

The Lace Wale,

THE RUNAWAY MARRIAGE.

Founded on fact, except as to names & places.

By ENG.—A FARMERSVILLE BOY.

(Continued from last week.)

Mr. Edward's will appointed his father-in-law, old Mr. Cromwell, his executor and guardian of his little three-year-old daughter. He also left some property and the interest of one thousand dollars to Old Cromwell, with the understanding that he was to bring Susan up in a respectable manner and give her a liberal education, all of which Cromwell most miserably failed to do. Mr. and Mrs. Cromwell were not of those who believe in maple-sugar government of children. They were of opinion that a taste of the horse-whip, if not quite so sweet, was more wholesome, and although Susan seldom got such a taste, it was not because of any tenderness on the part of the old folks, but because she had soon learned that the only way to avoid the lash was to render the most prompt obedience to every command. Her's was thus rendered a life of fear and not of affection. She was thereby deprived of one great source of human enjoyment, especially with children. She had always enough of good wholesome food, but no luxuries; enough of plain and comfortable clothing, but no finery; enough of hard work, but no sympathy; for she was not allowed to visit any of the neighbors' children, or go to a place of amusement or to any public doings whatever—not even to religious meetings, unless Mrs. Cromwell could go with her, and then she must sit beside Grandma and return with her directly as soon as the service was over. Thus matters went on at Mr. Cromwell's in a kind of routine till Susan was in her eighteenth year, except that they were obliged by law to send her to school at least six months in the year, while between the ages of seven and twelve years had to furnish a certain number of elementary school books. This, however, was always done grudgingly, between October and May, when the roads were at the worst, and when there was the least women's work to do at home. Furthermore, although the schoolhouse was fully a mile away she was allowed but fifteen minutes to go and the same to return. Any infringement of this rule was sure to bring down the aforesaid horse-whip, excuses being of no avail. Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, such was the power of her intellect she was enabled to acquire all the learning the country school was capable of imparting. She belonged to a smart family; the Edwards, you know, were great for learning. One of her uncles was president of a college. But I forgot to tell you about Roddy. He learned the joiner's trade, and a good workman he was, and got all the jobs he wanted for a long way round, and this is the way he came to get acquainted with Susan. Mr. Cromwell's house needed some repairs, and Roddy was employed to do the fixin' up, but was not allowed to see Susan, for she was ordered to stay upstairs and not be

seen while Roddy was there. She obeyed, but one day he heard what he thought a beautifully melodious female voice up-stairs, singing those beautiful lines of Dr. Watt's:

How happy is the man who hears
Instruction's warning voice,
And who celestial wisdom makes
His early, only choice.

He stopped a few moments to listen. Mrs. Cromwell hurriedly went up-stairs and came immediately down again, after which Roddy heard no more singing, and he supposing it was because he stopped to hear, concluded that she must be a miserly old thing who could not bear to see him idle one moment. But the next day while he was working away, Susan made her appearance down stairs with her beautiful, bright, shining, auburn hair which, when it was combed as it then was, reached below the middle of her back. This beautiful hair Grandma had always been in the habit of braiding, and Susan, forgetting her orders for the moment, had come down for that purpose. Mrs. Cromwell braided her hair as quickly as possible, and then said "now, go back to your room, and don't come down again till you are called or sent for." Roddy's mind being occupied with the work he was doing, his suspicion of foul play was not aroused, even by this stern command, nor till after he had (by way of flattery to the old lady) made the remark, "your daughter has beautiful hair," to which the old lady made reply, with half angry tone and manner, "her hair isn't anything to you as I know on." Roddy made no reply to this outburst, but thought within himself, "there's a mystery connected with this family, and I'm bound, if possible, to find it out." And so when he had done his job of work and got his pay, he enquired of the near neighbors and they told him what they knew about Susan and the Cromwells, adding that her life was little better than that of a prisoner sentenced to hard labor. "Ah!" thought he, "how witchingly provoking it would be if the owner of that hair should be something to me yet, eh!" But how to obtain an interview with the girl was to him a greater puzzle than anything else. It was not long, however, till an opportunity presented itself, unsought, for it so happened that Mrs. Cromwell and Susan paid a visit to a neighbor, a Mrs. Vasey, who by way of entertainment, showed Mrs. Cromwell a beautiful lace veil, which, if bought at the store, would have cost six dollars, but she had managed to get this for one dollar and a half. Mrs. Cromwell, after expressing her admiration of the article, eagerly enquired, "How on earth did you manage it?" "Well," replied Mrs. Vasey, "I sent Mary a month to the sewing school; that cost half a dollar. Then, I bought the stuff for one dollar, and Mary fixed it up just as you see it." "It is well done," said Mrs. Cromwell, "and I mean to have one just like it right off." And in pursuance of this resolution the next day after dinner, she said to her husband, "you know, Oliver, I've long hankered arter a lace wale, and you said you couldn't afford to pay six dollars for one. Now, I can get one for one dollar and a half.—Continued.

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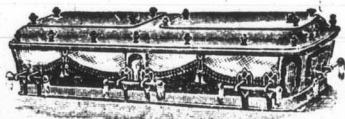
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