

certain Mr. Tomlins, who had annoyed Melindy more than the others, came late and was left in the dining-room alone with her. While eating his dessert he amused himself teasing her until she became really confused and distressed. As he rose to leave the dining-room he walked around by her table, and in pretended kindness put his arm about her and patted her cheek familiarly, as he said: "Poor little country girl; she is really teased. Well, I didn't mean any harm, and you mustn't mind me. You're such a little darling a fellow can't help noticing you, you know," and he stooped to kiss her.

Melindy's face turned scarlet, more with anger than shocked modesty, and, turning, she pushed him from her with all her strength. The attack was unexpected, and the young man fell heavily across a chair, his head striking the wall. He lay there partially stunned for a moment, Melindy standing over him, contempt and disgust in her face. As consciousness came back to him, and he took in the full meaning of her expression, Tomlins grew furious, and springing to his feet seized Melindy by her shoulders and shook her until her teeth chattered.

"Stop that, you impudent coward!" a clear voice rang out, just as Melindy became thoroughly frightened at realizing that Tomlins was drunk as well as angry, and in another minute the unlucky youth was again sprawling on the floor.

"This is none of your affair, Grafton," growled Tomlins, "and I don't want any of your interference."

"It is my affair," answered Grafton. "I'll not stand by and see a man do

learned that Saturday afternoons were hers, and that she did not know what to do with them.

These kindnesses, which grew out of the natural impulse to helpfulness, which is the unfailing desire of a noble heart, more truly in a man, even, than in a woman, made a still deeper impression on Melindy. The other inmates of the house were kind, too, and they often gave her small tips, but he was the only one who seemed to care that she should go to the right places and read the right books, and who blended respect and consideration, such as Melindy had never before known, with his kindness. His tall, supple figure, which he clothed neatly, but somewhat carelessly as to cut and fit, his clear gray eyes, dark hair, high-bred countenance, and dignified, yet gentle manners seemed to Melindy the perfection of manly beauty and grace, and his name, Donald Grafton, the most musical she had ever heard.

It was some weeks before she acquired the meagre facts concerning him known to Mrs. Winter, which were these: He was a Virginian by birth, the only son of a widowed mother of limited means, and was practically acquiring the profession of machinist, after a college education looking to that end, in one of the big city machine shops.

It was not long before Melindy began to dream of the dignified young Virginian by night, and to build castles for him by day. At first she had no part in these day-dreams. He was simply the hero of the romances of her imagination, and she delighted to make him perform mighty deeds of valor and chivalry, such



Galicians Pulling Flax.

violence to a woman while I can lift an arm in her defence."

"She struck me first," he answered, "or I'd never thought of harming her."

"If I did," said Melindy—"and I didn't strike him, sir," turning to Mr. Grafton; "I only pushed him off—it was because he was very impudent."

"I only tried to kiss her," put in Tomlins, "and the saucy jade needn't be putting on airs, for I don't doubt many a fellow has kissed her before now."

"That is not so, Mr. Grafton," Melindy answered, her voice getting husky, "and besides, if it was," she added, defiantly, "I guess I don't have to kiss them as I don't please to."

"You are right, Melindy," said Grafton, repressing a smile; "and I am surprised at Tomlins here. I do not believe he would have forgotten to be a gentleman if he had not taken too much whisky this morning. Come with me, Tomlins," he added, turning to the young man, who had dropped into a chair; "bed is the best place for you just now."

From that time Melindy regarded Mr. Grafton with sincerest respect and admiration, and he took a kindly interest in the friendless girl, whose feet seemed set among pitfalls. Several times he loaned her books to read, adroitly suggesting that they were the books ladies usually read, instead of the yellow-backed French novels and sensational papers which were found on the tables in most of the young men's rooms, and which he had seen Melindy reading. Two or three times he gave her tickets to a matinee, such as he would have taken his sisters to see, or to a popular concert, when he

as she read of in some of the books he loaned her.

After awhile she began to imagine herself his trusted servant, and thought how delightful it would be to minister to his comfort always, and to share in a reflected degree some of the success and glory with which she delighted to surround him in her thoughts.

About the middle of December, Donald was sick enough to be compelled to spend several days in his room. Melindy, whose duty it was to wait upon him, was unceasingly thoughtful for his comfort. One day she went to renew his fire, and, after having done so, she said, apologetically:

"I'll wait a bit to take off the blower."

Donald felt lonely and bored, and responded, cordially:

"Well, sit down, Melindy, and talk to me awhile, I am lonesome anyhow."

The color surged into her face and her lips parted in a pleased smile as she sat down at a respectful distance.

"Tell me what you think of the city, Melindy," said Donald, feeling that he had not acted wisely, but anxious to ignore that awkwardness of the situation.

"I haven't gotten much acquainted with it yet, sir, but I like the house, and Mrs. Winter, and—everybody," after an instant's hesitation.

"Don't you get homesick for the country sometimes, and for your people?"

"I haven't any people except a mother. Mr. Grafton, and I despised the stupid little town we lived in. But I think, sometimes," she added, as her face kindled, "that I'd give anything to see the blue mountains smiling in the sunshine,

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