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## "Star-Dust."

By ELIZABETH H. BOWLE.

It was for sheer deviltry that Andrew Ambrose made love to brown

Brown as a nut she was—hair, eyes, skin—and her life was brown to match; for the farm, when it paid, wrung too much sweat out of its toilers, draining life's sweetness, especially when there was little in the home-life to redeem. The father was tyrannical of will and surly, the mother feeble of health and always timid and subdued, and Marty herself a scorned girl.

For that mistake the husband, lacking justice and humor, had always blamed the wife; but the unforgivable sin was that the scorned girl did not fear him. She worked, worked like a boy or a man, just for her mother's sake, not to leave her, but she kept her taskmaster at bay. anything, he feared her, and for this he hated her. "There is no devil but fear." But Marty would much rather have had love. For no noble nature wishes to be feared.

And then into Marty's brown life came Andrew Ambrose. And this is how it came about.

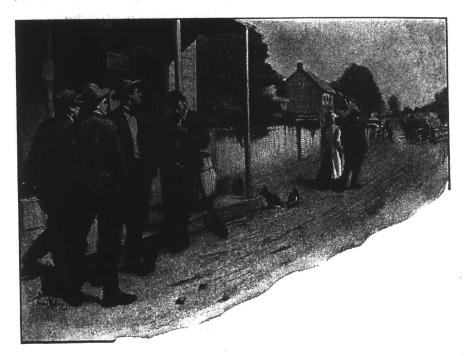
Andrew had returned from one of his hunting expeditions, to the success of which two bear-skins testified, and was standing outside the beau."

ning than scorn of its manner and motive. It was exquisitely funny to think of handsome Andrew, at whom all the girls made eyes, courting homely Marty—a Marty, too, whose gowning was so poor and unbecoming. It was almost Beauty and the Beast reversed.

But that very evening Andrew rode out to the farm. Marty was milking and she talked to him while she milked. She knew him. He had shot over their land sometimes and brought them jack-rabbits, and once, to her regret, a brown quail. But, her milking done, she left him to her father, never even coming to the house door to see if he were still there nor to watch him ride away, an unconcern or an abstraction that made Andrew smile again. But he went again the next evening, and the next, and the next, then subtly missed two, but the poor result of that subtlety made him laugh at himself

But it was that same evening, when Marty had gone to bed, but was sleepless, that her mother crept softly into her room and sat on the bedside.

"Marty, child," she said, in a tremulous whisper, "you've got a



'ANDREW HAD RETURNED FROM ONE OF IIIS HUNTING EXPEDITONS . . . WHEN MARTY PASSED BY WITH FRED WILLIAMS,"

grocery store with three other young men, when Marty passed by with Fred Williams, Rose Martin's "boy," and when she was out of hearing one said, with a laugh:
"It's full time Marty had a beau

of her own."

Said another: "She's too homely." And added, sadly reminiscent of a certain exacting beauty: "But perhaps homely girls don't expect so much. I guess they might even be grateful some" grateful some.

"Not much, Marty!" said the first one. "She's blamed proud, and as shy as a bird. You'd have to stone or trap her, or shoot her in the wing, to catch her at all."

Andrew smiled at this, showing his strong white teeth, and when he smiled that way there was a little devil in each dark eye, and the end of a woman's little finger would have fitted into the cieft in his chin. Hadn't a woman held him by the chin and tried it? The words took his fancy and the hunter's blood in him stirred.

"What do you bet I'll have her in my hand within two months, and that when I open it she'll perch on

And he threw his hand upward slightly, a gesture significant of the Sendus your address.

Single y. a gesture significant of the throwing off of a bird into the air, and the locality when I have the locality when I

Then knowledge seemed to come to Marty almost like a blow.

But, I thought he wanted to buy

"But, I thought he wanted to buy the farm. What can he want with me?" she asked.

"The farm nothing, child! Weren't his eyes on you all the evening?"—Yes, yes, Marty knew that. She could feel those compelling eyes on her now.—"Don't you think I know when a man's courting? Weren't there three courted me, and God only knows why I took your poor only knows why I took your poor father! But, listen, Marty, you must put on my new skirt—I daren't ask for another for you yet!—and sit in the parlor evenings"

the parlor evenings."

For a moment the aspect of that unspeakable parlor made Marty laugh softly. If "many waters cannot quench love," surely," she thought, "some parlors can."

"I'll never dress up for a man," she said, quietly, then.

But when her mother emitted in-

But when her mother emitted inarticulate murmurs, expressive of woe and disappointment, she added, consolingly: "And you know, mother, I look best in my working dress when I have on a big apron. My best dress is cheep and unly but best dress is cheap and ugly. hut

my aprons are cheap and pretty.

The fact was, she had an eve for color and for line, and she fashioned for herself big overall aprons of bright and set bigd or solutions. bright and soft-hued calicoes. Sometimes red, sometimes soft pinks and gray-blues, and sunbonnets to match. She, plowing a dun field on a gray day in one of these costumes, would