



THE TIMES.

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TWO ELOPEMENTS.

IN a large, square, old-fashioned, house—such as our fathers used to build when solidity was more sought after than utility—lived Phillip Manson and his sister Esther. Phillip had reached the mature age of forty, and Esther was close to him. Still, each had pursued a solitary pathway through life, seeking no companionship save that of the other, there was reason to believe that they would continue to follow the same course till in the fullness of time they were gathered into the family tomb—the receptacle of many generations of the Manson family.

"No," said Phillip when assailed on this subject by a match-making lady; "marrying may be very good for some people, but I could not bear to have my habits broken in upon, and my whole house turned topsy-turvy by the introduction of a wife.

As for Miss Esther, she often declared that she would never make a slave of herself for any man living.

Of course, it was insinuated by those whose opinions differed widely from Miss Esther's, that in adopting this opinion she was only making a virtue of necessity, and that it was best to be contented with one's lot, provided there was no chance of improving it.

Early one afternoon just after Esther Manson had completed her task of clearing away the dinner dishes and storing them away in the cupboard after a thorough washing, she was startled by a rap at the door.

Somewhat surprised by a caller at this unusual hour, she answered the summons. She was a little apprehensive that it was a neighbor who had of late proved very troublesome from her habit of borrowing articles and owing, it is to be presumed, to an habitual forgetfulness, neglecting to return them.

"I hope," she mused "that if it is Mrs. Bailey, she will be wanting to borrow something that I have not got."

She opened the door, but no Mrs. Bailey presented herself to her expecting gaze—a gentleman of forty-five, carefully, may elegantly dressed stood before her.

"I beg your pardon for intruding, madam," said he as he noticed Esther's look of surprise; but can you direct me to the house of the late Mr. Wellfleet? I have heard it was for sale, and from the description I have heard of it, I judge it will suit me."

"It is the next house on the left, sir," answered Esther, who had time, while the gentleman was speaking, to examine his appearance, which did not fail to impress her favorably.

Two days afterward Esther heard that Mr. Wellfleet's estate had been purchased by a stranger named Bigelow. She at once conjectured, and rightly that this was the name of her visitor. A few days elapsed, and Esther Manson received another visit from the gentleman.

"I have a favor to ask of you, Miss Manson," he began (it seems he had ascertained her name.) "I am aware that our slight acquaintance will hardly justify it, but I trust time will remove this objection. You must know," he added, smiling, "that I am a bachelor, dependent in many respects upon my housekeeper, who though a good woman in her way, I am afraid is not reliable in matters of taste. As my furniture has arrived, but has not yet been arranged, I would esteem it a real service if you would give me your opinion in some little matters respecting its proper disposition. My carriage is at the door ready to take you over."

Esther's cheek flushed with pleasure at this compliment, and she made preparations to comply with her new visitor's request.

It was not without a little consciousness of the singularity of the position that Esther found herself riding by the side a gentleman with whom she had scarcely exchanged half a dozen words in the course of her life. The distance, however, was but short, and she had little time for reflection. On arriving at her place of destination, she found the chief part of the business accomplished. The furniture, which by the way was new and handsome, had been arranged in the rooms after a fashion, but Esther was able to point out several changes for the better, with all of which Mr. Bigelow professed himself delighted; he, moreover, asked her advice as to what are your opinions about marriage?"

"Why," said she "I hardly know; I don't think I have given much consideration to the subject."

"Because," continued Phillip, "I find my opinions have suffered a great change on this point. There was a time when I thought it unwise but, now, if I could get a good wife, such as you, for example, I should be inclined to try it."

"O Lor', Mr. Manson, said Miss Preston, in some perturbation, "how you talk!"

Five minutes afterward Miss Preston, had accepted the proposal of Phillip, and the two were, to all intents and purposes, engaged.

"The only thing I think of," said the gentleman, after a brief pause, "is that my sister Esther is a decided enemy to marriage, and I hardly dare to tell her that I am about to marry. If we could only go away and have the ceremony performed, it would be pleasanter."

"Suppose we go to New York," suggested the bride elect.

"A good idea. We'll go. When can you be ready?"

"Next Monday morning."

So next Monday morning was agreed upon. It so happened that Esther was to start on Monday afternoon for the same place with the same purpose in view—but of this coincidence neither party were aware.

The reader will please go forward a week. By this time the respective parties have reached New York, been united in the holy bonds of matrimony, and are now legally husband and wife.—They were located at hotels situated on the same street, and even on the same side of the way, but were far from being aware of the propinquity. On the morning succeeding the two marriages, for by a singular chance they happened on the same day, Mr. Bigelow and Esther started out for a walk down street. It so happened that Phillip and his wife were at the same moment walking up street. The natural consequence was that the two parties met.

"Good heavens! my sister!" exclaimed Phillip.

"Merciful goodness! my brother," returned Esther.

"What brings you here with Mr. Bigelow?"

"Nay, how happens it that you are here with Miss Preston?"

"Miss Preston is now my wife!"

"And Mr. Bigelow is now my husband!"

"But I thought you were opposed to matrimony."

"And I supposed you were equally so."

"My friends," interposed Mr. Bigelow, "this is a day of surprise—but I trust of such a nature that we shall all be made happier thereby. My regret Mr. Manson, of robbing you of your housekeeper is quite dissipated by the knowledge that you have so soon supplied her place."

Bill of Fare from the Bible.

PREPARATION. Spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes and spoons, and the bowls, with the bread in the basket.—Num. iv, 7, and Levit. viii, 31.

GRACE. Give us this day our daily bread.—Matt. vi, 2.

SOUP. Pour out the broth.—Judges vi, 20. Feed me with pottage.—Gen. xxv, 30.

FISH. They gave him a piece of a broiled fish.—Luke xxiv, 42.

attributed to the cause which he assigned, namely, a pressure of business. The latter she did not observe, her mind being preoccupied. We, who are in the secret, may take the liberty of following him on one of his business calls. It was at a neat cottage, from whose front door dangled an immense knocker, that Phillip Manson, knocked. The door was opened by the same Miss Preston, who, some months before, he thought "might do" for Mr. Bigelow.

"Good evening, Maria," was his salutation as he entered. After a brief conversation about the weather, the crops and other standard topics, which, however trivial they may seem, could hardly be dispensed with, he began to show signs of embarrassment, and finally ejaculated:

"Maria—Miss Preston—I mean Maria, what are your opinions about marriage?"

"Why," said she "I hardly know; I don't think I have given much consideration to the subject."

"Because," continued Phillip, "I find my opinions have suffered a great change on this point. There was a time when I thought it unwise but, now, if I could get a good wife, such as you, for example, I should be inclined to try it."

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ENTREMENTS. Hare.—Levit. xi, 6. Chicken.—Matt. xxiii, 37. Besides harts and fatted fowl.—1 Kings iv, 23.

RELISHES. Olives.—Mic. vi, 15.

ROAST. All manner of baked meats.—Gen. xi, 17.

VEGETABLES. Parched corn and beans.—2 Sam. xvii, 28.

The full corn in the ear.—Mark iv, 28.

The leeks, and the onions, and the cucumbers, and the garlic.—Num. xi, 27.

GAME. Partridges.—Jer. xvii, 2. Two young pigeons.—Levit. v, 7. And he brought young quails.—Psalms cv., 40.

DESSERT. A basket of summer fruit.—Amos viii, 25. Pomegranates and figs.—Num. viii, 25.

Comfort me with apples.—Cor. ii, 5. Two baskets of figs.—Jer. xxiv, 2. Then thou mayst eat grapes thy fill.—Deut. xxiii, 24.

We remember the melons.—Num. xi, 5.

They brought bunches of raisins.—1 Chron. xii, 40.

Carry nuts and almonds.—Gen. xli, 2.

A WESTERN YARN.

LE ROY, the Western robber who was recently lynched, was outwitted once. It was in November, 1879, and the scene the Weston Pass Road near Rocky Ranche nine miles below Leadville. In the coach were seven gentlemen and one lady. At intervals during the day road agents had been the topic of discussion, and the lady remarked that all the money she possessed was safely tucked away in her left over-shoe. Curly Hooker was driving, and it looked as though the journey would be made in safety, when the stage stopped, and Curly cried down through the boot:

"For Heaven's sake, keep quiet and don't shoot!"

The next moment there came a word of command, and a murderous-looking revolver, at full cock, appeared at one of the windows. A second weapon of like dimensions came in sight at the opposite window, and the woman screamed in truly feminine fashion. The door was opened, and a slight form, the face concealed by a domino and black felt hat, appeared.

"Step out, please," said the owner, blandly; "toll must be paid by all pilgrims at this point."

"Hands up," said the voice again as the first passenger stepped out, "and be lively, too, for I haven't shot a man since yesterday, and am aching to get in practice again!"

His commands were obeyed to the letter.

All were ranged in line in the snow, and the boyish-looking leader first searched your correspondent. The first thing found was a railroad press pass, and scanning it for a moment, the bandit said:

"I always respect the press; I am Billy Le Roy' and I ask you to let me down easy."

All were examined except the lady and a gentleman at her left, and little money was found. "Beg pardon, Miss," said Le Roy, as he rifled her pockets. As the road agent turned to the remaining passenger, the latter said:

"I haven't got over \$25 to my name, but if you'll let me go I'll tell you where you can get over \$400."

Le Roy had already found the passenger's pocket-book, and, as it was not heavily laden, replied:

"Well, fire away; it's a bargain."

"In the left over-shoe of the woman," answered the tell-tale.

Despite the woman's protestations her shoe was removed and the money appropriated. Then orders were given to return to the stage; they were obeyed; Curly Hooker was told to drive on, and in a few moments the stage was blowing rapidly away from the eventful spot.

An indignation meeting was immediately held, and it was suggested that the passenger who had betrayed the lady should either be lynched or thrown out of the stage to perish in the snow.

"Allow me to utter a word of explanation," said the brute, in a suave tone, at this point. I am the agent for a St. Louis company who have purchased an interest in the Pendry group of mines at Leadville, and in my valise I carry \$60,000 of the purchase money. The expressage rate on so great a sum is so heavy that I thought it safer to adopt this method of carrying it through. I knew very well that if the robber found nothing he would search our baggage, and so played the role of informant and outwitted him."

On arriving at Leadville the lady, who proved to be Mrs. Winnie Purdy, was presented with \$1,000 by the agent.

A Sharp Bargain.

THERE is a shrewd and wealthy land-lord in Maine, who is noted for driving his "sharp bargains," by which he has amassed a large amount of property. He is the owner of a large number of dwelling-houses; and it is said of him that he is not over scrupulous of his rental charges, whenever he can find a customer whom he knows to be responsible. His object is always to lease his house for a term of years to the best tenants and get the utmost farthing in the shape of rent.

A diminutive Frenchman called on him to hire a dwelling he owned in Portland, and which had long remained empty. References were given, and the Yankee landlord ascertaining that the tenant was a man "after his own heart" for a tenant, immediately commenced to beat him down. He found that the tenant appeared to suit the little Frenchman, and he placed an exorbitant price upon it; but the lease was drawn and duly executed, and the tenant removed to his new quarters.

Upon the kindling of fires in the house, it was found that the chimneys wouldn't "draw," and the building was filled with smoke. The window-sashes rattled in the wind at night, and the cold air rushed in through a hundred crevices about the house, until now unnoticed.—The snow melted upon the roof, and the attics were drenched from the leakage.—The rain pelted, and our Frenchman found a "natural" bath-room upon the cellar floor—but the lease was signed and the landlord chuckled.

"I have been vat you sal call 'suck in' vis zis maison," muttered our victim to himself a week afterward; "but n'importe—ve sal see vat ve sal see."

Next morning he arose bright and early, and passing down town he encountered the landlord.

"Aha! Bon jour, monsieur," said he, in his happiest manner.

"Good day, sir. How do you like your house?"

"Ah, monsieur, elegant—beautiful—magnificent. Eh bein, monsieur, I have but ze one regret."

"Ah! what is that?"

"Monsieur, I sal live in zat house but three little year."

"How so?"

"I have find by vat you sal call ze lease zat you have give me ze house but for three year, and ver mooch sorry for zat."

"But you can have it longer if you wish—"

"Ah, monsieur, I sal be ver mooch glad if I can have zat house so long as I please—eh, monsieur?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, sir."

"Tres bien, monsieur. I sal walk rite to your offices, and you sal give me vat you sal call ze lease for zat maison just so long as I sal want ze house. Eh, monsieur?"

"Certainly, sir. You can stay there your lifetime if you like."

"Ah, monsieur, I have ver mooch tanks for zis accommodation."

The old lease was destroyed, and a new one was delivered in due form to the French gentleman, giving him possession of the premises for "such period as the lessee may desire," name, he paying the rent thereof promptly, etc.

The next morning our landlord was passing the house just as the Frenchman's last load of furniture was being started from the door; and an hour afterward a messenger called upon him with a "legal tender" for the rent for eight days, accompanied with a note as follows:

"Monsieur, I have bin smooke, I have bin drowned, I have bin freees to death in ze house vat I av hire of you for ze period as I may desire. I hav stay in ze house "jes so long as I please," and ze bearer of zis will give you ze key. Bon jour, monsieur."

It is needless to add that our Yankee landlord has never since been known to give up "a bird in the hand for one in the bush."