The Bloomfield Times.

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Herman's Courtship.

"I DON'T know how to answer you. Your news is very hard for me to bear. I feel amazed, angry, Herman."

Herman Wilson, himself, the picture of sorrowful amazement, looked at his uncle in silence, as the old man spoke with angry vehemence. He was a tall, stalwart young man of twenty-four, with a fresh, handsome face, now deeply clouded. His uncle was not over fifty, but an appearance of ill-health and feebleness made him seem much older. His usual pallor crept once more over his flushed, excited face before he spoke again to Herman, and his angry voice was gentle as its wont, as he said:

"I was hasty, Herman, hurt and surprised. Tell me now, how did it happen?"

"I scarcely know how to tell you, sir," said his nephew, respectfully.

"Where did you meet this girl?"

"Miss Miller," said Herman, flushing a little at his uncle's designation, "was very intimate with Mr. Grey's daughters. I met her there. Mr. Grey made me welcome in his home as soon as I became his clerk."

"You met her at Grey's. Well?"

"I loved her. That is all."

"All! Enough, I should think. And she loves you, I suppose, or I should not have heard all this?"

"She loves me," said the young man, with pardonable pride.

"Oh, Herman, why couldn't you have fallen in love with one of Grey's girls? Nice, domestic, home-like girls, that would have made a home for you. I know this is an idle, stuck-up girl, if she is not fooling you."

"I think you misjudge her, uncle."

"Don't tell me," was the answer, at once sad and impatient. "She is John Miller's daughter. I can never welcome her here. Never!"

"I hope you will not hold to that resolution, Uncle James."

"I suppose you were influenced some by the thirty thousand dollars her mother left her?"

"I didn't know she had one cent."

"Her mother kept that safely, and left it to the daughter. I knew that at the time she died. Oh, my lad, think better of it. Money is not everything."

"I tell you I never heard of her money till this minute. I wish you would see her."

"I—I see her? Never! If you marry John Miller's daughter, you may take leave of me and the farm. I'll have none of that blood around me. John Miller's daughter!"

"But, uncle, you would not turn me away from here—from the only home I have known since my parents died?"

"Bah! you won't care for that. You've been living in Tournay a year now, and you say Mr. Grey makes you a good offer if you stay with him. Then your wife will be rich, so you need not care for the farm."

For, be it known, James Wilson had had a sore heart ever since his nephew had left the farm, and gone to be a clerk in the town near by. He did not like farming, he said, and could make more money in town. But as his uncle spoke now, Herman suddenly remembered the years spent in this his only home, the kind, fatherly love of his relative, and spoke with honest warmth.

"I do care for the farm, Uncle James, and I care still more for your love. No matter how much money I make or hold, I can never have another such home or father."

"Well, boy, why don't you stay here, then? Oh, if it was anybody but John Miller's girl!"

"But, Uncle James, it is John Miller's girl. Will you tell me why one of Mr. Grey's daughters would have suited you any better?"

There was a dead silence in the room for some minutes after this. Uncle James spoke at last, in a low tone, as if he was reading instead of conversing.

"When I was a young man, Herman, not older than you are now, I was working on this farm for old Squire Heyward, who was very fond of me even then."

"He left you the farm did he not?"

"Yes, but there was no talk of that then. I was only a farm hand, though the old squire always chose me to drive him out, or to do any business that required a trusty person. He had no family, so it made a stir when his sister died in New York, and her daughter came to live on the farm. She was the handsomest woman I ever saw in my life, quite young, about seventeen, but with all the self-possession and coquetry of a woman of thirty. I was, as I said, often about her father, and met Arabela—that was her name—frequently. She was so kind to me, so gracious, had so many winning ways, that she had my heart in her grasp in less than a week. My love was fairly worshiping, and when she would give me smiles and words of encouragement, how was I, a poor country boy, to know it was all skillful coquetry, the sport of a hard-hearted flirt? Then John Miller came, and he too loved her. He was a young lawyer, who settled in town but came over here very often, sometimes for a week's visit at one time. Arabela played her part so well, that I never suspected the truth till I summoned up courage to ask her to be my wife in the future, when she told me she was engaged to John Miller. While we were talking John, Miller came in, and she told him my cherished hope and secret as a good joke. Together they laughed at the country bumpkin, and John made sneering remarks that stung me almost to madness. I think I would have struck him to the ground, but a kindly hand was placed upon my arm, and turning, I found the squire had entered the room unperceived. Sternly rebuking the others, he led me away, and sent me a long journey the next day, upon some private business. When I returned, John was gone with his bride. The old squire left her thirty thousand dollars, but he left me the farm. I was nearer to him than his own niece. Herman, don't ask me to welcome the child of John and Arabela here. I cannot do it."

"You know that her parents are both dead. She lives with her father's sister."

"I know. John died insolvent in spite of his sharp practice and avarice. Arabela only lived a few years after her husband."

Another long silence followed. Then Herman spoke:

"Uncle James, I cannot give Fanny up. But I promise never to bring her home as my wife until you consent to the marriage. Will you see her?"

"No, no! Wait till I die, Herman. I won't live very long, Doctor Hodges says."

"Uncle James!"

"I did not tell you before, lad, for fear of paining you. Doctor Hodges said last week that I was failing. I made him tell me. I may live a few years longer—I may be called any day."

"And I was worrying you," said the young man, penitent and tearful.

"No, lad; I like to know all you are doing. You will come home often?"

"Do you think I will go away again? My place is here."

"I should be very glad to have you, Herman. It is hard to find an honest overseer when the farmer himself is sick. But your prospects in town, Herman?"

"Let them go. Uncle James, do you think I could leave you now? You have been more than a father to me; let me try now to fill a son's place to you."

"And Fanny Miller?"

"We will talk of her some other time. Tell me how farm matters stand."

The conversation that followed awakened still further the kindly emotions of the young man's heart, and his remorse for the past year's absence. It seemed like desertion, when he heard of his uncle's loneliness; of how badly out-door matters had gone, in hired hands; of the waste, the domestic difficulties and losses.

"I would not have told you all this, if you had not offered to stay," the old man said.

"I should have stayed before, had I known you were so ill. You have always been about when I came over."

"I have never been confined to my room. Still, I grow weaker. I wish we had a good servant. Eliza is very wasteful, impudent, and, I think dishonest."

"I will drive over to Tournay to-morrow, and see if a good servant can be found, uncle."

But the first call the next day was not in search, of a servant, but to the doctor's, and Herman Wilson came out of his office with a very grave face.

"I am glad you are to be at home," the doctor had said. "Though the first relief may not be as complete as you would desire."

"What do you mean? You said that rest and freedom from care or responsibility might prolong my uncle's life for years."

"I say so still. But the first reaction from the long strain and worry may be serious. He has kept up by sheer force of will; now, when he may rest, he will probably be ill for many days. I wish he had a good servant. Eliza is not a pleasant nurse, I should judge. She looks to me as if she had lived upon lemons and pickles all her life."

"I am going to look for a good servant to-day."

"Why don't you take the old man a nice little niece?"

"All in good time, doctor. I must say good-day. I have to tell Mr. Grey of my new plans, and find a servant."

"Good-day, then. Send for me, if I am needed."

The day seemed a long one to James Wilson, watching for the nephew who was like a son in his heart. Eliza, resenting the new arrangement that threatened to disturb her much-abused reign, was slamming doors, and making kitchen-jars which were very trying to the invalid's nerves. A dinner, badly cooked, and served with bangs of spite and all ill-nature, did not improve matters, and made the arrival of Herman's companion almost as welcome as himself. For he had found a servant, whom he escorted to the house with pardonable pride, and introduced as—

"Annie, uncle. She has been highly recomended to me, and I think will suit us."

"I will try to make you comfortable, sir," said the new girl, modestly; and Uncle James decided that the sight of her face and sound of her voice were sufficient for that.

She was not pretty, though her face was very pleasant to look at, and her voice was still more pleasant to hear. She was neatly dressed as became her station; and before she took off hat or cloak, she had made the room seem like another place.

Uncle James wondered how a few light touches here and there, a gentle little stir of the dull fire, a dropping of the curtains, a little twitch of the table-cloth, could do so much.

"This is the living-room, I supppose," she said, presently. "I think I shall ask for an hour or two alone here to-morrow."

"Just as you please."

"Will you see Eliza now?" Herman asked.

"Yes. Is she in the kitchen?"

"I have told Annie," Herman said, "to keep Eliza, if she will be reasonable, and submit to her."

"Two girls, Herman?"

"Annie is to be our housekeeper, uncle; and Eliza is to do the rough work. I must be out of the house a great deal, if we are ever to get affairs straightened, and spring is opening very fast. Annie is to make you her special charge."

"Arrange it as you will, Herman. I feel very faint and sick to-night. My dinner was quite uneatable."

"Annie will see to supper. I will give her a hint."

Surely, Uncle James thought Herman had made a most judicious selection of a girl. The table was set as he had never seen it before. Cloth, dishes and the homely tea-service all shone with cleanliness, and the supper would have tempted an epicure. Light, flaky buiscuit, an omelet that was a miracle of lightness, some pork cooked in a most delicious sauce of cream and other mysterious ingredients, and coffee whose aroma alone was a boquet to the gentlemen's nostrils. Presiding over all, the pleasant face and neatly attired figure.

"Eliza declines to take a second place, Mr. Wilson," she said; "but will remain until you find another girl."

In about a week, Mr. Wilson, senior, began to wonder how he had ever existed without his new housekeeper.

A young, cherry girl was found to take Eliza's place, and over the old farmhouse settled a home-like peace that was the best medicine for the invalid.

Doctor Hodges proved a true prophet. For many days after his nephew returned to him, James Wilson was very ill, requiring patient and tender nursing.

It was Annie who made his bare room cozy and pleasant with pretty curtains, a strip of carpet here and there, till he was well enough to have a whole one tacked on. It was Annie who brought him tempting little dishes, just enough to satisfy him, without exciting the disgust that Eliza's coarse messes did.

Annie read to him, chatted with him, got Herman to buy a backgammon-board, and taught the invalid to play.

Annie brought him little cheering pieces of news—how the farm matters were improving, how Herman was plowing here and sowing there; of the new barn arrangements that would make the cattle healthier, and, as she said, gayly, "ever so much happier." Never did a fretful word fall from the pretty mouth, never did a frown cross the broad white brow.

Uncle James wondered if Herman knew how pretty Annie could look, when she sat knitting or sewing and telling him pleasant news in the afternoon, or when she ran up in the mornings, from household duties, to bring him little luncheons or some strengthening drink ordered by the doctor.

The great day came in three weeks, when Doctor Hodges said his patient might go down stairs again.

"Annie! you are a fairy. Where did you find time for this?" he cried, as Herman tenderly led him to a wide, chintz-covered armchair.

"Mr. Wilson helped me," said Annie, demurely, glancing with pardonable pride around the room she had found so bare and chilly-looking.

Now, a neat carpet covered the floor, and snowy curtains were draped from the clean, bright windows. Every inch of paint fairly shone. All the shabby old furniture wore a new dress of gay chintz, and the table had a crimson cover that was in itself a furnishing of brightness. On the mantle were vases of quaint old china, long hidden in a corner of the garret, now full of spring flowers; and by Uncle James' chair, a little table bore the backgammon-board, some new magazines and papers, and a cup of Annie's coffee.

When Uncle James first learned the comforts of a dressing-gown, instead of a worn-out coat, for house wear, embroidered slippers for old shoes cut down, and other little feminine contrivances quite new to his bachelor experience, I cannot stop to relate in detail. One by one the comforts a loving woman can bring, crept into the old farmhouse; and, to the amazement of the owner the economy of the household more than balanced the added expenses.

"Eliza never had anything but the plainest of food, and she spent twice as much as you do with our tempting table."

"Eliza wasted, and I save," said Annie, with a smile. "She had not your interest at heart."

"I was nearly frightened when Herman asked me to look over the month's account. So much comfort! My room so neat and pretty, the new china, the kitchen utensils, and so many pretty things to pay for. And yet the income showed a clear saving."

"A master's eye on the farm," said Annie, modestly.

"And a housekeeper indoors," said the old man, affectionately.

"I was brought up to make an invalid's home pleasant," said Annie, quietly. "My mother was never very strong, and depended upon me for such duties as I perform now, even when I was a school-girl. I have not had such care since she died, but it seems quite natural to resume it again."

"Your mother is dead, then?"

"I am an orphan. In the house I left when I came here, I shall scarcely be missed. My aunt, who took me when my mother died, has five daughters."

"Your aunt!"

"Yes! I smell something burning! Let me see if my pies are ruined!" and Annie escaped for the time from questions it was becoming difficult to answer.

The old man sat musing a long time. It was not the first time a vague mistrust of Annie had crossed his mind—a wonder why a woman so gentle and refined, so evidently a lady, was serving in a menial capacity. The first time she had sung for him, in one of his nervous hours of pain, he had noticed she was confused when he spoke of the evident cultivation of her voice.

He had spent much of his time, while Squire Heyward lived, in the city, and appreciated the difference between country-bred ways and city refinements. As he mused, he began to grow restless; and when Herman came in at tea-time, he found his uncle flushed and excited.

In a few words the cause of agitation was communicated to the young man.

"You think Annie is not what she seems, uncle? You are right. She is here under false pretences."

"Herman!"

"But, putting that aside, what fault have you to find?"

"Fault! I could not find a fault, if I tried. She is the most lovable, capable domestic girl ever I saw, as well as a lady in every word and action."

"Then you would like her to stay here, if I proved to you she is worthy of your confidence and affection?"

"Gladly."

"Even if I deceived you? I knew you would love her, if you only would consent to see her!"

"Fanny Miller?"

"Yes. Will you forgive me the deception, Uncle James?"

"Will you forgive me my willful blindness, Herman? No wonder you would not give her up? No wonder you love her! Bring her here, lad, and let me ask her if she will stay, to cheer the short time I may yet live to see your happiness."

The wedding was not long delayed. Care and love are rejuvenating Uncle James, who threatens to prove Doctor Hodges a false prophet yet, and who dearly loves to tease Fanny about the way Herman courted his wife.

Murder Will Out.

A Detroit (Michigan) correspondent gives thes particulars of a brutal murder, and how it came out:

Last November a murder was committed about five miles from here under most mysterious circumstances, and what seemed likely to be a dead secret for all time, is now brought to light. One night, about twelve o'clock, Dennison Miller, a well-to-do farmer, was awakened by a noise. His wife got up thinking it was a cat in the kitchen, and opened the back door for its escape. A masked man rushed past her; where her husband, roused by her screams, had got up, and without a word stabbed Miller to the heart, killing him instantly. Every effort was made to find the murderer. A large reward was offered, and several persons were arrested on suspicion, but finally discharged, and all hope was given up of the murderer ever being brought to justice. All this time that the search was being made the murderer was in daily contact with those searching and entirely unsuspected, and his discovery was only accidental two or three weeks ago. A powerful young man of nineteen, named William Smith, was twice arrested for attempting to throw railroad trains from the track, near this city. He was bailed, and immediately after set a barn on fire, when he was arrested and confined n jail. From some inadvertent remark suspicion of his complicity in the murder of Miller was aroused. On investigation a chain of evidence was found. Smith was charged with the crime, made a confession that he had contemplated the murder for some time, though he seems to have no special motive. He was working for a neighbor of Miller, and slept with the son of his employer on the night of the murder. He arose, administered chloroform to his companion and then got out of the window. He sought the house of the victim and committedthe fatal deed; after which he returned to his bed. When the alarm was given he turned out with the others in search of the murderer. The next day he was among the crowd discussing the affair, but betraying no sign of the deadly secret. He remained in the neighborhood some time after the excitement had subsided, and but for his reckless attempt at wholesale slaughter and arson would never have been suspected. He was arraigned, pleaded guilty and committed for trial. He seems to be indifferent or reckless as to the consequences. He has been called insane on account of his other deeds; but the physicians who have examined him, say that he has no symptoms of insanity.

A Curious Importation.

There recently passed through the New York Custom-house several cases containing a large variety of "brass knuckles," "billies" and "slung-shots," which came from Belgium, consigned to a prominent firm dealing in fancy hardware. These goods arrived without any invoice, and were sent to a general order warehouse. The "brass knuckles," as "a manufacture of iron," paid a duty of thirty-five per cent., and the "billies" and "slung-shots," being classed as "manufactures of wood, iron and leather," paid the same rate. The importers of these articles of "fancy hardware" say that the goods were sent as "samples," and had been consigned to them without any previous order.