

The Lace Wale,

THE RUNAWAY MARRIAGE.

Founded on fact, except as to names & places.

By ENG.—A FARMERSVILLE BOY.

"Who owns that nice house and that cluster of neat looking out-buildings down at the corner, about a mile from here?"

This question was asked by a young man travelling on foot of a farmer who was working near the road on which the young man was travelling. The place was some ten or eleven miles north-east from what was then the thriving town, but now the flourishing city, of Providence, Rhode Island, U. S. A. The time of the year was about the first of June, when farmers had just finished sowing and planting for the season. In the interim between sowing and hoeing all nature looked gay and cheerful. The grass was growing green by the roadside and in the pastures and meadows. Apple, plum, and other fruit-bearing trees and shrubs were in full blossom, while wild flowers were scattered in profusion over the fields and woods. The bees were busy among the flowers, the birds were singing in the branches or building their nests, and even the cattle and sheep appeared to be enjoying the situation to an extraordinary degree after the long confinement of a New-England winter. The newly sown grain was beginning to cover the fields with its beautiful mantle of green, thus reminding men of the beautiful and encouraging promise, that seed time and harvest should continue while the earth remained. The whole combined tended to dispose people to acts of generosity, benevolence, and hospitality.

"You don't live in these parts," said the farmer, "or you wouldn't be asking that question. That's Squire Gibson's place, or Roddy Gibson, as they used to call when he was little, and the name stuck to him till they elected him Justice of the Peace, three years ago, since which time we call him Squire Gibson. He has lived down there now for over twenty years, he and his wife, who was Susan Edwards. She was an orphan, and was brought up by her grandfather and grandmother, old Mr. and Mrs. Cromwell, and to tell you how he came to get her for a wife would be as good as a novel, in fact, in one sense, it's better, because it's true, and that is something which can very seldom, if ever, be said of novels, for, as a general thing, they don't even pretend to be true."

"Well, no," replied the traveller, "I don't live very near here. My home is within a few miles of Hartford, Connecticut. Father brought me about twenty miles this morning, and he thought I could go the rest of the way on foot. I am going down to Providence. My uncle, Charles Ripley, lives there. He keeps a grocery and liquor store. His boy, Fred, who was three years younger than I, used to help his father tend shop, and he began once in a while to taste the liquor he was selling, till by frequently tasting he soon became very fond of the stuff, and one night,

having tasted rather too much, he walked out and either walked or staggered off the dock and was drowned. They got his body the next day, and held an inquest over it. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death by drowning, but neglected to say anything about the cause of the accident. Uncle Charles wrote me to come to him and I am going to see what he wants. Father thinks he will want me to stay in the shop with him, but he advised me by all means to return to the farm by or before the harvest time, but I do not know what I shall do till I get there. In the meantime, I wish you had time to tell and I had time to listen to more about Squire Gibson (I think you called him) and his marriage. You say it is as good as a novel, and if it is, I should like to hear all about it—but I suppose I ought to be going as the day is wearing away."

"Do not be in a hurry, young man," said the farmer, "you will have plenty of time to walk ten miles after two o'clock, and I see by the smoke coming out of the chimney that dinner will soon be ready. Stay, and after dinner I will tell you all about Roddy and Susan, and if you don't say it's better than any novel you've read this last winter, I shall be disappointed, that's all."

The traveller consented to wait for dinner, and after partaking of a substantial, old-fashioned New England dinner of baked meat and beans, together with such other accompaniments as are found on a farmer's table, the young man reminded his host of his promise, who immediately began as follows:—

"Well, you see, Roddy's father was from Scotland, and that's the way he came to call his boy Roderick, but whether in honor of Roderick Dhu or some other Roderick, I don't know. Any way, he was a Presbyterian Minister and brought up his family in a strictly religious observance of the Sabbath and in the practice of other religious duties, and no doubt that, together with a good education, has been the principal means of bringing Squire Gibson to be where and what he is. For whatever some people may say to contrary, in at least nine cases out of ten, the training of infancy and childhood exert a powerful influence in forming the character of the man or woman, especially if precept and example are alike, and that is the reason why the precept and example of the mother are so much more powerful and abiding than that of the father.—But I'm off he story. Well, then, Susan, she was the daughter of James Edwards, a boot, shoe and leather dealer, down in Providence, where you are going. He was doing a good business till his wife died of consumption, leaving Susan only eighteen months old. Mr. Edwards, himself, by being so much in the same room with his wife during her long continued sickness, also caught the disease, and only lived a year and a half after his wife. He had accumulated a considerable amount of money and property, and in his will left a thousand dollars to Susan, to be paid to her on her marriage, or when twenty-one years of age, if unmarried."—To be Continued.

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Thos Vanarnum.

Farmersville, Feb. 15th, 1885.



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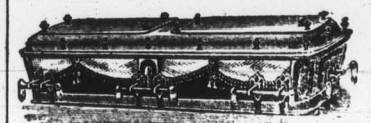
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