

If a Woman Will, She Will.

OLD JACOB MUDDLEWORTH was a stubborn man. I have good ground for the belief that never, since the destruction of Pharaoh, has a more stubborn, self-willed individual existed.

Jacob Muddleworth had, like Jephtha, judge of Israel, one fair daughter, and no more, which he loved passing well.

He loved her so well, in fact, that he dared not trust her to select a partner for life, but insisted upon it that he was better qualified to judge who was best calculated to insure her happiness in the marriage state.

She entertained quite a different opinion, and as she inherited not a little of her father's principal mental characteristic, she firmly resolved that she would never submit to her father's will in that respect.

Her name was Harriet—Harriet Muddleworth. The residence of the Muddleworths was in Flyburg, in Central New York.

Old Jacob was a—I may say he was the main pillar of society in that goodly town. He was not only a justice of the peace, but his name had been mentioned, on several occasions, in connection with the nomination for representative in the State Legislature.

One day, after dinner—Harriet was eighteen years of age at this time—Jacob Muddleworth sollocted, or rather demanded, a private interview with his daughter, when he proceeded to inform her that it was his wish that she should marry, and hoped that she would not be so unreasonable as to oppose such a measure.

Harriet assured him that she certainly should not, and plainly stated that nothing would more precisely meet her views.

"Right! Right!" said old Jacob, rubbing his hands benignly. "I thought you would acquiesce in my views, particularly when informed who is to be the happy man."

"I hardly need information on that point," said Harriet, quietly. "O, but I think you do; I am sure I have never informed you. It is no other than Robert Wiggins, son of my old friend Peter Wiggins, of Albany. You need to know Robert when you were a child; if you will recollect, the family resided over here in Bogtown—Peter has done well, very well, since he removed to Albany; he assured me, before I left him last Tuesday, that his son should have twenty thousand on the day of his marriage."

Jacob Muddleworth had been on a visit to the State capital the week previous, and Harriet surmised, from some obscure hints he had let drop after his return home, what had been the chief end of his journey.

"I have not seen Robert Wiggins for many years." "Nor have I; he was absent in Vermont when I was at his father's. But that need make no difference. Robert has, I am assured, grown to be a fine young man, and is now reading law with an eminent attorney."

"He will have to read long before he comprehends it, if there has been no improvement in his intellect since he was a boy."

"Robert is a worthy young man," exclaimed the old gentleman, warmly, "and I am astonished at such an expression from you. But as you offer no objections to wedding with him, it is no matter."

"But I do object to marrying him."—She cast down her eyes, but spoke in a low, determined tone. Her father elevated his eyebrows, and looking her steadily in the eye for a moment.

Both were silent for a few moments, and both were resolved to remain firm in the determination they had formed.

"You must have some potent reason for this strange behavior," said her father, at length, striving to appear calm.

"I have," said the daughter, in a quiet manner. "Will you inform me what it is?" "Certainly, I love another."

"You love another?" repeated he, in amazement. "I do." "And who may he be?" "John Leggett."

"You are mad!" "No, I was never more sane." "Why, he is only a journeyman carpenter?" "Yes, that is the profession he follows."

"Profession! I am amazed! He isn't worth one hundred dollars." "He is just beginning in life."

"And a fine beginning he is hoping to make by getting you. But he shall be foiled, the scoundrel! He shall never set foot in this house again."

"You cannot prevent our loving." "Yes, but I will," cried the enraged Jacob striking a chair standing near with such force as to overturn it: "but I will. Robert Wiggins will be here in one week, and marry him you shall, or not one cent of my money ever enriches you. You had better think well before you decide, for what I have said shall surely come to pass."

He rushed from the room as he finished speaking, and till the next morning she did not see him again.

Harriet Muddleworth sat for some time after she was left alone, deeply engaged with her thoughts. She was determined to hold out in the resolution she had formed, but she regretted deeply that she could not have her father's approbation, and it was no easy matter to bring her mind to a willingness to leave the home of her childhood and to give up the comforts she had so long been used to.

That evening Harriet sent for her lover, to inform him of the new position in which she found herself placed.—John Leggett was, as has been mentioned, a young carpenter, who was just setting up in life, with only a good reputation, strong common sense, and an excellent set of tools to begin with.

Harriet informed him of all she knew respecting her father's intentions. He pressed her to remain firmly opposed to the plan, received her assurance that she would, gave her an eloquent kiss, and retired to meditate upon what he had heard.

Now John Leggett had a cousin—a harum-scarum sort of a fellow, who was always up to any sort of mischief. This cousin, whose name was Tom Neggett, lived some fifteen miles distant, in a little town near the railroad. At present, however, he was on a visit to John and John made him a confidant of his love affairs. He listened to John's tale very attentively.

"Then the old gentleman, it seems, has not even seen his proposed son-in-law for many years?" inquired Tom, as his cousin concluded his tale.

"So she gave me to understand," was the reply. "And would not, in all likelihood, recognize him were they to meet?" "I should think not."

"Perhaps you are not fond of the weed?" remarked the young man. "No," said Jacob, emphatically. "I am not fond of it; and moreover, I don't see how anybody can be fond of it."

"Really, now, you surprise me. Do you know, I took you for a more sensible old brick?"

The old gentleman was astonished.—That any one should have the audacity to designate him by such an appellation as "an old brick," was a matter of surprise to his mind. His indignation was aroused.

"Sir," said he, "you are impertinent. You should have the good manners at least, not to smoke in such a place as this."

"Then it is really offensive to you?" said the other, without being in the least disturbed.

"Yes, sir, it is really offensive." "It is singular," said the other, in a musing manner, emitting a fresh cloud of smoke, "what tastes some people have."

"Will you throw your cigar away?" cried Jacob. "I really couldn't think of such a thing. But I'll tell you how we can arrange it; we'll stop the coach, and you can take a seat with the driver till I'm done smoking. Capital idea, that, isn't it?"

And without waiting for a reply—and in fact, Jacob Muddleworth was too exasperated at that moment to speak—the young man thrust his head through the little window, and called out to the driver to stop.

"Well, what's wantin'?" said the functionary, pulling up his team.

"This old chap inside wants to take an outside seat for awhile," was the reply. "It's a confounded lie!" shouted old Jacob, nearly choking with rage; and at the same time he jumped to his feet, entirely forgetting that he was confined to so narrow a space.

The consequence was his head struck with force against the top of the coach, knocked his hat over his eyes, and knocking him back into his seat. The driver grumbled, whipped up his horses, and started off at full speed. The young man reseated himself, puffing away with his cigar, and looking as serene as if nothing had been said or done. As for the old man, he struggled for a moment to release his hat, which done, he gazed furiously upon the other and repeated with all the wrath that stirred him:

"Yes, sir, it's a confounded lie—a confounded lie, sir, and you are a puppy, sir—an impudent puppy!"

"Don't I implore you," said the other, as calm as ever. "don't disturb yourself; you are really excited, I fear."

And he stretched out his legs at full length, managing to overturn the other's carpet bag in so doing, which slightly barked its owner's shins.

"Now, upon my honor, that is no place for a carpet bag to be sitting," uttered the young man, without the least apology.

"Blast your impudence!" vehemently cried Jacob, "you are intolerable.—You ought to be put out—you ought to be kicked out!"

"Really, if you keep on, I shall begin to think you are prejudiced against me, I really shall, upon my word."

Jacob Muddleworth looked at the young man before him like an enraged tiger. He was too exasperated to utter another word, but felt that it would afford him the highest satisfaction to annihilate his persecutor on the spot.

The remainder of the ride to Flyburg was passed by the young man in alternately singing loud songs and smoking cigars; and old Jacob parted with him, early in the evening, with the extremest pleasure.

He had been at home rather more than an hour, had eaten his supper and retired to his private room, when the servant informed him that a gentleman in the parlor desired to see him.

Wondering who it could be, he descended the stairs and passed through the hall. As he was nearing the door he heard the voice of his daughter as she uttered a slight scream, and then a man's voice exclaimed:

"But you really must give me just one! What, you refuse your affianced husband a kiss! It won't do; I must have one, you know!"

He threw open the door at the same time. He had recognized the tones, and was horror struck at beholding the very same young man who had been his fellow passenger from B——, with one arm around the waist of his daughter, who was struggling violently to release herself from his grasp.

The old man turned pale and then he turned red.

"What does this mean?" he cried, advancing into the room and confronting the stranger with the deepest wrath depicted upon his features. "Why are you here?"

"What?" exclaimed the other, "is it possible? Why, my old friend, who could have imagined that you were old Muddleworth? Well, now, I hadn't the least idea this afternoon who you really were. But never mind, I freely forgive you for the rash expressions you made use of; I'm not the one to harbor malignity, you know."

"Who the deuce are you?" cried Jacob, foaming with rage.

"What! you do not know me?" "No; and I regret of ever having seen you."

"Not know me? Well, then, I may as well inform you. I'm Robert Wiggins—generally known as Bob Wiggins by those who are posted."

Jacob Muddleworth gasped for breath, and leaned against a chair for support. Bob Wiggins took a seat.

man; you cannot be more anxious now than I. Name as early a day as you please—the earlier the better."

"Then I would suggest the day after to-morrow morning!"

Jacob thought that was rather early, and was disposed to suggest that it would require longer time to make the necessary arrangements; but he looked at his daughter, and she seemed to smile affirmatively, and so he replied:

"Well, let it be as you wish."

At ten o'clock on the morning mentioned the parties were united. The affair was rather private, and went off to the satisfaction of all interested. The same evening a very hungry looking young man alighted from the stage coach in Flyburg, and, after partaking of a hearty supper, called at the residence of Jacob Muddleworth, and introduced himself as the son of Peter Wiggins.

Harriet was fortunate enough to see him before her father came into the house and at once took Robert into her confidence, and asked him to join in keeping her father under the impression that he had seen the genuine Robert Wiggins. Robert was a good natured man, and a gentleman, and after hearing the whole affair, and laughing at the joke, readily agreed to keep still, but said he thought it rather rough to leave the old man under the impression that the son of his old friend was such a boor. But in aid of a woman so true to her lover he thought he would bear the burden.

It was many years before the old gentleman learned the joke that had been put on him; but by that time had found what a worthy son-in-law he had obtained and was satisfied with the result.

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