

The Bloomfield Times.

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AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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Making a Match.

"POOH! pool! What wild fancy is this you have taken, my dear?"

"'Tis no wild fancy, Mr. Stanwood, 'tis the sober truth, and so you will soon find if you do but listen to me."

"But I tell you, wife, I will not listen to such an absurdity. Our Ella in love with her drawing master! Ha! ha! That is the best joke I have heard for some time."

"You will find it anything but a joke, Mr. Stanwood. Now, do please lay aside that newspaper, and attend to me for a few moments. I wish to get this subject off my mind."

"I really wish you would, my dear. It is very absurd in you to trouble yourself with such foolish suspicions."

"Once for all, husband, I tell you they are not suspicions. I have seen enough for some time to convince me that Ella loves Mr. Ardley—you need not laugh so immoderately—just listen patiently."

"I'faith, not I!"

"Then if you will not listen, you shall read," and Mrs. Stanwood unfolded a dainty little note, and held it close before the gentleman's eyes, so that they must, perforce, see its contents. One glance overthrew his smiling indifference, and snatching the note from his wife's hand, he read:

"My dear Frank; I'll dear Frank her, the baggage; I have been thinking over what you proposed yesterday, and I think it is better that you should not speak to papa just yet. He would not consent—I know he would not; and only think if he would forbid our meeting again, what should we do? Let us wait a little longer, Frank; we can still hope for the best, and not fear for each other's constancy. I trust, oh! how undoubtingly in you, dearest Frank, and I know you have the same trust in your own Ella!"

Mr. Stanwood read these lines twice over, closely scrutinizing the handwriting, as if he almost thought the billet a forgery.

"Perhaps you are convinced now, Mr. Stanwood," said his wife, drily, "if that does not prove that Ella loves Mr. Ardley—"

"She does not! She must not! She shall not!" thundered the enraged father; "my daughter love one so far beneath her! I'll teach the silly thing—where is she? Send her to me immediately—I will quickly put an end to this nonsense."

"I hope you will not deal harshly with the child, she is scarcely more than that, you know," Mrs. Stanwood ventured to say; but the only reply was a reiterated request to send Ella to him without delay. And while the lady departed rather unwillingly on this errand, the incensed father paced the room with rapid strides, "nursing his wrath to keep it warm." In a few moments a pretty girl came tripping into the room.

"Miss Stanwood," began the father, in a severe tone, "I am shocked and grieved by what I have heard of you this morning. What excuse can you offer for your outrageous conduct?"

"Why, papa, what is the matter? What have I done to displease you?" asked Ella, her bright, smiling face clouding with anxiety.

"What have you done? Is not this precious piece of writing your work? and the unfortunate note was held menacingly before her.

The young girl caught her breath, and changed color as she saw it.

"Yes, you may well tremble. You, the daughter of the Hon. Horace Stanwood, to pen such a note! Pray, what has your drawing-master to say to me that you wish deferred a little longer? I await your reply, Miss Stanwood."

"He wished to—speak to you about—

me," almost sobbed Ella, struggling hard to subdue her agitation.

"What does he wish to say about you?"

"Please don't be angry, papa; he wanted to tell you that—that he—loves me."

"He loves you!" repeated the father passionately, seizing his now blushing daughter by the arm. "How dared he to dream even of loving you; and how have you dared to encourage his presumption? He loves you! The audacious beggar! And you were afraid that I would not consent—that I might forbid your meeting him again. Your fears were prophetic. I would rather see you in your coffin than consent to your marriage with a beggarly teacher. And mark my words, if I ever know you to speak to that fellow again, I will discard you forever. Do you hear me?"

Poor Ella could scarcely be said to hear. Grief and terror had almost paralyzed her; but every word smote keenly on her heart.

Satisfied with the effect of his angry words, and perhaps half regretting that he had been so harsh, for he was not naturally a hard hearted man, Mr. Stanwood closed the interview by desiring his daughter to retire to her apartment, and there remain till his farther wishes in regard to her should be made known. And the unhappy girl obeyed with alacrity, glad to be allowed to indulge her grief in the welcome solitude of her chamber.

"Well, Mrs. Stanwood, I have decided how to act in regard to that troublesome Ella. She shall be freed from her imprisonment soon."

"I am very glad to hear it. The poor child looks wretchedly. Every day she grows more pale and languid, and her eyes are dull and heavy with continual weeping."

"Change of scene, and country air will soon restore the light to her eye and the roses to her cheeks."

"Change of scene—country air, Mr. Stanwood?"

"Yes, I have concluded to take her off to my sister Amelia's."

"Away off in New England?" said the wife, dolefully.

"Only a two days' journey, my dear; and then she will be in no danger of meeting Mr. Frank Ardley—confound him! Though if he has a spark of feeling he will never seek to renew the acquaintance after the language I addressed to him the other day."

"How long is Ella to be absent?" asked Mrs. Stanwood, after a silence of some moments.

"Until autumn. She will enjoy herself very much at her aunt's, and the entire novelty of her surroundings will soon obliterate the remembrance of this silly, school-girl attachment."

Mr. Stanwood's decisions, as he was wont to boast, were always "as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians," therefore Mrs. Stanwood made no opposition to his project, though she much regretted the threatened separation from her only living child.

Ella's ample wardrobe was soon put in order, and on the next morning she started on her journey. On reaching Boston, Mr. Stanwood, greatly to his satisfaction, met with some friends who would pass by the town near which dwelt his sister, and placing Ella under their care, with many kind words and caresses, (for his violent anger had entirely died away,) he parted from his daughter, and returned home.

The home of Mrs. Rand, Ella's aunt, was situated near one of New England's prettiest villages. A narrow path, thickly set with maples, led up to the house, which was a quaint old-fashioned building, with mossy eaves projecting over long, narrow windows that were almost concealed by climbing roses and woodbine. The long sweeping branches of two ancient elms completely shaded the front of the house and to Ella the whole place had a gloomy, forlorn aspect quite repelling.

Mrs. Rand received her young relative, whom she now saw for the first time, with great cordiality; but Ella, low-spirited and weary, was in no mood to appreciate her friendliness, and was glad to avail herself of the old lady's suggestion that she should retire to her room and refresh herself with a nap before tea-time. It was a luxury to find herself alone in the neat, cool chamber, perfumed with the odors of the roses that peeped in through the snowy curtains. No way inclined to take the prescribed nap, she lay vacantly looking out on the broad expanse of hill and vale; while her thoughts returning to the home from which she was now so far distant, dwelt sadly on the change the past two weeks had wrought—on the clouds that had so suddenly arisen in her hitherto unclouded sky.

Her meditations were poorly calculated to raise her spirits, and Mrs. Rand was

much concerned, when she summoned her niece to tea, to find her still pale, languid and dejected. The old lady rallied her good-naturedly, saying she did not know what was coming over the girls now-a-days; in her time young girls had rosy cheeks and were full of health, and life, and gayety; very different from the lack-a-daisical creatures of these times. And Ella smiled, faintly, as her aunt talked on, trying to cheer her up, and thought within herself how impossible it would be for her to be lively or gay any more.

Then the kind old lady dropped the subject, and began speaking of a friend whose arrival she expected the following day.

"I am delighted that he is coming at this time," she said, smiling pleasantly on her silent guest, "you will be company for each other; and I predict you will be charmed with my friend Harrison. Ella, my dear, you cannot help it," she added, laughing, as Ella began to utter a faint negative, "he is young, handsome, lively, witty, and all that sort of thing; just the kind of person to captivate silly girls; but then he can attract us old folks as well."

And the old lady launched into an enthusiastic eulogy, on the many virtues and amiable qualities of her "friend Harrison," until Ella grew quite sick of the subject, took a real school-girl dislike to Mr. Harrison, and resolved to be as little in his company as possible.

The morrow came, Ella, by her aunt's desire, strolled with her through garden, and meadow; fed the chickens; went down to the brook to see the geese and ducks at their aquatic exercises, all with an air of such utter listlessness, that Mrs. Rand was very much troubled. At length, she had to return to the house, to attend to some preparations for the other guest, whom she was now hourly expecting.

Ella, glad to be alone, sauntered here and there at will, caring for nothing, and then turned to the house, devotedly hoping that something had occurred to prevent the exemplary Mr. Harrison's arrival. But, as she entered the wide hall she heard her aunt's cheery voice in the parlor, and that lady at the same instant appeared:

"Come, my dear," said she, taking the young girl's hand, and leading her to the parlor, "I was just going in search of you—hey-day, what's all this?"

For, without waiting to be presented, Mr. Harrison rushed to meet Ella, and she, with a little scream of delight, nestled very cozily in his arms.

The old lady peered sharply through her spectacles at the pair, who, for the moment were too much absorbed in each other to heed her astonishment. Then explanations were quickly given, and it appeared that Ella's lover, Frank Ardley, was a favorite from childhood with Mrs. Rand, who always called him his middle name, and to whom he had now come to impart the story of his unhappy love, and to seek in her quiet old home comfort for his wounded spirit, and truly he had found it.

But Ella, when the bewildering rapture of the unexpected meeting was over, began to talk, tearfully, yet decidedly, of returning home without delay. She knew for what purpose she had been sent from home—knew that under present circumstances her father would not allow her to remain an hour under her aunt's roof—so she must not stay.

Frank, looking very blank at this announcement, declared he would leave on the instant, rather than occasion her departure.

But Mrs. Rand vetoed both motions, "Ella's father had written to her, asking her to take charge of his daughter for the summer, and she intended to do it, so Miss Ella need not think of running away from her—a pretty thing, truly! And as for Harrison, his home was always with her when he could spare the time to come; so there they were, and there they must remain. And if her brother Horace had picked up the wicked notion that nothing was of value but wealth and grandeur, it was high time for him to drop it again. He thinks his daughter too good for Harrison Ardley indeed! She could tell him her Harrison was a match for the proudest lady in the world!"

Without doubt Ella Stanwood fully concurred in this opinion, and the result of the old lady's representations was, that the young people submitted with wonderful docility to her decision and said no more about leaving.

And now what happy hours they spent together, quite fulfilling Mrs. Rand's prediction. Ella forgot her purpose of disliking and avoiding Mr. Harrison—forgot that she had ever thought the old homestead gloomy and its mistress prosy and garrulous. The latter was now the best, dearest aunt in the

world, and her home the most delightful spot. And Mrs. Rand had no cause for farther lamentations over the young girl's paleness and want of spirits; the roses had returned to her cheeks, and her gayety and sportiveness amused and delighted her warm-hearted aunt.

"The dear, young thing!" she would say to herself, as she saw the lovers so happy in each other, "she is just the wife for Harrison Ardley, and his wife she shall be, all her father's prejudices to the contrary, notwithstanding."

So the summer glided by, and from time to time Mrs. Rand sent good reports to the parents respecting their daughter, which reconciled them to her absence, and caused Mr. Stanwood to pride himself greatly on the wisdom of the course he had pursued.

Early in September came a long letter to Mr. Stanwood from his sister. It informed him that a mutual attachment existed between his daughter and a young gentleman whom the writer had known from his infancy, and whom even she considered worthy to be the husband of her lovely niece, "in short, they are meant for each other," the letter went on, "and I am quite certain their union will be a happy one. You see I am counting on your consent, as a matter of course, for I know if you searched the States all through, you could not find a more unexceptionable match for Ella. My adopted son, Harrison, is a very fine young man in every respect, talented, (an important qualification with us New Englanders, you know,) and he comes of an old family, too, being related to the Harrisons of—county. I have long intended to make him my heir; though, for that matter he has wealth enough of his own, still I have taken a fancy to leave what property I possess to one who will make good use of it, and it rejoices me to think, that with your consent, my two favorites—for Ella has become very, very dear to me—will share my worldly goods." Mrs. Rand closed her letter of three pages, by requesting that the marriage might take place at her house, and that the parents would designate a suitable day for the ceremony, and come to assist thereat.

Mr. Stanwood mused a long time over this letter, read it through once more very deliberately, and then summoned his wife to the library. Mrs. Stanwood perused the letter, and returned it, simply asking if he intended to accede to his sister's propositions.

"I do," was the emphatic rejoinder.—"Having considered the subject carefully, in all its bearings, I consider that we may deem it very fortunate that our daughter has fixed her mind on one whom we can approve; for, I have such perfect confidence in Amelia's judgment, that I believe the gentleman whom she regards so highly will merit my full approbation."

"But Ella is so young," remonstrated the mother, "and besides she should be married at home."

"We would prefer to have it so, certainly, my dear; but Amelia is so desirous to have the marriage take place beneath her roof that I should really be loath to deny her. And again, it would be very impolitic to run the risk of displeasing her. I should not wish her property, which is quite valuable, to be lost to the family, on every account, therefore, it is the wisest course to yield to her desires; you can give as large a party as you please, in honor of Ella's nuptials, on our return home."

And Mr. Stanwood, having thus decided the matter, penned an appropriate letter to his sister, appointing the 3rd of October, Ella's birthday, for the wedding.

On the evening previous to the appointed day, the parents reached the farm-house, according to a promise to that effect. Mrs. Rand took care to have the young people out of the way on their arrival, and having conducted Mrs. Stanwood to her apartment to dress for the evening, she began to expatiate very pathetically to her brother, on his daughter's unhappiness and dejection on her first coming to the homestead. In reply, Mr. Stanwood told of her ridiculous penchant for her drawing-master, winding up with, "A young fellow without any conceivable claim to aspire to the hand of a child of mine—a mere nobody, sister Amelia. I really felt sorry for little Ella, but the thing was too absurd to be allowed to go on. I would never sanction such folly."

"Not even if your opposition had consigned her to an early grave?" inquired his sister, very solemnly.

"Oh, there was no danger of that," and the gentleman smiled, carelessly; "in our matter-of-fact age, people do not die of love or broken hearts."

"Perhaps not; but it is certain many

have died of diseases superinduced by continued anxiety or melancholy. We all know something by experience of the power the mind exerts over our physical health, and, for my part, I trembled for Ella, when I saw how prone she was to silent, mournful reveries—how impossible it was to interest her in anything. I remember how your other children had faded away in early childhood, and I feared for her, so fragile, so young, and with a grievous disappointment evidently preying on her mind."

"But that did not last long," replied the father, more affected than he wished to show; "you wrote me soon after her arrival, that she was fast regaining cheerfulness and health."

"I did, brother, and glad was I that I could truthfully make such a statement.—But who was the person who made such an impression on Ella's fancy? I should like to hear something more from you concerning him?"

"So tell the truth, Amelia," said Mr. Stanwood, rather embarrassed by the question, "I know no more of him than what I have already told you."

"Which is surely very little. Then you had no objection to him save that he was teaching for a livelihood?"

"That was a sufficient one."

"But tell me, Horace, if this young Ardley's position and fortune were such as would entitle him to aspire to your daughter—would you in that case consent to their union?"

"Very probably I should, for I rather liked the young fellow, but not as a suitor for Ella; but may I ask the drift of all these questions?"

"Simply, that I know more of the individual in question than you. If I tell you that my adopted son, Harrison, has another name, that he was known to you as Frank Ardley, what then, brother?—Nay, now, don't let passion take the place of reason, Horace; you were wont to judge of matters in an impartial, dispassioned manner, and I trust such is yet your custom."

Mrs. Rand had not forgotten her brother's weak point; the compliment was one especially agreeable to him, and unwilling to have it seen unobserved, he kept down his rising anger.

"But you cannot mean this, Amelia," he said presently, "you wrote me that young Harrison, whom you intended to be your heir, had wealth enough of his own."

"And so he has," replied the old lady, emphatically, "he has the best of all wealth, a wealth derived from his Creator, and of which no 'revulsion in moneyed circles,' no change of 'fickle fortune' can despoil him. He has the wealth of a lofty spirit, strong in unyielding rectitude—of a generous, manly heart—of a sound mind, gifted, too, with some of the brightest talents that heaven bestows. Yes, he is rich in all these; and tell me Horace Stanwood, have you not seen men rise to the highest eminence by means of these possessions, while the envied sons of millionaires have fallen to the lowest depths of poverty, and worse, of degradation and crime? I have seen such things, and though your years are fewer than mine, I doubt not you can recall many instances of the kind that you have seen or heard of."

Mr. Stanwood mused in silence. "Related to the Harrisons of—county, I think you said?" he asked at length.

"Yes, Gerald Harrison is his uncle on the mother's side," replied Mrs. Rand, with a covert smile, for she saw that she had gained the day. Just then Ella came tripping by the window, and, at a sign from her aunt entered. She flew into her father's arms, all smiles and blushes; then, oppressed with sad misgivings, she burst into tears.

"Poo! silly child, you have nothing to fear," he whispered, cheerfully. "Ah, Harrison, my dear fellow!" he added, as that personage appeared, and offering his hand cordially to the astonished lover.—"I suppose I must give this willful girl to you; see to it that you never cause me to repent my compliance."

"Heaven helping me, I never will Mr. Stanwood," was the quiet but firm-toned reply.

Mrs. Rand, having waited to learn this much, hastened to her sister-in-law to relate how matters stood; and the two soon descended to join the happy trio in the "best room."

A happy evening was spent by all, Mr. Stanwood was in his most pleasant mood, and his sister could see that every moment he was becoming more pleased with his prospective son-in-law.

"I never made but one match," the old lady was wont to say in after years; "but that was one to brag of."