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The Marrying Parson

By HELEN SHERMAN GRIFFITH.

II.

"Come down!" she ex-
"Are you coming?"

"Hush!" Randall thrust
door to investigate.
"Is a town?" asked Hope,
shudder. "Oh, how
It must be nearly

in a freight yard;
a town, though;" there
dim light twinkling
"The rain has stop-
With a jerk, the
train came to a standstill. "Let's get
out before my freight hands come
I'll get down first and help
you. Can you hold the bag?"

Responding to the word and
action, they were on solid
ground amid scurrying and tumbling
shadows. They emerged at
what appeared to be a
long, quaint village street, bordered
by houses. Outlines of houses loom-
ed on either side.

"It must be very late," Hope fret-
ted. "How can we have the face to
wake anybody!"

"Guess they're used to being in
this village people so, you
know. Why, there's a light at the back
of that house. Somebody's awake
there, anyhow. We'll try."

Randall opened a gate and led the
way across a straight path. As
he came to find the bell,
Hope caught glimpse of the darkened
front of an unpretentious cottage. In
response to Randall's ring an upstairs
window opened and a man's voice,
more sympathetic, hailed them.

"Who's there? What do you want?"

"We want to know—that is, this young lady and I—a runaway
match—we want a good listening
to—can we, I'm asking?" To Hope
he added in an undertone, "I can't
stand this kind of excuse that we
were delayed by the freight train.
It's too ridiculous. What shall
I say?"

But before Hope was begin-
ning to answer the voice called down:

"Wait a bit. I see. I'll be right down.
Just open the gate, please, until
I get to the door."

Hope's speedily short time the
lights were withdrawn, and the door
opened. Standing in its hospitable
breadth, holding an old-fashioned lamp
high above his head, was a kind-faced,
stoop-shouldered man, wearing a
shabby brown velveteen house jacket
and a small cap. Behind him were
grouped a comfortably stout, smiling
woman and a very sleepy little girl,
the last being the only one of the
three to betray a hasty toilet.

"Come right in, come right in," said
the man heartily. "Here's mother to
look after the young lady. Be ye wet?
It was a fine night hard."

He bustled into a small parlor, set
down the lamp and pushed forward
two chairs. His wife disappeared into
a back room, whence other lights ap-
peared and the homey sound of a
stove being shaken down. The little
girl perched herself on a chair near
the door and stared unblinkingly at
Hope and Randall.

"We don't wish to give you so much
trouble, sir," Randall began apolo-
getically, but the man checked him
with a kindly wave of the hand.

"Glad to do it for you, my boy; only
glad. Have you come far?"

"We don't know," Randall answer-
ed unthinkingly when Hope threw
him a warning glance. "That is—a
pretty good distance."

"Hum—I see," replied their host
with a twinkle. "Excuse me a mo-
ment"; and he bustled out of the room.

"However can we tell him—" Hope
checked herself with a glance at the
small girl, whose presence she had
forgotten.

"Of course the truth is going to
sound silly," Randall whispered, "but
when he comes in I'm going to make
a clean breast of it." Then he raised
his voice. "Little girl, can you tell
us how far it is from here to Mt.
Altemus?"

The child yawned. "Did you only
come from there?" she asked disap-
pointedly. "You'd better hurry up
then, dad," she called in a shrill voice,
"you haven't much time. The follow-
ers'll be right along."

Hope and Randall stared at the
child and then at each other, mystified.
Had it leaked out, somehow, that they
had stolen a ride on the freight
train?

"I'm coming," sounded the man's
voice from the next room. "Mother,
can you leave the kettle?" He enter-
ed as he spoke. "Mother'll be right
in; we need her for a second. We must
have everything correct, mustn't we?"

"I suppose so," replied Randall in
a puzzled voice. "But we—"

"Ah, here she is. Now, do you
mind standing over here, under the
light?" He took up a small book and
turned over the pages. "What are your
names?"

"Oh, our names, of course. I should
have mentioned mine in the begin-
ning," apologized Randall, rising and
crossing the room. Hope followed,
wondering.

"I am John Randall, of Springfield.
This young lady is Miss Hope Win-
throp, of Boston. We are stopping at
the Broadview Hotel, Mt. Altemus, and
this afternoon we—we—"

"Yes?" queried their host with a
twinkle in his eye, as Randall paused.
"Hush, Mattie!" to the small girl who
was pulling his coat-tail, "that auto-
mobile did not stop. Nevertheless,
we'll begin if you are ready. Mattie
is always stirring up sensations, but
we've never been stopped yet. Miss
Winthrop, will you stand here, please?
Now, sir, can you tell me whether
there is any just cause why you and
this young lady should not be—"

Hope, suddenly comprehending,
screamed. Randall turned to her re-
assuringly.

"We might as well tell," he said in
a low tone. "They will understand."

"Oh, don't you see—" began Hope,
in an agony of embarrassment.

"If there be an impediment," inter-
rupted their host sternly, "I must be
told frankly."

"Impediment?" repeated Randall
weakly. "I don't understand. The—
our—well, the manner of our—our ar-
riving here was so ludicrous, that
Miss Winthrop is afraid you'll laugh."

"No, no," interrupted Hope again
nervously. "I—he—oh, don't you see?
He wants—"

"I want nothing but the gentleman's
word," interposed their host gently.
"Now, if you please—"

"Oh, I'm afraid there is some mis-
take—" Hope murmured tremulously.
But the man began to read:

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered
here together in the sight of—"

"Oh, don't let him marry us!" sob-
bed Hope, and, turning, buried her
face in the ample bosom of the min-
ister's wife.

Randall and his host stared at each
other in amazement, but each for a
different reason.

"What—what do you think you're
doing, anyhow?" thundered Randall
at length, in exactly the tone he had
used on the moving freight train.

"Why—didn't you—I—surely I am
right in thinking you and the young
lady—" stammered the bewildered
minister. "They come here so often
—just that way—"

"Just what way?" Randall's tone
was less threatening.

"Why—at night—embarrassed—in
a hurry—like you—"

"Yes," chimed in the small girl un-
expectedly, "Dad's known all round
here as the 'marryin' parson,'" and
she beamed proudly upon her parent.

Hope sobbed out all the pent-up
emotions of the day, and the sound
of her sobbing hurt Randall.

"What a mess I've made of it,"
groaned Randall miserably. "The fact
is, sir, that I'd like nothing better
than—than to marry the young lady,
but we—a—well, you see, I—had not
got to that point, yet."

Hope stopped sobbing and Randall
feared an outburst of indignation. He
hurried on. "We had a misadventure
this afternoon, and stopped in here to
ask how to get back to Mt. Altemus."
And he told in as few words as pos-
sible what had occurred.

"We hadn't the remotest idea where
we were, or even the time of night,
but I was afraid you'd think me crazy
if I shouted that out to you while I
was outside.

"There, there," soothed the matron,
patting Hope's head. "There's not a
mite of harm done, dear. It's only
about nine o'clock and you can get
home before bedtime. We don't usu-
ally go to bed so early, but my hus-
band sat up all last night with a sick
parishioner."

"Mt. Altemus is only about forty
miles from here," the minister was
explaining to Randall. "Would you
like to telephone for a car? You could
make it by eleven."

"Oh, is there a car to be had?" ex-
claimed Randall eagerly, and followed
him from the room.

"If you'll excuse me, dearie. I'll
finish making that tea. Think of you
two not having had a bite to eat since
lunch! You must have felt like eat-
ing each other. Come, Mattie," and
the hospitable woman hurried into
the kitchen.

Randall returned in a moment, look-
ing intensely relieved to find Hope
alone. "Our host is telephoning," he
explained, crossing the room and
standing directly in front of her.
"Hope, you know, I am sure, that I
invited you to go for a walk with me
this afternoon to ask you to marry
me?"

"You are saying that out of pity,"
Hope accused him.

"But I am not! I—I was leading
up to it when that confounded thunder
storm broke. And then—well, hang
it, I couldn't propose in a freight car,
could I? Particularly after it got
going. I—I had to consider your
feelings."

"You were very considerate, but—"

"My dear, don't 'but' me," he inter-
posed earnestly. "I know it isn't—ah
—romantic or—or satisfactory—com-
ing like this, but please wait—at least
until to-morrow. You know I love you,
Hope, and I want you to be my wife.
I have wanted and hoped for it, for
months. Don't let a grotesque mix-up
spoil my life."

His manly, straightforward plead-
ing, and quiet ignoring of all embar-
rassment restored to Hope her dig-
nity. She hesitated and was lost—
or won.

"I've such a beautiful idea," she
whispered presently. "Let us have
this dear old minister marry us."

"Now? Bully!" Rapturously he
swept her into his arms.

"Heavens, no! A year from now,
maybe."

"Rubbish! And I may have to re-
turn to camp, any day."

"Ahem!" coughed a discreet voice
from the doorway. "I see I was not
so far out of the way, after all."

Randall held valiantly the position
he had won.

"Only two weeks out, sir," he
laughed, glancing from the shy, du-
bious face held against his breast, to
the kindly, understanding eyes of his
host. "Will you marry us in a fort-
night?"

(The End.)

Minard's Liniment Relieves Colds, Etc.

A Pumpkin-Time Bazaar.

Seven giant pumpkins set down in an autumn cornfield lighted by a harvest moon and a myriad of jack-o'-lanterns met your eye when you entered the hall where the bazaar was held. Upon closer inspection the huge pumpkins proved to be real booths in disguise.

In each case, a big wagon umbrella had been set up firmly, and from the top, laths or strips of woven wire had been extended out and down to the floor to make a curved framework. Lengths of orange cheesecloth were then sewed together to form the pumpkin rind, and gathered at the top around the umbrella ferule, which in turn was covered with green to represent the pumpkin stem. To it were wired one or two big green leaves cut from cambric or paper.

The front of each booth was left open, the orange curtains parting to show a counter on which the various wares were displayed. Kitchen tables or plain boards resting on uprights served as counters, with the lower part hidden by a short cheesecloth curtain.

The attendants all wore white, topped off with little green paper caps out of which wire handles stuck up straight to simulate jack-o'-lantern covers. The floor was strewn with corn husks, and cornstalks filled the corners and bare spaces.

Up in a far corner shone the harvest moon, a big circle of orange tissue paper stretched over a barrel hoop hung in front of a lighted lantern or an electric light.

The usual products of a country fair were on sale in enticing form. From the first booth waved a Union Jack, and under the sign "Soldiers' and Sailors' Comforts" were gathered gifts for the army and navy lads. Unfilled comfort bags and the articles of equipment for them, little jars of jam and marmalade, tin boxes of preserved ginger and flagroot, and packets of home-made candy were on sale.

In the second booth, fancy work and crocheted articles were assembled under the heading "Advance Christmas Presents."

The third booth contained aprons, holders, sweeping caps, and other household utilities; the fourth sold home-made candies; the fifth, canned fruits and vegetables; and the sixth, ice cream and sponge drops, to be eaten on the spot.

The seventh booth, which stood off by itself, was placarded as Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater's House. Instead of a counter it had, covering the entrance, a complete curtain, terrifying in its resemblance to a jack-o'-lantern's face.

Peter himself stood outside the door singsonging a variation of the well-known old rhyme to attract costumers:

Peter, Peter Pumpkin Eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her,
Put her in a pumpkin shell,
Where she tells fortunes very well.

Nearby Peter's House stood a wigwam of cornstalks which seemed to be the centre of a crop of baby pumpkins growing on trailing green vines among the corn. The Indian girl who lived in the wigwam readily picked a pumpkin and gave it to you on receipt of five cents. Thereupon you discovered that the pumpkin's orange crepe-paper skin covered a two-inch ball of cotton batting, which concealed a surprising little "grab."

A pieman with a big tray circulated among the crowd, hawking pumpkin pies—little saucer ones—at a nickel each.

An appropriate autumn entertainment could be given toward the end of such an evening, or on the second evening, if the fair lasted two days.

Marriage vs. a Career.

We had quite a discussion over it at the mother's club, whether a mother has a right to be continually "dinging" at her daughter not to get married, and what a dog's life a married woman has, and how tiresome housework is, and how greatly to be preferred to motherhood—and its attendant responsibilities—is a career. We met to discuss "Woman's Part in the World Re-making," and ended in almost coming to blows over woman's age-old job, having babies and bringing them up to become the best sort of citizens.

It was all started by the discontented woman with a fifteen-year-old daughter. There are some women who ought never to marry, or else ought to marry different men. When an aggressive, forward-looking woman who dislikes being tied to one spot, marries a mild, meek-mannered man, who is rooted to one job, one town and one house, and who in spite of his mild manners is extremely "set," you are bound to have a woman who thinks marriage is a failure. That's why this particular woman came out with:

"I toil Mary not to be fooled into getting married. The minute she does she'll be chained hand and foot, shut up in a kitchen nine-tenths of the time, and at least two-thirds of the time her wishes will be ignored. I'm going to see she is educated and fitted to earn a good living, and use all my influence to keep her from tying herself down to a home and a life of drudgery."

Now Mary is distinctly the marrying sort, more like dad than mother, a home-loving sort of girl, but immensely popular. She never has to worry for fear no boy will invite her to the class parties, her chief worry is to decide which one of them she'll honor. If she were left alone she'd grow up into a happy, contented woman, and take as keen a delight in cooking a family dinner and polishing the silver as her mother does in writing a brilliant club paper. Everyone in the club knew her mother's nagging was beginning to make a little impression on Mary, and this day her speech struck fire.

"O, I don't know," said the mother of six. "All women aren't unhappily married, and all professional women aren't happy. I'm sure I look as young as any business woman of my age, and my life is a good deal easier than any working girl's. Think of having to get up and drag off to work in all sorts of weather, no matter how you feel, and of keeping up to the mark for eight or nine hours. I can work hard a couple of hours, and then drop down for a rest. And I'm sure my wishes are always respected. I don't know as your boss ever asks you whether you like things done his way or not."

So the battle was on, and while arguments for and against were being advanced, I kept wondering if any mother has a right to give her daughter such a biased view of marriage. True, lots of marriages are failures, but that isn't the fault of the institution. It's the fault of the two parties entering into that particular contract. And when a woman is forever decrying marriage it sounds to outsiders like a confession of failure on her part. It's true, too, that a mother has to sacrifice no end of her own wishes to do her full duty by her children. But who is to say that if she carried out her own desires she would be any better off, or the world would be a whit improved thereby? Many a mother neglects her family because she thinks she has a higher duty to humanity in carrying on some pet scheme of her own. But humanity at large never knows that particular woman exists, and often the humanity she is trying to reach would be better satisfied if she'd let them alone and spend her energy in keeping her children mended up.

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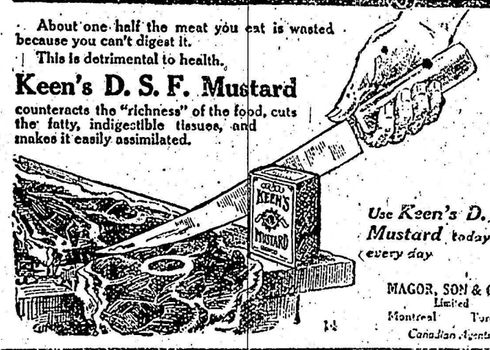

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Everyone who has an allotment knows what this weeding business means. We never seem to get rid of them. We grub up, and dig up, and hoe out continuously, and in the dark, while we sleep, up spring new weeds, strong, lusty, poisonous, and flower-destroying.

We must get rid of our character-weeds. What are the worst of them? Resentment is a big weed, extending not only to people but circumstances. Resentment cramps our energies and fills us with a bitter impatience. We must root it out, and plant tolerance and understanding in its place.

Attractive Bad Habits.

Indecision is this is a rather attractive-looking weed; but it leads to a life of idleness and want of purpose.

Fear, that is the most noxious of all weeds. It leads straight to utter ruin. It blossoms into the ugly flowers of meanness and cowardice and greed and crime. We fear poverty, and we become parsimonious. We fear ill-health, and we lose the health and energy we already possess. We fear everything, and yet a great man once said: "There is nothing to fear but fear."

It is hard to be certain that, if we have only face our terrors, they will fall before our eyes.

There are plenty of other weeds, such as anger and worry, and self-pity and envy. But we all know them. It is the constant pulling up of them that will weaken the garden that surrounds the building of our character.

I suppose we all have different ideas of what a great character means. Some of us think it means fame or personal success for world-creatives; for another. To me it means the power of transforming the events of daily life.

What is Character?

It does not mean the mere fact that we want to be known as people who are good, kind, honest, and have left half a million behind us when we say farewell to this world. It may be that we say, "Well, I trust that he was a good man." That is not your character. It is mine. It is a character that we have a man Love to speak of, either in life, if there is anybody to care, or in the hearts and memories of friends. Character is a candle.

God is love—that is the brightest of all gifts. Have we given love? Have we given some clothing? If not we have not erected an ugly, mean building. We shall probably have to pull it down somewhere later.

I believe one of the greatest mistakes we live in the idea that all our failures and mistakes are just part of your garden, which we have not yet begun to weed the weeds.

"It's As Easy to be Great as Small."

Don't bother too much about the future, remember when tomorrow comes it will be today. Live as well and fully and joyously as possible today.

We have been taught from childhood that Heaven is to be won by our own Heaven lying within us. The Kingdom of Heaven is within," said the great teacher. Teach that. If it is, let us take up our Kingdom now, and build into our character the kind of citizenship of harmony.

The time to begin is right now. We must go in with our building now, for at this very time we are making and shaping our character by our loves and hates to-morrow.

It is as easy to build a fine character. Was it not Emerson, who said, "It is as easy to be great as small." It may have been to him. He was probably born great, and had made his character somewhere else. To most of us it is very difficult indeed not to be small, but if we want to build a character that will be worthy of our toil and labor, we must seek the wider vision, and encourage our little souls to know that we, too, find it as easy to be great as it is to be small.

Suggested Museum for Faulty Designs and Materials.

From an English engineer comes the thought-provoking suggestion that in some technical college there be organized a museum containing specimens, not of achievement and perfection, but of failure and imperfection. Every designer is familiar with certain sorts of trouble, the engineer reminds, yet because of gaps in his experience, is unfamiliar with other kinds which are mere commonplaces to others of his profession. To this museum he could study at will the mistakes of others.

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