

THE ALDERMAN'S DAUGHTER.

AN ISLAND ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

"Ah, his extreme of fate has come.
He stands before it deaf and dumb."

JONAS ITEM is the editor of a great literary weekly—or the weakly editor of a great literary—no matter which.

One day, in the height of the season, Mr. Item took passage on the York Street ferry for Hanlan's Point.

Amongst his fellow passengers was a lovely being, at whose first casual glance the great journalist's heart capitulated. He would have sacrificed his editorial position on the spot for the privilege of one word with the charming creature. He longed for the old boat to sink, so that the young lady would throw herself upon him for protection. But no such contingency arose. As the steamer approached the island wharf the desire to make an impression upon the beautiful passenger became more intense, and Jonas had begun to invent an excuse for addressing her, when fortune unexpectedly placed the opportunity before him.

As the people landed, a favoring zephyr playfully picked the best "tip," from the fair one's hat, and tossed it gently into the shimmering sea. In a moment Mr. Item had recovered the truant feather and restored it to its owner. She smiled her gratitude so sweetly as to fairly intoxicate him with pleasure, and in a short time they were conversing quite familiarly.

"Miss ———."
"Wardheeler."

"Ah, yes; Miss Wardheeler, is it not criminal that the City Council does not compel the boat owners to place railings on these wharves?"

At this, (as any one would consider) very innocuous remark, Mr. Item's fair companion flared up indignantly, and vehemently replied:

"You forget yourself, sir; I wish you good-day!"

CHAPTER II.

"The two sat side by side in the twilight,
Like two loving birds in one nest."

At the opening of this chapter, Mr. Jonas Item is walking leisurely along the pavement on the west side of the island. A short distance in advance of him is Miss Wardheeler. Why had she so unceremoniously dismissed him at the end of the last chapter? He cannot make it out. Yet he will not bid farewell to his love-dream.

The wind had now increased to a gale, and people and things were blowing about promiscuously. A tremendous gust tears up a tent near by and carries it towards the lake, snatching up our heroine in its waywards flight. Again our hero gallantly rescues her as she and the enveloping canvas are about to disappear into the raging billows. Again she pours forth her grateful obligations to him, her deliverer. Fortune has deigned him one more chance. Again they become confidential, and discourse on themes celestial and terrestrial. They walk along one of the paths that lead down to the pebbly beach. The arching pines shake their aromatic fringes to the ground, while the birch branches glitter in the sunshine like silver filigree work. The face of nature, always beautiful here, seems to Mr. Item's enraptured senses clothed in super-natural glory. Vernona—she had confided to him her name—pressed his arm with a suggestive fondness. His heart glowed with the fervor of a long dormant passion. The time and place seemed specially prepared for his

wooing, but in order not to precipitate the momentous question, he proceeded to dilate upon the beauties of the surroundings. Fatal step.

"Vernona," said he, "sit down on this mossy cushion; nature has decked it with her own velvet for you. What a shame that the City Council does not take some steps to protect this charm——"

"Mr. Item," she screamed, "your remarks are exceedingly offensive. Will you release my hand at once, and permit me to rise?" and she vanished down the footpath like a shooting star.

CHAPTER III.

"But like the inconstant waters
Those glances still have rolled;
Beware the floods, fair daughter,
For the wave is false and cold."

FOR some time Mr. Item remained where he had been so cruelly abandoned by the lovely girl. He seemed to be utterly dazed, and acted as one in a dream. Suddenly he started as if he had received an inspiration, as indeed he had. A theory had come to him which fully explained the girl's strange conduct. Was she not an alderman's daughter?

He resolved for the time being to suppress his editorial tendency to criticize. But he would yet win this angelic being, and with determination in his eye and sand in his shoes, he started for the boat. Fortune again favored him. He found himself on the same ferry as Miss Wardheeler, and before the steamer reached Yonge Street slip he was her accepted. All previous misunderstandings had been effaced from memory, and the blue ethereal of their happy future was apparently cloudless. The wedding was to take place when Mr. Item's salary was advanced to a sum which would warrant the increased encumbrance.

But relentless fate had decreed otherwise. As Mr. Item handed his betrothed out of the gangway she stepped upon an innocent pork-rind and slid into the "drink." Once more she was rescued by Mr. Item himself, and as he was about to hand her into a hack which he had summoned, his feelings found vent.

"How disgusting," he exclaimed, "to have this foul sewer discharging itself right here. It is simply reprehensible in the City Council to per——"

"Mr. Item," screamed Miss Wardheeler, "leave me forever!" and she slammed the cab door violently, while the sewage of the city oozed from every crevice of the vehicle.

She was lost to him for ever.

He had forgotten that her beloved father was an *Alderman*.



June 28, '86.

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