixed Those Bottles Up?

A gentleman returning home from the Gilroy hot springs by coach was asked to exchange seats with a lady who found riding inside disagreeable with her. As he was making his way to the inside berth, she bade him take especial care of two bottles of Gilroy water, which she was carrying to her husband. As it happened, the lady had contrived to make herself very disagreeable to her fellow-visitors at the springs, and the passenger she had ousted from his seat determined to have his revenge. Opening each of the bottles, he poured out half the contents, and filled up with whisky. Before many days elapsed the proprietors of the Gilroy springs received the following elegant epistle, dated San Francisco, Aug. 30, 1879: "Sirs—You are a precious lot of scamps, you are! My wife paid a visit to your confounded place, and brought back some spring water. I drank about a bottle of the miserable stuff, and went to the Good Templers, and had not been in the hall more than fifteen minutes before I was as drunk as any man you ever saw; disgraced myself and the lodge, and this morning I am on a sick-bed. My impression is that any set of men who will run an institution of this sort ought to be soured into hot-water springs until life is extinct."

Sin always begins with pleasure and ends with bitterness. It is like the colt, which the little boy said was very tame in front and very wild behind.