

CAPTAIN JIM'S COURTSHIP

By A. E. RICE, Portland.

(Continued from last week)

Gradually the "fit" moderated and she became herself again. The supposed fit was quite involuntary on her part. When Captain Jim said MacDonald took the brandy, a sudden desire to burst out laughing overpowered her, and her efforts to disguise it, caused the apparent fit.

"Was only a chill, Jim," said she in explanation. "It comes over me at times, especially when I hear that MacDonald mentioned."

"Annie, be you a-mindin' of how I offered to put up fer them divorce costs?" said Jim sympathetically.

"Indeed I do, Jim," replied Annie, as she wiped a laughing tear from her eye. "Your generosity is noble."

"Annie," exclaimed he, as he again placed his arm about her waist caressingly. "I'd wade through oceans of brimstone fer you."

"Whist," cautioned Annie, "some one is in the shed." She sprang to her feet. A moment of silence was followed by gentle knocks on the kitchen door.

"Who can it be?" said she, in an undertone.

Captain Jim immediately replied in a subdued voice, as he stood up, "I reckon it be the red MacDonald."

"Go into the front room. No, better go in the bedroom. He may go out the front door, and if it is MacDonald and he sees you here, he will kill you."

"All right," said Jim, as he moved toward the bedroom door, "jest as you say, Annie."

"Hurry, Jim," she urged, taking up his hat and following him, "he shall not stay long."

Captain Jim finally fetched up the pistol from his pocket, turned around to Annie, displayed it and said, "I bought that fer self protection." Then he passed into the bedroom.

Annie flung his hat after him, and with the admonition, "keep quiet, Jim," closed the door.

The knocks again sounded gently on the kitchen door.

"Who's there?" inquired Annie, as she stood in the center of the room.

"Can I war-run a bit, if ye please? It's very cold." These words were uttered in a rich Irish accent, by some one in the woodshed, and it was evident to Annie the voice was masculine.

After a brief silence, she said, "come in."

The door slowly opened and a short, thick set, elderly man entered and carefully closed the door behind him. He wore a grey mackintosh that had seen some wear, with the cape collar turned up about his ears. A dark cloth cap, pulled well down at the peak, left but a small part of his face visible. The identity of the visitor was thus practically concealed.

They stood looking at each other in silence.

Gradually a thrill of misgiving ran through Annie, and she half turned toward the bedroom, when the stranger again spoke.

"Shure," said he, in a soft appealing tone, "this do be Christmas eve, and yees are not the daisy to turn me away, before I war-run me hands. I do be cold with the walk frum the water." He slowly turned down the collar of his mackintosh, then bowed and took off his cap.

"Why Smith," exclaimed Annie in glad surprise, "you almost frightened me, why didn't you come in at the front door?"

"Didn't know me," said Smith, laughing. "Shure, an' it's the furst toime in twenty years," thrusting his cap in his coat pocket. "Do yees know me now, my dear? An' be the same token, will yees iver fergit me," he continued, as he familiarly patted her under the chin. "I just that I'd sthale in, an' take a look at yees an' the childer this eve."

"Fallin' well, eh," laughed he, as in great glee, he gently poked her on the side with his finger.

"Why Smith, you do act queer," said Annie smiling. "I thought you were chilled with the cold?"

"Not fer yees darlint an' the grand childer of yees father. God rest his soul, he was the best frint I iver had. Just the tips ave me fingers Annie, were numb with the load an' the walk frum the water, but me heart was war-run fer yees, an' I didn't moind it at all, at all."

"What were you loaded with, Smith," said Annie, as she looked teasingly at him.

He leaned forward and said in a half whisper, "I've saine him."

"You have," she quickly replied, and burst into soft laughter.

Smith looked at her a moment in silence, as if affronted. Then he said seriously, "shure, didn't he come into the shure an' buy things fer yees an' the childers' Christmas stockin's, an' says he, 'now, Smith, yees take thim up and lave thim in the shid, without her knowing it. It'll be a foine surprise this night," said he, "indeed it will," said I. "God bless yees heart, a foine Christmas box, an' they made it too—so they do, yerself and childers. God bless yees for it," said I. "And do yees moind," said he, "do it quietly, Smith. Lave it in the shid an' come away without seeing her." "I will, be me faith, I will do that same, said I, an' here I am, an' a merry Christmas to yees an' the childer; God bless yees."

When he concluded, she laughed and said, "just like you, you dear old duck. You promised him not to see me, or let me know, yet here you are, and telling me everything—but," she turned and flew to the kitchen door and opened it wide

"Be the Rock of Cashel, you now undo me. May it please ye darlint, don't look into it," said Smith, appealingly. "He didn't want me to let yees know at all, shure, an' I'm tellin' the truth, dear."

"Do let me," said she coaxingly, "just one little squint, now Smith, do." She laid her hand on his arm, and looked bewitchingly into his eyes.

"God loves yees, I'm always conquered by women. Don't spake wan war-rud to any wan." He went into the shed and brought a large parcel and laid it on the table. Annie closed the door and stood beside him, her eyes fairly dancing with pleasure.

Smith commenced to untie the parcel, at the same time saying, "not wan bit mane, the best of the kind," said he. "Shure," said I, "an' it'll be fittin' a quane."

At that moment distinct raps were heard on the front door.

"Good Father," exclaimed the startled Annie.

"Be the power av light, it is he, otherwise it's an off night for callers."

More rapping on the door.

"I can't lave yees yet, darlint, I must see the masatin. I'll go into the shid an' wait." Smith hastily picked up the parcel and disappeared with it through the kitchen door.

Annie stood with a puzzled look on her face. "At length she said, in an abstracted manner, 'Old Captain Jim is not so miserly after all.' She was stopped from further utterance, by more impatient raps on the door, and then it opened and in walked Captain Tom Webb. After slamming the door shut, he said, 'Hello, Annie! It's a devilish cold night. Thought you were never goin' tew let a feller in.'"

"You did not give me time. Is this your first Christmas call?"

"Oh, Nan wud come over, but Kitty stepped in an' they talked an' laughed, then wimen air always talkin' an' laughin'." Aint they come yet?"

Annie smiled and replied, "not yet."

"I just sauntered on ahead, tew see Ole Cheesebro, 'bout that grocer bill, afore I come on," said Captain Tom.

"He jest biled over 'bout it, but I squelched him with a promise tew 'suar up' right smart now. On my way up here I thought of that Ole Jim Smeets' pile a-idlin' itself in that First National."

"No doubt, some of us could use a little of it to advantage," said she.

"Annie," he exclaimed in a half whisper, "you jest hit him fer some. You kin git it easy."

She stood a pace or two from him, and looked at him in a puzzled, half angry, half amused manner. He did not give her time to think much about it either, for he grasped her left arm, drew her close to him, and in a subdued voice, almost a whisper, said, "it wud tickle him all over, tew be able tew say he was your benefactor. Shure, Annie! He tole me so. You kin git any amount from him to once't."

At this instant Captain Jim silently opened the bedroom door and looked at Captain Tom. Annie smiled and said, "well, if I had a hundred just now I should feel rich."

"Only a hundred. Oh, pshaw Annie!" exclaimed Tom, disgusted.

"Five hundred Annie, shure. Nuthin' less nor five hundred. An' then you kin help me a leetle, eh." And under the impulse of his prospective good luck he seized her about the waist and gave her a whirl.

Captain Jim shook his fist at him.

"Why Captain Tom, what ails you?" asked Annie astonished. At the same moment Annie's brother Joe entered the front door and quietly tip-toed through the front room.

Captain Jim caught a glimpse of Joe, as he passed the kitchen threshold and promptly withdrew his head and silently closed the bedroom door.

Captain Tom's back was turned to Joe, and he was so interested with his subject and being a little "thick" also, was quite oblivious of the presence of a third person.

"Shore, Annie," said he, whispering in her ear, "you kin git it an' you'll help me out'n a hard fix tew."

Thinking the party was entering to his sister was Captain Mr. Smeets, Joe at once proceeded to execute his purpose. Some three or four months past, Captain Jim had him put ashore near Oswego, because he was short his fare, and in anger and disgust he had to walk to his home in Portland. Now his opportunity to get even had come. He had determined to put a stop to any fooling around his sister by that old duffer. He did not see Captain Jim when he entered the room. The light was not strong and his impetuous nature would not permit him to wait long enough to discover his error.

"I'll run him out from that clover in no time," said he in an undertone. He then stepped noiselessly close to the unsuspecting Captain Tom, seized him firmly by the ear, turned him about and pushed him at arm's length toward the front door. "I've got you at last," said Joe, "right where I want you."

Captain Tom was greatly surprised and gave vent to his feelings, with the expressive exclamation, "Sufferin' Lazarus!"

Joe opened the door with his left hand, still holding the suffering captain's ear with his right, "you put foot inside this house again and I'll smash every bone in your body, and here's a taste of it. Go!" Joe applied his boot and Captain Tom cleared the threshold with a yell. It was a simple case of mistaken identity, common to

excitable people. Captain Tom and Joe were very good friends, and had been for some years past. Their natures were similar and each entertained the most kindly sentiment for the other, but in this instance Captain Tom had no chance to recognize Joe, and Joe did not recognize Captain Tom.

Slamming the door shut, Joe returned to his sister, who was convulsed with laughter. "Annie, you're quit of him now, that's certain," said he.

"I don't think so," replied she.

"You don't, eh?" said Joe. "Very well, we'll see. Let me lay my hands on him once more, and I'll fix him." Joe rushed out and pulled the front door shut after him.

Aware of Joe's mistake, Annie would have set matters right were it not that Captain Jim was then in her house. She knew right well the cause of Joe's antipathy to him and therefore discreetly let events shape their own course. It was the way Joe handled and mistook Captain Tom that amused her.

Captain Jim again cautiously opened the bedroom door, and seeing Annie alone went over to her. He did not forget to take his hat, which he gripped in his left hand.

"I was not afeered Annie," said he, "only of bein' ketched in that bedroom."

"I know Jim, but I don't want to see you in trouble," which was literally true, for her opinion of Captain Jim had undergone quite a change, since she believed that he had made the purchase of Christmas presents which Smith was then guarding in the woodshed.

Captain Jim took a chair and sat beside her.

Smith felt the cold in the woodshed and having become impatient, neeped through the keyhole and partially saw a tall man holding Annie's head in a suspicious position. He saw Captain Tom.

"Oh, the villain," exclaimed Smith under his breath. The circumstances was so interesting that Smith kept his eye at the keyhole, oblivious of comfort or temperature.

Captain Tom being of a combative disposition, on ejection from the house, at once sought a club. "No man can fire me out'n a friend's house," he inwardly exclaimed, "without a settlement." He proceeded around to the woodshed and found a billet of wood near the door. With a chuckle of satisfaction he grasped it and the door being ajar he would "jest quietly slip in an' git a glimpse of his enemy through the keyhole." So he entered the woodshed and noiselessly closed the door. He groped his way slowly along step by step. Holding his club in front of him, as a sort of feeler, he struck it against the woodpile.

The noise attracted Smith's attention. Removing his eye from the keyhole, he looked straight back, into the darkness of the shed and exclaimed under his breath, "phwat the devil is that?" Captain Tom, seeing the light suddenly flash through the keyhole, halted in a listening attitude.

Smith, however, became nervous and muttered, "thaves," and grasped the kitchen door knob.

Captain Tom, in his turn, became alarmed. He had seen the sudden gleam of light on some moving object and then heard a clicking sound. (The click of the door lock.) He stepped back to the shed door and took hold of its edge with his left hand and stood in a defensive attitude. "Blow my whistle," said he in a whisper, "if that air ruffian aint a-layin' fer me in this shed."

Leaving Smith and Captain Tom straining their eyes at each other through the darkness of the woodshed and both on the alert, fearing some unforeseen attack, especially Captain Tom, who beats the air with his club, we must return to Captain Jim and Annie.

When he sat beside her, it was with a determination to know his fate forthwith. He did not like these interruptions and he was beginning to think they were a little too many for a lone widder. However, it being Christmas Eve, may have accounted for so many callers, though he remembered Barbara's words at Nan's surprise party.

"Annie, darlint," he began, "it's jest as you be a-sayin' now, you promise tew be my wife as soon as you kin git a divorce from Walker an' you kin have all the money you want. You kin go tew Sel-um, or anywhar you haf a mind tew an' stay thar, an' I'll fine you as soon as my contract with that navigation company expires. Now, it be all a-restin' with you. Be you answerin' yes or no?"

"What shall I say to put him off," she thought, when, as if by some spiritual aid, she was relieved from immediately answering by several smart raps on the front door.

She sprang to her feet and exclaimed, "who can it be, now!"

Captain Jim also arose, evidently a bit frightened, for he again began to fumble in his pocket, at the same time nervously saying, "It be that damned MacDonald, I'm sartin'."

Annie turned her back to another a laugh.

At that moment Captain Jim passed her, saying, "I'll jest wait in the shid 'till he be a-goin'." He hurriedly opened the kitchen door and as a consequence fell sprawling over Smith, who was at that moment directing his most earnest attention toward the shed door.

It occurred to Jim, as he unexpectedly fell over Smith, that he was being waylaid and he at once shouted, "robbers! help."

Captain Tom was not prepared for anything so unlooked for either, and when Jim suddenly tumbled out over Smith it seemed that two men were after him, so he also set up a shout of "help! murder!" and instantly bolted through the shed door, out into the street.

(To be Continued.)

HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

LAND FOR RESERVE.

Big Withdrawal Made in Warner Valley Section, Southern Oregon.

The interior department has decided upon another forest reserve for Oregon, this time in Southern Lake county, in the Warner mountain country. By direction of Secretary Hitchcock, the vacant public lands in a tract of over 990,000 acres in Lake county, and 44 1/2 townships adjoining in Northern California, have been temporarily withdrawn from all entry, with a view to their examination to determine the advisability of creating a forest reserve about the town of Lakeview. The Oregon lands withdrawn are: Townships 34 to 41 inclusive, ranges 16, 17, and 18; townships 37, 38 and 41, range 19; townships 36 and 37, range 20; townships 36 to 41 inclusive, ranges 21 and 22, all south and east. The township in which Lakeview is located, and the townships immediately north, south and west, are not included in the withdrawal.

A forest reserve in the Warner Mountain region is recommended by the geological survey, not only for the preservation of the timber, but the conservation of the water supply. Goose lake lies in the center of the withdrawal, and a number of streams which supply it with water have their headwaters within that region. Moreover, the headwaters of Sprague river, Drews creek, Warner creek, and a number of other streams would all be protected by a forest reserve in this region.

In view of the development of irrigation enterprises in Lake county and in Northern California, the creation of this forest reserve is considered most essential. The lands withdrawn are to be examined this summer, and such tracts as are found unsuitable for re-forestation will ultimately be restored to entry. The remainder, beyond a question of doubt, will be permanently reserved.

Better Catch of Fish.

Reports from the mouth of the river are to the effect that the catch of fish is a trifle better, but as the catch during the last week or ten days has been very small, this does not mean much. The time is fast approaching, however, when big runs are to be expected, provided, of course, that the weather and other conditions turn more favorable.

Died at Great Age.

Joseph Bashaw, who, as near as can be figured out, was at least 115 years old, was found dead in bed at the home of his stepson, near Sidney. He was probably the oldest man in Oregon. He was a Frenchman by birth and served in the French wars of 1800-18, under Napoleon. He drove an ox team to Oregon in 1847, and was then a gray haired man.

Fruit Outlook Bright.

Prune growers from different parts of Marion and Polk counties report that their trees are in excellent condition and promise an enormous crop. The rains did no damage during the blossoming period. The trees are now bearing much more fruit than could be matured, but, of course, much of this will drop off, as usual.

Fire at Ashland.

Fire which broke out at Ashland last Monday in the middle of the business houses on the west side of Fourth street, between A and B, near the Southern Pacific depot, gained such headway and burned so fiercely that almost the entire block was destroyed, involving a total loss of nearly \$25,000, upon which there was an insurance of \$10,500.

Cutting Down Debt.

The semi-annual financial statement of Wasco county, computed by County Clerk Lake, shows a reduction in the indebtedness of the county of \$41,705.34 within the last six months, leaving the total indebtedness at this time only \$68,191.14, which is the first time for many years that the indebtedness of the county has been materially below \$100,000.

Ready to Dig.

Ditch digging implements and supplies for the Columbia Southern Irrigation company, on the Tumello, have been going in for several days, and active operations are expected to be in progress there soon, though no news has yet come of the approval of the reclamation contract at Washington.

All Are Busy at Helix.

The prosperous little village of Helix, in the very heart of the great wheat belt of Eastern Oregon, enjoys the distinction of not having an idle man, a vacant storeroom or dwelling house within its limits. Everyone is busy, and all are prosperous.

Heavy Buyer of Timber Lands.

Deeds have been filed for record conveying the title to nearly 3,000 acres of timber land along the Klatskanie river to W. W. Boman, of Forrest, Pa., making a tract of about 7,000 acres that he has recently purchased in that vicinity.

MILL AT LUCKY BOY MINE.

Contract Has Been Let for an Increase of Fifty Stamps.

A contract has been made by the Lucky Boy company in the Blue river district, for the machinery to increase the mill at the mine to 50 stamps, and other machinery for the operation of the mine. The officers of the company have been negotiating for several days with the Union Iron works, of San Francisco, and have let a large contract for machinery.

There will be an electric power plant, which will be located on the McKenzie river, six miles from the mine, from which power will be transmitted to the mine. The machinery will be increased to 100 stamps next season, which will make it one of the most extensive plants on the coast.

Work on the flumes, buildings, etc., for the power plant will begin at once. The improvement now projected will involve an outlay of \$95,000.

Stripped of Timber.

W. H. B. Kent and H. D. Langell, of the department of agriculture, are in Baker City from Washington to examine the lands and report in regard to the establishment of the Blue mountain forest reserve. Already they have made a partial examination of a portion of the land, which it is proposed to embrace in the reserve, and they find that a great deal of the marketable timber has been cut off. They will remain in that vicinity for some time.

Activity in Blue River.

Following the contract for extensive improvements on the Lucky Boy mine in the Blue river district, the news is now given out that the Sunset mine, in the same district, will begin systematic development. A stamp mill will be put in to test the richness of the ore in a practical manner, and work will be prosecuted in the tunnels so as to open up the ledge in a manner to work systematically.

Joining Two Branches.

Again it is reported that the long looked for link connecting the two lines of the Southern Pacific between Springfield and Eugene will soon be built, and the report seems to come from a reliable source. A surveying party is to be sent by the company at once to make final location of the route for the connection, which it is the intention to construct during the present year.

Water Supply Falls.

There is a shortage of water at the Oregon agricultural college. The source of supply is a large well, which formerly afforded sufficient water, but the growth of the college and the largely increased amount of water required renders the output of the well insufficient to meet the needs. Every day now the well is pumped dry, in spite of the fact that there is careful husbanding of water in all the departments.

Sugar Beets Need Rain.

About 30 Japanese have arrived in Pendleton from Portland to work in the best fields of the Oregon sugar company, and 120 more are expected to follow soon. The beets are growing slowly, and almost at a standstill for want of rain. Grain, gardens and orchards are also suffering.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 70@71c; valley, 74c.
Barley—Feed, \$20.00 per ton; brewing, \$21.
Flour—Best grades, \$3.95@4.30; Graham, \$3.45@3.65.
Millstuffs—Bran, \$23 per ton; middlings, \$27; shorts, \$23.00; chop, \$18.
Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.10@1.15; gray, \$1.05 per cental.
Hay—Timothy, \$20@21; clover, \$10@11; cheat, \$15@16 per ton.
Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 50c per sack; ordinary, 25@30c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3@3.50 per cental.
Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 13@14c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 16@17c; dressed, 20@22c; ducks, \$7.00@7.50 per dozen; geese, \$6@6.50.
Cheese—Full cream, twins, 16 1/2@17c; Young America, 17@17 1/2c; factory prices, 1@1 1/4c; less.
Butter—Fancy creamery, 20@22c per pound; extras, 21c; dairy, 20@22 1/2c; store, 16@18c.
Eggs—16@17c per dozen.
Hops—Choice, 16@20c per pound.
Wool—Valley 12 1/2@15; Eastern Oregon, \$@14; mohair, 35@36c.
Beef—Gross, cows, 3 1/2@4c per pound; steers, 4 1/2@5c; dressed, 7 1/2c.
Veal—8@8 1/4c.
Mutton—Gross, 7@7 1/2c per pound; dressed, 8@9c.
Lamb—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7 1/2c.
Hogs—Gross, 7@7 1/2c per pound; dressed, 8@8 1/4c.