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THE OPINION

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The Old Love and the New.

It was a dreary night towards the close of October—a night that reminded you, by no means agreeably that the purple glow and delicious evenings of summer were at an end, and winter was drawing near. Alas, that summers do not last always! Bleak and brown the desolate hills stretched away in long ridges to the westward crested with black, leafless woods, like lashes, through which the sun's great eye glimmers an instant, with baleful sparkle, ere it dips down behind the horizon. Down in the hollow of the abrupt ravine, you could hear the low monotonous fretting of the little brook running under draperies of sere vines, with here and there a solitary blue aster, half buried in layers of brown leaves and trails of brown moss, while on the southern slopes, the dim October gloom was all lighted up with the blazing scarlet pennons of sassafras and dog-wood, outlined brilliantly against a sombre dim background of oaks and brown beeches. And the western window of Elkanah Pearl's red farm-house on the hillside, catching the fiery shaft of sunset, looked not unlike a great diamond, dropped among the clustering pines and birches of the solitary woods.
Nor was it altogether reflected brightness, for the wide, uncarpeted kitchen, was all in a glow with roaring hickory logs, yet fringed with the brown forest moss, while on the right side of the red brick chimney, you caught shifting kaleidoscopic views of a cavernous recess, paved with white hot coals, and luridly bright with ruby glimmers—such an oven, reader, as your grandfathers gloried in sixty years ago, before patent leather was thought of, and steam bakeries were unknown. And Martha Pearl—for shortness called Paty—was standing in front of this fiery furnace, dextrously shoveling in an array of corulent pies, ornamented in every possible device and design with a great wooden spatula.
Now, Paty Pearl was not a bit beautiful and therefore, perhaps, quite unqualified to figure as a heroine of romance. She was only a nice-looking girl, with bright blue eyes, and yellow hair rolled back in aspiring imitation of the New York belle's "cushions upon cushions," and cheeks as round and red as crab apples. But for all that she seemed exactly suited to the everyday atmosphere of the old farm house kitchen, with its low, smoky ceiling, traversed by huge, misshapen rafters, and brushed by the green, glossy leaves of a pet orange tree, rooted in a tub, and its scarlet cushioned rockers, and pine floor covered in the centre by a gorgeous blue and red braided rug—a part of the rustic picture.
"Isn't that cranberry tart almost ready, Aunt Dorothy?" questioned her rosy heroine, shading her flushed forehead from the ardent glow that threw Rembrandt lights and shadows in all directions. "I ought to shut up the oven right away—it's in splendid order."
Just ready," said Aunt Dorothy, daintily trimming off sundry ragged edges of crust with a thin bladed knife. "There, I call this a nice tart!"
Aunt Dorothy Pearl was undeniably an old maid. Thirty-four at the very least, and yet strangely pretty withal, for there was a rich bloom on her cheek, and purplish gossamer shining in her smoothly braided black hair, while her soft hazle-brown eyes had a velvety depth in their liquid iris that gave a singular, indefinable charm to her whole countenance. She wore a crimson stuff dress, with sleeves rolled up above a pair of round elbows, with dots of dimples on each side of the curve, and a blue checked apron tied in a most business-like manner round her waist.
"Now, then, Paty!" quoth Aunt Dorothy, briskly, "we'll clear away the table, and—Why, Elkanah! what brings you home from Polarville so early?"
For Farmer Pearl had advanced into the room, a gigantic, sun-browned six-footer, with shaggy eyebrows and genial wrinkles round his clear blue eyes, and stood there unbuttoning his ginger-colored overcoat, and leisurely untwisting the

serpentine folds of a red and white knit comforter from around his staid neck.

"Wal," said Farmer Pearl, "I be pretty early to-night, that's a fact; but I've sold the greening apples, and two cord o' wood, and got a pretty to'able fair price for 'em too. And I tell you what, it's goin' to be a reg'lar cold night. If I don't smell frost in the air outside, then I haint no nose on my face!"

After successfully propounding this astonishing specimen of the "double negative" in grammar, Elkanah drew off one mixed yarn mitten, and plunged into his inside coat pocket.

"There, Dolly, there's a letter for you, Squire Hawley handed me, as I come by the post-office. And now let's have a bite o' supper as quick as you can get it, for I tell you, I'm sharp set!"

Dorothy's pretty cheek reddened slightly, as she took the folded epistle from her brother's hand.

"It's—I think it's from Reuben Mitchell," she said, replying to Paty's inquiring glance. "At least the writing looks like his."

"Oh! it's from Reuben, eh?" said the farmer, patting his daughter's shoulder, with an approving glance. "Now don't run away as if you were ashamed of your dear, Marthy—you haint no call to make belief shy! What does he say, Doll?"

"He's coming here to-morrow with his brother," said Dorothy, holding the sheet close to the window, to catch the last gleams of the fading light. "Gracious alive! what does the man mean? 'Has something very particular to say, and hopes soon to sustain a nearer and dearer relation to me than that of my friend REUBEN MITCHELL.'"

The farmer burst into a great, resonant, well-pleased laugh.

"Why of course it means that he's goin' to be your nephew-in-law, Dolly," said he, rubbing his brown hands complacently together. "Paty! why, Paty Pearl! come back here, I say! What's the sense o' running away to hide on the stairs! Gals will be gals, and Reuben Mitchell's a fine feller, with the best farm for ten good mile round. 'Taint nothing to be ashamed of, as I know on."

"But father," faltered poor Paty, "he's—he's so much older than I am."
"That don't make no whit o' difference. He aint much above forty I dessey—"

"Just thirty-nine," interrupted Aunt Dorothy, softly, from her station by the twilight window.

"And you mustn't s'pose that's so dreadful old," went on Elkanah Pearl. "Why, bless your heart, Paty, I'm sixty-four."

"Yes, but, father—"

Paty's sobbing plea was drowned in the crash of hickory logs upon the iron fire dogs, and the fall of half-burned foresticks on the wide stone hearth, as Elkanah adjusted the fire.

"My darter," said the old man, setting his teeth together, "we won't argue the pint no longer."

And Paty knew that her father's decree admitted of no appeal.

Aunt Dorothy stood before the fire, with clasped hands and drooping lashes, that half hid the velvet darkness of her eyes, while Paty set the blue-edged crockery ware on the table, and cried softly over the jars of honey in the corner cupboard.

"It don't seem possible," pondered Aunt Dorothy to herself, "I thought I had conquered the old silly feeling. I never fancied myself capable of such absurd weakness—such sentimental folly as this."

Through the coral shine of the red embers, Aunt Dorothy saw the amber flush of long past sunsets when she had been wont to stand in the old porch, with Reuben Mitchell at her side—the yellow sunshine of balmy summer mornings, when Reuben always brought her baskets of wood strawberries or bunches of wild, pink honeysuckle, before he went to his day's work!

Ah! when Reuben came back from his long absence at the West, people had looked knowingly at one another, and rallied Dorothy Pearl on the reappearance of her "old bean."

Her old bean! And little fresh-faced Paty had won the heart that she had once believed all her own. Ah! there is no woman in the world that can witness the defection of an "old bean" without something of a pang, be she married or single.

Dorothy Pearl held one hand tightly over her breast, as she glided across the room to Paty.

"Paty, isn't it almost time to look after those pies?" she said. And in the same breath she put her arm round Paty's shoulder, and dropped a soft shadowy kiss on her cheek.

"Paty," she whispered. "I am glad for your sake darling. O, Paty! I hope you will be happy."

Paty did not feel very happy, however. But then, as Farmer Pearl sagaciously remarked: "Gals is so dreadful unsarten, you can't never tell which way they're going to jump."

So the Sunday morning dawned, chill and gray, over the village and the bleak autumn woods.

"Well," said the farmer brushing his iron gray hair back from a wrinkled forehead that had faced the storms of sixty-four years. "I'll bring 'em from church with me, if you gals won't neither on you go. Where's the big blue umbrella? it's beginnin' to rain like the old boy.—I'm kinder 'o sorry that long-legged brother of Reuben Mitchell's is comin'—I shan't know what on earth to say to him, for Deacon Jameson says he's great on Greek and Latin, and is studin' up for a minister.—Praps, though, Reub, brings him along to do the polite to Dolly, while he's a courtin' of Paty,—Reub, always was a far-sighted feller."

And Farmer Pearl departed, chucking to himself, under the spreading canopy of the "blue umbrella."

"The 'best room,' with its brilliant rag carpet, and white muslin curtains, shadowed with red-berried asparagus, was gaily decorated with bunches of deep purple dahlias, relieved by autumn leaves, and sprigs of cedar, while just beyond the open door, you caught a glimpse of the festive Sunday table, covered with shining birdseye damask, and garnished with jellies, pickles and preserves, known only to New England housekeepers.

Dorothy Pearl shaded her eyes with the book she had in vain been trying to read, and looked across the russet meadows, to where a bit of road was visible, below the great red barn.

"O, I see them—I see them," faltered Paty, changing from red to white, and shrinking away from her aunt's side. While Dorothy stood as still as if she had been carved in marble.

"It's all right," roared Farmer Pearl, bursting into the room at least a yard in advance of his guests.

"Reub and I've fixed it, just as clear as a quill. Come in Reub! come in. Mr. Hen—ery Mitchell, sir, if you please! Dolly, this is Mr. Hen—ry Reuben—no, I mean Mr. Mitchell's Hen—ry—no, I'm blessed if I can tell what I dew mean! Only what I would say, is Reub's brother Hen—ry!"

The farmer made a sudden dive for the woodshed, where they could hear him roaring out great gusty peals of laughter, and stamping round like one possessed.

Reuben Mitchell took both Dorothy's hands in his, and looked into her soft eyes tenderly, as he had been wont to look years since.

"Your brother has given his full and cordial consent, my little Dot," he said gently. "Will you, too, say yes?"

"Certainly I say yes," she returned frankly.

He passed his arm with a caressing touch round her shoulder.

"My dear little sweetheart of long ago!"

"Mr. Mitchell!" faltered Dolly, shrinking away from him, "this is scarcely what I should expect from Paty's betrothed husband!"

Reuben raised his eyebrows.

"What has Miss Paty to do with the matter?"

"Are not you going to marry her?"

"No; I'm going to marry Doro-

thy Pearl—the sweetest little jewel in all these northern hills—that is, if she will have me."

"Reuben!"

"Dot, is it possible you fancied I was wooing your niece all the time? Why, child, she and Harry have been snugly engaged these two weeks. Dorothy darling, what are you crying for?"

"I—don't—know!" sobbed Dolly. "Oh, Reuben, it can't be true!"

"Hallo!" ejaculated Farmer Pearl, thrusting his shaggy head in at the door, "are we goin' to hev dinner to-day, or aint we? 'Cause I, for one, can't live on young folks' pretty speeches and old love affairs patched over! I'm sartin I smell them chickens burnin'."

And Dorothy slipped away into the kitchen. Paty followed her the next moment.

"Oh, Aunt Dolly, I am so glad! To think how I could ever be such a silly little goose as to fancy that Mr. Reuben Mitchell cared a fig about ridiculous me! Aunt Dolly, I never was so happy in all my life!"

"Nor I, I believe," said Dolly, laughing hysterically—and setting the roast chickens right into a dish of quince-preserves!

"We've got a powerful sight to be thankful for!" said Elkanah Pearl, striking his carving-knife into the viands before him; "and one thing is, that Dolly and Pat, between 'em, haven't clean spilled our dinner!"

He never knew what a narrow escape it had through!

Our New York Letter.
NEW YORK OCT. 26, 1874.

Editor of Opinion:

I would interview somebody, yes, I would dance attendance on some great man, get his ideas on the questions absorbing the public mind, and give them to the OPINION. I would astonish Bradford. I would ripple the surface of her placid life with a smile of pride at her own enterprise. Three pints of my photographs should be placed on sale at the Post-office—with the usual ecclesiastic deduction to Sunday Schools—and a grateful body of Se lectmen would telegraph for permission to bring me (cabinet size) to the town pump.

My friend Jones was a successful interviewer, and if Jones, who was brought up on the bottle, and really had no advantages to speak of, could produce his column of brilliant dialogue every morning, why should I hesitate—I who have lived all my life just around the corner from a Primary school and a Police station. Perish the thought. I would see Jones at once.

"Familiarize your mind with a certain line of thought, and the questions growing out therefrom. Subtly lead the old gentleman back if he get offish and run away with the line. Give him just enough play to tickle him with belief that he isn't telling things he'll be sorry for when they appear in print the next morning. Above all things my dear fellow, don't let him bluff you; don't let him come the 'pressing engagement,' or the 'call again' dodge over you. Even though his wife scream 'croup' and 'the baby' from up stairs, ten to one it's a put up job—there's nothing to it, old boy, I assure you.

This was Jones' schedule of hints for the woodshed, where they could hear him roaring out great gusty peals of laughter, and stamping round like one possessed.

What more delightfully simple? Rolling off a log would be a matter of scientific calculation side of it. I began to "familiarize my mind" as suggested. I did it thoroughly all the evening after my conversation with Jones, and the consequence was I woke in the night to find Mrs. Snow with a double turn of wet towel around my head, and surrounded by all the paraphernalia necessary to a thorough course of home-made medical treatment, and why? Simply because I had in my sleep, asked if she really thought the baby had the croup! Now to any one acquainted with my domestic hearth, this question is, perhaps, the most absurd I possibly could ask. No wonder Mrs. S. turned nervous over it, but I hastened to explain, for being an ardent hydro-pathist, her arrangements were somewhat complicated. Besides, I once put myself into her hands for treatment, and owing to a slight error of 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the water of a bath, I was obliged to

take my meals off the mantel for three weeks afterward.

Determined to catch my man before business called him down town I took a hasty breakfast, and was soon at my victim's door, and later was ushered into the parlor, where was a young lady at the piano, deeply absorbed in counting an asthmatic accompaniment. Nearly if not quite sixteen, she was painfully backward, apparently unable to numerate above four. This soon became excruciating to me, for mathematics had from infancy been a passion. When a child of not more than three years, I took two apples from two apples (belonging to my little sister) and knew there were none left—because I went to see.

Upon noticing me the young lady fled, leaving ajar the dining room door, through which voices evidently from those at breakfast were distinctly heard.

"Papa, how do the papers get hold of all these little personal affairs, and private family matters?"

"Through reporters, my dear, who call upon gentlemen supposed to be connected in any way with the matters they desire to work up. Properly followed out this is legitimate enough, but the interviewer is becoming altogether too bold. To have these young sprigs—boys who only yesterday, as it were, had their little legs in iron to make their toes turn out—I say to have them question impertinently, with the shrewdness of a criminal lawyer, men old enough to be grandfathers to them, is carrying enterprising journalism a little too far."

"Were you ever interviewed papa?"

"Yes, once, and furthermore it will be the last time. In the coolest possible manner the red haired, bow legged rascal, (Jones, by all that's wonderful) wanted my personal history from the time I was first out of pinafores till now. This much for him however. When I led him from the house by the ear, he actually seemed to look upon it as a personal favor, carried out in the most delicate manner possible. If another of his craft should set foot into my house, I'd—the remark was lost in the clash of a carving knife against steel. Livid with fear and with hot streaks creeping up my back, I glanced around for something with which to defend myself, when the door opened, "Well, my young friend, what can I do for you?" A brilliant thought, one born of despair. "I called Mr. Brown to inquire"—"You are laboring under some delusion sir, my name is not Brown."

"Not Brown? Pardon me—what number is this?"

"Thirty-five."

"I want thirty-four. In passing the next door I took the number to be thirty-three."

"Quite right; but the odd numbers are on this and the even numbers on the other side of the street. A stranger in the city, I presume."

"Yes; a thousand pardons for this intrusion."

"Don't mention it."

"Good morning."

"Good morning."

Ed. OPINION, To JOSHUA SNOW, Dr.
For interviewing, \$5.00
Memo. of details.
Mental anxiety \$2
Lying \$2
Repairs on clothes damaged during a conversation with Jones the day following, \$1
Received payment, \$5.00
SNOW.

There are a great number of plants cultivated in our northern States that require more or less protection in winter. Many of these species that are generally considered as perfectly hardy are often greatly benefited by even a slight protection during the coldest weather. This is particularly the case with trees and shrubs on which the fruit and flower buds are formed the season before that in which they fully develop. And as the largest portion of our hardy plants belong to this class it is well to give them shelter whenever practicable. As the time will be soon at hand for removing plants to their winter quarters, and giving protection to those that require it in the open air, we give a few hints for the benefit of those who have no experience in these matters.

Strawberries.—There are a few va-