THE WATERLOO OF APRIL FIRST

ELL, I'll be flabbergasted!" quoth Gideon Welcome Gilpin. Gideon's height being to his breadth as two to one, there were nearly three hundred pounds of him to undergo flabber-He hitched up his expansive overalls and pushed an immense straw hat further back on his bald head. Pulling a pair of round, heavy silver-rimmed spectacles down to the gnarled end of his nose, he gazed earnestly above them along the main street of Rockford.
On the right hand pavement a

along the main street of Rockford.

On the right hand pavement going due, south was a slight, girlish figure crowned with yellow hair, which gleamed under an irresistible little blue velvet toque. A blue box coat hung gracefully from her shoulders, and a pair of small tan shod feet moved briskly beneath the pleats of a short blue walking skirt. She was the new primary teacher in the Rockford Graded School and popular among the children, if one judged by the number who surrounded her.

On the left-hand pavement also go

her. On the left-hand pavement, also going south, strode the new principal, seemingly unconscious of the dainty lady on the other side of the street. It is large, well-shaped head sat firmly on broad shoulders, and he walked with long sweeps of the muscular arms, which inspired the boys of the senior class with a wholesome AW.

long sweeps of the muscular arms, which inspired the boys of the senior class with a wholesome awe.

"I'll be flabbergasted!" repeated Gideon. "Si and Orve seys they don't take notice of each other, but I believe they do,' and they'd ought to, anyhow," atubornly. Gideon was voicing the sentiment of Rockford, which, to a man—including the women—had decided on the peculiar fitness of a connected future for the new principal and primary teacher. "Igiots, both of 'em, if they don't," Gideon concluded ambiguously. He retired behind the pigeon hole case devoted to trole Sam's postal service, and sat down on a high stool. Being alone, he pushed the glasses nearer his eyes, and proceeded to the perusal of such postal cards as had not been called for. This task completed, he seated himself in a broad arm chair facing the postal boxes, and awaited the arrival of his cronics, Si Lewis and Orve Webster. Both were gentlemen of leisure, the former luxuriating on a pension granted him because of a leg broken under a camp follower's waggon ten miles from the guns of Gettysburg; the lutter being enriched by the proceeds from the hotel which he ran strictly by proxy, his wife being a brisk worker.

Principal Philips lived at the hotel.

Principal Philips lived at the hotel. Ruth Emery boarded across the way with the Si Lewis household, while both with the St Lewis nonsenord, write coun-called daily at the post office; therefore to whom should the people of Rockford look for reliable information in the case of Emery versus Philips if not to their respective landlords and the sorter of

"He don't ever come to see her." all the information Ruth's landlord could honestly give, despite his willing-ness to possess more.

could nonesty gen-ness to possess more. "He don't seldom ever leave his room evenings," informed Orve, tapping the host of his lame foot. "He's got more "" man I boot of his lame foot. "He's got more stay at home in 'im than any man I ever see before."

But the information that Gideon Welcome Gilpin dealt out was of a highly perplexing order. If either of the two teachers were "corresponding regularly." of course the case in hand was hopeless, but Gideon annulled that idea. "He don't write to a single 'Miss,' and only regular to one 'Mrs." and that's his mother. I know that because—" here Unels Som's annul. But the information that Gideon that's his mother. I know that be-cause—" here Uncle Sam's servant was wont to clear his throat, "her answers come in them flimsy envelopes, so thin you can't help seein' through. And as for Miss Emery, she don't 'Mr.' a single

envelope."

"Mebby you haven't kept their letters

"months." suggested straight these five months," suggested his as the triumvirate sat around the office stove.

"Huh!" ejuculated Gideon, "You't you fool yourself." Then he leaned

back and added meditatively, "The're sly about it—the igiots!—but they don't fool me-there's something in the wind between the two."

"What?" demanded Si and Orye. They resented this assumption of superior wisdom on the part of the post-master, as he could not bring a ghost of proof to the support of his assertion.

But Gideon knew. His own had been middle-aged love affair, and he remembered various symptoms which may only be felt, not expressed. Therefore, he watched for the tangible and expressible the following afternoon when Ruth and the principal entered the post office. They did not enter together. Ruth

They did not enter together. Ruth came first, her cheeks flushed with the January wind, and her brown eyes aglow as she responded to the questions of the little ones who excorted her. "Any mail for me?" she asked at the postal window, and then her face underwent a quick, indefinable change, and Gideon felt the wireless telegraphic message which announced the entrance of the principal.
"Now, I'll give 'em a chance and

of the principal.

"Now, I'll give 'em a chance and watch 'em," thought Gideon craftily, and, creaking around to the swinging gate which guarded Uncle Sam's corner, he beckoned to the children. They understood the meaning of his crooked forefinger, and left Miss Emery with a whoop. Behind the counter, Gideon, ostensibly paying no attention to the teachers, but with his ears wide open, dealt out sticky sweets with a generous hand. hand.

hand.

Alas! his candy and his efforts were wasted. He heard a pleasant "Good afternoon" from both, and a simple remark on the school and weather. Then the outer door closed, and Henry Philips leaned over the counter, while the children, with gummed hands, made a wild dash for the street and their beloved "teacher."

Gideon sat down heavily on his light

loved "teacher."

Gideon sat down heavily on his high stool, and turned a furtive eye on Principal Philips with the uneasy feeling that the latter understood his motives. There was always a twinkle in Philip's eyes whenever he looked toward any member of the triumvirate.
"Have a fresh drop," invited Gideon to hide his chagrin. He pushed a box of six-months-old chocolates in front of the orincinal, who valiantly chewed one.

the principal, who valiantly chewed one. "Pretty little girl that," began Gideon boldly

"The child in red?" asked Philip, gaz-

ing abstractedly out of the window.

"Pshaw!" exploded Gideon, lifting one brow and dropping the other, "I mean the little school ma'am."

"Oh, Miss Emery!" carelessly. "Yes, from all I hear, she is a very nice young lady."

lady."
"From all I hear," groaned Gideon when, a moment later, he sat in a deserted room. "Gosh, and all hands! A room, "crosm, and all hands! A pair of ignits they are, but I know the signs." Si and Orve, who had been well-ded garly half a century, had forgotten the signs.

the Signs.
"See here," said Gideon, mysteriously, an hour later, "Si, hand me over some of the tickets for that lecture course you're runnin', and I'll sell 'em for you." Gideon was possessed of a bright idea, which made his bearded and creased face

white makes glow.

"What's struck you into sellin' lecture tickets?" asked Si curiously, pulling some out of his pocket. Si, being in his some out of his pocket. Si, being in his own estimation a great manager and a good church worker—where no manual labour was required—had arranged a lecture course for Rockford, proceeds to swell the pastor's lean salary.

swell the pastor's tean salary.

"Don't be askin' teo many questions," advised Gideon, winking wisely.

He pocketed the tickets, and went out to receive the mail hag which hung over the dash hoard of the incoming stage. At the door he sent out his voice in sonorous rhyme: "Here's the old mail bag, hangin' with a sag exactly like a rag, fastened by its tag." The rhyme informed the driver that the spirits of the mostmaster were buoyant. postmaster were buoyant.

A few evenings later he announced to the cronics, "Well, I done it!"

"Done what?" grumbled Si, backing up to the stove and shivering.
"Done what I set out to—smoothed the way for the Perfesser." The gleam of a battle fought and won was in the postmaster's eyes. "It took a deal of postmaster's eyes. "It took a deal of workin' in one way and another, but I finally done it."
"What?" demanded Orice and Si in uni-

Bon.

Gideon leaned forward and laid a on Orve's knee. "1 hand impressively on Orve's knee. "I sold him fice tickets for the lecture." He leaned back to allow that information to sink in, and then continued. "At first he allowed one would be enough for him, but I hinted and binted 'round the nim, but I minted and indiced round the bush until I got him to blushin'—red, mind ye!—and then he up and took two. Now you'll see folks' eyes open at the lecture to-night. Wish I was goin' my-self to see 'em come in. I tell ye they'll make the handsomest pair we've ever seen in Rockford."

seen in Rockford."
Gideon was fairly hugging himself over his success, when the door opened, and the primary teacher blew in with the drifting snow. She nodded at the group around the stove with a smile so winning that the thoughts of each dwelt on the stupid blindness of the principal. Gideon, heaming, did her the bangue to Gideon, beaming, did her the honour to rise, but her first words banished his smile

"Mr. Gilpin, I am told you have ture course tickets for sale. May l May I buy

ture course tickets for sale. May I buy one, please?"

It took Gideon a long time to make accurate change and find that ticket. For a moment after the door closed behind her, he stood staring at it. Then he sat down, mopped his face with a red bandanna handkerchief, and remark-ticket. "Wall. I'll he flobbergested!"

red bandanna handkerchief, and remarked feebly, "Well, I'll be flabbergasted!"

"Yes, you smoothed the way for the Perfesser fine, didn't you!" jeered Si!

"Don't see what the fool is thinkin' about wastin' that second ticket," grumbled Orve.

Not only on the occasion of the first lecture was the Professor's second ticket wasted, but on each similar occasion he entered the church alone, while the prientered the church alone, while the pri-mary teacher followed demurely in the wake of her landlady and the landlady's

"I tell you," affirmed Gideon when a warm March sun called the trio to the

warm march sun culture the trio to the bench on the south side of the post office. "I tell you that Perfesser is a dod-blumin' puzzle.".
"So he is," averred Si. "Nothin' has come of my tryin' to be friendly with-him and invitin' him over—to see me, him and invitin him ower—to see me, of course I said, but any fool could see I meant that he should come over and set up with Miss Emery."
"Well," growled Orve, "if a girl hain't got spi" enough to set her cap for a feller she can't ketch him, that's all, no

matter who helps her. I wouldn't hat be-lieved the little school ma'am was so lackin' in grit."

lieved the little school ma'am was so lackin' in grit."

The three were watching the handsome principal swinging down the left-hand walk, and the dainty little red-cheeked lady tripping along opposite in the midst of her flock.

Suddenly Gideon asked, "School out April first, ain't it!"

The others nodded, and he added grimly, "Them two are sure enough April fools to my thinkir."

"So they be," assented the others. The triumvirate, whose leisure, public spirit, and inquiring minds enabled them to penetrate the hidden places in the lives of the Rockford population, felt defeated in their efforts to glean the truth in connection with the teachers.

That the truth could be so unusual ana astounding. Ore was the first to learn, and Gideon the last. School was 'out' at noon, and the afternoon stage to the station was piled high with the baggage of the principal and primary teacher, homeward bound, as Rockland supposed. The stage stood at the post office door when Henry Philips entered, bearing under his arm a big box, from which he poured dozens of large square white envelopes. The postmaster fairly gasped. Never had such a mail come his way before. way before

Over the white drift the principal ex-tended his hand, "Good-bye, Mr. Gilpin," tended his hand, "Good-bye, Mr. Gilpin," he said, his face glowing with a quizzi-cal cheerfulness which ever irritated the worthy servant of Uncle Sam. "I shall certainly miss the Rockford triumvirate and the interest they have taken in—us." At the door he turned with a laugh. "I had quite forgotten," he remarked ambiguously, "that this is All-Fool's day." Fool's day,"

"Now what in thunderation does he mean" communed Gideon with himself as he examined the envelopes. Almost the first name which met his

puzzled gaze was "Mr. and Mrs. Gideon Welcome Gilpin." He held the envelope Welcome Gilpin." He held the envelope up to the light, tore the end off, and addressed himself to the engraved contents. "August first," he read alond, slowly. "Gosh, and all handst" His lower jaw sagged and his eyes bulged. He pushed his hat back, and scratched his head.

A hasty step sounded outside the door, and Orve bounded in, utterly forgetful of the leg broken in behalf of his country. His face was a study. So was Si's, who trod close on the other's heels. Both breathless

were brea do you think of that?" de-drye. "They've both resigned," manded Orve. exclaimed Si.

"What does this mean?" asked Gideon blankly, hobling up the engraved sheet, and paying no attention to their remarks.

"Mean?" yelled Orve. "Can't ye read an ordinary weddin' amounteement? It means they was married on the sly two days before they struck Rockford, and now they've started off on their weddin' tower, lookin' like the Land of Benlah."

Gideon leaned against the counter hadden to the counter had been to the counter had

why—"
"Because," interrupted Si, who understood the end of Gideon's question, "because, under the laws of this state no married woman can teach, and it seems they hadn't enough stray cash to sot up housekeepin' yet, so they postponed tellin' the school board all of their business until school was out."

Gideon cast the announcement on the counter, and beought his lower iaw no

Giteon east the announcement on the counter, and brought his lower jaw up with a snap. An expression of injury crept over his large good-natured face, "Well I'll be flabbeygasted—" he began, and stopped, interrupted by a boy's jeering voice as he derided a school mate. The three glanced foolishly at each other, for the voice was calling:

"April Fool will soon be past, And you're the biggest fool at last!"

Some poets rhyme for fame alone, And some for bread and butter; Some rhyme because their nature is Poetic thoughts to utler. But these poor rhymes have nobler aim, They're written to secure The health of all humanity
By Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

YOUR -STOMACH RULES YOUR HEALTH

When it does its work properly When it does its work properly your food nourishes you and the vigor of health tingles in your veins. But when your stomach fails and indigestion seizes you, then your system is starved and your blood filled with impurities. Be warned in time! Avoid suffering and ill-health he whing. health by taking

MOTHER

SEIGELS SYRUP

"My digestion was all wrong: I had no appetite, and what little I did eat caused me intense pain. I had frequent sick headaches, with pains in my chest, and became so weak that I could hardly walk. Yet MOTHER SEIGEL'S SYRUP cured me." Mr. J. Rellon, 220, George St., Sydney, N.S.W. Aug. 4th, 1900.

RULES YOUR STOMACH **AND CURES**

INDIGESTION