A Novel Wedding

Jean Barrie and Helen Arnold threw themselves down on the grass, under an old apple tree, in the orchard, to think of some plan by which to break the monotony of their country life.

Jean's father was a farmer of moderate means. Her mother was dead, since, her three sisters were married, Jean, who was the youngest, remained home and acted as housekeeper for her father and two brothers.

Helen Arnold was Jean's bosom friend, who spent several weeks every summer at the Barrie farm.

This morning the two girls sought the shade of the apple trees to keep them cool, while they searched their brains for some new recreation.

"There's no use waiting for something to turn up any longer," said Jean, "two weeks have gone since you came and not a thing has happened to remember your visit by. Now last year we had our masquerade, and dear old Fido died, and then we kept that old tramp one night, don't you remember you said we might be entertaining an angel unawares."

"Well, I would rather nothing would happen than have another old tramp come along, and we could not spare anything off of the farm to die, not even your kitten, for if you are to be an old maid, of course you must have a cat," said Helen.

"Oh! I have it," exclaimed Jean, "we'll have a wedding; not a commonplace affair, a real novelty, you know, one that will make old Mrs. Jones talk for a year, for we'll send her the first invitation, and her Sary the second one."

"A wedding," said Helen, "how can we? Who will be the bride, and where is the bridegroom. Now, look here, Jean; you are always getting us into some scrape, and if this is just a trick, I'll——"

"Don't make any objections now, nor ask too many questions," interrupted Jean. "You just follow my instructions and we will have some fun. Now, first of all, we must get out the invitations. We'll have to write them ourselves, and we must post them before the mail goes out this afternoon."

So the girls returned to the house and were soon hard at work writing out the invitations.

After dinner, when the men had gone back to the hay field, and the dinner work had been done up, Jean and Helen started for the postoffice.

When Jean emptied twenty-five letters from her shopping bag out on the counter, Mrs. Dean, the post-mistress asked, "Goin' to give another party, Jean? I thought you'd be givin' one before your friend went home."

"I'm just going to entertain a few of my friends," answered Jean, who was not anxious to give any more information than she could help

"Why, ain't you goin' to ask any boys to your party, Jean?" added Mrs. Dean, noticing the letters were all addressed to ladies.

But Jean evaded this question and said, "Good-bye, Mrs. Dean, I'm glad we were in time for the mail, for we want those letters to go as soon as possible."

When the contents of the Centreville mail of that afternoon had reached its destination, there were puzzled heads in more than one home. When Sara Jones received her invitation she said, "Why, this is Jean Barrie's writing; it must be an invitation to a party, but it's addressed to you and I both, mother!"

"Why, bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones, "What can the child want me to her party for, it must be a carpet-rag bee."

"Its an invitation to a wedding—Jean's going to be married," added the astonished Sara.

"Goodness gracious, Sary! you must be mistaken, Jean Barrie will never get married while her father needs her. Why, she won't even look at a boy. See how she turned up her nose even at our Johnny, and he a-goin' to be one of the best farmers around Centreville, and get a hundred acres of land to start with; and I'm going to give 'im that Jersey calf if she lives, and two feather beds, and a patch-work quilt," exclaimed Mrs. Jones in one breath.

"But who's she a goin' to be married to?" Mrs. Jones continued, "I didn't know as she'd done any courtin'. Let me see the invitation, Sary. Now likely that's the reason that friend of her's is stayin' there so long. I saw them looking at some calico down at the store the other day, and Jean said she wanted it to line some quilts with, and I wondered why she was makin' quilts this time of year when the fruit season is just here."

By this time Mrs. Jones had adjusted spectacles and was scanning the daintily written note.

"Now, that's strange," she said, "it don't say who she's to be married to. Sary, that don't read like the invitation your pa's brother William sent to us when his Mary Jane was going to get married, and your pa's brother William's invitation wasn't done in writin'. 'Pears to me if I was gettin' up an invitation I wouldn't get it up like that, and I'd have it printed in town instead of writin' it. Well, Sary, we'll go, I feel kind of curies about it, anyway."

"It's queer now they didn't ask James and our Johnny," added Mrs. Jones after pausing a few minutes, "and our Johnny has always been so mannerly towards Jean. Well, we'll go, Sary. I'm glad she told us in the invitation she'd take no presents."

While Mrs. Jones was thus commenting on her invitation to Jean's wedding, Miss Beatrice Gardener, a friend of Helen's and Jean's in a neighboring village was equally suprised over the invitation she had received.

"That's just like Jean; she never does things like anyone else," said Beatrice. "But the idea of a wedding invitation without the name of the groom! And there are to be no presents. Jean always said she would not accept presents if she had a wedding—but she always said she was never going to get married. Girls always say that until they get a good chance, I wonder why she did not invite brother Ned; she surely cannot expect me to go alone. But I've known Jean long enough I ought not to be surprised at anything she does, and I'll go if I have to go alone on my wheel."

In another not very distant village Mrs. Harry Randolph, the leader of society in her neighborhood, sat reading her invitation when her husband came in.

"Harry, here is the queerest wedding invitation I have ever seen; Jean Barrie is to be married, and the name of the groom is not given, and you are not invited."

"It's strange she has asked one of us and not the other," said Harry. "She must have known you could not go alone. I thought she was the girl who was never going to get married."

"Oh," said Mrs. Randolph, "girls are always changing their minds, but I'll go, for there's a mystery about this invitation that interests me, and I can drive myself, anyway."

While these invitations were thus stirring up the curiosity in the several homes until it was bubbling and boiling impatient for the eventful day to arrive, Helen and Jean were hustling around at home getting everything in readiness. Jean, after persuading her father and brothers to vow secrecy, told them all about her plans, and soon had them coaxed into her service. Her father looked after getting a turkey ready for her, and both the boys promised to be near where they could assist the guests from their carriages when they arrived, and look after the horses.

When Wednesday arrived the girls were too busy to talk much, for "everything must be in readiness by two o'clock," they said.

The men came from the hay-field for an early dinner, and by twelve o'clock had gone back, leaving the girls alone.

"I wish Jessie had come this morning," said Jean.

Jessie was one of Jean's married sisters, who was always ready to help when there was a prospect of fun

"Well, here she is now," called a cheery voice at the door.

"Oh, Jess," cried the girls, "we're so glad you've come. We're in such a hurry to get the tables ready and get ourselves dressed, and Mrs. Jones might come any time now. She always makes a point of being an hour and fifty minutes ahead of time."

So the girls talked and worked and were just putting on the finishing touches when Jean, looking down the road, saw Mrs. Jones and "her Sary" coming.

"Here comes Mrs. Jones, with her white apron on, and with a market basket on her arm," she said.

Then the three girls fled to Jean's room, where their costumes were all ready for them; and while they were dressing the remainder of the guests arrived. They came on bicycles, dog-carts, in spring wagons and on foot. Tom and Fred waited at the front gate to take care of the horses, and when the last one had arrived they disappeared and returned to the hay-field to resume their work. When the guests were all seated in the parlor, Mrs. Jones, who was sitting next to Mrs. Harry Randolph, after having sufficiently scanned her neighbor, ventured to ask if she could tell her the name of the groom, for she could not just call it to mind; but Mrs. Randolph had also very singularly forgotten his name.

"I think I saw him this forenoon," added Mrs. Jones. "There was a tall citified looking young feller passed by our house this morning, and I says to Sary, "that's him.' I could just tell by the looks of him, and he was going toward Barrie's. I don't think he would make as good a farmer as my Johnny. He kind of looked to me as if he might be a clerk in a store."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Randolph, who, not knowing Mr. Jones possessed a wonderful power of imagination, supposed this was a faithful description of Jean's choice, and did not hesitate to inform Miss Beatrice Gardener that she had just heard Jean was going to marry a tall, slim young man, who was a clerk in one of the large stores in town. Beatrice in her turn told it to her neighbor, and by the time it had come round to Mrs. Jones again, Jean's young man had become a tall, slim, dark-complexioned young fellow, who was a partner in a large dry-goods establishment in a not-far-disant city; so that until the appointed hour arrived the guests were waiting almost breathlessly for the entrance of the bridal-party. Only Mrs. Jones dared break the silence

"Now, its strange," she said, "there ain't no men-folks come. My Sary wouldn't think of having a wedding without no men-folks. I feel just as if this ought to be a carpet-rag-bee or a quiltin'. Say, did you bring a present, Mrs. Randolph?" queried Mrs. Jones.

"No," answered her neighbor, "you know presents are not to be accepted."

"Well, I brought her a jar of pickles," added Mrs. Jones. "I was doin' some down in a brass kettle one day—my mother used to own the kettle. She got it from Uncle Josier when Aunt Marthy died, and say, you ought to see what a purty green that kettle made them pickles; and pickles will come in handy to Jean when she commences housekeeping. Of course if she hadn't said she didn't want no presents we would have brought some silverware. I kind o' thought I'd have brought a cruet set, but my Sary, she thought a silver cake basket is awful nice."

But while Mrs. Jones is thus entertaining her neighbors, look in Jean's room and behold the bride, groom and clergyman ready to descend to the parlor. Jean is robed in a green and white plaid silk that her grandmother used to wear; Helen, with her long brown locks concealed under a wig made of sheep-skin, has on Mr. Barrie's long double-breasted coat, and a pair of Jean's bicycle bloomers, while Jessie, who is to act as clergyman is clad in a long white gown. When all were ready another of Jean's sisters seated herself at the piano and just as she commenced playing a wedding march the bride, groom, and clergyman entered the room, marched slowly to one corner where an arch of evergreens had been made, and there they took their stand.

"Bless me," was all Mrs. Jones said.

Mrs. Randolph and several others laughed. Mrs. Jones' Sary looked stupified. Mrs. Dean looked like the victim of a dupe.

Then the clergyman proceeded with a serio-comic ceremony of her own composition, and after pronouncing the contracting parties bound together she turned to the guests and asked them to postpone their good wishes and congratulations until some future day, and proceeded immediately to the dining-room, and the three girls leading the way, the guests all followed to where the dainty repast was awaiting them.

Much merriment was indulged in during the meal, after which Jean, Helen and Jess slipped away to don their ordinary apparel, and, returning, set to work to entertain their guests. The afternoon slipped quickly away for all but Mrs. Jones. The joke went hard with her. Early in the afternoon she went in quest of her jar of pickles and her Sary and together they beat a hasty retreat, Mrs. Jones saying to herself as she passed through the gate, "Well, I be an' ole fool anyway."

—Inez Turner.

Bealton, Ont.

EARTH'S MILLIONS.

A Universal Census to Be Taken for the First Time.

The enormous difficulty of taking the census of the world's inhabitants, which it is proposed to publish at Berne in 1901, becomes apparent when one considers that at least two-thirds and, perhaps, three-quarters of the inhabitants of our planet dwell in lands none of which has yet been civilized, and many of which still remain in a condition of savagery. Yet the purpose is as far as possible, to include in the enumeration every human being on whom the sun rises on a particular day in the year 1900. Explorers and census takers are to be sent to every available point on the globe for the purpose. Such is the scheme. It looks impracticable. An attempt has recently been made to take a complete census of Russia, and this will aid the new undertaking immensely. During his tour in Europe Li Hung Chang became interested in the proposed census of the world, and it is asserted, promised his co operation and assistance in the work.

China forms the greatest factor of uncertainty in estimating the population of the globe. Estimates of the number of inhabitants of China vary sometimes by one or two hundred millions and even the population of the chief cities can only be guessed at. So, too, Africa presents an enormous field of mysteries and difficulties. Estimates of its total population are constantly varying because explorers frequently come upon knots and centers of population the real extent of which is unknown. The most careful statisticians admit that their estimates of the population of Africa may be as much as 50,000,000 out of it. West of India are the vast lands that Alexander overran in his conquest—Afghanistan, Persia and Turkey in Asia. How many scores of millions or even hundreds of millions may they not contain? Many of the uplands of Persia are practically unknown to the civilized world, but they can support a great population. No one knows how many people Arabia contains.

No one knows how many Esquimaux there are dwelling in the lands of eternal ice that encircle the north pole; many of the islands of the vast Pacific swarm with inhabitants living on the open bounty of nature, whose free and careless life has captivated the imagination of highly cultivated men like Robert Louis Stevenson, and when the census is completed, if it proves practicable what will it probably show the total population of the globe to be?

LOCOMOTIVE SEARCH-LIGHTS.

The arc light is being tried in locomotive headlights. This constitutes a true search-light. On one road in the West the current is derived from a dynamo which is actuated by a steam turbine. It is thought that the power-er light may be utilized as a means of signalling from the engine to stations far in advance.

A SACRED CONCERT.

Mrs. Billson, Sunday evening—Can't you go into prayer meeting with me tonight?

Mr. Billson—Impossible, my dear. I promised Jimson that I would go with him to a sacred concert.

Well, I'll go there with you.

Um—I believe ladies are not admitted.

LIGHTNING RODS.

A lightning specialist maintains that rods are no protection, and that most precautions taken by people to keep out of the path of a possible electrical discharge are useless. The recent wonderful discoveries in relation to the nature of electrical force prove the worthlessness of the lightning rod, but offer nothing toward disarming the thunderbolt.

"IT IS AN EARTHQUAKE."

A SUNKEN CITY OVER WHOSE SPIRES WAR SHIPS FLOAT.

For Two Centuries Port Royal Has Slumbered Beneath the Blue Caribbean, Yet Even Now In Calm Weather Her Submerged Buildings May Be Seen in the Crystal Depth.

There is little of poetry in war. The gentle muses wing their flight before the deafening roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry. The newspaper correspondents in Southern waters are too busy with the stern realities which confront them to pay much heed to beauties which under other circumstances might inspire them to dainty bits of descriptive writing.

To illustrate my point we shall quote from a despatch dated from Kingston, Jamaica. "For two days," writes this correspondent, "our despatch boat has been lying here in the beautiful harbor of Kingston. Under the clear blue water a few fathoms beneath her keel sleeps the sunken city of Port Royal. Not a stone's throw from our boat a red buoy swings and rocks in the moonlight. It marks the spot where the old city's cathedral sank and where the spire still reaches up nearly to the surface."

That was all. That was the only reference to a subject rich in historical lore and the possibilities of unwritten romance. How little is known of the mysterious city beneath the waves of Kingston harbor, a city which at once suggests the hidden wonders of fabled Atlantis, which Jules Verne has described with such a wealth of imagery in his "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea." But Atlantis was probably a myth, while Port Royal is not.

The traveller who visits the capital of Jamaica should pray for clear weather, without wind. When the water of the harbor is ruffled by breezes the hidden city is obscured from view. But on a cloudless, still day, when the surface of the sea is perfectly smooth, the ruins of

THE PHANTOM CITY

may be plainly seen in the depths of the transparent water.

The spire of the old cathedral is the most prominent object. In the clear water you can see the fishes, lazily swimming in and out among the ruined turrets, more suggestive of owls and bats than of the finny inhabitants of the sea. Occasionally glimpses can be had of the ruins of other buildings—buildings which for more than two centuries have kept their ghastly secrets and will keep them until the end of time.

Down there, in that peaceful depth, lie the bones of three thousand men, women and children, carried down into the sea with their homes on that awful June day in 1692. An earthquake, suddenly and without warning, smote the profligate city of Port Royal, which slid into the sea. The waters opened and swallowed it up, and there beneath the silent waves was hidden the wickedness and debauchery of a community described by historians as being almost without parallel.

The survivors said it was the vengeance of God, and likened it to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And in very truth the history of the city seems to show the unceasing wrath of divine power. From the richest city of its time it has dwindled into insignificance, until now it is a most wretched place, used only as a naval station. Disaster after disaster has overtaken it.

After the earthquake the town was rebuilt, only to be completely destroyed by fire in 1703. On August 22, 1722, it was swept into the sea by a hurricane. It was once more reconstructed, but again, in 1815, it was reduced to ashes, and as recently as 1880 it was visited by another hurricane. Every disaster was attended by

GREAT LOSS OF LIFE.

The city of Port Royal was originally built upon a narrow strip of land extending out into the sea, which accounts for its strange disappearance at the time of the earthquake. Like the house of the foolish man of Biblical lore which was builded upon the sand, it literally slid into the water when the earthquake shock came.

Previous to that fateful seventh day of June, 1692, Port Royal had been known as "the finest town in the world." It was, as it now is, a British colony, but there was little either in its government or its customs of British morality. We are told that it was a place of luxurious debauchery; that in their excesses the colonists rivalled the profligates of ancient Rome.

Buccaneering and piracy were recognized industries. The treasure ships of Spain were legitimate prey. The riches of Mexico and Peru were levied upon and the people of Jamaica were literally rolling in wealth and splendor. Vice and debauchery held sway. Bacchanalian revels which might put to Roden's, whither I was invited, whose of nightly occurrence. There was no virtue.

And like the crack of doom came the earthquake. The thunder of the elements sounded in the ears of the heedless revellers. The earth opened in great fissures, and closed again like the jaws of a mighty trap. And in closing it gripped many of its victims in the middle, leaving their hands above ground. Then came the awful sliding, grinding noise, as the city, built upon its foundation of sand, sank into the caressing embrace of the sea, which forever closed upon its wickedness and will forever keep its dread secrets.

The shock came close on to midday. The air was hot and sultry. The sky was without a cloud. A great stillness seemed to hover over the city, and then, without warning,

THE EARTH TREMBLED.

Men and women left their houses and ran into the streets, only to meet death in the bowels of the earth or in the hidden recesses of the sea.

In his "Annals of Jamaica," published in 1828, Rev. George Wilson Bridges quotes from a letter written by one of the survivors—a rector—two or three days after the disaster, which is, in part, as follows:—

"After I had been at church reading, which I did every day since I was rector of this place, to keep up some show of religion, and was gone to a place hard by the church where the merchants meet and where the President of the Council was, who came into my company and engaged me to take a glass of wormwood wine as a whet before dinner, he being my very good friend, I stayed with him, upon which he lighted a pipe of tobacco, which he was pretty long in taking, and not being willing to leave him before it was out, this determined me from going to dinner to one Captain Roden's, whither I was invited, whose house, upon the first concussion, sunk into the earth and then into the sea, with his wife and family, and some that were come to dine with him. Had I been there I had been lost. But to return to the President and his pipe of tobacco; before that was out I found the ground rolling and moving under my feet, upon which I said unto him, "Lord, sir, what is that?' He replied, being a very grave man, 'It is an earthquake. Be not afraid; it will soon be over.'"

Despite the President's assurance, he disappeared, and was never heard of again. Continuing, the rector wrote: "I made toward Morgan's Fort, because I thought to be there securest from falling houses, but as I was going I saw the earth open and swallow up a multitude of people, and the sea mounting in upon them over the fortifications. Moreover, the large and famous burying ground was destroyed, and the sea washed away the carcases. The harbor was covered with dead bodies, floating up and down."

THE PHONOGRAPHIC CLOCK.

Evils and Benefits of an Invention Just Put on the Market in Germany.

Some modern inventions are a boon to humanity and others are not. The phonographic clock which has just been launched upon the market in Germany belongs to the latter category. One must admit the alarm clock in the theory of modern life, but a phonographic clock adds insult to injury. If one must be wakened, one must; but how can one turn over and take the final luxurious forty winks when the depressing programme of a busy day has been shouted into one's ears? Things that seemed natural and practicable the night before present an appalling front in the early morning; and the breakfast hour, announced in strident tones, is much more insistent than when suggested by an impersonal metallic clang.

Some valuable possibilities the new invention does possess. The housewife needn't laboriously explain breakfast details to the servants at night, and find the next morning that all important points have been conscientiously forgotten. She sets the phonographic alarm for an early hour, talks directions into it, and the next morning the cook is wakened by a stern voice telling her exactly what is expected of her in regard to breakfast preparation.

Paterfamilias, too, can work the combination. No more will he sit up until his pretty daughter's caller goes home and resort to time-honored hints to hasten the departure. He will not slam shutters and noisily lock doors and bid the other members of the family good night at the top of his voice and drop his shoes on the bedroom floor with a force that shakes the parlor chandeliers, and call down to the daughter that she must be careful about turning off the gas and locking the door. He will never be goaded by a sense of parental duty into walking into the parlor and making a scene and reducing the daughter to a point of tears. Oh, no; he will simply set the phonographic alarm for the hour when he thinks young men should end their calls. Then he will go serenely to bed; and when the fatal hour strike a specimen of the old gentlemen's finest irony will be hurled at the offending guest. Exit young man. The maiden wrathfully weeps alone.

A Cleveland girl had a quarrel with the young man to whom she was engaged. Now, when they pass each other in the street, he stares at her with an expressionless, glassy eye. And no wonder; for when he sent a request for the return of his engagement ring, she forwarded it to him, with a card bearing these words: "Glass—with care.'

A telegram from Vienna, received at the suburban residence of Count de Waldeck, informed him that it was the intention of two burglars, pretending to be insurance agents, to call on him. The police received the visitors, and they were imprisoned. They were really insurance agents, representing a New York company. The telegram was a trick of a rival company.

A GENTLE HINT.

He—Your sweet face is my book of life. I swear it.

She—But your oath is not valid until you have kissed the book.