ONLY A FARMER

Quite an interested and anxious group had gathered in Mrs. Wilson's dressing room, one pleasant morning in June. It consisted of Mrs. Wilson and her three unmarried daughters, and the subject under such animated discussion was how and where they should open their usual summer campaign.

It had always been an interesting subject, and to the maternal element, attended with considerable anxiety, but never such a matter of perplexity, almost amounting to a despair, as now.

The contents of the various wardrobes had been laid out and examined silks and muslins, cambrics and lawns, sufficient it would seem, for a dozen, and the two elder Misses Wilson, de clared with tears in their eyes, "that they had nothing, absolutely nothing, fit to wear."

It is noteworthy with what surprising unanimity the two sisters agreed on the point, who seldom agreed on any point.

Mrs. Wilson looked with dismay upon the finery spread before her, after listening to the above assertion.

"I'm sure, my dear," she ventured to say, "some of them are hardly worn, and with a little alteration-"

"Now, mamma!" interrupted Belle. "Why, will you talk so ridiculously, when you know that there is not thing here but what is wretchedly out of style! And as to altering anything, it always gives me a pain in the side to sew, and I'm not going to Saratoga all fagged out, if I never go!"

Of course this settled that. It is a little curious what a small amount of work will "fag" a girl "all out" who can dance until the break of day without the slightest inconvenience.

"There's one thing certain," said Lucy, the second daughter, "we've got to have at least one new dress.' "I don't know where it's to come

from then," responded Mrs. Wilson sinking down wearily into a chair. "It was as much as I could do to get pa's consent to going at all. It was 2 o'clock at night before he gave in, and then I verily believe it was from pure weariness, and inability to keep awake any longer."

Mrs. Wilson said this with an air of a woman determined to perform her duty at all hazards, and anxious to obtain credit for the same.

But it seemed to have quite the contrary effect upon Josie, the youngest daughter, who had not before spoken, but who now burst forth: "I declare if it isn't a sin and

shame for you to worry pa so!' Mrs. Wilson cast a reproachful look at the speaker.

"I will say Josie, that you are the most ungrateful child I ever saw. I'd settled in life."

"I'd thank you for not doing so; I am not going to Saratoga or Long Branch. In the first place I know that pa can't afford it. And then I promised Mary Crofton that I would visit her this summer."

Though Mrs. Wilson affected to be an admiring glance at the glad young displeased at this announcement she face. was secretly relieved.

Bell and Lucy were all suited with this arrangement too. Josie was very handy at furbishing and making over, and if she was determined to bury herself in a country farm house, she would not need so much of that for herself. and could, therefore, devote more time to them. And so busy did they keep her during the two weeks that followed, that Josie was glad enough to see the big trunks all packed and waiting in the hall.

To save expenses, Mrs. Wilson had arranged to dismiss the servants and shut up the house, with the exception of one room for her husband who was to take his meals at his sister's. "Of course, she won't charge him

anything, so that will be one item saved," remarked Mrs. Wilson, as she ment had secured.

such a hard time to get along." "Well, if your pa chooses to pay when

he need'nt and it isn't expected of him, it's his own loss. For my part I don't see what's the good of having relations if you can't make use of them."

Mrs. Wilson certainly believed in making her relatives useful, carrying out that belief to its fullest extent, whenever it was practicable as some of them knew to their cost. Even her love for her daughters partook of the selfishness of her intensely selfish nature, her chief anxiety being to get them "off her hands," and in a manner that would be advantageous and reflect as much credit on herself as possible.

But they were gone, at last, and Josie was at liberty to make her own simple preparations, which did not take her long to complete.

The father and daughter had a nice quiet tea together. Josie was going on the morrow, and as sitting opposite him and pouring out his tea, she saw the hard lines softening in his careworn face and how happy he was in her society, her heart reproached her for leaving him.

"I have half a mind not to go, papa; by yourself."

But Mr. Wilson would not hear to

have been working hard, and you need John; he was such a good son, and so a change. My life would be much the intelligent, steady and industrious. same anyhow.

"You can expect me in three weeks, Josie, who took so kindly to the country papa," smiled Josie from the car win- ways that it seemed as if she had always dow, the next morning. You will want lived in the country. He used to walk your little housekeeper by that time I home with her. Mary considerately know."

And Mr. Wilson went back to the mother, well pleased with the turn afcorroding anxieties which had made fairs were taking. him an old man before his time, thanking God for this bit of sunshine, and which left its glow in the heart long which John and Josie had a fashion of after it had vanished

There were only a few passengers for that every one seemed to honor and Baybridge, a small town in the interior understand of the State, though there were the And so the happy days went on each making it, as the "ROYAL" always had the repuusual loungers upon the platform of the day binding those young, loving hearts vinces. station as Josie stepped out. But they more closely together.

soon scattered, leaving her to stare When Josie returned to the city,

When Josie returned to the city,

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THOS. F. RAYMO

supposed would be waiting for her. She walked clear around the station looking in every direction, but not a vehicle was in sight except a rough box

heads as if impatient to be off.

A man stood beside the restive crea- with me when I was married papa, tures that yet seemed to be under per- she whispered, laying her cheek closely "There Jenny! Be easy Kate!" he | it be delightful!"

stamped their feet and tossed their that under ran her father's words.

said, patting the satin-smooth skin, and speaking very much as a mother would The baggage-master was standing ladies.'

near a pile of trunks and parcels. "Is this your trunk, Miss?" he said, as Josie approached him.

must be some mistake." here. What might their name be?" "Crofton."

"Why, bless me, you've got off at the wrong station. They live at North Baybridge, five miles beyond. "When does the next train leave?"

"To-morrow morning." Josie looked the dismay that she acquire certainly felt at this announcement.

"It's too bad, I declare," said the good-natured officer, pitying Josie's

Then as his eyes fell upon the owner of the team, who was looking towards

"If this ain't a streak of luck! Here's John Manning, their next neighbor. He can take you along as

got off at the wrong station. She wants to go to Crofton's. I tell her she can ride with you."

The young man removed his straw hat, revealing a forehead broad and full, and whose whiteness contrasted better think of." strongly with the healthy brown of the

"I shall be very happy, if the young lady has no objection to riding with a farmer, and in a farmer's waggon." the honest blue eyes that met her own,

made her cheeks redden. "If it will not be too much bother." As the young man listened to those low, softly spoken words, he felt nothing the speaker could ask would be any trouble at all. Springing to work, he soon improvised quite a comfortable seat for Josie by passing a rope from one stake to another, just back of the board in front, throwing a thick, soft blanket over the whole.

Glad to be released, Jenny and Kate bore them swiftly along the winding country road, dotted here and there by farmhouses, nestled down among trees like to know how much money I'd get and shrubbery. As soon as Josie got out of your pa if I didn't worry it out. a little used to it she enjoyed her ele-But that's all the thanks I get for lay- vated and novel position and which ing awake nights, scheming and plann- gave her a fine view of the beautiful ing how to give you a chance to get country through which they were pass-

> siastic exclamations and comments, seeming to take pleasure, they being so frankly and innocently expressed. "Do you think you would like to live in the country?" he said, stealing

> "Above all things," responded Josie -" that is," she added, after a moments pause, "if papa could be here too. I wish he could be, just for a little while; he would enjoy it so. Papa was brought up on a farm, and it would seem like old times to him. I heard him say that he wished he had

never left it." "I had a strong desire, when a boy to go to the city, where I could get a chance to get rich, and not have to work so hard. But I am the only son -an only child since last winter-" here the speakers eyes saddened. "I promised father just before he died, that I wouldn't leave the farm while mother lived, and I don't know that I

care to do so now." "I wouldn't if I were in your place," said Josie, with a wise shake of her regarded complacently the effect of pretty head. "It's dreadful hard Belle's new dress which her manage- times in the city. Everybody is groan- Portland and Boston with steamers and ing about them, which makes it dis- rail to all parts of the United States. "As though pa would board there mal enough. As to working hard, I'd for nothing," was Josie's indignant re- like to know who works harder than joinder, "When uncle William has papa does. It's ever so much nicer day and Saturday only up to 6 o'clock p. here."

The honest young fellow, whose heart was in his eyes, inwardly hoped that she would always think so.

"There is where I live," he said aloud, pointing to a house with a wide piazza running round two sides, and which looked very pleasant amid the green verdure that surr ounded it. Young Manning drew the reins at the

gate, inside of which a pleasant faced silver haired woman was standing. "Here's the mail, mother," he said, tossing down to her some papers and pamphlets. "Been lonely any? I'm PARK HOTEL

going to take this young lady to Mr. Crofton's. My mother, Miss Wilson." The young man took leave of Josie with a feeling at his heart such as he

had never experienced before. "How pretty she is!" he thought, and as good as pretty, I am sure." "What an honest and pleasant face! I wonder if I shall ever see him again?"

This is what she thought. Josie did see him again and quite often. The Mannings and Croftons were not only neighbors, but were inti- LIVERY STABLES, WITH GOOD OUTFIT ON THE mate. Mary Crofton had always been it seems too bad to leave you here all strongly attatched to Mrs. Manning's only daughter, who died the preceding

winter. She spent a good deal of time at her house, and Josie frequently with "I insist upon your going; you her. Mary was never weary of praising

John soon got over his shyness with lingered by the gate to talk with his

Then there was rides and walks, picnics and social gatherings, at all of getting off by themselvss-a fashion

tended, she had a pleasant story to whisper in her father's ear.

"If you love him and he is worthy of you," he said, in reply to the query waggon, with a board across it, drawn with which it ended. by a pair of spirited black horses, that Josie's quick ear detected the sadness

> to his. "And on a farm, too! Won't Belle and Lucy returned, with that

conscious air of subdued triumph and importance peculiar to "engaged young Having attained the end and aim of their existence, there was nothing

further for them to hope or expect. "Yes, I was expecting friends to From henceforth they were to repose meet me, but they are not here. There upon their laurels, floating down the stream of life with no thought or care "I know most of the people around for anything but the present enjoy-

Belle's captive was a Wall street broker, owning a fabulous amount on paper. Lucy's was the son of a millionaire, whose ambition seemed to be to spend as quickly as possible the money that his father had labored to

They made no attempt to disguise their disdain when they heard Josie's modest conquest.

"Only a farmer!" snuffed Mrs. Wilson. "Never did I dream that one of my daughters would stoop to that But I suppose if you have your father's approval you don't care for mine."

"Of course you can't expect us to visit you," said Belle loftily. "The connections of Charles Augustus are all "John, here is a young woman that's of the highest and most aristocratic character, and it couldn't be thought

"Certainly not," echoed Lucy. "A wife has to take the position of her husband, which is something you had Josie had thought of it; and very

happy thoughts they were, too. The financial disasters of the three years that followed made quite a change in the surroundings of all the The admiration so clearly visible in above, with the exception of Josie and

> Out of the wreck of Mr. Wilson's business nothing was left but the honor and integrity, which shone all the more brightly from the temporary gloom that shrouded him. His wife took their altered fortune very hard, fairly fretting and worrying herself into the grave, where she was laid a few months after. Penniless and unfitted for anything higher the husbands of Belle and Lucy were glad to accept positions, one as a conductor on a city car, the other a third-rate clerkship.

Josie did not see much of her sisters, but many a barrel of apples and crock of butter found their way from the

Almost every pleasant afternoon a grayhaired, placid looking old man can be seen on the western piazza of the farm-house, with a grandchild on each knee. It is Mr. Wilson, who often Her companion smiled at the enthu- thanks God that one of his daughters married "only a farmer."

Travelers' Column.



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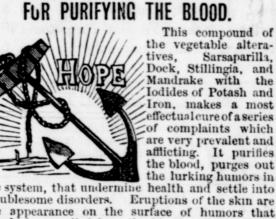
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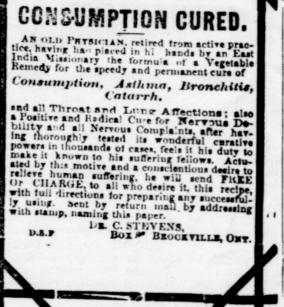
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