

had decided to take two boarders. She had always wanted to, and now it was her duty to.

So a few evenings later there appeared in a city paper the advertisement:

"Wanted—A boarder with a bicycle."

For with true New England thrift Miss Matilda had no sooner decided on a boarder than it occurred to her what a saving it would be if the boarder should bring a bicycle with him. This would serve the double purpose of inspiring the villagers by frequent exhibitions of the wheel in motion, and save the expense of their having to take lessons when their own town bicycle should finally be installed in—

By-the-way, where should it be installed? There was no livery stable, and if left in the schoolhouse the children would handle it and "muss" it. Thomas Paxton had a shed, but it was exposed to the weather and the machine might suffer. Miss Matilda finally decided that she would lock it up in a large old glass-covered and curtained cabinet in her parlor. The curtains should be kept drawn back, so that occasional callers should always have the stimulus of being conscious that Boxton owned a bicycle. Then, as she said, by watching the boarder on his wheel the Boxtonians would soon become expert in the projected use of a wheel of their own. Besides, a bicycle boarder would not have the contaminating effect upon Hiram that a mere boarder might. Miss Matilda had seen signs in her nephew of aspirations for a dress-suit that she wished to quell. That Hiram was really pining for that of which

hard work to send in even a diff through a crack.

But behold! When it did open the June Rose had been behind it all the time. It was clad in pink, and it had cheeks like a girl, and it was good to look at.

"Excuse me," he stammered. "I am the new boarder."

"Excuse me," she said sweetly. "But you can't be, for I am the new boarder myself."

"Oh," he said faintly. This, then, was not his hostess. "Then I think I must be a newer boarder."

"I will call Miss Matilda," said the June Rose, incapable of coping with this logician. Would he come in?

Of course he would come in. He had come to stay.

The June Rose walked across the hall. "Miss Matilda, another boarder has come."

"Very well," said the unsurprised Miss Matilda, rolling up her knitting. "I expected him."

For Miss Matilda was not of those who advertise and wait. She knew that all that would be necessary was for her to announce that she would take boarders. Of course they would come if they were once permitted.

"Good-evening," she said politely, as she entered the south parlor.

But even her self-possession nearly gave way as she encountered the unkempt young man of the highway. She had desired simplicity of costume for Hiram's sake; but really—really—she didn't know that bicyclists never brushed their hair.

"Where's your trunk?" she said tersely. He assured her it was coming on the



Twelve thousand Winnipeg School Children singing the Empire's Songs at Exhibition Grounds, Coronation Day.

a dress-suit is merely a symbol, for that to which the possession of a dress-suit would entitle him, never entered Miss Matilda's head. She supposed it to be the clothes themselves that appeared to Hiram so desirable. But if a real city boarder should appear among them in the bicycling costume, which she understood to be exceedingly simple, Hiram might see that city folk did not attach such value to city clothes, and so be gradually weaned from his dangerous predilections.

Hence it happened that Grahame Johnson read in the evening paper: "Wanted—a boarder with a bicycle."

It tickled his fancy. He could answer all the requirements. He had always been a boarder, and he had recently bought a bicycle. But what was their idea? Would they want to borrow the bicycle? Or did they want a boarder with an object in life that would keep him most of the time away from home, and therefore away from meals? At any rate, it was worth finding out. He might, at least, secure material for a New England dialect story. So a few days later he took part of the journey by rail and the rest on his wheel. Had he known Miss Matilda's preference for a boarder in simplicity of costume he could not have looked tired, hotter, or dustier than he did when he finally appeared at her front door. It was an attractive front door, that is, it would have been if it had been standing open to the wide hall, with the breath of June and June roses blowing through it. But at the moment it was shut fast, and when his knock was finally responded to, there was an ominous and thunderous unbarring of a bolt, implying that a June rose would have

next train. It would never do to let this excellent lady suspect that he had merely come to reconnoitre.

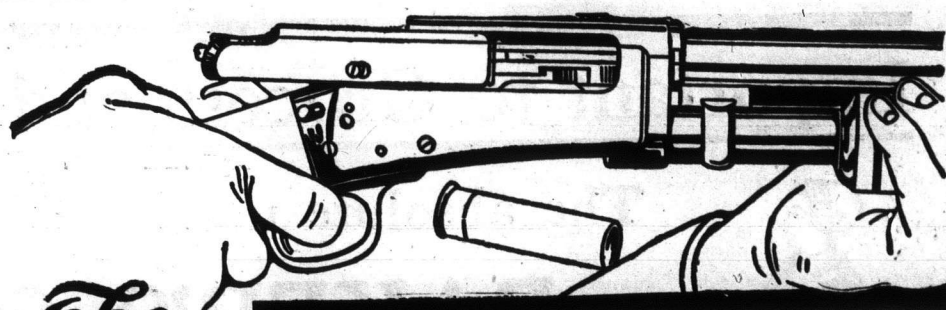
"Then you can go right up to the room next to Hiram's, and—"

Miss Matilda was about to add, as she had to her first boarder, "Take off your things," but he looked so distinctly as if everything had been taken off that could be, that she hesitated. It seemed more appropriate to tell him to "put on his things," for she never allowed even Hiram to come to the table in his shirt sleeves, but poor fellow, his trunk hadn't come.

In half an hour they were all at the tea-table, luxuriating in the pleasant sense of a stimulating novelty. The cold ham was pink and thin and delicious, the biscuit had "risen" properly, and the waffles were done to a turn. Miss Matilda was the only unexcited person present. Things had turned out exactly as she had intended they should, and she was content.

The June Rose was agreeably stimulated by the prospect of more fun than she had anticipated. Mr. Grahame Johnson believed himself in Paradise.

And Hiram? Hiram was a surprise. Grahame had expected a lean, lank countryman, devoted to corn; and behold, he was a student from a Western college, merely seeking rest and recreation in the friendly tilling of his aunt's pastures as a diversion. Mr. Johnson felt a little afraid of Hiram. His name was against him, but everything else appeared to be in his favor. Why Mr. Johnson was not agreeably surprised at finding the other young man attractive seems unreasonable; but it had a reason.



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