

MR. ARKWRIGHT'S WILL.

MR. AMOS ARKWRIGHT sat before his study fire, cogitating. He was thinking over the words uttered by Squire Houseworth half an hour ago, when that worthy had been sitting with him over the sherry and pineapple desert.

"What very fine young men your nephews are, Mr. Arkwright."

"Yes," muttered Amos, "I suppose they are very fine young men—very fine young men, indeed! But I wish they had not been brought up with the idea that they had a rich uncle to fall back upon—Florian is a desperately extravagant young coxcomb, without an idea in his head except the club house and his new silver dressing-box; and as for Albert, studious and thorough going though he may be, there's something about him that always reminds me of the ring of false metal. Since the days of Joseph Surface, no one has ever really believed in these model young men. It's perplexing—it is upon my word, I've almost a mind to turn my fortune into gold bars and throw it into the East River! I really believe the boys would do better if I were a bankrupt. Hallo! here comes Florian now."

Florian Levenson lounged into the room, a handsome, blue-eyed young man, with gold brown hair, and a merry Apollo-shaped mouth.

"Well, uncle," saluted the youth, dropping languidly into a chair.

"Well, young man," brusquely responded the uncle, in a tone denoting no very rapturous welcome.

"I was just looking for you, uncle."

"Were you indeed?" said the old man, dryly.

"I wanted to tell you something."

"More debts, eh?"

"Not exactly, sir. Uncle," with a desperate effort, as one might pull the string of an ice shower-bath, "I'm engaged to be married?"

"And who is the young lady?"

"Alice Dean."

"A pretty girl, very, for those who fancy the Anglo-Saxon style of good looks, but you have made a fool of yourself."

"In what way, sir?" demanded Florian.

"She don't care a straw for you—it's your expectations she's going to marry."

"Uncle?"

"Don't tell me!" cried Mr. Arkwright. "As if I hadn't found out the hollow hypocrisy of this scheming, knavish world long before you were born! Marry the girl; be a fool if you like; but mark my words, if you weren't the nephew of Amos Arkwright, the rich old bachelor, Alice Dean, wouldn't look at you twice!"

"Uncle, you are speaking what is false."

"Hold your tongue!" wrathfully interjected Mr. Arkwright, "or I'll disinherit you!"

"I would rather be disinherited than thus insulted," rejoined the hot-tempered nephew.

By way of answer, Mr. Arkwright merely rose and strode out of the room, nearly tumbling over his other nephew, Albert Wheatley, at the head of the stairs.

"My dear uncle!" cried Albert, a tall, dark, stylish looking man, with a voice as soft as a flute.

"Don't speak to me," Mr. Arkwright, "for I'm in a passion."

"In a passion, uncle?"

"With your shiftless, good for nothing jackanapes of a cousin, Florian Levenson. Albert Wheatley's face assumed a mild expression of sympathetic regret.

"It is scarcely to be wondered at, Uncle Arkwright. Florian's principles are indeed to be deplored."

Mr. Arkwright cut Albert short by hurrying past him down stairs, and shoot out into the street.

Half an hour afterwards he came back in a bustle.

"Boys," he cried, putting his head into the room where his nephews were enduring one another's company by the advertisement aid of the evening's newspapers, "I've got to go West to see about the railroad lands I've been buying—There's trouble in the new board of directors, and I must look after my interests in person."

And thus disappeared Mr. Amos Arkwright.

Alice Dean was re-trimming her opera hat a week or two afterwards, when the door opened, and Florian Levenson walked deliberately in.

She smiled a welcome to her lover.—But then she noticed that he looked very pale.

"Florian, what has happened?"

"I have bad news to tell you, Alice," said Florian Levenson, seating himself beside her. "My uncle has died suddenly somewhere out West. He had been threatened with apoplexy for some time past, but he was a person who never took any precaution for his health; and I am left a beggar."

"O Florian! I thought he was rich!"

"So he was; but through some strange pique of perversion, he has left all his fortune to my cousin Albert."

"But Mr. Wheatley will surely divide with you, Florian; he knows that you two were brought up together in antici-

pation of an equal share of the family estate."

Florian's lips curved bitterly.

"You do not know Albert Wheatley, Alice; he is selfish, cruel and grasping. I never knew him to share so much as an apple or a handful of marbles with anybody else."

"Then, Florian—"

"Then Alice, my little treasure, there is but one alternative left open to me—to give you back the troth you plighted to me. I cannot drag you down to poverty with me now."

"Florian," cried Alice, with the tears flashing into her soft eyes, and a deeper dye of crimson coming to her cheek, "do you think I would give up your love now? Never, dearest! Let us be poor and happy together; we can both work, and love will shed a sunshine over the darkest lot."

"But Alice, you have been so tenderly brought up—"

"Do you think that I am dependent on velvet carpets, and diamonds, and a box at the opera, for my happiness, Florian?" she asked, almost reproachfully.

"My darling," was his low-murmured reply, as he folded her to his heart. "Let Albert Wheatley have the Arkwright fortune now. I envy him none of its yellow glare, since your noble, disinterested heart is mine."

Mr. Dana was in his office, when "Sempronius Parkes," card was brought in. Mr. Dana, who happened to be that *vacavacis*, an honest lawyer, laid down his pen and told his clerk to show the stranger in.

It was not much that Sempronius Parkes wanted—a little matter that was soon dispatched, but somehow they drifted off into a desultory conversation afterwards, and happened on the death of old Amos Arkwright.

"I've been told he was enormously wealthy," said Mr. Parkes, tapping his snuff-box.

"Yes," said Mr. Dana. "It was a curious whim of the old man to constitute me his executor. Why I never saw him in my life."

"Indeed?"

"Never once. But of one thing I'm quite certain, to use Hibernianism—the greatest mistake of his lifetime was at his death."

"How do you mean?" asked Mr. Parkes.

"In leaving his money to that young Wheatley."

"A miser, eh?"

"On the contrary, as graceless a spendthrift as you ever saw, gambling, betting at the races, vicious amusements and degrading company. His prosperity seems to have acted on him as I have sometimes seen sunshine act on a rank and noisome patch of weeds, stimulating him into flaunting folly."

"Spending the old man's money, eh?"

"Not entirely; for the best of it is, it was fortunately so tied up that he could only use the interest; but whatever could by any possibility be squandered has vanished."

"There was another nephew, was there not?"

"Yes, Florian Levenson. He is married."

"Married?"

"Yes; and is in Jay & Dyson's banking house, doing well. Nobody had any idea of the steadiness and common-sense there was in that young fellow."

"I suppose he is furious at his uncle's partiality."

"I have never heard him express any such opinion. He always declares that the money was his uncle's to do with as he saw fit, and that he had received too many kindnesses at the hands of Mr. Arkwright to begin to criticise his memory now."

Mr. Parkes took snuff.

"Must be a curious young man," he said dryly. "And who, may I ask, did he marry?"

"Miss Dean; and a very energetic, thorough going little wife she makes for him. In this case the disinherited nephew seems to have received the most real benefit of the two."

"It's a peculiar sort of a story," said Mr. Parkes, rising, "but I must be going. Good evening, Mr. Dana, I'm much obliged to you for your politeness about those stamps."

And Mr. Dana went back to his legal toils, never once mistrusting that he had been talking to a ghost!

Florian Levenson and his wife were sitting contentedly at their unpretending little fireside, when a knock came to the door. Florian started a little.

"If my uncle Arkwright were not dead and buried," he said to Alice, "I should declare that was his knock."

"Nonsense," said Alice playfully, and he opened the door.

There stood Mr. Amos Arkwright, smiling contentedly.

"Good evening," said Uncle Arkwright, walking in as if nothing at all had happened.

"You're at tea, I see. Can you give me a cup, strong, without milk or sugar?" Alice uttered a cry, and ran behind Florian. Florian started at the apparition with a face as pale as ashes.

"Uncle!"

"Yes, it's I," said Mr. Arkwright, warming his coat-tails at the fire. "I'm not dead—I've been alive in Chicago the whole time; but you understand I wanted to see for myself how things were going to work. I've found it all out—"

Albert is a mean scamp, and you and this bright-eyed little wife of yours—come here, my dear, and give me a kiss—are trumps!"

Mrs. Alice, now quite convinced that Uncle Amos was Uncle Amos, and no sheeted ghost, but rather a plump old gentleman in a gray woolen suit and gaiters, came accordingly with the fragrant kiss on her cherry lips, and sealed herself at once as first favorite to the capricious old millionaire. While Florian, as his uncle said, "behaved more like an insane school boy than a reasoning member of society."

Uncle Arkwright's stratagem had succeeded brilliantly in discerning the false stone from the diamond. Albert Wheatley, shorn of the glitter of his temporary prosperity, is a billiard marker now, somewhere in the South; and Mr. Arkwright domiciled with Mr. and Mrs. Florian Levenson, the most complacent old gentleman north of Mason and Dixon's line!

Wash Day in Switzerland.

"OH, Aunt, do tell us something about your journey to Europe," exclaimed I, as Aunt Hattie came into the room, having returned only a few days since from a tour to the old country.

"Well," replied aunt, "I will tell you of a call I made on a friend in Switzerland. She had shown me around the house, when suddenly she exclaimed in her sweet, broken English, 'you know not that we wash these days.'"

"You wash to-day and such a company to dine!" exclaimed I, as a recollection of the way we ignored Monday as a company day at home flashed through my mind.

"Ah, oui, my friend, that makes nothing, if you excuse me for a little; but you see I have engaged my women, it is now three months, and the weather makes so warm that we like no longer to wait."

"Engage women three months beforehand to do a washing! and warm weather, what had that to do with it?" I must have looked my blank astonishment and ignorance, for Madame hastened to reply, laughingly.

"Oh, oui, I forgot that you know not our habitudes. We do not as you, who are so poor and have so few linens that you must wash all the weeks. And," lighting up with sudden thought, "you shall come with me now this moment even, and regard our so different manner."

And taking my arm she led me down a short flight of steps to the laundry.—An immense, well-plastered basement room, in the center of which were four tubs, as they called them, seven or eight feet long, resting upon solid supports of hard wood, and filled, some with colored clothes, some with white.

Here were three women clattering about over the rough stone floor, as they followed their mistress's directions in setting up a lye, very much, girls, after your mother's manner in the old-fashioned soap-making days. Only that here, instead of one insignificant barrel, were three or four huge hogheads from which the lye ran into large vats beneath.—These three women, so my amiable hostess informed me, were hired by the day to prepare the linen, the drying ropes—which they extend from tree to tree in the orchard—the clothes pins, all in short which is requisite to prevent too much going and coming when the great washing day arrives.

Besides, they make in the enormous range a fire which is fed day and night during the washing, and heat the water which they pour over the clothes in the great tubs or vats, whence it runs through pipes into the sewer, whose open mouth is at one end of the room.

"To-morrow morning," Madame went on to say, "the six women I have engaged to wash, will come early in the morning and begin by rubbing the calicoes as they are always washed before the 'whites.' Two or three women wash at the same vat, during which the others do not cease to pour boiling water over the whites, which are usually washed the second or third day. After this they must hang up the clothes to dry, and iron them if they know how, if not, other woman, ironers, must be sent for."

In farther conversation I learned that these washerwomen were to be hired for nothing else; that, going around, as they do, from house to house, they naturally pick up and disseminate to the best of their ability all the caucans (gossips) of the village, and hence the saying, which has perplexed me more than once in translating, that a person who meddles with the affairs of others is a *lessiveuse* (lye-washer.)

"And now," said aunt Hattie, in conclusion, "I believe I have told you all I know about washing day in Switzerland, except that these *lessiveuses* have to be fed five times a day—three 'square-meals,' and two lunches of bread and cheese—wine of course."

"But you haven't answered all our questions," exclaimed mother.

"What puzzles me is to know where that abominable mass of soiled clothing can be kept for a twelvemonth without engendering the plague. In some out-building for the purpose I suppose."

"No, indeed, I remember asking Mrs. Lebarre about that at the time, and she answered me that hers were stored in the attic, where the many windows were kept

open the year around, except during storms."

"Of course then, nothing else is kept in such an attic?" queried sister Helen.

"Nothing but the firewood."

"The wood kept at the top of the house? How is that? What a fuss it must be to take it up and down!"

"Yes, it would be if carried by hand, but instead of that, there is regular machinery for the purpose, drawing it up in immense baskets through a door opening from the attic in the rear of the house. The wood is hard and dries there under the tiles. Then as the first floor does not contain the living rooms of the family, it is not as much work to distribute the fuel as you might at first suppose."

In connection with this I recollect an incident that occurred in the Lebarre family. One autumn day some years before we were there at work in the wood-yard filling the huge basket with fuel, while a man employed for the purpose, standing in the attic, turned the crank of the machine and brought up load after load. During one of these ascensions the basket seemed to pull strangely, not exactly heavier than usual, but jerky and unsteady. Suddenly it grew lighter, there was a fearful scream, and in another moment the man had hauled in his basket containing three pale, frightened boys in lieu of wood, the fourth scapegrace having tumbled out in the midst of their frolic. The poor fellow escaped with a broken leg, and thereafter the boys were quite satisfied to seek their fun in some other way than making old Fritz haul them up to the attic in the wood-basket. And now girls pray don't ask me anything more to night, for I must positively go this moment," said Aunt Hattie rising and thrusting her knitting work into her pocket, lest your uncle should think I am lost or spirited away," and she had put her hood and furs on, and was half way to the door, when I arrested her with:

"But what of getting and making of all this underclothing? How can young ladies ever sew up enough to last a year, or their fathers' glancing at ours, 'afford money to buy them?'"

"They couldn't if cotton and linen cost anywhere near what they do here, or if the girls were as extravagant, and be-ruffled and be-tucked and be-braided and be-flounced as you foolish things are." And she pinched my cheek by way of emphasizing my especial foolishness. "You see they are more sensible 'over there,' dress more plainly, and have in consequence more time for reading and study. Why, I know at least a dozen Swiss girls of your age who speak and write fluently in four languages—and more leisure also for fun, out-door dancing, etc."

And with that little love-slap at our feminine sins, dear chatty aunt Hattie rushed precipitately out of the room.

The Force of Imagination.

BUCKLAND, the distinguished geologist, one day gave a dinner, after dissecting a Mississippi alligator, having asked a good many of the most distinguished of his classes to dine with him. His house and all his establishment were in good style and taste. His guests congregated. The dinner-table looked splendidly with glass, china and plate, and the meal commenced with excellent soup.

"How do you like the soup?" asked the doctor, after having finished his own plate, addressing a famous gourmand of the day.

"Very good indeed," answered the other; "turtle, is it not? I only ask because I do not find any green fat." The doctor shook his head.

"I think it has somewhat of a musky taste," says another: "not unpleasant, but peculiar."

"All alligators have," replied Buckland, "the cayman peculiarly so. The fellow I dissected this morning, and which you have just been eating—"

There was a general route of guests; every one turned pale. Half a dozen started from the table; two or three ran out of the room, and only those who had stout stomachs remained to the close of an excellent entertainment.

"See what imagination is," said Buckland. "If I had told them it was turtle or terrapin, or bird's nest soup, salt-water ammonia, or fresh, or the gluten of a fish from the maw of a sea-bird, they would have pronounced it excellent, and their digestion would have been none the worse. Such is prejudice?"

"But was it really an alligator?" asked a lady.

"As good a calf's head as ever wore a coronet," answered Buckland.

A man in Portland, Maine, claims that air can be compressed in a reservoir to an extent double the power of the engine that compresses, and has invented a governor which is said to control the pressure as completely as the governor of a steam engine. He affirms that pipes can be extended to an almost indefinite length, as by a simple invention he has overcome the obstacle of friction which previous experimenters have found so difficult to deal with.

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