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COURTING BY PROXY.

"NO, SIR, I cannot consent to your marrying my daughter."

"But why not, Mr. Merrill, why not? have you any reasonable objection to my person—my character?"

"Your person? O no—excepting that you're too confounded good looking. If it had been otherwise Eva might be a little more docile now."

"But my character, Mr. Merrill, have you any fault to find with that?"

"No, you seem honest enough, I do not suppose that you would steal—that is, anything beside my daughter and I shall take pretty good care that you do not steal her."

"Then what is it, sir, may I ask?"

"Eva, Mr. Beldon, has been spoiled and pampered and petted. She does not know how to do one useful thing. What kind of a wife would she make a poor man?"

"But I am not poor, I have a large salary. I could not of course give her a carriage and horse quite yet, nor a box at the opera, but she would not be obliged to exert herself at all. I shall be perfectly well able to keep servants and dress her handsomely, even richly."

"But you may lose your salary at any moment."

"I have the confidence of my employers, Mr. Merrill, and they are exceedingly kind."

"It is of no use to say anything more, I am very decided about this, and I beg that you will drop the subject. I wish you to discontinue your visits to my daughter at once. I shall be very glad to hear that you are prospering in the world, but I cannot give you Eva. The comfort and happiness of my daughter are my first and last consideration."

"But she loves me, sir."

"She will get over it; young girls' hearts are not reliable. Good morning, Mr. Beldon, I have told you my wish—pray do not oppose it."

The young man seized his hat and quickly withdrew; but as he was passing the parlor door, a little white hand was laid upon his arm, and he was drawn into the room and eagerly questioned by the lovely owner of the aforesaid hand.

"What did he say, Henry, what did he say?"

"He forbade my coming to the house at all, Eva."

She laid her head against his arm and burst into tears. Drawing her closely to him, he talked in low, soothing tones, until suddenly raising her eyes to his, she said, "I cannot give you up, I will not give you up. If you cannot come to see me, I shall go to you."

"Oh my darling, that will never do."

"Then are you willing to relinquish me so easily?" she asked drawing herself away from him. "No, dearest, never, never; but we shall be obliged to resort to stratagem, and I have a friend who will assist me. I must go now, if your father should find me with you, he would be very angry," and after pressing his lips to hers he tore himself away.

William Curtis was seated in his office, with his hat on, and his feet resting upon the mantle piece, in regular bachelor fashion, when Henry Belton entered, looking eagerly and excited.

"Glad to see you old fellow," exclaimed the former; but, see here, what's the matter? You look a little down in the mouth, it appears to me."

"Will, I want your assistance."

"How, where and when?"

"I want you to woo and win a lady for me."

"What's that?"

"Just what I said exactly."

"But supposing she should be like the fair maiden of olden times, and say, 'Why dost thou not speak for thyself?'"

"You know Henry, I'm not such a bad looking fellow."

"I know that, Will, but I'm not afraid my little Eva, is as true as steel."

"O, it's the fair Eva, is it? Why, what's the matter there that you do not woo and win her yourself?"

I am quite willing that you should encourage Mr. Curtis' attentions, he is a very promising young man."

"And has plenty of money," she added dryly; parents are always willing to encourage the young men that have a fortune, or the expectation of one. Money redeems a multitude of sins. They may drink, cheat or steal, if they are only rich. But if a man is relying upon his own exertions to make his way in the world, no matter how good and honorable he may be, he is threatened like a vagrant or a felon. I hate such injustice."

"Don't grow ill-natured, Eva; it would soon spoil your beauty."

"I had rather be ill-natured than mercenary," she retorted.

"I suppose you think your father a terrible old bear, because he won't let you play at love in a cottage—scrubbing floors, washing dishes, cooking salt pork, &c."

"I think you are very cruel," she said and bursting into tears, rose from her seat and left the room. Her mother's eyes followed her, full of tenderness and sympathy, but Mr. Merrill only laughed saying:

"She will be in love with Curtis in a week you see if she isn't."

"O no" said the mother, "Eva is very constant in her loves and friendships, she will not change, I know."

"Mr. Curtis is not in love with Eva, nor she with him," exclaimed Maud, a beautiful girl of seventeen years.

"Indeed, miss, and what do you know about it?"

The young girl blushed rosy red, and then laughing a little answered.

"I can see, papa, as well as other people."

"You had better attend to your books and not trouble yourself about your sister's affairs."

"I shall soon be through with tiresome old books, and have some affairs of my own," she retorted saucily.

"I beg, Maud, that you will wait until Eva is settled before you begin your flirtations. I shall certainly go crazy if I have to look after two of you."

"I'm going to parties this winter, papa, and of course I shall look my prettiest, and then—and then."

"It is time to go to school, so no more nonsense, but come and kiss me good bye and the young lady did as requested."

That afternoon Mr. Curtis called with a dashing little turn-out, and took Eva off in triumph, the young girl looking bright and happy enough to warrant her father's predictions, but at Meridian Lane another young gentleman took his place by her side, and indulged in certain demonstrations that his predecessor had not dreamed of. They passed one delightful hour together, the horses being allowed to take their own pace, meanwhile, and upon returning to the place appointed, Henry sprang out, and young Curtis again sprang in and drove the young lady home.

The same programme was repeated week after week. Eva of course losing neither health nor spirit under such a regime. At length, one day when Henry Beldon was with her, who should they see coming but Mr. Merrill himself.

"What shall we do? What shall we do?" asked the frightened girl.

"Haven't you a thick veil, darling?"

"Yes, yes," and immediately the article in question was drawn closely over Eva's face and shivering with apprehension they met the severe parent, who gave them both a searching glance as he passed by.

"O Henry, do you think he knew me?"

"Not unless he recognized your dress."

"Then I'm safe enough, papa never knows whether I am clothed in purple, green or yellow. Fortunately I had my veil, I shall regard it in future as my kindest friend. Wasn't it funny, though?"

and she went off into a fit of joyous laughter so contagious that her companion soon joined in the merriment.

That evening Mr. Merrill turned to his daughter saying, "Eva, I do not think you need to wear the willow any longer for Mr. Beldon, he seems to be consoling himself."

"What do you mean father?" she inquired very demurely, but almost choking with repressed laughter.

I met him riding with a lady to-day, so closely veiled that I could not see her face—but they seemed to be enjoying themselves very much."

"I do not suppose that Mr. Beldon will be silly enough to make a hermit of himself, and renounce the society of all other ladies, because he has been dismissed from the house of the girl he loves. I hope that he will find consolation somewhere."

"I think, Eva, that you had better find consolation in the society of the gentleman you were with to-day."

looking fellow that came along," exclaimed the gentleman, triumphantly.

"I have not changed my opinion yet of Eva," she replied.

"Have not changed your opinion? You do not believe that she is still in love with Beldon, do you?"

"Wait and see."

"Why I have just given my consent to her marrying William Curtis—and she went off as happy as a bird."

The mother smiled incredulously but said nothing more.

The next day Mr. Merrill was sitting in his office, when suddenly the door opened and Eva entered, leaning upon Mr. Beldon's arm, looking very happy, but a little nervous.

"My husband father," said the audacious little lady.

"What's that? he inquired, pushing back his chair.

"Don't scold now, papa," she continued, "you said I might marry the gentleman I rode with yesterday—and this is he, I was the veiled lady you saw consoling him."

Mr. Merrill looked very grave for a moment, and then said:

"Well, children, your two younger heads were more than a match for my old one; go and see your mother."

And the happy couple were very sure they heard a sound strongly resembling laughter, as they left the room.

"Papa," said a sweet voice, in a few moments afterwards, "you are very anxious, you know, to have Will Curtis in the family; and—and he is willing."

"What do you mean, Maud? You haven't commenced your affairs in good earnest, have you?"

"Eva is settled—and Mr. Curtis wants me to marry him."

"Not for two years yet."

"He is willing to wait." And kissing her father a dozen times she also left him to join her impatient lover.

Chinese Chopsticks.

"OF the Chinaman's social habits," says the Rev. J. G. Wood, in "The Natural History of Man," "none is more widely known than the use of the 'chopsticks,' or the two little rods by means of which the solid food is eaten. This is not the Chinese name, but is one invented by foreigners, who have employed the terms as a sort of equivalent for the 'kwal-tszs,' or nimble lads, as they are very appropriately termed by the Chinese. Originally they were simply two slips of bamboo, but now they are of wood, bone, ivory, and sometimes silver. Two pairs of chopsticks in my collection are nearly ten inches in length, and about as thick at the base as a small goose quill, tapering gradually to half the thickness at the tip."

"Much misunderstanding prevails as to the use of the chopsticks, many persons supposing that they are held one in each hand, after the manner of knives and forks in Europe. These curious implements are both held in the right hand after the following manner: One of them is taken much as the pen is held, excepting that instead of being held by the thumb and forefinger, it passes between the tips of the second and third fingers.—This chopstick is always kept stationary. The second chopstick is held lightly between the thumb and forefinger, and can be worked so as to press with its tip against the point of the other, and act after the manner of pinchers."

"The adroitness displayed by the Chinese in the use of these implements is worthy of all admiration. I have seen them pick up single grains of rice with the chopsticks, dip them in soy, and carry them to the mouth with perfect precision; and, indeed, after some few lessons, I could do it tolerably well myself. In eating rice in the usual manner, the tip of the chopsticks are crossed, and the rice lifted with them as if on a spoon. If, however, the man be very hungry, he does not trouble himself with such refinement, but holds the bowl to his lips and scoops the rice into his mouth with a celerity that must be seen to be believed. In point of speed a spoon would be nothing compared with the chopstick."

"The reader must understand that the Chinese never carve at the table, thinking that to do so is an utterly barbarous and disgusting custom. The meat is brought to the table ready cut up into small morsels, which can be taken up with the chopsticks. The only use made of a knife at the table is to separate any small pieces of meat that may adhere together; and, for this purpose, a narrow, long-bladed knife is generally kept in the same sheath with the chopstick."

"The slumbers of an Irish gentleman being disturbed by another gentleman who had come to administer a horse whipping, he asked him whether he meant to be so unmanly as to flog him while in bed. "Certainly not," was the visitor's reply. "Well, then," rejoined the other, quietly rolling himself up very snugly in the bedclothes, "you may wait as long as you please, but hang me if I'll get up while you're in the house."

"But these hacks are dangerous. We might get the small-pox." "You've no cause to be afraid of my coach, mum, for I've had the 'indwheel vaccinated, and it took beautiful."

SUNDAY READING.

An Atheist's Grave.

The churchyard of Tewin, in Hertfordshire, is a spot of some interest to the curious, from the fact of its being the resting place of the mortal remains of Lady Anne Grimstone. The "old wife's tale of the neighborhood is to the effect that the said Lady Anne Grimstone was an atheist without a shadow of belief in the Deity; and that, so firm was her belief in the non-existence of God, that at her death bed her last words were to the effect that, if God existed, seven elm trees would grow out of her tomb-stone. Whether such words were used, and in such a manner, it is impossible to determine; but, whether the tale be correct or not, seven elm trees have sprung up through the solid tomb, and have broken away the solid masonry in all directions, making the reading of the inscription a difficult and almost impossible feat. The iron railings that surrounded the monument are in many places firmly imbedded in the trunks of the trees. The numerous names carved in all available parts of the trunks attest the number of visitors curiosity has drawn to the spot.

The trees are each distinct and separate, and notwithstanding the strangeness of the locality appear to thrive well.—Many suppositions to account for their growth have been started, but some are of so improbable a nature that the country people still cling to their favorite old story of Lady Anne's atheism.

"I Feel it Pull."

In the deepening twilight of a summer evening, a pastor called at the residence of one of his parishioners, and found seated in the doorway a little boy with hands extended upward, holding a line. "What are you doing here, my little friend?" inquired the minister.

"Flying my kite, sir," was the prompt reply.

"Flying your kite?" exclaimed the pastor. "I can see no kite—you can see none."

"I cannot see it, but I know it is there—for I feel it pull."

A few years back the angels came and bore far above us out of our sight, one that was very dear to us all. The attachment of our heart was not broken.—The connecting ties were lengthened, not broken. We loved her while here. We love her still. She loved us while in the flesh. We are sure she loves us none the less in her new condition. Rising higher and still higher in the heaven of heavens, we feel her influence. She is with Christ, and attracted by gentle influences, we are tending toward her peaceful home with the prospect of the same glorious companionship.

A Hundred Years to Come.

No man ever appears to think how soon he must sink into oblivion—that we are one generation of millions. Yet such is the fact. Time and progress have, through countless ages, come marching hand in hand—the one destroying, the other building up. They seem to create little or no commotion, and the work of destruction is as easily accomplished as a child will pull to pieces a rose. Yet such is the fact. A hundred years hence, and much that we now see around us will have passed away. It is but a repetition of life's story; we are born, we die; and, hence, we will grieve over these venerable piles, finding the common level of their prototypes in Nature, ultimate death.

"We all within our graves shall sleep,
A hundred years to come;
No living soul for us shall weep,
A hundred years to come;
But other men our land will till,
And other men our streets will fill,
And other birds shall sing as gay,
As bright the sunshine as to-day,
A hundred years to come."

One cold night Rev. Dr. Ezra S. Ely, of Presbyterian fame, was preaching in a prairie farm house. When about one third through the sermon, two late-comers drove up to the door and entered. The doctor stopped and said that as these friends were very cold with their ride, the meeting would sing a hymn while they were warming themselves which being done, he observed that as they had taken so much trouble to come, he would begin his discourse again for their benefit; and taking his text accordingly he commenced once more at the beginning and repeated his sermon, rather more to their edification than to that of the rest of the audience perhaps.

Why deal with your heavenly Friend with more strangeness and less confidence than with an earthly friend; and desire his help and sympathy only in seasons of extremity; yet He is fond of them that call upon Him in the hour of need; He cannot deny Himself. "In their affliction they will seek me early." But why not accept that companionship which throws a light over minute working of His Providence, and gives a voice to the interpreters of His love, hour by hour, moment by moment?

Nothing is so dishonoring to God as unbelief. Even supposing that our prayer is not answered so that we can recognize it here, yet we have honored Him by asking for that which he alone can bestow; and them that honor Him He will honor.