

mean to say I should have no care about this, but it is not the first consideration," and then Noel betrayed symptoms of hesitancy in expressing what he thought paramount "Have you spoken to Violet?"

"Yes, and it is because she has what really is a most singular scruple that I come to ask your good office's in overcoming. She owns she loves me, but will not pledge her word or receive mine, because we do not exactly think alike."

"I know what you mean," said Noel gravely. "I wish you did, Brandon, for your own sake."

"Then you will side against me, too. Oh Noel, I did think we were brothers at heart."

"Brandon, you know you have been as dear as one could be. I have known none but you. There is only one division betwixt us. When will you bridge it over?"

"Look here, Noel, I never believe in any one being forced with the feelings. I am sincere in striving to follow the right, because I do not feel this in the same way you and Violet do. Do you think it, to say the least, charitable to class me as if I were an abandoned reprobate? There are ever differences of feeling. My own Father and Mother thought differently to yours,—forgive me for speaking of them,—but Uncle never thought alike with Aunt Violet."

"I know," said Noel in a low, sad tone, "but, oh Brandon,—I could not feel such a spirit your words would indicate;—it seems too much like 'stand back, I am holier than thou.' You do not know how far such thoughts are from the heart, and how hard it is to be obliged to say words I feel you do not understand what prompts them."

"I must say I think I am hardly dealt by,—because it is not as if I turned my back upon the path you and Violet walk in, then I could understand why you should see the necessity of looking out for danger."

"Can two walk together unless they be agreed?" Noel murmured unconsciously aloud.

"I do not think they could," Brandon answered eagerly, "if they were divided in tastes, habits, and everything making up the happiness of life, but Violet and I have these in common, and I love her better than life."

"I guess, Brandon, you are not original in believing this. We mostly once in our lives set up the idol and fall down and worship. We will ask Auntie about this. My love to you and Violet says yield."

"Now think over my proposition for your and Auntie's training is what I bargained for, and would make a prize to be drawn. Brandon will get a good one," he said bitterly. "I must be content with an inferior article. Don't forget to polish Miss Brown extra," he added laughingly as he lazily sauntered from the room.

Miss Barbara for once at fault in her discernment when she told her sister that Fitzroy had not been as deeply smitten as she feared, and that once away from the influence of Violet his fancy would be a thing of the past. Could she have seen her nephew white she was saying this, her heart would have had many a pang on his behalf. Fitzroy suffered as the heart disappointed only can suffer, but none ever guessed the struggle the young man went through. Underneath his bright animated bearing he carried a dull leaden weight of bitter sorrow, that would refine or mar his future. All unconsciously Noel exercised a noble influence upon all his companions; his sterling worth was a beacon for imitation. In acting out his principles he did not put on the repelling air so often misnamed *pious*, that frowns upon the merry repartee, and scents in every action apart from the conventicle a wordly spirit. He was a very tower of strength to Fitzroy, who differed with Brandon in receiving the offers of his birthright by accepting them, while Brandon looked on and questioned. More and more did the tried young man cling to Noel, imbibing his spirit. A great longing for his sympathy in his disappointment often drew him near to confessing it, but not to *her* brother could he disclose this secret; so it was locked up in his own breast, and when at last he started to take up his home-duties, giving the usual brotherly kiss on parting to his cousin and Violet, even the astute Miss Barbara was deceived, and had no more misgivings about his being heart whole. It was some few weeks later when Brandon startled Noel as he was about closing his door with an impetuous push at it, and with suppressed excitement said "Noel, I want you to do a good turn for me."

"Why, Brandon," was the surprised exclamation, "I thought you were in bed long ago. If I can do such you have your request before asked," he added affectionately.

"I thank you; you are a dear good fellow, but will it surprise you very much if I tell you I care for Violet with more than a brother's love?"

"You do not say so," he ejaculated. "I once laughed at Aunt Barbara suggesting such a probability, but honestly never thought of such a thing coming to pass. Now I did fancy Fitzroy cared for her, but found I was mistaken when he left, joking and light-hearted as ever."

"Fitzroy!" echoed Brandon. "It was only your fancy, for he found me out and wished me luck, and said when I had plucked up courage to ask Violet, and she accepted, he would send her his benediction. Shall you raise any obstacle to me. "My position—"

"I thought you must have changed, old boy, if you could stand upon a trifle and send me adrift," said Brandon with a hearty hand-clasp.

"Do not mistake me, Brandon," and Noel put his hands affectionately upon the other's shoulders. "I never shall think the destiny of an immortal soul a trifle—and that is what it really means. Violet misses the soul's interchange of feeling in you, as I do, and dear as you are in all else this is the one thing needful."

"I will try for it, Noel, believe me; I cannot say more."

Brandon was a counterpart of the young man whom our Lord loved, but whose riches claimed a divided sovereignty, and unless the heart be emptied of every rival there comes not that One in to take possession, though He stands at the door and knocks. That knock Brandon heard that night as Noel spoke, but while willing to open the door, he did not thrust out the worldly spirit that was holding day after day a surer possession, and that in time would not leave room for the door to open.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

CANADIAN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANIES.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—Some time ago allusion was made by you as to the impairment of the paid-up capital of certain Canadian insurance companies, and as the "Report of the Superintendent of Insurance" for this Dominion is just issued, I now enclose you an extract from same (page 12) agent these companies up to 31st December, 1879:—

Citizens'	\$194,591
National	162,929
Canada Fire & Marine	93,869
Sovereign (formerly the "Isolated Risk")	53,511
Dominion	23,079

In the United States, fire companies, when capital is impaired, are obliged to make up the deficiency or cease doing business, while the companies above alluded to as having their capital impaired to the extent shown by this report, still continue to increase their risks all over the Dominion "without let or hindrance." The facts prove the present Insurance Act to be perfectly worthless in protecting the public in case of a serious conflagration.

I am, truly yours,

Argus.

Montreal, 30th August, 1880.

OTHER FELLOWS THINK SO TOO.

There's just one thing a man can have

In all this world of woe and strife,

That makes the business not too bad,

And that one thing's an easy wife.

Dost fancy that I love my girl

For rosy cheeks or raven hair?

She holds my heart because she laughs—

Because she laughs and doesn't care.

I put my boots just where it suits,

And find them where I put them, too;

That is a thing, you must allow,

A chap can very seldom do.

I leave my papers on my desk;

She never dusts them in a heap,

Or takes to light the kitchen stove

The very ones I want to keep.

On winter nights my cozy dame

Will warm her toes before the fire;

She never scolds about the lamps,

Or wants the wick a trifle higher.

On Sundays she is not so fine

But what her ruffles I can hug;

I light my pipe just where I please,

And spill the ashes on the rug.

The bed is never filled with "shams"—

A thing some women vilely plan

To worry servants half to death,

And spoil the temper of a man.

She lets me sleep to any hour,

Nor raises any horrid din

If it just happens, now and then,

To be quite late when I come in.

I tell you, Jack, if you would wed,

Just get a girl who lets things run;

She'll keep her temper like a lamb,

And help you on to lots of fun.

Don't look for money, style, or show,

Or blushing beauty, ripe and rare;

Just take the one who laughs at fate—

Who laughs, and show she doesn't care.

You think, perhaps, our household ways

Are just perchance a little mixed;

Oh, when they get too horrid bad,

We stir about and get things fixed.

What compensation has a man

Who earns his bread by sweat of brow,

If home is made a battle-ground,

And life one long, eternal row?

—Harper's Magazine.