

The Bloomfield Times.

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Courting by Proxy.

PASS the cigars, Jack, and tell me what
you will tell the tailor to-morrow.

"Tell the tailor, Phil? Why, patronize
him well, and order another suit. What
concerns me most is how we are to get din-
ners next week. I suppose your governor
won't come down with any cash just yet?"

"Not a sou. He told me in his last let-
ter he made me a regular allowance, and I
must calculate my expenditure accordingly.
No, there's no money to be got there."

"We must make another call upon Abra-
ham, Moses and Co., Phil."

"My dear Jack, Abraham, Moses and
Co. have got to the end of their philantropic
tether—their fountain of generosity is
dry. Nothing can be done in that quarter.
How about your aunt in Cornwall, and the
pretty cousins?"

"A good thought, Phil. I would go
down and marry one of the girls if it wasn't
for my confounded shyness."

"That's a quality of yours, Jack, I con-
fess I can't understand. You are confident
enough with women of another class; in
fact, you put me in mind of young Marlow
in Goldsmith's comedy."

"Ah, that's it Phil! Ladies floor me
completely, I think they are the most for-
midable creatures in the world, and can't
for the life of me find anything to say to
them."

"Are your cousins pretty girls?"

"I should say they are. I have not seen
them since they were children. I will tell
you what it is, Phil," said Jack, giving the
fire a poke; "you shall go down and make
love to one of them for me."

"Well, I don't consider myself a modest
man, Jack; but I think that would want
more confounded impudence than even I
possess."

"Why not? We are much of a height.
Not that matters, for my aunt has not seen
me since I was a curly-headed boy about
as high as the table, and now I should say
six feet is the figure. You shall do it, Phil
and turn me into a married man as soon as
you like."

Thinking it would be a change for me,
with a little pleasant excitement, I thought
I would humor Jack in his hair-brained
idea, trusting to my ready wit to pull me
through all difficulties. And now I might
as well inform the reader who Jack and I
were.

Jack, or more correctly, John Westhall's
father, was a retired admiral of the navy,
on half-pay, living up in the north, and
whose dearest wish some years ago had
been to make Jack a midshipman, with
the hope of his following in his own foot-
steps; for he was one of the old school, who
thought the service was going to the dogs
now so many of the lower classes, as he
termed tradesmen's sons, were coming into
it. But Jack had too great a liking for
London life to think of going to sea, and
his refusal greatly offended his father, and
they now but rarely corresponded.

However, the old admiral got Jack an
appointment in the Treasury, where he
managed to dawdle away his time and run
awfully into debt, which his father resolu-
tely refused to pay.

I am a member of the Inner Temple, by
name Philip Fermor, son of Sir Philip Fer-
mor, Blankshires, waiting patiently for
"briefs," which never come, and living
upon an allowance from my father, which
I contrive, without any trouble, to exceed,
and hitherto eked out by visits to the
Jews.

The ardent friendship, however, between
Jack and me and the whole tribe has been
of late rudely interrupted, and we have

not seen each other since the last "little
bill" was not taken up. But to return to
our dialogue.

"How can I go down there," said I, "if
I don't know them? Wait till the pony
runs away with the pony-chaise, and run
forward like a true knight-errant and stop
it? Or when the heiress is going for a ride
bribe the groom to put a piece of holly un-
der the saddle, and when the horse is gal-
loping madly towards a precipice, rush for-
ward and catch her from the saddle—eh?"

"No, my boy. Change your name from
Philip Fermor to John Westhall, and go
down to see your dear aunt in Cornwall.
You have not seen her since you were a
child. I will tell you all about them I
can. Go down to-morrow and write me
by return—I came, I saw, I conquer-
ed."

So, after sundry more cigars and another
bottle, we parted for the night, I pretty
well primed with information as to Jack's
aunt and dear cousins, not forgetting the
amount of cash possessed by each.

I was up early next morning, portman-
teau packed and labelled Mr. John West-
hall. Taking leave of Jack I jumped into
a cab, and was soon snugly ensconced in a
first-class carriage bound for Sea-view,
Penrhiddell, Cornwall.

The weather was delightful, and I ar-
rived at my destination in excellent spirits,
fully equal to the enterprise I had under-
taken. After a ride of an hour I got to
Sea-view Lodge. A pretty servant-maid
opened the door.

"Mrs. Winslow at home?" said I.

"Yes sir. What name shall I say,
sir?"

I was just about giving her my card,
when my name on it struck my eye, and
the thought that I was Jack Westhall at
present struck me.

"Mr. Westhall," said I.

I was soon ushered into the presence of
Mrs. Winslow, a pretty woman of uncertain
age, who immediately came forward, ex-
claiming:

"My dear John, I am delighted to see
you. Give me a kiss. Why, what a great
whiskered fellow you have grown. Come
and see the girls."

Now I was in for it, I took it all very
coolly, and wondered whether the girls
would serve me in the same way. Dismissed
the thought as improbable.

"My dear nephew, John Westhall—
girls. Ada Winslow, Julia Winslow—
John."

We were soon chatting pleasantly to-
gether, and, while successfully exerting
myself to please, I had time to observe
and lay down the plan of the campaign.

Ada Winslow, a lovely blonde, with the
most bewitching of blue eyes, was evidently
the heiress Jack spoke about as being his
playmate when a boy, and as Jack told me—

"I remember my aunt saying to a friend,
'It is the dearest wish of my heart to have
our families united, for Admiral Westhall
is such a dear friend,' so," said he, "you
will find the running easy."

Julia, the other cousin, was a nice girl,
tall and Juno-like.

"Do you remember jumping into the
lake after your little playmate, John?"
said my aunt.

"O yes," said I, on thorns, for Jack
never said anything about it. "What a
cold she got, poor little dear."

"I don't remember her taking cold after
it," said my aunt; "but your memory is
better than mine, I dare say, John."

"Very likely," said I, though I thought
I would not have such a good memory in
the future, in case it got me into trouble.

Soon afterwards a Captain Penwall called,
and a walk in the grounds was pro-
posed. I led the way with Ada, and found
her a most charming companion. She
asked me about the opera and other sub-
jects, and drew me out in a surprising man-
ner. I felt it was the happiest afternoon I
had seen in my life. A lovely voice, well
cultivated mind, with sympathies in a
right direction, joined to a handsome form,
will always have an ennobling effect on a
man; and I began to feel very small in my
own estimation, when I thought of Jack
and my mission, and was almost deter-
mined to tell Mrs. Winslow, who I was, and
return to town at once. The thought of
treachery to Jack was the only thing that
prevented me, and I felt bound to the
wheel.

"What charming grounds, aunt," said I,
when we returned.

"Yes, John," said she; "but you have
not seen the beauty of the place yet. The
girls must take you to Merlin's cave."

"Why not have a picnic, aunt, dear?"
said Ada.

"The very thing," said the captain.
"I thought you did not like picnics,
captain," said Julia, "as the spiders got in
the 'lobsters,' and picnics were very well
for gipseys?"

"That was before I was initiated," said
he.

After dinner, and I and the captain had
smoked for half an hour, he proposed ad-
journing to the drawing-room.

Seated at the piano was Ada, idly play-
ing with the keys. I pressed her to sing,
and she instantly complied, singing, with a
beautiful rich contralto and perfect intona-
tion, "Il segreto." The style in which it
was sung showed me she was passionately
fond of music and a perfect musician,
which only made me the more enamored
with her. I had stood with rapt attention,
and was roused by my aunt saying:

"I should have thought you did not care
for music, John—your father told me you
had a voice like a bear."

"Like a bear, aunt?" said Ada.—
"Why, I was only thinking Mr. Westhall
had quite a singing face and voice, and was
going to ask him to join me in a duet."

I turned the subject as well as I could—
"I had no voice to speak of;" whereas, the
truth was, I had a tenor voice of no mean
quality, and began to wish Jack at Halifax.

The eventful morning of the picnic turn-
ed out bright and fine, not a cloud upon
the sky, and, tempted by the prospect, I
turned out for an early walk and smoke.
While strolling along, I could not help
considering my position. That I was fall-
ing in love there could be no doubt—an-
other day, and I am done. Should I go
back? Perish the thought! Make love
for Jack I could not.

"Well, I shall not break Jack's heart,"
thought I, "and I am sure Ada views me
favorably; but could I win her love under
false pretences?"

I determined to trust to the chapter of
accidents, feeling convinced I should soon
be bowled over, and then—the deluge!

My charming Ada looked bewitchingly
at breakfast, and completed the conquest
of last night. The meal passed off merrily,
and we were all in excellent spirits for the
journey. There was Miss Todbright, the
clergyman's daughter, a mild young lady
in green; Miss Poole, a tall young lady
in blue, that reminded one irresistibly of a
graffine, flirting desperately with the poor
captain; young lady in pink, another young
lady in pink, and a sprinkling of elderly
ladies to "play propriety;" Captain Pen-
wall, Mr. Darwin, of the Guards, a bony
young fellow with red mustaches, who evi-
dently thought himself the "best old
port," though I set him down as a very
ordinary claret. I soon discovered he was
paying desperate court to Ada, who, I was
delighted to see, treated him very coolly.
The scenery on our ride was most impres-
sive, being of a bold rugged character; now
a road running along the edge of some
cliff, now across a small stone bridge over
a yawning chasm, until at last we arrived
at our destination, or rather in sight of it,
for we had a scramble down the cliffs, of
three hundred feet or so, until we got to
the sea beach. There we slowly rambled
around until we came to the entrance of
the famous cave, said in ancient times to
have been the abode of a tremendous giant,
who thought nothing of throwing moun-
tains at one, and had a penchant for young
ladies for dinner. The cave was approach-
able from the beach only at low water, and
at high water the mouth of it was covered
with the sea, which rolled and thundered
up the cavern with the greatest fury. We
had no apprehension on that score, how-
ever, as long as we did not stop too long in
the cavern. We were soon bravely pen-
etrating its depths. From the entrance it
immediately began to rise upwards, and
the roof to get lower. The bottom was
covered with loose round boulders, and the
sides sparkled and beamed with many col-
ored lights, the reflection from our flame-
bees making a magnificent tableau. We
soon came to a kind of chamber, from
which branched off in several directions
smaller caves of equal beauty of appear-
ance, and here we determined to lunch.
Provisions were got out, the champagne
made its appearance, and we all as merry
as young ladies and young gentlemen of
the nineteenth century can be. I voted for
a ramble down one of the smaller caves,
and soon found myself alone beside beau-
tiful Ada.

We rambled a long way down the cavern,
until we were surprised to find it led down
to the sea—though I ought to say I was
not in the least surprised. If we had come
suddenly to St. Paul's Cathedral I could
not have been surprised. I was past that,

walking in the air, or in heaven, or in some
happy place or other in which I had not
"preambled" before. I was rather an-
noyed when we got to the beach, to see our
"bony young guardsman" making hastily
towards us, and, to avoid him, I took Ada
around a rocky point running into the sea,
or soon would be so, for the tide was com-
ing in fast, and within a yard or so of the
point.

"Gave him double that time, I fancy,"
thought I, as we found ourselves in another
small cave in the rocks.

I was too engrossed with my charming
companion to notice how the tide was
creeping up, and surrounding us on all
sides. In fact, a shower of rain coming on
just then, compelled us to go into the cave
for shelter, shutting off our view of the sea.
There I soon forgot all about it, and was
getting rather tender in my converse, and
was on the point of avowing all and mak-
ing a plunge to know my fate, when it
came to me in another form—in the shape
of a huge wave coming up the cave nearly
to our feet, covering us with spray.

"O Mr. Westhall! Good Heavens! we
are lost!" said Ada, starting up.

"No, dearest," said I. "Trust to me.
I will find a way out somewhere," putting
my arm around her waist in the confusion.

I was afraid she would faint, and was
carrying her further up the cave, to try
and find an outlet, when she disengaged
herself from my arms, saying:

"I am strong now. O, what can I do?"
I searched, and found no outlet, and
began to feel like a rat in a trap; but the
thought of the danger I had brought my
darling into nerved me to exertion.

Higher and higher came the waves, hiss-
ing, boiling, and had already half filled the
cave with water; and to add to the horror
of the scene, a terrific storm was bursting
without, and the flashes of vivid lightning
illuminated the fast-darkening cave.
It was with small hope I determined to
swim with Ada out of the horrible place,
and try to reach the shore. I took hold of
her dear form, and besought her to trust all
to me, and plunging in, swam with all my
strength to get out. It was harder than I
thought. When I had got a few yards, a
huge wave would drive me back again;
and nearly breathless, I felt I was sinking,
when a wave larger than the others in its
reflux carried me out within a few feet of
the rocky point. I struck out with re-
newed strength, and laid my precious bur-
den safely upon it, and looked around upon
the wide waste of waters.

A dreary scene met my gaze. The base
of the rock, not long before dry sand, was
now covered with water, with a swim of a
hundred yards to the shore. I shouted for
help; in vain—no reply. No form could I
see. The rock I was on was fast covering
with water; crawl along them I could not,
for they rose up sheer for twenty feet. I
wildly kissed the insensible form I held,
and plunging in again, made one more ef-
fort to swim for shore. Fainting, sick at
heart, and nerveless, I was panting on,
when a cry above me caused me to look up,
and then I saw the captain on the rocks
which I had swam beside. A rope was
lowered, I was just able to fasten it to my
charge, and see her being pulled up safely,
when, with a despairing glance at the lead-
en sky, I sank into the watery waste.

"That's right, wake up and drink this,
old fellow," said a voice I knew.

I opened my eyes and found myself on a
bed in a rough cottage, the captain by my
side.

"Where am I?" said I.

The captain made no answer, but poured
some brandy down my throat, which had
the effect of making me fully awake, and
gradually I remembered all the incidents
of what I found to be the previous day.

"How is Miss Winslow, captain?"

"She has perfectly recovered, and has
been down to inquire after you this morn-
ing," said he.

"How was I saved, captain?"

"I jumped in after you."

I reached out my hand and wrung it in
silence, my heart for the moment too full
to speak. A good action from another is
more apt to touch the heart than the great-
est of danger can do.

"Are you well enough to be moved to
Sea-view," said he.

I told him yes, and thought I'd be moved
to Timbuctoo, if Ada was there. The
events of the previous day had only the
more deeply engraven her image upon my
heart, and I panted to see her again.

While the captain had gone for a con-
veyance, I wrote to Jack; told him all.
That I was going to propose to Ada on my

own account; consoled him that there was
still another cousin for him, and that to
exonerate him I would make it out that
the reason I had changed my name was
only on account of a harmless wager be-
tween us.

I was soon at Sea-view, which was full of
guests, and found myself quite the lion of
the place, though, if the truth were told,
the captain was the real hero, for it was
my folly that jeopardized two lives.

In the afternoon I found Ada alone in
an arbor at the bottom of the grounds,
singing softly, and accompanying herself
upon the guitar. She left off as I entered,
and I took up the guitar, and sweeping
my hands across the strings, sang, "Il mio
tesoro." After completing it, Ada came
forward and laid her hand on my arm,
saying:

"Mr. Westhall, you have acted very
bravely towards me, and I shall always look
up to you as the defender of my life. Will
you answer me without reserve a question
I will ask?"

"Yes?"

"You are not Mr. John Westhall,
Mrs. Winslow's nephew?"

"No, I am not. Forgive me, Miss Win-
slow," said I, endeavoring to take her hand.

"I suspected all along you were not, but
your singing confirmed me in my opinion,
sir. What have you to say for yourself?"
said she, with rising color. "Who are
you?"

"I am your cousin Jack's bosom friend,
and I came down here by his knowledge to
personate him, to see if any one of you
would know him. He is coming down
himself. I am Philip Fermor, son of Sir
Philip Fermor. Will you forgive me?"
said I, taking her hand. "What's in a
name? O Ada, I would have told you
before, but my love for you would not let
me. I cannot exist without you; say,
dearest, that I may hope some day you
will—"

Her mantling blushes gave some confi-
dence, and drawing her to my heart, I
poured out the full tale of my love. Told
her of Jack, all.

"But I am not Jack's cousin," said she;
"I am but a friend of Julia's. We are not
related, though of the same name. I am
not the heiress, Mr. Fermor."

I told her I loved her all the more. I
would write to my father, work hard in my
profession—anything if she would be mine,
to wait. Her sparkling face gave consent,
and we parted—I to ask Mrs. Winslow,
and tell who I was that had assumed the
name of her nephew.

I told her all, only concealing the fact that
Jack was the instigator of the plot, for I
was afraid it would harm him in her opion.
When I told her who I was, she
forgave me, for I found she knew my
father well; they had been old friends years
ago. I spoke of my love for Ada, and she
told me Ada was her own mistress, but
counselled me to inform my father before
taking further steps.

I wrote to him, telling him my love was
beautiful but poor. Would he increase
my income? He replied, giving his free
consent to my marriage, if I choose to
make a fool of myself; but if so, he would
feel it his duty to discontinue my allow-
ance.

I sought Ada in despair, and said I would
come for her in a year with fame and
money, when she said, with the sweetest
possible smile:

"I, too, have deceived you, and have to
ask for forgiveness."

"Granted a thousand times!" said I,
interrupting her, and gazing at her happy
face.

"I said I was not the heiress, Philip,
that you sought; but I am another quite
as rich."

In three weeks we were married, and
before I started for Switzerland with my
beautiful bride, I sent Jack a check to pay
his debts.

A wag went to the station at one of
the railroads, one evening, and, finding the
best car full, said in a loud voice:

"Why, this car isn't going."

Of course this caused a general stampede,
and the wag took the best seat. In the
midst of the indignation the wag was asked:

"Why did you say this car wasn't go-
ing?"

"Well, it wasn't then," said the wag,
"but it is now."

A young man who went West a few
months ago, has sent only one letter home.
It said: "Send me a wig," and his fond
parents don't know whether he is scalped
or married.