

The Free Press Short Story

That Merry Diamond Wedding

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The following is one of the stories told at the Old Squire's diamond wedding without diamonds! This was not till long after, Addison, Theodore and Ellen had left home. The Old Squire was ninety-five, and Grandmother Ruth was in her ninety-fourth year. I had come home for a few days in April to see the things were going on with them. Not that they really needed care; on the contrary, they were still quite competent to manage their affairs yet it seemed only right that we should keep an eye to them in case we were needed. There was a new pile to be built that spring and I had been off to engage the lumber for it when on my way home past the Corners post office I found that a letter had come from Theodore, then a teacher at the mission school for Sioux Indian girls near Pierre, South Dakota. "I hope you are not forgetting that the 16th of May will be the seventy-fifth anniversary of Grandmother Ruth's and the Old Squire's marriage," she wrote. "We have always said, you know, that we would have a diamond wedding then. It would be a shame for us to let it pass unobserved; all the more since their golden wedding went unnoticed on account of sad events connected with the Civil War. But surely we must have that diamond wedding. True, there will not be many diamonds! None of us are rich enough for that. But what odds? We will all come home and bring our tokens of our affection. I have written to Cousin Addison. He likes the idea and will be on hand. Cousin Ellen has already been down here from Elm Brook to talk to you; she will come on East with me, two weeks beforehand, to help put it through. And oh, how good it will seem to be at home together again! Now you talk it over with Gram and the Old Squire."

stop it! It went on day after day. We were led to keep open house and serve refreshment to callers and visitors, out in that tent, all the following week, till poor Theodore and Ellen despaired of ever being able to end it. Addison declared joyously that we should have to nail up the gate at the foot of the lane and post a notice that the family had moved away. "Still they kept coming, three, four, ten or twenty at a time. The Old Squire and Gram were obliged to keep 'dressed up' in their wedding attire and be at the door, receiving visitors and accepting congratulations. The newcomers had to be invited in, conversed with at length and told all the facts and particulars of the wedding. More than once the weary Ellen exclaimed that never again would she have anything to do with a diamond wedding! Unless it had a safety brake on it and could be stopped at will! She estimated that meals or luncheons were served to over three hundred people after she and the Old Squire were married. When she was in her ninth year and he was twenty, the wedding was held at the academy where we young folks attended school, and his pupils and she were so much of it that they could not take it all with them, when the young couple drove home to Maine a week after their marriage. They had a two-horse team; but another team was needed to draw the whole of it. There was no railway then, and so nothing of motor trucks; and a week after they left the old lady dispatched the remainder of the 'setting-out' by one of the town farms! "Yes, Ruth, I know," the Old Squire assented. "I know he has made mistakes, pretty bad ones. But I am not going to pass him by. I am too near the great Jumping-off Place to put on airs of self-righteousness over any one."

While she tarried by the way to refresh herself the canoe and papoose had floated off and most likely would have gone over the falls but for our young grandmothers' plucky effort to salvage it. Returning, after many stoppages to enjoy the contents of her bottle, and finding her papoose gone, the creature set off to look it up, and it was during this quest along the river bank that she came upon our folks' wagon at the ferry. Espying her papoose on the wagon seat, in the possession of a stranger, she very likely jumped at the conclusion that the whites were trying to kidnap it. The fury with which she rushed forward may therefore have been due to maternal instinct, beclouded by drink. By this time the young Old Squire had come out from the ferryman and had returned where the ferry boat was moored; they had just pushed off when, glancing across the river, he saw the squaw dash at his young spouse, brandishing her knife and muttering imprecations. "Run, Ruth! Run!" he shouted. "You can outrun her! Run!" He saw Ruth jump down from the wagon, but, instead of running, she faced the squaw and stood her ground. "I wasn't going to run!" Grandmother Ruth exclaimed indignantly when the story was told. "I didn't know the child was hers. I thought she meant to kill us both." The Old Squire was horrified and kept shouting, "Run, oh, run, Ruth! Why don't you run?" Ruth stood still, however, but when the squaw rushed at her she stepped nimbly aside, seized the red virago by the wrist that held the knife and with a quick exertion of her vigorous young strength swung her half off her feet and flung her down the bank and into the muddy, shoal water at the foot of it. Sal got out, however, and grandmother again with a howl, stabbing wildly with the knife she still held in her hand. But again her wrist was caught, and this second time she was flung so forcefully that she went down the bank and into the water, head first. The young Old Squire and the ferryman, both of whom had been pulling with might and main at the ferry rope, were now close at hand. The squaw was helped out and disarmed. She was well known to the ferryman, and he was able to contribute information which was necessary to set the misunderstanding right. Under the circumstances not much could be done for the papoose save restore it to its mother; but it was not without misgivings as to its fate that they saw Savage Sal paddle away up the river. Requite on the Farm.—Every farmer and stock-raiser should keep a supply of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil on hand, not only as a ready remedy for ills in the farm but because it is a horse and cattle medicine of great potency. As a substitute for sweet oil for horses and cattle affected by colic it far surpasses anything that can be administered.

Menu Hints
Recipes for New and Novel Dishes; Household Ideas and Suggestions
By Betty Barclay
LIGHT AND SATISFYING
Here is a soufflé which the most inexperienced may make without fear. It comes out of the oven light as thistle-down and will not fall even if service is delayed a moment or two.
CHEESE SOUFFLE
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
1 cup milk, scalded
1 cup grated cheese
3 eggs yolks, beaten until thick and lemon colored
3 egg whites, stiffly beaten with 1 teaspoon salt
Add tapioca to milk and cook in double boiler 15 minutes, or until tapioca is clear, stirring frequently. Add cheese and stir until melted. Cool. Add egg yolks and mix well. Fold in egg whites. Bake in greased baking dish, placed in pan of hot water, in moderate oven (350 degrees F.) 50 minutes or 30 minutes in ramekins. Soufflé is done when it shrinks a trifle and is brown. Serves 4.
When made with quick-cooking tapioca and properly baked, soufflés do not fall but stay tender, moist, and light while being served.
BRIDGE PARTY "TICK-UP"
(Serves 18)
9 cups orange juice
6 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup sugar
9 cups ice-water
Crushed ice
Orange slices
Combine and serve over crushed ice in tall glasses. Place a half slice of orange over rim of glass.
GINGER SORBET
1/2 pound hand-diced ginger
3 quarts water
2 cups sugar
1 cup lemon juice
Juice of 4 oranges
Crushed ice or ice water
Shred the ginger fine, add it to the sugar and sugar and boil for fifteen minutes. Cool and add water to make ten cups of liquid. Add the fruit juices and serve in glasses half filled with crushed ice, or diluted with iced water.
ORANGE AND CANTALOUPE FRUIT CUP
(Serves 2)
1 cup cantaloupe balls or cubes
1 cup diced orange pulp
1/2 cup diced pear
1/2 cup orange juice
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Cut balls from melon with potato cutter or scoop out with small spoon. Combine with orange pulp and diced pear. Pour over fruit juices, chill thoroughly and serve.

YOU NEED A CRITIC
Doing tasks over and over does not necessarily mean doing them better and better. Some old women can be found who have made poor bread and tough pie crust all their lives, as well as men whose hair has whitened at a job to which they have never done justice. Some of you young people who are ambitious that all you need is to keep on working day after day and year after year. That is a help, but it does not follow that your work will improve unless you have it criticized by one who knows better than you do. Everyone ambitious to improve along any line needs a critic, unless he has the faculty for self-analysis which is so much rarer than talent. Do not lose your temper with your critics for they are doing you an invaluable service.
PEDIGREE POULTRY BREEDING
In poultry breeding there seems to be a tendency to believe that, making a male out of a high record dam to hens which themselves have high records, will give the final product and spell success; however, the most thoughtful breeders believe that high egg production is not a definite character, but is rather the result of a combination of several production characters, each of which is distinct and inheritable. Among these characters may be mentioned precocity, broodiness, intensity, high persistency, and they are no doubt combined in different ways, also probably inherited, from both the sire and the dam. I mean that the trap-net and banding systems may single out the good producers, but a careful analysis of records must be done to find out the best reproducers. After giving much care to secure birds from the best matings possible of pedigree stock, the problem of production for too many beginners seems to end. The mistake is paramount as results often show. Feeding at all times is in the mind of thoughtful breeders one of the most intricate problems they are faced with. The results of 16 years of this kind of work show real progress at Cap Rouge and it is believed that this is due partly to breeding partly to improvement in feeding and management. Starting with 4 per cent. of hens which had laid over 150 eggs the first year, we are now working with birds having reached the 200 egg mark, with the eggs weighing at least 24 ounces to the dozen. In order to make further improvements pullet year egg production, egg weights, early maturity, standard qualifications, hatchability and mortality must be kept in mind in selecting flocks, while the young males to be used should be selected according to the average of the better stock records, and should be vigorous and possess the standard qualifications.

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And remember, please, the stock is limited in every line. We try to carry just sufficient of each design so that there will be no duplication in the lines sold.
We've appreciated very much the loyalty of Acton and district in the patronage accorded THE FREE PRESS in past years. We'll be glad to serve you well again this year.
The Acton Free Press
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A TEST FOR PICKING MATURITY OF APPLES
During the course of investigations by the Laboratory of Plant Pathology, Kentville, N. S. conducted on the storage quality of apples from various spray plots it has been necessary to try to define the stage of maturity of the apples, both at harvest and at intervals during storage. A few years ago a mechanical pressure tester was used. This instrument registers the pound pressure necessary to force a plunger into the flesh of the apple a fraction of an inch. It was in reality the "thumb test" reduced to a mechanical basis. But like a good many machines, its accuracy depended on the operator's skill. Several types of these instruments have been tried and may still have a limited use but as a test for picking maturity they leave much to be desired.
Chemical analyses of apples have shown that certain changes are going on in the apple as it approaches maturity. One of these is the gradual disappearance of the starch which has accumulated in the fruit during the preceding two or three months on the tree. It has been found in Australia and New Zealand and confirmed by the Laboratory at Kentville that the starch content at harvest of some varieties of apples has a decided influence on the development of storage pit as well as their general quality.
The two varieties Gravenstein and Cox Orange have responded exceptionally well to the iodine test for starch as an indication of picking maturity. The test is simple to perform and worthy of trial by growers who wish to market these varieties in their best condition.
To conduct the test a representative sample of 25 or more apples are picked. The fruit is cut in half and dipped for about half a minute in a potassium iodide-iodine solution. This solution is made up of 1 gram of potassium iodide one-quarter gram of metallic iodine in 100 cubic centimeters of water. After dipping the cut surface of the fruit in the solution it is removed and placed with the treated surface up to be the starch a blue-black. For the best picking maturity there should be no starch in the rest of the flesh of the apple should contain no starch. In other words, one-half or less of the flesh outside the core area should turn blue-black, but if there is no blue color the apple is over mature.
This testing method is not offered as a cure-all for our storage troubles of fall varieties of apples. In our experience however the fruit harvested at a time when the starch was present only in a part of the flesh, as suggested above, was superior in storage life and quality and freer from storage pit to the earlier harvested fruit. Seed color is not a reliable index of fruit maturity.