

NOT AN ELOPEMENT.

"Yes, I like your appearance," said Mr. Smith, looking at John Paddington through his gold eye-glasses. "And your recommendations are excellent, excellent; but my steward must be a married man, a married man, sir. Here's a house for him, you see, and everything comfortable and proper for a nice little home; but I cannot engage a single man, I cannot do it."

"Shall I be taking a liberty in asking why?" said John, with his head on one side, and that insinuating smile of his, which did more for him than any number of recommendations and letters of introduction with most people.

"Yes," replied Mr. Smith. "You certainly are, but I'll permit it. I am, unfortunately, a widower, and I have four daughters. I am fond of having fine-looking people about me, therefore I engaged a handsome young coachman; consequently, Amelia, my eldest, eloped with him. Final result, I have settled a sum of money on Amelia, and they are living on it at Hackensack."

"I had a very fine-looking gardener, pious, well educated, had a quotation from the Bible for every occasion. Salina, my second girl, eloped with him. I settled something on Salina, and her canny Scotsman has used it to start a florist's establishment of his own. He is getting on in life more pious than ever, and because I happened to swear a bit over the elopement, prays for me, night and morning, as a misguided sinner."

"Later, I employed a French cook with a moustache as long as himself. I never dreamed of danger there, but Corinna, my third girl, eloped with him. They have started a confectioner's establishment on what I gave 'em, and he is always calling me his *beau pere*, and sending me some sort of flummery—a frosted cake with Cupid on it, or a mould of jelly, or I don't know what. I can't quarrel with anyone, or disown my girls. You see, I was a great flirt myself in old times, and ran off with poor, dear Mrs. Smith from boarding school. They inherit it from me. But it cannot happen again. My Edith is still with me, and everyone about me must be married, or very old and ugly. My cook would frighten the crows, my gardener has a hump-back and a Xantippe of a wife; and you—well, I do want you, I do indeed. I know you can manage my estate perfectly. I like you personally and all that, but I kicked your predecessor out for kissing his hand to my daughter, and have been seeing to my own business ever since. By the way, he made a very good thing of the case of assault and battery he brought against me."

"I suppose I shall have to get another deformity to attend to the estate, if I don't want another elopement."

And Mr. Smith walked up and down the room for awhile, and then suddenly turning upon Paddington, inquired:

"Why haven't you married before this?"

"Well, sir," said John, "unfortunately I have not felt that my pecuniary condition was such that I dared to marry. But if I secure this situation I will be in a position to take a wife."

"You must be married before I engage you," said Mr. Smith.

"Very well," said John. "If you will give me the promise of the stewardship on those conditions, I can show it to a young lady, who will, I think, be very willing to marry me at once, and I can come to you on Monday with a wife."

"Good," said Mr. Smith. "Pretty girl?"

"Beautiful," said John, "and I am madly in love with her."

Whereupon Mr. Smith seated himself at his desk, and wrote these words:

"I promise John Paddington that if he fulfils his promise of marrying at once, and brings me a wife on or before Monday, September 1st, I will engage him as steward of my estate, for a period of five years from date. (Signed)

"SAMUEL SMITH."

Armed with this document, John Paddington departed to see his fair one, and began to pace up and down the pavement on the opposite side of the way from the Church of St. Deborah.

At this moment the bells were ringing for afternoon service, and numbers of nice young ladies were hurrying up the street with demure countenances, holding prayer-books in their hands.

One, who was unusually pretty, and who was dressed with remarkable taste, looked coquettishly over her shoulder at John Paddington as she entered the door, and as he met her eyes, smiled upon him.

Instantly he crossed the street and followed her to a pew which she entered—one under the gallery at the darkest end of the left-hand side aisle.

The congregation had mostly gathered near the front of the church, and on this week-day afternoon was not large.

Service had not begun, and the young people had as good an opportunity to converse in whispers as they could have desired.

"You are prettier than ever, Edith," whispered John Paddington.

"And you are naughtier than ever," said the girl.

"I am more in love than ever," said John, "if that is being naughty. Now, Edith, we have had a long flirtation. I adore you, and I want you to be my wife. Can you answer me candidly 'Yes' or 'No'?"

The girl blushed, pouted, and finally said:

"Oh, I haven't the heart to say 'No.'"

"Then it is 'Yes'?" asked Paddington.

"I have only delayed because I had not the means of giving you such a home as you deserve. For a year we have met each other constantly. I have cared for no one else. I am sure of my own heart. Are you sure of yours?"

"Yes," said the girl, more seriously than before.

"Of late I have often wondered if in the end you would despise me for having made acquaintance so easily. I have been wrong, I know."

"If it had been anyone else it would have been very wrong," said John, with more romance than logic; "but, you see, our hearts met at first sight. You never flirt with any other fellow, I am sure."

"Miss Edith only replied:

"Not since I knew you, John."

And now the service commenced, and the two were obliged to be silent until its conclusion; then they walked down the steps and away together.

"I have so much to tell you, Edith," said

John. "I want you to be very brave and very good. I want you to marry me tomorrow, dear."

"Oh!" cried Edith, "tomorrow? But why in such haste, John?"

"My position depends upon my being a married man," said John. "I shall have a nice little house of my own, a contract for a good salary for five years, and you will be very comfortable. Here is a paper the old gentleman signed, promising all that to me if I married before Monday."

"What an odd idea!" said Edith.

"Well, he has reasons," said John. "See, here is his promise on those conditions. And he is a solid old gentleman; has a nice estate, and lives in a very elegant residence. By the way, oddly enough, his name is Smith, the same as yours, my dear."

"Samuel Smith," she read aloud, and then laughed. "And what are you to do for him, John?" she asked.

"I am to have the stewardship of his estate," he answered. "Now I'll tell you, dear, what it is all about. He has had trouble with his daughters. One eloped with his coachman, and one with his gardener. He thinks a bachelor unsafe to have about, and that is why we must marry at once."

Edith laughed again.

"Well, in that case I'll marry you in this dress," she said, "and tomorrow, if you like."

"But, of course," said John. "I must ask your father first. I don't want to be dishonorable. As you are of age—"

"Twenty-two," said Edith.

"As you are of age," John continued, "I shall marry you whether or no, but I wish to be respectful."

Suddenly Edith became grave.

"John," she said, "I know papa better than you do: it would be of no use. We will marry and tell him afterwards, and avoid a scene; he generally submits to the inevitable. I will meet you where you please tomorrow morning, and you can take the certificate to Mr. Samuel Smith and secure the position. Go to your home on Monday and I will meet you there, and later we will tell papa."

"As you please," John answered, wondering what sort of a father Edith could have, and dreading that he was probably someone of whom she was ashamed. However, if his darling's relatives were beneath contempt, that would not change his feelings towards her, and he felt himself quite able to keep them from invading his little home if they were inclined to do so in the slightest degree, or should they prove objectionable.

It was a strange sort of thing, he felt, to marry a girl of whose antecedents he knew nothing; his friends would call him mad if they knew it. But then they shall not know, and with this he flung his doubts to the winds for ever, and, to cut a long story short, married Edith Smith on the following morning. And having given her the address of the little cottage which they were to occupy (Mr. Samuel Smith's estate was well in the suburbs), they parted with a kiss.

"I will be at our cottage by two o'clock, John," Edith said. "Have the papers signed so that there can be no backing out on Mr. Smith's part."

When John presented himself in Mr. Smith's study on Monday, announcing his marriage and proving it by the exhibition of the certificate, Mr. Smith was very cordial.

"Curiously enough, your bride has one of our family names," he said. "Edith is my daughter's name, was my mother's, and her grandmother's. Well, I congratulate you, and here are the papers. We will sign at once, if you please. The more I see of you, Mr. Paddington, the more I like you. I've no doubt that your wife will be a prudent little matron, who will set a good example to my wild little witch of a daughter, and will be good enough to watch over her a little."

The signatures were appended to papers already made out by a lawyer, and Mr. Smith held out his hand to John.

"Now I shall have a vacation," he said, "and no doubt my affairs will prosper in your hands, Mr. Paddington. I'm a very poor man of business myself."

"And Mr. Paddington is a good one," said a voice behind him.

John turned and saw his wife near them. She was in home dress and without a bonnet. He was startled, almost shocked. It was not at all nice; in fact, it was bold and forward to make such an entrance to speak so familiarly to Mr. Smith. He hesitated to check her.

"You forgot that I have not introduced you to Mr. Smith, my dear," he said. "This is Mrs. Paddington, sir."

"Where?" asked Mr. Smith, looking about him. "Mrs. Paddington? I don't see her. This is my daughter, Miss Edith, sir. Now, my dear, are you playing some joke, hiding Mrs. Paddington somewhere?"

"This is my wife, Mr. Smith," said John Paddington, wondering if Mr. Smith were out of his mind.

"Sir, this is my daughter!" said Mr. Smith, lifting his voice.

"That is true, papa," said Edith, "but I am his wife also. You ordered him to be married, and he married me. He hadn't an idea who I really was, though we've known each other for a year. Smith is such a common name, and it is all my fault. I thought I'd vary the programme a little, and not elope as my sisters did."

"Good heavens!" cried John Paddington, sinking into a chair. "Edith, you know that I implored you to let me ask your father's consent. I never guessed that I knew him; I believed him some worthless old man of whom you were ashamed. I had no idea—"

Here, confused and mortified, he paused for words; but Samuel Smith, having regarded him for a moment, held out his hand.

"John Paddington," he said, "I hold you guiltless. As for that—that—"

"Don't call me names, papa," said Edith. "You know you like John very much, and he won't want you to settle money on him, and he'll be a splendid steward. Kiss me, and forgive me."

"I always was a weak fool," said Mr. Smith.

But he kissed her. And today the coachman son-in-law, and the gardener son-in-law, complain very bitterly that Mr. Samuel Smith shows great favoritism to the son-in-law who is a steward, and Edith says with an air of great propriety: "You see, that is because John did not elope with me."

PERFECTLY RECKLESS.

The Old Gentleman's Extravagance Greatly Troubled His Good Wife.

A round-faced, apple-cheeked and pleasant-looking little old man sat by the side of his rather acrid looking and elderly wife on the way home from an excursion trip or, as the old man called it, "a little excursion too."

He was full of delightful memories of all he had seen and heard, but his wife looked sad and unsympathetic. Presently the old man pulled out a little old buckskin bag and shook a silver dime and a nickel out of it.

"There, Ar'minty," he said to his wife as he held out the money on the palm of his hand, "there's all that's left out of a two dollar bill I tuk fer spendin' money."

"I know it, Nathan, and I think it's terrible," replied his wife.

"Shucks! I don't. I b'lieve in havin' a good time when you set out to."

"We could have had a good time 'thout wastin' all that money."

"Wastin' it? Shucks! Haint it right fer a feller to hev a little enjoyment out of this life?"

"One kin have enjoyment 'thout committin' all sorts o' sinful extravagance. It just makes me sick to think o' how you've flung money 'round today."

"What'd I git that was so dreadful extravagant?"

"Well, you went beyond all reason in ev'rything. What airly need was there of ye buyin' sody water twice?"

"Cause I wanted it twice."

"Oh, yes; you allus was one to pamper the flesh. An' what airly need had we o' that ten cents worth o' bolony sossage? Five cents worth would o' been a plenty."

"We eat all just the same."

"Et it? Of course we et it; you reckon I was goin' to add waste to extravagance by throwin' any of it away? An' what had we o' them sweet crackers when we'd tuk along more good bread an' butter an' pie than could eat?"

"I think sweet crackers go mighty good once in awhile."

"Well, we aint made o' money to spend on high livin', no matter what's good. An' look at them peanuts you went an' bought. Half o' 'em was bad. Peanuts air on-healthy things, anyhow."

"Then you'd ort to be glad that half o' 'em was too bad for us to eat."

"They cost five cents, all the same. An' here I been chilly an' mizzable all day on 'count o' that ice cream I did my best to keep you from orderin'! I knowed it wouldn't agree with my stummick."

"You oughtn't to let it then."

"I had to eat it after you'd went and wasted good money for it. It just seemed as though you was bound and determined to fling money away today; you acted like you was a millionaire. I declare if you didn't, Nathan Sipes."—*Detroit Free Press.*

Jumping at Conclusions.

Write (to husband, who has just returned home): "What's the news from town?"

Husband: "Nothing."

Of course not. Oh, well, there is never any news for a woman unless she finds it out for herself."

After a long silence the husband breaks in with: "It does seem to me that people ought to be more careful."

"What about?"

"I was thinking of something that occurred last night. Jack Baxter and his family sat out in the garden until quite late, and when Baxter got up and went into his room he had not noticed that his prinkish little son had slipped away. Just as Baxter stepped into his room he heard something under the bed—in fact, saw something—and thinking that a robber had secreted himself there, he seized a pistol and fired under the bed, and—"

"Merciful goodness! and shot his little son?"

"Who said he shot his son?"

"You said his son went under the bed."

"I didn't."

"What did you say?"

"I said that he did not notice his son when he went into the room."

"And wasn't the boy under the bed?"

"No; a cat was under the bed."

"You are the most hateful man I ever saw."

"Why so? Just because the boy did not go under the bed and get shot? I had nothing to do with it, I assure you."

Why He Wanted the Baker.

A well known baker in Belfast, nearly all his assistants being down with the influenza, engaged a few new "hands" to do the work.

One of these recruits, who was rather thick-headed, had a lunatic asylum in his mind of daily visits.

One morning while standing at the hall door of this institution, he observed a man gazing at him very intently; so, being of a rather nervous disposition, he thought it best to return to his cart, which was standing at the gate-house a few hundred yards distant. The lunatic, for such he was, walked after him.

The man, observing this, and being now thoroughly frightened, started to run. The lunatic did likewise, and being more fleet of foot, steadily gained on him.

Seeing that he could not reach the gate-house first, the baker's man thought it would be a good plan to scale the wall surrounding the grounds, and, suiting the

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Extracts from Letters:

One says:—"I would not be without your Wine of Rennet in the house for double its price. I can make a delicious dessert for my husband, which he enjoys after dinner, and which I believe has at the same time cured his dyspepsia."

Another says:—"Nothing makes one's dinner pass off more pleasantly than to have nice little dishes which are easily digested. Eagar's Wine of Rennet has enabled my cook to put three extra dishes on the table with which I puzzle my friends."

Another says:—"I am a hearty eater, but as my work is mostly mental, and as I find it impossible to take muscular exercise, I naturally suffer distress after a heavy dinner; but since Mrs. — has been giving me a dish made from your Wine of Rennet over which she puts sometimes one, sometimes another sauce, I do not suffer at all, and I am almost inclined to give your Rennet the credit for it, and I must say for it that it is simply GORGEOUS as a dessert!"

Another says:—"I have used your Wine of Rennet for my children and find it to be the only preparation which will keep them in health. I have also sent it to friends in Baltimore, and they say that it enables their children to digest their food, and save them from those summer stomach troubles so prevalent and fatal in that climate."

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