

WHILE NED BALKED

By RUBY DOUGLAS

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The rain was falling in torrents as the congregation came out of the little church at Auburn. Not a cloud had marred the clearness of the sky when the sexton pulled the time worn bell rope to call the good people to service, and it was not surprising that the fair sex were arrayed in their smart spring frocks and bonnets.

The women tucked up their skirts and huddled together on the shallow porch while the men made hasty dashes through the rain to nearby homes for umbrellas or to the old fashioned top buggies in which they had driven to church. They returned laden with protection of some kind for the frills and fineries.

"Land sakes, Inez, whatever 'll you do?" asked a prim looking old lady in black of a pretty girl in a pale blue frock at her side. "You'll never walk that two mile in this rain and in that get up."

Inez Taylor looked anxiously out at the willful little raindrops dancing on the board walks. "I'll just wait here until it's over, Aunt Betty," she answered, but her pretty blue eyes looked ready to help the rain with their



NED THOUGHT A NICE REST UNDER THE TREES WOULD BE GOOD.

tears. She was thinking of the mud through which she must walk even when the rain ceased, and she looked down sadly at her dainty French heeled boots and the billowy ruffles of her new spring finery.

As the rain poured on an old white horse attached to an equally ancient black buggy stopped in front of the church. The occupant, a young man, pulled from beneath the seat some side curtains and prepared to put them on.

"Well, I'm blessed if that ain't Robert Davis!" cried Aunt Betty. "Robert, oh, Robert, come!"

"Don't, Aunt Betty," interrupted Inez quickly as she drew back into the church door. But she was too late. The young man had heard and was on the porch in a minute.

"Robert, you're just the man we want. You can take Inez home, for you're a-goin' right by the house. Ain't it fortunate?" Aunt Betty might have observed from the expression of her niece's face and the somewhat embarrassed attitude of the young man that they did not agree with her.

"I shall be only too glad, Mrs. Withersby, to drive you and Miss Inez home. Old Ned is slow, but he gets there in time," said the young man, looking directly at the slender woman and avoiding Inez's eyes.

"Oh, but I ain't a-goin' home. I'm a-goin' to step right across the way to take dinner with Susan and Matilda, and you and Inez will have more room anyhow. That's a dear boy." She patted him affectionately on the arm; she could not reach the big, broad shoulders. "My sakes, but you are a-growin'!" Robert! How's your mother? Come, Inez, let me see you started home, Aunt Betty, womanlike, asked more questions than she expected to have answered.

Inez drew back into the church. "Aunt Betty, I can wait until the rain is over and not bother Mr. Davis," she said, averting her eyes from the young man, who stood awkward and silent.

"Nonsense, child! As if you and Robert hadn't driven home together many a time. Bother, indeed? Come away, child."

Aunt Betty was perfectly right. They had driven together many a time, and perhaps if the old white horse could talk he might add that the conversation would not convey the impression that either one was "bothered." But it was fully a month since he had joggled along before his handsome young master and the fair Inez, whom he had ventured to think was his mistress to be.

"Come, Inez," said Bob, looking into her eyes for the first time. "Very well; I suppose I must," she replied, tucking up her skirt and stepping ahead of him. He thought she had never looked so pretty; a little petulant pout was becoming to Inez.

"Tuck in her dress, Robert," said Aunt Betty when the young people were in the seat, "and don't let her spoil her bonnet. Goodby."

The sexton of the raindrops, the

buggy top and the splashing of old Ned's hoofs in the muddy road were the only sounds which broke the silence in the vehicle. Neither one had spoken. After awhile Bob Davis leaned toward his fair companion and, taking her hand, said, "I'm sorry, Inez, that you had to come with me against your wishes, but it could not be."

"So am I, very sorry indeed, Mr. Davis," she interrupted, pulling her hand from him. "Nothing further need be said."

They lapsed into silence again. Bob thought of the many times she had not been reluctant to drive with him and a certain moonlight night not so long since when she had put her pretty head on his shoulder and told him he might hold the reins of life for her always. He thought, too, of another night when they had quarreled and of how she took the ribbons from his hands and urged Ned to hurry, so she might be soon rid of his company, she said. He knew she did not mean it. She was angry and they were both stubborn.

"Inez," he began again, "won't you?"

"No, I won't do anything you ask, Mr. Davis. Please hurry. I wish to get home." And Inez moved farther into the corner of the seat. She was provoked to think they had met in this way, and, while she was longing to be friends with him again, she also wanted him to apologize for all the cross things he had said to her on that night and, yes, for all she had said too. She wanted to see how long he would wait, and this chance meeting had spoiled it all.

"Get up, Ned; get up," said Bob, touching his faithful old friend lightly with the whip. But Ned, who had a few ideas of his own, thought a nice little rest under the dripping trees would be a good thing for him and incidentally help along matters behind him and refused to move. He had balked. It was not the first time, and both the occupants of the buggy knew what it meant. Ned would go when he was ready, and not until then. Perhaps both minds remembered an occasion when one of Ned's tantrums was a welcome accident.

"This is most annoying," said Inez, looking ready to cry.

"Yes? Ned is stubborn too." Bob placed a decided accent on the last word.

Inez bit her lip. Why did he not apologize?

"I shall get out and walk," she said after Bob had urged Ned in vain to trot along.

"Don't be foolish, Inez," said Bob a little crossly. "I will get out myself if my company is so very distasteful to you." And, throwing back the rubber robe, he prepared to get out. The rain was coming down as persistently as ever, and he stopped to turn up his collar and trousers. As he placed his foot on the step to alight Inez caught the end of his coat.

"Bob, you'll get wet!" she cried, pulling at his coat. He did not turn around and stepped out into the mud and rain, jerking his coat from her a little roughly. She was ready to cry.

"That's better than freezing," he retorted.

"Please, please come back, Bob," and Inez burst into tears. That settled it. "Inez, sweetheart, I'm a brute. I know it. Forgive me, darling," he said as he jumped into the seat and took her in his arms. Ned thought it was now time to jog along.

"Take the lines, Bob," she said as Ned started and she looked up from the wet shoulder, "and never, never drop them again."

The First Ocean Steamer.

The first steam vessel which crossed the Atlantic ocean was under the American flag and was named the Savannah. The launching took place in New York harbor, on Aug. 23, 1818, and the first trip, began March 28, 1819, was from New York to Savannah, Ga., which was reached April 6.

She was advertised by her owner, William Scarborough of Savannah, to make the ocean trip, starting May 20, and passengers were advertised for. None, however, was willing to risk the voyage. The vessel sailed May 25, reaching the Irish coast June 10. The next day Lieutenant Bowin of the king's cutter Kite boarded the ship, thinking that because smoke was issuing from her smokestack that the vessel must be on fire.

Captain Rogers had charge of her during the voyage and afterward took her to Copenhagen, St. Petersburg and other foreign ports. The steamship was built by Francis Pickett and had a fuel storage capacity of seventy-five tons of coal and twenty-five cords of wood, and her wheels were so constructed as to be removable in stormy weather.

Too Good to Be True.

"I think your daughter intends to elope."

The old man looked at the neighbor who was always interfering in matters that did not concern him and shook his head.

"I can hardly believe it," he said. "I have every reason to believe."

"But that won't do," interrupted the old man. "You forget that this is a serious matter that ought not to be allowed to rest upon hearsay evidence. When one man comes to another and tells him that his daughter is about to forsake the parental roof under cover of the night he should be absolutely sure of what he says. Have you incontrovertible evidence that what you say is true?"

"Well, no; I can't say that I have," replied the officious neighbor, beginning to feel that perhaps he had gone too far.

"Just as I feared," returned the old man. "This is the third time I've had my hopes suddenly raised by reports of this sort, and it is growing monstrous."

How Mrs. Jones Got a Seat

However crowded the car or boat may be, Mrs. Jones gets a seat, thanks to her three-year-old Gladys. This is the way it works:

Enter Mrs. Jones. All the seats occupied; women calmly indifferent; men buried behind newspapers.

Gladys—Mamma, mamma!

Mrs. Jones—Yes, dear.

Gladys—Where is your seat, mamma, and where's my seat?

Heads reappear above newspapers, while Mrs. Jones appears unconscious, and one of the rebuked men offers Mrs. Jones a seat, while his neighbor makes room for Gladys.

But the denouement came when Mr. Jones happened to be with his wife. Gladys piped her query about their seats.

"Hush, Gladys!" said Jones.

"But mamma told me to say that."

"Then it was mother's turn to say 'Hush!'"—New York Times.

A Proud Boast.



"Let's throw rocks at him, an' maybe we'll come back an' kick us."

"Wot good 'll dat do us?"

"Why, den we kin brag dat Kid McGuff, de champeen middle weight, has kicked us onces!"—New York Evening Journal.

Too Much Sentiment.

"Then there is no prospect of any marriage between Jack and Miss Bittinger?"

"No, indeed. The engagement was broken off for good and all."

"What was the trouble?"

"Oh, Jack was entirely to blame! Mabel had been trying to prove to him what a prize he was getting and remarked that Tom Maggleton would give his eyes to marry her. And Jack said that didn't prove much. One of Tom's eyes is crossed, and he squints horribly with the other. And Mabel flared up and said they were the best eyes he had, and it was beautiful of him to offer to give them up. And Jack said he thought it was much more beautiful to keep his eyes and devote them to serving her comfort and happiness. And Mabel said he had no sentiment about him, and Jack said he had no intention of making a blind fool of himself. And Mabel said she hated a man without sentiment, and then Jack took his hat."

"And what is Mabel going to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"And what is Jack going to do?"

"Well, everybody is certain he is going to marry Clara Coupons, the richest girl in the state."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Two Useful Discoveries.

"If we had more money at our command," declare the polar explorers, "we could find the north pole in no time."

"If you had more north poles," retort the plutocrats, "you could discover one once in awhile too."

"Whereat the explorers discover that their compasses have been deflected by the wrong bank accounts."—Judge.

The Propitious Moment.

"I don't see what excuse there was for publishing this volume of verse."

"Why, the author is a thirty-second cousin of James Jones."

"And who is James Jones, pray?"

"Oh, he's a man the two hundredth anniversary of whose birth or death falls some time about now."—Detroit Free Press.

A Scandal Heeded.

Gladys—If Mrs. Playfair is so happy with her husband why is she getting a divorce?

Elsie—Because she dreads the facts of their prosaic agreement coming out in the society papers. It would be such a scandal, you know!—Brooklyn Life.

Messing in Disguise.

"John," said the wife disconsolately, "the wolf is at the door!"

"Good!" cried her husband. "Now the bill collectors will be afraid to come near us."—Philadelphia Ledger.

An Involuntary Gift.

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"What a lovely road! Did your mamma send it to me?"

"Yes, but she don't know it."—San Francisco Examiner.

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