

"Wife," said Ed. Wilbur one morning, as he sat stirring his coffee with one hand and holding a plum cake on his knee with the other, and looked across the table into the bright eyes of his little wife, "wouldn't it be a good joke to get bachelor Bill Smiley to take widow Watson to Barnum's show next week?"

Quietly he waded along so as not to stir up the mud, and when he got to the right spot he dropped under the water and came up with his teeth in his hand, and replaced them in his mouth. But hark! What noise is that? A wagon and a little dog barking with all his might, and his horse is starting. "Whoa! whoa! Stop, you brute you, stop!" But stop he would not, but went off to a spanking pace with the unfortunate bachelorette after him and the little dog yelping after him. Bill was certainly in capital running costume, but though he strained every nerve he could not touch the buggy or reach the lines that were dragging on the ground.

left hand, and pulling the stopper out with her teeth, she stuck it under his nose. Bill was just taking in breath for a mighty sigh, and the pungent odor made him throw back his head so far that he lost his balance and went over the low back buggy. The little woman gave a little scream as his bare feet flew past her head, and covering her face with her hands, gave way to tears or smiles—it is hard to tell which. Bill was "right side up" in a moment, and leaning over the back of the seat was humbly apologizing and explaining when Ed. Wilbur and his wife and baby drove up behind and stopped. Poor Bill felt that he would rather have been shot than had Ed. Wilbur catch him in such a scrape, but there was no help for it now, so he called Ed. to him, and whispered in his ear. Ed. was like to burst with suppressed laughter, but he beckoned to his wife to draw up, and after saying something to her, he helped the widow out of Bill's buggy and into his, and the two women went on, leaving the men behind. Bill lost no time in arranging his toilet as well as he could, and then with great persuasion Ed. got him to go home with him, and hunting up slippers and socks, and getting him washed and combed, had him quite presentable when the ladies arrived. I need not tell how the story was all worked out of bashful Bill, and how they all laughed as they sat around the tea table that night, but will conclude by saying that they went to the show together, and Bill has no fear of Gus Stockrider now.

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