

# The North Branch Democrat.

HARVEY SICKLER, Proprietor.

"TO SPEAK HIS THOUGHTS IS EVERY FREEMAN'S RIGHT."—Thomas Jefferson.

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### Select Story.

#### THE PINK CALICO.

"John," said old Mr. Morton, taking off his gold rimmed spectacles and putting them methodically in their case as he spoke—"John, come into my study, I want to have a talk with you."

The old gentleman said this with such an air of importance that John Morton, albeit of a phlegmatic temperament, not easily astonished by anything, arose and followed his father with no little surprise and curiosity upon his handsome features.

"What on earth can the Governor have in his mind?" he said to himself; "I hope he isn't going to fail or give me a stepmother, but he looks solemn enough for anything."

Solemn indeed was the old gentleman's countenance as he sat down opposite his son, folded his hands on the green cloth of the table between them and began:

"John, if I am not mistaken, the day after to-morrow is your thirtieth birthday."

"So it is, by Jove," said John, "I'd quite forgotten it."

"Your thirtieth birthday," continued the old gentleman, "and really when a man comes to be thirty, it is my opinion he ought at least to begin to think about a wife. I married your poor dear mother when I was five-and-twenty, and felt none too young. And as my sons have grown up I am glad to say they have generally followed my example. Hiram made a fine match when he married Miss Gower—and though Peter's wife was not such an heiress, she is a good woman and a pretty one—and not extravagant—and as for William, I couldn't wish him a better partner than the girl he married last year. You are the only bachelor of the four, and I must confess I am extremely anxious to see you married before I die—and I'm an old man, John, and can't live a great while."

"As to that father, you'll live, I hope to be a hundred," said John. "But I will look about me, and if I see the girl I fancy, I'll pop the question. In fact, I've been doing that these ten years, only the right person hasn't come along."

"I see, I see," said the old gentleman with a sly chuckle, "you want a good wife—a good, sensible girl, who knows how to take care of her husband's home—eh?"

"Well, yes," said John with a yawn. "A handsome girl—with bright eyes—and rosy cheeks with dimples in them—and nice hair and taper waist."

"You're quite a judge of beauty, I declare, father," said John. "Well I should like a pretty wife, that's certain."

"A little with a little something of her own, too," said the old gentleman. "In fact an heiress. To sum up the whole—a sensible affectionate beauty, with a fortune. That's your wife, John."

"If I can find her, father," said John Morton. "But you see all the good things in the world are seldom given to one woman. The heiresses are often frights and the beauties poor, while half the time one doesn't care to hear a pretty speak or to look at a sensible one. And as for prudence and economy, they are handed over to grandmothers, and affection is quite old-fashioned. However, find me such a paragon as you describe to-day, and I'll lay my heart and hand at her feet to-morrow."

"Will you?"

"Why, of course I will, sir."

"Ah, ha! you're a married man then, for I found her for you yesterday."

John Morton's eyes opened wider than their lazy wont with astonishment.

"Who is she?" he asked.

"She's a Miss Spice," said the old gentleman, "Baxter Spice's daughter. I met her there yesterday, and the moment I set my eyes on her I said, that's the wife for my son John. A beauty—and such a notable domestic little body—and every cent old Spice calls his own will be her's some day. I want you to go down and see her."

John laughed.

"Perhaps she's engaged to somebody else," he said. "People seldom leave such tempting fruit on the bough long—no doubt she's appropriated."

"She's only eighteen!" said Mr. Morton, "and—ahem! I happened to know she's not engaged. I had a talk with the old gentleman. He wants to see her married but she don't fancy anyone. She has a notion, you see, that the young men are thinking of her money, and declares she'll die an old maid. Between you and me, Spice expects you down."

"And the young lady?"

"Oh! she don't know a word about it, not one, I assure you. You will go won't you?"

John yawned.

"I don't mind running down that way," he said, "but really I can't promise to admire you know."

"But you will without promising," said the old gentleman. "You can't help it. I've some business for you to make an excuse—a couple of horses old Spice wants to sell, which are just the things for you. And he is a hospitable old fellow, who will make you stay a week if you once get there. Go up to-morrow and fall in love with Miss Spice, you rascal."

The rascal laughed. He had his own opinion about the probable beauty of Miss Spice, knowing that a fortune is apt to blind old eyes to many deficiencies, but there was a savor of romance in his search for a wife that pleased him after all, and he determined to enjoy it to the full.

Consequently, on the following morning, he started, with his valise well packed, his dressing-case fitted up in exquisite style and a secret determination to flirt with Miss Spice if she were the least attractive. As for any serious design of wooing and wedding, nothing was farther from John Morton's thoughts.

When the train had screamed and whistled over the necessary number of miles, it stopped according to custom, at the little depot at D—, and there, with others, the traveler alighted, amidst a whirl of country dust, betook himself to that portion of the village wherein the residence of the Spices must be located were his directions right.

He found it, at last. A rather pretentious mansion, built on a rising ground, with stone steps leading to the garden, wherein a white fountain kept guard over sundry geometrical beds of flowers. Everything about it was trim and neat, and delightfully cool.

To one of John Morton's rather indolent disposition the shady colonnade, and the rural seats under the great elms behind the house, had a wondrous charm. It would be a glorious place to live in, he thought; especially were one rich, and able to forget all tormenting business details, and fortune-making, and other bores of the kind, and lounge all day with a book and a Havana under those trees. "I wonder whether Miss Spice appreciates her residence."

As he thought thus, John Morton coolly sauntered, valise in hand, up the broad gravel path, and wrapped in his own careless fashion at the hall door. No one answered the first time, and a second application only brought out a white poodle with pink ribbon at his neck, who barked with puny fury at the stranger; but, on a third trial, the door opened suddenly, and there stood before him a pretty girl in pink calico, with a white apron on, and her sleeves pinned up, exhibiting the plumpest arms in the world, with dimples at the wrists and elbows. In one hand she held a dusting brush in the other a dust-pan, and keeping both tidily away from her dress, she seemed to wait for his inquiry. It came promptly:

"Is Mr. Spice in?"

"Dear me, no, sir," replied the girl. "The family are all away—called very unexpectedly to see a sick relative. But—I beg your pardon—are you Mr. Morton?"

"That's my name," said the young man.

"Oh, in that case, Mr. Spice left word that he was very sorry to go, and that if you came you would oblige him by staying until his return. Martin, the coachman, could show you the horses, he said—and we were to make you comfortable—will you walk in, sir?"

John Morton hesitated a moment, and then crossed the threshold. The girl pushed open the parlor door and ushered him in.

"John shall show you to your room," she said, "and I will have a lunch for you when you come down, Mr. Morton. People generally find an excellent after a journey."

And away she ran humming a tune, and leaving John Morton to remember her smiles and dimples and pleasant voice.

"If Miss Spice is not a very pretty girl, she must be jealous of this little creature," he said to himself. "What eyes and snow-white teeth! I wonder who she is?"

An hour after when fresh from his toilette he took his place at the tempting lunch table, he had a chance to ask the question:

"Excuse me," he said, as he took a cup of tea from her hand, "but what shall I call you?"

"Oh, I am only Hetty," said the girl.

"Hetty?"

"Yes, sir. I don't call myself a servant,

for they don't pay me any wages; but the old gentleman and lady give me my board and clothes, and I make myself generally useful. I'm quite one of the family. Do help yourself, Mr. Morton."

"Thank you, Hetty," and he took a sandwich. In a moment he began again: "Mr. Spice has a daughter hasn't he?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Very handsome, I've heard."

"Handsome! Oh dear, no, not in the least handsome."

"Tastes differ, Hetty."

"I know it. But, really, Miss Spice is, I should say, quite plain. Won't you have some more jam, sir?"

"Not any, thank you. I presume Miss Spice, being so amiable, is considered handsome on that account."

"Amiable! Oh, mercy!"

"Why is she not, Hetty?"

"I shan't tell you, sir," said Hetty. "It's not my place to talk against Miss Spice, but—amiable—ha! ha!"

John Morton shrugged his shoulders and looked at Hetty. Her eyes were bright, and her cheeks dimpled with merriment. In his admiration he forgot the subject of conversation, and from Miss Spice turned to other subjects. Hetty on these grew eloquent. She talked well, and had the sweetest voice ever heard; she told the city stranger of the pretty country places close at hand: of the brook where the trout were found, and the soft green grass and purple flags besides its margin; of the high hill whence such a view could be had; of the stone church ninety years old where they went every Sunday; and of her own great love for all these things. And as John Morton listened, he thought, "this girl is above the sphere of dusters and brooms and scrubbing brushes. She is as much a lady as in the land." Then he tried her on other things, and found that she had read a good deal, and that the books she had chosen were not trash, and without intending to do so, expressed his surprise.

The girl looked down demurely.

"You see I read Miss Spice's books," she replied, "and have picked up a good deal that way."

And then lunch being over, she left him to pass the time as he chose, and to go with Martin to the stables and admire the garden. But at meal time she acted the part of hostess, and after tea sat demurely at her work on the porch for an hour or two.

That night the gentleman who came to Miss Spice, the heiress, dreamt of Hetty, who "made herself useful, for her board and clothes."

Mr. Spice and family would not return for several days—so said Hetty—even if the relative whose illness called them away grew quickly better. And in that time there was nothing for John Morton to do but to idle about the grounds, saunter into the stables, and get up a flirtation with Hetty.

Demure and shy she seemed at times; at others merry and self-possessed. She was a puzzle to him; and, becoming interested in her, he tried to "make her out." The result was another puzzle more difficult than the first, for one fine morning John Morton awoke to the knowledge that he was in love. How it began he could not tell. The girl was comely and pleasant to look at, but not beautiful. He was proud and this half mental position would have seemed an insurmountable barrier between himself and any woman. But the fact remained the same. He loved her. One hair of her bright head was worth all other women put together to him. The thought of parting from her was intolerable. He could not, would not, turn her away and say, "this love of mine is too humble for me." Yet what a position. He was there as an aspirant for the hand of this mistress and, ere she came, had given his heart to the maid.

For a few hours he had a mighty struggle with himself. Then love conquered, and he sought Hetty. She was in the garden amongst the flowers.

Surely nothing, not even those sweet roses, could be fairer or sweeter than the girl. Her eyes were cast down, her taper fingers busy with some frail plant beaten down by the summer's shower. As he came she looked up with a smile.

"My poor cypress vine is almost dead," she said; "and this rain has done more harm than good to the garden. I'm sorry, for the family will be home to-night. We received a telegraphic dispatch this morning to that effect."

Home to-night John Morton had known of course, that they would come. He

could not have been wild enough to fancy that Mr. Spice had deserted the villa for his sake, and left him free to idle there and make love to Hetty forever. Yet the revelation was a shock.

Home! And Miss Spice, that ill-tempered, ugly heiress would be there, and Hetty's place would be the background. Stay—woe and win the lady and forget this girl. Not he. He would transact his business with Mr. Spice and ride away at once. But something must be done before even this could be accomplished. Something in which Hetty was interested. He stooped down and touched her shoulder with his hand.

"Hetty," he said, "leave those flowers a while and come and walk by the brook with me. I have something to say to you. Don't refuse me. It is something serious Hetty."

Hetty arose, tied on her garden hat, and looked down at her flowers still. She would not lift her eyes and he saw on their lashes two tears. Those, and a smile about her mouth, made a perfect April's day of her sweet face.

"You will walk with me, Hetty?" he asked.

And for an answer she turned and took her place beside him. So they sauntered on down to the brook side, where the purple flag grew amidst green sedge, and deep in the clear water you could catch a glimpse of shining trout. For awhile both kept silence; then John Morton spoke suddenly:

"Hetty, do you know I love you?"

That was all? no preface—nothing to lead to the subject: no prelude to the music—the whole sweet tune broke upon the girl at once:

"Hetty, do you know I love you?"

Hetty stood still; her hand trembled in his—her bosom rose and fell. In a moment she began to sob.

Then John Morton's arms crept around her waist.

"My darling," he said, "look at me—speak to me. Tell me that you return my feelings—tell me that you will one day be my wife?"

At that she pulled her hand away from him.

"You came here to be Miss Spice's suitor she said; I know it—I heard it talked over when I could not help listening. Say those words to her—not to me."

"To her? I hate her very name, said John. "I love you Hetty."

"A poor girl, almost a servant?"

"Why should I care! I love you, oh, Hetty, I love you better than I love my life. Hetty, answer me—will you be my wife? It needs but one little 'yes.'"

An odd convulsion, between laughter and weeping, passed over her face. But she commanded her voice and said slowly:

"You belong to Miss Spice."

Her words made John Morton flush scarlet.

"Miss Spice is nothing to me," he said; "I've never seen nor do I desire to see her. Hetty answer me."

Hetty turned quite away from him and in a sort of choking voice replied:

"This is the only answer I can give you; if Miss Spice will not be your wife, I do not know of any woman in the place who will, and fairly ran away."

John Morton followed her, only a little way however, for coming to a spot where the path took a turn, he spied her through the bushes, sitting under a great tree, laughing in the merriest manner. The sight turned his heart to stone.

"The heartless jade," he muttered; "and for her I would have given up anything beside in the wide world. All women are alike. Rustic simplicity in pink calico differs not a whit from city airs and graces in more antique. I'll go home. Miss Spice may come or go, for all I care. Oh, Hetty, Hetty!"

With these last words on his lips, John Morton made his way to Spice Ville, mounted to his own room and proceeded at once to pack his port manteau; cramming his wardrobe in pell mell, and using no gentle language towards the innocent garments which would bulge over and forbid the fastening of the lock. Just as the packing was completed there came a sudden racket in the garden, a sound of wheels and of merry voices. And his attention was attracted to the window. There at the gate stood a little carriage, from which descended a stout old lady and a stout old gentleman. Mr. and Mrs. Spice returned without a doubt.

"Five minutes more and I would have been clear of the house. However I'll not stay long," and with this determination

he descended to the hall, just in time to see Hetty rush into the old gentleman's arms with the exclamation, "Dear papa."

Out of them she came in a moment, turning rosy red as she murmured:

"Oh, papa, I quite forgot—this is Mr. Morton."

John Morton stood like one petrified. He hardly heard the old gentleman's apology for his absence, or the old lady's welcome.

The truth which was slowly dawning on him made him oblivious to all else. He stared at Hetty, whose mischievous face was dimpling and blushing in the most bewitching way. And slowly his lips formed two words—they were—"Miss Spice!"

"Eh!" said the old gentleman; "I really didn't understand you."

"The gentleman wants an introduction," said Hetty. "Please tell him that I am Miss Spice and your daughter."

Then she burst into a peal of laughter that made the old house ring, and brought on her head a maternal reproof for being "so wild before a stranger."

Poor John Morton believed himself the victim of a dream.

But two hours after he had recovered his senses, and sitting close to Hetty on the porch in the moonlight whispered:

"Hetty, do you thing Miss Spice will say yes?"

And Hetty answered, "I think she will." After awhile she said—the old lady's absence and the old gentleman's nap favoring whispers:

"Never say I told you any stories. I told you I made myself generally useful and that they gave me my board and clothes didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is true."

"Ah!"

"So you fancied me a servant of your own accord, sir. How could I help that?"

"Oh, Hetty, Hetty! But one story—say, two—you have told. You said Miss Spice was ugly and cross—I know she is pretty and an angel."

Then there was a sound suspiciously like a kiss, and there were but three on the porch, and Mr. Spice was snoring so it could not have been him.

One month after that there was a wedding, and Mr. John Morton was united to Miss Spice; and if all weddings were the beginning of years as happy as they have spent since then, it would be well for married folks the wide world over. Though Mrs. Morton is a little mischievous, and sometimes tells a story of a gentleman she knew who traveled miles to woo and marry an heiress and at the end fall in love with a girl in pink calico.

ABOLITION IS A LIE—a monstrous, revolting and impious lie. It assumes that white men and negroes have a common origin and a common nature, and therefore it strives to force them to live under the same condition and be amalgamated in the same system, just as we do with the Irish, Germans, or other varieties or portions of our race. It is also a crime, hideous and awful, against God and his creatures, for it attempts to reform the order of nature and equalize beings whom God has made unequal. Finally, it is disguise, monarchism, and could it succeed in this country, it would necessarily overthrow Republican institutions, and indeed the masses—the great toiling multitudes—would be degraded into a condition immeasurably and unutterably more hopeless than the most degraded people of the Old World.

The usher of the Troy Opera House a few evenings ago, perceived in a front seat a person arrayed in black broadcloth and wearing a round crowned felt hat. The attentive usher hurried down the aisle, and touched the spectator on the shoulder with a "You must take off your hat, sir. The head turned round, and a pair of feminine eyes gave the usher an indignant look, he retired with "I beg your pardon, madam," and the audience testified their appreciation of the incident by a subdued applause.

A beautiful girl stepped into a shop to buy a pair of mitts. "How much are they?" "Why," said the gallant but impudent clerk, lost in gazing upon her sparkling eyes and ruby lips, "you shall have them for a kiss." "Agreed," said the young lady, pocketing the mitts while her eyes spoke daggers, "and as I see you give credit here, charge it on your books and collect it the best way you can." So saying, she hastily tripped out.

The man who takes things easy—The city pickpocket.