

OUR ELOPEMENT.

MY name is Christopher Terry, but everybody calls me Chris. for short, I suppose.

The day that I was born was a memorable epoch in the annals of Terryville. On that occasion there was a town election that ended in a bloody fight between the adherents of the rival candidates and a conflagration that destroyed nearly one-third of the best buildings in the place.

Fred took the paper containing the ammunition into the kitchen and laid it on the table, while Dick and himself went to hunt up the cannon. In their absence Dorcas Miller, the maid-of-all-work, coming in and wishing to use the table, took up the package of gunpowder, and being ignorant of its contents, tossed it upon the hearth, within a few inches of a hot wood-fire.

My parents were pious members of meeting and were woefully troubled lest these signs might prognosticate something in relation to their youngest born. I was a robust child and precocious for my years. At eleven months old I could walk and when I was in my third year I was able to swear as well as a boy of five.

My father, as in duty bound, thrashed me, and my mother (good woman) generally began where my father left off. But the rod did not realize my parent's expectations, and they must have lost faith in King Solomon on this particular point.

I had not been in school a week before I was engaged in a half-dozen fights with my school-fellows. Being brought before Mr. McPhail, the teacher, to account for my misconduct, I commenced to excuse myself on the ground that I was the party assailed, and was consequently compelled to defend myself.

"Jane," said he, addressing my mother, "I don't know where that boy Chris gets his pugnacious disposition. All my family are amiable, and his brothers are as gentle as lambs."

"I can't tell myself," answered my mother, of mine "unless he inherits it from a brother of mine who was a wild fellow in his youth. He went to sea as a sailor, and finally joined some of the Fiji tribes who are forever fighting among themselves; if poor Joab still is living he must be a chief by this time, for he was uncommonly ambitious in his way."

"I'm glad it don't come from my side of the house," responded my father, "we are a peace-loving people." For the next ten years I attended various educational establishments with more or less bad luck to myself and others concerned, and in my eighteenth year I returned home preparatory to entering into some business.

My father had a friend by the name of Abner Loring, who carried on a pretty brisk business as a merchant with the West Indies. Mr. Loring was a kind-

hearted man and very affable to every one in his employ. He was, therefore, quite popular with his clerks, for besides being agreeable, he gave good wages and did not work his employees to death. I had been in the counting house but six months, when he one day called me aside and said:

"Christopher, how would you like to visit the West Indies?"

"I should be delighted, sir," I replied "do you think of sending me there?"

"Very well, sir," I replied, "I'll be ready, and I hope that I shall justify the good opinion you have formed of my business qualities."

A week later I was on board the good schooner Manuelita, Captain Dobbin, skimming away over a summer sea. It was the first time I had ever been outside of land and through the weather was pleasant and the ocean smooth, I was nevertheless badly sea-sick for several days. At the end of that period I was on deck trailing a hook and line astern for Spanish mackerel and baracouta. We had delighted weather all the way out, and made a tolerably speedy passage.

The last school I attended had four or five Cuban boys as pupils, I roomed with a couple of them, and very rapidly acquired their language.

It was a beautiful day when we let go anchor in the port of Arecibo. I must confess I was not prepossessed with the appearance of the place as viewed from the deck of the Manuelita. The houses seemed low, flat-roofed, and all of a dingy color, and looked as if they wanted white-washing. As soon as Captain Dobbin and myself dressed we took the boat and went on shore. The cargo was consigned to the house of Diaz & Domingues. Armed with my credentials from Mr. Loring, I walked with the Captain to the business place of the firm and presented my letters to Mr. Diaz, his partner being absent in Europe.

That afternoon my baggage was sent on shore and I was introduced to the family of Mr. Diaz, with the usual assertion that everything in the house was at my disposal. This is a common phrase out there, but it don't mean what it conveys, and must not be taken literally. Otherwise I should have immediately appropriated the daughter of my host, asked her father's blessing, and hunted up a church and married her on sight. The wife of Mr. Diaz was a good natured little woman, quite fat, with an excellent flow of spirits, and was incessantly talking. Amelia, the daughter, was about seventeen, with jet black eyes and hair, petit figure and the clearest white complexion I ever beheld. She was very pretty, indeed, she is so still, and is now looking over my shoulder as I write, and pulling me by the ear, calls me a "scallawag." She has learned this beautiful American word, and sometime applies it very improperly. But I must not anticipate.

During the thirty days the schooner was detained in port, I became very intimate with Mr. Diaz and family, and had got deep in love with Amelia. I had not neglected my business, or rather Mr. Loring's but arranged it satisfactorily, and had written Mr. Loring of my success. Amelia Diaz returned my passion *sub rosa*. She informed me cordially, that it would never do to let her father suspect our attachment, as he would not listen to our marrying, that he had selected a husband for her in the person of a gentleman who lived in San Juan, he was old enough to be her father, but he was rich, and they thought he would make her an excellent husband. She detested him, however, and if I would run away with her she would marry me for she loved me and she knew she would never be happy if she married Senor Valdez. The candor of the young girl was something that gave me a new sensation, and I determined to spoil the matrimonial project of Mr. Valdez, if it was in my power to do so. Let no one censure me if there was hypocrisy in my conduct to the Diaz family. Remember, reader, I was young, and moreover deeply, wildly in love, and I thought in matters of love everything was fair.

"What are we going to do then?" I asked, with a natural anxiety to learn her views.

"Oh, yes," I responded, "that's the invariable answer for everything. It don't signify much, though."

"How can I tell?" she replied in English, (for the Diaz family spoke our tongue well) "what can I say?"

"Will you surely marry me, Amelia?" I asked.

"I am willing," she replied, "but you could not find a priest here who would oblige us. They all know my father and mother, and matters of this kind are done differently from what they are in your country. How delightful it must be in your home, to marry when you please and whom you please."

"Indeed, our case seems a desperate one," I answered thoughtfully, "and I suppose it will require a desperate remedy. I must think over the matter to-day, and to-morrow we'll talk again on the subject."

I worried and bothered myself all day long, and at length determined upon a plan which ought to have occurred to me at the very first. But my mind was so perplexed and I was so madly in love that it was impossible for me to be cool and collected for five consecutive minutes.

There were a number of vessels sailing from Arecibo every little while, and more than one frequently departed upon the same day. I learned that a brig called the Vajante was to sail at the same time the Manuelita was advertised. I knew the captain, who had relatives in my part of the country, and we had struck up an intimacy from this fact. I therefore called on Captain Lake and stated that I would like to return with him, and also expressed a wish that he would accommodate a young friend of mine also.

"All right," he replied, "I will be happy to have you both, and think I can make you comfortable."

"I'm sorry to lose you," he replied, "but you'll find Dave Lake a good fellow, and I think you'll have better accommodations in his cabin than mine."

"I have one favor to ask of you, captain," I said, "but I will not mention it unless you give me your honor you will not repeat it to Mr. Diaz or any one else here."

The captain smiled. "Well," he said, "what is it? I promise you."

"Not to mention my returning in the Vajante," I replied.

"Oh, is that all?" he answered. "I'll oblige you."

"Now, having arranged all this," I said, "are you willing to run away with me? Remember, we can't get married until we arrive in the United States; then I will marry you the instant we get on shore."

"I'm satisfied," she replied, "now give me the hour of the vessel sailing, and I ask no more."

I did as she required, and then asked her how she was going to manage things.

"I'll pack a good many articles in your trunks," she replied, "and after they are out of the house the rest will be easy."

The day before the sailing of the Vajante, I was so apprehensive something would happen to mar our scheme that I could not swallow a mouthful of food. I told Mr. Diaz that I did not feel very well. Amelia looked at me from under her eyelids. I felt very guilty, and I think she must have experienced a similar feeling, though she seemed as gay as a bird. That day my baggage was sent on board the brig, Amelia had packed her wardrobe away very snugly in my trunks. Towards afternoon I took a stroll with her on the beach.

"Be under my window at eleven to-night," she said, "and I will join you; don't ask me any questions, but simply act as I propose."

The boat was to be on shore for me by midnight, at the Vajante was to sail at daybreak the next morning. I spent a pleasant evening with the Diaz family, and at ten o'clock bid them adieu, Amelia included.

I gave Mr. Diaz a cordial invitation to visit me if he ever came to the United States. Little did he imagine when he thanked me that he would so soon avail himself of my invitation.

I wandered about the town until eleven o'clock, and then stood beneath Amelia's window, with my heart thumping loud enough for her to have heard it. Presently I saw a form balanced on the window sill, and then a small rope fell at my feet. A moment after she glided lightly down and was beside me. There was no moon, but I could see she was arrayed in male attire. I knew this would be her costume, for we had arranged all that. Catching her by the hand we made our way to the beach, and the boat soon after arrived, when we embarked. A pang shot through my heart when we got on board, to observe that Amelia had sacrificed her beautiful hair to the shears. With womanly judgment, however, she had saved it so that when she arrived she could make use of it. I introduced her as my friend Mr. Diaz.

"Belong to the family of Mr. Benito Diaz?" asked Captain Lake

"Yes, we are related," answered Amelia.

"When I got an opportunity I asked her if she thought her father would get a clue as to where she had gone."

Amelia's state-room was directly opposite mine. I was awakened by her calling me.

"What's all the noise about?" she asked.

"We are getting under way," I answered.

"Why, it's dark," she exclaimed. "Daylight will soon be here," I replied.

By seven o'clock we were flying away with as much canvas as the Vajante could carry, and the low outline of the coast was barely discernable. Amelia gazed at it long and wistfully and for the first time I saw her eyes were wet.

I comprehended her thoughts and whispered, "You shall never regret it."

She smiled sadly and then descended to her state-room.

It was a beautiful day in September when we stepped ashore at Baltimore. I cannot depict Captain Lake's astonishment when he saw Amelia appear on deck in her proper costume, and learn for the first time whom he had been carrying for a passenger. An hour did not elapse ere Amelia was my own wedded wife.

"How nicely you manage things in your country," she remarked.

I laughed, for I felt very happy.

A few days after we arrived at the end of our journey. Mr. Loring was surprised at my not returning in the Manuelita, but was glad to see me.

I got a quiet boarding-house where I took my wife, and we began to be very comfortable. When about a couple of weeks later, as I was sitting at my desk in the counting-room, I got a hurried note from Amelia to hasten home as soon possible. I became alarmed, and ran as fast as I could until I reached the house. My wife met me at the front door; she was a good deal agitated.

"Be calm," she said, "my father is here. He followed us immediately in a vessel which sailed a few days after ours. He is very angry, but I know him better than you do. Take it calmly and don't make any irritating reply, and he'll soon forgive us."

I have seen some stormy men in my time, but Mr. Diaz beat them all for passion. He called me some pretty ugly names, that I would not like uttered by any one who was not my father-in-law. He declared he would shoot me and tear me to atoms, with many other polite and agreeable phrases, and after going through the tragic until breath and language failed him he gracefully glided into the ludicrous by opening his arms and embracing Amelia and myself and forgiving us. I had to laugh, for I could not restrain myself. Mr. Diaz laughed too. We were a happy family that night. Strange things come to pass. Mr. Diaz and his wife have come to the United States to reside and live over the way just opposite to us. "Mamma Diaz" is now standing at her window and looking at my little two year old Benito, who is shaking his fist at her and calling out "Mira."

Not She Bears.

A TRAVELING showman visited Quebec some years ago, and exhibited through the streets a couple of dancing grizzlies.

He had the animals securely fastened together by a chain, and led them by a strap or rope. Notwithstanding this apparent security, some of the citizens grew uneasy at the fear of the possibilities of evil which might follow on the breaking loose of either or both of the dancers.

The dancing, always comical enough from its clumsiness, was well done, and attracted the attention of a large crowd. The authorities interfering, the man was arrested for maintaining a dangerous nuisance. It was in vain that he protested that the performances of his bears were not attended with danger to the public.

The police insisted that the bears were dangerous animals. The poor showman urged that whatever dangers might result to the public from the loose performances of ordinary bears, these bears were so harmless, and so completely under his control, that he was sure they would inflict injury to nobody. It was in vain. The police marched him, and his bears to the station house, the bears joyfully stepping along on their hind legs, and performing as they went, such curious antics as to attract more attention than before.

Arriving at the police court, a hearing was had, and testimony was taken as to the general hurtful disposition of bears, authorities as far back as the history of the times of Elisha being cited, to prove the destructive habits, especially of she-bears. After which the showman asked if he might be allowed to put in a little testimony in behalf of his bears. Leave being granted him, he said he would proceed to show that they were not she-bears, and that their habits were so different from those of the rest of the bear family, that the apprehensions felt in regard to them were entirely unfounded. He gave a low whistle, and said, "Come out, boys!" In an instant the bears opened, and out from their skins jumped two lively boys, each with a grin on his face, from ear to ear. The spectators were convulsed with laughter, the court joined in the merriment, and the showman and his family were suffered to depart in peace.

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