

IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.

I.—THE PLAN.



CHARLES CALLETT sat in his room sad and disconsolate. He had within the past six months made seven distinct attempts to gain a wife, but each time had suffered a reverse. The last refusal had made him desperate. A wife he must have, and a wife he *would* have. Gathering himself-together, he breathed a terrible vow that the next time the fickle sex should not refuse him. Whilst brooding over his troubles a brilliant idea alighted upon his bewildered brain, and his spirits rose to zero during its contemplation. It was that he should open the Directory and therefrom blind-folded hunt with a pin for the name and address of a spinster, and write a declaration of love to the first he struck. With his heart throbbing wildly Charles Callett set to work, and after impaling a butcher, a minister and a couple of carpenters, he hit upon this line:—

DOBBINS SELINA. Milliner, 36 Cuniform. A nice lonely name, thought Charles, and, doubtless, a kind, loving girl that owns it. It was but the work of a moment, *a la* novelist, for him to dash off a four-paged epistle to her, explanatory of his lonely position, his lovable nature, his prospects in life and his willingness to lead her to the altar if she would but acquiesce. It was but the work of another moment to post off the important missive to 36 Cuniform street. When our hero returned to his room he swooned away. The excitement of those two moments in his life was too much for him.

II.—THE RESULT.

Charles Callett kept open the directory at the D page, and many times lovingly and tenderly glanced at the line with the pin stuck through it. Selina Dobbins did not answer the anxious Charles at once. A day passed by. No answer. Our hero began to despair. Perhaps she had left the address given. Terrible thought! Was he to lose his Selina? Visions of a nice new millinery store in a front street tantalised him. At the close of the second day, just as he was beginning to sink beneath the weight of suspense, his landlady informed him that a lady wished to speak with him. 'Selina,' flashed through his thoughts. It was but the work of a mo—to fix himself and bound into the sitting-room. As he entered he saw a tall, spare-looking lady with a very firm-set face, which had weathered forty winters at least.

"Madam—," he began.

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted the spare one, "my name is Miss Selina Dobbins." Mr. Charley Callett fell on the edge of a chair, with the cold shivers chasing down his back. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Charles Callett?"

"Yes, Miss Dobbins, you—you have," replied that individual in a voice bereft of all its former melody.

"Then I have a little account to settle with you. This letter," holding up the four paged explanatory epistle, "contains the out-pourings of your heart to me, I believe."

Mr. Charles looked at the long arm and then at the cold piercing eyes of Miss Selina, and murmured, "It did."

"It did, eh? but it does not now. Well, Mr. Callett, I wish to express to you my views upon the subject. I desire to let you feel just how much love I have for you. No letter could hold all that I think or desire to express."

Thus speaking, Miss Selina Dobbins drew from beneath her jacket—a whip, and proceeded to lay it about Mr. Charles Callett's anatomy. Then followed a lively



time. Charles found himself possessed of more activity than he had ever dreamt of, and it was but the work of a moment for him to "get" the first opportunity that presented it elf.

Mr. Charles Callett lost all his love for the fair, but not gentle, sex, and all his savings paying for the damages caused by the visit of impetuous Miss Dobbins to his boarding house. He looketh not for a wife these days.

TITUS A. DRUM.

THE "MAIL" COACH—A FARCE.

Scene—SANCTUM OF NEW PROHIBITION ORGAN.

Dramatis Personæ.—Mr. F., editor-in-chief, and elderly gent in black, seated at table strewn with "copy." F. in shirt-sleeves—newly-opened bottle of whiskey at elbow—face expressive of desperation—office water-jug beside elderly gent—E. G.'s face expressive of apprehension.

F. *loq.*—Never mind, old chap, I think I can stand it, now that I've got something sustaining—fire away—won't try this sort of grind on blue-ribbon beer again, as long as my name's Ned.

(*Enter Mr. B., the proprietor.*) B.—Well, boys, how goes the coaching? Does he catch on to the racket, Mr. Aqua Pura?

A.—Yes, brother, he has great receptivity for new ideas, and takes up the theory of prohibition—

F. (*interrupting.*)—But, d—in the practice—

A. (*soothingly, and drawing back his chair.*)—There, there—don't excite yourself, brother; Rome wasn't built in a day—