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RIDING IN ROCK CREEK PARK

The mild weather in Washington has brought out the equestrians in large numbers. Our illustration shows Miss Dasha Allen, daughter of Major Henry T. Allen, U. S. A., taking her mount over a barrier in Rock Creek Park.

LED BY THE SIGN

By JEAN DOUGLAS.

Briggsville is a typical country village so far removed from railroads that twentieth-century progress has not invaded its solitude, and if it were not for the newspapers and the stage which once a day covered the fifteen miles between the village and Winterton, the inhabitants would be as free from knowledge of the outside world as those who dwell on the planet Mars. For this reason Briggsville had preserved that quaintness which enveloped all villages preceding the Civil war.

The township proper consisted of a town square, grouped about which was the general store and postoffice, town hall, bake shop, drug store, hotel, the Methodist church and adjoining parsonage and the residences of Squire Wilson, Lawyer Parker and a few other prominent members of the community.

One thing which puzzled the sojourner, if he remained long enough in Briggsville to become intimately acquainted with its life, was the unusually large number of spinsters which occupied the attractive houses and attended church, for the social life of the village was centered in the church.

If he were interested enough to examine the register of births, he would find the feminine number much in the majority, and those men who did not marry at an extremely early age usually shook the dust of Briggsville from their boots and sought pastures new. If any desire to migrate ever entered the minds of the maidens they never divulged it, and seemingly contented, they divided their time between household duties and serving the church.

Numbered among these ladies of single blessedness were Janet Peabody, who taught the younger generation the three R's in the brick schoolhouse; Sarah Horton, the church organist; Martha Hill, an artist of no mean ability, and Anne Morrison, the principal owner of real estate in the town. These splendid examples of lovely womanhood were inseparable friends since the days when they made mud pies in the lane back of the Morrison barn.

Accomplished and possessing physical attractions of equal magnitude, it was an unsolvable mystery why at least one of the fascinating quartet was not chosen to share some lonely bachelor's fireside. It was rumored that both Miss Anne and Miss Sarah had refused Arnold Young, the proprietor of the general store, and his friend, Jared Bolton, who owned the grist mill; but whether these worthy men lacked courage to take other maidens or preferred to cherish their unrequited love for the fair kindlers of the flame, they continued to be the only eligible men of Briggsville until the venerable Reverend Horner passed on to eternal rest, leaving his pulpit vacant, and the presiding elder of the district appointed the Rev. David Potter to assume the responsibility of caring for the shepherdless flock.

In honor of the young pastor's appointment to their charge the Ladies' Aid society gave a series of chicken and waffle suppers and appropriated the money thus earned to renovate the church.

Martha Hill, on account of her artistic abilities, was made chairman of a committee to select wall paper, carpet and furniture. Sarah Horton insisted that the organ needed tuning, and the society sent to Winterton for a professional, that it should be properly done. Anne Morrison donated a silver communion set, which completed the perfect appointments of the sacred edifice. Somehow Janet Peabody, though a devout Christian, was not assigned any particular duty to perform, and the gentle, madonna-like little school teacher felt slighted and hurt.

On the eventful Sabbath when the Rev. David Potter was to preach his initial sermon the entire population of Briggsville donned its wedding garments and with beaming countenances was prepared to welcome the new pastor.

He had arrived the day previous, and was the honored guest of Squire Wilson until the renovation of the parsonage was completed.

Miss Horton, seated at the organ ready to begin "Blest Be the Tie," the moment the minister entered the door, was flanked by her three friends, the Misses Hill, Peabody and Morrison, who sang in the choir.

At the first stroke of the second bell the squire and his guest entered, and the entire assemblage burst forth into a volume of song. After the squire had introduced the pastor to his congregation the Reverend Potter, without the slightest sign of nervousness, took charge of the service as if he had been accustomed to facing that particular sea of faces for years. As a result his popularity was assured from that moment. Briggsville was almost sinfully proud of its clever, handsome, genial pastor. He chummed with Arnold Young and Jared Bolton, while Squire Wilson learned to love him as if he were his own son.

Among the four lovely spinsters he impartially divided his attentions, escorting Sarah Horton to the concerts at Winterton, accompanying Martha Hill on her sketching expeditions, helping Anne Morrison in her efforts to help those less fortunate than herself, and visiting the school where Janet Peabody was the presiding genius.

In this manner a year passed, and David Potter suddenly realized the fact that he would like a helpmate, and was confronted with the serious problem of whom to choose. He admired each one of the four for some particular charm, and since it was impossible to blend those attributes in one maiden he was miserable, and decided to ask divine help in selecting the proper wife. He prayed for a sign by which he was to know the favored of the Lord.

The next afternoon found him at Anne Morrison's, and as usual she was planning to assist several families to educate their children at the state normal school, and he thought what a help she would be in his work. Surely heaven would approve of this noble woman; but no "fiery pillar" appeared to guide him.

Then David called upon Martha Hill, who was in the studio painting the most wonderful picture of an apple orchard in spring. As he watched her deft fingers guiding the brush to realistically reproduce nature's beauty, he marveled and hoped that the sign would appear; but the miracle was withheld, and so he passed on to Sarah Horton's.

Before he reached the door the inspiring strains of Handel's "Messiah" greeted his approach. The little maid-of-all-work told him to "walk right in," so he sat quietly, not disturbing the performer with a knowledge of his presence, until the last note ceased to vibrate. Miss Horton's music always had a calming influence; he felt at peace with the world, and could "sit enraptured for hours beneath the soothing influence of her melodies." Surely she must be the one God intended for his mate; but the sign appeared not.

School was over at four, and Janet Peabody came home escorted by six adoring pupils. She felt especially happy, and resented the fact that because she was thirty-five and unmarried Briggsville demanded her to assume a matronly dignity and wear dull gray, brown or blue, and suppress her youthful spirits.

Running upstairs, she obeyed a sudden impulse to don a pretty pink-sprigged dimity she had worn years ago, and stood before the mirror admiring the pretty reflection, and then there came a knock on the door and she opened it to discover David. When each had recovered a natural poise she invited him in.

During her conversation the pastor received the longed-for sign. Love entered his heart, and he knew that Janet was the chosen one.

Manfully he told her of his prayer and of his afternoon visits, ending: "I have had my sign; I have seen a vision and know you are mine by divine appointment. God is love and has manifested his presence to me as to the prophets of old, Janet, will you marry me?"

Janet did wed the pastor, and Briggsville will tell its descendants for years to come of the lovely wedding, for at the same time Jared Bolton married Sarah Horton and Arnold Young Anne Horrison.—Buffalo Express.

HIS THOUGHT.

"And when we are married will you give me all your attention, George?" asked the sweet young thing.

"But you forget, dear, that there's the furnace," replied the matter-of-fact man.

TRUE OPTIMIST.

Vicar—Amid all your troubles, Mrs. Grundy, I am pleased to see that your gratitude to Providence does not fail.

Mrs. Grundy—No, sir; rheumatiz is bad, indeed, but I thank 'eaven I still 'ave a back to 'ave it in.—Life.

NOT A GOOD TITLE.

Quint—So you've written a new song for soprano voice. What is it called?

Quaver—"Would That I Were Young Again."

Quint—Great Scott! You'll never never get any woman to sing that.

DURING WET SPELL.

Mrs. Church—Is your husband good judge of the weather?

Mrs. Gotham—I really think he is. He said it was just beastly weather.

MISS KATHLEEN ELLIOTT

Miss Kathleen Elliott of Racine, Wis., has been called one of the two most beautiful women in America. She has been visiting Congressman and Mrs. Henry Allen Cooper in the national capital.

WHY THE RECEIPTS FELL OFF

Happening That Had Swelled Them the Year Before Was Not Repeated, and Not Likely to Be.

The recent upheavals in Western Union circles which led to the injection of numerous railroad men into the commercial telegraph field on the Pacific coast led to some funny episodes while the railroaders were learning the new business. One Los Angeles official, who, however weak he might be in other matters, was strong as horse radish on red tape, telegraphed the manager of a desert telegraph office forty miles from any other office: "September a year ago your receipts were $4.95, last September only 25 cents; how do you account for losing 90 per cent. of the business?" and received full information in the following reply: "The $4.95 business last year was received from our section foreman, who sent telegrams to everybody he knew announcing the arrival of a baby at his house. This September his wife did not have any baby, and he says that next time she does he intends to write letters about it."—Los Angeles Times.

DON'T JUDGE BY EXTERNALS

That Physical Appearances or Mannerisms Denote Much Is Denied by Writer in Woman's World.

Place no dependence upon the common marks of character as shown by physical appearances or mannerisms. One of the strongest men mentally and spiritually I ever met had a "weak chin." And a "square jaw" is as likely to belong to a bully as to a brave man.

One of the most delicate, clever and gentle writers in America is a fat, frowsy and very common looking woman.

I know another woman with a loud, disagreeable voice, and she is not at all what that might imply, but is as sweet and modest as one could wish. It is just an unfortunate way.

Discount all the usual signs of a piercing eye, a soft voice, a shy manner, an imposing presence, a viciously low forehead, a shifting glance, and all that; judgments formed on these things are pretty sure to be wrong.—Dr. Frank Crane, in Woman's World.

JUDGE FINES A WATCH.

Judge T. H. Brents of the superior court at Walla Walla, Wash., who recently fined an automobile for making a juror late, has imposed a $10 fine on a watch which prevented Gus Harras, defendant in a case, from reaching court in time.

"Time's money, and we'll let the watch pay it," said the judge. Harros was sued by Pete Hanson, who asked $1,000 for false imprisonment. Harras having had him arrested three years ago for trespassing. After four hours the jury decided no damages were due.

ODD BITS IN THE NEWS.

"The bride," says an Australian paper, "appeared in a smart white frock of pale blue linen.

A newspaper headline runs: "Mother of eighty complains." Don't wonder at it. Our own missus finds even one troublesome.

The latest Irish bull: "It looks as if she had saddled herself with a veritable white elephant."—Dublin paper.

A Missouri lawyer, in pleading a wife's divorce case, stated that her husband "undertook to poison her without just cause."

UNDERSTOOD HIS BUSINESS.

Fruit Vender—Why you notta tella me move on?

Policeman—Your cart is not in the way there.

Fruit Vender—Den I put ita in da way, and I wanta you tella me move on.

Policeman—What for?

Fruit Vender—Dat maka big crowd and I sella banan.—Youngstown Telegram.

MOTHER WAS GAME.

His Sister—His nose seems broken.

His Fiancee—And he's lost his front teeth.

His Mother—But he didn't drop the ball!—Life.

WHERE THE MONEY IS.

"Is there any money in poultry?"

"You can get pretty good prices for chickens killed by passing autos, but you have to keep a sharp lookout."

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

Mr. Lloyd George, after reading the fine array of epithets showered on him at the meeting of protest organized by the doctors at the Queen's hall, might find consolation in a passage of one Paul Louis Courier's pamphlets. "I should like to reply to this professor, but I fear he is angry with me. He calls me a Jacobin, a revolutionary, a plagiarist, a thief, a poisoner, a forger, a pestiferous person, a madman, an impostor, a slanderer, a scarecrow, a man of corruption, a buffoon, and a raker in dustheaps. That is all, so far as I remember. I follow his meaning. He has discovered that he and I hold contrary opinions, and this is his way of telling me so."—London Chronicle.

SHE CERTAINLY COULD.

"If there's any joke I hate," said the nice lady, "it's that old one that you joke writers are constantly digging up about a woman not being able to hammer a nail."

"Can you hammer a nail?" we came back, gently.

"I sure can!"

"Let's get a hammer and nail and prove it."

"That's not necessary—it's already proved. Do you see this blue thumb nail of mine?"

NEWER MYSTERIES.

We presume that the postmistress who used to read the postal cards is now sniffing the butter that passes through the parcel post.

THEIR SOURCE.

"There is much warmth in that singer's tones."

"Then it must come from the register in her voice."

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