

The Family Circle.

THE IDEAL POPULAR LEADER.

He is one who counts no public toil so hard
As idly glittering pleasures; one controlled
By no mob's haste, nor swayed by gods of gold;
Prizing, not courting, all just men's regard;
With none but manhood's ancient order stirred,
Nor crowned with titles less august and old
Than human greatness, large-brained, limpid-
souled,
Whom dreams can hurry not, nor doubts retard.
Born, nurtured of the people; living still
The people's life, and though their noblest
flower,
In naught removed above them, save alone
In loftier virtue, wisdom, courage, power.
The ampler vision, the serener will,
And the fixed mind, to no light dalliings prone.

THE LESSER MINISTRIES.

A flower upon my threshold laid,
A little kindness wrought unseen:
I know not who love's tribute paid,
I only know that it has made
Life's pathway smooth, life's borders green.
God bless the gracious hands that e'er
Such tender ministries essay;
Dear hands, that help the pilgrim bear
His load of weariness and care
More bravely up the toilsome way.
Oh, what a little thing can turn
A heavy heart from sighs to song!
A smile can make the world less stern;
A word can cause the soul to burn
With glow of heaven all night long!
It needs not that love's gift be great—
Some splendid jewel of the soul
For which a king might supplicate.
Nay! true love's least, at love's true rate,
Is tithe most royal of the whole.
—The Churchman.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

A STORY OF UNCROSSED LOVE. IN THREE PARTS.

BY "NOVUS HOMO."

I.

The hot July sun blazed down upon a large brick farm-house, situated about a quarter of a mile from the beautiful Rideau Lake, one of the many into which the little Rideau River widens as it pursues its tortuous course through some of the most fertile land which Ontario boasts. This residence was by no means a handsome edifice, but had that indescribable air of comfort which so many farm-houses have, while not possessing any particular architectural beauty. But although at first glance this house was a pleasant and artistic picture enough, surrounded as it was by huge, shady elms, still on looking more closely one noticed that every shutter was tightly closed, and on the huge oaken front door—that symbol of the transitory nature of human life—a piece of black crepe was languidly stirring in the summer's breeze.

Some twenty years or so before the day on which this story commences, John and Mary Tennant had left England, the land of their home and affections, and having crossed the "briny" with the object of repairing their shattered fortunes, had settled down on this picturesquely situated farm. Two years afterwards, when they had succeeded in making a comfortable home for themselves, they were blessed by the birth of a baby girl, a dainty little creature, who seemed to embody all the refinement of the Tennant family. Her mother wished to name her Sophia, after a very wealthy maiden aunt of hers, who lived in England, but the father ardently objected to this much used and much abused cognomen, and insisted on her being christened Florimel. As the baby girl made no objections, Florimel she was named.

Eighteen years after she had first seen the light, Florimel had developed into a beautiful girl. She had neither blue eyes

which seemed to reflect the glory of the heavens, nor had she golden locks gracing her snowy temples, nevertheless, although she was not the time-honored ideal of the author of fiction, still in spite of that very discouraging fact, she was a very beautiful and attractive lass of eighteen summers. Anyone passing there on a summer's morning before the dew was off the grass would in all probability have seen her drinking in the fragrance of the early morn and plucking with her dainty fingers the many-hued flowers which grew in profusion in front of the house. Surely she was a vision of delight with her perfectly poised head crowned with a glory of soft brown hair, which the sunbeams delighted to touch with their golden fingers, her delicately tinted skin, and large, wondering gray eyes, from the inmost depths of which gentleness and innocence shone forth. The fortunate spectator of this daily recurring scene would next have noted the dainty figure, the small slender foot and stately carriage which exclusively belongs to those of gentle birth.

But alas! on this unhappy morning the greatest sorrow which can enter into the heart of a devoted daughter had bedimmed the lovely gray eyes, and had robbed the sweet face of its fresh fair color. Florimel's mother was dead. The next day a long procession of mourners followed the remains of Mary Tennant to the lonely spot where the people of the surrounding country buried their dead. Only Florimel knew the agony which that parting caused her. The last, long, lingering kiss imprinted on those cold irresponsible lips marked a change in the life and character of our heroine.

Mary and John Tennant had always bestowed on their daughter the tenderest affection. She had been watched and tended like the rarest and most precious of exotic flowers. But although the development of her character must thus have been stunted to some extent, still she was by no means unable to shoulder the burden of duties which devolved upon her at her mother's death. The departed mother had been the tenderest of women, the most affectionate of mothers and most unselfish and loving of wives. Her whole aim in life had been to make a bright and happy home for those whom she loved. Her efforts were crowned with success, and until she was taken away no sorrow of great magnitude had touched the life of Florimel. Thus besides being a girl of sweet disposition she had grown up strong and healthy in body and mind, and no maid in the country-side was merrier than she.

John Tennant was a man of no great individuality of character. The death of his wife had been a severe shock to him and he derived his only consolation from the devotion of his daughter. He looked upon her with great pride, but felt that his days were numbered and therefore he strongly desired that he could leave her to the guardianship and protection of some good man, in whose love and care she might be safe and happy.

Thus these two were thrown entirely on each other's society. Only one who has lived in the country can realize the great want of society—of refined society—which Florimel felt, now that her mother, who had been her constant companion, had been taken away. For a girl of eighteen—a beautiful girl, who was above all things refined and cultured, and who was gifted with no mean share of intellect—the

unvaried monotony of country life could not fail to be irksome. But as we shall see, Florimel was soon to find a joy far above the pleasures of varied life and society.

II.

It was an August morning. The sun beat down relentlessly upon the yellowing fields. The air was filled with the languid hum of bees, the peculiar hum of the grasshopper, the fragrance of flowers and the music of sweetly singing birds. The lake was like a sheet of glass. The motionless foliage of the trees showed the absence of the slightest breeze.

Suddenly the door of the house around which our story centres was flung open, and Florimel appeared arrayed in a well-made black gown. For awhile she stood perfectly still enjoying with charmed spirit the pleasure which one always feels on taking a morning survey of the beauties of nature. Her lovely eyes were misty with tears and she had the dejected look of one in great sorrow. Anon, a gleam of sunshine swept across her face, she hesitated a moment and then entered the house, but reappeared soon, holding a large shade hat in one hand.

"Father is so sorrow-stricken and silent," she soliloquized, "that he won't talk to me, and as I cannot comfort him I must find someone to comfort me. I wonder if Archie Wendover would be passing. He might brighten me up a little bit."

When a beautiful maid turns to a man in time of sorrow, it shows that she has more than ordinary regard for him, and as we are interested in Florimel's future, we must see who this fortunate young man was.

Archie Wendover was a young Presbyterian minister, who two years before had graduated with honours at Glasgow University. As his health had been somewhat impaired by over-work, his doctor advised an ocean trip. So Archie had decided to follow the adage, "Young man, go west," and after much wandering in search of a charge had finally received a call from the small but thriving congregation in the village of Y—, which was about two miles distant from the Tennant farm. He lived with his sister in a pretty and comfortable cottage, surrounded by a few acres of land, about midway between the village and Florimel's home. As Wendover was an athlete in his way, he had been unable to resist the bicycle craze and had that summer purchased a "wheel," upon which he was wont to enjoy a morning spin down the road which passed the Tennant farm. There were many equally good, if not better roads in the neighbourhood, but Archie, strange to relate, preferred this one with all its hills, hollows and roughnesses. He had never up to this time explained to himself precisely why he did so. Of course very often he saw Florimel as he passed, and occasionally he stopped just to tell her how that rheumatic old woman, or poor sick baby in his parish was progressing. He would ask Florimel to send a pot of jelly or some such dainty, so dear to the heart of the sick. Sometimes—in fact very often—the conversation would drift on to some other matters and last much longer than was quite justifiable under the circumstances. The fact of the matter was that Archie, was very much in love with our heroine. They made a charming picture as they often stood there on the bright mornings,

leaning on either side of the rustic gate. Archie was a fine, stalwart, broad-shouldered fellow, with honest blue eyes and curly brown hair. Some of our society match-makers would have been very much interested in the result of those long morning chats.

This morning, however, Florimel watched in vain for the little cloud of dust which heralded the approach of her "spiritual adviser." She was very much disappointed. She went slowly back to the house and took her mother's old place at the breakfast table with her father. They ate their meal in silence, and when it was finished Florimel went quietly up to her father and putting one arm around his neck kissed him tenderly and said in a soft, low, tone, "I will try and take mother's place, father dear, if I can." "I am sure you can, as far as anybody could do so, my sweet daughter, but it will not be long until I follow your mother, my darling." "Oh, dad, don't talk like that!" said Florimel, bursting into tears.

"But it is true, my dearest, and my only wish now is for someone who will love and care for my darling." Florimel said nothing, but a faint tinge of colour spread over her features. After breakfast she learned that Wendover and his sister had gone to the seaside for two or three weeks. She was very lonely for those three weeks; for Esther Wendover was her only and very much beloved girl friend; and then, as she said to herself, Archie Wendover was rather nice. She missed him more than she thought she would have done, but attributed it to her solitude on account of her mother's death. However she managed to fill in the time. She learned how to attend to all her new duties. She nursed her father, who was still suffering from the shock of his wife's death, so tenderly that he became much better. In short she was a ministering angel to all about her.

III.

Florimel was not the only one who found those three weeks lonely and long, for Archie also felt an undefined longing for some absent one, although he was in the midst of the beauty and gaiety of "Old Orchard," with its beautiful bathing and unrivalled beach of glistening white sand, extending unbroken for twenty miles. But Wendover had by this time discovered that he was passionately in love with our fair Florimel, whereas she, if she was in love with Wendover, was, as yet, hardly conscious of it.

Everything however, whether pleasant or unpleasant, comes to an end. It was a bright August day and Archie and his sister were to arrive home by the afternoon train. Florimel had ridden over on her "bike" to meet Esther, and they were now walking home with their arms linked, girl-fashion. Archie was walking rather dejectedly in the rear shoving Florimel's pretty little bicycle along the dusty road. Several times he narrowly escaped tumbling over it, so occupied was he in watching the graceful girlish figure in front, and thinking what a lucky mortal that sister of his was. Presently they arrived at Wendover's trim, vine-covered cottage. Florimel held out her little daintily-gloved hand, and it seemed to Esther, standing by, that Archie took it in his large brown hand with almost significant eagerness, and held it much longer and more tightly than was necessary. Florimel gazed into