

AFTERMATH.

BY GUY ROSLYN.

Come whisper in this oak, west wind, and blow
A breathing music in among the leaves
To soothe the siesta, while haymakers throw
The dying grass that fairy perfume weaves;
And as the pall
Of frothing ale
Is eagerly caressed by sunburnt arms,
I'll dream of country life and rustic charms.

Come, carol in this oak, clear-throated birds,
And let your summer's love be in the lay;
Unto the droning tune of leaves give words,
And in kind fellowship together play;
And I will hearken
Till shadows darken—
Till all the men go home, and cloudlets swim
In glowing amber at the western rim.

AUNT CHARITY'S VISIT.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"Minta's young man," said Aunt Charity, nodding her head as she replaced the black morocco spectacle case in her pocket. "I'm going to New York to-morrow to be introduced to him."

"You?" cried Mrs. Trestledale. "Why not I?" said Aunt Charity. "To be sure I can't much of a traveler, but it's never too late to mend, they do say, and there's one or two things in that big rattle-box of a Sodam-and-Gomorra of a place I'd like to see afore I die. So now that a good opportunity offers, and Minta's so set on it, I've about made up my mind."

"So Minta is really engaged," said Mrs. Trestledale, thinking with a sigh of her own ineligible eight daughters.

"Well, yes—and no;" said Aunt Charity, rescuing her knitting-ball from the jaws of a piratical kitten. "She's taken a considerable fancy to the young fellow, but she can't goin' to sign and seal nothin' without my consent. Marriage is a dreadful risky business, accordin' to my way of thinkin'. I never got married myself, and I don't see but what I've survived it pretty tolerable well; but you see Minta thinks different. And I'm one as believes in lettin' every one enjoy themselves after their own fashion."

And after Mrs. Trestledale had gone home, Aunt Charity Waite set herself to decide whether she should travel in her black silk or her gray alpaca.

You could not have believed it, to judge of the little brown cottage, with its steep gambrel roof, nor the old lady's antiquated ward-robe and well-worn furniture; but Miss Waite was very rich. Money had somehow clung to the Waites. Their business thrived; their interest grew fat upon itself; their acres always lay in the way of some new railway or projected street; their few and cautiously selected speculations prospered. And the very bank directors themselves took off their hats when Aunt Charity drove by in her queer little hooded phaeton, drawn by horse which was reported never to have gone out of a walk since he had been in the Waite family.

"Well, Aunt Charity, how do you like New York?"

Aunt Charity looked down at the velvet carpet, and up at the gilded chandeliers, and all round at the frescoed walls, and lace and silk-draped casements, before she answered:

"Pretty well—for such a noisy place."

Minta Delmayne laughed. She was a fresh-faced, merry-eyed girl of eighteen, with raven black hair, a saucy nose, and a mouth that plainly said, "Kiss me, if you can," such a cherry-red, pouting, roguish little dot of a mouth, was it.

"And now, Aunt Charity," said she, "where shall I take you?"

"O, 'most anywhere," said the old lady, fanning herself vehemently with a prodigious palm-leaf fan.

"To the top of Trinity steeple?" "Bless your heart, no," said Aunt Charity; "nor to the bottom of Hurl Gate, nor none o' them outrageous places the Lord never meant his people to visit, else he wouldn't a set 'em down on the level ground."

"Shall we go shopping?"

"Well, I didn't exactly calculate to shop till the end of the week."

"Central Park, then?"

"That's country," said Aunt Charity, "I can see enough meadows and sheep-grazin' at home."

"Then what do you say to the pictures at the Academy of Design?"

Aunt Charity brightened at once. She should like that, she said; and Minta put on her hat

and lace saque, and began to make herself as coquettishly pretty as possible, prattling the while, as was perfectly natural, about Mr. Ames Percival.

"You'll like him so much, Aunt Charity," said she.

"Shall I?" said the old lady, somewhat dubiously.

"He is so gentlemanly, so refined, so entirely free from all the faults of the present age."

"I'm glad to hear it," observed the old lady.

"Don't bet, eh? nor play cards, nor drink?"

"Oh, Aunt, never! He tells me he does not know the ace of hearts from the knave of spades."

"I know as much as that myself," said Aunt Charity. "We used to play, 'old maid' when I was a gal, and 'Muggins.' It's a dreadful funny game 'Muggins' is. But you're ready, I see, and so am I. What are you a noidin' to that vulgar-looking stage driver for? An't one o' your acquaintances, is he?"

"Only to make him stop, Aunt Charity. Now we are all right."

Aunt Charity Waite was delighted with the pictures in the Academy of Design, and long after Minta was tired out she sat complacently, gazing:

her, with his companion—a bull-necked, sal-low-faced fellow, who surveyed the surrounding world through a gold-mounted eye-glass.

"You're in my light, sir. Please to move a bit," said Aunt Charity, who was a free-spoken old lady.

The blonde young man stared at her. "Please to step to one side or the other," repeated Aunt Charity, rather shortly.

"My good woman," said the blonde young man, in a voice whose supercilious tone alone was an insult, "if you don't like your view you can move. I shan't! Look, here, Fortescue," to his companion; "I'm blamed, if I believe the little ballet-girl is coming at all! It's too deuced mean of her to give a fellow the mitten this way, after the champagne supper I gave her last evening."

"She knows you're engaged. Eugenie does, you see," drawled Mr. Fortescue. "She an't a fool, if you are. She knows there are no more bouquets and lace scarfs and diamond rings afloat, say nothing of wine suppers."

"You don't suppose she has heard about the five thousand dollars I lost at the last Fleet-wood?"

"Perhaps. Who knows?"

"Well now, look here. I can make it all



"WHILE HAYMAKERS THROW."

"Now I wonder what the man asks for that there cattle piece," said she, before one of Wiles' *chef-d'œuvres*. "I've got five dollars I mean to spend in some sort of an oil-painting to hang over the parlor chimney, and this jest about suits me. If you don't mind, Minty, I'd like to walk around again."

"Just as you please, Aunt Charity," said Minta; "only as I've seen all I care to, suppose I just run down Broadway a minute, to match some fringe, and then I'll come back for you."

"Well," said Miss Waite, again adjusting her spectacles.

"You won't be afraid."

"Bless your heart! what of?"

And off tripped Minta.

But matching a peculiar shade of fringe is not exactly an expeditious process; and Aunt Charity got her fill of picture-gazing, some time before Minta returned.

"I guess I'll set down, and rest a spell," said she.

So she established herself comfortably on a cushioned sofa, and began to look around at the other frequenters of the art exhibition.

Presently a tall, over-dressed young man, with a blonde mustache, a light-blue insolent eye, cameo shirt-studs, and a pink and white spotted silk neck scarf, planted himself directly opposite

right when *Dapplewing* runs at Long Branch. I've got a cool ten thousand staked on *Dapplewing*. I have; honor bright."

"And suppose *Dapplewing* chances to lose?"

"Oh, the deuce! What's the use of saying disagreeable things, Forty? All the world knows she's the favorite, and besides, I shall be married to a bag of gold by that time."

"Yes; but, Percival, look here—"

"I say," giggled the blonde young man, "look how that old hag is staring at me. I'm blessed if I don't believe it's a case of love at first sight. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hush!" whispered Fortescue. "There comes your divinity."

"What—Eugenie?"

"No, you blockhead; Minta Delmayne."

Mr. Percival turned around, all smiles and bows.

"You here!" cried Miss Delmayne, "How very fortunate! Come this way, and let me present you to my aunt. Aunt Charity, this is Mr. Ames Percival, of whom I have spoken to you."

Mr. Ames Percival cowered before the gaze of the "old hag" upon whom he had so freely commented. Aunt Charity gazed at Mr. Ames Percival with uncompromising steadiness.

"He wouldn't stand out of my light," said she.

"I assure you, ma'am, if I had had the pleasure of knowing—" growled Mr. Ames Percival.

"Let's go, Minta," said the old lady, rising and taking her niece's arm. "And while we're goin' home I'll tell you all about the bally-girl and the thousand dollars he lost at Fleet-wood, and the ten thousand he's goin' to pile up at Long Branch."

"Ma'am," pleaded Mr. Percival, "you are mistaken. I—"

"No, I an't," said the old lady. "My heart-in's as good as ever it was, thank fortune! And one thing's sartain, young man: you don't marry my niece Minta with my consent."

So the match was broken off. And Minta Delmayne had good reason to bless the day that she took her Aunt Charity to visit the Academy of Design.

For the arrow of Cupid had not stricken very deeply, and Minta was too sensible to pine for an alliance with a gambler and a rascal. And *Dapplewing* was beaten by two lengths, and Mr. Ames Percival is now engaged in billiard-marking for a livelihood.

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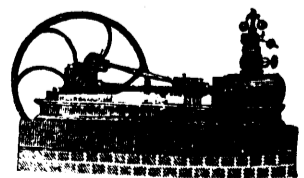
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