"Call a Man."

A plain, unassuming, bashful young man was John Eldred, living with his mother on a good farm, left him by his father, who was dead. They were in excellent circumstances, and John was as happy as a well to do farmer can be. He was no fool, either, for he had a good library—and read it, too—and gained a great deal of useful knowledge. John was good looking, not a handsome man (for there are none), but a tall, finely formed man. But John had one failing in my eyes; he was twenty six years old and not married. Nor was there any prospect of any such event happening very soon, for of all the bashful men that ever wore a shirt collar John Eldred was the worst. The girls in that immediate vicinity were strangers to him, John always avoiding everything that wore a dress, save his mother and sister.

John's mother was a quiet, loving woman, who ever had uppermost in her mind the happiness of her children, consequently she had for some time secretly wished that John was married.

Gertrude, John's sister, was a very pretty young lady, and also shared her mother's wish, but how to bring it about she could not imagine.

In the same neighborhood lived Judge Clark, who had a daughter named Mabel. Now John for a long time admired Mabel, and although he had never betrayed it, his sister had guessed his secret, and resolved to bring about a match between the two, but just how to do it she did not know.

It happened in July, the anecdote I am now in shape to relate. Gertrude had invited a number of girls to a quilting party one afternoon, Mabel among the rest. She told John they were coming, and then added:

"Now, John, for my sake, do come in to tea this afternoon. You know all the girls that will be here, and—"

"But, Gertrude, that patch of timothy by the north wood must be cut, and as Jim has gone to stay over Sunday, I shall have to cut it."

And so, much to Gertrude's chagrin, he took his scythe over his shoulder after dinner and started for the patch of timothy. But he lingered around the orchard until he saw the plump figure of Mabel Clark coming, and then, heaving a sigh, he started for his work.

The patch of timothy referred to was a newly cleared piece of land, nearly surrounded by woods, and so full of stumps and log piles that it was impossible to use the machine. [illegible] return to the party.

It was a very warm day, so the girls had moved the chairs out of doors in the shade of some large maples, and there they sat chatting, joking and laughing as only a party of light-headed girls can.

Meanwhile John had mowed several times across the patch, and it began to be terribly hot. The sun poured its rays down with great intensity, and the thick wood on all sides kept off any breeze that might be stirring. John was more than hot—he was fairly boiling and as thirsty as an old toper. So John, thinking that no one could possibly see him, sat down on a log and took off his shoes and pantaloons, and then, with his long gingham shirt and wide rimmed straw hat and his socks, resumed mowing. He had mowed twice across the piece, and was picking out the tall grass around an old log pile, when right beside him he saw a pair of blue racers.

John was no coward, but he was mortally afraid of snakes. If he had been warm before, he was a lump of ice now. With a dash of his scythe he cut off the head of one of them, and the other one raised his head and darted toward him. John dropped his scythe, turned and jumped just as the hooked teeth of the snake caught above the wide, firm hem of the rear end of his gingham shirt.

He cast one look behind him, and saw his dreaded enemy, streaming out like the penant from a steamship, and, thinking only of the terrible fate that awaited him if he stopped, bounded toward the house with the speed of an express train.

On, on he ran through the north meadow and orchard, and, as he neared the house, the thought of the party flashed through his mind. But there was no other way, and so on he ran.

He dashed down past the west end of the house, and as he rounded the corner the whole party of girls met his view.

"Call a man!" he yelled, and then turned the corner. So great was his momentum that the snake swung around and struck him on his bare legs like the sharp sting of a rawhide whip.

The girls screamed and jumped, and the quilt went over on the ground. The vision sped around the corner, and once more came the cry:

"Call a man!"

No quicker did he disappear around the corner of the house than he would appear at the other corner. Every time he turned the corner he would receive a terrible blow from the cold, slimy snake, which would raise him from the ground at least four feet and at every blow he would yell,

"Call a man!"

The frightened girls rushed for the house, and they had hardly got inside the door as John flew past it with a shout,

"Call a man!"

Down across the road he went, leaping the gate at a bound, and as he cantered through the flock of hens, scattering them in all directions, the shout rose loud and clear:

"Call a man!"

Around the barn, back again toward the house, went the strange pair, and as the gate was again leaped, came the cry this time of:

"For God's sake, call a man!"

As he again disappeared around the house, Mabel Clark ran out of the door, and, seizing a stick some four feet in length, stationed herself at the corner, with the cudgel elevated above her head. On came John, panting like an engine, and as he came around the corner, down went the club, barely grazing John's head, but striking the racer a blow that broke its hold and back at the same time. John concluded it best not to wait, but, gathering his remaining strength for a final dash bounded into the house, up stairs and into his room.

An hour later Gertrude tapped at his door. "John, will you come down to tea or shall I call a man."

"I will come down, Gertrude," was his answer in a firm tone.

And he did. He made a careful toilet, and there was not a feature of his face that betrayed each treatment. Mabel had extracted a promise from the girls not to speak of the episode, or betray any knowledge of it whatever.

Mabel had John's company home that night; and in the glorious October weather there was a wedding at Judge Clark's. It was not until then that the story came out, but John often says to Mabel: "I am thankful to Providence that you did not call a man!"

A Down-East farmer, known far and wide by his patriotic title, had a neighbor who was in the habit of working on Sundays; but after awhile this Sabbath-breaker joined the church. One day our friend met the minister to whose church he belonged. "Well Uncle Sam," said he, "do you see any difference in Mr. P. since he joined the church?" "Oh, yes," said Uncle Sam, "a great difference. Before, when he went out to mend his fences he carried his axe over his shoulder; but now he carries it under his coat."

Mr. Stephens has many stories to tell of negroes, and one is of a famous cotton and chicken depredator, who since the war met the ex-Vice President in the road. "Well, Thomas," was the kindly salutation, "I was sorry to hear that you had been in trouble about Mrs. Tripp's chickens." "Yes, Mars. Alec, I done quit all dat dy. "How many did you take before you stopped?" asked Mr. Stephens. "I tuck all she had, was the perfectly innocent reply.

"When a young female," says the autocrat of the Breakfast Table, "walks with a male not arm in arm, but his arm against the back of hers, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the 'teller' was you saw with her."

Probably the mild-eyed goat is the only animal ever invented that can eat twenty-four hours a day, and then get up in four before day and devour a flour barrel and seven old fruit cans for a lunch.
