

and forward lot I call them who imagine they can run things better than the old tried families like ourselves, and only to-day we learn—

"It was sprung on us—just sprung on us!" interjected Miss Jane.

"To-day we learn," resumed the other, "that our church has chosen a pastor!"

"Settled the matter out of hand," put in Miss Jane, mournfully.

"Without as much as by-your-leave to us—us who have ever been the leading subscribers, and who've entertained more ministerial candidates here in our home than you could count on all your fingers and toes!"

"Yes, and they've been and gone and called a young man, single man—what's this Mrs. Kenton said his name was, sister?"

"Oh, don't ask me. It went in one ear and out the other! We'll hear it soon enough. Why, Mr. Grantley's swallowed something the wrong way. Dear, dear! Ring for a glass of water, Jane, do."

"It's all right," said the gentleman, "I swallowed my tea too quickly. Pray go on. What were you about to say?"

As he cleared his throat he glanced covertly and swiftly at Miss Weeks whose lips were twitching at the corners, for she knew her cousins very well—and was familiar with all their little ploys and peccadilloes.

"Well, I was just saying," resumed Miss Morefield with her prim and somewhat severe air, "that this young fellow we are about to have thrust upon us, is very likely a callow youth just fresh from college. So, when Graysville gets tired of him they can't blame us. It was none of our doing."

"No, indeed!" Miss Jane cried, nodding her head so energetically that she dislodged her back-comb.

"I'm so sorry," murmured Mr. Grantley, "I am sure you must have had quite a siege of er—theologitis, if you have entertained such a number of preachers. It must have become monotonous."

"Oh well—no. As a rule, they are a nice gentlemanly class of men," returned Miss Jane, generously. "They might get on some people's nerves, but I don't mind them at all."

"There are really no two of them alike," remarked Miss Morefield. "Though on the surface they may seem to be. And if I do say it as shouldn't, I'm a pretty good judge of preachers in general. I can spot one every time."

"Really? How clever of you!" Mr. Grantley's eyebrows rose, incredulously.

"Yes, indeed," Miss Jane put in, "sister is smart. She can read a person like a book."

"There are some things I can't stand in a preacher, though," Miss Morefield went on, "I always mistrust the man who parts his hair in the centre. He is apt to be sissified—if you know what I mean?"

Mr. Grantley nodded gravely.

"Now that Mr. Cayley—the one before

dear old Doctor Lang, you remember, Jane—Mr. Cayley parted his hair in the middle, and believe me, Mr. Grantley, Mrs. Cayley was the one who ought to have worn the trousers."

"Yes, I was real glad when the Lang's came," Miss Jane assented.

"But we didn't have 'em long. The Doctor got to be too old and moss-backed, so we—"

"We asked for his resignation. I went around and got as many names as I could. It was hard work."

"Yes, pretty nearly everyone seemed satisfied to keep him. But we persuaded them finally that progress must be maintained even at the expense of natural affection. We wanted a man with an Edinburgh degree and some private means if possible, to settle here indefinitely. But we never could afford to go that high of course, though we are still hoping that some one like that will be attracted to the town."

Mr. Grantley coughed, deprecatingly.

"I am sure if Edinburgh University—only knew of your wishes," he remarked, "there would be a stampede for Graysville at once."

There was a moment's silence and then Miss Morefield sighed dolefully and resumed:

"Oh, we have certainly had a time! I sometimes think our ideals are too high or something like that. In the last twelve years we have had no less than fourteen men (calling themselves servants of the Lord) come here to impart the Word to us."

"Fourteen? Settled ministers?" queried Miss Weeks.

"Well, they didn't settle long. Graysville is—well rather particular. It is called a difficult charge to fill."

"I should imagine so!" exclaimed Mr. Grantley.

"We are said to be ahead of the times—I mean there is such a degree of culture here in this seemingly sleepy little place, that we are not easily satisfied."

"We want our religion administered in strictly up-to-date style," amended Miss Jane.

"Mr. Roland was up-to-date but his methods were peculiar. He had good subject matter but no delivery," said Miss Morefield. "No and with Mr. Hagan—the quick tempered candidate

you remember, sister?—it was exactly the opposite. He gave us nothing but Old Testament doctrine, but he talked like William Jennings Bryan, while he was giving it to us."

"I loved his voice," murmured Miss Morefield, reminiscently.

"Then there was young Mr. Bentley who lisped slightly and Mr. Day who had such a beautiful complexion, but we learned afterward that he was consumptive. Then came the Reverend Ebenezer Stayner. They called him a live wire. I don't know—he didn't look like a wire, though he was very much alive. He used to pound the pulpit and roll his eyes and fling his arms about! Dear, dear! My nerves used to be in such a state every Sunday morning I always had to drink four cups of tea to my dinner, and lay down on the sofa for an hour afterward."

"I didn't care for his wife," remarked the other sister, "she kept to herself too much. I remember going over one day to give her some advice on how to run her house and children—"

"And she told her sister," interjected Miss Jane, "that she guessed that was her own business. What do you think of that?"

"Shocking!" Mr. Grantley shook his head emphatically, as he spoke.

"I liked dear Mrs. Young better. Poor thing—she died here," sighed Miss Morefield.

"Consumption," explained Miss Jane, "though there are some that say she was simply worn out. Too much was expected of her I believe. Of course we must have our pastor's wife to preside at our meetings and we certainly expect her always to keep nicely dressed, and her house should always be thrown open at any time in case any of us require the parlors. Then she herself should be at all times cheerful and bright, and if she is a true helpmeet to her husband, she should try and cut down expenses by doing without hired help, because of course twelve hundred a year isn't a fortune."

"How many children did this Mrs.—Young I think you said—have?" asked Florence Weeks, gravely.

"She had eight," said Miss Jane. "Little demons they all were, too," remarked Miss Morefield.

"Your new pastor," observed Mr. Grantley, "will scarcely offend on that score. I understood you to say he was not married."

"No, but he will be. He is engaged, they say."

"To some empty-headed young thing in her teens, I suppose," added Miss Morefield.

"Well, don't let's borrow trouble, sister," said Miss Jane, virtuously, "as long as this Mr.—whatever-his-name—is doesn't lisp and stammer like poor Mr. Bentley (whom they used to dub 'soda-fountain'), and as long as he is earnest and his wife doesn't put on too many airs I guess we can stand 'em for as long as they'll be here."

(Continued on Page 22).



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