

A Love Song.

Those eyes that were so bright, Love,
Have now a dimmer shine,
But all they've lost in light, Love,
Was what they gave to mine.
And still those orbs reflect, Love,
The beams of former hours
That ripened all my joys, my Love,
And tinted all my flowers.

Those locks were brown to see, Love,
That now are turned so grey;
But the years were spent with me, Love,
That stole their hue away.
Thy locks no longer share, Love,
The golden glow of noon;
But I've seen the world look fair, my Love,
When silvered by the moon.

That brow was fair to see, Love,
That looks so shaded now;
But for me it bore the care, Love,
That spoil'd a bonny brow:
And though no longer there, Love,
The gloss it had of yore,
Still mem'ry looks, and dotes, my Love,
Where Hope admir'd before.

THE LOVERS' RUSE.

What! marry my daughter? No, sir!
Eleanor Vane is entirely too good a girl to be permitted to unite her destiny with yours. My daughter, sir, can never wed a man who, like yourself, is too indolent to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. You cannot have her, sir.

But, pleaded Willis Graham, the individual to whom the above remarks were addressed, it is entirely unnecessary for me to engage in manual labor to insure my support. I already possess a sufficiency of this world's goods in my own right; besides, I am an only child, and my parents are among the wealthiest citizens of New York. Do not, I beseech you, Mr. Vane, blight my fairest prospects by adhering to those cruel words.

You have my answer, sir, replied the old man, as he turned upon his heel and strode angrily away. Benjamin Vane was a well-to-do farmer, who owned a small, but highly cultivated, farm in the Green Mountain State, which insured to his small family, consisting of himself, his wife and only daughter, a pleasant and comfortable home. He was an honest, hard-working man, who, in his youth, had commenced the great struggle of life with nothing but his unaided strength and indomitable will to assist him, and now, at the age of sixty-five, he was the possessor of property valued at about five thousand dollars. Having accumulated the small fortune he possessed by patient industry and incessant toil, he looked with distrust upon the ability and integrity of those upon whom Dame Fortune had smiled more favorably. Hence the rudeness with which he had replied to Willis Graham, who had requested the hand of his daughter in marriage.

Benjamin Vane loved his daughter with all a parent's tenderest affection, and hitherto no wish of hers had been denied; on the contrary, almost every whim had been gratified. He had given her all the educational advantages which were open to those of her sex, and now, at the age of twenty years, she was a handsome, queenly woman, possessing a refined and cultivated intellect, and the acknowledged belle of Maplewood, her native village.

Willis Graham was the only son of a retired merchant of New York, who had amassed an ample fortune during a long life of successful business, and who had given his son a thorough business training, and the best education the noted college of Yale afforded. Willis Graham by the death of a bachelor uncle who had been engaged in business in San Francisco, California, inherited a magnificent fortune; having now completed a thorough course of studies at college, he was spending a season of recreation with a relative who was a resident of Maplewood. Here he had become acquainted with Eleanor Vane, and was surprised and pleased to find her mind so fully stored with useful knowledge, and an entire familiarity with the writings of the best authors. Her cultivated tastes, and the refinement of her manners, caused him to seek her society, and the association speedily ripened into a mutual affection. At the close of the summer season, when it became absolutely necessary for him to return to the great metropolis he had requested of Benjamin Vane the hand of his daughter in marriage, and been rudely refused, as shown in the conversation which opens this story.

Benjamin Vane's brow wore a frown of displeasure as he seated himself before a cheerful fire in the ample fire-place of his

dwelling, and his daughter, who was aware that the interview between her father and Willis Graham had taken place, watched the expression of his countenance with anxious interest. As she saw the troubled and vexed countenance of her father's usually pleasant countenance, a shade of disappointment stole over her beautiful face, and her heart sank within her breast. Suddenly he turned upon his daughter with the abrupt remark,—

Eleanor, I had a conversation to-day with Willis Graham which deeply concerns yourself. He had the presumption to request your hand in marriage, and I gave him a decided refusal. I hope my daughter has too much good common sense to desire to link her life with so unworthy an object as Willis Graham.

But, father, pleaded Eleanor Vane, Willis Graham is the soul of honor. He is noble, and good, and—

All a delusion, I assure you, Eleanor; you have permitted your affections to blind you as to the true character of this man. My word for it, he is a mere upstart—a fortune hunter, perhaps—for whom you will entertain different sentiments when his true character is made apparent. I have given him an unequivocal refusal to his request, and my daughter, I hope, will respect my wishes sufficiently to cease all association with him.

This was said with such emphasis that Eleanor knew it would be useless to remonstrate or reason with her father, and, with an aching heart, she left the room, to conceal the bitterness of her sorrow in the loneliness of her own chamber. The evening wore slowly away, and finally, when the lights were extinguished in the dwelling, and her parents had retired to rest, she stole cautiously from the house, out into the bright moonlight, to meet her lover, according to a previous agreement, beneath the grand old maples at the foot of the hill upon which her home was situated. What the result of that interview was we will not record; but when Eleanor Vane returned to the farm-house it was with a much more hopeful expression of countenance than when she left it a short time before.

Bright, cheerful spring, with the song of birds and the perfume of budding flowers, came at last, and Farmer Vane observed, with pleasure, that, although Eleanor had refused the attentions of the young men of the neighborhood, yet she seemed resigned to her fate, and the name of Willis Graham had never passed her lips since the conversation recorded above, which occurred the autumn previous. He trusted that time would eventually efface all traces of the love she had entertained for this "well dressed city fop," as he sometimes termed her former lover, and, to all outward appearances, his surmises were correct.

It was the evening of a day in the latter part of April. A bright fire was burning in the chimney of the farm-house, while Benjamin Vane and his wife were intently listening to the calm, sweet tones of Eleanor's voice as she was reading aloud. Suddenly the reading ceased as some one rapped at the door. Farmer Vane answered the summons himself, and, upon opening it, and perceiving a stranger instead of one of his neighbors, as he expected, he politely invited him to enter and be seated. The stranger was rather peculiar looking. His hair, which was unusually long, was of a deep red hue; his eyes were covered by glasses; while a long red beard, and mustache of the same color, completely covered the lower part of his face. His form, too, was slightly stooping, though the feet and hands were small and symmetrically shaped. Yet, notwithstanding his entire lack of beauty, his appearance was by no means unprepossessing. In his hand he carried a satchel, which evidently contained his entire stock of this world's goods. Perceiving that the farmer was waiting to know the object of his visit, the stranger said,—

Your name is Vane, is it not?
Yes, sir; Benjamin Vane, at your service.

I understand you desire to employ a laborer on your farm during the season. I am seeking employment, and have called to endeavour to obtain the situation, provided you have not already secured the services of another person.

No, I have not engaged a man as yet. May I enquire your name and place of residence?

My name is John Willis. I was born and brought up in the state of New York, but the last few years of my life were passed in the vicinity of Boston, Massachusetts.

Have you had any experience in farm work? The wages labor demand at this time should secure the service of a competent

farmer—one who is familiar with all the duties of farm life.

I will be frank with you, Mr. Vane, as I do not wish to deceive any one. I must acknowledge that I have but limited knowledge of farm work, but as it is absolutely necessary that I should receive employment, I am willing to labor at almost any price, and I imagine that where there is willingness to learn, the knowledge will be easily acquired. At any rate, I am willing to commence work with you at your own price, with the understanding that my wages are to be increased if I render proper satisfaction.

The result of the interview was such that John Willis retired to rest for the first time in the farmhouse as the employee of Benjamin Vane. By devoting all his energies to the task, in due time the young man acquired a thorough knowledge of agricultural pursuits and Farmer Vane congratulated himself on having secured so faithful and efficient a laborer. He could plainly perceive that at some period of his life John Willis had been accustomed to mingle with a different class of persons than those with whom he was now associating; yet not a murmur escaped his lips; on the contrary, he appeared cheerful and perfectly contented in his present avocation. In Benjamin Vane's eyes he was the ideal of what a true man should be—intelligent and refined, yet able and willing to build up a fortune for himself by his unaided exertions. It was with secret satisfaction that he perceived an attachment springing up between John Willis and his daughter, and in conversation with his wife on the subject the following colloquy ensued:—

I do believe, Esther, he exclaimed, that Eleanor has quite banished from her mind the image of that good-for-nothing Graham. She appears to be well pleased with the company of John Willis, and there is no man living to whom I would more willingly have her bestow her hand with all his poverty.

Yes, Benjamin, replied his wife, John Willis is a noble man, and I think Eleanor has transferred her love from Graham to him. Poor thing she undoubtedly did love Graham—and he certainly was much handsomer than Willis.

Tut, tut! no such thing! I like John's looks much better, growled Benjamin Vane, who could not be prevailed upon to acknowledge that Eleanor's lover possessed one redeeming trait.

The conversation was interrupted at this moment by the merry laugh of Eleanor, who, in company with John Willis, was returning from an evening walk in the bright moonlight; and the next moment she entered the room, gay, sparkling, and beautiful.

The long summer days wore on, and finally when the crops were gathered in and disposed of, and the farm work for the season completed, Benjamin Vane having no further employment for a laborer, was compelled very reluctantly, however, to discharge John Willis, after paying him his hard-earned money. At this interview John Willis revealed the long anticipated avowal of his love for Eleanor—spoke of the cheering prospects of ultimate happiness in a pleasant home of his own, carved out by his own hands—and ended by asking her hand in marriage.

She is yours and may God bless you both! was the fervent response of the honest old farmer.

Arrangements were made for the marriage to be celebrated early in the following spring at which period Eleanor's husband was to assume complete control of the farm. Benjamin Vane urged John Willis to remain with them during the winter months. But to this he could not consent, as he pleaded urgent business elsewhere, which required his attention.

It was an evening in early spring. Nature was beginning to deck the earth in a robe of green, and all seemed bright and joyous without; yet within the dwelling of Benjamin Vane disappointment reigned. A friend and neighbor, in whose integrity he had reposed entire confidence, had been elected to an office of trust, and, being required to give a bond of five thousand dollars for the faithful discharge of his duties, Benjamin Vane had unhesitatingly signed the instrument. Subsequently the officer had absconded, with a large amount of public funds, leaving his bondsmen to make good the defalcation. Being unable to raise the money, his farm was this day being sold, at the county seat, some miles away; and, with spirits crushed and broken, he was now nervously pacing the floor expecting that some one would soon come and tell him the result of the sale. His wife and daughter

covered despondingly before the fire meantime.

Suddenly their attention was attracted by hearing light, quick footsteps approaching the house, followed immediately by a vigorous rapping on the door. Benjamin Vane's heart sank within his breast as he bade the stranger enter, expecting that some of his neighbors had come to see the house. As the new comer entered the dwelling, and was recognized by the inmates, for a moment they forgot their misery in the first flush of joy at the meeting. The new arrival was Eleanor's affianced husband, John Willis. Perceiving at a glance that all was not as it should be, John Willis gazed from one to the other with an enquiring expression upon his countenance; and Benjamin Vane, thinking it proper to acquaint his intended son-in-law with the extent of his great misfortune, at length exclaimed,—

Mr. Willis, I deem it best that you should be apprised immediately of the terrible misfortune which has befallen me in the last few months, and of which you are evidently unacquainted. And the broken-spirited old man proceeded to relate what the reader already knows of the state of his finances, and concluded by saying, yes, John, I am penniless, while Eleanor is homeless and a beggar.

Not so bad as that, Mr. Vane, exclaimed John Willis, as a pleasant smile rested on his features. You should be thankful that your property has passed into the hands of as kind-hearted as it has. I was at E—to-day when the sale was made. I am acquainted with the person who bought the farm; he is young and very wealthy, and it would pain me exceedingly to know that he was suspected of any act which was in its nature mean or exacting. I am satisfied that arrangements can be effected by which you can remain on the old homestead the remainder of your life on your own terms. Willis Graham is—

He was interrupted by Benjamin Vane, who exclaimed excitedly,— Willis Graham, did you say? Did he purchase the farm?

He did. The old man groaned aloud as he said,— John, I have sufficient reason to know that Willis Graham is my bitterest enemy. At one time he fancied he loved my daughter, and requested of me her hand in marriage, which I refused him. Willis Graham now has his revenge, and we are ruined! And the old man buried his face in his hands to conceal his grief.

For all this, knowing my friend as I do, I am certain you wrong him by your unjust suspicions, Mr. Vane. Willis Graham is wealthy as I said before. I would be sorry to think him otherwise than an honorable man. Could you forget the past, and think well of him in the future, if he would restore to you the title of your farm?

God knows, I could and would; but Willis Graham can never forget the deep insult I gave him more than a year ago. It is idle to imagine that he should.

To convince you that you wrong him, examine that. And John Willis took from his pocket a paper, and handed it to Benjamin Vane.

The farmer unrolled the parchment, and in blank astonishment perceived it to be a deed giving him possession of the farm; the document was executed by John Willis Graham. The truth began to dawn upon the mind of the old man. Turning to John Willis he said,—

Who are you?
The young man suddenly pulled off wig, beard and spectacles, and drew himself to his full height.

John Willis Graham! Can you forgive me?
Yes, and may God bless you! was all he could say in the fullness of his joy.

Benjamin Vane and wife are quietly passing a green old age in the old farm-house, while Willis Graham and Eleanor, his wife, make yearly visits from their city home to the old homestead, near Maplewood, in the Green Mountain State.

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