

A SEARCH FOR A COUSIN, -OR- How Lottie Was Sold.

LOTTIE SEABURY was an orphan and an heiress, and having passed her one-and-twentieth birthday, had come into full possession of her comfortable little property, amounting in all to one hundred thousand dollars.

"What am I to do? Where am I to live, Mr. Fulham?" she asked her guardian, rather drearily.

"My dear," he said, at last, slowly. "You should travel, and see something of the world. I might find a lady of suitable age and position, who would be glad to act as chaperone and companion to you, in consideration of a liberal salary, and then you might please yourself as to your future movement."

"The very thing!" cried Lottie, with such sudden animation as to almost take old Fulham's breath away. "I'll go to California, and hunt up Roy," she had thought at once.

So it was arranged; and after a few weeks a fat, kind-hearted old widow, Mrs. Worth Grame, had gladly undertaken the charge of the pretty young heiress. Her salary to be five hundred dollars a year, and all her expenses paid, Mrs. Worth naturally felt that she was in clover.

Lottie was rather shy about proposing at once to go to California, so she concluded to spend the fall and winter in New York, and start for the far west in early spring.

A pleasant suit of rooms, rather high up, but cozy and bright, were engaged at the Clarendon, and there Miss Seabury and Mrs. Worth comfortably established themselves. Lottie found sufficient amusement in the gay sights and sounds of New York, the matinees at the Opera House and theatres, and the daily drive to the Park. She read novels by the dozen (dear privilege of an escaped school-girl!) banged her piano, ate bon-bons and kept up her French by daily chats with a jolly, little Parisienne hair-dresser, who came to her every morning.

From the window of her parlor Lottie could look across the street to the Everett House, and one day she was rather startled, as she sat rocking, and pretending to do some worsted-work, to see the barrels of an ivory opera-glass directed, apparently full upon her.

"How very impertinent!" thought Lottie, and she moved out of sight, and then softly closed the inside blinds. She would not have been a woman if she had not peeped through the slats, to see what sort of animal had been surveying her through the lorgnette. There he was at the window, smoking sure, looking lazily into the street. He was handsome enough, and Lottie fancied there was something familiar in the cut of his face. Another day came, and again Lottie had to close her blinds, and was indignant. And one afternoon, as she followed Mrs. Worth into the carriage, there was the same young man almost at her elbow, and staring at her with all his eyes.

"What was she to do? Tell Mrs. Worth? Change her rooms at the hotel? After all he had done nothing but look at her once or twice, and, perhaps, even, it was some other window at which the lorgnette had been directed. 'I'll keep the blinds closed and not think of it any more,' said Lottie to herself, as she really kept her resolution.

The next Saturday there was to be a matinee at the Opera House—Nilsson was to sing in "Martha." Of course, Lottie and Mrs. Worth did not miss such a treat. There was a great crowd, and in the struggle of getting out after the opera was over, Lottie became separated from her chaperone.

"Perhaps you had better take my arm," some one said suddenly at her ear.

Lottie looked up angrily, and saw her neighbor of the Everett House. He was looking curiously at her, and seemed almost inclined to laugh.

"What insolence!" muttered Lottie, and drawing up her little figure with great dignity, she tried to wither him with a look.

"It is very unkind for you to refuse my arm," said the young man, tenderly. "As often as you have kissed me, too!"

"He is mad!" thought Lottie, and now she was really frightened, and made a des-

perate effort to push through the crowd and rejoin Mrs. Worth.

"Stop, Lottie!" and a detaining hand held her back. "You surely have not forgotten your cousin, Royston Crosby?"

"Roy! is it really you?" exclaimed Lottie, joyfully, clasping her hand over his arm.

"You don't suppose I would be so ungentlemanly as to speak to a girl I didn't know? Of course, I am Roy. I have been watching you for the past week, for I fancied you were Lottie Seabury; and after you left the hotel to-day, I went and inquired for you by name, and then followed you here."

"Dear Roy, I am so glad to see you.—More glad than I can say," cried Lottie, enthusiastically.

"Dear little Lottie!" said Roy, affectionately squeezing her hand with his arm. "When did you come from California?" asked Lottie.

"Ten days ago."

"Did you make your fortune, Roy?" Roy shook his head mournfully.

"Ah!" thought Lottie, "the poor boy is probably as poor as when he went away. How fortunate that I am so rich, for of course, he can have all he wants of my money."

They were now in the open air. She looked up into his face.

"Royston, you must come and dine with us this evening," she said. "I have a great deal to talk to you about."

She spoke with the seriousness of advanced age, as if she was an elderly aunt lecturing a refractory young nephew.

"Of course I'll come," said Roy. I should like it immensely."

Mrs. Worth was found, panting with terror at the loss of her charge. Roy was duly presented to the good lady, and the three went cozily home together.

After dinner Roy lighted his cigar, and seated himself on the window-sill to smoke. It was a warm evening, late in October; the window was open, and the lights and sounds of the great city, seemed gay and cheerful to the young people. Lottie sat in her low rocking-chair, and pondered over what words she could use in offering to help her cousin. "Plain words are always the best," she thought, and thus she commenced.

"Royston, I am troubled about you."

"Are you Lot? Why?" said Roy, lazily allowing a thin cloud of smoke to escape from his mouth.

"Are you in debt?" asked Lottie, seriously.

"No, nothing to speak of."

"Did you leave any debts in California?"

"No," said Roy, looking curiously at the grave face of his pretty cousin.

"And as you have only been here ten days, you cannot owe much. But how do you expect to pay your bill at the Everett House?"

"How?" asked Roy.

"Yes, how? You were always a careless, thoughtless boy. I feared you would not make your fortune in California. Royston, you know you are too lazy to work in earnest."

"Very true!"

"But then I am very rich and have enough for us both. You must frankly ask me for what you want."

"Oh, I see!" said Roy, setting up and looking full at Lottie.

"Of course you would not mind asking me, your own, dear cousin; and it distresses me to think you are in poverty."

"You dear, little thing!" said Royston, leaning down from the window-sill, and attempting to kiss his own, near cousin.

"Don't be childish, Roy," Lottie said, gravely, and motioning away the handsome face so near to hers.

"Oh, yes! let me be childish," whispered Roy. "The old lady is asleep, and cousins always kiss!"

"No, no!" said Lottie, pushing him away, and feeling strangely fluttered and shy.

But Roy would have his kiss; and after he had taken one he was not satisfied, and would not let Lottie go until he had taken a dozen more.

Mrs. Worth slept the sleep of the just, and did not even dream of the impassioned little scene being enacted before her.

"Oh, Roy, how could you?" murmured Lottie, trembling all over, when at last he had released her.

"How could I help it?" said Roy, resuming his cigar and his tranquillity. "You dear, generous girl! So you mean to support me, eh? And pay my debts, if I have any?"

"Certainly," said Lottie, who had recovered her self-possession, and spoke in a very business-like tone. "What could be more natural and proper, rich as I am, and your own near cousin, too?"

"First cousin, once removed," said Royston, dreamily. "I'll be hanged if I ever remove a second time!"

"I think it will be best for you to just simply ask me for what you want," said Lottie.

"Exactly."

"Or, if you preferred it, I could make you an allowance?"

"No. I'll ask you for what I want."

"And, Royston, to-morrow you must get your bill at the hotel, and bring it to me. For, of course, it will be best for you to be here."

"All right, I will. Lottie, I feel very childish again!"

"Don't be so silly!" said Lottie jumping up, and running across the room to Mrs. Worth, waking up that vigilant matron.

Royston said good-night soon after, and went away. He walked around Union Square many times that night, before he finally entered the hotel, and mounted to his room. And when there, he sat at his window, an hour or more, looking thoughtfully at a window opposite, in the Clarendon.

The next day Lottie did not fail to remind her cousin of the hotel bill, and he laughingly brought it in to her, and looked over her shoulder as she read it.

"You see it isn't paid," said Royston.

"Of course not," said Lottie.

"A bottle of claret every day, you know, Lottie," explained Royston, apologetically.

"Very well," said Lottie. "Now I shall give you a blank check, which I have already signed, and you must fill it up yourself, taking all that you wish, Royston, for indeed, I have more than I can spend, and I should not like to think you were pinched."

Roy picked up her little hand, and kissed it. He took the check, and, later in the day, told Lottie that he had paid all his bills.

The days lengthened into weeks. November passed, and Christmas was near at hand. Lottie had a pretty, little broom, which she hired by the month; but it presented the most imposing appearance, and had quite the air of a private establishment.

One afternoon, Mrs. Worth being indisposed, Lottie graciously invited Roy to drive with her, first to Broadway, to do a little Christmas shopping, and then, afterward to the Park.

"I am going to hang up her stockings," whispered Lottie to Roy, "and yours, and mine, too. Roy, dear you must tell me what you would like. I shall, of course give you something as a surprise; but I would like, also, that you would select something for yourself."

"So I will," said Roy. "Indeed I have already made my selection, if I can only get it. I'll tell you about it, while we are driving to the Park. And, by the way, Lottie, I have half made up my mind as to a Christmas present for you. You must give me your opinion of it."

"No," said Lottie, eagerly. "I'd rather not, I like to be surprised. Choose whatever you like for me, and give in to me Christmas-day; or, better still put it into my stocking, Christmas-eve, and I will promise not to look at it until the next morning."

"All right," said Roy, with his usual easy acquiescence to whatever Lottie proposed.

"But, Roy, what will you have for your Christmas gift?" asked Lottie, after they had left the noise and bustle of Broadway, and were bowling up to the Park.

"Well, the fact is, Lottie, I am afraid you will think I am asking too much."

"Absurd," said Lottie. "If I can give it you, you may be sure I shall."

"Well, Lottie, it's—it's you I want!" stammered Roy, with an appealing look. Lottie blushed to her very forehead.

"Oh, Roy! do you mean it?" she asked.

"I should rather think I did," said Roy; "and if you refuse I shall have to go away from you, Lottie."

"But I don't refuse," cried Lottie, after a pause. "You may have me and welcome. I have often thought how sensible it would be, and should have offered myself, if it had only been proper."

"No, would you?" said Roy, in great delight. "How jolly it would have been to have had you propose to me! We are engaged now, aren't we, Lottie, and I may be childish as often as I like?"

"Certainly not, while we are driving in the Park," rebuked Lottie, for her rash cousin had leaned toward her, very much as if he wanted to take immediate advantage of his position.

It was a happy drive altogether. The Park was gay and crowded, and when they had left the animated scene, and drove home in the dusk of the early winter evening, these two children made sober plans for the future, or rather Lottie made the plans, and Roy agreed to everything, holding his cousin's little hand in his, and admiring the pretty face and figure, so well set off by the velvet dress with sable trimmings.

Christmas-day came, and Lottie had so dressed her parlor with evergreen and holly, that it looked like a little arbor. Three long, rather limp stockings, dangled from the mantle-piece; but Lottie studiously kept her eyes from that tempting neighborhood, till breakfast was over, and Royston had made his appearance. And then with much ceremony, she handed Mrs. Worth a stocking which, from its size, could not possibly have belonged to any other member of the party; and then to Roy one, out of which were tumbling cigar-cases, and slippers innumerable. And at last, eagerly seizing her own, she dived into the leg, and brought out, first a gift of Mrs. Worth, and then a little blue velvet box, which, when opened, displayed a diamond of marvelous size and beauty.

"Ah, Roy, how lovely!" she cried, trying the ring on the third finger of her left

hand, and admiring the effect. Then diving the ornamented hand into the stocking again, she drew forth nothing more than the photograph of a country house!

"How pretty!" said Lottie, seeming however, a little puzzled, as she looked at the picture. "It is a charming house; such nice, wide piazzas, and pleasant grounds. Did you give me this, Mrs. Worth?"

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Worth.

"I gave it to you, Lottie," said Roy, quietly. "It is the picture of a house I bought for your Christmas-gift. I think you will like it. It is a nice little place on the Hudson."

"Oh, thank you, Roy," said Lottie rather falteringly. "But do you think we afford it?"

"I had it at a great bargain," said Roy; and, by the way, Lottie, I forgot to mention before that I had a little money of my own."

"And you were going to spend it all on me?" asked Lottie, tenderly.

"No, not, all," said Roy, apparently suffering under some embarrassment. "The fact is, the house only cost thirty—"

"Thirty dollars!"

"Thirty thousand; and I have twenty a year."

"Twenty dollars, Roy?"

"Twenty thousand."

"A year!" breathlessly. Then, with wide open eyes, after a pause. "And did you make all that money in California?"

"No, I did not make it," explained Roy. "Uncle Job died, and left it to me."

Lottie's face grew grave.

"You have deceived me, Royston. You told me you was poor."

"No, I did not, dearest. You deceived yourself. Why would you persist in believing me a pauper?"

"I asked you plainly if you made your fortune in California, and you shook your head so mournfully, I thought you must be poor."

"You asked me if I had made my fortune, and I naturally shook my head mournfully over the incontrovertible fact that I had not made a cent! If poor old Uncle Job had not died, I might have lived on your charity after all, my darling. Let that console you."

Before another month, Mr. and Mrs. Royston Crosby went off to Europe, on a wedding trip, and Mrs. Worth was permanently installed at the place on the Hudson, as a housekeeper plenipotentiary, and chaperon extraordinary.

The Man he Wanted.

A first-rate story is told of a very prominent man, who lived in Detroit forty years ago, and who at that time owned more steamboat stock than any other man in the Western country, besides other wealth to a large amount.

Like many of the pioneers who acquired great riches, he was very ignorant in all that books taught, but his learning was more like wisdom, and in common with many who have lived, and passed away, but left their mark behind them, he knew what tree would make shingles by looking at it.

He had, at the time of our story, just completed a splendid new warehouse at Buffalo and wanting a suitable clerk to take charge of it, he advertised for one in the papers. The next morning early a candidate for the position presented himself, rather too flashy a young man in appearance; but the following conversation occurred:

"Young man, when you make a mistake in any of your books, how do you correct it?"

The young man explained, in a very profuse manner, how he should proceed to make it all right.

"A good way, no doubt, to do it," replied the old man, "but I shan't want you."

Very soon another aspirant put in an appearance. A similar question was asked him, and in a long and eloquent manner he pointed out the remedy in all such cases.

All the reply was: "Young man, I shan't want you."

Some three or four others dropped in during the day, and to each one the same question was put, and they all had some smart way of covering up errors in their books.

The old gentleman was entirely ignorant himself of the art of book-keeping, but he had wisdom in all things, which is more than a match for learning.

Just at the close of the day a plainly dressed man, with a bright eye and a brisk step, called for the situation.

"Take a seat sir," said the old gentleman "I want to ask you one question. When you make a false entry on your books how do you go to work to correct it?"

Turning upon his questioner a cold sharp look, the young man replied:—"I don't make that kind of mistakes, sir."

"Ah! my dear sir, you are just the man I have been looking for all day," and in a few moments after, the man who corrected his blunders by not making them, was installed in the office.

"Mamma says it is not polite to ask for cake," said a little boy.

"No," was the reply: "it does not look well in little boys to do so."

"But," said the archer, "she didn't say I must not eat a piece if you gave it to me."

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