

Little Stitches.

Oh, thoughts that go in with the stitches
That woman so quietly take,
While castles are built with the needle,
And bubbles are rounded to break!

You see, in your kerchief hem, Freshman
A dotted line fairy and fine;
But see you the prayers, low and tender,
Pricked in with the lengthening line?

Betrothed! as you bend o'er the trossseau
Absorbed in your rose tinted dream,
Speak low, as you ensure the seamstress
For waver and knot in the seam.

In 'brodery dainty and foreign,
That falls at your wrist, can you see
How trembled the hand of the novice,
In spite of the vigil-taught knee?

r throbs of a woman heart smothered,
And cries that no penance can still,
e lifting the wreath and the roses,
Are echoed from girldle and frill,

A terrible, blood-reddened ladder
Of loops hung on poverty's hands,
p which goes the foot of oppression,
To gather gold out of its strands!

Waits yonder no echoing thunder,
No lightnings to smite from the cloud,
When falling tears rust the swift needle,
And thread ties the neck of a shroud?

Ah, beautiful stitches so tiny,
Where brooding love waits in the nest,
In shadow of motherhood coming,
Half fearful, yet consciously blest!

What happy hopes lie in the gathers,
Or lurk in the robe soft and fine?
What buds underneath the leaves silky,
What day-dreams run on with the vine?

No tale can you tell, little stitches,
Such tales as you might, if you could!
From the founcces that cover a ball dress,
To seams in a holy monk's hood!

ELECTORY.

Lost and Found.

Chapter I.

EIGHTH! What's a person to do under such circumstances? No way of extricating myself from this predicament unless I take an overdose of laudanum. O hang myself, or, perhaps—I never thought of that—she is as much opposed to the marriage as I. I'll go and see the old maid anyhow, and thus learn my fate.

At this happy thought Paul Smith's face lighted up, and he brought his hand down on the desk by way of emphasis.

I'll do it, he continued. My curiosity is fully aroused. I really want to see the old girl, and, besides, I can see Ellen Bertram.

Paul Smith was verging well on his thirtieth year.

In form he was above medium height firmly built, denoting great physical strength.

He possessed an ordinary face and a finally formed head showing superior mental ability.

He had lived with his uncle Jacob Smith, since he was a boy, his parents having died when he was quite young.

Paul, being naturally a lover of books, had every opportunity of satisfying his thirst for knowledge that he could desire.

His uncle was a rich old bachelor, who cared for no one but his nephew, and for nothing but accumulating wealth.

At the age of sixteen, Paul was sent to college, where he concentrated his every faculty on the acquisition of knowledge. He graduated at the age of twenty-two.

His uncle welcomed him home warmly, and offered to make him his partner in a large mercantile firm.

Paul declined his offer, preferring the study of law.

He therefore spent two years at a law school, and was admitted to the bar.

Having a deep, clear, sonorous voice, pleasant manners, and a good share of eloquence, he soon distinguished himself as an advocate.

He had not chosen law for his vocation from necessity, for he was the heir-apparent to half-a-million, but because he loved the profession and he entered it with great zeal, and, at the age of twenty-nine, justly won the name of being one of the best lawyers in the city of H—.

Paul thus far had escaped, unscathed the arrows of Cupid.

But, alas! like almost all other men, in an evil hour, he was taken off guard and mortally wounded.

A month or so previous to the opening of our story, Paul was called to a distant city on professional business.

When about two-thirds of his journey as finished he was overtaken by a storm.

He had barely time to spring from his horse, secure him, and rush into a small country school-house before the rain descended.

What was his surprise and pleasure to find school exercises in progress, which were superintended by a beautiful maiden.

Paul had, half an hour before, wished it would not rain; but now, from some cause, he wished it would rain all the rest of the afternoon, which it very accommodatingly did.

He made himself very agreeable, and, when school was dismissed, the rain still continuing, he willingly availed himself of the invitation extended to him by his newly-found acquaintance, to accompany her home.

Paul was not absent-minded and given to day-dreaming, but he certainly did after his visit to the little white school-house, often sit with an open book in his hand, staring vacantly out at the open window or door.

And we think it very probable our school-mistress, figured conspicuously in his thoughts, and, if air-castles were built, she, with our amiable hero, resided in them.

From the time the above recorded events transpired, Paul's professional business increased wonderfully in that part of the country.

As beforementioned, he was the prospective heir to a princely fortune, but, before he could inherit it, he would be obliged to concede to the stipulations of a will made in his favor by John Smith, brother of Jacob Smith, viz: he was to marry Ellen Reydell, the daughter of a William Reydell, an old friend and college chum of Jacob Smith's, and the brother-in-law of the deceased John Smith.

Said John Smith had been largely endowed with the organ of acquisitiveness. At the age of eighteen he had left his home and friends, and gone forth, without money, to battle with the world.

Twenty years of his life were spent in engulging every noble sentiment of his nature in the vortex of avarice.

His success was greater than he had anticipated it would be.

While on a visit to see his brother, he became enamoured with the sister of William Reydell, whom, without display and on a month's acquaintance he married.

A few years after his marriage his wife died, and from that time until his death, he lived with Mr. Reydell.

As he had been eccentric during life, his relatives naturally supposed he would exhibit some freak of eccentricity in making his will.

Their supposition proved to be correct.

The above expressed disposition of his wealth, was found to be the contents of his will, and in the case of either party refusing to comply with the requirements, the vast estate was to go to a charitable institution.

The property was left under the guardianship of Mr. Reydell and Jacob Smith, until the condition was accepted or rejected.

When the contents of the will were first made known to Paul, he viewed the subject carelessly, and from a financial point of view; but of late he looked at it in a different light. But, viewing it in any light, it was a great temptation. He was offered on the one hand, ease, prosperity, and a half-million of money; on the other, toil, hardship, and discouragements. The former was purchased by complying with the requirements of the will, the latter was the consequence of refusing to do so.

Paul possessed the same weaknesses that are common to the whole human family to a greater or less extent. He knew full well what depended upon his decision. By refusing he knew that he would not only incur the displeasure of his uncle, cause the insolvency of Mr. Reydell, but would lose all his aristocratic friends, and, doubtless, many briefs. Long and earnestly had he struggled with himself. All that was noble within him cried, never sell yourself for wealth! All that was selfish and mercenary, cried, why give up friends and wealth, because your conscience is at variance with your desire? And then a sweet face, a pair of beautiful, laughing eyes, would rise before his mental vision. Why hesitate a moment? he would say to himself. My duty is plain. I am offered, in lieu of my happiness and freedom, riches and an unloved, and, no doubt, cross, ugly wife.

While sitting in his office on the afternoon in which our story opens, he suddenly arrived at the conclusion expressed at its beginning.

He made his uncle acquainted with his intention of paying Miss Ellen Reydell a visit; that gentleman was overjoyed; grasping Paul's hand, he cried,—

That's right, Paul. I know you will love her. Why, bless you you can't help it! Everybody loves her. She is the most beautiful, accomplished, and—

There, uncle, don't tell me anything more about her. An exaggeration of anything you wish to praise is detrimental, as it excites the expectation beyond reality, and thus has the opposite effect.

I have not exaggerated to you in the least, but, on the contrary, have not half told you how lovely—

Well, don't try. I daresay there isn't

an adjective in the English language adequate to do her justice. There can be no doubt but that I will immediately, at first sight, fall in love with the old maid.

I tell you she is not an old maid. She is the sweetest noblest—

Well, why don't you marry her yourself, uncle? again interrupted Paul, maliciously.

If she is the embodiment of perfection, I can't see how you've resisted her manifold charms. I will relinquish all claims I am supposed to have to her hand. You certainly will not find me to be a very formidable rival.

I am sure you won't relinquish your claims—no, not under any circumstances—when you have seen her. And the absurd idea of an old bachelor like me marrying her! She wouldn't have me.

If she would, you don't suppose, sir, that I would make a fool of myself by marrying, do you?

Then why are you trying to make a fool of me for?

With you it is different. You are naturally inclined to be sentimental, and get love-sick. Besides, you know the consequence of refusing to marry her.

Well, I will not argue the point with you. I will go and see the lady, and if I find the encomiums are merited that you have been lavishing upon her, I promise, she being willing, there will be a wedding ere a fortnight rolls around.

Paul arrived in the town of Bellville on the following day, and immediately repaired to the residence of Mr. Reydell.

He was kindly received by that gentleman, and as he was of a social disposition, educated and, a lawyer, they soon entered into an animated conversation, in the middle of which they were interrupted by the entrance of Miss Ellen Reydell.

Mr. Reydell arose, introduced them, and, having important business to which he was obliged to attend, excused himself and withdrew, leaving them together.

Paul, for a few moments after he had gone stood transfixed, gazing at the lady unable to articulate a syllable. At length with a great effort he regained his mental equilibrium sufficiently to converse with her.

Ah! he thought. And so this is the young lady whom they have chosen for my future wife? She would be the last female on earth I would marry. She can't be less than forty years old; her hair is a thin, rusty brown colour; her eyes don't both look in the same direction, and she undoubtedly wears false teeth. Beautiful! Lovely! Uncle is an excellent judge of beauty. Marry her—ugh!

A perceptible shudder passed through his frame at the thought.

Miss Ellen was not particularly pretty. Her forehead was very low—scarcely allowing a discernible space between her hair and her eyebrows. Her nose was immensely large, and mouth ditto. Her neck was in length like a giraffe's. However, she had many good qualities which would overbalance these small defects in her personal appearance. She was a good cook, very amiable in disposition, an indefatigable talker, and, most wonderful of all for an old maid of her age, was opposed to Woman's Suffrage.

Paul, she said, drawing a chair close beside our frightened hero, and sitting down, I am very glad to see you, and I assure you this opportunity of having a confidential talk with you has been long and earnestly desired. I am sure you will not think me indecorous if I speak plainly upon the subject which so nearly concerns the future welfare of you and—

Yes—I—indeed—Miss Reydell, began Paul, becoming more embarrassed at each word.

I understand you, Paul, interposed Ellen, moving her chair closer to him. You think there may be objections to the marriage. Your fears are indeed groundless. It is true, I was at first opposed, thinking they meant to coerce—

Indeed, in broke Paul, becoming desperate, there is no compulsion in the matter; it is left at our option whether the marriage shall take place or not.

So I understand. You know there is no danger of either refusing.

Miss Reydell, I—

Call me Ellen, Paul. It is so much more friendly.

And she gave him one of her sweetest and most winning smiles.

I was going to say, Miss Rey—I mean, Ellen, stammered poor Paul, wiping the perspiration from his brow, that I hope—well—I—ah—really I—

Oh, I see, Paul; you want to know the day upon which the wedding shall take place, you impatient fellow! Well, I'm sure I'm not particular. I presume the necessary arrangements could be made by the latter part of next month.

I beg of you not to put yourself to any unnecessary trouble; but—

Ah, you want the wedding to come off sooner. Just like all you men! still you don't want to put us to any great trouble. I appreciate your willingness to generously yield your own desires to ours. I think, perhaps, we can make the preparations—purchase my wedding-dress, etc.—sooner, without incommencing you greatly. You are not going? What will—

I should be happy to prolong my visit but I cannot. I have business of vital importance to which I must attend.

Oh, I am so sorry you have to go, but we shall see you again very shortly. In the interval I suppose you will write often.

Yes—I—suppose so, I wish you good-day.

Good-bye, Paul. Knowing the relationship we shall soon sustain to each other, there can be no impropriety in claiming a kiss from you.

I—indeed—I—Miss Rey— he began.

But whatever he intended to say was forever lost, for the lady, throwing her long arms around his neck, and standing on her toes—as he had straightened his six feet of manhood to his fullest height to get out of reach implanted an explosive kiss in such a manner as to completely bring his words to a speedy termination.

Come back to see her! he muttered, when he once more stood in the open air. Write to her! And above all, marry her! If she never receives a letter till I write her one, her epistolary compositions will be certainly limited and will not require much time for perusal. If she don't marry until I marry her, she will remain on old maid the rest of her natural days. But what am I to do? My refusal will disappoint uncle, Mr. Reydell, and the fair Ellen, saying nothing about my own disappointment in losing the wealth. What am I to do? he repeated. I have it now! he suddenly exclaimed. I will go and see Ellen Bertram, and ask her to marry me. If she says yes, I will forthwith purchase a farm, and settle down, for I verily believe farming is my true vocation; at least, it was always my boyish ambition.

Chapter II.

HE purple glow of a warm, delicious summer evening was fast fading into the sombre shades of night. The setting sun, glimmering through the beautiful woods, brightened and intensified the scene.

Sitting in a school-house, a book before her, her head resting on one shapely hand, was Ella—the young lady with whom Paul had fallen in love. So engrossed was she in the perusal of the book before her, that she did not hear the clatter of the horse's hoofs as Paul rode up. Paul could look upon her peerless beauty unseem. She possessed a magnificent form, replete with feminine beauty and grace. Her forehead was well formed, being somewhat higher than is ordinary for woman, and denoting superior mental gifts. Her eyes, her large, lustrous, glorious eyes, wonderful in depth, laughing, sparkling, loving, were alone sufficient to distract any unmarried lawyer.

Paul advanced and held out both hands, saying—

Aren't you glad to see me, Ella? She started, raised her eyes to his, and a beautiful smile passed over her features.

I am always glad to see my friends, she answered, putting her hands in his. I did not expect to see you; it is, indeed a joyful surprise.

I did not suppose I would find you here; interested in a favourite author? Yes, I wasn't aware I had lingered so long. Isn't it a glorious sunset?

Yes; no gallery of art can rival its beauty. I have been reminded all day of my boyhood days, when I wished that summer would last always, everything has seemed so full of life and joy. So it is with our lives; the calm days—days of peace, happiness and prosperity—are our summer days. Those days of adversity, of sorrow and disappointments, are our stormy days of winter.

But we must have a share of both, replied the young girl, preparing to leave the school-room.

Wait a moment, Ella. I have come here to-day to say something to you—something that concerns my own future happiness. I came to tell you that I love you; these are simple words, but, oh! how true, and how fraught with untold meaning!—I love you. Ella, dearest, why don't you speak; will you be mine—my wife?

He spoke earnestly, passionately, looking vainly in her face to read a requital of his love.

She averted her face to conceal the storm that swept over it; yet as she answered him, there was a perceptible quivering in her voice.

I cannot marry you. I regret that you have placed your affections on me. But why can you not? Do you not love me? Oh, Ella! do you love me? His voice was husky with suppressed emotion.

She, too, was greatly moved, Her face was pale, and she leaned

heavily against the window, and silently struggled to subdue her feelings and resist his pleadings.

I am already engaged to be married, she said, quietly, her face still averted. Engaged! he repeated. To whom? But what matters it? That you do not love me should suffice.

A long pause ensued broken by him. Ella, you are the only girl I ever loved. I never knew how dear you had become to me till now, when I am on the point of losing you, of bidding you fare well for ever. Oh, Ella!

He came very near her, forcibly taking both her hands in his, and gazing long and earnestly in her face until she lifted her quivering eyelids, and her eyes looked into his dark brown orbs, but for one moment only.

She could not look upon the despair and anguish that flowed from their depth, anguish so intense that it flooded every feature with agony.

He stood irresolute for a moment, scarcely able to restrain himself from taking her in his arms and imprinting a farewell kiss on her trembling lips.

Good-bye, and may you be happy, he said, dropping her hands.

And, turning suddenly, he was gone. She stood where he had left her, with a look of utter hopelessness swept over her fine face, and a sharp, intense pang shot through her lonely heart.

The shades of night settled over nature soon.

The bright stars shown with brilliant lustre over the scene.

The moon slowly ascending above the green hill, made the gloriously beautiful night more beautiful by its effulgent splendour.

And still Ella stood leaning her head against the window, every vestige of hope fled, leaving her face sad, gloomy and despairing.

A month had passed.

Paul's attempts, in the meantime, to subdue his love for Ella had been futile.

Her sweet, lovely face, dearer, infinitely dearer to him than all things else besides, was always before him.

The more he strove to extinguish that love, the fiercer it burned, until this mighty, all absorbing passion conquered him.

Paul's answer to his uncle's inquiry as to his decision in reference to marrying Ellen Reydell had been,—

I will never marry Ellen Reydell—no, not if the inheritance were ten times as large as it now is. It is utterly useless to talk further on the subject.

Thoughtless words those, Paul, thoughtless because, before the year closes, you will have wedded Ellen Reydell.

It so happened that Paul was obliged to go to Bellville.

It was with great trepidation that he once more entered the place.

He had resolved not to call at the house of the Reydells, and, if possible not to let them know he was in town.

But it was not possible.

A lady to see you, sir, was announced on the first evening of his sojourn there.

Intuitively he knew it was Ellen Reydell.

A swift glance around proved that there was no visible means of escape.

The lady entered, and before him, in her ugliness, stood Miss Reydell.

Paul gave her a chair, and looked towards the door.

She spoke.

Paul I am told that you will not consent to the marriage. This is folly. All the preparations are made for it. You must consent.

I cannot. I will never yield my assent to the mercenary business. We do not love each other.

That is no excuse. In most cases I will admit, the heart should be left free to make its own choice. But in this case it is different. She is willing to abide by any engagement you make.

(CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.)

THE STAR

AND CONCEPTION BAY SEMI-WEEKLY ADVERTISER,

Is printed and published by the Proprietors, ALEXANDER A. PARSONS and WILLIAM R. SQUA BY, at their Office, (opposite the premises of Capt. D. Green, Water Street, Harbor Grace, Newfoundland.

Book and Job Printing executed in a manner calculated to afford the utmost satisfaction.

Price of Subscription—THREE DOLLARS per annum, payable half-yearly.

Advertisements inserted on the most liberal terms, viz:—Per square of seven-teen lines, for first insertion, \$1; each continuation 25 cents.

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