

HOW BUD STRATTON WON A BRIDE and the CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE FAMILY

by Whipping his Sweetheart

BUD STRATTON of Highbank, White county, Ky., fought Mrs. Libbie Tucker of Tackitt, Pike county, in the same state, with bare knuckles, clubs, ropes, brasses, plates, and kitchen utensils for over half an hour, knocked her down and out—and the next day they came into Pikeville, the county seat, secured a license, and were married.

And when they registered with the probate clerk, who served the license to wed, Bud Stratton, and his blushing bride backed him up in his insistence, that the clerk write in the book, "Mr. Bud Stratton, champion of the Stratton family." So it was duly recorded and they departed on horseback through the mountains for Tackitt, where they will make their home on Mrs. Stratton's valley and hillside farm.

Bud won his bride after one of the most strenuous courtships in the history of the world, for Mrs. Tucker had vowed that never again would she wed a man who could not whip her, and during the five years of her widowhood, she had whipped or routed four men who proposed until it looked as if Tom Sharkey was the only person who had a chance to win her, Jeffries and the others being married, and at her style of fighting even the famous sailor pugilist might have had a hard time winning from the Amazon.

Whole Family Always Ready to Fight.

Libbie Merkle was a member of a family that was known to the revenue officers by name, although they never touched the Merkle family or interfered with their alleged illicit distilling of pure old corn whiskey. There were four boys in the family, Tom, George, Ed, and Harrison, all 6 footers and powerful men, quick on the trigger and ready to fight with guns, fists, or rough and tumble at the choice of any adversary that happened along. And Elizabeth, or Libbie, through her girlhood held her own against any of her brothers.

Their father and mother died early, and they grew up on the piece of farm land, in the heart of the mountains, and, somewhere up near the top of Eagle peak, the boys made whiskey which was reputed to be excellent. Libbie was hardly a match for the boys in fighting man style, but the way she could hit, and scratch, and throw kitchenware overcame her handicap, and she maintained the balance of power in the Merkle tribe.

Tom died a natural death, Ed was shot in a fight near Whitesburg, Harrison enlisted in the army, and George got into trouble and fled the country, so Libbie was left alone in the farmhouse, and in 1868 she married Leslie Tucker.

Won by His Soft Talk.

At the time of the marriage the people of the entire countryside laughed, prematurely enjoying the thought of what their married life would be. Tucker was a small, rather nice looking young man of 27, who had been living down in Williamsburg and clerking in a store down at Harrison, Tenn. He knew a little about the world and wore pretty good clothes, which fact did not win many friends for him in the hills of Pike—but his soft talk and his superior knowledge and clothes won a place in Libbie's heart, perhaps because she was accustomed to such different things among her own brothers.

At that time Elizabeth Tucker was one of the most stately Amazons in the world. She stood 6 feet tall in her Sunday shoes and she weighed close to 180 pounds. Accustomed to hard work, to mountain climbing, to rudo fare and ruder living, her health was perfect and her strength something amazing. Despite her coarseness, her strength, and her masculine manner, there was a wild, rude beauty about the girl, then only 24 years of age, that would have caused men to turn and look at her even in a different sphere of life. Her beauty was that of rugged perfect health and strength, and there was nothing in her bearing of the wornout, tired, sickly women of the mountains, hard and broken by hard work, exposure, and poor fare. She had lived in wild freedom with her brothers and had lived better than most of the people around about.

How She "Beat Up" Number One.

Within a few weeks after the wedding the news of a fight at the Tucker home was circulated through the hills. It was three days before Les Tucker was able to leave the house, and then, in response to some inquiries, and the gibes of neighbors, he admitted that Libbie had "beat him up some," and he "loved" that she was "the fightiest woman he ever saw."

That fight sufficed Les for several months, but he came back from Whitesville drunk one night—and wasn't able to get out of the house for a week after that. He admitted that the fault was all his own, and, in proof of the statement that he was drunk, he testified that he had attacked Libbie and tried to whip her in revenge for the beating she had given him before.

Never during the remainder of their year of married life was there a fight in the Tucker household. Les had learned his lesson, and he took orders and obeyed them. Besides his health failed, and about a year after the marriage he died and Libbie mourned sincerely.

So Libbie lived alone, working on her farm, getting stronger and more rugged. About a year after the death of her husband a neighbor inquired of her why she didn't get married again. Libbie Tucker, standing on the porch of her little home, broom in hand, thought a moment and then said: "I ain't a goin' to marry no man 'ceptin' I can find one what's man enough to whip me."

Proposes a Strenuous Courtship.

So the word was passed around the mountain district that any man who thought of taking whip the Libbie Tucker in her own home could have her as his wife, and several young men



who had been cherishing thoughts of going courting in that direction suddenly abandoned their plans and sought wives in other parts of the mountains.

In 1861 Eben Daniels, who owns the Maxwell over on Robinson's creek, came a wooing to the Tucker farm—that had been the Merkle farm. He was a strapping big fellow, weighing about 190 pounds, and he at first knew nothing of the conditions set down by Libbie. He had seen her at the meeting house over at Jake during the "missioner's" revival and fallen in love.

He called three times and "set up" with Mrs. Tucker.

Then he proposed and she laid down the conditions. She told him that he would have to whip her before she would marry him. She "loved" that she liked him "powerful much," but that she didn't know whether or not he could whip her. She rather hoped that he would. The man departed, but returned several evenings later and agreed to fight. And they fought. At the end of ten minutes Daniels was floored by a blow on the head with a skillet, and when he recovered his scattered wits he fled ignominiously.

A few months later Bill Swadley, a dapper young fellow who taught the school over near Jake, came a courting, but

he fled at the mere proposal of a fight, declaring it was his misfortune that he had to fight with a woman, and as Mrs. Tucker administered his remark, he was forced to run, leaving his hat, to escape a whipping.

The next courter was a long time coming. He started paying attention to the widow during the spring of 1863. He was a lawyer named Morg Amos, because his father had been one of Morgan's raiders during the civil war. Morg was a tall, rawboned, homely sort of a man and he loved Libbie sincerely and devotedly. He helped her with the spring work, in her clearing, and grubbed bushes for her.

Morg proposed along in June, and there was a battle royal

because she was plainly in love with the big, good natured suitor.

It was late in June, on Sunday afternoon late that that proposed. He told about it himself afterwards. They were riding horseback side by side along the road over Cannon mountain, to the east near the Carolina border.

"Lib, I says," said Bud in relating the story, "Lib, I want you to marry me. I'll be a good provider. I'm plumb destroyed to marry you."

"An Lib she loves she likes me terrible, well but that I've got to prove that I kin lick her afore she'll promise."

"Shucks," says I, "I ain't a goin' to lick a woman."

"Mebbe you ain't," says Lib, "but if you ain't I ain't a goin' to marry a man. I ain't shore you kin lick me now."

"Well, that is my spunk an' I tell you I'll come over in her house the next day an' if I don't lick her there I'll bet every man in the Blue Ridge mountains wipe his foot often me."

And the next day there was a fight that was a fight—one that the prize ring experts would have revelled in.

There were no witnesses, as the detailed story of the fight by rounds never will be told. All that can be learned of that most battle for a bride and a championship is from the few words that the bride and groom have said regarding it, the statements of Mrs. Wiley Blair, who lived a quarter of a mile down the mud road towards Tackitt from the Tucker farm, and from the observations of those who saw the couple within the next week.

Bud was seen to arrive at the house shortly after 9 o'clock on the morning of June 28. He was seen to enter the house.

Furniture, Dishware and Blows.

Within the next five minutes Mrs. Blair, who had seen Bud ride past, and who said that time had no hint that the matrimonial preliminary had been taken place that morning, heard a racket that caused her to start up the mud road to the rescue. She reached the front gate and stood there entranced. From inside the house there came a sound of breaking furniture, the crash of dishware, the sounds of blows, as if three desperate warriors were being done. She heard the repaired kitchen partition go down with a crash. She heard the cook stove break to pieces, and through the open front door she caught a glimpse of the contestants struggling back and forth across the kitchen floor.

She saw them break clean, and dash for different parts of the kitchen. She saw chunks of firewood hurtling through the air, dishpans, dishes, the big new, thick white pottery, the handleless cups, frying pans, brooms, the lamp, and the kitchen chairs flying about the room.

Then two figures fell out the back door and the battle continued in the back yard. She ran around the house and saw Mrs. Tucker just gathering up some of the stones from the well curb and hurling them at Bud who was advancing. She saw Mrs. Tucker grab the ax and drive back to strike. Then she saw that's that about out, catch his hand on the point of the jaw, and saw the ex-champion drop like a log into the grass and platinum leaves of the back yard.

Entranced by the spectacle she stood in her tracks until she saw Bud bend over, place his arms around the form of his defeated inamorata, and lift her tenderly towards the well where he revived her with cold water.

An hour later Bud and his subdued and obedient fiancée rode down the mud road together and turned into the "Big Road" leading to Whitesville to get the license. His head

in the Tucker home. Mrs. Tucker was forced to go to Pikeville for a new set of dishes for the table, and she told the storekeeper there that she wanted heavy white ones with no handles on the cups because handles broke off so easily when cups were thrown. Also she bought a new "sauce pan and two new frying pans" and had Jim White come up and fix the kitchen partition which had been half torn down, and put a new leg on the kitchen table.

Morg was able to attend to his work a week later—but he whipped two men for mentioning Libbie's name to him—so no one ever got the full details of that affair.

Threw Him Out the Back Door.

The next courter, who was willing to fight for and with Libbie was Lorenzo Reed, and it was currently reported that Libbie threw him out of the back door.

There was much speculation in White and Pike counties last winter when it was learned that Bud Stratton was "keeping company" with Libbie. Bud was the strongest, best natured, best liked fellow in all the district of northern White county from Highbank over to Home. He had won all the "chugging" matches and wrestling bouts at every house raising in that part of the country.

Bud took Libbie over to meeting at Jake, and he rode into Pikeville with her when she went to buy calico and sugar, saying that he wanted to get some store tobacco for himself, and with these marked attentions there was no doubt in the minds of the mountaineers that he would ask Libbie to marry him. Half of the people of the mountains thought that Libbie would say "yes" without the formality of a fight and concede that Bud could whip her—and others declared that they believed Libbie would let him whip her on purpose be-



MRS. LIBBIE TUCKER

GREATEST MASSEUR IN WORLD TELLS HIS SECRETS

THE MOVEMENTS ARE LIGHT

REMOVING WRINKLES BENEATH EYES

REMOVING WRINKLES LOWER LIP

KNEADING THE NOSE

Certain Rid of Wrinkles

ZABLUDOVSKI, the greatest masseur in the world, who, in his office as director of the Institute of Massage of the University of Berlin, has destroyed more wrinkles than any man living, has told the world—the feminine world especially—how to beat Father Time.

This man, who has trained armies of masseurs and sent them forth to fight age, to restore beauty, to destroy wrinkles, and talk Time, declares that beauty may be saved, even restored, by scientific massaging, and he denounces many of the lotions and medicines that are used, declaring the human fingers, scientifically applied, are the best makers of beauty.

Here are some of the vital points set forth:

Certain methods of massage have efficacy to restore lost beauty and rebuild tissues.

Drinking vinegar, absorbing the thyroid gland, and making lemon curds should be forbidden.

Unskillfully administered medicines do harm, and are often positively dangerous.

Systematic applications of manipulations of the human body give it brightness and suppleness.

Zabludovski Explains His System.

Prof. Zabludovski, in speaking of massage in general and of his own system, or, rather, the system taught in Berlin, says:

"In many cases a special apparatus may advantageously replace the movements of the hands. Nevertheless, for cosmetic massage of the face the most effective manipulations should be performed only with the hands. By this means a complete renewal of the muscular fiber can be effected, causing a slight irritation of the nerves, which is transmitted to the vessels, stimulating them, and by that fact producing

a more rapid movement of the sanguineous fluid. The massage has, moreover, an equalizing effect when the sensitiveness is exaggerated or weak, and I have on many occasions caused the disappearance of flushing and paleness which many persons display on the slightest emotion.

"By methodical massage one may succeed in obtaining from the forehead—the muscles of which, either because they are covered with large quantities of fatty matter or slightly paralyzed by an affection of the facial nerves, only perform a small part in the play of the features—a recovery after a certain time of the possibility of wrinkling (if there is no organic affection) if it is methodically and skilfully handled with the fingers. The formation of folds at the impulse and will of the patient, or even unconsciously, soon follows by movements of association, corresponding with the progress of the thought. A forehead—a portion of which has shrunk or become lacking in resistance—readily resumes its vigor and shape when, by means of vibration, it is better irrigated by the flow of blood."

How the Treatment is Applied.

In applying the Berlin system to a person, probably 30 years of age, fat, with a faded complexion and a tendency to wrinkle—an ideal subject for treatment—the patient is ordered to close her eyes, so that the face may be entirely relaxed. Then the operator stands on one side or behind.

If the object is to remove wrinkles of the forehead the masseur stands upright on the right side of the patient. Her right hand moves in a transverse direction. The movements are slight, beginning at the root of the nose and being prolonged to the line of the hair. The left hand is engaged simultaneously in a similar movement, beginning at the base of the forehead and being prolonged upwards to the roots of the hair.

If it is desired to give to the nose a regular form that organ must be kneaded with the palm surface of the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The movement, which is in strokes and composed of light vibrations, extends from the point to the root of the nose. The masseur passes her fingers over both sides of the nose; she stands at the right side of the patient, and her left hand supports the nape of the neck.

To Get Rid of Wrinkles.

To get rid of wrinkles the masseur stands behind the patient and smooths them with the tips of the three first fingers of each hand in a transverse direction along the forehead, beginning in the center and continuing the movement as far as the temples.

If it is desired to attack the wrinkles beneath the eyes they must be lightly rubbed with the thumbs. The move-

ment begins at the back of the nose, and is carried over the maxillary bones, beneath the lower eyelids, and up to the temples. It must be done quickly, bearing in mind that massage of the face should never exceed fifteen minutes and that of the body thirty minutes at the outside. A longer period would produce no better effects and would be contrary to the methods of massage, which are as follows: It must be done quickly, with force or briskness.

The disappearance, or at any rate the partial effacement, of wrinkles of the lower lip is also produced by light friction with both thumbs, beginning exactly below the lower lip and continued as far as the "branches ascendantes" of the lower jaw.

Massage as Aid to Dieting.

Not only as to face, but as to figure, Dr. Zabludovski holds out hopes, and he recommends massage as an aid to dieting, both for fat and thin persons. Severe dieting, he declares, becomes intolerable, persevering and a cause of hypochondria unless accompanied by massage, and massage, he declares, is especially beneficial when used in connection with mixed diets.

"Cosmetic massage," he says, "has started upon a fatal path under the impulse of the manufacturers of creams, powders, oils and essences, who sell them in connection with apparatus with which to apply them."

"The combination of cosmetics and massage is objectionable. The simultaneous use of massage and arguments is wrong, because when massage is rightly practiced the arguments cause irritation of the skin, not being interesting enough."

"The best of these lotions is white natural vasoline. Purchase it in small quantities and keep in hermetically sealed boxes so that it may not degenerate and decompose."