

A FORTUNATE GIFT.

THEY made a strikingly contrasting picture standing in the warm June twilight, and the fragrant odors of the roses and the woodbine, and the budding grape vines, lingered around them as if the tender scents were fitting tributes to them.

Two fair young girls, the same age to an hour, and unlike as sisters could possibly be, and each a perfect type of her own style of loveliness—both of them peeresses in their royal dower of beauty.

Rose stood leaning against the railing of the verandah, her laughing eyes, that could melt from the cool, brilliant gray they now looked into such liquid darkness when occasion required—splendid calm, cold eyes were roaming away out into the gathering dust that was falling in a purple-gray of tissue over wood and lawn.

She turned her face toward her companion. Her eyes suddenly relaxed in their wandering, listless glances, and showed a half-vexed, half-amused expression.

"Bell, how much longer are we going to stay here?—at least how much longer do you want to stop?—I am sure I shall die of ennui if I have much more of it."

"I don't think of going back to town yet, Rose. I wish we might never have to go."

"Never go back? Why, Bell, is it possible that you are so infatuated with the country as to actually wish that?—Child, for three months it is all very well to bury one's self as we are buried, and I've no doubt that mamma will feel much better and stronger for it; but to stay longer, in a hired cottage, with only one half-grown girl to assist in the work, and no amusements of any sort, and our joint stock of earnings, exhausting itself daily—I tell you, Bell, I prefer our own suite of rooms at home, and my music scholars and your book-keeping, with a chance of occasional enjoyment."

"I dare say you're right, dear. But I do love the country, Rose."

"So would I if, for instance, I lived in the mansion over yonder—Ferry Court, you know—where the stately housekeeper showed us through and desecrated on the many qualities and vast wealth of its owner. I forgot to tell you, Bell, that there will a grand reception a week after he comes back, and he is expected hourly."

Bell lifted her eyes in a graceful little gesture of surprise.

"A reception? Oh, Rose, and of course there'll be a dance. Oh, dear, how I'd like to go!"

"Of course you'd like to go. But do you think for a moment that the aristocrats around here would condescend to associate with us?"

Bell's face grew stern.

"Why not? We are ladies born and bred, if we do work for a living."

"You foolish child! I tell you our faces and our handsome dresses—if we had them—would take us where our family name would not. And I can tell you something else, Bell—"

The little gate at the roadside opened at that instant, and the sound of lagging footsteps coming toward the house interrupted Rose's remark, and then a dusty, travel-stained man paused at the foot of the steps and touched his dingy hat-rim to the girls.

He was evidently one of the many respectable, discouraged, disheartened men one so often sees tramping through the country in search of work.

Rose drew herself up.

"Go away. We have nothing for you. We don't encourage tramps here."

He touched his hat—the rim was decidedly battered and dusty.

"I beg your pardon, ladies; but if you will give me a—"

Rose swept across the floor angrily.

"Will you march on, or will I have to set the dog on you? Bell, go tell Jane to unfasten Rover."

The man turned away slowly, as if to move was an effort, and Bell sprang up in an impulse of protest.

"Rose, how can you be so heartless! He is pale as death, and only see how he draws himself along? You might have let him sit down a minute, and at least have given him a kind word and a piece of bread and butter."

A contemptuous laugh pealed from Rose's red lips.

"Tired and ill! Drunk and a thief, you'd better say! A piece of bread and butter! Absurd, Bell!"

Bell raised her finger warningly.

"Oh, Rose, don't! he'll hear you!"

Rose raised her voice a key higher.

"Let him hear, then! Perhaps you had better sit and watch that he does not faint and fall."

She swept haughtily into the house, leaving Bell with her cheeks flushing and compassion born of sweet womanly sympathy glowing in her blue eyes as she watched the man walk slowly, painfully, and finally halt at the gate, as if

In utter discouragement at the long stretch of road between him and the next house, where he might find what Rose had rudely denied—the magnificent country seat of Lionel Granville, from whose doors no beggar was ever turned away hungry.

Bell saw him, and her quick instincts told her what she imagined his manner meant.

Quick as a bird, she dashed up stairs to her room and snatched her portmanteau from the bureau drawer, and was down again with a sovereign in her hand and she ran softly after him still leaning against the gate post, and still looking with that same strange expression on his pale face at the towers of Fernley Court.

"Here, please. It isn't much, but it is all I have to spare. Take it, please."

He looked surprisedly at her, and then at the money.

"You are very kind, but you are mistaken. I only wanted a—"

Bell thrust the money in his hand.

"Never mind, please. I think I can see you are proud; but please take it. There!"

He seemed amused at her eagerness, but made no more ado about accepting the gift and pocketing it, as he stood and watched her slim figure flitting away like a spirit in the dust.

The next day Rose came into Bell's room, radiant as she only permitted herself to be under such circumstances her gray eyes flashing, and her red lips parted in a smile of triumphant delight.

"Bell, see this! Now what do you say?"

She laid a square, monogrammed envelope in the girl's lap, addressed to Misses Melton, and bearing inside invitations to the reception at Fernley Court for a fortnight from that night.

Rose watched the girl's sweet face glow under the surprise, then saw, to her amazement, the flush of delight fade.

"Well, Bell, of course we'll go. I'll take some money I can spare and get some *suisee*, and wear natural flowers with it; and I know you have a sovereign laid aside for an emergency. You can get a good many things with it—gloves and a sash, you know—and who knows but what Lionel Granville may be captivated?"

Bell laid the envelope softly down.

"I can't go, dear unless I wear my old white muslin, which will look wretched beside your new *suisee*. I—I've spent my money!"

Rose frowned.

"Spent your money? Why, I saw it yesterday morning in your drawer. I noticed that the edge of the sovereign was a little chipped, and remember wondering if it was a good one or not.—Spent your money! Bell, what do you mean?"

Bell met the vexed eyes as calmly as she could. She was just a little in awe of this magnificent sister of hers.

"I gave it to that poor man last night, Rose, I was so sorry. I am sure he wasn't the sort of man to talk as you did. I know he deserved the money."

Rose sat down, and folded her hands in icy wrath.

"Give a sovereign to a tramp—a beggar! Well, if it doesn't pass my comprehension."

Rose swept out of the room—she was like a duchess in her movements—and poor Bell went on with her sewing, wondering if her old white muslin wouldn't look pretty well if it was nicely got up, thinking that there was a sea-green sash somewhere she had never worn; and a pair of white kids at home that Rose could go for when she went to buy her *suisee*. So, while her busy, deft fingers sewed through the summer days on Rose's airy dress, little Bell decided she would go, after all, and wear her white dress, and tea-roses in her golden tresses, and the sea-green sash knotted on her skirt—a simple, exquisite toilet, that made a very Undine of her, that made people turn their heads for more than a second or third look when she and Rose entered the magnificent ball-room.

It was perfectly delightful every way. Mr. Granville possessed none but high-bred, intelligent friends, and the Misses Melton were treated accordingly.

The music was heavenly, and from her seat where she sat like a queen in state, Rose watched her handsome host who had bowed low over her hand when he was introduced—watched him as, in his quiet, self-possessed manner, he went among his guests.

Her heart was beating—would he, oh, would he ask her for the first dance, or would he go among the groups of stylish women from the city, any of whom would be honored by his attention?

And then Rose saw Mr. Granville go straight across the room, right by her, and bow slowly to Bell as he said a few words and offered his arm.

Bell! Bell! to lead the grand quadrille! Bell on Lionel Granville's arm, the observed of all observers—as fair as a sea-symph, and so graceful, so sweetly unconscious of her radiant beauty.

Rose sat gloomily through the first quadrille and watched Lionel's pale, handsome face, as he bent it very near Bell's golden curls, his ardent, admiring eyes, that looked so eagerly into the sweet, girlish face, that others beside Rose noted his attention.

Then, the dance over, Lionel gave Bell his arm.

"That has been a delightful quadrille, Miss Melton. By the way, did you know I have something that belongs to you?"

They had reached Rose's chair by this time, and Bell turned laughingly to him.

"Something of mine! I do not see how that can be, Mr. Granville. Do you, Rose?"

Rose favored him with her most fascinating smile.

"Indeed I do not, seeing that this is the first time we ever saw Mr. Granville."

He smiled in Bell's eyes.

"I'll leave you to fathom the mystery. Don't forget the first waltz for me, Miss Bell."

He went away, so handsome, so courtly, and Bell's foolish little heart was throbbing with new, vague delight, while Rose was almost suffocating with envy at the signal triumph of her sister. Mr. Granville came for his waltz.

He drew her hand through his arm almost authoritatively.

"Miss Bell, it seems I have always known you, yet you say you never saw me before. Suppose we take a walk through the conservatory instead of having this waltz?"

Into the fragrant semi-dusk they went, where fountains tinkled and rare flowers bloomed, and the music came in velled sweetness and richness.

"I want you to be sure I am right, Miss Melton, when I say I have something of yours. Look at me closely.—Have you ever seen me before?"

He bent his face near hers. It was gravely smiling—and so tender and good—and Bell looked timidly at the smiling yet stern eyes.

"I am sure I never saw you before, Mr. Granville."

"Then have you ever seen this?"

He drew from his vest pocket a sovereign—the very one, with a tiny bit chipped off it, that Bell had given the tramp.

"Don't you understand, dear child? I had taken a freak into my head that I would walk from town here, and it was a grand walk, although it took three days, and ruined my clothes. I stopped at your little cottage to beg a glass of water. You know the rest."

Bell's face was a marvel surprise of at that moment.

"In your kindness and goodness you gave it to me, Miss Bell, and the little act gave me an insight into your heart that a year of ordinary intercourse could never do. I shall keep it until you buy it back. I have set a price on it, and if you are ever ready to give it you can have it."

He put the money reverently away in his vest pocket, and took her out among the crowd again, a strangely happy girl.

And before the summer roses had faded, Bell paid the price for the chipped sovereign—her own heart—that Lionel Granville pleaded for so eagerly.

She is the mistress of the grand house now, and Rose visits her once a year, not oftener, because Bell's husband does not care much for her.

But the invalid mother has a life-long home amid the luxuries of Fernley Court, and Bell is happier than the birds that sing in the trees of the big old park.

A Romance from Troy.

THE Troy "Press" says: The following very romantic story is but the substance of what happened in our city many years ago. The characters that appear as principals have passed away, but their descendants yet live among us and occupy honorable positions in society. Two young men who had passed through college and graduated with honors were studying medicine. They were fast friends and were almost inseparable. They entered society together, and were well received in the best houses. They were together one evening at a reception in one of the wealthiest mansions in the city, when a new star appeared in the person of a niece of the hostess, who had come from Massachusetts. She was handsome, and reports agree in saying that she was as good as she was pretty.

Both of the medical students were smitten, and for the first time in their lives a feeling of estrangement came between them. The natures of the two young men were essentially different.—One was frank and open as the day, while the other was taciturn and reserved.

Both paid court to the lady, but she soon manifested a choice for the more frank character and they became engaged. The defeated suitor seemed to bear his disappointment resignedly. In time

the lady went home, and the successful suitor went abroad to complete his studies.

While absent, letters were received by the girl concerning her lover which created the feeling that he was false to her, and finally one came in his own handwriting bidding her farewell, and stating that he was to be married to a lady of rank.

This proved almost a death-blow to the girl, but she soon rallied and sought in every way to conceal the traces of grief.

The defeated suitor was at hand and again proffered his homage, and finally, in a fit of pique, she married him.

Had this been the finale of the story there would be no romance. It was not long after the wedding before the lover returned. He could not be made to believe that the one he loved was false by nature. He reasoned that there was cause for her change, and like a sensible man he commenced the task of unraveling the mystery. After much trouble he obtained an interview with the wife in the absence of her husband and as an answer to his upbraidings she handed him his letter of renunciation.—She was happier than she had been in many a day when she learned that the letter was a forgery, and that the lover had always been true to her.

She at once renounced her husband, and soon opportunity offered, and she procured a divorce and was united to her first and only love. The husband and wife settled down in this city, and here he enjoyed a long and successful career, and when he died, full of years and honors, and was surrounded by his wife and family. The false friend, who, by his wicked machinations, had wrought so much sorrow, removed to Lansingburg, where he became a physician of note. He afterward re-married, and his posterity to-day occupy honored positions in the State. In two family Bibles in this city the marriages are recorded among the family archives.

Redeeming Mutilated Currency.

WHENEVER a national bank or legal tender note becomes mutilated, whenever anybody comes into possession of a worn out note; or whenever by accident any money of this character becomes so far destroyed that it will not pass, the owner may send it to the Treasury of the United States.—The mutilated currency goes to the redemption division of the Treasurer's office, and there judgment is passed on it.

Of course every precaution is had against fraud. Quite often a woe-begone piece of a note will be sent in, and after the crucial test will turn out to be the relic of a counterfeit bill. Sometimes the affidavits accompanying a fragment of what was once a greenback are 'manufactured.'

One of the most remarkable cases that has ever come before the redemption division occurred recently. A Nebraska backwoodsman dropped his pocketbook, containing one hundred dollars, into the camp-fire. Before he could get it out the heat so acted upon it that the book had shrivelled up into a hard burnt ball. He did not attempt to open it, but sent it on with a statement of the facts.

The ball was cracked, just as a hickory nut would be in order to get at its contents. Inside were found, intact and undamaged, the twenty and ten dollar bills that went to make up the one hundred dollars.

A farmer living in Illinois distrusted the banks and always kept his money in his house or about his person. A short time ago he had \$11,000 in ready cash and carried it in his coat-pocket. He went to bed, leaving his coat on a chair. His wife complained of the coldness of the room, and he got up to stir the fire. He had been back in bed but a short time, when the room filled with smoke and the well known odor of something burning.

He jumped up to find his coat pocket burnt out and his \$11,000 a charred mass. Fortunately there was enough distinguishable about the notes to secure him, upon his sworn and attested affidavits of the facts, a new set complete.

A Tennessean put \$135 into his boot and secreted the boot. When he went back for it he lost his bearing and could not find it.

Six months afterwards he stumbled across the old boot exactly where he had left it. The money inside had furnished nourishment for cockroaches and other vermin. A handful of small pieces was all that was left to tell the tale. Sending them on to the Treasury they were examined, and enough of them were identified to give the man \$30.

Probably nothing is truer than that a thankful spirit has always fresh matter for thankfulness. To praise God for the past is the sure way to secure mercies for the future. Prayer and praise live or die together. A gracious, thankful spirit bespeaks a soul prepared for the highest and sweetest enjoyment on earth or in heaven.

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