

## ROSITA FAIRFAX.

“AND ROSITA, mother; what has become of her?”

Allan Fairfax asked the question with a perceptible heightening of the color in his brown cheek, bringing it in, as it were, carelessly, although it was the one question that had been in his mind all this first day of his return from a long East Indian absence.

“Oh, she married some farmer fellow or other, and—let me see—I believe she is dead!”

“You speak vaguely, mother, of your own niece,” Allan commented, a little reproachfully.

“Well, really, you know that Glenn Fairfax's family never seemed like our own, and Rosita was always full of some whim or other.”

Mrs. Fairfax adjusted the coiffure of point lace and cherry ribbon on her head as she spoke, with white ring-gemmed fingers, thinking to herself how fortunate it was that Rosita was out of her son's way.

“Allan would have been just absurd enough to renew the old engagement, if he had had the ghost of an opportunity, and now that Helen Farquharson, with all that property of hers, fancies him such piece of chivalrous romance would have been simply absurd. I do think Providence is watching over our interests.”

There are more people in this world than Mrs. Fairfax who weave around their selfish plots and plans the glamour of that Providence which is most aggrieved and defied.

Allan Fairfax, learning thoughtfully against the mantel, with his arms folded and his eyes fixed on the roses of the carpet, was a singularly handsome young fellow. He was very dark with brilliant black eyes, luxuriant wavy hair, and features like a chiselled Apollon. It was the birthright of the Fairfaxes to be handsome—nor had Allan fallen short of the traditional standard.

He started from his reverie, as his mother's voice sounded again.

“I beg your pardon, mother; did you speak to me? I was thinking of something else.”

“I was only asking if you would drive out with me, this morning.”

“I believe not, if you will excuse me, I have not entirely finished my unpacking.”

Mrs. Fairfax sailed out of the room with the port of an orient queen, and Allan was left alone. But he did not go up to his trunks.

“Married!” he murmured to himself. “Oh, Rosita, how could you have so soon forgotten? Yet it is the way of the world, and I have no right to expect a different fate from my fellow-men.”

“I know I could do it, mamma.”

“But, Rosita, only think of it,” cried the poor little widow, wringing her helpless hands. “You, Glenn Fairfax's daughter, stooping to such a menial occupation as that!”

“Not so very menial after all. You wouldn't be at all horrified if I took in fine sewing or embroidery, for the wherewithal to satisfy this relentless landlord of ours; and what difference does it make, whether I help dress a lady's shoulders or her head?”

Rosita Fairfax was a beautiful girl, after the blonde, gold-haired type, with sunny blue eyes, cheeks like a velvet rose petal, and a graceful undulating figure—such a girl as seems to be born to wear pearls and satin, and blossom like a tall white lily, in the very garden of life.—Yet she was not out of place in the dusty thoroughfares, where work is the rule and pleasure the exception. Her chintz calico dress, belted at the round waist, and relieved by narrow strips of snow-white linen at throat and wrists, fitted her as perfectly as the costliest silk could have done; and the bright hair that fell in loose burnished rings over her shoulders, needed no wreath of artificial flowers or glimmer of jewels to give greater brilliancy to its shine.

“But a hair-dresser, Rosita—a common hair-dresser.”

“No, mamma,” interrupted Rosita, laughing. “Give it the full French grace of signification—say *coiffeuse*.”

“What difference can the name make?”

“Much, mamma, in spite of Shakespeare's celebrated query. And Minnie Dow earns her dollar a day, and it is so kind of her to obtain this vacant situation at Madame Prenneror's for me.”

“Minnie Dow is a carpenter's daughter.”

“And I am descended in a direct line

from one Adam, a gardener. Come, mamma, darling, let us look this matter fairly in the face. We are very poor, and society will neither feed nor clothe us; let us defer no matter how meekly, to her whims. I might take in needle-work, provided I could get any to do; but I should waste my life away, and have the paltriest pittance to show for it. I might give music lessons if I were content to wait a year for each separate pupil. I might go out as a governess, if I could have sacrificed all individuality and independence for a hundred dollars a year. But as this opportunity for earning a little something presents itself, and you know that I had always had a regular Parisian knack for twisting the hair up, and looping it into all manner of waves and knots and puffs, I think it's a grand opening. That's right, mamma, look up and smile.”

For Mrs. Fairfax had smiled, though faintly enough, at Rosita's *resumé* of their situation.

“How can you be so light-hearted, my child?”

“Why, what's the use of being heavy hearted? I am young and strong, and if I can't earn my living one way I am determined to do it another. Now will you be a good little mamma, and rest contentedly on the sofa until I come back?”

“You are not going to—?”

“To Madame Prenneror's? Yes I am.”

“So soon?”

“The sooner the better; and there's one characteristic about this French-Madame—Minnie says she always settles up with the girls every Saturday night, mamma, when I shall come home with seven dollars in my pocket?”

But the landlord says he must have his rent to-morrow. It is twelve dollars, now, Rosita.”

“Oh, I'll coax him to wait.”

And Rosita went out with a light elastic step, and a smile that seemed to turn her whole bright face into sunshine.—Mrs. Fairfax, in spite of herself, caught the infection, and smiled back at her beautiful young daughter.

“She is fit to be a princess,” thought the mother, with a longing, lingering thrill of tenderness: “and, oh, to think that she should be reduced to this!”

Mrs. Fairfax's heart would have been sadder still, if she could have seen how quickly the smile faded away from Rosita's presence. She went swiftly down the street turned on Broadway, and went to a jeweler's store.

“How much will you give me for this gold cross?” she questioned the clerk abruptly, as she drew from her bosom a cross of chased gold, with a topaz burning like a spot of sunshine in its centre.

“Do you wish to leave it in trust, or sell it?”

“To sell it.”

The clerk examined it critically.

“I can give you twenty dollars for it.”

“It cost fifty?”

The clerk shrugged his shoulders.

“Of course you can't expect first cost; but we are not anxious to buy.”

Rosita laid down the cross.

“Give me the money,” she said quietly.

The clerk counted out the twenty dollars, and Miss Fairfax left the store.

“At least the rent is provided for, and the grocer's bill,” she said to herself, “and now we can make a fair start in the world. Poor papa! how little he thought what we were coming to when he gave me that glittering toy on my sixteenth birthday!”

Madame Lunile de Prenneror received her new work woman very graciously.

“You are just in time my dear,” she said; “*ma foi*, the orders that I have received to-day! If I had had a hundred hands, they would all have been busy. Let me see—what are we to call you?”

“My name is Ro—”

“Oh, true, true; but it was not of that I was thinking. I like my girls to adopt French names. Miss Minnie Dow is called here Nannette Dupont, and you—you are henceforward Marie Pelotte.—You do not object? It gives us style—character—Parisian *ton*!”

“I do not object ma'am,” said Rosita, smiling at the oddity of the Madame's whim.

“Well, Marie Pelotte, it sounds foreign, does it not, my child?—you shall go to to-day. I have three orders—two dinner parties and a ball. Here are my plates *à la mode*; study them well, and reproduce them on the heads of Mesdames my patronesses. Do you think you can meet the emergency?”

“Certainly, ma'am.”

“You will find the numbers of the

streets, and the hour of the appointment, on this card. You will charge five dollars a head; more, if gold or diamond powder be required—and I look to you, Marie Pelotte, to sustain the well-known honor of the Prenneror establishment.—Stay, it is early still; you may dress Nannette's hair to prove to me that you thoroughly comprehend your great position. Madame Prenneror was in ecstasies at her new employee's taste and skill, as demonstrated on the shiny brown head of Miss Minnie Dow, *alias* Nannette Dupont; and Rosita went out at the appointed hour, her heart beating rather tumultuously, but nevertheless quite prepared to meet the onerous duties before her.

The first candidate a little bewigged female, who was scarcely visible through the paint and powder on her face, was easily disposed of, and was highly gratified at the amount of puff and baudeaux and bows of hair that Rosita arrayed around her face.

“I like you Pelotte,” said this eccentric lady of fashion. “Tell Prenneror always to send you to me! Why you have twice the taste of Manon, my French maid.”

The second place, No. 18 Vessemere street, was a stately mansion, with brown stone steps and violet velvet window draperies, fringed with gold. Mademoiselle Pelotte was shown into a boudoir whose elegance reminded her of other days by some strange hidden link of association. Presently a pert-looking *soubrette* came to her.

“My mistress will see you in her dressing-room.”

Rosita followed her into a room where a lady sat in a loose frilled dressing wrapper of white cambrie, and heavy black hair falling down her back—a lady whose haughty glance towards her, as she beckoned her approach, filled her with nameless terror.

It was her aunt, Mrs. John Fairfax!

Evidently, however, she was herself unrecognized, and gathering new courage from this fact, she glided round to the back of the chair, and commenced her operations, secretly thanking her kindly planets for Mrs. Fairfax's fashionable near-sightedness.

“You may arrange it *à la Marie Antoinette*, young woman,” said Mrs. Fairfax languidly, opening a book and beginning to read, while Rosita with trembling hands proceeded to brush and arrange the heavy hair of the woman who had turned coldly from them in the hour of need—who had denied their bond of relationship.

“How slow you are!” exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax, impatiently, after she had read a few pages. “You will never be through! Who is that at the door? Open it!”

But Rosita did not stir; and the lady, concluding the young Frenchwoman did not understand English readily, called out, “come in!”

The door opened, and Allan Fairfax entered looking rather surprised as he did so.

“You are busy?” he said, and I will not—”

The half-completed sentences died away on his tongue, as he stood gazing at the golden-haired girl who was behind his mother's chair, with down-cast eyes and cheeks heightened into vivid crimson bloom trying vainly to prosecute her work—while her hands trembled, and a white mist seemed to blue her eyesight.

“Rosita Fairfax!” he exclaimed.—

“My Rosita!”

Mrs. Fairfax sprang up and applied her gold eye-glass to the hard black eyes that had played her so false.

“What does this mean?” she cried, growing pale beneath the rouge that glowed on the cheeks. But the girl replied to Allan alone.

“Not your Rosita!” she answered, with spirit. “I am one of Madame Prenneror's employées, dressing your mother's hair, as part of my daily work. I do not scorn to earn my bread and that of my mother, whom yonder woman turned from her doors a year ago. Why did you not speak a word for us then, Allan Fairfax?”

“I have been in India for two years.—But I wrote to you.”

“I never received your letters. I see how it is,” said Rosita, coldly. “I was foolish enough to entrust them to your mother's care.”

“Mother,” said Allan, sternly, “will you give me an explanation of this?”

But Mrs. Fairfax, exposed and mortified had sunk into a chair, covering her face with her hands.

“I—I thought it was only a boy and girl engagement, Allan, and that you would both repent afterward. I thought I was acting for the best.”

“You told me that Rosita was married—that she was dead?”

Mrs. Fairfax replied only by hysterical sobs. Allan went to Rosita and took both her hands in his.

“After what you have heard here, Rosita, do you blame me?”

“I do not.”

“I have loved you, and been true to you, Rosita; will you give me another chance yet to win the jewel of my life?”

She looked up into her face, her eyes swimming in tears.

“I will, Allan.”

Mrs. Fairfax knew that her wiles and schemes had all been vain—that Rosita had conquered; and inwardly she resolved to make the best of it.

And Madame Prenneror lost “Marie Pelotte,” the best of all her *coiffeuses*.

“It is always thus,” sighed the madame, taking snuff. “I never had a dear gazelle,” says the poet; but, after all, true love is satisfied, and I ought not to complain.”

## Ups and Downs in Life.

Mr. John Hart is creating a great furore in a minstrel hall in New York by his perfect delineations of negro character. He was once a millionaire. When the oil fever broke out in Pennsylvania, Mr. Hart owned a hundred acres of wild land near Tideoute, Pa., worth about sixteen cents an acre. He was then running a canal boat on the Delaware and Hudson Canal. In the fall of 1864, several immense oil wells were discovered on Mr. Hart's land.—Stock companies were formed in which he was a prominent shareholder, and at one time he was offered \$500,000 for his interest. This was refused. He left the canal, built a most magnificent private residence, wore diamonds of almost fabulous value, and seemed made of money. At one time he was a prominent candidate for congress, but failed to secure a nomination through the inertness of a trusted friend. Fortune's wheel suddenly turned backward. Mr. Hart was inveigled into more oil speculations, and within three years was without a penny. He then turned his attention to negro minstrelsy, and is said to be superior to either Dan Bryant, T. D. Rice, or Can Emmet in his delineations of negro character. He speaks four different languages, and has travelled in Europe and Australia. He was once wrecked in the Straits of Magellan, and spent two months in destitution on the Island of Terra del Fuego. He is now playing an engagement at a salary of \$100 a week.

## A Bet Decided.

Not many years since there lived in the “moral” city of Boston, two young bucks, rather waggish in their ways, and who were in the habit of patronizing rather extensively, a tailor by the name of Smith. Well, one day, into Smith's shop these young gents strolled—“Smith, we've been making a bet: now we want you to make each of us a suit of clothes—wait till the bet is decided, and then the one who loses will pay the whole.” “Certainly, gentlemen: I shall be most happy to serve you,” says Smith and forthwith their measures were taken and in due course of time the clothes were sent home. A month or two passed by, and yet our friend, the tailor, saw nothing of his two customers. One day, however, he met them in Washington Street, and thinking it almost time the bet was decided, he made up to them, and asked how their clothes fitted.

“Oh! excellently,” says one; by the way, Smith, our bet isn't decided yet.”

“Ah!” says Smith, what is it?”

“Why” said one, “I bet that the first day in the year 1940 would be rainy; Bill here took me up, and when the bet is decided, we'll call and pay that little bill.”

## After an Office.

A fellow afflicted like many others we know, with a desire for an office, sends us the following touching appeal:

Could you get a good office for an orphan of some twenty-five summers, who can give first-class reference as to moral character, and who wouldn't mind swearing to anything reasonable that might be proposed?

I am not particular about the sort of office it might be. All I ask is a good place, with enough salary for board and billiards and some etceteras, and a couple of able, industrious young men to do the work.

If you should hear of anything of that sort, and let me know, I should really look on you in the light of a friend.

Don't be anxious to solve a conundrum. We know a man who got two black eyes in endeavoring to find out the difference between a man and a woman who were fighting.

## A Clerical Joke.

OLD Doctor Strong, of Hartford, Conn., was not often outwitted by his people. On one occasion, he invited a young minister to preach for him, who proved rather a dull speaker, and whose sermon was unusually long. The people became wearied, and as Doctor Strong lived near the bridge, near the commencement of the afternoon service he saw his people flocking across the river to the other church. He readily understood that they feared they should have to hear the same young man in the afternoon.

Gathering up his wits, which generally came at his bidding, he said to the young minister:

“My brother across the river is rather feeble, and I know he will take it kindly to have you preach to his people, and if you will consent to do so, I will give you a note to him, and will be as much obliged to you as I would to have you preach for me; and I want you to preach the same sermon that you preached to my people this morning.”

The young minister, supposing this to be a commendation of his sermon started off in good spirits, delivered his note, and was invited to preach most cordially. He saw before him one-half of Dr. Strong's people, and they had to listen one hour and a half to the same dull humdrum sermon that they heard in the morning. They understood the joke, however, and they said they would never undertake to run away from Strong again.

## “Terrible Deaf.”

IN olden times, before Maine laws were invented, Hall kept the hotel at Irvington, N. J., and furnished accommodation to man and beast. He was a good landlord, but terrible deaf. The village painter was afflicted in some way. One day they were sitting by themselves in the bar-room. Hall was sitting behind the counter waiting for the next customer, while the village painter was lounging before the fire with a thirsty look, casting sheep's eyes occasionally at Hall's decanters, and wishing most devoutly that some one would come in and treat. A traveler on his way to Brandon stepped in to inquire the distance.

“Can you tell me, sir, how far it is to Brandon?”

“Brandy,” says the ready landlord, jumping up; “yes, sir, I have some,” at the same time handing down a decanter of the precious liquor.

“You misunderstand me,” says the traveller; “I asked how far it was to Brandon.”

“They call it pretty good brandy,” says Hall. “Will you take sugar with it?” reaching as he spoke for the bowl and stirring stick.

The despairing traveler turned to the village painter. “The landlord,” said he, “appears to be deaf. Will you tell me how far it is to Brandon?”

“Thank you,” said the painter; “I don't care if I do drink with you.”

The traveler treated and fled.

## The “Fat Sheep.”

Some twenty five years ago, when I was living in the town of ———, I took occasion one evening to attend a social meeting in the church at that place. As is their custom on such occasions, one after another rose and gave his or her experience. After a time, a man in humble circumstances, small in stature, and with a very effeminate, squeaking voice, rose to give in a piece of his experience, which was done in the following manner.

“Brethren, I have been a member of this church for many years; I have seen hard times; my family has been much afflicted; but I have for the first time in my life to see my pastor or any of the trustees of this church cross the threshold of my door.”

No sooner had he uttered this part of his experience, than he was suddenly interrupted by one of the trustees, an aged man, who rose and said in a firm, loud voice: “My dear brother, you must put the devil behind you.” On his taking his seat the pastor in charge quietly rose and also replied to the little man, as follows: “My dear brother you must remember that we shepherds are sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Whereupon the little man rose again, and in answer, said, in a very loud tone:—“Yes, and if I had been a fat one, you would have found me long ago.”

The effect upon the audience can be better imagined than expressed.—*Lutheran Observer*.

Jerome Bonaparte is said to be much interested in the obituaries of him published last week, Monday.