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Select Tale.

(From Peterson's Magazine.)
SISTER MARY'S COURTSHIP.

BY FANNIE MORETON.

"Pray tell me what you are reckoning up in that busy brain of yours, Louise? Be careful that you don't go to counting your chickens before they are hatched, like that unfortunate milk-maid grandma used to tell us of. Let that be a salutary lesson to you, sister mine, never to indulge in day dreams or build foundationless castles in the air."

"Thank you, Mrs. Mary, for your sage advice. Perhaps some day or other I may profit thereby. But my thoughts just now had very little to do with either milk-maids or chickens. I was wandering mentally in a higher sphere—calculating how many years my charming sister had been a wife."

"Ah! Lucy dear, that reminds me, did I never tell you the history of my courtship? For I now recollect you were travelling with papa in Europe at that time; and though five years have passed since I became a faithful helpmate to my leige and lord, yet you have never deigned to visit us in our western home until the present summer."

"You know very well why I have not, Mary. While inclination has often bidden me, duty has peremptorily called another way."

"Never mind bringing up an endless tirade of excuses now, but just please touch the bell, and tell Kate to take Maggie and Edward a walk to their grandma's, and I will commence."

Very little did that darling sister of mine look like a wife and mother, with her soft brown hair parted on her fair brow and her eyes as bright and blue as ever—and as she stood before the dressing-glass, she laughed gaily and exclaimed, as if speaking aloud the thoughts that were at that moment passing through my mind.

"I don't look so very old, do I Lou, though I have been married five years? I'm sure my cheeks are as rosy as ever. Oh, Lou, how I have wanted to look pale sometimes, because then, you know, one looks far more intellectual. Instead of that, I always had such a bright color like any farmer's daughter. But one thing is true, the 'cares of the household,' as Aunt Ophelia says, don't trouble me much, for Nannie does everything so well—"

"But, Mary, I can see no very intimate connection between her doings and your courtship, so if you ever intend to begin, pray do."

"So I will, love, only have a little patience," said she, gaily, stooping down and kissing me. "But I assure you you will find it very dull and uninteresting, no 'hair-breadth escapes,' no 'spirited horse just ready to throw itself and rider (myself of course) over some steep precipice, when just at that exact moment some hero of the wood will come gallantly forward and become my preserver and future lover.' No handsome, manly cousin to fall in love with and become his daily companion in walks and rides. Nothing of all this. I forewarn you, but if you still persist in hearing my home story, you shall have it."

Merely bowing my head in assent, for I was becoming impatient, my sister seated herself on a low footstool at my feet and began.

"You remember Mrs. Milton, who used to visit us in the city, and make me so many handsome presents? Well, she owned a charming place near the seashore. Oh, Lucy, if you have never been there I cannot describe it to you. The house itself is old-fashioned, and the furniture, though antique, is rich and costly. I shall never forget the many pleasant evenings I have spent in that vine-clad porch, with the whole expanse of blue, clear water lying almost at my feet. When laying aside my book, I would sit fairly entranced in the calm grey hour of twilight when silence reigned around—and the moon shed her soft light over the rich and varied scene. Truly it has been said that man made the city. But God made the country."

Mrs. Milton was a kind-hearted wo-

man, though one fond of having her own way. I was ever a great favorite of hers; so was a certain young physician in a neighboring village. How often has Mrs. Milton spoken in boundless praises of him to me: telling how half the village girls were striving to win his noble heart, but striving in vain.

Mamma and I had returned in the early part of September from the Springs, tired with gaiety and excitement. I fairly cried for joy when Mrs. Milton came to New York, nominally with the intention of having mamma and myself return with her to her rural home. Mamma, however, preferred remaining in the city, tho' she finally consented to my returning with Mrs. Milton, the terms that I should keep my mitt within bounds, for you know what a wild madcap I was in those days, Lou.

I will pass over our pleasant journey, and my delight in exchanging the hot and scorching pavements, brick walls, and dust-laden air, for cool, refreshing breezes and waving green grass. I had been at Mrs. Milton's about a fortnight, when one morning she hastily entered my room, saying, 'Come, Mary, brush your hair and fix up, for Dr. Louiston and Mr. Nelson are coming down the avenue, and I would not wish them to see you in this plight.' 'Nor I either, Aunt,' I replied, for I had been out in the woods all the morning, and my gingham dress was sadly torn, and my white apron all stained with blackberries. 'Well, dear,' she continued, 'come down in the parlor as soon as you're ready, for I must go and show them in; Nancy is so dumb, she will be more likely to take them in the tea-room, if she should condescend to invite them to enter at all,' and so saying, she left the room.

What Mrs. Milton meant by fixing up I do not know; but I am afraid my toilet that afternoon did not exactly suit; for as it was very warm I simply arranged my hair, and put on a white muslin dress without a single ornament, save that little diamond ring papa had given the New Year's before.

From various hints from my friends at Westland and others interested, I had learned that if I had heard much of Dr. Louiston, he had heard much more concerning me. In fact the whole country round was aware that the doctor had been selected by Mrs. Milton as my future husband. But from several stories I had heard, I knew very well that he was not easily caught; and I determined to meet him on his own ground. Much had been said by the village belles and young wives of the country round in his disfavor in my presence. But I heeded them not, for I well understood their motives, and though, sister dear, I cared very little to see Dr. Louiston, I did die to make them envious as far as it was in my power. I'm afraid, Lucy dear, that if their motive was wrong in speaking my disparagement in Dr. Louiston's presence, my own motive in cultivating his acquaintance was not exactly right.

When I had completed dressing I took a bunch of wild flowers, which I had been gathering that morning, with the intention of arranging them. I descended the stairs. As I entered the room, I saw Mrs. Milton standing by an open window conversing with the two gentlemen, and pointing to some favorite plant in the garden below. I therefore stood for a moment near the door unobserved. Happening to look that way, one of the gentlemen caught my look, and I thought I could just perceive a rather amused expression pass over his countenance. In a moment I knew that it was Dr. Louiston, and I returned his glance with one of hauteur and disdain. He was of the medium height and strikingly handsome. His features were fine, and his eyes black and piercing.

I sat down on the sofa and commenced arranging my flowers, and when introduced begged the gentlemen to excuse me from rising, as I was particularly engaged. Mrs. Milton seemed surprised. 'My dear,' she said, 'this is Dr. Louiston, whom you have doubtless heard me frequently speak of.' 'Indeed,' I answered, without once looking up. I could plainly see that Mrs. Milton was displeased with my conduct during the interview, but

she concealed her feelings under the mask of politeness.

The doctor's friend, I had forgotten to mention, was a young man of a bright florid complexion, not good-looking certainly, but polite and gentlemanly in his manners. He came and sat down by me, and we soon entered into a spirited conversation. Presently Mrs. Milton, who had been regarding us with nervous glances every now and then, rose and requested Mr. Nelson to accompany her to the house, to look at some choice exotic she had lately received, and which she wished him to analyze. They left the room, leaving me to play the hostess to Dr. Louiston, not a very agreeable task just then, I assure you. But I had previously resolved what line of conduct to pursue, and proceeded to carry it into effect.

Rising and walking to the open window, I emptied my apron of its contents of shreds of stalks and leaves, and placing my choice bouquet of wild flowers in a vase, I calmly turned round to Dr. Louiston and said, 'You have doubtless heard my name coupled with many idle reports, and your partial motive,' I added, smiling, 'in coming here to-day was one of curiosity, and I must say, my dear sir, that I cannot much blame you after your experience. Now, Dr. Louiston,' I continued, 'if you choose to come and visit us occasionally from motives of friendship, don't imagine, my dear sir, that you will be treading on slippery ground, or that snares are spread round to entrap you. For as to myself, though I have not yet informed Mrs. Milton, or indeed any one but dear mamma, I am to be married to a dear cousin (who is now travelling in Europe for his health) at the end of six months.'

I calmly endured that fixed gaze of inquiry, without shrinking, for every word I had uttered was truth.

Dr. Louiston rose, and coming to where I was standing, said, while a beautiful smile played upon his countenance, 'At least then, Miss Mary, let us be friends.' 'Certainly,' I replied, laughingly, at the same time extending my hand, 'I have not the slightest objection.'

Just at that unlucky moment, while my hand was still in Dr. Louiston's, Mrs. Milton entered the room, while a gratified expression swept over her features; and when the gentlemen had departed, and she openly congratulated me on my successful conquest, it almost broke my heart to think of the kind friend I was deceiving. For I believe, Lucy, my interests were as near her heart as her own.

Well, Dr. Louiston and I, I see I must be brief, sister, as the dressing bell has rung, continued from that time as friends, riding on horseback, rowing, and walking together; and the time allotted for my visit was fast drawing to a close.

But, Lucy, whenever I thought of returning home, there would come such a sensation around my heart, that I could almost wish, sometimes, that it would cease to beat altogether. I know it was very wicked, but I could not help it.

One evening, I remember it as well as if it were but yesterday, we had been walking together, Dr. Louiston and I were seated beneath a lofty oak. We were both of us silent. I was thinking with deep regret of returning to the city the next morning, for mamma had written that I must not delay my return another day, as papa and you were expected by the next steamer. As the dew was fast falling, we rose and returned home. As we nearly reached the door, Dr. Louiston turned to me and said, 'Forgive me, Mary, for the words I am about to speak. When I received your permission to visit you, it was with the mutual agreement that it was to be only as a friend. But oh, Mary,' he continued, earnestly, 'I have found too late, as others have found before me, that love has grown out of friendship; and Mary, forgive me dear, but I must say it, I have sometimes dared, yes! dared to hope that, though your heart was promised to another, your heart was mine. Oh! that that wild hope might indeed prove a reality, and I would not ask for more.'

My head was lying on his shoulder, my hand lay passively in his. I had not

the power to speak. I knew if I should attempt it, I would only burst into tears.

When we reached the piazza all was still. Nothing was to be heard but the dashing of the waves against the shore. I sat down on a seat on the porch, and gazed with filling eyes into the blue sea. Oh! how I wished I was buried beneath those rocking waves, never more to see the light of day. But better thoughts soon came, and when Dr. Louiston bade me farewell, and imprinted a kiss on my brow, I felt calm. 'Good night, Mary,' he said, 'I respect you for the silence you have chosen to keep. But oh! Mary, my life is all a blank now; and sometimes when you are surrounded by the bright and gay, will you pause and bestow one thought on him who must hereafter lead a dreary existence? Oh! Mary, that we had never met.'

Oh! how fondly was that wish re-echoed back in my own heart. But I strove to be calm, and bidding Dr. Louiston farewell, rushed into the house.

And now, Lucy, I need not go on, you know the rest. How when but a few days after papa had returned, he called me one morning to the library, drawing me toward him and kissing my brow, and told me he had sad news for me; and bade me never again think of my cousin William, for six weeks ago (so he had written me, and papa had in mistaken kindness withheld the letter until his return) he had married an English girl, speaking of our engagement only as a childish attachment.

My eyes were filled with tears of joy now, and I kissed papa over and over again, who looked at me wonderingly over his spectacles, for he had expected to find me lounged in grief.

And now Louise, you remember my merry wedding, and our removal to St. Louis, and that life ever since has been to me but one bright dream of happiness.

Home Politeness.

Why not be polite? how much does it cost to say 'I thank you'? Why not practice it at home? to your husband? to your domestics? If a stranger does you some little act of courtesy, how sweet the smiling acknowledgement! If your husband, ah! it is a matter of course no need of thanks.

Should an acquaintance tread on your dress, your best, very best, how profuse are you with your 'never minds, don't think of it, I don't care at all; if a husband does it, he gets a frown; if a child, it is chastised.

'Ah! these are little things,' say you. They tell mightily upon the heart, let me assure you, little as they are.

A gentleman stops at a friend's house, and finds it in confusion. He don't see anything to apologize for—never think of such matters. Everything is all right—cold supper, cold room, crying children—perfectly comfortable. Goes home, where the wife has been taking care of the sick ones and working her life almost out. Don't see why things can't be kept in order—there never were such cross children before. No apologies accepted at home.

Why not be polite at home? Why not use freely that golden coin of courtesy? How sweetly they sound, those little words, 'I thank you,' or 'you are very kind.' Doubly, yes, thrice sweet from the lips of her who smiles make the eye sparkle with the light of affection.

Be polite to your children. Do you expect them to be mindful of your welfare? to grow glad at your approach? to bound away to do your pleasure before the request is half spoken? Then with all your dignity and authority mingle politeness; give it a niche in your household temple. Only then will you have learned the true secret of sending out into the world really finished ladies and gentlemen.

What we say, we say unto all—be polite.

In Turkey, whenever a storekeeper is convicted of telling a lie, his house is painted black, to remain so for one month. If there were such a law in this country, what a sombre and gloomy appearance some of our cities would present.

FEMALE CHARACTER.

Character to a woman is like cash to a man—without it one is poorly off indeed. The person who will deliberately injure a woman's reputation by word or deed, is guilty of an act that should crimson the cheek with shame, and burn the conscience as with fire. The trouble of it is too often attended with no such result. We find the following about on the sea of newspaperdom, which is good enough to have the widest possible circulation.

'Never make use of an honest woman's name at an improper time or in a mixed company. Never make assertions about her that you think are untrue, or allusions that you feel she herself would blush to hear. When you meet with men who do not scruple to make use of a woman's name in a reckless and unprincipled manner, shun them, for they are the very worst members of the community; men lost to every sense of honor every feeling of humanity. Many a good and worthy woman's character has been forever ruined, and her heart broken by a lie, manufactured by some villain, and repeated when it should not have been, and in the presence of those whose little judgment could not deter them from circulating the foul and blighting report. A slander is soon propagated, and the smallest thing derogatory to a woman's character, will fly on the wings of the wind, and magnify as it circulates, until its monstrous weight crushes the poor unconscious victim. Respect the name of woman, for your mother, your sister, are women; and as you would have their fair names untarnished and their lives unembittered by the slanderer's biting tongue, heed the ill that your own words may bring upon the mother, the sister, or wife of some fellow creature.'

A NEWPORT STORY.—Near Newport, is situated the Island of Connecticut; the inhabitants of which are in the habit of taking their produce to the market of the former place, taking back in return, such commodities as their necessities demand. Some years since, there lived an honest family on the island, who had a son—whose long shabby, uncombed hair, gave him an uncommonly poorish appearance, even in that then primitive place. The father was in the habit of visiting Newport, according to the custom of his neighbors. On one occasion, he took home with him, packed at the top of the chest in which he transported his goods a small mirror, the first ever possessed by the family. The chest was brought home, and placed in the centre of the room, as usual, for the purpose of being discharged of its contents, when this uncouth son ran, as usual, and raised the lid, to see what father had brought from town. On this occasion, he gave but one brief look, dropped the lid, and with terror depicted in every feature, cried out: 'Oh, mother! mother! father has brought home a cub! he has brought home a cub I see him—a young bear?'

LIGHT SUPPER.—One of the great secrets of health is light supper; and yet it is a great self denial, when one is hungry and tired at the close of the day, to eat little or nothing. Let such an one take leisurely a cup of tea, a piece of cold bread with butter, and he will leave the table as fully pleased with himself and all the world as if he had eaten a heavy supper. Take any two men under similar circumstances, strong, hard-working men, of twenty five years; let one take his bread and butter, with a cup of tea, and the ordinary of *ceieras*, as the last meal of the day, and let the other eat heartily of whatever may tempt his appetite, and we will venture to affirm that the tea drinker will outlive the other by thirty years.—*Home Circle*.

CHILDREN.—I remember a great man coming to my house at Waltham, and seeing all my children standing in the order of their age and stature, he said: 'These are they that make rich men poor; but he straight received this answer, 'Nay my lord; these are they that make a poor man rich—for there is not one of these whom we should part with for all your wealth.—*Bishop Hall's Life*.

SCATTERED THOUGHTS.

To-morrow will be my birth-day, and I have stolen awhile away from cumbering cares, that I might spend a short season of the closing year in casting a retrospective glance at the past—how checkered it has been, how strewn with providence and crowned with blessings.

But a few years ago, a happy little school girl, surrounded by those who loved to fondle and caress, with prospects fascinating enough to enamour a little traveler, and guide the tiny feet to paths of pleasure; but ere I had entered the enchanted ground to pluck its fragrant blossoms, heard the silent whisper—'Child, beware! I heeded not till thorns grew up around me, and thought the solemn lesson, that earth's enjoyments cannot last. While pausing to reflect, the rude blast of the destroying angel swept over, and bore away the flattering spirit of my idol brother to a fairer climate, where cold and heat are never known. Again and again, I have watched beside the dying bed of many very dear to me. I still seem to feel the farewell grasp, and hear the feeble accents as they frame a parting admonition, 'to be good.'

O, relentless death, why dost thou choose earth's richest jewels for thy prey? Thou hast broken our circle, left our hearthstone desolate, loosed the silver cord, broken the wheel at the cistern, and gathered 'mid thy gleanings the ripening shock. We faint would have treasured for ourselves; but the dust has returned to the earth, as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it.

We are left orphans—my mother, as a broken reed, shaken by the wind. But the fatherless and widow have a Father in heaven, whose supporting hand has sustained, whose rod and staff have upheld us, while the tender Shepherd gently folds us as lambs to his bosom, healed our bleeding hearts with the balm of Gilead, and administered a cordial for each fear.—I have since felt a nearness to this Saviour which I never felt before, though the billows had high gone over me, yet His smile calmed the angry waves and chased away the gloom of night. 'He hath done all things well;' these bereavements were only to elevate my affections, and refine and purify my heart, by purging away its dross, that the image of Christ might be reflected there.

Months and years have passed, yet His loving kindness has never failed. I rejoice to-day that He has taken my feet out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and fixed them upon the rock Christ Jesus. O, reader, here is a foundation which ages cannot destroy, and upon which I would urge you to build all your hopes; for, unlike the quicksands on which you have reared the castles of your every-day dreams, you will find life real and immortal. GLEN.

A French paper mentions that a peasant received lately by mail, a letter from his son Joseph, a Zouave before Sebastopol. The young man mentioned the fact that his legs were yet whole, but that his shoes were the worse of the wear. The affectionate father having purchased a pair of nine and a-halfs, was perplexed as to the means of forwarding them. At last he thought of the telegraph—the line to Marseilles ran through his village.—He put the address on one of the soles, and flung the shoes over the wire. A pedlar passing by, struck by the solidity of their workmanship, appropriated them and placed his used up stampers in their place. The next morning the old daddy returned to the spot to see if the telegraph had executed his commission. He saw the substitution which had been effected. 'I vow,' he exclaimed, 'if Joseph hasn't sent back his old ones!'

INTOXICATION.—An old law in Spain decreed that if a gentleman was convicted of even a capital offence, he should be pardoned on his pleading his having been intoxicated at the time he committed it, it being supposed that any one who bore the character of gentility, would more readily suffer death than confess himself capable of such a vice.

VICTORIA AND THE SABBATH.

The following interesting anecdote of Queen Victoria was originally published in the Court Journal. It is probably true; and if so, is highly honorable to her: A noble lord, not particularly remarkable for his observance of the holy ordinances, arrived at Windsor late on Saturday night.

'I have brought down for your Majesty's inspection,' he said, 'some papers of importance, but as they must be gone into at length, I will not trouble your Majesty with them to-night—but request your attention to-morrow morning.'

'To-morrow morning!' repeated the Queen, 'to-morrow is Sunday, my Lord!'

'But business of state, please your Majesty!'

'Must be attended to, I know,' replied the Queen; 'and as, of course, you could not come down earlier to-night, I will, if those papers are of such vital importance, attend to them after we come from church to-morrow morning.'

'To church went the royal party, to church went the noble lord—and much to his surprise the sermon was on 'the duties of the Sabbath!'

'How did your lordship like the sermon?' inquired the Queen.

'Very much, your Majesty,' replied the nobleman, with the best grace he could.

'I will not conceal from you,' said the Queen, 'that last night I sent the clergyman the text from which he preached. I hope we shall all be the better for it.'

The day passed without a single word on the subject of the paper of importance—which must be gone into at length. His lordship was—as he always is—graceful and entertaining, and at night, when her Majesty was about to withdraw, 'To-morrow morning, my Lord,' she said, 'at any hour you please—as early as seven if you like—we shall go into those papers.'

His lordship could not think of intruding at so early an hour on her Majesty—nine would be quite time enough.

'As they are of importance,' said the Queen, 'as they are of importance, my Lord, I would have attended to them earlier, but at nine be it.'

And at nine her Majesty was seated, ready to receive the nobleman, who had been taught a lesson on the duties of the Sabbath, it is hoped he will not quickly forget.

Right or Left.

We were told a few days since the following piece of 'skinning' as it was called, and which is rather too good to be lost, showing at the same time the desperate straits a certain class of gentlemen are put to in making a raise. A well known case, who was hard up for money, meeting a brother chip in the street, told him if he would walk across the street, go into the front door of the hotel opposite, and in walking in be very lame in his right leg, but come out in a few moments and be lame in the left leg, he would make it all right with him some time.—Without asking why or wherefore, the fellow did as was requested, and the skinner going up to a gentleman, remarked to him how lame that man was in the left leg, who was just going into the hotel.—'The gentleman said he was not lame in his left leg, which the other insisted was so. But to settle the matter, the skinner immediately proposed a bet of ten dollars that the man was lame in the left leg, which the gentleman accordingly took.—'The money was posted, and in a few moments the man came out so desperately lame in the left leg that he could scarcely get down the steps of the hotel, and of course the money was lost by the gentleman, who could scarcely believe his own eyes, for although the man came out lame in his left, he was perfectly certain he went in lame in the right leg, but at the same time he never imagined there was any collusion between the parties. We have heard of many ways to make a raise, but this goes a little ahead of all.—*Albany Knickerbocker*.

The only way for a man to escape being found out is to pass for what he is. The only way to maintain a good character is to deserve it. It is easier to correct our faults than to conceal them.