

The Lancaster

"THAT COUNTRY IS THE MOST PROSPEROUS WHERE LABOR COMMANDS THE GREATEST REWARD."—BUCHANAN.

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IDEAL AND REAL.

By JOHN G. SAGE.

Some years ago, when I was young, and my name was Miss Delaney, I used to paint my father's face with red and white. I used to paint my father's face with red and white. I used to paint my father's face with red and white. I used to paint my father's face with red and white.

hearts, and wit enough to fasten them with glistening clasps whenever she chose. At the same time, she was as amiable as could fairly be expected of a spirited young woman who ruled a subservient seminary with a rod more rigid than any of the professors could wield; and she was, with all her frolicsome coquetry, as discreet as a dowager, and she was not destitute of good sense, a powerful proof of which was that she never uttered her name Lucie. Nevertheless, it is a melancholy truth that many of the maidens of Winstons persistently refused to recognize those insinuating qualities which by the ruder creatures were unanimously accorded to her.

After a considerable period of supreme sway, Miss Brandon at length sighed, Alexander-wise, for something to conquer. She fell in with Mr. Henry (so christened, but popularly denominated Harry) Langford, a fine young fellow with no theological aspirations, who had come up to Winstons to look after some long neglected relations. Clever and well-dressed, and with a heavenly curl in his hair, he interested Miss Brandon, who forthwith smiled upon him, and baited her flirtation-looks with more delicate fascinations. With a shade of surprise, she observed that her intended victim succeeded in reaping the full benefit of the baits, and yet refused to be caught. Upon this, she became shy, and he commenced a promiscuous assault upon the affections of every available young woman he encountered. As soon as it was evident that they understood each other, they began to laugh. Consultation followed. From laughing at one another they turned to laughing at Miss Brandon's troop of suppliant admirers. I am sorry to say that the young lady betrayed confidence. She told him how one especially devoted adorer was continually quoting Scriptural texts to her; and how another, of ontological turn of mind, would insist on comparing her to new and exquisite specimens of bugs. Then he told her, quite maliciously, how precarious her rule was, and cruelly likened her position to that of a keeper in a lunatic asylum, whose strength lies in his confidence that his subordinates, having lost their wits, possess no power of combination among themselves to defeat his plans. Occasionally Miss Brandon was a little tart; and sometimes Mr. Langford was a little rude; but they usually kept within amicable bounds, and were understood to be excellent friends—nothing more.

Not one of Miss Lucy's devotees ever thought it worth while to look upon Harry Langford with eyes of green indignation. He was in no degree rapacious about her; she often snubbed him. An infrequent quarrel between them had once been detected. Besides, he was not a resident, only a visitor, whose opportunities were thus limited.

Moreover it is a fact that no two persons were more profusely convinced of their absolute indifference to one another than Miss Brandon and Mr. Langford themselves. They had given much private thought to the subject, (there was the danger!) and had satisfied themselves that they were, as every body understood, excellent friends—nothing more.

Nevertheless it happened that Mr. Langford was suddenly overcome by a sense of shame at his want of family feeling in so long neglecting his Winstons relations. So he endeavored to repair old errors by frequent visits, and established an extensive acquaintance in the neighborhood. He frequented many months of his but a perpetual shiver. Mr. Langford, anxious to experience all these joys, came up to Winstons in the middle of February to remain two days, bringing with him baggage sufficient for three weeks, with him, after much inter-exchange of entreaty and expostulation, he was induced to extend his visit.

The first time he met Miss Brandon, he trembled before her with the suggestion of a sleigh-ride. Said he, "A sleigh-ride in winter is seldom amiss," and was thereupon sharply rebuked for admitting the possibility of such a thing at any other season. See would ride with him the next afternoon.

In the morning Mr. Henry Langford gravely inspected the family stable, but found nothing therein equal to his own idea of the magnitude of the occasion. At the public stable he was more successful. At first he contemplated the luxurious magnificence of a span, but an irresistible impulse subsequently induced him to settle upon a single courser. (One horse may be driven with one hand!) It is difficult to imagine what impelled him to seek with such pertinacity as he did for the narrow sleigh in the collection. At five o'clock, P. M., the light-hearted young pair dashed away, as full of good-natured glee as the sleigh was full of them—and they fitted very compatibly. Miss Brandon, knowing the country more intimately than her companion, undertook to point their way, a manner of proceeding quite agreeable, in view of the male creature's total ignorance of localities. They glided on, turning left and thither, until ere long they left the clustering cottages of Winstons quite a distance behind. For a while both chattered and laughed with a vigor that put them into a profuse glow. But by-and-by Mr. Henry stopped short, and in an unaccountable manner, and left Miss Lucy to do the declamation, contenting himself with watching the sparkle of her eye, or the pretty curve of her lip, as she threw out incessant little smart sprinkles of feminine wit. Presently he observed with wonder a faint suspicion of a flutter trembling through him, and attributed it to their rapid motion, recollecting similar sensations in earlier youth, caused by swinging.

He must have expressed something odd in his countenance, for, of a sudden, Miss Lucy out short her fun, and subsided into a dim oblivious tranquility. Just one minute after, it flashed upon Mr. Henry Langford, that he had for the past six months been steadily and unintermittedly occupied in making a muff of himself;

gained strength. In a little while gusts of wind came swirling along, keen and icy, and impudently hurled the light snow into the faces of the homeward-bound. With any other companion, Mr. Harry Langford would have said disagreeable things. Miss Brandon acknowledged to herself that if she were now under the guidance of any of her professed devotees, there might be words as bitter as the wind.

When they were four miles from Winstons, they came to a sudden turn in the road. The new snow had drifted here, and the way was difficult to pass. At a touch of the whip, the horse plunged forward—and a trace snapped!

This was serious. Langford sprang out, and discovered that the difficulty might be temporarily arranged by splicing. For this he needed time. Together they searched the sleigh, but found no consolation there. Ten cheerless minutes passed. Harry tried a dozen expedients, all unsuccessful. What should be done? There were no houses near. It was becoming very dark.

At last he proposed, not without hesitation, to draw the sleigh to the side of the road, to wrap his fair charge in impenetrable folds, and to start off on foot in search of twine.

At this point all trouble vanished in an instant. In a faint voice Miss Lucy unexpectedly chirped forth from her pile of buffalo robes—"Will this do?" and instantly hid herself from human view.

She had let fall something upon the snow that lay like a half-coiled blue snake. In answer to her frightened question she was informed that it did, Harry, laughing himself to pieces internally, but superficially solemn and calm, repaired damages, resumed his place, and drove cautiously onward. After a while he said—"Think, now, Miss Lucy, of a woman walking to Linville in this temper!"

Lucy looked appealingly into his face, and gave signals of great distress.

"You are cold," he said, and as she was silent, he took it for granted that she was! As they passed through the long avenue to Mr. Brandon's house, an electric exuberant took place, without the same explosive result as before.

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