John Henry's Wedding

By GEORGE V. HOBART

Clara J. had said "yes," and the next evening I waded into the Vanvivver mansion to drag Papa's and Mamma's consent away from them.

So long as I played light comedy roles I knew I was a favorite with the old folks at home, but when it came to doing a leading part and walking off with the daughter, I began to get uneasy for fear they'd peach for the egg basket and hand me a few unripe scrambles.

When I squeezed through the portiere I found the old lady and gentleman very busy discussing their plans for a summer trip.

"Where are you going to spend the summer, John?" inquired Pather, giving me a limp paw, which I shook hurriedly and then handed back to him.

Here was an opening—a grand chance to butt in right at the go off.

"Well, to tell you the solemn, we haven't decided yet," I answered.

"Will! they both exclaimed.

"Why, John, I thought you were playing a lone hand!" said the old gentleman. "You always know you as a young man who could walk up and down Easy street without a guardian or a time-card. This is the first time I ever heard you speak of a pal-I-back! Whence the W?"

"I always thought you were free to go and come as you pleased, John," the old lady put in.

Here was my chance to climb the family tree and knock down the fruit, but for some reason or other the blood seemed to rush to my ears, and I went backwards like a crab.

Papa had fired me with his steel-blue eyes, and I could see by another expression that she was beginning to set me back as one of those double-life leaders.

My collar began to faint and my hands grew nervous and wanted to fight each other.

"The fact is, ladies and gentlemen—er—I meant Mr. Vanvivver, and you, too, Mother—er—that is——"

"Why! I declare! A cat-fish grin! and at there till I used it all up. I was over the edge. Say, this marriage business is immense after the athletic blows, but the preliminaries make me sick.

"You seem to be a little to the bad this evening, John," said Father, and Mamma began to shake her head, as though she had a mental tintype of me far out on the road to ruin, and walking fast.

I went at them again. "As a matter of fact, I merely dropped around this evening to inquire if you could—that is to say, if it is possible for you to give me—to give me your—your—sister."

Overboard again and not a life preserver in sight.

I was pitiful.

"Most extraordinary attack of hesitation I ever knew you to have," said Father, while Mamma simply sat there and focussed me with her sad, reproachful looks.

"Perhaps you need something to brace you up," suggested the old gentleman.

I needed a sanitarium and a corps of efficient physicians, but I didn't say so.

At that moment I was doing a chump act never before equalled in the history of the world. My eyes looked like a couple of vacant lots and I had reversed grins, and was now using the style most affected by a stuffed leopard.

"The boy may be suffering from incipient brain fever, or is he in love?" whispered the old lady.

"Hush!" ordered Papa; "I'm love, eh? That's it. When's the wedding? Who's the girl? Sorry to lose you, John, but the best of friends must part in the divorce court. Ha, ha!"

That cackle went right through me and splashed on the wall behind me. The old man was a fierce joke pusher.

"Come on, Mamma, let's go to bed; John, he is she! Have you told Clara? She'll be lonely. Her eyes certainly do be best time killer she ever had. Speak out; we are your friends, even if you are going to pass us up."

"It was good of you, John, to come to us with the news first. Wasn't it, Absalom?" smiled the old lady.

Father nodded his head vigorously, and there I sat with my mouth wide open—a regular Charlie Poollahface. I wanted to speak, but every word in my body was back-pedalling.

It was scandalous.

If I had realized what it meant to go up against an unsuspecting family council I certainly would have coaxed Clara J. to elope. Then I could have sent her beloved parents a postal card, bearing the awful news thus: "May I have your daughter? Thanks. I have her now. Lay tag, you're it."

I began to recover consciousness slowly, and muttered, "You have me all scrambled."

"What I want to ask you is may I—"

Just then Tack rushed in with a whoop. "Pop! Mom! What d'ye think? John Henry and Clara Jane are going to get married!"

"Greenwood cemetery—no fowl-see!" I murmured, and waited for the axe.

After a painful pause I opened my eyes and said, "Well, what's the answer?"

Papa and Mamma had risen and were giving me the look-over with a side-smile I couldn't quite understand.

"What's the answer?" I repeated, prepared to duck and avoid a rush of furniture to the head.

Papa placed Mamma's arm gently under his and started away.

At the door the old gentleman turned and said, "John, it's up to you!"

Then they both chuckled and left the flat.

If ever that boy Tack needs a friend in the job, sun shine!

Two or three evenings later I picked my way into the house past seven double rows of messenger boys and dry goods deliverers; fell over about eight tons of packages, and after divers perils by land and sea, finally drifted into the parlor. There sat Father and Mamma, telling Clara J. all she had ever heard.

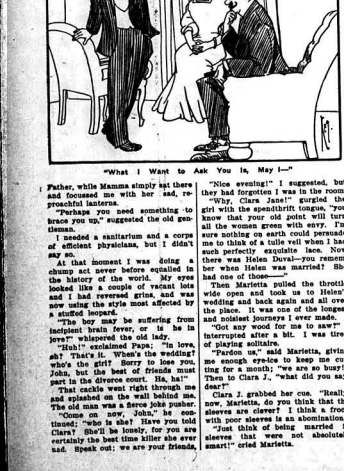
Mamma was to be the confidant of honor, but to hear her talk you'd think she was the leading lady. That girl has evidently told her all she heard.

She certainly was a hard worker with the gab.

"Evening, ladies!" I said.

Clara J. gave me a spectral sort of a smile and Marietta shook her back hair at me, then they clinched.

"But I'm afraid, Marietta"—Clara J. was at the bat—"that I may not look well in ivory white. I do wish, Marietta, that I had chosen the other shade, and the trained, Marietta; don't you think two yards too long for me? Now do tell me! I'm sure it will be so, Marietta, do you think the old lace will be as becoming as the fresh tulle would have been?"



"What I Want to Ask You is, May I—"

"Nice evening!" I suggested, but they had forgotten I was in the room.

"Why, Clara Jane!" gurgled the girl with the speedthrift tongue, "you know that your old point will suit all the women green with envy. I'm sure nothing on earth could persuade me to think of a tulle veil when I had such perfectly exquisite lace. I'm so glad Helen Duval—you remember when Helen was married? She had a bunch of roses—"

Then Marietta pulled the throttle wide open and took us to Helen's wedding and back again and all over the place. It was one of the longest and most tiresome journeys I ever made.

"Got any wood for me to saw?" I interrupted after a bit. I was tired of playing solitaire.

"Pardon us," said Marietta, giving me a dagger look to keep me cutting for a month; "we are so busy!" Then to Clara J., "what did you say, dear?"

Clara J. grabbed her cue. "Really, now, Marietta, do you think that the sleeves are clever? I think a frock with poor sleeves is an abomination."

"Just think of being without sleeves that were not absolutely smart!" cried Marietta.

Her voice seemed to have a high fever.

"And the lines of the skirt," Clara J. went on; "do you think they are good? I know a wedding dress should have good lines, Marietta; good, sweeping lines. Of course I know the design was good; but made up, Marietta, do you think it will be good made up?"

"When do you expect to get those girls garments delivered?" I interjectured; but all the wires were down in my direction, and I got no answer.

Clara J. took out her hammer and began to tap the bridesmaids, while Marietta held the nyel, so I got up sideways and went home.

It was the most cruel game of frost-and-I ever saw.

All in good season the presents began to show up. One evening the postman, who was a friend of the family, dropped in to see if they would suit. Nearly everybody I knew had sent me a cut-glass decanter, and he made me run out and sign his pledge.

With the exception of two or three of those present, the wedding was the prettiest affair of the kind I ever attended. I was one of the exceptions. When the fateful hour drew nigh my heart crawled up in my throat and refused to go back home. I supposed it wanted to see the show.

As I stood near the chancel waiting for the bride to come and get me, I felt like a bottle of ketchup with the cork out. It seemed to me that everybody in the world was giving me the fish eye.

I couldn't remember whether I should wear my hands in my pockets or in my mouth, so I tried both styles. Presently I caught the eye of Sydney Delirie, and he didn't do a thing but throw off a grin that nearly put me out of the wedding business.

Sydney was one of the ushers, but he should have been away back sitting down at his work in the soap factory. He was one of the Five Life The Shines who used to drop in on Clara J. of an evening and tease her to death. Of course, I don't know why I ever consented to let that human pestiferous be an usher. He couldn't ush for sour pickles. All he could do was to put his face where I could see it and let that feature do the rest.

About this time Billy DeVriee, my best man, came in with a face I didn't dare look at him, but I knew that mentally he was yelling for ice water. Outwardly he was very nervous, and he put in his spare time trying to chew his vest with.

Still, the thought flashed over me that Billy, being a college graduate and a football captain, showed wonderful self-control in confining himself to a conflict between his teeth and his necktie. It's a wonder he didn't give the minister the low tackle and try to make touchdown.

Then the procession came down the aisle, and the bell rang for the wind-up.

One of the bridesmaids got giddy and wanted to take her way into the main tent, but all around her were kind-hearted people, so she wasn't pinched.

Pretty soon the minister sprung that old gag on me about the ring, and I suppose for a moment he thought he had me, but I fooled him.

I knew I had brought for the bridegroom to get so rattled that he loses the ring, so I wasn't taking any chances. The day before the wedding I bought eight rings, and when the bridegroom came I had them stored away in every pocket and a spare one in each shoe.

No fumble on the ring—not for me! No matter in which direction the dippers was sent I had a ring. I thing I'll get this idea patented.

When the minister made a few cracks at us, but we called him every time, politely but firmly, and presently he handed me a card and said we were duly elected members of the Married People's Club.

Immediately thereafter we all went home in a flock of hacks to take a fall out of some of the most beautiful breakfasts that ever came off the griddle.

Clara J. and I were alone in the library.

"Did I do all right?" she asked eagerly.

"You! The limit!" I said. "You looked like a queen. But, wait! Stop the wagon! Why, bless me, in the excitement of a quick finish nobody thrown rice at the happy bride!"

She put her face very, very close to mine and handed me a few dozen of smiles. "Once more, John, it seems to be up to you!"

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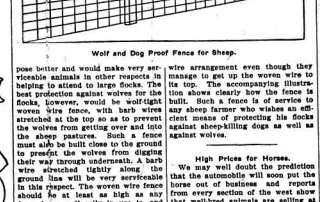
FENCE PREVENTS WOLVES FROM DEVOURING SHEEP

Best Protection Against Destructive Beasts Is Woven Wire Fence With Barb Wire Stretched Across the Top.

In answering a query as to the best method of preventing wolves from destroying a sheep flock, the Wisconsin Agriculturist publishes the following:

Many bells on a flock of sheep will no doubt be good service towards keeping wolves off though they would not be a valiant attacks from well-bolder animals. A few well trained shepherd dogs would serve the purpose better and would make very serious inroads in other respects by helping to attend to large flocks. The best protection against wolves for the flocks, however, is a good, well-tight woven wire fence, with barb wires stretched at the top so as to prevent the wolves from getting over and into the sheep pastures. Such a fence must also be built close to the ground to prevent the wolves from digging their way through underneath. A barb wire stretched tightly along the ground line will be very serviceable in this respect. The woven wire fence should be at least as high as any farm fence ordinarily in use is, and pieces of 2x4s should be nailed or spiked to the tops of all the posts projecting outward from the field enclosed for sheep pasture at an angle of 45 degrees to the upper parts of the posts. The pieces of 2x4s should be 2 to 30 inches long and to them the barb wires should be stapled. The barb wires made will prevent the wolves from getting over as they cannot get over the projecting barb wire arrangement even though they attempt to get up the woven wire in its top. The accompanying illustration shows clearly how this fence is made. Such a fence is of service to any sheep farmer who wishes an efficient means of protecting his flock against sheep-killing dogs as well as against wolves.



Wolf and Dog Proof Fence for Sheep.

High Prices for Horses.

We may well doubt the prediction that the automobile will soon put the horse out of business and reports from every section of the west show that wellbred animals are selling at $350 to $500 per pair.

COMFORT FOR FARM STOCK

Should Be Fed at Regular Times and Never Roughly Handled by Being Chased by Dog or Left in Cold.

(By A. D. WILSON, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.)

One of our good dairy farmers, living in Carlton county, who is also a Farmers' Institute lecturer, Mr. F. J. McLeran, in talking on "Care of Dairy Cattle," always emphasizes the importance of making the stock comfortable. He says that if they are made uncomfortable by being fed at irregular times, so that they spend a great deal of their time expecting to be fed, the discomfort shows in lowed production. If they are made uncomfortable by having a poor bed, being roughly handled by having a dog set on them, or by being left out in the cold or shelterless, he says, these conditions result in decreased production. He emphasizes the fact that one of the great advantages of weighing the milk every day, from each cow, is that it gives one a good check on any condition that brings about discomfort to his animals. If any cow shows a dropping off of her milk flow, as a rule a little observation will show that she has been made uncomfortable in some of the ways mentioned above; and, knowing these facts, the farmer is able to check these unfavorable conditions quickly.

One of the points that Mr. McLeran especially emphasizes is the importance of not allowing the cows to stay out in the winter when they are uncomfortable. He states that a good way to determine this is to take off your coat and go out in the yard with the cows, stand around and act just as the cows do. When you begin to feel uncomfortable and feel like going into the house, put the cows in the barn.

Autos on the Farm.

Some people have an idea that the farmer will not be able to properly care for his machine, but my experience has been that the farmers who have called for licenses have been fully conversant with the workings of their machines—in fact, many farmers are better informed on mechanics, gasoline engines and the like than the average city man who applies for a license. There is another view held by many city people which is wrong, and that is that the farmer will be content with a small horsepower motor car, says a writer in Institute American. As a matter of fact, when a farmer gets a car he wants it so constructed that he can use it for pleasure and for business, and that is the reason that they generally want their cars to have 40 horsepower or better. Time and help are the two things now at a premium on the farm farm and, as an auto saves both, there is an increasing interest in the subject of the cost of the present fall and spring will be by far the best selling time for farm autos ever seen.

HOW ENGLISH RUN DAIRIES

Cows Are Not Soiled to Any Great Extent by Pasture Is Depended Upon for Entire Summer Feed.

In England cows are not soiled to any extent; they get pasture in depended upon for the entire summer feed. They say over there that a cow is not worth a cent if cow going as she should.

Early in August the cows are turned in the aftermath of the meadows and later changed back and forth between the pastures and the meadow.

When taken off the pastures in late summer the cows are fed a little cow meal and cake but they do not get much grain at any time.

In the winter they are fed roots—40 to 70 pounds per day, about 18 pounds of straw, half as much hay and about eight pounds of meal and oil cake mixed.

The barn yards are paved with cobble stones to keep the cows out of the mud and the manure is saved on the yard. Not a thing is wasted.

There are very few creameries in England and the butter on the market is all farm butter but it is of fine quality, generally a great deal better than our farmers make.

The prices for milk for the year averages about $1.50 per 100 pounds, after the freight is paid.

COMFORTABLE FARROWING PEN

The brood sows must have dry and reasonably warm quarters. The accompanying illustration gives us a fairly good idea of one style of a litter pen. It is roomy and has long sliding doors when opened admit of plenty of light and air. The style of a pen is similar for the attendants are also the triangular shaped sheds. These pens can be more easily cleaned and bedded.

Many Goats in Country.

It is estimated that there are over 2,000,000 goats in this country and all are practically free from tuberculosis. Thousands of them are milk goats and are used regularly for ill's purposes.

BABY'S TENDER SKIN

Chafed, Sore and Bleeding Quickly Cured

Mrs. J. P. Deal, Kansas City, Kansas, writes:

"I cannot speak too highly of Resinol. When our baby was four months old she was so fat that she chafed in the creases of her legs and body. She was so sore and inflamed that she bled, and was feverish and crying almost constantly. Resinol Ointment was recommended to us. We had tried everything that we had thought of without success, but Resinol cured her in a very short time. We consider it the best household remedy for irritating skin troubles and would not be without it. We are also greatly pleased with Resinol Soap. It is so delightfully refreshing for the bath."

Resinol Ointment, Resinol Toilet Soap and Resinol Medicated Shaving Stick are high grade standard preparations, and their merit and reliability have won them a place in millions of homes. They are for sale at every drug store on the American Continent and by all leading druggists in other countries.

For a trial booklet on Care of the Skin and Complexion, Booklet and sample, enough for anyone, mention this paper. Resinol Chemical Co., Baltimore, Md.

The Key to Germany.

Capt. Charles King, the author, president, at the Milwaukee club, the German element in Milwaukee's population.

"I know a soldier," said Capt. King, "who met the kaiser last year in Berlin.

"You have a thorough knowledge of our best theatrical productions, I suppose," said the soldier. "Have you ever been to Germany before?"

"O, yes, sir," said the soldier.

"What cities have you visited? Berlin and Hamburg?" asked the kaiser.

"No, sir," said the soldier. "Milwaukee."

What About Him?

The talk has gone back and fro, and the youthful socialist had been asserting that no man ought to get his living by cheating, and we all listened to him, and agreed that it was dreadful to be a sweater and live off the truth, but tried to make their livings in honest people, philosophers, landowners, financiers, we scarified all of them who cheat the public, and finally came to "living by deception," said the young man. Then a little voice from a woman came from the corner of the sofa. "What about the conjurer?"—London Chronicle.

Model African King.

The Christian Pontifex of Bombo in Africa is a proof of the power of the gospel. At daybreak every morning he leaves his palace and comes to assemble at the king's house to hear the word of God read, and to praise and pray. Witchcraft and superstition have fallen under the power of the gospel, and the king is now taking knowledge of it. The native church in London contributed £17 a month for the support of native workers on a native station in the interior of Angola.

Deserved the Shoes.

The many weary feet leaned over the fence and watched the housewife doing her chores.

"Ah, lady," he said, tipping his hat, "I used to be a professional humorist. If I tell you a funny story will you give me an old pair of shoes?"

"Well, that depends," responded the housewife; "you must make sure that brevity is the soul of wit."

"Yes, sir," he responded, "and brevity is the sole of each of my shoes, mum."

THE FIRST TASTE

Learned to Drink Coffee When a Baby.

If parents realized the fact that coffee contains a drug—caffeine—which is especially harmful to children, they would doubtless hesitate before giving the baby coffee to drink.

"When I was a child in my mothers arms that began to be nibble things at the table, mother used to give me sips of coffee. As she poured the coffee exclusively at meals I never knew there was anything to drink but coffee and water.

"And so I contracted the coffee habit early. I remember when quite young the continual use of coffee so affected my parents that they tried everything they knew of, and then ground it in the coffee-mill, as a substitute for coffee.

"But it did not taste right and they went back to coffee again. That was before Postum was ever heard of. I continued to use coffee until I was 27, and when I got into office work, I began to have nervous spells. Especially after breakfast I was so nervous I could not attend to my correspondence.

"At night, after having coffee for supper, I could hardly sleep, and on rising in the morning would feel weak and nervous.

"A friend persuaded me to try Postum. My wife and I made up our mind that if it was worth the price we would give it a fair trial. Now we would not give up the Postum for the best coffee we ever tasted.

"I can now get good sleep, am free from nervousness and headaches. I recommend Postum to all coffee drinkers."

Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

"There's a Reason."

Ever read the new letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.