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NO. 27.

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marvel. The handsome Side-Boards, Secretaries, Chiffoniers, Writing
Desks, Hall Racks, Slate and Marble Mantels in the land.

But their paths one day came in collision.
"You were going to the singing school to-
night, Elsie!" said Helena Elvira, sharply.

ELSIE'S RIGHTS.
"It's a nice farm," said Mr. Hubbard Spruce, as he stood on the top of Chalk Hill, from whose peak Chalk Farm lay spread out before him like a panoramic display. "A very nice farm. No nicer in the neighborhood."
"And a house with all the modern improvements," said Mrs. Spruce, her thin lips widening into a spasmodic smile. "It does seem as if I had reached us at last!"
"We can keep a hired girl, ma, can't we?" said Helena Elvira Spruce, who had her gowns made long and straight, with little ruffles around the skirt, and big shoulder-puffs, to look "spirituelle." "It's such drudgery to wash dishes and scrape fry-pans!"
"Of course!" observed Mrs. Spruce. "I am sorry for my poor stepson, Paul. But Paul would have been alive now if he had taken my advice and stayed at home, instead of going out to Nevada, silver-hunt-
ing."
"Paul was always a headstrong boy," said Mrs. Spruce, smoothing down the cravat band on his straw hat—"always!"
"And so the Spruce family came down the hill, through the sweet pine woods, softly carpeted with their fine needles, and across fields all golden with buttercups, to the snug farm house under the monster sycamore trees.
And there, on the steps, sat a pretty young girl, seemingly not more than eight-
een or nineteen years old, with a traveling bag in her lap, and a black baggage veil fluttering in the evening breeze. Her dress was of cheap, black material; her face pale and worn, as if with fatigue. She rose hurriedly up as they approached.
"Have I come to the right place?" said she. "Does Mr. Spruce live here?"
Mr. Hubbard Spruce cleared his throat sonorously.
"Young woman," said he, "my name is Spruce."
The girl burst into tears.
"Please—please, then, be kind to me," faltered she. "I am your son Paul's widow."
"And as she spoke she came up to him, holding out both trembling hands.
"There's some mistake here," said Mr. Spruce, unfolding a big, red-silk handkerchief. "Paul's wife died in Nevada, a few weeks after his death."
"No, she did not," said the young woman. "She's here now. I was very, very ill; they gave up all hopes of me. But I did not die."
"Humph!" said Mr. Spruce, while his wife and daughter got behind him, eyeing the stranger with cool, unsympathetic eyes. "This is a very remarkable story. I am inclined, young woman, to believe it all fabrication. I'm very much afraid that you are an impostor!"
A deep-red flush rose to the girl's face.
"I can prove that I am not that," said she. "I have the papers here in my bag. I thought, as a matter of course, that Paul's parents would be good to me. There was no one else for me to go to."
Mr. Spruce's face turned all manner of colors as he looked at the little packet of papers which she extended to him.
"Upon my word," said he, "this is very extraordinary!" Julia, to his wife, "I am constrained to believe that this young woman really is Paul's widow."
Mrs. Spruce dropped a stiff courtesy.
"How do you do, Mrs. Paul?" said she. "You will call me Elsie, won't you?" said the girl, appealingly. "And this is Paul's sister."
"His half-sister," corrected Miss Helena Elvira. "We never were at all alike. Ma was only his step-mother, and I scarcely remember him."
"And," added Mrs. Spruce, querulously, "it did seem as if Paul had made us enough trouble one way and another without dying and bequeathing a wife to take care of."
"Julia," said Mrs. Spruce, pompously, "we must not question the will of providence. Come here, Elsie, kiss me. We'll do the best we can for you—always taking it for granted that you mean to earn your own living, and not be dependent upon us."
"I will do my best," said Elsie. "I am a good little housekeeper. Paul always said that my cooking was excellent, and I made all his shirts with my own hands."
"Very sensible—very sensible!" said Mr. Spruce. "And now mother, let's go in. I suppose Elsie can keep the little end-room close to the shed?"
"I was calculating to keep my flour and stores there," said Mrs. Spruce, sourly. "But I guess I can manage. Come, Elsie; I'll show you where all the things are kept, and then you can get supper for us. Helena Elvira isn't very strong, and I am very tired."
"I shall be so glad to be of use," said Mrs. Paul Spruce, wistfully.
"While she was turning off her things in the little room assigned to her, Mrs. Spruce, senior, came tiptoeing back to where Hubbard still stood on the grassy green, mechanically wiping the perspiration from his forehead, staring around him in a glassy-eyed sort of way.
"Hubbard!" said she, in a low voice.
"Hubbard?" retorted the farmer.
"Do you s'pose she knows it?"
"Knows what?"
"That this farm and the ten thousand dollars in money were left to Paul by his Uncle Wetherbee?"
"Of course she don't!" said the old man, looking around, as if fearful lest some one should overhear the words. "How should she?"
"Are you going to tell her, Hubbard?"
"He turned short to Elsie, with a growl like that of an incensed wild animal.
"What do you take me for?" said he. "Of course," suddenly altering his tone into smooth pliancy, I have the best interests of Paul's widow at heart. She shall be provided for. She shall never want. But what does a woman know about business?"
"Of course!" said Mrs. Spruce, with a sigh of relief—"of course!"
"So Paul's widow settled down in the Spruce household as a sort of patient, much enduring drudge, willing to do everything, and anxious only to gain a kind word or a smile.
Miss Helena Elvira treated her in a cavalier sort of way, as she might have treated the "hired girl" for whom her soul had longed.
And grateful little Elsie accepted it all, thankful for any crumb of occasional kindness being her, and training herself not to expect too much from these un-democratic connections.
But their paths one day came in collision.
"You were going to the singing school to-
night, Elsie!" said Helena Elvira, sharply.

"But you can't! The minister is coming here to tea, some one must be on hand to wash the dishes."
"Joah Whitley asked me to go with him," said Elsie, with drooping lashes, "and I thought—"
"Joah Whitley, indeed!" angrily retorted Helena Elvira. "I'd like to know what business a widow like you has to be careering around the country with Joah Whitley, or any other young man!"
"Is it wrong?" breathlessly asked Elsie. "Oh, Helena Elvira! But Paul has been dead a year or more, and after all, I am only eighteen."
"Quite old enough to know better," said Helena Elvira. "I'll go with Joah, and explain it all to you. It's quite impossible for me to spare you."
"But he didn't ask you!" flashed out Elsie.
Helena Elvira laughed—a hard, cracking laugh.
"Jealous, eh?" said she. "But you may as well spare yourself the trouble, Elsie. Joah Whitley never would care for you."
In the Spruce household Helena Elvira's will was law, and Elsie found herself compelled to submit.
She was washing dishes, sorrowfully and alone, in the kitchen, that evening, wondering why she should be placed outside the pale of human enjoyments and affections, when, unexpectedly enough, the door opened, and in walked honest Joah himself.
"Is it true, Elsie Spruce?" said he. "Did you really want to go to singing-school with me to-night?"
"Oh Joah!—who told you that?" exclaimed Elsie, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or cry.
"Why, Helena Elvira, of course."
"It was not true, Joah?" whispered Elsie. "Of course it wasn't!" said he. "I might have known it. She is a false, treacherous human cat; and you Elsie—well, you are the sweetest little darling in all the world, and it goes to my very heart to see you drudging and toiling here, like a slave! Be my wife, Elsie—come home to the Old Red Cottage with me—and you shall live as a lady should!"
"What could Elsie Spruce answer but yes?"
"And it was not until half an hour of blissful love talk had passed that she remembered herself sufficiently to cry out:
"But, what will Mr. and Mrs. Spruce say?"
"It was no use, Elsie. I was too much in love to take my place, and Mrs. Spruce is firmly convinced that—that you are in love with Helena Elvira!"
"Bother Mr. Spruce!" said Joah, recklessly; "and Mrs. Spruce must convince herself the best way she can. Helena Elvira, indeed! Why, I'd as soon marry yonder clothes-post!"
"But Joah Whitley had hardly calculated upon the energy of the domestic storm which spent itself upon poor Elsie when the actual truth transpired. Helena Elvira sobbed, wept, and declared herself the victim of a foul conspiracy.
"I felt a cold chill creep all over me when first I set my eyes on that girl, six months ago," she bewailed herself. "I knew she was a serpent, fated to sap my life's blood!"
"Elsie!" said Mrs. Spruce, sternly, "you must either give up this young man or leave this house!"
"I can't give up Joah!" said Elsie, bursting into tears. "I love Joah!"
"I never heard anything so insolent in my life!" shrieked Helena Elvira.
"The only way to settle this question," said Joah, when he heard of the general commotion, "is for me and Elsie to get married at once."
"But Mrs. Spruce herself visited the Old Red Cottage in Helena Elvira's behalf.
"I don't think you understand exactly how matters are situated," Joah, she said, with her most maternal smile. "Our dear Helena Elvira—who is all shrinking modesty and clinging affection—will inherit the whole of Chalk Farm and ten thousand dollars in hard cash the very day that she marries."
"But what is that to me?" said Joah Whitley, drumming his fingers on the window-sill. "I hope she may be happily married, but—"
"And," breathlessly added Mrs. Spruce, "Paul's widow has nothing but the gown she stands up in!"
"What of that?" said Joah, stoutly. "I love her—and she loves me!"
"Well," said Mrs. Spruce, tartly, "if you are determined to make fools of yourselves, you can do so."
And thus speaking, she shook the dust of the Old Red Cottage off her feet in disgust.
But when she reached Chalk Farm once more, her husband was sitting in the best room with his head in his hands, and a face as pale as ashes, while opposite him stood a spare, wrinkled, elderly man in black.
Mrs. Spruce stopped on the threshold just in time to hear the concluding words of the stranger's sentence.
"According to your own account of it, Hubbard Spruce," he said, "you have been defrauding this girl of her legal rights, and deliberately. You have laid yourself open to the severest penalty of the law."
"Don't, Mr. Payne—don't!" interposed Elsie, who had advanced out of the shadowy angle of the room. "He is my father-in-law! He has been good to me!"
"He has behaved like a scoundrel!" sternly said Mr. Payne. "And it only remains for you to lodge an accusation in order that he may be placed in the prison cell that he richly deserves!"
But Elsie put her arms around Hubbard Spruce's shoulder, as if to shield him.
"Never!" she said.
"Thank God for that word, Elsie!" said Mrs. Spruce, hurrying forward. "Your father-in-law meant no harm. He always intended, some time, to give it back to you. What is this lawyer doing here?"
"He is the gentleman who always had charge of the Chalk Hill estates," said Elsie.
"He came to see me about buying some more land. This is the first I knew of—of poor Paul's property. But oh, father, mother! with a pleading voice, "I make no difference to me. No one shall ever know."
"But to Helena Elvira's warped nature, Elsie's sweet forgiveness was more bitter than the sharpest reproof could have been.
The Spruce family moved out of Chalk Farm back to the little one storied house whence they had originally come, and left Elsie and Joah Whitley in possession of their rightly domain.
"It's all Paul's widow's fault!" sobbed Helena Elvira.
"Hush!" sternly uttered her father. "You talk like a fool! Don't you know that, to us, it was her angel of forgiveness?"
—Helena Elvira's Grace.

The Skin of the Earth.
We talk a good deal about boring and digging into the bowels of the earth. It is a mistake. We have never reached the bowels of the earth any more than the bill of a gnat that pricks you on the abdomen reaches your bowels.
The human skin is about one two hundredth and fiftieth of the diameter of the body; allow the earth proportionately thick and it will be 30 miles through.
The deepest borings have been about half, not through the false or outer layer of skin; not near to the cutis vera. The highest mountains have only shown us what may be about one fifteenth the thickness of the earth's skin. Could we go through this thick hide into the real flesh and blood of the earth what wonders might be discovered!
At the last session of congress there was a movement to get an appropriation to bore a hole as deep as it could possibly be made under the direction of the best engineers, but failed. Money so appropriated would be spent to much better purpose than that appropriated for explorations to the north pole and many other objects.
The heat and gasses of the earth's interior are to be forces of the future for motor power, lighting and heating. A bore 10, 15, 20, 30 miles deep may be impossible, but he is not wise who says impossible of anything within human endeavor.
We simply mean that, since so much has been discovered by merely scratching and puncturing the false skin of the earth, might not wonderful results be obtained by reaching through its skin.

The Use of Loons.
A Western paper says: The crazy screams of the loon are heard again through the silent watches of the night and at early morn. Seven were seen sporting themselves in Pigeon Lake the other morning. It will be a good thing if they become numerous around here, as they will make magnificent sport for the innocent shoot-
ists who come in the summer with their kits. If there is anything that will tickle a loon half to death, it is to get a pair of breech-loading, nickel-mounted, double and twist, brown canvas, copper riveted throughout, city sportsmen after him. He will stand on his head and kick at the clouds with delight. He will sit on the water like an old-fashioned three decker, with his off eye shut and his beak on the grin, till the city chap thinks that if he can't blow that gallop clean out of the water at the first pop it would be useless his shooting at a barn. Then he draws up, holds his breath, slits his eyes, and pops. So likewise does the loon, and while the sport is confusedly looking for his pieces, the loon comes up within four feet and a half of the boat and laughs—a wild lunatic laugh, that would put unholly thoughts into the very best church deacon that ever lived. Then the rowing and shooting commences, and if the loon does not take at least five hours' hilarious fun out of them, why, he must be a young one and not feeling extra well. Yes, loons should be encouraged.

The Lover Could Not Stand the Test.
"Do you see that row of poplars on the Canadian shore, standing apparently at equal distance apart?" asked a grave-faced man of a group of passengers on the Fort Erie ferry boat.
"The group nodded assent.
"Well, there's quite a story connected with those trees," he continued. "Some years ago there lived on the bluff in Buffalo, overlooking the river a very wealthy banker, whose only daughter was beloved by a young surveyor. The old man was inclined to question the professional skill of young rod and level, and put to him the test, directed him to set out, on the Dominion shore, a row of trees no two of which should be farther apart than any other two. The trial proved the inefficiency and forthwith he was forbidden the house, and in despair drowned himself in the river. Perhaps some of you gentlemen with keen eyes can tell which two trees are furthest apart?"
The group took a critical view of the situation and each member selected a different pair of trees. Finally after much discussion, an appeal was taken to the solemn faced stranger to solve the problem.
"The first and the last," said he, calmly resuming his cigar and walking away with the air of sage.

Wouldn't Marry a Mechanic.
A young man commenced visiting a young woman, and appeared to be well pleased. One evening he called when it was quite late, which led the young lady to inquire where he had been.
"I had to work to-night."
"What do you work for a living?" she inquired in astonishment.
"Certainly," replied the young man, "I am a mechanic."
"I dislike the name of mechanic," said she turned up her pretty nose.
This was the last time the young man visited the young lady. He is now a wealthy man, and has one of the best women in the country for a wife.
The young lady who disliked the name of a mechanic is now the wife of a miserable fool—a regular vagrant about grogshops—and the soft, verdant, stilly, miserable girl is obliged to take in washing in order to support herself and children.
You dislike the name of a mechanic, eh? You who brothers are but well dressed loafers. We pity any girl who is so verdant, so soft to think less of a young man for being a mechanic—son of God's noble men—the most dignified and honorable personage of heaven's creatures.
Beware, young man for being a mechanic—one of God's noble men who work for a living, for you may one of these days be a mortal to one of them. Far better to discharge the wretched paper with all his rings, jewelry, brazenness and pomposity, and to take to your affection the callous-handed, industrious mechanic.
"Think that he could expire whenever he pleased, and again laid down upon a sofa and fallen in a few minutes into his sportive death trance. He had always come back to activity within half an hour, but on this last occasion they grew alarmed at the long continuance of his trance. They called to him, but he did not answer; they shook him, but he did not awake. Their fellow student was really dead. It is narrated of Colonel Townsend, Rajah of Puntland, in the Punjab, that he had this power of what doctors call voluntary liberation. As some women faint away whenever they feel like doing so, so the gallant Colonel could 'die daily,' or whenever he pleased.
His heart, says the medical account of it, would cease to beat; there was no perceptible respiration; the body became cold and rigid, the eyes glassy and the features cadaverous. He would continue dead for several hours, and then come back to life. Dr. Hayne says that Colonel Townsend told him that he could expire whenever he pleased and by an effort of his own will restore himself instantaneously to the living state. On one occasion he performed the experiment in the presence of three medical experts, one of whom kept his hand upon the Colonel's heart, while a second held his fingers on his wrist-pulse, and the third held a mirror before his mouth. They found all traces of pulsation and restoration gone, and were unanimous in their belief that he was actually dead, when he revived as easily as he had died, to their great astonishment.—Brooklyn Eagle.

A Railroad Cat.
An engineer on the Wabash Railway whose run is between Danville and Springfield, has a cat which he would not part with for love or money.
"It belonged to his wife, who is now dead and for a year past it has been his constant companion in the cab. The cat loves its life on the rail, and has grown sleek and fat sniffing the parrie winds. Ordinarily it sits perched up in the cab window before its master, but occasionally it strolls out to the pilot, where it will ride for hours at a stretch, winking at the dogs which bark at the train as it thunders by the crossroads. Sometimes when the train is approaching a station the adventurous animal climbs to the top of the sand and clammy roosts there, undeterred by the shriek of the whistle or the clang of the bell. The engine has good luck ever since the animal became an occupant of the cab, and the trainmen look upon it as a mascot against disaster.
BEYOND THE REACH OF GENTUS.—A young lady of my acquaintance was once present at a musical party where the lion of the evening was a celebrated flute player. After he had performed this young lady was presented to him, and there was a general silence in the room, which added to her natural embarrassment. She felt that she must say something pleasant, so, with a happy smile, she exclaimed: "Oh, how delightful you play! Do you ever accompany yourself on the piano?"
The artist looked at his flute, then at his fingers, shrugged his shoulders, bowed low and said: "Never." After a moment she saw why everybody laughed.
TOMMY, walking with his father, saw him give a beggar five cents, and inquired into the matter.
"What did you give that man five cents for, papa?" asked Tommy.
"So that he might eat bread, my boy," said the father.
That evening at the supper table it was observed that Tommy declined to eat any bread, in any shape.
"Aren't you eating now-a-days, my boy?" his mother asked.
"No, mama."
"Why not?"
"So papa'll give me five cents."

TEACHER.—"How many zones are there?"
BOY.—"Six."
"Yes, there are only five."
"Yes, there are six."
"Name them."
"The torrid zone, the northern and southern temperate, and northern and southern frigid."
"That's five; what is the other one?"
"O-zone."

A MAN entered a little Rock Bank and presented a check which read: "Pay to bearer the sum of ten dollars." The cashier took the check, looked at it, and said, "The check is perfectly good, but you'll have to get someone to identify you." "What is the use of the man replied; don't you see that it says 'Pay to bearer'?" "Yes, but you must prove that you are the bearer."