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EDMUND.

The rising moon had hid the stars:

Her level rays, like golden bars,

Lie on the landscape green,

With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams,

As if Diana in her dreams,

Had dropt her silver bow

Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this,

She woke Edmund with a kiss,

When, sleeping in the grove,

He dreamed not of her love.

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,

Love gives itself, but is not bought;

Nor voice, nor sound betrays

Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes—the beautiful, the free,

The crown of all humanity—

In silence and in thought

To seek the elected one.

O weary hearts! O slumbering eyes!

O drooping souls, whose destinies

Are fraught with fear and pain,

Ye shall be loved again.

No one is so accused by fate,

No one so utterly desolate,

But some heart though unknown,

Responds to his own.

Responds—as if, with unseen wings

As angel touched his quivering strings

And whisp'ers, in its song—

"Where hast thou staid so long?"

LONGFELLOW.

COURTING AN HEIRESS.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

[From the New York Ledger.]

"I don't think he cares two straws

for me," thought Elsie Miller, pulling

the withered roses out of her hair with

a quick, impatient little jerk. "And he

used to be so different. Oh, dear! Talk

about the fickleness of women! Men

are twenty times as unaccountable. But

I don't care—I don't care one particle."

And, in undeniable proof of her in-

difference, the round, bright, diamond

drops rolled down her fresh, pink cheeks,

and her lips quivered.

Elsie was a pretty, plump little

damsel, with eyes as blue as china

marbles, a complexion like a damask rose,

and bright tendrils of silken soft hair,

parting decidedly of the reddish hue,

greatly to our heroine's daily dissatisfaction.

"Nobody has red hair in all my

novels," said Elsie, almost ready to

despair.

Aunt Bridget Merriam had brought

Elsie up, until she stood on the thresh-

old of her seventeenth year—brought

her up in a kindly, old-fashioned sort

of way, to knit and to sew, and to make

her own fresh little muslin dresses, and

stitch her own spotless linen collars.

"For there's no knowing what tribu-

lation a body may have to pass through

in the world," said the old lady

solemnly; "and it's always just as well

to be able to turn your hand to almost

anything. I've found sixty and seven

years, and I've found out that Heaven

helps those who help themselves."

So Elsie unconsciously provided her-

self for a stormy future, brightening up

whatever weapons nature had given her

for that battle with the world which

Aunt Bridget appeared to consider al-

most inevitable. And when Aunt Brid-

get died suddenly, and she was left alone,

poor Elsie thought wretchedly of dressmak-

ing, school-teaching, copying—all the

possibilities by which women won a-days

confinement to stare off the wolf's footsteps

from their doors.

"This is a very unexpected stroke of

providence, Miss Miller," said Mr. Peck,

the solemn-faced lawyer.

"Yes, sir, indeed it is," said Elsie,

sadly, thinking how lonely the house

would be without Aunt Bridget's brisk

step, and aged, kindly face.

"But we must all be prepared to meet

the dispensation of a higher wisdom

than ours," he added.

"Yes, sir," said Elsie, wishing her

mother were talking in that sanctimonious

whisper, and tell her whether she had

better accept the situation as teacher in

the district school, or go as governess to

Miss Dalton's six motherless little

girls.

"And we note of us suspected for an

instant that our dear departed friend

was worth fifty thousand dollars."

"Fifty thousand dollars!" Elsie open-

ed her china-blue eyes widely enough

now.

"Exactly that sum, my dear Miss

Miller—and she has been—been—pleas-

ed to testify her confidence in my—

my—humble abilities, by constituting

me your humble guardian until you

reach the age of twenty-one years. Al-

low me—how—to prefer my most cordial

congratulations."

How Mr. Peck wished his Freddy

was twenty instead of ten years of age!

"For," he inwardly reasoned, strok-

ing his long, bristly chin, "he's sure

to fall a victim to some fortune-hunter

or other. And she's such a fool."

But Mr. Peck was mistaken in that

last estimate. Elsie Miller was no fool.

Gervaise Colton heard the story of

Miss Miller's good fortune in silence.

"I am glad you told me," he said to

his informant, Squire Dalton. "I was

going down this evening, to ask Elsie if

she would accept a home at my hands."

"Do you mean, marry you?" de-

manded the straightforward squire.

"Certainly—of course."

"My dear boy, you couldn't do a

more sensible thing. You'll have the

richest wife and the prettiest wife in

town, and I always thought that little

Elsie fancied you. Go, by all means."

"Never!" said Gervaise, emphatic-

ly.

"Hallo!" cried the squire, dropping

the red silk handkerchief that he was

flourishing about, and staring fixedly at

the handsome young man opposite him.

"I would sooner cut my right hand

off than give people occasion to call me

a fortune-hunter," said Colton, with a

quiet determination, that made his mouth

look like iron, his brows like adamant.

"Gammion!" said the Squire, rad-

uncourteously; "didn't you just tell me

you were about to propose to her, under

the impression that she hadn't a penny

in the world?"

"Yes, I told you so, and it was the

truth—but it would be rather difficult to

convince the world in general of it."

"Oh, bother the world in general!

What do you care for its verdict one

way or the other?"

But Colton shook his head.

"I have striven all my life long to be

an honorable gentleman," said he, calm-

ly; "nor shall I allow the shadow of a

shade to dim my character now. I love

Elsie Miller as truly and tenderly as a

man can love, but I will not submit to

be called a hearse-hunter!"

"Dat, my dear boy, please reflect

that the days of Don Quixote are over.

Nobody will appreciate the sacrifice you

are making; and Elsie herself will prob-

ably marry some calculating mercantile

or other, who won't make half so good

a husband to her as you would have

done."

Gervaise Colton remained obstinately

unconvinced, however, and the Squire's

eloquence was utterly thrown away.

And little Elsie? How she marvel-

ed at Gervaise's altered manner—at his

cold constraint and distant politeness;—

what scalding tears she cried into her

midnight pillow, and how vainly she

tried to read the unreadable riddle.

"I'm sure he used to like me," said

Elsie, as she bathed her eyes with rose-

water in the mornings. "And there's

the rosebuds he gave me just before

Aunt Bridget died, and the letters he

used to write, and—"

So, led most of Miss Elsie's solilo-

quies—in tears.

"But I don't care!" persisted our

heroine.

Two months passed away, and still

Gervaise adhered to his new rôle of dis-

tant, courteous friend, until one night

Elsie resolved to ask him what she had

done to forfeit the old place in his heart.

So she marched up to him, in the

merry confusion of good Squire Dalton's

birthday party—a resolute little soldier,

in armor of white muslin and shield of

roses.

Gervaise was leaning sadly against

the door, listening abstractedly to the

music, when Elsie laid her bouquet of

roses lightly on his arm.

"Gervaise!"

"He started."

"Miss Miller!"

"Miss Miller," she repeated, bitterly.

Oh, Gervaise—you used to call me Elsie

once. Why are you so cold—so changed?

What have I said or done to lose your

friendship?"

"Nothing," he answered, strangely

embarrassed.

"Gervaise!"

"Will you excuse me," he said, hur-

riedly, "I see a friend to whom I must

speak."

Elsie stood with her cheeks flaming

like the roses in her hand, and her blue

eyes burnt with tears. Had she hum-

iliated herself in vain?

And this was the night that she went

home and declared, for at least the hundred

and ninety-ninth time, that "she

didn't care."

"I cannot endure this," thought Ger-

vaise Colton. "I shall forget dignity,

mannishness, resolution, and every thing

else, if she looks me in the eyes like

that once again. Oh, if Miss Bridget

Merriam's fifty thousand dollars could

be thrown into the sea!"

All that night Gervaise spent in pack-

ing his valise, burning old letters, and

settling his affairs in a hurry.

"I may as well go out West," he

thought, "it's a wide place and a

lonely place, and I shall be safe from

the besetting demon of temptation any

where. I may surely keep this little

bunch of dried violets that she gave me

the day of the picnic; she will never

know."

Alas, there was little of consolation

in that last reflection.

"Ought I to write and bid her good-

bye?" he pondered, with an indescrib-

able yearning, for one last link to bridge

over the dividing currents of their lives.

"No, I must leave her free, unfettered

even by a fancy."

Gervaise Colton sat underneath the

swinging lamp of the express train, as it

thundered through the midnight soli-

tudes, with folded arms, and sleepless,

staring eyes. He was leaving, hope-

less, hopeless, sunshine, behind him for-

ever. Oh, why had Providence made

the path of duty so narrow, and so beset

by prickly thorns? Why must he fight

such a perpetual battle with himself?

Would it not be better to die at once?

As the vague, repining aspiration, al-

ter the peace and oblivion of death came

across his mind, there was a crash—a

jar—a noise like the reading of beams

and splintering of arches—and Gervaise

Colton was thrown violently against the

side of the car, with a concussion that

for a few moments deprived him of sense

or consciousness. Then he struggled

up, sick and faint, into a sitting position,

and became aware that he was surround-

ed by dead and dying.

The train had run off the track, and

the three foremost cars were precipitated

into a sort of gorge or declivity, some

seven or eight feet deep, just beyond

Gervaise Colton had wished for death

—here it was, face to face with him.