

"You should have seen the way your husband acted when you were in the hospital last winter having your eyes treated. He was the most forlorn creature I ever saw in my life. You came home sooner than I expected, you know. And when Mr. Billy met my father on the street the next day he said: 'Will you please be so kind as to do me a favor, Mr. Green? Tell Priscilly everyd'ing's all right—everyd'ing! I got mine oldt lady pack!'"

Priscilla's voice broke. Mrs. Billy turned her face away, and Billy deliberately shut his eyes, on the principle of the ostrich hiding his head. Then, "Ahem!" said Billy and the old lady murmured:

"Dem vas terribly days, Priscilly, for me, too."

Silence fell in the room while, from without, came the murmur of people and loud, the cry of Billy's old pet gander.

Priscilla aroused herself, and, looking the old wife squarely in the eye, demanded: "How did that miserable man over there propose?"

Billy held up his forefinger with a mysterious "Ah-ha!" while Mrs. Billy smiled and shrugged her shoulders, "I dunno," said she.

Billy twisted up one corner of his mouth, and, wrinkling his cheeks in one tight winking of the eye, he vowed: "I dunno, needer."

"Vall, vall, vall, vall! Do you hear dhot now? He's forgot already!"

"Vall, you forgot, too!"

"Who says so?" Mrs. Billy was quite indignant, but meeting Priscilla's quizzical glance the old lady flushed all over her wrinkled face and knelt down to shake the stove.

Priscilla grew pensive. "Of course," she said, "you loved each other very, very much?"

"I don't know dhat needer," retorted Mrs. Blom.

Priscilla laughed, and, turning to the grinning old husband, remarked: "You must have had a hard time winning that woman."

Billy poked a broom-splint into the end of his pipe as he replied with an air of carelessness: "It was no so hardt."

Mrs. Billy turned into a delightful specimen of a porcupine as she stepped back: "It was hardt enoot, I guess! Andt it vouldt haf been so hardt as neffer vas eef I hadn't wanted to see Amelia."

"She dought she vas a-marryin dhot man—vhadt you call him?—Kreestopher Coloombus."

"And when she found out that it was only you what did she say, Mr. Billy?"

Billy's powers of invention had given out, so he could only retreat under cover of his uplifted finger and a mysterious: "Ah-ha! Ah-ha! Priscilly!"

Priscilla had a new, perplexing, pure and fragrant beauty about her to-day and an abnormal amount of curiosity.

"Well, no doubt," she said after a while, "you got along very well together then, when everything was new, and you get along very well together now, but, in between—how was it? Did you ever fight?"

"No sir! No, siree!" The old lady was very positive. "When he coom into de house madt I neffer say von vordt to him till he get gladt agin andt somedings nice to eat; and when he coom into de house andt see me madt he neffer say a vordt. And so ve neffer hadt no badt fightdts."

"Ve hadt von or two hoodt fightdts yit," remarked Billy with a serene smile.

"Ya-ya. But vhadt off dhot?" said Mrs. Billy. "Dem vas de cheapest kindt off pepper ve couldt puy. Andt pepper vas a very hoodt ting eef you know how to use de shaker. Dem quarrels vas noddings, Priscilly. When dey coom ve both rememper dhot both of us moost pe a leetle wrong. Dere neffer vas no quarrel in dis vorld yit vhere de whole blame vas on one sidet. So when you git a husbandt, Priscilly, andt a quarrel cooms oop, efen eef you know you vas rightt, you ho into de corner andt you say to yourself: 'Vhere vas I wrong, eh?'"

Priscilla was looking down at her

fodded hands—hands which she knew would some day be locked fast within another's fingers. How long before the two would be a perfect fit? How long before her restless fingers would cease to find moments when they would flutter to be free.

"Vhadt vas you a-dinkin' oot, Priscilly?" the old lady asked. "Two cookies andt a glass off milk for your doughts."

"I dell dem to you for noddings," interposed Billy, looking at her.

"She vas a-dinkin' apout dem odder mens. She vas a-dinkin' apout dhot reech oldt pachelor peau dat she hadt in New York already. Ve heerd't all apout dhot. Couldn't you ketch him, Priscilly?"

The old lady reached out her hand and patted the girl's smooth fingers. "Vhy couldn't you luff him, leetie girl?"

Priscilla's soft laugh rang through the dusky room. "You'll never tell, will you?" she said. "I visited his sister for ten days once, and every morning I had that man for breakfast. If you want to find out whether you can live with a man just make a practice of eating breakfast with him. He may be the finest fellow in the world at the dinner-table, and a grouchy, disagreeable old bear in the morning. And the worst of it is that you have to eat just as many breakfasts in this world as you do dinners."

"It vas too padt you vent to veesit dhot vomans," remarked Billy, and Mrs. Billy said positively:

"You vas too partuculy, Priscilly. You neffer vill findt a man vhadt prings de same face to preakfast vhadt he prings to dinner midoudt he pe a nightd-vatchmans. I heard say dhot vas de reason vhy dem vomen-folks in New Englandt gifs dere oldt mans pies for preakfast. Dey vant to fooi him andt make him dink it vas dinner-dimes."

"I wish I had tried that on Mr. What's-his-name," said Priscilla, thoughtfully. "But then there was something else—at all three meals. He had a dog—a little spotted cur with a chewed-off ear and no tail to speak of—that he had picked up in the street. And do you know where that would sit while we were eating—no matter how many people were present, nor how much beautiful china and glass there was on the table? Where do you think?"

"In a chair py de table," Mrs. Billy answered promptly.

"No, sir! He sat on the table—

right between my place and the old bachelor's. And sometimes he would drink out of my glass and sometimes he would walk across the table for something that he liked better on the other side!"

Billy had brought his feet to the floor and taken the pipe out of his mouth, which mouth was now wide and round with amazement.

Mrs. Billy had put down her knitting, and now she brought her hands together with a resounding clap: "Vall, vall, vall, vall! I neffer! I neffer deedt! Billy, do you hear dhot? Priscilly, don't you neffer ho to dhot house agin. I vouldt haf took dhot dog py de neck andt flung him outd off doors. yit. Oh, dear, dear, dear, dear! Dey neffer deedt sooch dings in de oldt country."

Billy was too shocked for words. He could only grunt disgustedly, while Priscilla leaned back and smiled.

"He was the man who said that girls are divided into two classes," she stated: "those that tell that they want to get married and those who tell lies. So I thought that I would show him. You don't think I did wrong, do you?" added Priscilla, demurely.

The old lady was very positive in her denial and very angry; but Mr. Billy put back his legs and his pipe while he seemed to reconsider the question.

"Vall, I dunno. He vas awful reech, dhot man. Andt he seemd't to know a lot apout girls. Andt, pe-sides, you couldt haf kilt de dog."

"She couldn't haf kilt all de dogs in de vorldt," declared the old wife. "Eef a man vill pe a fool mid von critter he vill pe a fool mid anodder."

"And besides," said Priscilla, "I liked the dog better than I did the man. I always agreed with him when he used to say: 'The more I see of men the more I like dogs.'"

"You vas rightd apout dhot mans," vowed Mrs. Billy, but the old Dutchman stuck to his guns.

"Vall, I dunno, yit. I heerd't vonce apout a girl vhadt marriedt a reech oldt man vhadt vas so stingy he nearly starvedt her to death. Honest, he gif her so little to heat dhot she joost went andt hung her teeth on a hook py de door. Andt do you know vhadt she done to dhot reech oldt deffel? She deedn't do a ting but git him vay oop in de top off de house von nightd, den grease de stairs andt holler, 'Fire!'"

"Vere did she git de grease?" de-

manded practical Mrs. Billy. Billy simply spluttered over his pipe in the twilight and the old lady turned her attention once more to Priscilla.

"He vasn't the right von, mine dear; dey none of dem vas," she said. "But de rightd von he vill coom some day. Eef he vas to von endt off de vorldt and you to de odder you vouldt come togedder joost de same. Vhadt ees to pe vill pe."

"Do you really think so," murmured Priscilla. "I almost believe you."

She looked smilingly out of the window; then, with a quick, sly wave of her hand, rose to go.

"Somebody's at de door," said Mrs. Billy.

"Let me go." Priscilla quickly crossed the room and laid her hand on the latch. A clear, decisive knock sounded in the panels. Then, upon the old people's ears, the girl's voice fell soft and with unusual music.

"No, I will not—I cannot let him in to-night, my dearies. It is the Principal of the school, Mr. Wilcox—and—and—" Priscilla opened the door, and against the pale evening light they could see her slim figure standing close beside another, larger form. A masculine voice murmured a few words, and then Priscilla's indescribably sweet and tender laugh sounded soft and low.

"I have promised to marry him. Good-night," she said, and quickly and shyly closed the door.

The old people heard the crunching of two pairs of feet in the snow, and, peering out of the window saw the man and the woman pass down the path and out of the gate. There both the young folks turned and waved their hands at the dusky windows.

Mrs. Billy sighed almost enviously. "Do you rememper de first dime you valked home drough de snow mid me, mine dear?" she asked with her shoulder pressed close to Billy's.

"Ya-ya-ya!" he rejoined, slipping his arm around her waist. "But dis snow vas nodt von half so deep as dhot."

"Vall, I guess nodt!" The old lady was happy once more. "Andt I tell you somedings, Billy: I neffer knowed dhot day vhedder ve vas a-valkin drough snow or de hay fields."

"Nor me needer," said Billy. "I been a-vonderin' a hoodt many dimes eef you vas as pig a fool dhot tay as your oldt Billy."



Two famous kings of the foothills, Western Canada.