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Fred. Eckerson's Proposal.

16 MISS BECKY NEWTON." Well, sir."

"Will you marry me?"

"No, I won't,"

"Very well then, don't, that's all." Mr. Fred Eckerson drew away his chair, and putting his feet on the pizza, unfolded a newspaper. Miss Becky Newton bit her lip and went on with her sewing. She wondered if that was going to be the last of it. She had felt this proposal coming for nearly a month but the scene she had anticipated was not at all like this. She had intended to refuse him, but it was to be done gracefully. She was to remain firm, notwithstanding his most eager eutreaties. She was to have told him that, though respecting his manly worth and upright character, she could never be more than an appreciating friend, she had intended to shed a few tears, perhaps, as he knelt in an agony of supplication at her feet. But instead, he had asked the simple question, without any rhetorical embellishments, and on being answered, plunged at once into his newspaper, as though he had merely inquired the time of day. She could have cried with vexation.

"You will never have a better chance," he continued, after a pause, as he deliberately turned over to find the latest telegraph reports.

"A better chance for what?" she asked shortly.

"A better chance to marry a young goodlooking man, whose gallantry to the sex is only exceeded by his bravery in their defence." Fred was quoting from his newspaper, but Miss Newton did not know

"And whose egotism is only exceeded by his impudence," retorted the lady sar-

"Before long," continued Fred, "you will be out of the market. Your chances, you know, are getting slimmer every day.'

"It won't be a great while before you are ineligible. You will grow old and wrinkled, and-"

"Such rudeness to a lady, sir, it is monstrous!" exclaimed Miss Newton rising hastily and flushing to the temples.

"I'll give you a final opportunity, Miss

Becky. Will you mar-"Not if you were the King of England," interrupted Miss Newton, throwing down her work. "I am not accustomed to such insults, sir." And so saying she passed into the house and slammed the door be-

"She is never as handsome as when she is in a rage," thought Fred to himself after she had gone, as he slowly folded up his paper as he replaced it in his pocket. "I was a fool to goad her so. I shall never win her in that way. But I'll have her," he exclaimed aloud. "By heaven! I'll have her, cost what it may."

Very different was the Fred Eckerson of the present, pacing nervously up and down lying asleep on the grass. the piazza, from Fred Eckerson of a few moments ago, receiving his dismissal from the woman he loved with such a calm and imperturbable exterior; for he loved Becky Newton with all his heart. The real difficulty in the way, as he more than halfsuspected, was not so much in himself as in his pocket. Becky Newton had an insuperable objection to an empty wallet. The daughter of a wealthy Louisiana planter, reared in luxury, and a recipient of a weekly allowance of pin money sufficient to pay Fred's bills for a whole month, she had no immediate idea of changing her situation for one of less comfort and independence. Besides it had been intimated to her that a neighboring planter of unusually aristocratic lineage had looked upon her with covetous eyes. To be sure he was old and ngly, but he was rich; and in her present

mercenary state of mind, Miss Becky Newton did not desire to allow such a chance of becoming a wealthy widow slip by unimproved.

But alas for human nature! If Becky was really so indifferent to Fred Eckerson, why did she run up stairs after that interview, and take the starch all out of her nice, clean pillow-shams by crying herself into hysterics on the bed? It was not all wrath, not all vexation, not all pique. There was somewhere deep down in Becky Newton's heart, a feeling very much akin to remorse. She was not sure that she would not one day be sorry for what she had done. She had no doubt she could be very happy as Fred Eckerson's wife, after all.

"But then," she cried growing hot with the recollection, "he was so rude and so insulting! I could never live with such a man-never !"

When Fred Eckerson had walked off some of his feelings on the piazza, he concluded to take a look at the river. The Mississippi, which flowed within 500 yards of the house, was at that time nearly at the height of its regular "spring rise." Its turbid waters rushing swiftly toward the sea, had nearly filled the banks, and in many places had broken through the levees and flooded the low lands for many miles. A crevasse of this description had been made in the farther bank, nearly opposite the house, and the windows of the Newton mansion commanded a view of a vast and glittering inland sea, not laid down on the map. The current of the stream bore upon the coffee-colored bosom an enormous mass of floating timber, which was dashed along in the boiling flood, rendering navigation wholly impossible. The waters were still rising, and the frequent crashes far and near told of the undermining power of the current, as sections of the sandy banks succumbed and disappeared, carrying with them the trees which overhung the stream.

Now it happened that, by a curious coincident, Miss Newton also resolved to look at the river. She dried her tears, and putting on her hat, slipped out by the back door to avoid Fred, and soon found herself at the foot of a huge cottonwood tree on the bank below the house. Throwing herself upon the grass, and lulled by the rapid flood beneath she soon fell asleep. Had she possessed any power of foreseeing the future, it would have been the last thing she would have done; for, although it was very pleasant dropping sleep there in the shade, with the soft sunlight filtering through the leaves overhead, the awakening was not at all to her mind. A terrible crash made chaos to her dreams; the tall cottonwood toppled and fell; and Miss Becky Newton found herself immersed in the cold flood, with her mouth full of muddy water. In a moment more somebody's arms was around her and she felt herself lifted up and placed in the sunshine, though precisely where, she was as yet too bewildered to know. Getting her eyes open at last, she found Fred Eckerson's whisker's nearly touching her face.

" Well !" "Well !"

"Where am I?" asked Becky, shiver-

ing and looking around her.

"You are in the middle of the Mississippi," replied Fred, "and you are in the fork of a cottonwood tree, and you are voyaging towards the Gulf of Mexico just as fast as the freshet can carry you."

"How came you here?"

"In the same conveyance with yourself Miss Becky. In fact, you and I and the tree all came together, to say nothing of a portion of your father's plantation, which I fear is lost to him forever."

Becky was silent. She was thinking, not of the accident or their perilous position, but of her appearance when she was

"How long were you there before this happened ?" she asked.

"As long as you were. I was up in the

tree when you came !" "You had no right to be up there," she said, coloring, "a spy upon my movements."

" Nonsense !" he replied, "You intruded on my privacy, and while you slept 1 watched over you like the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft."

"Thank you for the service, I'm sure," she said, bridling.

"You snored awfully."

"Mr. Eckerson, remove your arm from my waist."

"Then put your's around my neck."

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing." "You will fall into the river if you do

Becky was silent for a few moments, while the unwieldy raft whirled along in the current, rolling from side to side, and threatening every instant to turn completely over and tip them off. At last she

"What are we to do?"

"I think, now that I am started, I shall go on to New Orleans," he replied. "To New Orleans?" exclaimed Becky.

"It is a hundred miles !" "Yes, and a chance of a free ride for a

long distance is not to be neglected. You can go ashore if you prefer." She burst into tears. "You are cruel," she said, "to treat

me so." "Cruel," exclaimed Fred, drawing her

closer to him, quickly-" cruel to you?" There was no help for it, and she again relapsed into silence, quite content, apparently, to remain in Fred's arms, and evincing now no disposition to rebel. For once in her life she was dependent on a

"I want to go to New Orleans," continued Fred, after a pause, "because there is a young lady of my acquaintance residing there, whom I have an intention of inviting into this neighborhood." 44 Oh !"

"If we don't go to New Orleans, and if we get safe out of this scrape, I shall write for her to come anyway."

" Ah !"

"I shall obtain board for her in St. Jean, which will be convenient for me as long as I remain your father's guest. I can ride over after breakfast every morning you see."

"She is an intimate friend, then," said Becky.

"I expect to marry her before long, he replied.

"Marry her! Why you-you proposed to me this morning."

"Yes, but you refused me. I told you then you would never have another chance."

Becky was silent again. It is a matter of some doubt whether, had Fred at that moment, sitting astride that cottonwood log, with his feet in the water and his arm around her waist, proposed to her a second time, she would have accepted him or not. To be sure a marvelous change had come over Becky's feelings since her tumble in the river. She felt that one strong arm, like that which supported her, was worth a thousand old and decrepit planters, and she recognized the fact that a man who could talk so coolly and unconcernedly in a situation of such extreme peril, was of no ordinary courage. But she was not yet quite prepared to give up either. It was Becky who spoke first. golden dreams. The dross quite washed out of her soul, and she did not yet know how much she loved Fred Eckerson. Besides she did not half believe him.

Their clumsy vessel floated on, now root first, now sideways, and now halfsubmerged beneath the boiling current. Their precarious hold became more uncertain as their frames became chilled by the cold water, and every plunge of the log threatened to cast them once more into the river. In vain Fred endeavored to attract the attention of some one on the shore. The cottonwood retained a course nearly in the middle of the stream, too far from either bank to render their outcries of much avail. As it grew dark their situation seemed more and more hopeless, and to Becky there appreared to be no escape from certain death, either by drowning in the darkness, or by exhaustion before daybreak.

Yet to die in this man's arms seemed not wholly a terror. She could hardly think, if death must come, of any way in which she would rather meet it. Was it possible she loved him, and must need be brought within the valley of the shadow before she could know her own heart? Had she loved him all along? While she was thinking about it, chilled by the night air, she fell asleep. When she awoke the stars were out, but she was warm and comfortable. Raising her head, she found herself enveloped in Fred's coat. "Fred !"

" Well !"

"You have robbed yourself to keep me

warm. You are freezing."

"No, I ain't. I took it off because it was so awful hot," and, taking out his handkerchief with his disengaged hand he made a pretense of wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"How long have I been asleep?" "About three hours. We are drifting ashore now."

"Shall we be saved?"

"I don't know. Put your arms around my neck, for I am going to take mine

Becky did this time as she was bid .-She did not only throw her arms quickly around his neck, but laid her head upon his breast without the slightest hesitation. In the darkness Fred did not know that she imprinted a kiss upon his shirt bosom.

"Hold fast, now!" he cried. "Hold on for dear life !"

The log had been gradually nearing the shore for some time, and it now shot suddenly under a large sycamore which overhung the bank and trailed its branches in the brown flood. Quick as thought Fred seized the limb above his head and pulled with all his might. The headlong course of the cottonwood was checked, it plunged heavily and partly turned over its top became entangled in the sycamore, and a terrific crackling of limbs ensued. With a sudden spring Fred gained the projecting branch, dragging his clinging burden after him. In another instant the cottonwood had broken away and continued its voyage down the river, while the bent sycamore regained its shape with such a quick bound that the two travelers were very nearly precipitated into the stream again. Fred, half supporting half dragging Becky, worked his way to the trunk by a series of gymnastics that would have done no discredit to Blondin, and in a moment more both had reached the ground in safety.

"That is a business we are well out of," he said, when he had regained his breath. "Now where are we?"

He looked about. A light was glimmering from a habitation behind them, a short distance from where they stood. Becky could not walk without great pain, and Fred lifted her lightly in his arms and started for the house. It proved to be the dwelling of a small planter, who was not lacking in hospitality. Here their wants were quickly attended to, and under the cheering influence of warmth and shelter Becky was soon herself again.

They drove home on the following day, Fred having procured the loan of the planters horse and chaise for that purpose promising to return them by Mr. Newton's servants the day after. The morning was bright and clear, and the fragrance of the orange groves was in the air. Becky, who had maintained almost utter silence since their escape from the cottonwood, was no less silent now. Fred himself did not appear particularly communicative, and many miles of the long ride were taken without a remark from

" Fred," she said

"Yes !"

"You have saved my life, have you not 211

"Happy to do it any day," he remarked, not knowing exactly what else to say.

"I thank you very much."

"Quite welcome, I'm sure." There was another long silence, broken only by the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the road. Fred himself seemed to have lost some of his habitual ease, for he kept his whip in constant motion, and held the reins nervously.

"Fred !" ii Yes !!!

"Are you going to write to that young ady in New Orleans ?"

"І в'рове во." "Hadn't you-better try again-before

ou-before you write?" He turned his eyes full upon her, and

pened them wide. "Try again ; try what ?"

"I've been thinking through the night," said Becky, bending low to hide her face, and carefully separating the fringe of her mantilla, "that-perhaps-if you asked me again the same question—that you did yesterday morning- I might anwer a little different."

Becky's head went against Fred's shoulder, and her face became immediately lost to view.

"You darling !" be exclaimed, "I never intended to do otherwise. The young lady in New Orleans was wholly a myth. But when, may I ask, did you change your "I have never changed it," she mur-

mured. "I have loved you all the time but I never knew it until last night."

And to this day, when Mrs. Becky Eckerson is asked where it was that she fell in love with her husband, she answers " on a log."

Why does the 'girl of the period' make the best housekeeper? Because she heart and an uncharitable tonguo.

Falling Leaves.

ANY persons think that when leaves MANY persons that the Fall it is turn red and yellow in the Fall it is because they have been killed by the frost. But a little observation will show that such is not the case, and that the Autumns when the leaves are the most beautiful are those in which the frost is the latest. This has been notably the case this year.

A severe frost kills the leaves at once, and they soon fall, brown and withered. To be brilliant they must ripen naturally, and our hot September and October midday suns have probably much to do with it. In England where the Falls are apt to be damp and cloudy, the leaves are not so bright, and American artists, who strive to paint our maples and dog-woods as they see them, are unjustly accused of over-col-

The leaves fall because they are ripe and have performed the services that was allotted them. The leaf is the laboratory of the plant, and in it are performed most of the operations essential to its growth. It takes the crude materials gathered by the roots, refines them, rejecting all that is not essential to the plant, and out of the remainder constructs the highly complex bodies that are found in other parts of theplant. These rejected parts consist mainly of earthy matter that was in solution in the water taken by the roots, and it is deposited in the cells of the leaf. This is shown by the fact that the leaf contains far more ash than any other part of the plant. In some plants the ash of the leaf amounts to over 20 per cent., while that of the wood rarely exceeds two or three. When the cells become completely clogged up with this matter, the leaf can no longer perform its functions, and so ripens and falls off. Provision has already been made for this separation. If the foot-stalks of most leaves be examined, it will be found a kind of joint exists near the body of the plant, even when the leaf is quite young ; as it grows older this joint becomes marked, and finally when it is ripe a gentle breeze will shake it off, and no wound is left, nothing but the scar; the wound was healed even before it was made. The same is also true of fruits, which by botanists are regarded as nothing but developed leaves; a joint may generally be found in the stem, at which it separates readily. This is very marked in the grape; it is situated at a little swelling that is to be found on the stem. A slight bend will separate the stem at this point, while it takes a strong pull to sever it above or below. Even on the evergreen trees, which apparently never shed their leaves, the leaves exist at are replaced by new ones, the old falling away as they become unfit for active duty; but the leaves in this case being shed mostly in the Spring, we do not miss them.

Freaks of a St. Paul Cow.

A ludicrons performance occurred on Fourth street yesterday afternoon, the scene being laid near the Metropolitan Hotel, and the principal figure being a cow of mild aspect, but not remarkably handsome. The front door had been left open, and the lady of the house hearing a tremendous clatter of hoofs on the stairway leading to the upper story of her domicil, started burriedly to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon. She arrived in time to see a cow's tail swinging aloft at the head of the stairs, and soon the animal had found her way into a small closet in the vicinity, and at once became profoundly interested in a sack of meal, or some other pleasant object stored therein. The lady failing to appreciate the transformation of her tidy apartment into a common stable, at once inaugurated battle against the trespasser, and by the use of signs, movements and pass-words, which only a lady can recall on such an occasion, undertook to eject the cow from the premises. Bossy failed to see the signs and did not seem to care a cob about the lady's wishes. The lady shook her apron at the cow and reached out her hand carefully for a more effective weapon of warfare. The cow comprehended the situation at last, and her head was lowered, her tail was flung in the air, and her back was curved majestically. The lady concluded the air in her stairway was not conducive to health and rushed out doors calling for help. It came in a short time, and the cow was eventually ejected, but not until some threatening demonstrations had been made on the levies or reinforcements operating against her within the fortress .- St. Paul Press.

The worst of all heresies, is a bad