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LOVE IN A VILLAGE.

By Ned P. Mah.

Meltonville is a picturesquely situated village, the dwellings constituting which are dotted along the side of its streets all distinct and detached, as if some giant had taken a handful of them and flung them hap-hazard; reminding one of nothing so much as a child's box of Dutch toy houses, with toy trees stuck at irregular intervals in front, upon the road-side. There is a stream, and a mill, and a bridge, and hills overhanging on every side, with sandy roads winding down them into the village, and up them out of it; and a queer little church with an extinguisher-like spire, and a red school house, and a quaint little parsonage, and a red brick uncompromising looking hostelry, with the grandiloquent word Hotel painted in big letters on a board upon its side.

There is something so sunny, and smiling, and happy in its aspect, that the traveller instinctively halts upon the hill brow—the brow of whichever hill he may chance to approach it by—and think, if he should happen to know the lines, of "Auburn, loveliest village of the plain" with the mental annotation that instead of "plain," he should read "vale" in this case—something which makes him add if he should have met with and remembered the words of Tom Moore, that if there's peace to be found in the world a heart that is humble might hope for it here.

In one of these scattered dwellings, that are yonder with the Gothic porch and the white palings, and the green balconies and the miniature croquet ground, lives Charley Hayden. He is clerk in the Sheriff's office at the foot of the street, that queer little, ill-shaped brick building like a letter L turned topsy-turvy, the office having been built out of its side as an after-thought; yet the whole structure as well as the prim flower beds in front, having a sternness of outline and rectangularity that savours of law and red tape. He is a bit of a poet, too, in his way and is a regular contributor to the city papers, so that with the money he earns in these ways, and the few hundred dollars that his smiling buxom wife has brought him, he manages not only to make both ends meet, but to give the yearly increasing leaves of his olive branch the requisite quantum of the sap of knowledge imbibed by them from the grammar school of the nearest city, and to be a hospitable host to his village friends and cronies, one or more of whom is sure to drop in of an evening for a glass, and a pipe and a chat.

Young Ames is with him to-night, a bright-faced, healthy, sun-burnt young farmer, but bashful withal, and yet who contemplates matrimony, only he is terribly perplexed as to how he shall hit upon the best, or any, way of popping the momentous question. Thrice he has screwed up his courage to the striking point, thrice he has even opened his mouth to utter the fatal words, but encountering at the critical instant the clear grey eyes, with their calm, wistful questioning glance, of his innamorata, has blushed, and faltered, and twisting with trembling hands his slouched felt hat into impossible shapes, has awkwardly slunk, with flaming cheeks and bewildered brain, away, feeling as if his collar had suddenly become a great deal too tight for him, his clothes a great deal too loose, and his feet, and hands, and head, had increased to three times their natural size.

"Charley," suddenly cries out young Ames after an interval of the profoundest silence, "what did you say to your wife when you asked her?"

"In one sense nothing," answers Charley, "for in point of fact my wife asked me."

Young Ames, whose spirits had risen high in anticipation of some intelligence which should prove to him the road to popping made easy felt his hopes fall again to zero.

"Anyway," says he in a much more subdued tone "you might tell us how it happened, you know!" Perhaps the faintest glimmer of a hope showed within him that by some ruse his Jenny might be trapped into a like snare.

Charley looked pityingly at the boy for a moment, understanding his dilemma as one not ignorant of the evil, with a little patronage in his pity may be, as one who has safely crossed the Rubicon; and emitting a huge puff from his lips, and elevating his feet comfortably upon the corner of the table, thus began.

"Seven years ago, last winter," said he "there was to be a surprise party and a slim dig up to Jack MacKinnigan's place at Quinby. I was living to home then with the old man and it was agreed upon that I should drive our Bess over with the cutter and take up Annie on the way. So I did and a merry enough ride we had of it, laughing, and sparking, and carrying on, for Annie was in high spirits and I had never felt better in my life. I was kind of proud to know that there wouldn't be a prettier girl at the house and that 'twas I was sitting alongside of her. And it was nice enough to have her clinging up close and confiding like, and giving my arm a grip every time we jolted over a hard ridge or slid across the road in a slipping place. But when we got inside I felt crest-fallen enough, you bet, for she kept on dancing and sparking a young chap out of Bigby with no end of hair oil and flash dry goods and cheap jewellery, and never so much as a word or a look for me the whole evening. Well, when it was over and I'd got her into the cutter again and set Bess going as good as she knew homewards, you may guess I didn't feel much like talking, so I just sat right over to my side of the sleigh, and fell to thinking what a fool I'd been to break off with Hatty Irvine who was homely, and good, and had never said a cross word to me in my life, and had almost cried her eyes out when folks began to call Annie Hawthorne my girl. And yet I felt, too, that Annie was quite ready, may be, to make it up and was only waiting for me to say the first word. And so, as I sat looking right away over the white snow in the moonlight at nothing at all, and letting the lines fall slack on Black Bess' back, who kept on her sober gait all the same with her pricked ears, and her slouched tail, and keeping the exact middle of the track like a wise mare as she was, the first verses I ever made came into my head, and I never woke from my trance till Bess pulled up of herself in front of old Hawthorne's rail fence, and Annie asked me in a quiet, entreatyful sort of tone, 'If I wouldn't come in and take something warm before I went on home.'"

There was a light in the window still, as though they were set up expecting us, and somehow I didn't find heart to say No with Annie speaking so pitiful like, so I just flung the buffalo robe on to Bess' back and followed Annie into the

house. The old people was to bed, and had only left the lamp burning ready for us, and so Annie poured out some whiskey into a glass and filled some water into it out of the kettle on the stove, and fetched the nutmeg grater out of the table drawer, and asked me to sit down and have a warm glass before I turned out in the cold again; and there we sat down kinder glum, and glowered at each other across the stove.

"Presently, Annie spoke with a kind of twitter in her voice as if she was near crying and said:

"Charley, what made you so dull and dreamy like, coming home. Was you angry with me, you stupid boy?"

"Annie," said I, 'you'll laugh when I tell it you. I was making poetry.'

"Poetry," says she, 'I'm awful fond of poetry. Tell me what it was.'

"So I took a bit of pencil and an old letter out of my pocket and wrote down the first verses I ever made in my life. Here they are:

Musical, blythe sleigh bells
Like a fairy's voice,
This the moral that it tells—
Always rejoice!

Weep not with bitter tears,
Flowers 'neath the frost;
Loves 'neath the snow of years
Withered and lost.

Bright eyes beam sweet for you
Close at your side;
Warm hearts still beat for you
Whate'er betide.

Pine not the desolate,
Dreary dead past;
Wait not a brighter fate,
Youth flies so fast!

Seek not the far away
Phantom Ideal.
Wake Dreamer! Seize the day
Clasping the Real!

Thus do the sleigh bells say
With fairy voice:
With glad music, blythe and gay,
Always rejoice!

"Beautiful!" cried Annie, springing up and clapping her little hands and coming over to me with a face like a rose.

"Charley," said she in a half whisper and a blush in her voice. 'Why don't you do it?'

"Do what?" I enquired, maliciously obtuse.

"Clasp the real."

"If the words were not very distinct perhaps it was my fault, for I smothered them in kisses.

"And that was how I asked my wife or how my wife asked me. Anyway it's all over now."

I am afraid Ames, who had with difficulty kept his eyes open during his host's narrative, did not derive much practical aid therefrom. Let us hope that his Jenny may find some equally ingenious expedient to rescue him from his dilemma.

Home Notes.

The *Lancet*, the great medical authority, has declared war against that most useful of home implements, the sewing machine. It declares that 'machining' is a most exhausting employment, and one which gradually breaks down the health. It suggests that steam power should be employed in giving the necessary motion to machines. The idea is so simple and so practical that one wonders it has not occurred to any one before. Work on the home machine, light as it comparatively is, is exceedingly fatiguing if persisted in for any length of time. What then must the work be by which hundreds of sewing girls earn their livelihood? Fancy ten hours a day—sixty hours a week—at a heavy, lumbering machine that often requires considerable strength to keep it in motion. Here is a field for our social reformers.

A suggestion for housekeepers. Would it not be advisable for ladies employing help—in view of the extraordinary number of cases of theft by servant girls—to insist upon obtaining a character with every servant they engage? By so doing they would save themselves no end of trouble and vexation, while at the same time they would largely assist in keeping up the moral standard of the class from which domestics are taken.

It is not everybody who has taste in choosing picture frames. To many, therefore, a few simple rules for framing chromos will be acceptable. As a general rule, the predominant colours in a picture should be taken as a guide. Black-walnut frames, or brown panels, will be suitable for bright pictures, while dark pictures, and especially those in which brown predominates, should always be framed in gold. Whenever you are unable to decide between the two, take a gold frame by all means, as gold will agree with every picture. Black walnut, especially when enriched by delicate engraved and gilt lines, is likewise very beautiful. The width of the frame should also be determined by the character of the picture. The stronger the picture, the wider the frame should be. Width of frame adds to the importance and dignity of the picture. The style of wall-paper should, in some degree, influence the selection of a frame. When the paper is figured, the frame should be wide, in order to separate the picture from the paper. The best background for pictures is a neutral gray or a dark maroon.

Many people who, without being vain, take a pride in their looks, have been distressed by a oiliness of the skin of the face which is peculiar to certain temperaments and conditions of health. To such it may be welcome news to hear that this unpleasant condition of the skin may be got rid of with very little trouble and at a very small expense. A lady writing on cosmetics, recommends the following wash as perfectly harmless and efficacious. Half an ounce of gum-camphor dissolved in one pint of spirit, reduced with an ounce of glycerine and two spoonfuls of hartshorn. Apply this every night, and let it dry in. Wash well with a spoonful of hartshorn in the water at morning, wipe, and bathe with weak camphor. This may be applied three times a day in warm weather if the face is troublesome.

Mrs. Fawcett, wife of Professor Fawcett, recently delivered a lecture in London on "Women as Educators." In the course of her remarks she alluded to the habit of summing

up the value of woman by her looks and dress, and asked: "What would be thought if the same treatment were accorded to a gentleman, and a newspaper paragraph running thus described his appearance on the platform? 'Mr. Jones next proceeded to expound his views on public matters to the electors. He was quietly but richly dressed in a coat of dark blue cloth, with trousers of a lighter colour. He is about the middle height. It may interest our readers to learn that his hair is raven black, and that he wears a beard and moustache. His voice is clear and musical, and although he spoke with considerable self-possession and fluency, there is nothing un-masculine in his appearance.'"

The Empress Eugenie has just received from Paris a dress that is "something like"—a dress to make one's mouth water, and to lead to the transgression of the tenth commandment. It is of lace, is made up over black velvet and shows to fine effect on that fabric. The underskirt is one piece, not flounced, its design being a heavy scalloped border of roses and tulips twined with leaves, and interlacing with another border formed of finer scallops of forget-me-nots and ivy leaves. Each large scallop has a medallion figure filled with roses, tulips and forget-me-nots imbedded in an urn of exquisite workmanship. Another medallion semi-encircles this one, and the two are tied with a true lover's knot carried around the whole underskirt. This true lover's knot tying the medallions and interlacing over the whole is considered the gem of the design.

A story comes from Whampoa, China, that nine damsels of that city, being filled with horror at the prospects of a married life, fastened themselves together, and committed suicide by jumping into the water. Young ladies don't do that sort of thing over here. They prefer jumping headlong into the troubled waters of matrimony.

An English correspondent writes: Perhaps those curious in such matters would be glad to hear how the country house of a well-known connoisseur in matters of taste is furnished. Each bedroom is of a different colour, but in all other respects alike. The carpets throughout are black; the panels, wainscots, doors, and furniture are also all black, with a little gilding introduced. The walls are not papered, but are covered with the same cretonne as the curtains and bed furniture. Each bed has an eider-down quilt covered with the same cretonne, and each window has plain muslin curtains, with gilded frills as well as cretonne curtains. Black is coming into great favour now in the decoration of houses; and laceworkers are beginning to see that furniture-lace never shows to such advantage as on black velvet, or black satin, relieved by coloured bows, either for writing or tea-tables, mantel-pieces, brackets, or the like. Thick linen-backed satin is more durable than velvet, for soap and water carefully applied will make it as good as new.

All ladies will agree that the Vice-President of the United States is at once the most sensible and the most gallant masculine on this continent. At the Woman's Suffrage Convention held at Washington the other day, he said: "Twenty years ago I came to the conclusion that my wife, my mother, and my sisters were as much entitled to the right of suffrage as myself, and I have not changed my mind since." Such a sentiment was of course greeted, as it deserved, with loud applause.

Another *galant homme* was the Parisian Rothschild. When the celebrated Minister Prince Metternich was a Continental Jupiter, whose nod was sufficient to do all sorts of wonderful things, M. de Rothschild gave the daughter of this Prince a present which will always rank amongst the most curious and valuable of Christmas boxes or every of any age. The little Princess was at the time eight years old. The banker had a doll constructed the exact size of the child, and then bestowed upon the figure a *trousseau* worthy of the heiress of an empire—silks from the East and West, lace from every known locality renowned for its make. Each pocket-handkerchief was worth a hundred crowns, and around the neck of the doll was clasped a string of pearls of the value of five thousand dollars. The Prince would never have consented to a banker sending his daughter a gift of such a value, and to such an extent; but a doll—he could not refuse such a trifle as that.

Madame Bezaire has applied to the Minister of the Interior for leave to "share her husband's captivity," an expression obviously meaning only that she may be enabled to go to see him when she likes. It is not probable that the permission will be refused.

The ex-Empress Eugenie has grown ten years older since her husband's death and exhibits an alarming tendency to *embonpoint*.

The latest creation from Paris is the *corset sultan*, white canvas, silk quilted, bordered at the gorget with Valenciennes, and rimmed at the hips by downy push. This wonderful corset is said to mould the bust with the perfection of a statuary. Far from exercising undue pressure, "it caresses the epiderm." Have any of them been imported into Canada, we wonder?

Glycerine is every day winning favour in the preparation of cosmetics and lotions. It deserves to be called the restorer of beauty. Glycerine cream "velvets" and "satins" the skin, giving it the polish of marble. On the delicate epiderm of women and children, glycerine soap is most salutary.

In selecting flowers for the decoration of the dinner-table at this season of the year care should be taken that they are of a colour which will stand artificial light, as it is by that they will mostly be seen. Many that present most delicate and lovely tints by daylight appear when under artificial light ugly and indistinct. Take some of our mauves and yellows for example. For this purpose there is nothing more effective than white and scarlet. Of course, the stands must be regulated according to the size of the table; but a table should never be overcrowded, for if overdone it looks even worse than one only half done: and the same may be said in respect to the arranging of the flowers in the stands. Above everything, crowding and excess should be avoided, for, no matter how handsome the blooms may be, if they are crushed up against one another they lose their shape and distinctness.

ARABIAN.