

# The Holt County Sentinel.

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## Holt County Sentinel.

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## MARRYING RICH.

BY REV. W. B. SLAUGHTER.

### CHAPTER III.

[CONCLUDED.]

CHARLES BARNWELL had always acquitted himself well in his career as a student. His mind was of that symmetrical cast that admits of seriousness without severity, and sprightliness without levity. An ardent lover of truth, he was energetic in its acquirements. Esteeming the society of the wise and the good, his walks were among the purest and most elevated circles. Deeply pious, he was ever happiest when he was mingling with those whose conversation was in heaven. It would be expected that he would be found often in those places where Christians meet for social worship.

The L— College was celebrated for the religious influence that generally prevailed among its members. No season passed without a gracious revival of religion in the town where it was located. Between the citizens of the town and the students of the college, there subsisted an intimacy of intercourse and a sympathy of feeling that seldom are seen at such institutions. They had little about which to wrangle, and much in which to affiliate and cordially work together. Let the reader accompany us to the house of God on a sweet May evening. The people are quietly and cheerfully assembling for social worship. The exercise commences and proceeds with sweet and uniform animation. Now the song of praise goes up like incense to heaven; now from the bended knee the yearning heart pleads to God.

Hark! that voice is not recognized in this house of worship. It is a female voice. The language of the petition is such as irresistibly to arrest the attention of every one present. So elevated the thought; so pure and chaste the diction; so calm and subdued the tone; so deep and soul-thrilling the pathos. The soul of the petitioner evidently wreathed with God. The words of the prayer burned into the very soul of each one who heard them, and the whole assembly was pervaded with the thrilling power of that one heart's prevailing utterances. On no one did the prayer of the stranger make a deeper impression than on Charles Barnwell. He felt, as only a refined and noble mind can feel, the depth of import that attended the most pure and glowing language he had ever heard.

You will pardon him, kind reader, for resolving then and there, to avail himself of the first opportunity to become acquainted personally with the person in whom he was so much interested.

He did not have long to wait. He had been accustomed to drop in now and then at the meeting of a sewing circle. This circle met the next day. He resolved to attend it, and as he had often done before, inquire in what way he and his associates could aid the objects of the society. Full of the hope that he might meet his lady there, he proceeded to the place of meeting. More than once he detected himself asking why he felt such an interest in her. She was to him a stranger. He had seen her only the evening before, and then he had seen but little of her. He could not say she appeared beautiful, but there was something in the deep, rich, subdued pathos of her voice, something in the glowing fervor of her soul, that fascinated him.

The ladies were assembled, and in the midst of their work, when he made his appearance. He received their cordial salutations, and returned them with a cordiality equal to that with which they were offered. There was one lady well known to him on account of her self-sacrificing, devoted, religious life. She was a widow, living in humble privacy, yet doing much good silently and meekly. She was poor. Her own hands earned her daily bread. Mrs. Gray was at this time accompanied by a young lady. A glance informed him that she was the person whose acquaintance he so much desired. As soon, therefore, as he could do so without apparent haste, he placed himself by the side of his friend and entered into conversation. He was immediately introduced to Miss Ellen Gray, and the conversation was carried on between them.

We will not undertake to report their conversation in detail. Very naturally, the business of the circle suggested the destitution and wretchedness of multitudes of our race, the best methods of reaching the benighted heathen with the light of the Gospel, and the power of that gospel to quicken and elevate

the race. In these subjects she evinced a zeal full of sympathy and intelligence. Charles was filled with admiration at the extent and variety of the information she possessed, and fascinated with the ease and grace of her conversation. He watched the expression of her countenance as she talked. Now the bright light of her deep blue eye would seem to scintillate around him; now a shade of sadness would pass over her, and now the utmost gentleness and tenderness would blend upon her features. Altogether, when he retired from her charming presence, Charles Barnwell confessed to himself that she had become to him an object of very tender regard. He was in love. Still he wished he could know something of her history. He had entered his last year as a student. He must not allow his mind to be too much occupied with such a matter as love. But no, he wouldn't do that. He begged to know of himself if he could not maintain his self-mastery. True, he admired Miss Gray, and who, that had met with her and conversed with her, would not? There was nothing strange in his admiration of her. Surely it would do him no harm to run in at Mrs. Gray's now and then, and enjoy an hour of pleasant chat with her and her beautiful niece.

In spite of himself, however, he often found his thoughts wandering away from the book before him to the humble cottage and its inmates. We do him but justice, however, in acknowledging that he put his vagrant thoughts under arrest at such times, and dragged them back to their task. One evening, while taking the air just for his health's sake, nothing else, certainly, Charles found himself sauntering along by the little cottage. It was a matter of course that he should just call. "But what is the matter with me?" he said to himself as he opened the gate; "I do believe I shall suffocate." Poor fellow! his heart was in his throat. His knees trembled, and he felt so when he made a call on Mrs. Gray. But this was the first time he had called since the niece arrived. Perhaps that would account for feelings so unusual.

Miss Gray had an opportunity now to take the part of an entertainer, being at home. And well did she perform her part. Charles was soon made easy in the presence of the ladies, and an hour passed more pleasantly, it seemed to him, than ever an hour passed before. Did he not betray his emotions? One of the three was suspicious of the fact that he was more than interested in the conversation. The widow Gray had observed the effect which her niece's presence had produced on him, and she secretly attributed it to the right cause. Nor was she disquieted with her suspicion. The reputation of Charles Barnwell was such as commended to her any attachment that might grow up between him and her niece.

No one in L— knew anything of the young lady's former history. All that was known of her was, that her father was Mrs. Gray's brother, and had resided in a distant State. It was said that he had a moderate station in life, and was respected by his fellow-citizens. No one knew his circumstances respect to property. Some said that he was poor, others that he had a competence. But if the apparel of the daughter was any index to the circumstances of the father, it was evident that he must be a poor man. It was observed that she never appeared in anything but the plainest garb. The material of her wardrobe was uniformly common, if not coarse. Yet whatever she wore, she moved with the same calm dignity and self-possession that marked the superior qualities of her mind. In her aunt's family she seemed as a maid of all work, now in the kitchen, now in the chamber, and now plying her needle. And what some people remarked as a very singular thing, she was never disquieted by being taken by surprise at her work. She could leave her work and engage in conversation with the utmost ease, and never failed to interest those with whom she conversed. People speculated and queried much about her. It was odd, they said, that so much grace of carriage, so much polish of manner, so much ease and sprightliness a conversation, and, withal, such evidence of the highest culture, could consist with the humble position she seemed to occupy.

All these queries were at length put to rest by the announcement that Miss Gray had engaged to do some needle work in Squire Little's family. Now

it was known that she must be a poor girl, and though she was accomplished, as she was acknowledged to be, it was evident that she was not admissible to the first class of society. Of course, Miss Gray, the seamstress, would not expect to associate on terms of equality with the Misses Little.

One evening the young ladies received a call from some young gentlemen of the college. Among them was our friend, Charles Barnwell. To be noticed by this class of young gentlemen was always gratifying. The party entered gayly into conversation, and wit sparkled and flashed in their sallies. At length music was called for, and Miss Julia Little led the way with a piece only tolerably performed.

At length, as the performances seemed to languish, one of the gentlemen asked, "Is Miss Gray with you now?" "Yes, she has been working for us a few days past."

"She seems quite an interesting girl!" "Yes, rather," said Miss Julia, and after a moment added: "She is a beautiful seamstress."

"Very likely," said Charles; "she would be beautiful in any occupation." "Charles Barnwell in love with a young seamstress!" cried two or three at once.

"As you please, ladies," said Charles, smiling; "I confess I admire her." "O! Julia," said the youngest Miss Little, "Miss Gray plays prettily. I heard her this morning."

"Invite her in," said William Blakeslee, half ironically. "Do, by all means," said Charles Barnwell, earnestly.

"O, we should have been glad to invite her in at first," replied Julia, "only we could not know it would please you."

Miss Gray was immediately sought for, and soon made her appearance. "Now, dear Miss Gray," said Emily, "you must give us a song. Julia has been playing, and we all want you to sing."

Notwithstanding the evident ill-grace of the invitation, looking, as it did, as though she had been called in merely to entertain the company, she readily complied. There was no affectation of airs; there was the same serene dignity united with unassuming meekness that always lent such a powerful fascination to her presence.

While she drew forth the full power of the instrument, every one looked on with admiration. It was evident that she was a proficient in this beautiful accomplishment. Rising from the instrument, she made a simple apology, and excused herself, saying, she had promised to spend the evening with her aunt. "And with your permission, I will bear you company, Miss Gray," said Charles.

### CHAPTER IV.

It was now six months since Charles had first met Miss Gray in the social meeting. His interest in her had gone on increasing continually, and he acknowledged to himself that he loved her. They had often worshipped together. They had met frequently at the house of her aunt, and whenever he had attempted to study her deliberately, he had found himself lost in admiring her. That she was a poor girl was no objection to her in his mind. Her pure heart, her high intellectual endowments, her genuine piety, her unassuming modesty, and the grace of her conversation, fully compensated, in his judgement, the want of wealth; nay, more, her virtues and accomplishments were the true jewels, whose possession would make any one rich.

Nor did Ellen seem to dislike his attentions. There was a true congeniality of spirit between them. Aunt Gray saw that they loved each other, and she was secretly happy in view of their mutual attachment. They were worthy of each other she said to herself. And she often made an excuse to be engaged when he called, and thus they were left much in each other's society.

Affairs at length came to a crisis. Charles must soon return to his home. He confidently expected to bear with him the highest honors his alma mater could confer on the young graduate. But he longed far more earnestly to carry with him the pledge of her whose worshiper he had become. Would she consent to be his? Ah! this question, which seemed to imply a doubt, threw him into a tumult of conflicting emotions? He resolved to know the worst at once. Had he flattered himself that she loved him when she did not? Full of these thoughts, yet resolute to declare his love, he walked rapidly down to Mrs.

Gray's, and was soon in the presence of Ellen.

"Ellen," said he, when they were alone, "I called on business."

"With my aunt? Excuse me a moment, I will call her." "No, with you." "Indeed!"

"Yes, with you. There is a place vacant which you are desired to consent to fill."

"Do you think me qualified to fill it properly?" "Better than any other living person."

"Now you flatter me. But would you advise me to accept the place?" "I cannot say that I would advise you, but, dearest friend, I will entreat you, pardon me, but I came to tell you how dear you are to me, how my love for you consumes me until I know whether I may hope that it is returned or not. The vacant place is by my side. I feel that you only can fill it. Will you consent to share with me the fortunes of life?"

Almost unconsciously he had taken her hand in his, and she had not withdrawn it. She heard him without any apparent displeasure. A tear moistened her eye.

"Have you weighed this matter?" she replied.

"Yes, again and again; I can only be wretched if you deny me. Let me tell you the truth; I began by admiring your fine talents. I soon admired, still more, your deep piety. I sought your acquaintance. I soon found myself seeking your society often. Has not our intercourse, as friends, been sweet? We have seemed to be formed after the same intellectual mold. Your thoughts have answered to mine, mine have reflected yours. We have worshipped at the same altar. We have read the same books. We have admired the same objects. In all things our aims, aspirations, sympathies, and opinions, have been in unison."

"But have you considered our stations in life? Have you thought how it would be regarded by the world, if you, who are just ready to receive the honors of college—if you, whose fortune is full of bright promise, were to marry a poor girl, a seamstress?"

"What do I care for the world's thought? It will effect me as little as the slightest breath of air. I despise the factitious distinctions of the world. I know you to be good, and intelligent, and accomplished. Your tastes, and sentiments, and views of life, are in unison with mine. What right, then, has the world heartlessly to interpose its selfish laws between us? I know that the world is wrong in this, and I will never be bound by its absurd rules. I love you with my whole being. I cannot elevate you in the social scale. You are already worthy of the highest place. Besides this, I am not ambitious to walk in what the world calls its highest circles. There life is all artificial. The prisoner in the stock is not more absolutely bound than are the members of those circles. They who, to gratify their vanity, seek admission there, have to pay the full penalty of pains and distress for their ambition. And it is a terrible price. My intention is to lead a quiet rural life. Only to serve my country or my God, would I consent to forego the pleasure of my quiet home. No, dearest Ellen, I care nothing for the world's thoughts. And if I did, I know that the world, the versatile world, would soon applaud my choice of such a one as you."

"Do you, then, think it possible to love unselfishly?"

"Ah! I may be only too selfish in my love. I assure you I should feel that I have secured a treasure of wealth in you. Were you the possessor of lands and gold, I might have reason to hesitatelest my affections were biased by a base motive. Heaven knows I should never cease to despise myself less, if knowing that you had not the property, I should cast away your real riches of mind for a similar reason. No, you are rich in all that is permanent; in the purity and nobility I recognize. But why should I urge these views? The only question is a question of the heart. Can you love me, and will you be mine?"

"I will not evade your question. My heart is yours, Charles. Only I would not have you commit yourself without considering the social position I occupy. I would not be to you an occasion of future regret."

"Noblest, best of women! My heart shall ever bless you for the happiness you have occasioned me."

## CHAPTER V.

Not long after the events narrated in the last chapter, the conversation between Charles and his mother took place. The reader will have seen in what sense Charles understood himself when he informed his mother that he was engaged, and that he should marry rich. He was fully persuaded that his mother, (who was an excellent woman, despite the weakness before alluded to,) when she came to know the exalted virtues of his adored Ellen, would not only approve, but applaud his choice. He did not intend wickedly to dissemble, yet he could not altogether justify himself. Why not tell her the girl was poor in this world's goods, but rich in virtue, intelligence, refinement, and all female accomplishments? Sometimes he almost resolved to do it; to acknowledge his error, and pray that his choice might be approved. Then, again, he resolved to let time tell the story, and trust to the influence of acquaintance with his chosen bride to remove all objections on the ground of poverty. It would be but a little time, for it was arranged that their nuptials should be celebrated during the latter part of the season.

Thus the time hastened on, and the day arrived when he was to go and claim his bride at the hands of her parents. Already they had sanctioned her espousal. They knew, they said, the reputation of the young gentleman who had done them the honor of seeking their daughter's hand. They had heard of his disinterested affection; of the magnanimity with which he had sacrificed the chances of, apparently, far more advantageous alliances, for the sake of her own personal worth, which, they truly believed, he had not overestimated. They were ready to receive him as a son, and hoped for much happiness to result from the relation. They hoped that he would not fail to be accompanied by his parents at the marriage. This was not agreed upon, as a matter of course, speculating upon what kind of people the Grays could be. What style did they live in? How should she appear in the society of such grand people as they must be, if they were so rich? She almost regretted that her son would get a rich wife, now, for she began to fear that it might be the occasion of some separation between the parents and the children. How could she expect a wealthy young lady, a person of aristocratic connections, to be willing to descend to the circle in which she had hitherto moved? And how could she hope ever to feel at ease in those higher walks which would unfit her rich daughter-in-law? Poor woman, she just began to feel that she had miscalculated the advantages of her son's marrying rich. She feared that she had put thorns in her own heart by so often exhorting him to look for a rich wife.

Charles did not fail to perceive the trouble she was in, and it gave him secret pleasure. It would render the denouement less terrible than he had feared. In fact, he believed that when the truth was known, and it was found that she was not rich, it would be an absolute relief to his mother's feelings.

As to his father, he had no misgivings on his account. He cared but little for wealth. A competence was desirable; more than this was a vexation. He hoped the young lady had good sense and a good heart, and he thought Charles would not have fancied her if she had not.

But Charles was determined that his mother's concern should be enhanced to that point that the truth, when known, would be a positive relief. So he took occasion often, when they were alone together, to expatiate upon the queenly dignity, the polished grace, and the lofty intelligence of his affianced bride. The scheme worked well; and, by the time that they were ready to commence their journey, Mrs. Barnwell was so agitated with doubts, and fears, and misgivings, that she heartily wished she had been less anxious to contract great alliances.

The preparations were at length completed. A ride of a day brought them to the village of C—, where the Grays resided. They had lived here only a short time, and were little known in the village. A man who was inquired of, pointed out a small house in the edge of the village, as their residence.

"What that little white house with blinds?" "Yes."

As they moved on, Mrs. Barnwell said: "That don't look like the dwelling of [SEE FOURTH PAGE.]