THE YAKIMA HERALD.

SUPPLEMENT.

COUNTRY LUCK. (CONTINUED.)

"Why didn't you ever give a clam bake on Sunday—the only day I could be there?" asked Tramlay "I'd give more for such a meal out of doors than for the best dinner that Delmonico could spread."

"Edgar!" gasped Mrs. Tramlay it did not reach him, though the look that accompanied it passed in its full force from the foot of the table to the head.

"Why, Sunday?" said Phil, with some hesitation. "Sunday is—Sunday."

"Quite true," said the host. "It is in the country, at least; I wish 'twas so here."

"Edgar," said Mrs. Tramlay, "don't make Mr. Hayn think we are heathens. You know we never fail to go to service on Sunday."

"Yes," said Tramlay; "we're as good Pharisees as any other family in New York."

"And after that dinner in the woods," continued Lucia, "we went for pond lilies, don't you remember? I do believe I should have been drowned in that awful pond if you hadn't caught me."

Again Marge's brows gathered perceptibly.

"He merely drew her aside from a muddy place," whispered Mrs. Tramlay.

"Well, this is interesting," said Tramlay, at the other end of the table. "Hayn, are there many places out your way where silly girls are likely to be drowned if they are allowed to roam about without a keeper?"

"Quite a number," said Phil, as seriously as if his host expected a list of the Haynton ponds and their relative depths. "For instance, Boddybanks pond is about"——

"Oh, that was the pond where we went canoeing—that pond with the funny name! My! I wish I was in that very canoe, on that very pond, this very minute."

"Lucia!" exclaimed Mrs. Tramlay.

"I know 'twas dreadfully impolite to say before company," said Lucia, with a pretty affectation of penitence, "but everybody knows I can't be there, and that 'twould be too cold for comfort; so it doesn't do any harm to wish it. And I should like that canoe trip over again; shouldn't you, Phil?"

"I certainly should," said Phil. "That pond is very pretty in summer, when everything around it is green. There are a great many shades of green there, on account of there being a great variety of trees and bushes. But you wouldn't know the place at this season; and I think it's a great deal prettier. The ground—the water, too—is covered with leaves of bright colors; there are a lot of blazing red swamp maples around it, in spots, and three or four cedar trees with poison ivy vines"——

"Ugh!" ejaculated Mrs. Tramlay.

"Poison ivy leaves, you know, are the clearest crimson in the fall," Phil continued, "and they're so large and grow so close together that they make a bit of woods look like a splendid sunset."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Lucia, clapping her hands, "let's go out to Haynton to-morrow, just for two or three days."

"Lucia," said her mother severely, "you forget all your engagements for the next few days."

"Her father's own child," said Tramlay. "She forgets everything but the subject before her. She would make a good business man—if she weren't a girl."

"I saw some couples out canoeing at Mount Desert, last season," drawled Marge. "It seemed to me dreadfully dangerous, as well as very uncomfortable for the lady."

"Oh, our canoe wasn't one of those wretched little things; was it, Phil? 'Twas a great long pond boat, made of beech bark"——

"Birch," suggested Phil.

"Birch bark, and so heavy that I couldn't upset it, though I tried my hardest."

"Lucia!" The voice was Mrs. Tramlay's, of course.

"Why, mamma, the water wasn't knee deep; I measured it with the paddle."

Mrs. Tramlay sank back in her chair, and whispered that if the family ever went to the country again she would not dare leave that child out of her sight for a single instant, but she had hoped that a girl 20 years of age would have enough sense not to imperil her own life. As for that farmer fellow, she had supposed he was sensible enough to——

"You wouldn't have tried that trick if I had been in the canoe, Miss Tramlay," said Phil.

"Why not?" asked Lucia. She knew how to look defiant without ceasing to be pretty.

"Well, I would have been responsible for you, you know—your instructor in navigation, so to speak, and it's one of the first principles of that art not to take any risks unless something's to be gained by it."

"Good!" exclaimed Tramlay.

"Not bad," assented Marge.

"But I'd have got something if I'd succeeded in upsetting the boat," said Lucia; "I'd have got a ducking."

Then everybody laughed,—everybody but Mrs. Tramlay, who intimated to Marge that Lucia was simply being ruined by her father's indulgence.

The dinner ended, the host and Marge retired to the library to smoke. Phil was invited to accompany them, but Lucia exclaimed:

"Phil has been too well brought up to have such bad habits. He is going to keep me from feeling stupid, as ladies always do while gentlemen smoke after dinner."

She took Phil's arm and led him to the drawing room, where the young man soon showed signs of being more interested in the pictures on the wall than in the girl by his side.

"These are very different from the pictures you used to see in our little parlor in Haynton," said Phil. "Different from any in our town, in fact."

"Are they?" said Lucia. "But you might be loyal to home, and insist that yours were unlike any in New York: because they were, you know."

"I didn't suppose they were anything unusual," said Phil, quite innocently.

"Oh, they were, though," insisted Lucia, with much earnestness. "I'm sure you couldn't find one of them in any parlor in New York. Let me see; I do believe I could name them all if I were to close my eyes a moment. There was 'Gen. Taylor at the Battle of Buena Vista,' 'The Destruction of Jerusalem,' the 'Declaration of Independence,' 'Napoleon's Tomb at St. Helena,' 'Rock of Ages,' 'George Washington,' Peale's 'Court of Death,' 'Abraham Lincoln and His Family' and 'Rum's Deadly Upas Tree.' There!"

"Your memory is remarkable," said Phil. "I didn't suppose any one had even noticed our pictures at all; for I'm sure they are old fashioned."

"Old fashioned things—why, they're all the fashion now, don't you know?" said Lucia, with a pretty laugh.

Phil did not reply, for he was quite overpowered by what seemed to him the elegance of the Tramlay pictures. He could easily see that the engravings were superior in quality to those to which he was accustomed; he was most profoundly impressed by the paintings—real oil paintings, signed by artists some of whose names he had seen in art reviews in New York papers. He studied them closely, one after another, with the earnestness of the person whose tastes are in advance of his opportunities; in his interest he was almost forgetful of Lucia's presence. But the young woman did not intend to be forgotten, so she found something to say about each picture over which Phil lingered.

Among the paintings was one which had been seen, in the original or replicas, in almost all the picture auctions which were frequently held in the New York business district for the purpose of fleecing men who have more money than taste. Sometimes the artist's name is German, oftener French, and occasionally Italian; the figures and background also differ from time to time as to the nationality, and the picture is variably named "The Parting," "Good-By," "Auf Wiedersehen," "Good Night" or "Adieu," but the canvases all resemble one another in displaying a young man respectfully kissing the hand of a young woman. The Tramlays' copy of this auctioneer's standby was called "Adieu," the name being lettered in black on the margin of the frame.

"Why," exclaimed Phil, with the air of a man in the act of making a discovery, "I am sure I have seen a wood engraving of that painting in one of the illustrated papers."

"I don't see why they should do it," said Lucia; "it's dreadfully old fashioned. People don't say 'adieu' in that way nowadays except on the stage."

"I thought you said a moment ago that old fashioned things were all the fashion."

Lucia shrugged her shoulders and said: "Kissing hands may come in again." Then she raised one of her own little hands slightly and looked at it. Phil's eyes followed hers, and then the young man became conscious of a wish that the old form of salutation might be revived, on special occasions at least. The thought succeeded that such a wish was not entirely proper, and while he reasoned about it Lucia caught his eye and compelled him to blush—an act which the young woman perhaps thought pretty, for she immediately imitated it, the imitation being much more graceful and effective than the original. The situation was awkward, and Phil instantly lost his self possession; but not so Lucia.

"Here," she said, turning so as to face the wall opposite that on which the mischief making picture hung, "is papa's favorite picture. He thinks everything of it; but I say it's simply dreadful."

It certainly was. The center of the canvas, which was enormous, was filled with several columns and a portion of the entablature of a ruined Greek temple.

"It is as large as all the other pictures combined, you see; all the lines in it are straight, and there isn't anywhere in it a dress, or a bit of furniture, or even bric-a-brac."

Phil imagined his host must have seen other qualities than those named by Lucia, and he seated himself on a sofa to study the picture in detail. Lucia also sat down, and continued:

"There is color in it, to be sure; bits of the columns where the light is most subdued are as lovely as—as a real Turkish rug."

Much though Phil had endeavored to keep himself in communication and sympathy with the stronger sentiments of the world outside of Haynton, he had never realized even the outer edge of the mysteries and ecstasies of adoration of old rugs. So Lucia's comparison started him into laughter. The girl seemed surprised and offended, and Phil immediately tumbled into the extreme depths of contrition.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured, quickly. "It was all because of my ignorance. We haven't any Turkish rugs at Haynton, nor any other rugs, except those we lay on floors and use very much as if they were carpets. I ought to have known better, though; for I remember that in eastern stories, where the rare possessions of oriental kings and chiefs are spoken of, rugs are always classed with jewels and silks and other beautiful things. Please forgive me."

Half in earnest, half pretending, Lucia continued to appear offended. Phil repeated his confession, and enlarged his explanation. In his earnestness he leaned toward her; Lucia dropped her head a little. Marge, who had finished his cigar, entered the parlor at that instant and raised his eyebrows—a motion more significant in a man of his temperament than a tragic start would have been to ordinary flesh and blood. Lucia started and showed signs of embarrassment when she could no longer ignore his presence; Phil merely looked up, without seeming at all discomposed.

"I think, my dear," said Tramlay to his wife, who had been turning the backs of a magazine, "that I'll take our friend around to the club with me for half an hour, just to show him how city men squander their time and keep away from their families. I won't be long gone."

"Oh, papa! right after dinner? We've scarcely seen Phil yet, to ask him any questions."

"Plenty of time for that," the merchant replied. "We'll see him often; eh, Hayn?"

"I shall be delighted," said Phil.

"Suppose you drop him at my club on your way home?" suggested Marge. "I shall be there."

"Good! thanks; very kind of you. He'll see some men nearer his own age; all our members are middle aged and stupid."

"I think it's real mean of you both," said Lucia, with a pretty pout.

Phil looked as if he thought so too. At Haynton it was the custom, when one went out to dinner—or supper, which was the evening meal—to spend the evening with the entertainer. But objection seemed out of place; the merchant had gone for his hat and coat, and Marge made his adieus and was donning his overcoat at the mirror in the hall.

"I'm very sorry to go," said Phil to Lucia. His eyes wandered about the room, as if to take a distinct picture of it with him; they finally rested on the picture of "The Adieu."

"You shall take my forgiveness with you," said the girl, "if you will solemnly promise never, never to laugh at me again."

"I never will," said Phil, solemnly; then Lucia laughed and offered him her hand. Perhaps it was because Phil had just removed his eyes from "The Adieu" and was himself about to say good-by, that he raised the little hand to his lip. Fortunately for her own peace of mind, Mrs. Tramlay did not see the act, for she had stepped into the library to speak to her husband; Marge, however, was amazed at what he saw in the mirror, and, a second or two later, at Phil's entire composure. Lucia's manner, however, puzzled him; for she seemed somewhat disconcerted, and her complexion had suddenly become more brilliant than usual.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIMSELF FOR COMPANY.

FOR years Philip Hayn had been wondering about the great city only a hundred or two miles distant from his home—wondering, reading, and questioning—until he knew far more about it than thousands of men born and reared on Manhattan Island. He had dreamed of the day when he would visit the city, and had formed plans and itineraries for consuming such time as he hoped to have, changing them again and again to conform to longer or shorter periods. He was prepared to be an intelligent tourist, to see only what was well worth being looked at, and to study much that could not be seen in any other place which he was ever likely to visit.

At last he was in New York; his time would be limited only by the expense of remaining at hotel or boarding house. Yet he found himself utterly without impulse to follow any of his carefully perfected plans. He strolled about a great deal, but in an utterly aimless way. He passed public buildings which he knew by sight as among those he had intended to inspect, but he did not even enter their doors; the great libraries in which for years he had hoped to quench the literary thirst that had been little more than tantalized by the collective books in Haynton were regarded with impatience. Of all he saw while rambling about alone, nothing really fixed his attention but the contents of shop windows. He could not pass a clothing store without wondering if some of the goods he saw within would not become him better than what he was wearing; he spent hours in looking at displays of dress goods and imagining how one or other pattern or fabric would look on Lucia, and he wasted many hours more in day dreams of purchasing—only for her—the bits of jewelry and other ornaments with which some windows were filled.

Loneliness increased the weakening effect of his imaginings. He knew absolutely no one in the city but the Tramlays and Marge, and he had too much sense to impose himself upon them; besides, Marge was terribly uninteresting to him, except as material for a study of human nature—material that was peculiarly unattractive when such a specimen as Lucia was always in his mind's eye and insisting upon occupying his whole attention.

His loneliness soon became intolerable; after a single day of it he hurried to the river, regardless of probable criticism and teasing based on his new clothes, to chat with Sol Mantring and the crew of the sloop. The interview was not entirely satisfactory, and Phil cut his visit short, departing with a brow full of wrinkles and a heart full of wonder and indignation at the persistency with which Sol and both his men talked of Lucia Tramlay and the regard in which they assumed Phil held her. How should they imagine such a thing? He well knew—and detested—the rural rage for prying into the affairs of people, particularly young men and women who seemed at all fond of one another; but what had he ever done or said to make these rough fellows think Lucia was to him any thing but a boarder in his father's house? As he wondered, there came to his mind a line which he had often painfully followed in his copy book at school: "The face of youth is an open book." It did not tend at all to restore composure to his own face.

Hour by hour he found himself worse company. He had never before made such a discovery. There had been hundreds and thousands of days in his life when from dawn to dark he had been alone on the farm, in the woods or in h's fishing boat, several miles off shore on the ocean, yet the companionship of his thoughts had been satisfactory. He had sung and whistled by the hour, recited to himself favorite bits of poetry and prose, rehearsed old stories and jokes, and enjoyed himself so well that sometimes he was annoyed rather than pleased when an acquaintance would appear and insist on diverting his attention to some trivial personal or business affair. Why could he not cheer himself now—he who always had been the life and cheer of whatever society he found himself in?

He tried to change the current of his thoughts by looking at other people; but the result was dismal in the extreme. He lounged about Broadway, strolled in Central park, walked down Fifth avenue, and from most that he saw he assumed that everybody who was having a pleasant time, driving fine horses, or living in a handsome house, was rich. He had been carefully trained in the belief that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," but his observations of New York were severely straining his faith. He was entirely orthodox in his belief as to the prime source of riches, but he suddenly became conscious of an unhappy, persistent questioning as to why he also had not been born rich, or had riches thrust upon him. He understood now the mad strife for wealth which he had often heard alluded to as the prevailing sin of large cities; he wished he knew how to strive for it himself—anywhere, in any way, if only he might always be one of the thousands of people who seemed to wear new clothes all the time, and spend their evenings in elegant society, or in the gorgeous seclusion of palaces like that occupied by Marge's club.

For instance, there was Marge. Phil had asked Tramlay what business Marge was in, and the reply was, "None in particular; lives on his income." What, asked Phil of himself, was the reason that such a man, who did not seem much interested in anything, should have plenty of money and nothing to do, when a certain other person who could keenly enjoy, and, he believed, honestly improve, all of Marge's privileges, should have been doomed to spend his life in hard endeavor to wrest the plainest food from the jealous earth and threatening sea, and have but a chance glimpse of the paradise that the rich were enjoying—a glimpse which probably would make his entire after life wretched. Could he ever again be what he had so long been?—a cheerful, contented young farmer and fisherman? He actually shivered as he called up the picture of the long road, alternately dusty and muddy, that passed his father's house, its sides of brown fence and straggling bushes and weeds converging in the distance, an uncouth human figure or a crawling horse and wagon its only sign of animation, and contrasted it with Fifth avenue, its boundaries handsome houses and its roadway thronged with costly equipages bearing well dressed men and beautiful women. Passing the house of a merchant prince, he saw in the window a fine bronze group on a stand; how different from the little plaster vase of wax flowers and fruits which had been visible through his mother's "best room" window as long as he could remember!

Yes, money was the sole cause of the difference: money, or the lack of it, had cursed his father, as it now was cursing him. None of the elderly men he saw had faces more intelligent than his father, yet at that very moment the fine old man was probably clad in oft patched trousers and cotton shirt, digging muck from a black slimy pit to enrich the thin soil of the wheat lot. And his mother; it made his blood boil to think of her in faded calico preparing supper in the plain old kitchen at home, while scores of richly clad women of her age, but without her alert, smiling face, were leaning back in carriages and seemingly unconscious of the blessing of being exempt from homely toil.

And, coming back to himself, money, or lack of it, would soon banish him from all that now his eye was feasting upon. It would also banish him from Lucia. He had read stories of poor young men whom wondrous chances of fortune had helped to the hands and hearts of beautiful maidens clad in fine raiment and wearing rare gems, but he never had failed to remind himself that such tales were only romances; now the memory of them seemed only to emphasize the sarcasm of destiny. Money had made between him and Lucia a gulf as wide as the ocean, as the distance between the poles, as——

He might have compared it with eternity, had not his eye been arrested by somebody in a carriage in the long line that was passing up the avenue. It was Lucia herself riding with her mother. Perhaps heaven had pity on the unhappy boy, for some obstruction brought the line to a halt, and Phil, stepping from the sidewalk, found that the gulf was not too wide to be spanned, for an instant at least, by two hands.

CHAPTER IX.

NEWS, YET NO NEWS.

"ANY letters?"

"Not a letter."

"Sho!"

Farmer Hayn and his wife would have made good actors, if tested by their ability to clothe a few words with pantomime of much variety and duration. From almost the time that her husband started to the post office, Mrs Hayn had been going out on the veranda to look for him returning. She had readjusted her afternoon cap several times, as she would have done had she expected a visitor; she had picked faded buds from some late roses, had examined the base of one of the piazza posts to be sure that the old wistaria vine was not dragging it from its place, and had picked some bits of paper from the little grass plot in front of the house; but each time she went from one duty to another she shaded her eyes and looked down the road over which her husband would return. She had eyes for everything outside the house—an indication of rot at an end of one of the window sills, a daring cocoon between two slats of a window blind, a missing screw of the door knob—all trifles that had been as they were for weeks, but had failed to attract her attention until expectation had sharpened her eyesight.

As time wore on she went into the house for her spectacles; generally she preferred to have letters read to her by her husband, but her absent son's writing she must see with her own eyes. Then she polished the glasses again and again, trying them each time by gazing down the road for the bearer of the expected letter. Calmness, in its outward manifestation, was noticeable only after her hope had again been deferred.

As for the old man, who was quite as disappointed as his wife, he studied a partly loosened vest button as if it had been an object of extreme value; then he sat down on the steps of the veranda, studied all visible sections of the sky for a minute or two, and finally ventured the opinion that a middling lively shower might come due about midnight. Then he told his wife of having met the minister, who had not said anything in particular, and of a coming auction sale of which he had heard, and how eggs for shipment to the city had "looked up" three cents per dozen. Then he sharpened his pocket knife on his boot leg, handling it as delicately and trying its edge as cautiously as if it were an instrument of which great things were expected. Then both joined in estimating the probable cost of raising the youngest calf on the farm to its full bovine estate.

Finally, both having thoroughly repressed and denied and repulsed themselves, merely because they had been taught in youth that uncomfortable restraint was a precious privilege and a sacred duty, Mrs. Hayn broke the silence by exclaiming:

"It does beat all."

"What does?" asked her husband, as solicitously as if he had not the slightest idea of what was absorbing his wife's thoughts.

"Why, that Phil don't write. Here's everybody in town tormentin' me to know when he's comin' back, an' if he's got the things they asked him to buy for 'em, an' not a solitary word can I say; we don't even know how to send a letter to him to stir him up an' remind him that he's got parents."

"Well, ther's sure to be a letter somewheres on the way, I don't doubt, tellin' us all we want to know," said the old man, going through the motions of budding an althea bush, in the angle of the step, from a scion of its own stock. "'Watched pots never bile,' you know, an' 'tain't often one gets a letter till he stops lookin' for it."

"But 'tain't a bit like Phil," said the old lady. "Why, he's been away more'n a week. I thought he'd at least let us know which of the big preachers he'd heerd on Sunday, an' what he thought of 'em. Hearin' them big guns of the pulpit was always one of the things he wanted to go to the city for. Then there's the bread pan I've been wantin' for ten years—one that's got tin enough to it not to rust through every time there comes a spell of damp weather; he might at least rest my mind for me by lettin' me know he'd got it."

"All in good time, old lady; let's be patient an' we'll hear all we're waitin' for. Worry's more wearyin' than work. Rome wasn't built in a day, you know."

"For mercy's sake, Reuben, what's Rome got to do with our Phil? I don't see that Rome's got anythin' to do with the case, onless it's somethin' like New York, where our boy is."

"Well, Rome was built an' rebuilt a good many times, you see, 'fore it got to be all that was 'xpected of it; an' our Phil's goin through the same operation, mebbe. A man's got to be either a stupid savage or a finished off saint to be suddenly pitched from fields and woods into a great big town without bein' dazed. When I first went down to York my eyes was kept so wide open that I couldn't scarcely open my mouth for a few days, much less take my pen in hand, as folks say in letters. I hardly knowed which foot I was standin' on, an' sometimes I felt as if the ground was gone from under me. Yet New York ground is harder than an onbeliever's heart."

Mrs. Hayn seemed to accept the simile of Rome's building as applied to her son, for she made no further objection to it; she continued, however, to polish her glasses, in anticipation of what she still longed to do with them. Her husband continued to make tiny slits and cross cuts in the althea's bark, and to insert buds carefully cut from the boughs. Finally he remarked, as carelessly as if talking about the weather:

"Sol Mantring's sloop's got back!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Hayn; "why ain't you told me so before? Sol's seen Phil, ain't he? What does he say? Of course you didn't come home without seein' him!"

"Of course I didn't. Yes, Sol's seen Phil—seen him the day before he caught the tide an' came out. An' Sol says he's a stunner, too—don't look no more like his old self than if he'd been 'born an' raised in York. I tell you, Lou Ann, it don't take that boy much time to catch on to whatever's got go to it. Why, Sol says he's got store clothes on, from head to foot. That ain't all, either; he"—Here the old man burst into laughter, which he had great difficulty in suppressing; after long effort, however, he continued: "Sol says he carries a cane—a cane not much thicker than a ramrod. Just imagine our Phil swingin' a cane if you can!" And the old man resumed his laughter, and gave it free course.

"Mercy sakes!" said the old lady; "I hope he didn't take it to church with him. An' I hope he won't bring it back here. What'll the other members of the Young People's Bible class say to see such goin's on by one that's always been so proper?"

"Why, let him bring it; what's a cane got to do with Bible classes? I don't doubt some of the 'posties carried canes; I think I've seen them in pictures in the Illustrated Family Bible. I s'pose down in Judee ther' was makes an' dogs that a man had to take a clip at with a stick, once in a while, same as in other countries."

"What else did Sol say?" asked the mother.

"Well, he didn't bring no special news. He said Phil didn't know he was leavin' so soon, else like enough he'd have sent some word. He said Phil was lookin' well, an' had a walk on him like a sojer in a picture. I'm glad the boy's got a chance to get the plow handle stoop out of his shoulders for a few days. Sez you wouldn't know his face, though, 'cause his hair's cut so short; got a new watch chain, too; I'm glad to hear that, 'cause I was particular to tell him to do it."

"Well, I half wish Sol Mantring's sloop had stayed down to York, if that's all the news it could bring," said Mrs. Hayn, replacing her spectacles in their tin case, which she closed with a decided snap. "Such a little speck of news is only aggravatin'; that's what 'tis."

"Small favors thankfully received, old lady, as the advertisements sometimes say. Oh, there was one thing more Sol said, 'twas that he reckoned Phil was dead gone on that Tramlay gal."

Mrs. Hayn received this information in silence, her husband began to throw his open knife at a leaf on one of the veranda steps.

"I don't see how Sol Mantring was to know anything like that," said Mrs. Hayn, after a short silence. "He isn't the kind that our Phil would go an' unbosom to, if he had any such thing to tell, which it ain't certain he had."

"Young men don't always have to tell such things, to make 'em known," suggested the farmer. "Pooty much everybody knowed when I was fust gone on you, though I didn't say nothin' to nobody, not even to the gal herself."

"If it's so," said Mrs. Hayn, after another short pause, "mebbe it explains why he hain't writ. He'd want to tell us 'fore anybody else, an' he feels kind o' bashful like."

"You've got a good mem'ry, Lou Ann," said the old farmer, rising, and pinching his wife's ear.

"What do you mean, Reuben?"

"Oh, nothin', 'xcept that you hain't forgot the symptoms, that's all."

"Sho!" exclaimed the old lady, giving her husband a push, though not so far but that she was leaning on his shoulder a moment later. "'Twould be kind o' funny if that thing was to work, though, wouldn't it?" she continued; "that is, if Sol's right."

"Well," replied her husband, with a sudden accession of earnestness in his voice, "if Sol's right, 'twon't be a bit funny if it don't work. I hope the blessed boy's got as much good stuff in him as I've always counted on. The bigger the heart, the wuss it hurts when it gets hit; an' there's a mighty big heart in any child of you an' me, though I say it as mebbe I shouldn't."

"That boy ain't never goin' to have no heartaches, not on account o' gals," said the mother, whose voice also showed a sudden increase of earnestness. "I don't b'lieve the gal was ever made that could say no to a splendid young feller like that—a young feller that's han'some an' good an' bright an' full o' fun, an' that can tell more with his eyes in a minute than a hull sittin' room full of ord'nary young men can say with their tongues in a week."

"No," said the old man, soberly, "not if the gal stayed true to the pattern she was made on—like you did, for instance. But gals is only human—ther' wouldn't be no way of keepin' 'em on earth if they wasn't, you know—an' sometimes they don't do 'xactly what might be expected of 'em."

"That Tramlay gal won't give him the mitten, anyhow," persisted Mrs. Hayn. "Mebbe she ain't as smart as some, but that family, through an' through, has got sense enough to know what's worth havin' when they see it. She needn't ever expect to come back here to board for the summer, if she cuts up any such foolish didos as that."

"Lou Ann," said the farmer, solemnly, "do you reely think it over an' above likely that she'd want to come back, in such case made an' pervided?"

Then both old people laughed, and went into the house, and talked of all sorts of things that bore no relation whatever to youth or love or New York. They retired early, after the manner of farm people in general, after a prayer containing a formal and somewhat indefinite petition for the absent one. The old lady lay awake for hours, it seemed to her, her head as full of rosy dreams as if it were not covered with snow; yet when at last she was dropping asleep she was startled by hearing her husband whisper:

"Father in heaven, have pity on my poor boy."

CHAPTER X.

AGNES DINON'S PARTY.

THROUGH several days spent listlessly except when dolefully, and through several restless nights, Philip Hayn was assisted by one hope that changed only to brighten; it was that nearer and nearer came the night of the party to which Miss Agnes Dinon had invited him—the party at which he was sure he would again meet Lucia. Except for the blissful incident of the arrested drive on the avenue, he had not seen her since the evening when he had raised her hand to his lips. How the thought of that moment sent the blood leaping to his own finger tips! He had haunted the avenue every afternoon, not daring to hope that the carriage would again be stopped in its course, but that at least he might see her passing face.

As quick as a flash that day his eye, trained in country fashion to first identify approaching riders by their horses, had scanned the animals that drew the carriage, so that he might know them when next he saw them. But again and again was he disappointed, for spans on which he would have staked his reputation as being the same were drawing carriages that did not contain the face he sought. He might have been spared many heart sinkings, as well as doubts of his horse lore, had he known that the Tramlays did not keep a turn out, but had recourse to a livery stable when they wanted to drive.

He had even sought Lucia at church. He had known, since the family's summer at Haynton, the name of the church which they attended, and thither he wended his way Sunday morning; but their pew was apparently farther back than the seat to which he was shown, for not one member of the Tramlay family could he see in front or to either side of him, and when the service ended and he reached the sidewalk as rapidly as possible he soon learned that the custom of rural young men to stand in front of churches to see the worshipers emerge was not followed at fashionable temples in the city.

Another comforting hope, which was sooner lost in full fruition, was in the early arrival of his dress suit. Fully arrayed, he spent many hours before the mirror in his room at the hotel, endeavoring to look like some of the gentlemen whom he had seen at the Tramlay reception. Little though he admired Marge on general principles, he did not hesitate to conform himself as nearly as possible to that gentleman's splendid composure. Strolling into a theatre one evening on a "general admission" ticket, which entitled him to the privilege of leaning against a wall, he saw quite a number of men in evening dress, and he improved the opportunity to study the comparative effects of different styles of collars and shirt fronts. Finally he ventured to appear at the theatre in evening dress himself, and from the lack of special attention he justly flattered himself that he did not carry himself unlike other men. He also made the important discovery that Judge Dickman's custom of buttoning his swallow tailed coat at the waist, and displaying a yellow silk handkerchief in the fullness thereof, had been abandoned in the metropolis.

At last the long hoped for evening arrived, and Phil was fully dressed and uncomfortable before sunset. He had already learned, by observation, that well dressed men kept their faces closely shaved, and he had experimented, not without an inward groan at his extravagance, in what to him were the mysteries of hair dressing. He ventured into the streets as soon as darkness had fairly fallen, made his way to the vicinity of the Dinon residence, and from a safe distance reconnoitered the house with the purpose, quite as common in the country as in town, of not being among the earliest arrivals. So long did he watch without seeing even a single person or carriage approach the door that there came to him the horrible fear that perhaps for some reason the affair had been postponed. About 9 o'clock, however, his gaze was rewarded by a single carriage, another followed shortly, and several others came in rapid succession; so a quarter of an hour later he made his own entry. On this occasion he was not unable to translate the instructions, as to the locality of the gentlemen's dressing room, imparted by the servant at the door; but, having reached the general receptacle of coats, hats and sticks, he was greatly puzzled to know why a number of gentlemen were standing about doing nothing.

By the time he learned that most of them were merely waiting for their respective feminine charges to descend with them, a clock in the room struck ten, and as Phil counted the strokes and remembered how often he had been half roused from his first doze beneath his bed clothes at home by just that number, he yawned by force of habit and half wished he never had left Haynton.

But suddenly drowsiness, melancholy and everything else uncomfortable disappeared in an instant, and heaven—Phil's own, newest heaven—enveloped the earth, for as he followed two or three bachelors who were going down stairs he heard a well known voice exclaiming:

"Oh, Phil! isn't this nice? Just as if you'd been waiting for me! I haven't any escort to-night, so you'll have to take me down. Papa will drop in later, after he's tired of the club."

Oh, the music in the rustle of her dress as it trailed down the stair! Oh, the gold of her hair, the flush of her cheek, the expectancy in her eyes and her parted lips! And only twenty steps in which to have it all to himself! Would they had been twenty thousand!

At the foot of the stair Lucia took Phil's arm, and together they saluted their hostess. Phil felt that he was being looked at by some one besides Miss Dinon, and indeed he was, for handsome young strangers are quite as rare in New York as anywhere else in the world. Nevertheless his consciousness was not allowed to make him uncomfortable, for between long trained courtesy and intelligent admiration Miss Dinon was enabled to greet him so cordially that he was made to feel entirely at ease. Other guests came down in a moment, and Lucia led Phil away, presenting him to some of her acquaintances and keenly enjoying the surprise of those who recognized in him the awkward country boy of a week before. Then one gentleman after another engaged Lucia in conversation and begged dances; other ladies with whom he was chatting were similarly taken from him; and Phil finally found himself alone on a sofa, in a position from which he could closely observe the hostess.

Miss Agnes Dinon was very well worth looking at. Mrs. Tramlay may not have been far from right in fixing her years at thirty-six, but there were scores of girls who would gladly have accepted some of her years if they might have taken with them her superb physique and some of the tact and wit that her years had brought her. Gladly, too, would they have shared Miss Dinon's superfluous age could they have divided with her the fortune she had in her own right. Nobody knew exactly how much it was, and fancies on the subject differed widely; but what did that matter? The leading and interesting fact was that it was large enough to have attracted a pleasing variety of suitors, so that there had not been a time since she "came out" when Miss Dinon might not have set her wedding day had she liked. What detriment is there in age to a girl who can afford to choose instead of being chosen? Is not the full blown rose more satisfactory, to many eyes, than the bud? And how much more charming the rose whose blushing petals lack not the glint of gold!

Phil had about reached the conclusion that Miss Dinon was a woman whom he believed it would do his mother good to look at, when his deliberations were brought to an end by the lady herself, who approached him, and said:

"At last I can take time to present you to some of my friends, Mr. Hayn. May I have your arm?"

Phil at once felt entirely at ease. It was merely a return of an old and familiar sensation, for he had always been highly esteemed by the more mature maidens of Haynton, and generally found them far more inspiring company than their younger sisters. Phil informed himself, in the intervals of introductions, that Miss Dinon was not like Lucia in a single particular, but she certainly was a magnificent creature. Her features, though rather large, were perfect, and her eye was full of soul, especially when he looked down into it, as from his height he was obliged to, and the poise of her head, upon shoulders displayed according to the prevailing custom of evening dress, was simply superb.

She found opportunities to chat a great deal, too, as they made the tour of the parlors, and all she said implied that her hearer was a man of sense, who did not require to be fed alternately upon the husks and froth of polite conversation. Phil's wit was quite equal to that of his fair entertainer, and as her face reflected her feelings the guests began to be conscious that their hostess and the stranger made a remarkably fine looking couple.

Impossible though he would have imagined it half an hour before, Phil's thoughts had been entirely destitute of Lucia for a few moments; suddenly, however, they recovered her, for looking across the head of a little rosebud, to whom he had just been introduced, Phil beheld Lucia looking at him with an expression that startled him. He never before had seen her look that way—very sober, half blank, half angry. What could it mean? Could she be offended? But why? Was he not for the moment in charge of his hostess, who, according to Haynton custom, and probably custom everywhere else, had supreme right when she chose to exercise it?

Could it be—the thought came to him as suddenly as an unexpected blow—could it be that she was jealous of his attention to Miss Dinon, and of his probably apparent enjoy

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Prosser, Wash., October 5th, 1889. oct10-tf