

brightened up considerably as the axe began to move up and down with a regular, double motion, reached forward, struck a stick at random with the axe blade so as to catch the stick, drew it forward into position and struck it, splitting it in the centre, and threw the pieces with two other arms into the corner, and so on till the pile began to get low. Any sticks that were not split fine enough, John threw back.

All proceeded well enough till the last stick was split. Then the maid started to buzz around in search of more. It attacked the saw horse and demolished it, ran into a tub and reduced it to kindling wood, ripped up a barrel of ashes and raised a terrible dust which completely drove John into the house. All this time he was trying to get near enough to start it off on another track, but it wheeled around and flung the axe so menacingly that John got excited and lost his head.

When the dust had subsided sufficiently we went out again. By this time the maid had anchored beside the new wood pile and was splitting it over. This would not have mattered much; we didn't mind the wood being reduced to matches, but it was close to the shed window and the sticks were being flung through, carrying broken glass with them into the street. John did not care for another visit from the policeman, but he was completely nonplussed. Just then he heard a stifled chuckle and looking over his shoulder he saw several boys perched on the fence and among them our own, who immediately dropped down. But what maddened John was the sight of a newspaper reporter also, who was evidently sketching the scene. Then the air began to be filled with flying missiles which John threw at the maid, till, by some lucky hit, some of the machinery was jarred and the maid

rushed wildly around the shed, the axe now slashing about with a motion evidently intended for some other office than wood chopping. John ran to shut the door in the face of the reporter who was filling sheets with sketches. The maid, however, started after him. John stopped, tried to dodge, hesitated, then ran out of the back gate and down the road, the maid thrashing at him with the axe. This was serious. I ran to the gate and anxiously looked after them, while the boys and reporter followed in the wake of the maid. I very much feared the maid would run into something and do some damage, but I soon saw that, as, of course, John avoided all obstacles so did the maid and simply followed him. I wondered why he did not reverse and pass the maid, thus putting it off the track. Presently, however, John returned alone and looking somewhat travel-stained. He pushed past me and went upstairs to the bathroom. I did not dare to follow to ask questions, but Fred and Tommy also returned soon and told me what happened after I lost sight of them.

It seems that, first of all, the axe flew off the handle and chopped a rooster, which was scurrying out of the way, almost in two. Then they caught up with a cow. It was quite a bit out of town, and she started to run in the same direction. John swerved to one side and the maid caught up with the cow and belabored her with the axe handle. This maddened the cow so that she made for the river and rushed in, the maid after her. They slashed about in the stream for a minute: then the maid sank and the cow appeared on the other side.

Next morning, about an hour after John went down town, he sent up a new carpet for the dining-room. We have a German girl now, and I don't know but that she's better than the automatic maid-of-all-work.