

THE RIVAL COUSINS:

—OR—

Frances Vaughan's Secret.

"YES, he loves me; he loves me!"

Frances Vaughan uttered the words almost impatiently, with the vehemence that was a part of her nature when strongly moved. Then she glanced up at her Cousin Edith.

They were so different, the two women who sat in the cosy room overlooking the lawn at Woodlea, a reach of emerald grass burnished by the May sunshine. Cousins on their fathers' side, but the relationship was faintly told in looks. Edith was five years the elder, and proud of her distinctive Vaughan inheritance. She had always passed for a beauty; her regal air, her calm, classic face, her abundant blonde hair, and her exquisite figure, certainly established her claim. Somewhat haughty, but that was in the Vaughan blood. Her grandfather was all the prouder of her for it. Sitting in her crimson-cushioned chair she made a very lovely picture, though she roused herself a trifle at her cousin's speech.

"It will never do, Frances."

"Perhaps I might make it do," and the young girl clinched her hand with fierce determination.

"Grandfather would consent to a suitable marriage, but never to this."

"Suitable indeed!" for something in the cool tone of Edith roused every fibre of resistance in the small frame. "Mr. Harold, for instance!"

"Mr. Harold makes no secret of his admiration for you."

The bright face flushed, and a sharp frown settled between the straight brows.

"I've some wayward blood in me. The Vaughan current runs in straight channels, never pausing to daily with wayside trifles. To marry Mr. Harold would kill me. His precision, his formality, his everlasting platitudes, would wear me out body and soul. I should have a handsome establishment, but of what use is a great white tombstone when one is dead?"

"You are always unreasonable, Frances."

This calm superiority had been very hard for Frances Vaughan to bear. At her cousin's last remark the hot blood flashed to her face.

"I was not born after your fashion, Edith. Thank Heaven that I am Vaughan only in name, and that I can change that at a moment's notice."

"You don't mean—" and Edith Vaughan hesitated to utter treason with her proud lips.

"I mean that Ross Stanhope has asked me to marry him, and fearing that it would be impossible to win grandfather's consent, has proposed a speedier plan."

"Frances, you will not, you cannot—"

"I'm not so sure." Frances Vaughan rose with a proud gesture. A slight, childish thing she was, looking really younger than her eighteen years, and though not regularly handsome, was bright and brilliant. Every thing about her seemed warm and glowing, and you read in her face a large capacity for tenderness, perhaps unreasoning devotion to any cause she espoused. "I'm not so sure," she went on. "I have some fortune of my own, and this life here doesn't appear all engrossing to me. I am not enough of a Vaughan to appreciate it. I want love."

The sneer did not touch Edith. She said, calmly—

"A poor artist with no position, a man we know very little about. I should advise you to give up the acquaintance. It frets grandfather to have him come to the house."

"Thank you." The ripe lip curled.

"I have warned you," Edith said, loftily. "I will not risk any complicity with such a termination. Whatever you do is upon your own responsibility."

Left to herself, Frances buried her face in her hands and wept a few passionate tears. Why was it that her cousin's counsel always exasperated instead of convincing her? Her feelings were strong, but her moods evanescent. Ten minutes later she was rambling through the shrubbery, lured thither by a figure she had seen lingering under the trees.

Edith watched them from the window of her own room. She could go to her grandfather and explain the danger Frances was in, for Ross Stanhope's friends had not given him a very strong endorsement. But if the girl inherited a taste for such people, opposition would only make her the more resolute. She smoothed the matter over to her conscience, and went to her grandfather's room to read to him, her usual custom.

"Where is Frances?" he asked, presently.

"I saw her walking with Mr. Stanhope a while ago," she replied quietly.

"There must be an end to this nonsense," Mr. Vaughan began, impatiently.

"I will not have him considered a

visitor. A man with no prospects, no position. I have been foolish not to speak before, as the child really has no pride. I shall tell her this very evening. If she would only like Harold."

The bell rang for supper. Frances passed her cousin in the hall, exclaiming, with a gay laugh, "Just in time."

"Grandfather was vexed about your being with Mr. Stanhope. He asked for you sometime ago."

"I bore every body when I am in doors, and if I stir out I am needed," she said, with a swelling and indignant heart.

Edith was her usual graceful self at table, but Frances felt constrained and chafed inwardly. Afterward she was summoned to the library, and Mr. Vaughan, now really angry, peremptorily forbade her receiving Mr. Stanhope or walking with him, and laid down some rules for her future conduct. She might have borne this if he had paused here, for in a certain way she did both respect and love him. But when he touched upon Mr. Harold's regard for her, and held him up as the kind of man he desired her to marry, her endurance reached its utmost bound. Usually her temper flashed up in a blaze, but now there was a white line about her mouth and a fierce determination in her eyes.

"I have always intended that you should have a share in Woodlea, but if you displease me in this matter of marriage, you need never expect one farthing from me."

Frances bowed haughtily, and walked across the hall to the drawing-room as she had been commanded. Mr. Harold had already taken up his post. To think of spending all the glad young years of her life with such a man, listening to his stereotyped compliments and threadbare attempts at wit! Well, to-night she would be obedient, and to-morrow, perhaps, choose another destiny. She had it in her power.

Mr. Vaughan looked in upon them presently with satisfaction. Frances was making herself really charming. Edith's clearer eyes discerned the something hidden beneath the mask. Counsel, she told herself, would be of no avail.

When Frances Vaughan laid her head upon the pillow that night, relieving the fiery throbbing pulses with bitter tears, a crushing sense of loneliness overwhelmed her. Away from this formal rule, this cold, loveless home, life looked bright and full of enjoyment. Who cared for her here? She had always been a thorn in Edith's path. If there had been no Edith, it seemed as if she and her grandfather might have touched some shore of real affection. And then she checked herself. "I am selfish and wicked to think thus of her," she said, between her sobs, "but we can never love one another. And as I am an interloper here, who would care if I went? They are sufficient for each other's comfort and pleasure."

She was quiet and preoccupied the next morning, and plead an engagement with a friend for the day, promising to be back early. Edith saw her depart with a very curious feeling. It seemed as if she had only to stretch out her hand to save her cousin from some impending evil. But her eyes kept their cold, calm look, her voice had no strand of tenderness in it.

When Frances returned no one knew. Going to her room late in the afternoon for some embroidery patterns she had taken, Edith found her asleep. There were traces of tears still visible upon the long lashes shadowing her cheek, and the flush of recent excitement lingered over her brow. Another token caught the quick eye of Edith, the glitter of a plain gold ring on her third finger. She had fancied that Frances might be tempted to some daring step and leave Woodlea, but to marry Ross Stanhope and brave it out here, astonished her beyond measure. She stole noiselessly out of the room, leaving Frances alone with her secret.

A woman less strong and reticent must have evinced some curiosity, but Edith acted quite as usual for the next few days, although she could see that her cousin was nervous and ill at ease. The ring disappeared, and some friend announced in the course of a morning call that Mr. Stanhope had left the village. Mr. Vaughan was delighted at this.

"He will be shocked at her duplicity when he knows the truth," Edith thought, and she waited anxiously for some announcement, but the weeks passed away marked by no event save the rejection of Mr. Harold, and a certain listlessness in the place of the wild spirits that in Frances had so wounded the refined pride of the Vaughans.

"Evan Murray is coming to Woodlea next week," Mr. Vaughan announced to his grand-daughters one morning, as the letters had been brought in before leaving the breakfast-table.

Both faces flushed with anticipation, then that of Frances as suddenly paled.

"I did not know he had returned from

Europe," Edith said, watching her cousin with a sort of stealthy glance.

"He only reached America a few days ago, but he says in his note that he owes his first duty to me, and shall pay it with pleasure. He has been away just three years."

Both girls remembered the summer made so pleasant by his frequent visits. Frances was but a child, yet his appreciation had stirred her not unlike the love of her dead father. Every path had been made smoother by him. It seemed as if she had hardly lived since then. She thought of him as a grave, quiet man, tender and generous of heart, and with a most unwearied patience. Would he care for her now as he had then, for she needed a friend sorely.

"Mrs. Parker must put the square chamber in order," Mr. Vaughan went on. "It is a long while since we have had friends to stay, and I am really delighted. I shall enjoy his visit so much. His foreign experiences have not led him to forget us, though it is not in him to neglect an old friend."

"He will be somewhat changed," Edith responded. "These years of travel and mingling constantly with foreign society must have made some impression upon him." And then she thought, with a conscious pride, that but few could surpass her in elegance or beauty.

The announcement caused a pleasant excitement at Woodlea. Edith with a watchful eye overlooked the preparations, instructed the housekeeper within doors and the gardener without. There must not be anything that would jar on the most fastidious taste, no small neglect, no lack of order.

Mr. Vaughan thought of something besides the pleasure of welcoming back an old friend. Evan Murray, of all other men, would he have chosen for his successor at Woodlea, had there been no other heir. And since Edith's husband would fill this post, he had speculated not a little on the sort of person he would be. Not that she had lacked suitors, but she had held herself regally above them thus far. More than once he had half wished Mr. Harold's fancy had taken that direction, for the Harold's had come of a proud old race. But since Mr. Murray had returned heart-whole, unwon by any foreign beauty, a new hope stirred the old man.

And though Edith betrayed no undue eagerness to meet him, it must be confessed that a vague idea, not unlike her grandfather's, found a place in her mind. He had liked her three years ago, and she had lost no charm since then. A mature, high-bred, beautiful woman of twenty-three, cultivated and accomplished. It was not vanity simply that led her to rate herself thus highly; she had seen enough of the world to know that she could command admiration from the highest sources.

Three years before, Frances, only a child, to be sure, had been an annoyance and a marplot. Mr. Murray evinced a strange liking for her, and it was quite impossible for Edith to banish her from all their walks and conversations. And now what was to be done? Had the girl really any secret, and would it be wise to wreat it from her? Nothing could compensate, in Mr. Murray's estimation, for lack of truth and frankness. All deceit and double-dealing was abhorrent to him, and she knew that Frances had wound herself in some net. Since Ross Stanhope's departure she had changed perceptibly. Edith had not given up her first wild thought that a marriage had taken place between them, and she well knew that she both wrote and received letters unknown to her grandfather. Edith possessed the cool wariness of an Indian, and she waited day after day for some sudden betrayal, knowing that any secret or imprudent step would forfeit the regard of the young girl's only relative, as well as her home. And she bore her waiting the more patiently because Frances, after the first day or two, evinced no special interest in Mr. Murray's coming.

Indeed, she well knew she had no interest. Her desire for a friend expired as suddenly as it had been kindled. She had shut herself out of the pleasant things of life, chosen her path, and must walk in it, were the end bitter or sweet. Above all, she had an intense desire to get away from Woodlea, and it seemed rather as if the fates were conspiring to keep her here.

Mr. Murray made his appearance one lovely summer afternoon. A polished gentleman, possessing that higher beauty of soul that shone through every feature, and with a peculiar air of ease and refinement that spoke of a generous heart as well as a cultivated intellect. And as Edith greeted him she could not but be satisfied with the pleasure so delicately expressed.

"Where is Frances?" Mr. Vaughan asked, with a little frown.

"I left her in her room some time ago. She was complaining of a headache."

"Do not disturb her on my account,"

Mr. Murray said, when Mr. Vaughan would have summoned her. "As I am to be your guest for days, instead of an

hour or two, I shall have time to renew all my old friendships. I remember her only as a child; I dare say she has changed greatly."

"She does not resemble the Vaughans much," her grandfather returned, slowly, and with a look of pride at Edith. "And although she is grown in many respects, she is still a child."

Frances did not make her appearance until nearly supper-time. She looked languid and was very quiet, though there was little occasion for her talking, as Edith entertained their visitor in a most perfect manner. How lovely she looked with this delicate color in her cheeks, and the latent vivacity was just sufficient to tone the pride that occasionally strayed to the verge of haughtiness.

Mr. Murray felt much disappointed in Frances Vaughan. As a child he had taken a great deal of interest in her. Bright, winsome, full of spirit, generous to a fault; while he admitted that hers was a peculiar nature, he did expect some marked development. Had her training brought about this look of constraint and repression, or was she really mindless and commonplace? No wonder he should turn to Edith with a sense of relief.

After a restless night, Frances was awake with the birds. How this burden she had added to her life oppressed her! In a few weeks her bright dreams had all faded. The long gray stretch of life lying before her appalled her. Could she change it, and if not, how could she endure the consciousness of this miserable secret four years? Sometimes she fancied that Edith suspected her, and she almost feared to be denounced and thrust from this home that had suddenly grown a place of refuge to her. She watched the sun as it came up in the east, and when her thoughts grew intolerable she rose and dressed herself. The fragrant morning air tempted her, and as soon as the servants were astir she stole down stairs and out on the wide walks.

"It will never do," she said, to herself. "I must dismiss these harassing fears, or I shall make myself ill. He surely cannot fall in his love for me, and perhaps, as he says, we are too poor to take up life together. Not that I should fear," and a little of the old light flashed into her eyes. So she strove to banish her thoughts in the beauty of the morning, and the fresh odoriferous air seemed to dispel the clouds that had been gathering about her soul. Walking briskly along brought a glow to her cheek and new life to every pulse. If she could only shake off the old shadow entirely! And she began to wonder if her one decisive step had not been fatally false. There could be no going back, however, no going forward, even, but just dreary waiting.

Turning a corner under the maples she came suddenly upon Mr. Murray. He was still an instant from astonishment at the bright vision before him, then held out his hand.

"I did not expect to find you playing wood-nymph," he said, with a smile. "It has improved you like enchantment. I hardly recognized you last evening, and felt—shall I admit it?—disappointed in you."

"Because I was grave and ladylike?" and a mirthful gleam strayed over her face.

"Because you were grave, too grave for any one in the very spring-tide of life, when there can be no interior shadows to darken the soul."

She colored deeply for a moment. "There are better subjects of conversation than I shall prove," she said, abruptly. It must be pleasant coming back to Woodlea at this season, and finding no changes. At least, it is a great delight to grandfather to have you here again."

"Your grandfather has been my dearest friend for so many years that it gives the place a homelike touch, and to a wanderer like me it is especially charming. But you seem quite a stranger. In the old times I used to be a sort of father confessor to you—have you forgotten that?"

The old life had gone out of her mind completely until he recalled it with a look and a word. But then it had been the frank confidence of a child with an elder brother or relative, now—she wondered if he loved Edith, and that she would be sufficiently strong to give her a claim like that of the past.

"The subject seems to be full of grave consideration for you. For the past month or two I have been wondering about the little girl I left, and how she would meet me on my return. And I know now the distance last evening was due only to the awkwardness of such meetings when there has been a decided change in one of the parties."

"You think I am changed, then?" She asked it hesitatingly.—Concluded next week.

"I take 'Dr. Sellers' Cough Syrup,' and no one in the city keeps clearer of coughs and colds than I. Druggists sell it. Price 25 cents."

MUSSEY & ALLEN

CENTRAL STORE

NEWPORT, PENN'A.

Now offer the public

A RARE AND ELEGANT ASSORTMENT OF

DRESS GOODS

Consisting of all shades suitable for the season

BLACK ALPACCAS

AND

Mourning Goods

A SPECIALITY.

BLEACHED AND UNBLEACHED

MUSLINS,

AT VARIOUS PRICES.

AN ENDLESS SELECTION OF PRINTS

We sell and do keep a good quality of

SUGARS, COFFEES & SYRUPS

And everything under the head of

GROCERIES!

Machine needles and oil for all makes of

Machines.

To be convinced that our goods are

CHEAP AS THE CHEAPEST,

IS TO CALL AND EXAMINE STOCK.

No trouble to show goods.

Don't forget the

CENTRAL STORE,

Newport, Perry County, Pa.

BLOOMFIELD ACADEMY.

The next regular term of this Institution begins MARCH 20th, 1880.

Full preparation, classical or otherwise, is given for any college—male or female—either for Freshman or Sophomore year.

A thorough course is provided for teachers, and the option is given of selecting one or two of the higher studies.

Prof. J. C. Miller will have charge of the Penmanship and business courses.

Music, Drawing and Painting.

Philosophical and Chemical apparatus for the study of the Natural Sciences, Literary Society, Library.

Students are at all times under the supervision of the Principal and their progress and conduct noted on their weekly reports.

Boarding, if in advance, \$2.50 per week, otherwise, \$2.75; Tuition from 50 cents to \$1.00 per week, in advance.

For further information, address,

J. R. FLICKINGER, A. B., Principal.

or WM. GRIER, Proprietor.

New Bloomfield, Pa.

92m.

SELLERS'

COUGH

SYRUP!

50 Years Before the Public!

Pronounced by all to be the most Pleasant and efficacious remedy now in use, for the cure of Coughs, Colds, Croup, Hoarseness, Tickling sensation of the Throat, Whooping Cough, etc. Over a million bottles sold within the last few years. It gives relief wherever used, and has the power to impart benefit that cannot be had from the cough mixtures now in use. Sold by all Druggists at 25 cents per bottle.

SELLERS' LIVER PILLS

are also highly recommended for curing liver complaint, constipation, sick-headaches, fever and ague, and all diseases of the stomach and liver. Sold by all Druggists at 25 cents per box.

R. E. SELLERS & CO., Pittsburg, Pa.

J. M. GIRVIN. J. H. GIRVIN

J. M. GIRVIN & SON,

FLOUR, GRAIN, SEED & PRODUCE

Commission Merchants,

No. 64 South Gay St.,

BALTIMORE, MD.

We will pay strict attention to the sale of all kinds of Country Produce and remit the amounts promptly.

J. M. GIRVIN & SON.

ESTATE NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given that Letters of Administration on the estate of Castleberry Harris, late of Penn township, Perry County, Pa., deceased, have been granted to the undersigned residing in said township.

All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment and those having claims will present them duly authenticated for settlement to

S. H. HARRIS, Administrator.

Penna twp., Duncannon, P. O.

December 2, 1879.—5t

HIRES IMPROVED ROOT BEER PACKAGE.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, makes five gallons of a delicious and sparkling beverage—

wholesome and temperate. Sold by Druggists, or sent by mail on receipt of 25 Cents. Address—

CHAS. E. HIRSH, Manufacturer, 215 Market St., Philadelphia, Pa.

PARLOR Pictures, Scrap Book Pictures, Chromo Business Cards, Motto

Cards, Conversation Cards, "May I see you home?"

Cards, 50 assorted samples sent for 10 cents.

PHILADELPHIA LITHOGRAPHIC CARD CO., 322 South Front St., Philadelphia, Pa.

JOB PRINTING of every description neatly and promptly executed at Reasonable Rates at the Bloomfield Times Steam Job Office.