

"I am indeed pleased to be of such service to you. I was not aware that my question would act as a nerve tonic. Really, my powers of conversation must be more brilliant than I ever imagined. But here comes a horse and buggy with but a single occupant. Shall I crave the boon of a lift for you into the city, while I follow after with the wheels?"

Although he put the question quite nonchalantly, Geoffrey could not but feel that he would be very much disappointed did she assent to this very reasonable proposition, and he was secretly much gratified at her prompt rejoinder.

"No, sir. I may be a coward and a poor walker, but I'm hardly mean enough to ride off in that fashion and leave you to wrestle with my broken machine. It surely cannot be very much farther now? You are not tired of me for a companion, I hope?"

"No, decidedly not," was the emphatic reply. "But if you are unused to walking, I'm afraid you'll suffer from your decision."

"I'll take the risk," she responded lightly. "And now, sir, I'm going to be conventional. Are you fond of poetry, Mr. — ah —?"

"Geoffrey Holding, at your service, ma'am," he prompted, taking off his cap, with an elaborate bow.

"Thank you, Mr. Houlding, are you fond of poetry?"

"Well, yes, Miss — ah —, Miss —?"

"Margaret Morton, sir, at your service," came quickly, accompanied with a low courtesy. "And who may your favorite author be?"

"That I scarce can say. There are many things to admire in Longfellow; and then, again, Whittier is so interesting. I think on the whole that I am rather partial to the latter. Throughout so much of his writings there is such a throbbing of intense love of liberty, that he appeals to all liberty-loving people."

"Good!" she commented, "Whittier is my favorite, for that and other reasons. His 'Snow Bound' is such a delightful poem."

Thus chatting gaily, they continued their tramp, and were so interested that almost before they realized it, they were upon the streets of the city, and stopping before the door of what Miss Morton announced was her father's residence. She once more strove to express her thanks for the service Geoffrey had rendered her.

"Don't mention it again, I pray you," he said. "But may I presume to call, to assure myself that no harm has come to you from the mishap?"

After a momentary hesitation, she answered: "Thank you, yes. Mother would be disappointed had she not the opportunity of adding her thanks to mine. We are usually to be found at home on Tuesday evenings."

The following Tuesday evening Holding took advantage of this permission, and the acquaintance thus accidentally begun strengthened into a comradeship, which continued to grow throughout that fall and winter, during which they met on a number of occasions at the homes of mutual friends; and he also gladly accepted Mrs. Morton's cordial invitations to spend one or two evenings quietly at her house. Further, on two or three red-letter dates he was permitted to be the escort of mother and daughter to evening concerts. Then in the spring when wheel days were come again, Margaret and himself quite frequently went for a spin together. Through-

out, however, their intercourse had been strictly conventional, and Margaret invariably deftly turned any remark which might have been construed as bordering in the slightest upon sentiment.

It was on one of the pleasantest of June afternoons, that having had a brisk run for several miles into the open country, they had dismounted for a rest by the roadside, not far from the scene of their first encounter, she seated upon a large stone, and he reclining carelessly upon the grassy sward beside her. In the course of the desultory conversation they were carrying on, poetry was incidentally mentioned, and Geoffrey asked:

"Are you fond of Tennyson, Miss Morton?"

"Yes, I must confess that I am very fond of his writings."

"Indeed. Then have we another failing—or should I call it such?—in common. What do you admire most of his productions, 'In Memoriam'?"

"No. His lighter periods please me better. His 'Idylls of the King' are more to my liking."

"I have a partiality to that portion of his writings likewise, and, indeed, latterly there has been one in particular of his stories which seems to haunt me."

"Which may that be pray?"

"'Tis the story of 'Gareth and Lynette,' which persistently runs through my thoughts, and though I feel anything but a gay cavalier and knight-errant, yet do I oftentimes think of you as Lynette and myself as Gareth."

A faint flush mounted to her cheeks as she asked, lightly:

"How is this, Sir Knight? I certainly had not for a moment imagined that your practical mind was given to such flights of fancy."

"Ay; that's just it," he returned seriously.

"You do not think me capable of any sentiment, and in that do most assuredly resemble Lynette, who had naught but ridicule for her 'knave-knight.' My resemblance to Gareth, I must confess, is slight, especially as regards his nobler qualities; but in being treated as a joke I seem to be his fellow, for whenever I strive to approach the subject which is nearest my heart, I find that I am being laughed at. Proceed in spite of it, however, I now will, though I may be forfeiting the pleasure of your society forever by so doing. I love you, Margaret, with my whole heart, and it seems to me that I have loved you from that very day when first we walked along this road together, last October. I own at once that I am neither brilliant nor rich: but such as I am and have I lay willingly at your feet, and run the risk of being called 'knave-knight' for my pains. Oh, Margaret! can you not try to love me a little?"

Her face was still flushed a little, but otherwise she seemed quite cool and collected, in contrast to his excitement. She made no reply for a moment or two, but continued to gaze over his shoulder down the road. Presently she said:

"Your words do me great honor, sir; but it would probably be better for us to be strictly conventional, especially upon a public thoroughfare. There is a wheeling party approaching now. They, like ourselves, are taking advantage of this ideal afternoon for a spin."

These words, and more than the words, the attitude of the girl, brought despair into Geoffrey's heart; but with an effort he pulled himself together and strove to meet her upon

the ground that she had chosen, though he could not conceal a tinge of bitterness in his tone as he replied:

"Yes, and probably they hold us but indifferent wheelers to pass our time here when we might be enjoying the exercise. Shall we ride on?"

"Presently, if you wish. You are quite fond of wheeling, are you not, Mr. Houlding?"

Inwardly chafing at her light talk, Geoffrey still determined to maintain his part, so responded:

"Yes, very. And you?"

"Well, sir, as I had occasion to inform you once before, somewhere very near here, I am, in moderation, and—and," turning her laughing eyes and blushing face toward him as the last of the party went by, "in connection with the remarks you were making a few moments since, if you wish it very much, I shall be most happy to try a tandem."

He looked at her in amazement for a moment, unable to realize the happiness those bantering words conveyed, and then—well, as the last rider of the throng which had just passed happened to glance back she saw something that was not exactly conventional.

For the CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL.

Mother's Hand.

THERE is something strange and tragic
In the touch of mother's hand.
Sorrow disappears like magic
With the touch of mother's hand.
I have often wondered why
Care and pain so quickly fly
With the touch of mother's hand.

It can smooth the ruffled places,
The touch of mother's hand;
It can clear our troubled faces,
The touch of mother's hand.
Oh, it is gentle, soft, caressing
As it falls in heavenly blessing,
Mother's soothing hand.

Let it lead you all the way,
The touch of mother's hand;
Let it be your guide and stay,
The touch of mother's hand.
To its gentle counsel bend,
You will find no other friend
Like the touch of mother's hand.

When the wrinkles gather there,
On that dear hand,
Cherish it with tender care,
Dear mother's hand.
It was her great love for you
In the years she led you through,
Traced those lines on mother's hand.

When at last you bid farewell
To the touch of mother's hand,
How you'll miss it none can tell,
Mother's patient, loving hand.
Still 'twill guide your lonely way
Till you rest in endless day
With the touch of mother's hand.

HELEN OWEN.

Laugh Thrice a Day.

It has been said that we grow in face as we grow in thought, and that our faces are mirrors of our souls, but do we ever stop to think that our faces affect our souls also? And if they affect our souls they also affect our health, for health is, to a greater or less extent, controlled by the mind and soul.

It is a fact, as we have found out, that a woe-begone expression will drive every one away from us. Even fortune deserts us.