

ST. TAMMANY FARMER.

Covington, February 1, 1879.

HARRY.

Two good-looking young men, one just the same general style as the other—tall, fair, drooping-moustached, blue-eyed, only that Rochestine was the handsomer of the two and a trifle heavier.

They had been chums at college, friends ever since, and regular correspondents during Rochestine's four years absence in Europe. And now he had just come back, and naturally enough there were ten thousand things to talk about—fully as much as if they had been women instead of men.

Harry Clifford's tongue ran especially fast.

"You've come back in the very nick of time, Rochestine. There has been something I've wanted you to do for the last three months—something I'll be hanged if I do, although its got to be accomplished by hook or crook. You're just the identical man to do it, old friend."

Rochestine looked inquiringly at him; then he shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"It sounds suspicious, Clifford. Before you say a syllable more, I'll wager it is something concerning a woman; and, Clifford, you know as well as I do that I'd sooner face a cannon's mouth than a woman."

"You mean to say that your tour abroad hasn't cured you of your confounded bashfulness yet? Why Rochestine, I'm ashamed of you."

Rochestine smiled.

"Yes? So am I, Harry. However, although you call it bashfulness, and I don't, the fact still remains, that ladies' society has more terror for me than pleasure."

Clifford looked wise and experienced.

"That is only because you haven't come across the right girl yet. Confidentially, Rochestine, I've met my destiny since you went away."

Rochestine looked at him surprisedly.

"Since I went away? Why, Harry, your memory is defective. You were engaged to that pretty little cousin of yours before I sailed."

Clifford colored, under the calm, steady gaze.

"But Clara and I—Confound it, Rochestine! it's just about this very business I'm so glad you have come home. In a word, I imagined I was in love with my cousin, Clara Severn, when really I was not. Six months ago, I met the most fascinating woman that ever enchanted man—Miss Belormond—and the result is—and consequently—"

Somehow, with Rochestine's inquiring eyes on him, Clifford felt more conscious of his awkward position, so far as the two young ladies were concerned, than was altogether pleasant to him. He hesitated and flushed, then laughed un- easily.

"O, I comprehend it all perfectly. You want me to act as your ambassador, and use my influence at court to smooth matters between you and the young girl you have so badly injured? Really, friend

Clifford, you have a high opinion of my obligingness and persuasive powers!"

"I have," replied Harry, so honestly, so eagerly, that it was next to impossible to remain angry with him. "I admit I'm a rascal—I'll admit that neither you nor any one else ought to befriend me in the matter; but, old fellow, if ever you did one good turn for anybody in distress, you'll do it for me. I'm engaged to Christie Belormond, and I love her heart and soul, and she cares for me just as much. I shall marry her, happen what may; only I'd give anything I own if you'd try to make it as pleasant as possible to little Clara."

Rochestine's handsome forehead was full of thoughtful, reproving frowns.

Clifford went on, eagerly:

"To tell you the truth, Rochestine, I have in a degree broken the ice for what is to follow. I haven't seen Clara for six or seven months, and my letters have been irregular and not what they used to be. Yesterday I telegraphed her to meet me at the ten-ten train to-night, for I had resolved to go to her and tell her all, and explain to her and my aunt the whole affair. But, by Jupiter! Rochestine, I can't do it. Every ounce of courage has oozed out at my finger's ends."

"And you really want and expect me to do it for you, on two hours notice?"

"If you only will! I've written Clara a letter, and if you would only deliver it personally, and tell her, you know—"

Rochestine smiled sarcastically again.

"Well, tell her what? Just what I think, Harry? That you have treated her most cruelly, as no gentleman would do—that I consider her well rid of you?"

Clifford's face flushed.

"Those are rough words, Rochestine. After all, what have I done, or what do I contemplate doing, so terrible as to have my best friend use them to me? Tell me—would you have me love one woman and marry another?"

Rochestine shrugged his shoulders again.

"I don't pretend to know anything about it. Give me the letter, Clifford. For Miss Severn's sake I will do all I can to ease it for her, poor little girl."

And half an hour later Mr. Henry Rochestine was on the train due at Wheatfield at ten-ten, where would await him the girl whose affection her lover had deliberately set aside.

Mr. Rochestine's thoughts were not especially rosy or enviable as the train sped on through the bright moonlight September night. Perhaps the deepest, most prominent feeling was one of pity for the young girl who, in all her unconsciousness of what awaited her, was at that very time making her glad preparations for meeting her lover; and Rochestine's face flushed as he pictured it.

He was a little nervous when the train stopped at a way station which the brakeman designated as "Wheatfield," but he went ahead, determined to do his best, wonder-

ing how he should find the house, when a spruce colored man, whip and gloves in hand, stepped up to him and touched his cap.

"Beg pardon, sah; this is Mass'r Henry?"

Rochestine's first thought was, how the deuce did the fellow know his name? His second, a sudden satisfaction that the difficulty of finding the Severns had vanished, as evidently the Severns had found him.

"That's my name. You're the Severns' man?"

And in a moment he was being escorted to a coach and pair he had not at first seen.

And in a moment more he was seated inside, and then—

Two arms were around his neck—the warmest, softest arms—and a golden-haired head was nestling on his breast, and then—then two delicious lips kissed him, and the sweetest voice he had ever heard in all his life thrilled him from head to foot.

"Oh, Harry, darling, if you only knew half how glad I was to see you! Why, its been ages and ages since we met!"

I hardly know how to describe Mr. Rochestine's sensations—indeed, he was totally unable to analyze them himself, as for several seconds he sat there, with that fair head nestled against his fall overcoat, and the echo of such an exquisite voice in his ears.

It was several seconds before he was capable of any sensation beyond those strangely mingled ones, astonishment, and a curious, new sort of delight, and a vague fear—and then it flashed over him, with a feeling of ridiculous jealousy, that it wasn't intended for him at all.

Of course it wasn't. Harry Clifford, the double-dyed rascal, was supposed to have come, and, in the uncertain light, this young lady—Miss Clara Severn—had mistaken him for Clifford, as any one else would naturally have done.

What was he to do about it? And, as a faithful chronicler, I am obliged to record that he did not feel at all disposed to instantly enlighten the sweet, fair-haired girl, who caressed his hands so tenderly—whose lips had just brushed his moustache.

It was a perfect revelation to him, this big, handsome fellow, who had always been more or less shy of pretty women, but whose heart, full of affection, was in reserve for somebody. He rather enjoyed the mistake than otherwise. But not for long. It was certainly not more than five minutes before the carriage turned into an avenue that he saw led to a brilliantly lighted house. Then the awkwardness of his equivocal situation struck him with awful force, that was not lessened by his companions words:

"Why don't you talk, Harry? If you knew how I hungered for the sound of your voice—and we will be at the house in a moment, and you must say something before we meet mamma—to let me know you are not angry! Mamma has said all along that you didn't care for me as you used to. Harry! don't you love me?"

It was charming, her pretty, incoherent way of speaking, and he

saw her face distinctly now—eager, flushed, with the sweetest coral lips and the purest of blue eyes.

"Do I love you? Yes, I do, better than all the world beside!"

And then the sudden passion that had come in his tone almost horrified him with its bold temerity.

She gave a little, delighted exclamation:

"I knew it! There—let me have one good look at you, all by ourselves, and then we will go in to mamma. Harry, how much handsomer you have grown in the last six months. Oh, I shall fall in love with you over again, sure, if you will let me! May I?"

Her sweet, shy words, sent a thrill through his heart.

"May you? I wish you would! Promise me, before we get out, that you will never forget those words."

"As if it was likely, you old darling! Harry," and her voice fell to the most delicious murmur, "you haven't kissed me yet!"

Would mortal man have done less? He took her in his arms and pressed her lips to his in a long, lingering kiss.

"I never loved you so much before, Harry," she whispered, as she stepped out, giving him her hand, and the two went up the verandah steps together—Rochestine feeling that the most awful retribution the Fates could hurl at him had been compensated for in that ten minutes ride.

Clara's hand was outstretched to ring the door-bell, when Rochestine suddenly interfered.

"Give me one moment longer before I see your mother. Walk down the verandah once or twice."

And then, in a penitent, straightforward way, that would have gone far to condone a much more unpardonable sin than he had committed, he told her he was not "Harry," but Henry Rochestine, Clifford's most intimate friend, who had commissioned him on his errand. Then he told her the whole story, while the girl, almost paralyzed with momentary fear and horror, turned her blanched face toward him in dumb, piteous embarrassment and consternation.

He explained and talked, and craved her pardon, in a way that was at once gentlemanly, honest, deprecatory, and tinged throughout with an eager, ardent way, that told the girl that he had fallen in love with her on the spot.

Her face was white as the moonlight as she listened.

"I thank you for explaining before we met mamma, Mr. Rochestine. I believe you are an honorable gentleman, and I have nothing to forgive; only—only,"—and a piteously embarrassed, shame-faced look reddened over her sweet features—"of course, I can never forgive myself for—for— Please, please, Mr. Rochestine, never tell it to any one—not even to Ha—Mr. Clifford!"

"You can trust me to the very utmost, and the day may come when you will tell me you are not sorry it has all happened so. I tell you frankly, Miss Clara, I love you with all my heart and soul, and I shall

leave no means untried to win you."

A few minutes later Clara presented him to her mother, and then lengthy explanations ensued; and when he went away, Mrs. Severn's emphatic opinion was given, that he was the "most perfect gentleman she had ever seen."

Six months later, Clara not only indorsed the opinion, but supplemented it by declaring "he was the dearest fellow that ever lived, anyhow!"

And before another six months had gone by, and moonlighted nights of royal September were abroad on silver wings again, Clara had shyly confessed it was the best thing that ever happened to her—the awful mistake in the carriage that night.

"And your presumptuous impudence, Henry," she added, laughing and flushing.

"And your sweet, womanly modesty, my darling—without which, even then, I should never have loved you."

From the files of the Louisiana Gazette, published in New Orleans fifty-six years ago, we clip the following advertisements:

February 17, 1823.

PASSENGERS FOR MADISONVILLE.

An elegant sleigh and four will leave Basin Carondelet this day at 3 o'clock for Madisonville, by way of the canal and Lake Pontchartrain; it will be provided with buffalo robes and other accommodations for eight passengers. Apply to the driver, on board, or at Labrikin's stable. Passage, \$5.

February 17, 1823.

SKATES.—A few pairs of Holland-made skates for sale at 111 Custom-house street, ready-strapped.

An editorial paragraph then speaks of Catalonian wine freezing in the bottles; of Bayou St. John being frozen a foot thick, and of numbers of skaters being out.—New Orleans Times.

THE PHONOGRAPH.—"Dovey," he said, "I think I was telling you, after I came home last night, about the necessity of some retrenchment in our expenditures—was I not?" "Well, really, I've forgotten, John," she answered, nonchalantly; "turn on the phonograph and see." He turned it on, and all it said was, "Whizzer mazzter (hic) mazzter? Whizzer mazzter?"

THE DUTCHMAN'S WARNING.—The howling of a dog in the night is said to be a sign that death will soon occur. The Pennsylvania Dutchman, whose faith was fixed on this sign, gave an incident in proof of its correctness, thus: "One night mine old dog Bese, he howls all the evening, and he howls like everything, when me and mine fraa go to bed, and in the night Katrina she wake me up and say: 'Hans, I not sleep pretty much any, Bese he howls so. Vat ish de matter?' And I say, 'Somebody will be dead pretty quick already,' and den we go to sleep mit ourselves; and de next morning I look in mine paper, and, by jingo, dere vas a man died in Cincinnati!"

Good wine is made of oranges.