no grace except that which love gave him, and lifted her hand to his lips. He seemed no more astonished at her reply than he had been at the spiritual visitation of the night before.

When the boys came home that night they found the professor radiant, Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley beaming approval upon their daughter, and May herself submitting to it all with the most curious expression ever seen upon any dimpled face—a compound of laughter and doubt, of fun and fear.

Whether she was pricked by her conscience, or only frightened by the boldness of the game she was carrying on, they could not tell. As soon as was possible they got her alone by herself, and fell upon her, metaphorically speaking, with an avalanche of questions.

"May, did he really ask you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"But he acts as if you had said yes."

"Well, so I did."

"By Jove," ejaculated Tom, perfectly astounded.

"You know I told you, boys, that if I helped you in your fun, you must let me have mine."

"But, May, May, do you know he has already asked father's consent?—What a storm there will be!"

"She means," interrupted Jem, who had been studying her face attentively, "to let it go until it comes to the finale, and then say no instead of yes when the minister puts the question."

Tom's face was a picture of mingled consternation and admiration. He had held a very low opinion of the courage of the girls up to this point, but here was one who was willing to go beyond him.

"Did you think of this last night when you wouldn't tell us what you were going to do?" he asked, humbly.

"Of course I did."

"Only think, Tom, he believed every word of it after all!" put in Jem.

They congratulated themselves upon having perpetrated a successful joke; but still their countenances wore a very uneasy expression.

"After all, May, it's a little too bad," said Tom, hesitatingly; "the professor is a good sort of a man, though he is such a muff. We won't spoil your fun, of course, but just look at it before you go ahead. Have you thought what an awful row there'll be when it comes out?"

"It's too late to stop now," said his sister faintly, as she was a little alarmed herself at the prospect.

"Well, anyway, May, you can marry me, and get out of the scrape," said Jem, taking her hand, consolingly.

"She'd better marry you right after the other ceremony then," answered Tom omniously. "You had better take her out of father's reach as soon as possible. He thinks everything of the old professor."

"Well, why shouldn't we?" asked Jem, with confidence.

"It's just as well now as any time.—May won't mind."

And, indeed, May did look so relieved at this proposal, after the fashion of a child who has unexpectedly grasped a torpedo, that Tom began to think it would be the best way out of the scrape, after all.

To be sure, the pair would have nothing to live on after they were married, except his sister's little legacy, which would not go far, and besides, which could not be claimed for a year, till the young lady was of age. But Tom had a cheerful confidence in Jem's abilities, and as great a confidence in his sister.

They finally settled it among themselves that this was to be the plan, and afterward tried to look as if everything was all right.

One of them at least failed ignominiously. Tom was attacked with fits of self-reproach every time he chanced to meet the professor's eye, and whenever the unconscious man showed him any trifling kindness, would rush out of the house as if he were a convicted criminal. This went on for a few months.—Tom growing more and more conscience stricken. May more and more silent and timid, till at last the powers that be were moved to set the wedding day.

They all felt a kind of relief at this.—The joke that had seemed so ludicrous at first had grown into a species of nightmare, which bestrode them all mercilessly.

May submitted to the wedding prepations with a quietness very unlike her. She avoided solitary interviews with the professor; but as he had far too great a reverence for her to seek them, this conduct then did not attract attention.—There was much wondering and many comments among the gossips of the village over this apparently unsuitable engagement; but Miss May had a reputation for doing unexpected things, so at last the wondering settled down into acquiescence.

By the morning of the wedding day Jem and Tom were beginning to recognize the serious aspect of the drama to be enacted, and were not a little nervous on entering the church. In their trepidation they nearly forgot to provide themselves with white gloves, if there had not come a timely reminder from May.

The service commenced—went on without interruption to the place where the decisive question was put. Jem and Tom listened in the utmost excitement to the professor's response; and then the question came to May:

"Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?"

Jem was just rising from his seat in anticipation of the coming scene, when her answer came, in a low, clear voice that could be heard distinctly in all parts of the church:

"Yes."

The two boys were horror-struck.—Was it possible she knew what she was doing? Was she overpowered by fright?

Whether she was or not, they certainly were, for, in spite of a frantic impulse to cry out and proclaim the mistake, the decorum of the place kept them still till the ceremony was over.—Then they rushed to her side, heedless of order or conventionalities.

"May, May!" whispered Tom, catching her hand in his excitement, "are you crazy? Do you know that you are married to him?"

The color in her face deepened as in a late sunset sky.

"Yes, I know it," she answered, quietly, laying her other hand on her husband's arm; and then lifting her beautiful, flushed face to her brother, "and I love him."

Perhaps two more discomfited young men never stole out of church than were Jem and Tom, as they slipped away unnoticed among the crowd of people. The former, indeed, was savage, and declared that he would never forgive her.

But Tom, when he saw his sister's face leaning out of the carriage for the last time before they drove away, was moved to kiss her in a grim, uncompromising sort of way; and seeing the penitent tears gathering in her brown eyes, to mutter to himself:

"It was our fault, after all. We acted as if we were sure she hadn't got any heart, and no wonder she was ashamed to show it."

As for Jem, he finally retracted his heroic resolves, and consented to a most amicable truce between himself and Mrs. Professor Rensel after her return; but the young men were never quite sure whether the professor believed in that ghost or not."

A PENNSYLVANIA ROMANCE.

EVERY day proves the verity of that trite old saying that "Truth is stranger than fiction." Here now we have from our own State and from Tioga county one of the wildest regions of the State, a story romantic enough for the foundation of a novel, and one which we condense as follows:

Kate Hanson, a girl of odd masculine ways and only 18 years old, disappeared from her Tioga home twenty-two years ago. She used to spend much of her time in the woods, being fond of hunting and expert with both rifle and rod, and one day, taking the rifle presented her by her father, she disappeared in the woods never to return.

Everything possible was done to find trace of her, but at last she was given up as lost. It was thought by her companions that Kate having formed an attachment for a worthless young man, Johnson by name, and her parents having forbidden marriage with him, had eloped with him. Colonel Wilson, of this city, spent the winter of 1876 in Cuba, meeting while there Major James Hopkins, of Ohio, who served in Thomas' division during the war. Hopkins owned a fine plantation in the interior and warmly invited him to become his guest. The home was a delightful one, presided over by Mrs. Hopkins, a handsome and dignified lady of about forty. He had two children, and all were living happy and contented. In the confidence begotten of acquaintanceship, it finally came out that Mrs. Hopkins was none other than Kate Hanson, of Tioga county, and Watson was intrusted by her with the salient points of her history since her disappearance, and requested to inform her relatives that she would, as soon as possible, pay them a visit. The story she told was a singular one.

When her father ordered her to cease receiving Johnson' attentions, she concluded he was right, but could not get rid of Johnson's company but by leaving home. She passed that night in the woods, and next day found a hunter's cabin—the owners absent. Appropriating a suit of their clothes, she disguised herself, travelled to Dunkirk, and found a situation as cook on a Detroit and Buffalo lake boat. One day she read an advertisement giving a minute description of her, and offering a reward for her recovery. This alarmed her, and she wandered to Cincinnati and found employment on an Ohio river steamer, in which position she remained until the outbreak of the civil war, when she joined an Ohio regiment, and was in all of the engagements of General Thomas' division. In 1863, she was promoted to sergeant in her company. In 1864, her captain met her one day as she was returning from stationing a guard. He said to her that he had long suspected that she was a woman, and demanded to know if such was the case. The charge was so sudden and unexpected that she lost her self-possession and convicted herself by her reply. She begged the captain not to reveal her secret, but he took her before General Thomas and made the strange fact known to him.

Kate was at once sent back to the rear, and ordered to resume her proper attire. She became a nurse in the hospital, and soon had in her care her captain, he having been wounded in a skirmish. Between the captain and the nurse, whom he had detected in the ranks of his company, a strong affection formed. At the close of the war they were married, the captain, meantime, having been promoted to the rank of major. Major Hopkins' family was one of the best in Ohio, and it refused to recognize his wife. She had $900, which she had saved from her earnings on the steamers. This was in a Cincinnati bank. She drew it out, and, with her husband, went to Cuba. There they prospered and were found by Colonel Wilson in 1876. Word has been received from Mrs. Hopkins that she and her husband and children will sail for New York in August, and visit the home she so mysteriously left nearly a quarter of a century ago.

The Old Joker.

Smith H. is a notorious joker—one of those queer fellows who joke everywhere, in all company, and from force of habit. He was attending court in answer to a subpœna, and was dining at the public table. He began to chat with an acquaintance, who presently asked:

"Smith, how old are you?"

"If I live," replied Smith, solemnly, "till the 30th of next month, I shall be seventy-one."

A lawyer, who sat opposite, here looked at him with an expression of surprise, but said nothing. The next day Smith was called as a witness, and after giving his name and residence, was asked his age.

"Fifty-three," was the prompt response.

"What!" exclaimed the lawyer.—"Didn't I hear you say at the hotel, yesterday, that you would be seventy-one if you lived until the 30th of this month?"

"Next month, sir! With that correction, I did say so."

"And now you swear that you are but fifty-three?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, sir! tell me what kind of a witness you are, any way. What do you mean?"

"Why, I think if you live until the 30th of next month you may be 100 because, sir, next month is February, and and hasn't but 28 days; and when I see the 30th of February I expect to be 71!"

The court, the bar, and the audience joined in the laugh, and Smith's examination was proceeded with.

Only First-class Paper.

A Detroiter who has the reputation of being hard pay, was waited on the other day by a man who began:

"Mr. Blank, I hold your note for $75. It is long past due, and I wanted to see what you would do about it?"

"My note? Ah! yes, yes; this is my note. For value received I promise to pay, and so forth. Have you been to the note-shavers with this?"

"I have, but none of them would have it."

"Wouldn't, eh? And you tried the banks?"

"Yes, sir, but they would not look at it."

"Wouldn't, eh? And I suppose you went to a justice to see about suing it?"

"I did, but he said the judgment wouldn't be worth a dollar.

"Did, eh? And now what proposition do you wish to make?"

"This is your note for seventy-five Give me five dollars and you can have it."

"Five dollars? No, sir! No, sir!—I have no money to throw away, sir."

"But it is your own note."

"True, sir; very true; but I'm not such an idiot to throw away money on worthless securities, no matter who signs them. I deal only in first-class paper, sir, and when that note has a negotiable value I will be pleased to discount it. Good day, sir—looks like settled weather again!"

Questions for the Liquor Seller.

A young man in Virginia had been sadly intemperate. He was a man of capability, fascination and power, but he had a passion for brandy which nothing could control. Often in his walks a friend remonstrated with him, but in vain; as often would he urge his friend to take the social glass in vain. On one occasion the latter agreed to yield to him, and as they walked up to the bar together he said:

"Gentlemen, what will you have?"

"Wine, sir," was the reply.

The glasses were filled, and the friends stood ready to pledge each other in renewed and eternal friendship, when he paused and said to his intemperate friend:

"Now, if I drink this glass and become a drunkard will you agree to take the responsibility?"

The drunkard looked at him with severity, and said:

"Set down the glass."

It was set down and the two walked away without saying a word.

Oh, the drunkard knows the awful consequences of the first glass. Even in his own madness for liquor he is not willing to assume the responsibility of another's becoming a drunkard.

What if this question was put to every liquor dealer as he asks for the license and pays his money:

"Are you willing to assume the responsibility?"

"How many would say, if the love of money did not rule, "Take back the license."

Curious Hiding Places.

Some women have curious ways of hiding their money. The Cincinnati *Commercial* says: "Mrs. Hansen put fifty dollars in the oven of her stove one night to keep it safe. Next morning, after breakfast, the national debt had been diminished exactly that much. A student of the curious would find it interesting to note the places in which women hide their money. One excellent and frugal dame used to tuck her little savings away under a corner of her carpet. The tiny roll of greenbacks grew fatter and fatter in the course of a year or two, when, the day after it counted $250, the house took fire, burned to the ground, and again the national debt was diminished by a little roll of a woman's pin-money. There was that other careful lady, too, who used sometimes to hide her diamond rings between two tea-cups in the kitchen cupboard, sometimes behind a certain brick in the cellar, and again under the lining of an old hat. She had divers other places of safety for her jewelry also, the only trouble being that she had so many hiding places she occasionally forgot where she last put her precious things, and about every three months would fancy she had been robbed, and the house would be turned inside out, and all therein be made uncomfortable until the missing gem would be found carefully tucked away in the folds of the bottom towel of the pile in the left-hand corner of the lower drawer in the clothes-press at the east end of the dining-room."

Early Impressions.

A straw will make an impression on the virgin snow, but let the snow remain but a short time and a horse's hoof can hardly penetrate it. So it is with the youthful mind. A trifling word may make an impression on it, but after a few years the most powerful appeals may cease to influence it. Think of this, you who have the training of the infant mind.

☞ Queen Victoria is said to object seriously to the feminine fashion of wearing the hair in a fringe across the forehead. It is stated further that she instructed the bridesmaids who appeared at the recent wedding of her son that they would not be permitted to wear their locks in that fashion, nor to don high heeled boots, nor to wear tied back gowns. Last year, it is reported, one young lady who came to a drawing room with her hair over her eyes, was informed by the Lord Chamberlain that until her hair had grown she need not attend any more at the palace.

☞ You need not fear for the manhood of a good boy. If the little fellow looks into your eye and speaks the honest truth, if he is respectful to those who deserve respect, brave when he should be brave, yet with no shame of being gentle, thank heaven, and do all you can to keep him so; but have no fear. As vices strengthen so do virtues. The good boy is more than likely to be a better man.

A Fool Once More.

"For ten years my wife was confined to her bed with such a complication of ailments that no doctor could tell what was the matter or cure for her, and I used up a small fortune in humbug stuff. Six months ago I saw a United States flag with "Hop Bitters" on it, and I thought I would be a fool once more. I tried it, but my folly proved to be wisdom. Two bottles cured her, she is now as well and strong as any man's wife, and it cost me only two dollars. Such folly pays.—H. W., Detroit, Mich."

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