

were afraid to be too affectionate with her openly lest their mother should 'send them to Coventry' as she had done Alice.

Poor Mrs. Darby was wretched herself. She loved her daughter and wanted to see her happy, but she must be happy in her mother's way—not her own, and she thought that by bringing constantly increasing pressure to bear upon the wilful girl she would give way, and so everything would end charmingly.

Captain Jervis had made arrangements to return in a day or two to sign some deeds, for he was too honourable to smirch his business name through any pique arising out of private affairs. He determined to see Alice once more, to use his best endeavour to win her, and if she remained obdurate, why then—"all's fair in love and war."

The nook, however, saw a different state of things. "Would you forgive me if I proposed flight, Alice, dear-est? Things are gone so far that unless something is done the worst will be done. I met Mrs. Darby to-day and she told me I should never have you; that you were promised to another on her word of honour, and that she would see he had his rights. What is intended I cannot clearly see; but that Mrs. Darby and Captain Jervis will work together to gain their ends I have no doubt. You are over age, a girl's age, I mean, and legally you can dispose of yourself. I can make a quiet home in any of the cities, and if you are satisfied to accept of the best I can perform for your sake, my darling, I will do my best to provide well for you, and to make you happy. Your father will forgive us, I am sure, and your mother will in time. I can take you to a friend's house in the city while I get the few arrangements for our marriage completed, which will be in a day or two, and then we can defy this Captain Jervis and his friends."

"O pray, Harry, think of some other way; flight from her happy childhood's home is the last thing a good girl should think of."

"My dearest, I have thought over every possible means of mending matters, and I see no other way. Fleetwing can carry you over anything it would seem,—Dick is as good under me. We will arrange to meet each other—"

"Oh, Alice," cried a tender voice close at hand, startling the lovers, nevertheless, "I heard mother telling father that Capt. Jervis is coming on Monday and that he will bring a paper and a man he knows, and he will marry you and let you find out how he loves you after; and I told Margy and she said I must get away and tell you and Harry, and you must do as you please." It was Alice's little sister Rose that brought the trying news.

"I will neither be cajoled nor bamboozled into being Captain Jervis' wife," cried Alice with all the dignity of her nature flushing her proud face. "It shall be as you say, Harry, and I will tell you to-morrow at this time what I will do. I cannot imagine what mother is thinking of to use me so; I have said all I can say to move her to do me justice, but it has evidently proved useless; she is perfectly infatuated with the idea of this marriage and sticks at nothing to gain her ends. Good night, Harry, my love," and the girl put up her lovely face to be kissed as if it was for the last time. "I will make one more appeal to father, and if he cannot help me I will help myself."

Alice's appeal to her father was not wholly fruitless, for Fleetwing was sent to winter at a neighbour's, a mile off, greatly to the satisfaction of Mrs. Darby, who had feared some rash act on the part of her daughter by Fleetwing's aid.

"God bless you both, girls," cried Alice on the following Sunday as the three dressed to go to Sunday-school, three miles away, a distance they preferred to walk when the roads were fairly clean, as they happened then to be; "by the time you reach home I shall be half way, at least, on my way to the city with Harry, and to-morrow morning I shall be his wife. Don't be afraid of a little scolding for my sake and don't cry now, for that will attract attention; we shall soon see each other again and all will be well."

The two girls, whose mettle was equal to their sister's, neither wept nor lamented but set off with her as usual to Sunday-school, Margy promising to take Alice's class to the best of her ability, and to guard Alice's secret as long as she possibly could. At the cross-roads they parted, all three crying a little. Then Alice took concession-roads, side-lines, cross-lots and pasture until she reached a bit of copse not far from the government road, where she found Harry Vernon and the two horses, Dick and Fleetwing, saddled and ready for work. Alice rapidly put on her riding skirt, which had been surreptitiously conveyed to Harry's care, and the lovers mounted and set off. A quiet determination, not, however, unmingled with anxiety, was on each countenance. Taking

roads that led them by a tiresome *détour* into the high road, two miles away from their own neighbourhood, they had no fear of meeting any acquaintances, for neighbours were 'next door' who lived three or four miles apart. Onward they rode towards the city as fast as they dared, considering the task they had before their horses. They beguiled the road with much, but necessarily desultory conversation, and many a tear fell down Alice's soft cheek whenever she could conceal them from her loved companion. For it was a bitter thought to her that, after living a happy, and, as she told herself, fairly dutiful daughter in her parents' house for nearly twenty years, she should have to run away to avoid persecution, instead of being married to the man of her choice, with all the honours she felt due to her or to any other good and affectionate daughter.

The fugitives had passed a cross-road half-a-mile when they became conscious of horses galloping behind them. Turning to look, Harry and Alice exclaimed at the same breath, "Jervis and that friend of his!"

"Ride, Alice, ride! for if that fellow interferes with us I shall shoot him," cried Harry, in a tumult of rage.

Putting their horses at full speed the lovers flew over the rough road, followed as fleetly by the horses behind. Now and then they heard the shouts of the riders, but never for an instant doubting that they were in pursuit; neither Dick nor Fleetwing slackened pace, and they began to slightly distance their pursuers when a toll-gate came in view.

"We are overtaken if we have to stay for the opening of that gate," cried Harry Vernon. "Can you take it, Alice?"

"I can," answered Alice, in a low, determined tone.

"Now for it, then, dearest!" cried Harry again, and before the old toll-keeper, who was taking his Sunday afternoon nap, could get to the bar to collect his sixpences, the two gallant horses were over it like birds and away down the road with the rush of a whirlwind. Then there came the familiar cry, "Gate! Gate!" half a crown was flung him, and two other riders passed through as the bar slowly swung on its hinges far enough open to let them by one after the other.

"They can never cross the river at a leap," cried Captain Jervis, as he pushed on with might and main, "and there is my last chance."

"Hope you enjoy the sight of a fair lady running away from the man she does not love," said Evan Howel, with something of a sneer in his tone.

"Don't hit a man when he's down," replied Captain Jervis. "Am I not trying to make amends? By George they have leapt it!" he added, as the lovers cleared the river where he had hoped to catch up with them.

"We can't go into the city at this pace if they can," said Evan Howel, pulling up; "you will have to make it up with them in a different fashion, Ned."

But Fate sided with Jervis, or at least he thought so, as he saw the fugitives suddenly pull up as though something unforeseen had happened.

And notwithstanding Howel's expostulations, who would have dropped the whole thing then and there for decency's sake, Jervis rode on rapidly and soon came up with Harry and Alice, not before observing that Fleetwing had gone dead lame.

"Don't you come a foot nearer, sir, or I shoot," cried Harry, turning his horse.

"No, no, Vernon, don't do that! I am come as a friend. Listen for one moment, I beg you as a favour."

"It is true, Mr. Vernon," chimed in Evan Howel, riding nearer, "Captain Jervis is ashamed of himself and wants to tell the lady so."

Alice had turned round.

"I do indeed, Miss Darby; I have behaved shamefully to you. I never thought to drive you to extremities. I and Howel were just riding out to-day that I might explain myself to Mr. Darby, beg Mrs. Darby's pardon and do my best to gain your forgiveness, Miss Darby, when we saw you and Mr. Vernon riding so rapidly towards the city that we knew something was amiss, and Howel insisted you were flying my persecutions, which you knew were to have been renewed to-morrow. I am deeply ashamed of myself, Miss Darby; I have forgotten my manhood in treating you so badly, but I humbly pray your forgiveness and beg you to accept my assurances that I will do all that I can to undo any mischief I have so selfishly caused."

So indignant was Harry Vernon that he sat his horse like a figure of stone, and after one glance at him which showed her the stress he was under, Alice bravely spoke:

"I forgive you, Captain Jervis, and accept your apologies, but you will have a less easy task with my mother, and I put

it upon you as a proof of the truth of your present assertions to see her to-morrow and make my peace with her, for I am determined not to go home again except as Mr. Vernon's wife, and the arrangements he has made for our immediate marriage, under the painful circumstances so cruelly imposed upon us, shall be carried out as if this unexpected meeting had not taken place."

"My own darling!" exclaimed Harry Vernon, who had begun to fear that Alice would insist on returning home at once, not altogether realizing, as indeed he could not, how deeply the home love of the fair girl had been tried.

"I humbly accept your task, Miss Darby, and if Mr. Vernon will look at them I will show him the papers I was carrying out to Mr. Darby as a proof of my repentance, confirming my purchase of land and other pieces of business we had talked over."

Harry Vernon held out his hand for the papers, which were passed to him by Evan Howel, and after examining one or two he handed them back to Howel, saying, "They are proof enough."

"And you will forgive me, Mr. Vernon, and shake hands," cried Captain Jervis.

"I forgive you, Captain Jervis, since Miss Darby does, and you seem anxious to make reparation, but I cannot shake hands."

"I do not deserve it, Mr. Vernon, but some day I shall. We will go back, Evan, now."

"But," replied Evan, "Miss Darby's horse is lame; she cannot go as far as the city to-night."

"You will take mine, Miss Darby!" eagerly cried Captain Jervis, "and I will lead the mare to some stables I know of, not far on, and see that she reaches you as soon as she is well."

"I will take Mr. Vernon's horse," replied Alice gravely, "and accept your care of Fleetwing, Captain Jervis."

The exchange was effected, Harry Vernon accepting Evan Howel's horse for the rest of the journey to the city, Captain Jervis leading Fleetwing gently away, while Howel, on Jervis' horse, rode quietly by his side.

"God bless you, my own darling!" cried Harry Vernon, as soon as they were fairly on the road again. "So true a heart and so noble a temper deserve all a man can give. May I be worthy!"

Harry Vernon did shake hands with Captain Jervis, but it was after the lapse of three years spent in active service in the East. Invalided by a sabre-cut, Jervis made up his mind to visit his acres in Canada West, and there finding his old love a happy wife and mother, he also found a new love, who looked kindly on his suit, in Miss Margaret Darby, who had as many charms of person as her sister, and no lover to interfere with Captain—or, more correctly, according to the *Gazette*—Colonel Jervis' proposals, which she accepted after some delay, mainly the fruit of his conduct three years previous towards her sister Alice.

S. A. C.

Stray Notes.

A Prominent Place.—Young Lady: What a delightful scene! How prominent that massive rock stands out.

Soap Manufacturer—Yes; very fine. I'll have a man come down here to-morrow and paint a sign on it.—*Judge*.

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The Age of Condensation.—"Have you seen that volume containing the best fifty books condensed?"

"No. I haven't had time to look it up. I am preparing an edition of the 'Cyclopaedia Britannica,' to be printed on a postal-card."—*Judge*.

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Long-haired Individual (to Managing Editor)—Is the literary editor in?

Managing Editor—No, he's gone off on his vacation.

L. H. I.—Do you know whether he read my poem before he went?

Man. Ed.—I think he did. He asked for an extra week's rest.—*Buffalo Express*.

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In a crowded American tavern a judge and an Irishman were obliged to occupy the same room.

"Now, Pat," said the judge, "you would have had to stay a long time in Ireland before you would have slept with a judge."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Pat, "an' your honour would have to stay a long time in Ireland afore you'd been a judge."