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## THE INDEPENDENT.

## BIGGS' PICNIC.

### Post Mortem.

[From the Pacific Rural Press.]

"Hurrah, wife, we'll have a picnic," roared Mr. Biggs, as he dashed into the kitchen, where his wife was engaged in the delightful occupation of kneading bread. John Biggs did not stop here; he grabbed his wife around the waist, and, in spite of her struggles and remonstrances, commenced dancing up and down the culinary sanctuary. Round and round he went. Over went the table with the flour and dough. Down went the dish-pan, and crash went the kettle off the stove. "Hurrah, wife, we'll have a picnic," roared Mr. B., heedless of the destruction he had caused. His wife's remonstrances grew louder and louder, as he continued dancing, much against her will. At last, she freed herself by force. "Now, Mr. John Biggs, do you behold the ruption and scatteration you have been the cause of?" Mrs. Biggs was extremely fond of using big words, she did not, however, always use them correctly. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" she continued, "have you been and gone crazy? Have you no more respect and *adambition* for your affected spouse, than for to come and go and do it, as you have come and did it?" "O, never mind Sal; don't scold, I've arranged it all. Jones and I. The whole family of Joneses, and the whole family of Biggses are to unite in felicitous union and to have a picnic. Hurrah, wife, we'll have a picnic! Hurrah, wife!" And John Biggs was about to commence his dancing again; but his wife contemptuously threw the dish-rag at him. This act so astonished that worthy, that he forgot his intention, and stared in blank surprise at his contemptuous spouse. "Wot!" he exclaimed, "don't you want to go on a picnic? Don't you want to—?" "No I don't. Aren't you aware that Anne Jane does not possess a dress fit for a picnic? Don't you know that William John and Samuel James have not received a novel pair of boots for quite a period of existence? No, of course not. You don't perceive your affected spouse going about the house in a morain' wrapper, while Mrs. Bontain promulgate the streets in a silk dress. Then you come to thy domestic hearth and propogate goin' to a picnic. No, Mr. Biggs, esquire." She always called him Mr. B., esquire. "No picnic for us." "Why, my dear, what do you mean? It was only last June that I purchased a dress for you, and one for Anne Jane; besides Sam James and Will John's boots are plenty good enough for a picnic." So saying, Mr. B. turned on his heel, and left the kitchen to his triumphant wife who firmly believed she had gained a decisive victory. In spite of this opinion, two days after she was busily engaged in preparing the eatables for the proposed picnic. The Joneses were to call for the Biggses at 6 A. M. on Thursday. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday went slowly by. Wednesday night, Mrs. Biggs staid awake. She was sure they would all be late. She knew it, she felt it. At midnight she succeeded in rousing Mr. B., who was snoring vigorously, and informed him that it was six o'clock. "No, my dear; really now, it can't be six; why, I've only got to sleep." "Mr. Biggs, esquire, if there is one predicament I am noted for more than another, it is the faculty of correctly designating the proper time. I know it is six, Mr. Biggs, esquire, and you must get up immediately." Biggs reluctantly scrambled out of bed, rubbing his eyes, and proceeded to don his clothes. He had nearly finished, when he bethought himself of glancing at his watch. He was justly indignant, when he discovered the hands to point at five minutes after twelve. Hastily disrobing himself he again ensconced himself beneath the bed-clothes, muttering

something about some people always knowing everything. Whereupon Mrs. B. took the opportunity to lecture him for half an hour on the "irreverent embodiment of the sterner sex." An hour passed slowly away; again Mrs. B. was sure it was six o'clock, again Mr. B. was certain it wasn't, again Mr. B. had to crawl reluctantly out, again Mr. B. looked at the watch, and again he triumphantly declared Mrs. E. to be mistaken. So it went on from hour to hour, till the fated five o'clock arrived. Then there was bustle in the house of the Biggses. Mrs. B. was sure they had forgotten something. Mr. B. busied himself in doing everything. Will John had his hand in every basket. Anne Jane occupied herself in taking his fingers out again. Sam James followed his mother, plying her with question after question. A quarter before six saw the large hamper and the two smaller baskets on the sidewalk, backed by the whole Biggs family. "My, what detained the Joneses so long with the vehicle. They must have broken down. I know something has happened," asserted Mrs. B., when ten minutes had passed. The other five dragged slowly away, then, with a terrible rattle, and cracking of whips, and barking of dogs, and shouts of children, and cries of neighbors, and hurrahs of Mr. Biggs, the wagon turned the corner and Mr. Jones' red face shouted out, "hall laboard for the picnic!" "Hurrah," replied Mr. Biggs. Mr. B. always said "hurrah" on all occasions. "How is the equilibrium of your constitution?" inquired Mrs. B. Soon the hamper was aboard. Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Biggs filled one seat. Biggs, Anne, Jane and the two Miss Jones held another, Leander Jones, Will John and Sam James occupied a third. "Hal ready?" cried Mr. J. "Hurrah," replied Mr. B., touching up the horses and away they went. "Hurrah," again shouted Biggs. "Mr. Biggs, esquire, stop that hilarious manner of gestation," entreated Mrs. Biggs. "O let him be," remonstrated Mrs. Jones. At this moment Mr. J. dived suddenly underneath the seat, and brought out a large, black bottle. "Here Biggs," he cried, raising the bottle, "here's something to cheer us up. Take a whiff." Mr. B. applied the mouth to his lips and took quite a respectable whiff. Jones followed suit; but the ladies declined. On they went leaving the city slowly behind. Now they were out in the open fields. As yet they had seen no place suitable for their picnic grounds. "There's ha place," triumphantly shouted Mrs. Jones, as she caught sight of two little scrub-trees in the distance. The rest of the party objected, however, they wanted, as Mrs. Biggs aptly said, "something a little more unbragous." Along the road the wagon went, around corners, on farther and farther. The sun was up pretty high now. Everybody was hungry. In the excitement, the Joneses and the Biggses had neglected to partake of the necessary meal of breakfast. At this moment, Mrs. Biggs caught sight of Will John and Sam James as they were in the act of repeating a deprecation on the large hamper of eatables. What was everybody's horror to learn that the best pie, the pie which Mrs. Biggs had spent the most time on, the pie, in the making of which she had most exerted her self, was all gone. The young villains had consumed it every bit. Mrs. Biggs boxed their ears, and they set up quite a respectable boohoo. Just then a cry from the two Miss Jones attracted everybody's attention. The wagon had just turned a corner, and here was a fit spot. "What a lovely spot," said the Joneses in chorus. "How romantic! How poetic! How secluded! How awfully good!" A small stream ran between two large oak trees, that threw a delightful shade around. The grass looked

fresh and green. The shade appeared inviting. The water was clear and limpid. The vote of the party being taken, it was decided to stop here. Accordingly, out jumped everybody. Out came the hampers. Out came the baskets. Mr. B. and Mr. J. selected a spot. Soon the cloth was laid. Soon everything was on it. Soon they clustered around it. Mrs. Biggs and Mrs. Jones held the principal place among the eatables, but their husbands occupied the position of priority amidst the bottles. The two Miss Jones and Anne Jane sat carefully down on one side, while the noisy young Biggs and Leander Jones were arranged on the other. "Hurrah," shouted John Biggs Sr., "pass the pickles." "Here's your health man," he roared as he took a bite of pickle and quaffed a large glass of XX Stout. Each one was to give a toast. Mr. Jones followed next. "Here's lookin' hat ye Mrs. hand Miss Biggs, hand young Biggses." "Vel Mr. B. hi 'ope has ve villave menny 'appy hoccasions like the present hum," toasted Mrs. Jones. Mrs. B. could not resist the temptation to fire off her big words, and to close with a scrap of original poetry. She commenced as follows: "This glorious and enervating predicament is astronomicated by ne with exceeding circumlocution. I sincerely and devoutly desire that when the novel year shall have cast its beaming beams—" "Pass the san'wigs," roared Sam James. "Hush," excitedly whispered everybody present. "Well, I want the san'wigs," remonstrated Sam James. They were passed. Mrs. B. proceeded, "As I was remarkin' when it shall have perforated its beaming beams in juxtaposition to this felicitous event. I hope—I hope—I sincerely desire to—to be present. Through the perfumed atmospheric air, Through the enlightened waters there, Through these grandiloquent oaks majestic, We are delighted with our picnic." "Hurrah roared Mr. Biggs. "How nice! How extremely beautiful!" murmured the two Miss Jones. What his sweet sentiment!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones. "Pass the cheese," shouted Mr. J. The eldest Miss Jones had just come from boarding-school and toasted as follows. "It is with much palpitation that I ascend to address myself to this assemblage present; but, as the poet has ably expressed it, 'needs must when somebody drives.' I hope the revolving planets will be able in *compor mentis* to gaze composedly on us at this same time next year." "Very good. Hurrah!" exclaimed Mr. Biggs. But Mrs. B. was a little bit jealous, as she imagined the last toaster was "foreibly engulating her peculiar propposition." The remainder of the party asked to be excused from their part. Mr. Jones struggled to his feet, to deliver a second toast. "Ladies hand geman, ladies and geman, young ladies hand geman on this hoccasion—hon this hocc—hon han hoccasion like this—Ere's your very good ealth." "Pass the cake," roared the whole boys' side, in one breath. "Pickles, pickles, pickles," shouted Mr. Biggs. "Please to be so kind condescending and obliging to expediate the movements of the sandwiches in this direction," simpered the eldest Miss Jones. "Oh! Mr. Riggs, esquire," screamed Mrs. B., as that gentleman sat down in a custard pie. "I really beg your pardon my dear madam," he exclaimed as he jumped up, putting his foot in a second pie. "There! there you go again. Goodness me all my pies are going. I shall faint, I know I shall. Biggs, esquire, you're a brute—a good-for-nothing brute." Mr. Jones caught the pie-smasher by the coat-tails and attempted to make him sit down. Biggs' foot slipped, and crash he went at full length over the eatables. Squashed sausages, pickles, cheese, cakes, custard pies, cups, XX Stout, and a bottle of claret. Mrs. B. screamed and fainted. The two

Miss Jones were knocked speechless. Mrs. J. didn't know what to do. Will John roared. Sam James cried. Leander Jones attempted to drag Mr. Biggs off the table. At last, Jones the elder, caught him by the feet, and with one pull jerked him away back. What a sight. Everything was ruined. Nothing was left in the basket. No more eating. Everybody was hungry. They hadn't half enough. What should they do. The pepper had collided with the jelly. The mustard had scattered over the custard. The salt had seasoned the large pie. The porter had soaked all over the cake. The claret had stained the table-cloth. The pickles had, with great presence of mind, jumped into a bowl of milk. The pies had perished nobly. Everything was as flat as a pan-cake. All was spoilt. Naught was saved. What should they do? By this time Mrs. Biggs came suddenly to her senses. "A bright thought struck her. 'Mr. B., esquire,' she said, 'you unmanly brute, take that basket, and go over to that house, away down there, and purchase enough condiments for the assemblage.' With a humble air Mr. B. scrambled to his feet, took the basket, and started slowly off. Mr. Jones wished to accompany him; but Mrs. Biggs forbade. The house was about two miles off on the other side of a large orchard. Scrambling over the fence, Biggs walked pensively on. The sun was near the zenith. It sent down its beams with fearful heat. The portly Biggs waddled on leaving a pool of perspiration at every step. Soon he reached the house. In answer to his call a fat, burom, country-wife appeared, and in answer to his inquiry for "vittles," said, "she had eggs and bacon," and milk and bread, and apples." "O anything will do us, no matter what it is Anything to fill up on." The basket was soon filled to overflowing. He paid her the necessary amount, and started for camp. "Look out for the bull near the bottom of the orchard," she shouted after him. "All right," he answered back. What did he care for bulls. He was a new man now. He had a basket full of provisions. (Raw bacon, raw eggs and stale bread.) He was equal in fair fight to a dozen bulls, with that basket near him. How he would lighten the picnicers' hearts when he got to camp. He, Mr. John Biggs, of the city, what did he care for any bovine animal. As he was walking on, musing thus, he showed himself to possess a particular regard for that horned beast, for the next he hegrd a loud bellowing and a terrible thundering. "Great heavens! what's that?" he exclaimed giving an involuntary jump, knocking the basket against a tree, which had the effect of breading every egg. How they streamed out of the basket. "Holy Jerusalem!" he yelled giving a second jump. He looked behind. He glanced back. He saw a cloud of dust making with all speed straight for him. He determined to fly, and go he did. Away with all his might he flew. On the bull came thundering. Biggs still clutched the basket. How he made his heels fly. But in vain, the enraged animal was gaining on him every bound. What should he do? "Oh! poor Mrs. Biggs," he yelled, "and all the little Biggses; what will become of them. I'm a gone man. Hang old Jones and his picnic! I've been deluded and wheedled into this. Poor Biggs you—Oh! Oh! Lord Oh!" he cried as the bull nearly caught him, with his horns. Bang, crash went the basket, scattering apples, bread, bacon and broken egg shells around everywhere. The bull stopped an instant. Now was Biggs' only chance. Up a tree he must go, and up a tree he went, with all the haste possible. The tree was a small one; Biggs weighed two hundred. How that tree bent and nodded. He was sure it would break. Swing, swing, and down went Biggs. He was nearly frightened to death. Down, down,

within an inch or two of those hated horns, then up with a swing and down again. My, how hot the sun was. Oh! what misery he was in. Heaven help him, he was to be the prey of an enraged bull at last. Then his bruised, mangled and torn body would be brought home to his bereaved and sorrowing family. He saw how they all would look—every one. For two mortal century hours that bull staid there; then left as suddenly as had come. But Biggs was afraid to come down. It might be a ruse on the part of the despicable animal. He sat, swinging on that tree for another half an hour. In the meantime the owner of the field had caught sight of Biggs in his fruit tree, and had concluded that Biggs was robbing his orchard. Seizing a gun loaded with salt and pepper, he crept slowly and cautiously toward the unconscious Biggs. The farmer got very near. B. was about to descend, when the owencatching a good sight of that worthy's rear, banged away. "Jerusalem! My God!" roared Biggs, slap-head-over-heels he went out of the tree. Chuck! he came on the ground. He roared, he shouted, he kicked, he swore; he swore over again; in fact, he did everything he could do. "Ahh!" exclaimed the old farmer, "you skunk, you, I've catched you stealin' of my apples eh?" "Oh! no, good Mr. farmer," remonstrated Biggs, holding on to his seat, and speaking with difficulty, "I assure you sir I hadn't the sanllest design against your fruit." "You lie!" roared the Granger. "You're a brute. You're no gentleman," retorted the irate Biggs. There is no telling what this would have come to, the farmer was about to salt and pepper Biggs once, when up came all the Joneses and all the Biggses. Mutual explanations followed. All was explained. As they stood there in a crowd, talking together, suddenly the farmer roared, here comes the bull. Ght! Everybody got for all they knew how. How they ran. The Biggses and the Joneses running for dear life. Now they screamed and screeched. It was well the fence was so near, or the few hindmost among whom was Biggs, might have suffered. Such a scramble over the fence; and such congratulations after each one was over; and such a scolding as Mr. B. underwent. That night the Biggses and Joneses reached home tired, worn-out, hungry and disgusted. They all entered into a solemn vow never to go to on another, or even encourage a picnic. Picnics were, as Mrs. Biggs ably expressed it, "an ingenious predicament of concentrated and sequestered embodiment of indignation and necessitous consternation." So ended the Biggs' picnic.

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Hillsboro Oregon

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