



Ball to June

Hail to June, who comes a-singing,
 Roses in her hair!
 All the little birds are winging,
 All the blossom-bells are ringing,
 Golden chalcids are flinging
 Fragrance on the air.

Hail to June and glad-to-morrows,
 Song and summer-time!
 June who covers all the furrows
 Thick with blossoms; June who
 borrows
 All the wealth of earth, and sorrows
 Hides within a rhyme!

Celia Myrover Robinson.

A Slip in Orthodoxy

By Joanne Gled Strange.

"Yes, John, there's the church and I'm quite sure this is the house!"

A prim little woman in a gray gown turned into the gate and walked briskly, in spite of the warm August day, up the long brick sidewalk to the parsonage. She was followed by a tall, erect man in a Prince Albert and silk hat, who looked from side to side at the carefully mowed lawn and at the beds of pansies and mignonette near the house. She waited for him at the steps of the porch, and as they reached the door he looked down at her and smiled while she carefully arranged her gray gown and straightened her neat little straw bonnet before pulling the bell.

"It looks just as it used to, I do declare!" She glanced from the big brick church on one side to the cornfields on the other, which stretched away in the distance, and then up to the man who was still looking at her, and her eyes were strangely young in spite of the wrinkles about them, and her cheeks were slightly flushed.

"Are you quite sure there is time, John?" Don't you think we ought to hurry?" She pulled the bell again. Then turning to him, she carefully brushed a speck from his correct black coat with her lace-edged handkerchief.

"Plenty of time, my dear," he answered in his deep voice; and he smiled again as the pink in her cheeks grew deeper and her eyes lowered at the "my dear."

"I'd be willing to stand here all afternoon, and look at you." He leaned against a porch pillar and took off his hat, brushing the thick iron gray hair from his forehead. "Only if we can't get this minister, we must look up the justice of the peace to marry you to-day, Methodist parson or not." He straightened up put on his hat and reached for the bell himself.

"They must be home." There was an anxious tone in the little lady's voice. "It would be dreadful not to be married by a Methodist minister, when I've been a Methodist for almost forty-five years. There I hear some one. John, John," she whispered in a flutter, "you sure you've got the ring?"

"Sure's shooting, Amelia. Don't you worry. I say, hurriedly, 'you do the talking. You know the ways of parsons better than I do—haven't been near one for twenty-five years—not since I went with you, way back in—'"

"Hush!"

The door was opened by a rosy-

cheeked, panting maid, her clean white apron tied over one hip.

"Is—is this the parsonage?" The lady's voice trembled a bit.

"Stum," breathed the maid, holding aside the door.

"Is—is the minister in?" asked the visitor, stepping over the sill. The gentleman followed, his silk hat in his hand.

"No, mumm, yes'um, no—that is, Mrs. Neal is in, mumm, and I can fetch Mr. Neal for yez. Just step into the stiddy, mumm. I'll call the missus," and the maid vanished down the hall, leaving the couple to look at each other, and to hear in a stage whisper: "Come quick, mumm. They wants the minister, I thinks it's a weddin' fra' the looks of 'em."

And when Mrs. Neal, a smiling young woman with fair hair and blue eyes, came cordially to greet them, she found a very blushing, "awfully fussed little woman," as she told her husband afterwards, "and a big man with eyes full of twinkles," standing close together in the hall. She took them into the study, saying she had sent the maid for her husband. He was at work in the garden. It was such a fine day for wedding he couldn't resist it, she told them. Wouldn't they be seated? Hadn't it been a fine summer?—she continued as they both found chairs on opposite sides of the room—she cool and pleasant. Mr. Neal had thought of taking them to the seaside for August; but the baby was teething, so they decided they had better keep him home. He was asleep now. But it had been so cool they hadn't minded. Did the callers live in Pleasant Valley? She thought she hadn't seen them, but then she and Mr. Neal had not lived there so very long, and didn't know every one yet. They were Quebec people, but they did like Ontario so much.

The little woman was becoming less nervous, and the big man watched her as she explained how she had lived all her life in Norris Falls, but she had visited in Pleasant Valley twenty-two years ago, and had always hoped to come back some time. She—they were going on a trip. The place didn't seem to have changed much in that time. Here—they were going on a trip. Here her face became pink again and she looked quickly at the man. They were going to Montreal and then to Quebec, and then to Halifax. They—

A door slammed and the minister entered the room. His keen eyes looked first at the woman and then

at the man, and lastly at his wife, who rose and said to her visitors, "My husband, Mr. Neal!"

Mr. Neal shook hands with each of them cordially. "I'm sorry to have been so long," he explained, "but I was out in the garden when Maggie called me and was anything but presentable. It's a fine day for gardening." He seated himself and looked from one to the other as he talked.

The big man admitted the fineness of the day; thought it a trifle warm; wiped his face with his handkerchief and, after glancing several times at the little woman across the room, whose eyes were fixed on him, he straightened his shoulders, looked the minister fully in the face and said: "We called on you this afternoon because we wish to be married. Miss Chesna is from Norris Falls and I am from Deaver, and we came here to be married because we preferred a quiet wedding, and didn't care to have every one in Norris Falls talking about it till we were well away from there."

Mr. Neal nodded gravely. "I have the license here;" the man tapped his breast pocket, "and we came to you because Amelia would be married by a minister of her own denomination, even if she wouldn't be married in her own town." He smiled at the gray-krowned figure on the couch.

The minister looked at his wife and smiled and then turned again to



the man. "Have either of you been married before? You see there are some questions I must ask," he explained as they both laughed, the man throwing back his head and filling the room with his merriment, and the little lady's gaiety rippling in spite of her nervousness.

"Well, I haven't," chuckled the man. "How about you, Amelia?" "How foolish you are, John!" Then with dignity: "You let me talk. We aren't either of us married," she explained to the minister and his wife. "We were expected to be married some time ago—twenty-five years ago to-day—but it was postponed." She said this simply, but she held high her head in the little straw bonnet. "And if I don't bury a bit of me I won't get that five-thirty train. It's most three already."

The minister looked at his wife. Her eyes were strangely soft, and she smiled at him.

"Perhaps Miss Chesna would like to come into my room and take off her gloves," she said, and led the way from the study. She stopped to tell the maid to make some lemonade and get out some cookies and fruit-cake.

When they returned to the study some moments later, they found the two men discussing the merits of the State of Colorado, and of Denver

in particular, quite as if they had known each other for years.

John got to his feet as they came into the room. The little lady had taken off her bonnet and had combed up the soft grey hair on her forehead, and in the lace at the neck of the grey dress Mrs. Neal had pinned a pink rose. John looked at Miss Amelia so long that she hurriedly selected a red rose from the vase on the mantel and pinned it to his coat.

Mrs. Neal bustled about, lowering and raising the shades, and bringing great bowls of nasturtiums and sweet peas and scarlet rambler from the other rooms, and as a last touch, she sent Mr. Neal, upstairs for a white fur rug to put in front of the bow window where the bride and groom were to stand.

It took Miss Amelia a long time to fasten the flower in the groom's button-hole, and it was only when the little maid had been called in as a witness that the rose was pinned quite to the bride's satisfaction.

Then the groom brought out the license and placed it on the table, and with it a little red velvet box. "The ring," he explained, looking smilingly down at the grey head which barely reached his shoulder.

"Oh, you want the ring service?" The minister opened the box and took out the little gold band, handing it to the groom, whose fingers were not very steady just then.

"I have your names correctly," the minister asked, "Amelia Chesna and John Wetherby? That's right, I think. Now, if you will just stand together on the rug, I'll begin."

The young minister was very solemn as he read the marriage service, and his wife thought she never had heard him give it more impressively, not even at the biggest church weddings they had ever had. The maid was eager for the response, for her apron was still on sideways and she had added a cap which perched coyly over one ear, but no one noticed her. The bride and groom were far beyond noticing anything. His voice trembled a bit on the "I will," and hers was clear and firm, but they almost dropped the ring between them, making the little maid gasp and put out one hand involuntarily.

The groom held the bride's hand during the prayer, and after the "Amen," he kissed her and Mrs. Neal kissed her, and the minister congratulated them, and the little maid hurried from the room wiping her eyes on her apron.

Then the minister produced a little white and gold wedding book with forget-me-nots on the cover—their wedding present, he told them—and they signed their names in it, and Mrs. Neal signed hers and the little maid signed hers. "Marguerite Angeline Casey" in a large round hand, making a slant down the page.

After this they had the lemonade and the fruit-cake and cookies, served on the best china by Marguerite Angeline, the minister and his wife keeping up the conversation, the bride and groom content to sit silently together on the sofa.

Then there was that five-thirty train to make, and this quiet aftermath could not last forever. Mrs. Wetherby went to Mrs. Neal's room to put on her bonnet and gloves, leaving John and the minister to settle the fee.

"You've been so good to us, my dear!" the bride said softly, pinning on the straw bonnet before the mirror—"just as if we'd always known you, and I'm so glad I insisted on coming right up here. I seemed to remember the place, even after so many years. I went to that church when I was a girl, and I sat down by a window looking