

SELF-RAISED

BY
EMMA D. M. SOUTHWORTH

"Servant, well, if he was a servant, I don't know nothink! Why, there aint a gentleman in S' Mary's county as dresses as fine and puts on as many airs!"

"That is quite likely, Uncle Reuben; but for all that, Frisbie is Lord Vincent's servant," said Ishmael.

"Well, how's ever that may be there he was alongside of the driver. But what staggers me is that there wasn't no Lord Vincent nowhere to be seen! He was 'mong the missin'! And that was the rummest go / as ever was seen. A new bride a-comin' home to her 'pa without no bridegroom. And so I just axed Mr. Frisbie, Esquire, and he telled me how his lordship missed the trail. What trail? And what business had he to be off the trail, when his wife was on it? That's what I want to know. And, anyways, it's the rummest go that ever was. Did you hear anything about it, Ishmael?"

"I chanced to hear Lady Vincent say to her father—that she was alone. That was all. I did not even see her ladyship."

"Well now, that's another rum go. Didn't wait to see her. And you sich friends? Pwch! Oh! Ah! What's that for, Hannah? You've trod on my toe and ground it almost to powder! Ah!"

"If your foot is as soft as your head, no wonder every touch hurts it!" snapped Mrs. Gray.

"Law, what a temper she have got, Ishmael," said poor Reuben, carressing his afflicted foot.

Hannah had effected the diversion she intended, and soon after gave the signal for rising from the table. And she took good care during the rest of the evening that the subject of Lord and Lady Vincent did not come upon the tapis.

The next morning being Monday, Ishmael accompanied Reuben in his rounds over his little farm and the great Tanglewood estate, to see the improvements. The "durrum" cow and calf and the "shunk-eye" fowls received due notice. And the first ripe bunches of the "hammers" grapes were plucked in the visitor's honor.

In the afternoon they went down to the oyster banks and amused themselves with watching Sam rake the oysters and load the cart.

It was while they were jasting out on the vine-shaded porch, enjoying their usual evening chat under the star-lit sky, that they heard the sound of approaching wheels.

And a few moments afterwards a carriage drew up at the gate.

Reuben walked up to see who was within it. And Ishmael heard the voice of Lord Vincent inquiring: "Is this the best road to Tanglewood?"

"Well, yes, sir, I do spose it's the best, if any can be called the best where none of them is good, but every one of 'em as bad as bad can be!" was the encouraging answer.

"Drive on!" said Lord Vincent. And the carriage rolled out of sight into the forest road.

After all, then, the viscount had not absconded. He probably had missed the train. But why had he missed it? That was still the question.

On Tuesday morning Ishmael took leave of Hannah and Reuben, promising to stop and spend another day and night with them on his return to Washington; and mounted on a fine horse, borrowed from Reuben, with his knapsack behind him, he started for the Beacon.

It was yet early in the forenoon when he arrived at the cool promontory where the refreshing sea breezes met him.

As he rode up to the house that you know fronted the water, he saw Bee, blooming and radiant with youth and beauty, out on the front lawn with her younger sisters and brothers.

Their restless glances caught sight of him first; and they all exclaimed at once: "Here's Ishmael, Bee! here's Ishmael, Bee!" and ran off to meet him.

Bee impulsively started to run too, but checked herself, and stood blushing but eager, waiting until Ishmael dismounted and came to greet her.

She met him with a warm, silent welcome, and then, looking at him suddenly, said: "You are so much better; you are quite well. I am so glad Ishmael!"

"Yes, I am well and happy, dearest Bee—thanks to you and to Heaven!" said Ishmael, warmly pressing her hands again to his lips, before turning to embrace the children who were jumping around him.

Then they all went into the house where Mr. and Mrs. Middleton met him with an equal cordial welcome. "And how did you leave the family at Tanglewood? Family said 'Ah! there is no family there now; no one left but the old judge. How is he? And when is Claudia and her lordling expected back?" inquired Mr. Middleton, when they were all seated near one of the sea-view windows.

"The judge is well. Lord and Lady Vincent are with him," replied Ishmael.

And then in answer to their exclamations of surprise he told all he knew of the unexpected arrival. A luncheon of cream, fruit, cake, and wine was served, and the welcome guest was pressed to partake of it.

Ishmael tasted and enjoyed all except the wine—that, faithful to his vow, he avoided, and was rewarded by a sympathetic look from Bee.

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