

HOW I WON A HUSBAND.

"I will not have a man that's tall; A man that's little is worse than all. I will not have a man that's fair; A man that's black I cannot bear. A young man is a constant pest: An old one would my toon infest. A man that's rich I'm sure won't have me; A man that's poor I fear would starve me."

I was in trouble! I most always am for that matter; but this day I was in the deepest affliction. It was raining; no, it wasn't waiting to rain—it was pouring; and I had a new bonnet! Now, I'll leave it to any of my lady readers, if it isn't aggravating to stay in the house when one has a new bonnet! Now, I'll leave it to any of my lady readers, if it isn't aggravating to stay in the house when one has a new bonnet? It's my firm belief I was born under an unlucky star; for just as sure as I get anything new, just so sure it will begin to rain, though it hasn't rained a drop for a month before. I'm sure it does it for a spite, because it knows I like to show off!

To make matters worse, I had nobody to talk to. Brother Jack had gone off fishing, in spite of the weather; at least, so he said; and I dare say it was true, for Sarah Ann Thompson told me he was reading to her the whole blessed day. Sister Kate sat reading a yellow-covered pack of trash, called "Angelina"; or, The Deserted Countess of Gooseberry Plains; and there I had to sit, with nothing to do but make faces at my faces in the glass.

"For goodness' sake, do pitch that horrible balderdash in the fire," I broke out at length, losing patience.

"Why, Fanny, how can you? I'm astonished at your want of taste. Just listen to this new—isn't it beautiful?"

And, throwing herself into a melodramatic attitude, Kate read:

"Villain!" thundered the infuriated duke, as he brandished his cutliss high in the air, "proclaim aloud thine infamy, or by the gods! thy dastard life shall pay the forfeit; and thy base soul go groveling to the regions of eternal night!"

"Never! proud duke, never!" returned the undaunted Lord Bond-reherringsfeld (La! what a name for every day!) "thy daughter, the beautiful Lady Rosalinda Imogene, shall be mine, for in these veins flows blood as noble as ever throbbed in the heart of a Duke of Gooseberry Plains!"

"O, my father!" cried the ravishing Rosalinda, throwing herself at her haughty progenitor's feet, "behold at thy feet the daughter of thy adored Seraphina Ariminta, who is an angel in the family vault, and pardon him, the beloved of my soul!"

"Regone! degenerate maiden!" shouted the maddened duke. "Begone! ere I curse thee!"

Lady Rosalinda uttered a loud shriek, and fell to the floor in a state of insensibility.

"Did she, indeed? And served her right, too; the big goose!" ejaculated, as Kate paused; much conversation in that strain, I think, would be apt to loosen one's teeth."

"A broken-down system. This is a condition for disease; to which doctors give many names, but which few of them really understand. It is simply weakness—a break-down, and a warning of the vital forces that sustain the system. No matter what may be its cause (for they are almost innumerable), its symptoms are much the same: the most prominent being, sleeplessness, sense of prostration or weakness, loss of energy, and want of energy for all the ordinary affairs of life. These, what alone is absolutely essential in all such cases is increased vitality—vigour—"

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I strongly urge every weak woman to give them a trial.

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At this moment ma entered with a letter in her hand. "Frances, my dear," she said turning to her youngest born, "this letter is from Frank Stevens, to whom you are engaged. He is coming here in a few weeks; and as his father is anxious that the marriage should take place immediately, he desires you to be ready as soon as he arrives."

Was there ever such impudence! I sat bolt upright, with mouth and eyes wide open, the very picture of amazement; and looking anything but romantic, as a glance at the mirror opposite satisfied me.

"How sentimental!" impetred Kate, looking up from that good-for-nothing thing of an "Angelina."

"Of course, my dear, it is rather sudden," said ma, replying to my look of blank astonishment; "but I think we can manage to be ready."

"And does that impertinent fellow think I'll really marry him?" said I, finding words for my bewilderment at last.

"Why, of course, Fanny!" said ma in her most stately manner; you are engaged to him, you know!"

"Engaged, indeed! I'd see him at Jericho first!" said I, indignantly, as I went out, banging the door after me with rather unnecessary force.

Now, lest anyone should think I am ill-natured—which, I solemnly assure you, I am not—I will tell you I was dreadfully out of temper that rainy July day. But when a young lady is out of temper, and her ma comes in as coolly as though she were going to give her a spanking, and tells her to get up, and be married!—well, really, it is—is enough to provoke a saint.

To tell the truth, I was engaged to Frank Stevens; but, oh dear! such an engagement as it was! Ten years before, when I was nine years of age, Mr. Stevens had paid us a visit, bringing with him his only son an dber, Master Jack, then twelve years old, and one of the most tantalizing, provoking young wretches, I firmly believe, on the face of the globe. Papa and Mr. Stevens, who had been old school friends in their youth, became desirous of uniting the houses of Stevens and Hunter, and to effect this laudable design, they formed the wise resolve to marry Master Frank and Miss Fan, who, on the strength of three hours' acquaintance, had grown as thick as two pickpockets.

When the precious engagement was announced to us, we both behaved like perfect models of propriety, with the exception of Frank, who made use of the scandalous expression: "Whew! here's a go!" When our consent was asked, Frank declared he'd no objections; and I told them sincerely: "I'd just as lief as not."

Our conversation, half an hour after this solemn engagement took place, was truly edifying: "Frank," said I, gravely, "do you think we'll have much fun?"

"Yes; I guess so," replied that young gentleman; "we'll have bride's cake, you know; and we won't have to go to school; so I reckon we'll have a good time!"

"And we can make lasses candy every day?" said I, as memory conjured up the sweet but sticky occu-

panion we had been engaged in that morning.

"Yes," returned my fiancé; "and I'll buy a new kite, and a pony, and ever so many picture books; and you and me, Fan, 'll live in clover."

"La! won't it be splendid?" returned the future Mrs. Stevens. "I'll buy a great big doll, and a skipping-rop, and chiny cups and saucers. I heard papa saying he was going to give me so much money; and if ever he does, when we're married, perhaps I'll get a new parasol."

Having made with astonishing prudence, these important arrangements for the future, we parted, full of the beatific hope of "getting married by-and-by, and having some fun!"

I am sorry to say I did not follow the usual example of lovers at parting; we neither threw ourselves into each other's arms nor even noisened a cambric handkerchief with our tears. On the contrary, Frank laid in an extra supply of coffee and buck-wheat cakes that morning, to prevent hunger on his journey; and, if I remember aright, my own performance was most respectable.

So ten years passed, and Frank and I had not met again. He went to college and I went to a fashionable boarding school from which I had only returned six months before you had the honor of making my acquaintance, reader. From pa I learned that Frank had been abroad for the last two or three years, but that he was shortly expected home.

Such was the state of affairs that memorable rainy morning on which I was so terribly out of temper (I mention it again for fear you may have forgotten); I had almost ceased to think of my quondam engagement, and had not the remotest idea of ever being called upon to fulfill it. Therefore a cold shower bath could not have produced a more stunning effect upon me than being so unceremoniously told to get up and marry him upon a minute's notice, just as if I wasn't to have no voice in the matter at all.

Besides the tyranny of the affair, I had another reason for declining an alliance with the illustrious Mr. Frank Stevens, the sweetest recollection of whom was associated in my mind with molasses candy.

A certain tall, handsome distinguished-looking stranger had made his appearance in our village a few weeks previous, with the most adorable black hair and whiskers (my favorite color), and a perfect love of a moustache. And, oh! such splendid black eyes; and such a dear little foot and hand; and such a nice coat, fitting without a wrinkle; and such a fascinating way of running his fingers through his luxuriant dark locks. Sarah Ann Thompson said it was to show off his diamond ring; but I don't believe it.

Now, you must not think I was in love with this bewildering individual. Not I, indeed! I had firmly made up my mind never to marry anyone fair or dark, handsome or homely. My firm and grim determination was to live and die an independent old maid—to "paddle my own canoe"—so, there! And if I did spend my time at meeting, in stealing shy glances at the stranger, it was in admiration of his proper attention to the minister, and keeping thinking, all the time of the sermon how irresistibly handsome he was, as his eyes wandered over the congregation with easy nonchalance. It's nobody's business, because I just did it for—ahem! for fun.

I soon discovered from Jack that the stranger was a Mr. Dunlane, from Louisiana, all the way; and to use Jack's glowing eulogium, a "confoundably good fellowing at times."

He came to our village for the professed object of catching trout, and recruiting his health, impaired by home study—not as Sarah Ann Thompson maliciously hinted, to escape the sheriff—though really for a gentleman in ill health, he looked in very good condition.

To return from this digression. In about an hour it cleared up, and though it was still too wet to sport my new bonnet; I determined to go out. Being in a misanthropic state of mind (I repeat it, I was out of hu-

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I determined to don garments that the wind and drizzle wouldn't hurt. Accordingly, I drew on a pair of rubbers, as big as all out-doors: a merino skirt that had once been red, but which had now faded to a genteel mud color; an old black basque, with a hole in each sleeve, and a big flabby, green sun-bonnet, innocent of starch, something after the fashion of those sported by hurdy-gurdy girls. And thus elegantly arrayed, I whistled to Pomp, the big house dog, and set off.

To be continued.

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UNCLAIMED LETTERS, REMAINING IN G. P. to Sept. 26th, 1911

Table listing unclaimed letters with columns for names, addresses, and dates. Includes entries for Mrs. Chas. Everett, Mrs. Hattie E. King, Mrs. Bessie Pardy, etc.

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