

# THE STORY OF Waitstill Baxter

By KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

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"I should like that, for they would be our only wedding bells. Oh, Mark! What if Waitstill shouldn't go, after all, though I heard father tell her that he needed her to buy things for the store, and that they wouldn't be back till after midnight. Just to think of being married without Waitstill!"

"You can do without Waitstill on this one occasion, better than you can without me," laughed Mark, pinching Patty's cheek. "I've given the town clerk due notice and I have a friend to meet me at his office. He is going to lend me his horse for the drive home, and we shall change back the next week. That will give us a fresh horse each way and we'll fly like the wind, snow or no snow. When we come down Guide-Board hill that night, Patty, we shall be man and wife; isn't that wonderful?"

"We shall be man and wife in New Hampshire, but not in Maine, you say," Patty reminded him dolefully. "It does seem dreadful that we can't be married in our own state and have to go dangle about with this secret on our minds day and night, but it can't be helped. You'll try not to even think of me as your wife till we go to Portsmouth to live, won't you?"

"You're asking too much when you say I'm not to think of you as my wife, for I shall think of nothing else, but I've given you my solemn promise," said Mark stoutly, "and I'll keep it as sure as I live. We'll be legally married by the laws of New Hampshire, but we won't think of it as a marriage till I tell your father and mine and we drive away once more together. That time it will be in the sight of everybody, with our heads in the air. I've got the little house in Portsmouth all ready, Patty. It's small, but it's in a nice part of the town. Portsmouth is a pretty place, but it'll be a great deal prettier when it has Mrs. Mark Wilson living in it. We can be married over again in Maine afterward if your heart is set upon it. I'm willing to marry you in every state of the Union so far as I am concerned."

"I think you've been so kind and good and thoughtful, Mark, dear," said Patty, more fondly and meltingly than she had ever spoken to him before, "and so clever too. I do respect you for getting that good position in Portsmouth and being able to set up for yourself at your age. I shouldn't wonder a bit if you were a judge some day and then what a proud girl I shall be!"

Patty's praise was bestowed none too frequently, and it sounded very sweet in the young man's ears. "I do believe I can get on with you to help me, Patty," he said, pressing her arm more closely to his side and looking down ardently into her radiant face. "You're a great deal cleverer than I am, but I have a faculty for the business of the law, so my father says, and a faculty for money making too. And even if we have to begin in a small way my salary will be a certainty, and we'll work up together. I can see you in a yellow satin dress stiff enough to stand alone!"

"It must be white satin, if you please, not yellow! After having used a hundred and ten yards of shrew worn yellow calico on myself within two years I never want to wear that color again! If only I could come to you better provided," she sighed, with the suggestion of tears in her voice. "If I'd been a common servant I could have saved something from my wages to be married on. I haven't even got anything to be married in!"

"I'll get you anything you want in Portland tomorrow."

"Certainly not; I'd rather be married in rags than have you spend your money upon me beforehand!"

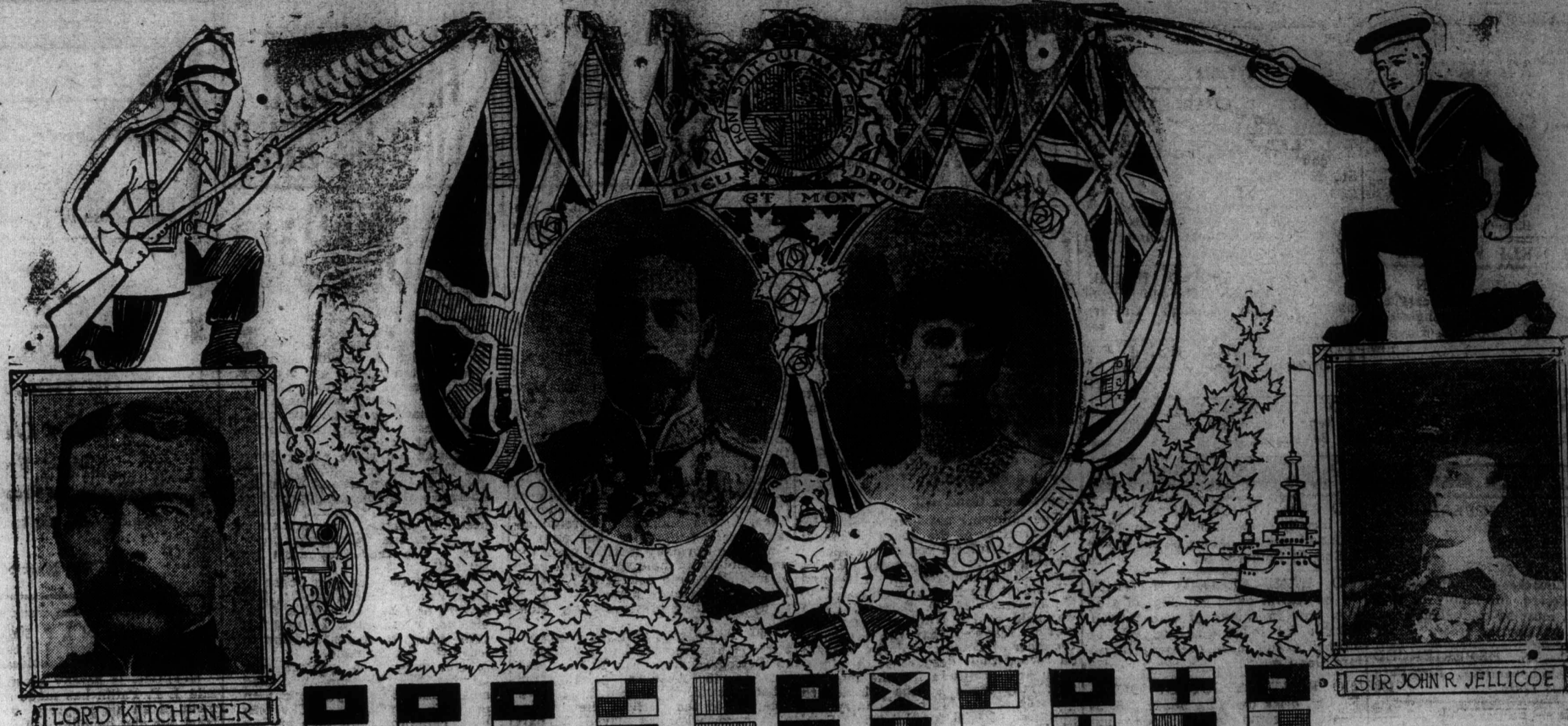
"Remember to have a box of your belongings packed and slipped under the shed somewhere. You can't be certain what your father will say or do when the time comes for telling him, and I want you to be ready to leave on a moment's notice."

"I will; I'll do everything you say, Mark. But are you sure that we have thought of every other way? I do so hate being underhanded. Everything depends on my keeping it secret from Waitstill, but she doesn't suspect anything yet. She thinks of me as nothing but a child still. Do you suppose Ellen would go with us just to give me a little comfort? I shouldn't miss Waitstill so much if I had Ellen, and how happy I shall be if she approves of me for a sister and thinks your mother and father will like me in time."

"I don't know; look at Aunt Abby Cole," said Patty pensively. "Well, it does not seem as if a marriage that isn't good in Riverboro was really decent. How tiresome of Maine to want all those days of public notice; people must so often want to get married in a minute. If I think about anything too long I always get out of the no-man-land."

(To be Continued).

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GREAT BRITAIN is engaged in the most terrible war the world has ever known, and on it hangs the fate of the British Empire and the freedom and happiness of everyone of its citizens.

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DAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1914.

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is a time of crisis in Canada. Very much depends what the next few months bring forth. There is no necessity to realize the importance of manufacturing to Canada an more than justice in undertaking special for their support. It is a matter for common sense.

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