

would have been with him had he taken the matrimonial yoke upon his shoulders. He don't nurse the babies, though. He rather prefers to treat the elder children to taffy and candies, and see them stain and dirty their lace pinafores and frocks so that ma may have lots of work on washing day. That is his plan of enjoying a picnic.

Whence comes the picnic fiend's power? Because he offers the best means by which to bleed the people of their spare cash. Every trade in the land knows this, and seeks his aid. Everbody is fish that comes to his net. Suppose you are a gentleman at leisure, that does not exempt your attendance at his revels. The national society, the benevolent society, the carpenters, the bricklayers, the moulders, the wholesale warehousemen, the plasterers, the laborers' the sweeps, the brass bands, the fife and drum bands, the kazooists and one hundred and fifty others lay their claims before you, and you are in imminent danger of being boycotted for life if you do not support one and all of them. Woe to the man who is foolish enough to let slip that he has a dollar or two to spare for innocent recreation. He is a doomed man during the picnic season.

THAT'S SO.

I HOLD it true whate'er befall,
I feel it when I hunger most:
'Tis better far to have a crust
Than no part of the loaf at all.

HOW BEN LOST HIS BRIDE.

A TALE OF OLD CANADA.—BUGGIES AND BUCKBOARDS.

"So YOU never got married, Uncle Ben?" said I to old Ben Brackenbury, as we were overhauling our shooting irons and fishing tackle preparatory to an excursion to Muskoka. Ben was one of the "old time rocks," and knew the manners and customs of all the various denizens of forest and stream.

"No, Captain," replied Ben. Ben always called his acquaintances "Captain," "Major," or "Colonel," according to their apparent seigniority, whenever he forgot or didn't know their names. "No, Captain, I never did get spliced, but I was pooty durned near it onst, I tell ye; but I made a flummix of it, a big flummix! and all on account of that darned old Sal Roller!"

"How was that, Ben? Here, tell us the story. I would like to hear the melancholy truth as to your early blighted hopes."

"Wall," continued the old man, after wiping his mouth on his coat sleeve, and filling his ancient clay as he took a seat on a salt barrel, "it happened this way:—Ye see, in the old times here in Canada, out in the country, almost all the fun the young folks had was at the 'bees.' If a man wanted a log barn or a shed put up he'd have a 'raisin' bee,' and the neighbors for miles around would come and help him, and up she'd go in no time. At night the gals would all jine, and we'd send for a fiddler and have a dance. Yes, Captain, we had raisin'-bees, parin'-bees, quiltin'-bees and all sorts of bees. I tell ye what, Captain, thar ain't no such fun goin' now-a-days as we used to have.

"Wall, Cap, in them days I was counted a pooty likely young man. I had a good hundred acre farm, money in my pocket, wore store clothes on the Sabbath and sported a pair of prunella boots at the parties, so I was considered not a bad match even for Ruth Kripps, the girl I was awful in love with. Ruth was about as nice as they make 'em, brown hair, rosy cheeks, and always wore a smile.

Wall, her father, Old Major Silas, didn't object to me much, altho' he was a consarned proud old man, havin' fit at Lundy's Lane and Queenston Heights under Ginerall Brock, so I was allowed to take Ruth out of an evenin' to a party or temperance meetin' all right, in fact we was as good as engaged. Wall, one day the neighbors got a bid for a party at old Kernal Doosenbury's, and we all of course agreed to go, for the old man allers kept a good lay-out for the boys and girls.

"Naturally I called on Ruth to git her to go with me, but she said she couldn't, as her Aunt Mima was sick and she'd have to go and nuss her. She was awful sorry, so was I. So, cussin' old Aunt Jemima in my innardness, I fixed it to go with a lot of young fellers in an old farm wagon with a sort of a buckboard for a middle seat. This buckboard, Cap., was a two inch plank and hed no more spring in it than a brick. Jeewittaker! how she did jolt over the rough roads! Wall, when we got to the house who should I see flyin' round and enjoyin' himself but Ruth's father. He'd driv up by himself in his new buggy and was in for lots of fun. And as I was lookin' round who should catch my eye but old Sal Roller, the longest-tongued and worst-tempered old cat in the township. She beckoned me and I had to go.

"'Wall, Mr. Brackenbury, du tell,' commenced the old critter, 'what on airth are ye doin' out here without Miss Kripps?'

"'Oh! Ruth,' says I, 'she's goin' to her Aunt Mima's. Aunt Mima's very sick.'

"'I reckon she didn't stay long, then, for I saw her at the front stoup when we passed the house. It was about an hour after the Major started. Guess her aunt wasn't very sick, so she came home. You ought to go back for her.'

"'How kin I go,' said I, 'when I hain't got no rig?'

"'Take the old man's rig, he'll never know it,' says old Sal, and I did. I put the hoss in the new covered buggy and speeded along pretty lively, I tell you, till I got to the Major's house. Ruth, like a good girl, bundled on her things, jumped in, and away we went at a smart trot, but not for long. The weather, which was clear and warm for the fall of the year, suddenly changed, and right in our teeth came a squall of wind, rain, hail and snow that blew the cover clean off the buggy and wet us to the skin. It got as dark as Egypt and we lost our reckonin', we missed the lane leading to the Colonel's house, and turned into a side line where a wheel come off the buggy and we'd have froze to death only an old trapper happened to come along and brought us to his cabin where we hed to stay till mornin'.

"When the storm had settled down to a steady rain the Colonel's guests allowed that they'd start for home. When the old Major found that his horse and buggy was gone he cussed a blue streak, and was goin' to fight the Kernel, and when it leaked out that I took the rig he nigh went into fits. To make matters wuss he had to ride home with the boys on the buck-board, which nearly shook the life out of him, and he landed home as wet as a drowned rat, with all the boys laffin' at him, fur they were all pooty full. The next day I called. Ruth was in bed with inflammation of the lungs, and when the old man saw me he turned red, collared me and kicked me out of the house. Next day I left, got a lawyer to sell my farm—I couldn't stand the jokes of the boys—and I've been out this way ever since. So you see, Cap., I lost my gal, my prospects, and everything all through that cussed old Sal Roller. Cap., guess I'll take a small drop on the head of it. Here's luck!"