

A Pleasing Anecdote Spoiled.

HERE is a time-honoured story which we find going the rounds of the press. It has a new application and new names, but the tale is more ancient than might be supposed on a superficial examination:

John Quincy Adams and John Hancock, "the Signer," married two sisters, the daughters of a noted Methodist divine in Connecticut. John Quincy was a favourite with the old people, and Mary's choice was approved by them. So, when the banns were published, the parent said, "Mary, if you will furnish me the text, I will preach you a wedding sermon." She was equal to the task, and gave the text, "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her." Needless to say that justice was done to the occasion and the text.

Not so with Margaret, who in the meanwhile was receiving the attentions of her John in a very inexpensive way, so far as her parents were concerned: for it is said that "he never crossed his legs under their festive board." So, when the banns were published, she said to her father: "Father, you preached a wedding sermon for Mary. Cannot you preach one for me?" He at first demurred; but at last he consented, and called for the text, when Margaret, who was equal to the occasion, said, "And John came, neither eating nor drinking, and ye say he hath a devil."

This is a pleasant anecdote, and may be true about somebody; but as to John Hancock and John Quincy Adams it can't be true.

John Hancock died four years before John Quincy Adams got married. Hancock's wife was a Miss Quincy, of Massachusetts; Adams's wife was a Miss Johnson, of Maryland.

If this ingenious inventor had substituted the elder John Adams for John Quincy, the anecdote might have appeared more credible, for both John Adams and John Hancock married Quincys. But if the father of either bride was a preacher, he could not have been a Methodist, because Methodism was not then established in America.

A Pretty Good Bad Boy.

A good many years ago now a small, bare-legged boy set out from his home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for an afternoon's sport with a gun. He rambled along, as boys will, with his eyes wide open for everything that came under them, as well as for the game that was the special object of his expedition, and he had not gone far when he saw a chaise approaching, driven by the Governor of the State.

The Governor was a very popular and distinguished man, who was being talked of for the Presidency, and we should not have liked the small boy if he had not been a little overawed by finding himself alone in the presence of so august a personage. He was equal to the occasion, however, and as the chaise reached him he stood aside to let it pass, and gravely presented arms. The Governor at once pulled

up his horse and looked with amusement at the little fellow standing there as serious as a sentry, with his gun held rigidly before him.

"What is your name?" said the Governor.

"Thomas Bailey Aldrich," replied the boy, with a military salute.

He was invited into the chaise, and though he lost his shooting, what was that in comparison with the distinction of riding into Portsmouth Town with Governor Woodbury.

This was forty years ago, and since then Thomas Bailey Aldrich has earned a place among the foremost of American authors by a series of books, some in prose and some in verse, which are distinguished by the purity of their tone, the refinement of their style, and the picturesqueness of their invention. One of them is called "The Story of a Bad Boy," and except that some of the names of persons and places are changed, it is so faithful a picture of the author's boyhood that it might be called an autobiography.

Beautiful Spring.

THE glorious spring weather which has descended upon us during the last few days makes those of us who dwell in cities long for the bird-voices, buds and bright flowers of the open country. Most of us are unable to give effect to our longings, being compelled to do our daily dole on the business treadmill during six days out of the seven. In Toronto, however, we are not left altogether without the means of gratifying our fondness for Nature's beauties. The parks and open places are less numerous than they might be, but there are various spots where brief glimpses of *rus in urbe* may be obtained at a nominal cost, or at no cost at all. The florists' shops, for instance, present an ever-changing panorama of beauties, and a visit to them costs nothing. I have long been in the habit of availing myself of the privilege thus afforded, at this season of the year, and I have always found that it does much to gratify the desire for rural delights that steals over one with the departure of snow and the appearance of green grass.

On the east side of Yonge street, a short distance above Gerrard, is Slight's Temple of Flora. I often spend a pleasant half hour or so here, rambling in and out among the pots and baskets in which the numerous floral beauties are displayed. My last visit to the establishment was paid yesterday afternoon, and it was the next most pleasant thing to a day in the country. As I entered the place from Yonge street my olfactories were greeted with all the perfumes of Araby. The conservatory is not large, but the variety of beautiful roses, lilies, carnations and what not is remarkably fine. The establishment is in three stories. Ascending the first flight of stairs one lands in what is called the show-room. Here there is an almost endless display of rare flowers and plants, such as are not commonly met with in the greenhouses of this country. Some of them are surpass-

ingly beautiful, and it is noticeable that many of the least attractive to the eye are sweetest to the smell. Ascending to the third story, one finds it divided off into five compartments, each being devoted to some special and particular purpose. In No. 5 I saw the most beautiful crimson-purple Duke of Connaught rose my eye ever looked upon, inasmuch that, if the truth must be told, I felt strongly tempted to steal it.

I have no time to dilate upon the many sights I saw here. I passed on my way homeward along Carlton street, dropping into the Horticultural Gardens *en route*. All Torontonians are familiar with this pleasant spot, and I am not going to take up space by describing it. But I had not proceeded far upon my homeward journey ere I came upon another florist's establishment well worthy of a visit. Turning northward from Carlton up the western side of Ontario street, I reached the grounds of Mr. S. L. Beckett, who here has a plot of about 5,000 feet. Upon entering the greenhouses I was again struck with the interminable varieties of beautiful flowers which meet one at every hand, and which each and all addresses the beholder in an unspoken language. Easter lilies, roses, carnations, hyacinths, calceolarias, japonicas and what not are here in hundreds. Upon entering into conversation with the proprietor, I learn that he makes a specialty of growing and establishing young, hardy plants. If so disposed you may count several thousand of these from the spot where you stand. But the attractions of the place are such that you can spend your time much more agreeably by gazing about you at the countless bright flowers that stare you in the face on every hand. A considerable portion of the ground is not yet taken up, but the proprietor is about to convert all the vacant space to horticultural purposes, so that the attractions of this spot are likely to be materially increased before the summer is over. Having spent all the time I could spare in viewing the contents of the greenhouses, I betook myself homeward. Ere long I shall probably visit some of the other "pleasant spots to while away an hour," and if agreeable to your readers, I should like to call attention to them in a future number. Meantime, such of your readers as "love the sunshine and the meadow" cannot do better, when they have a spare hour, than follow in my footsteps.

SUSAN.

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