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THE FARMERSVILLE REPORTER.

FALSELY ACCUSED.

(Continued.)

"I wonder how Captain Gray will take the tidings of Bertha? Bella, do you believe there was an engagement?"

"I never thought so," replied Bella, after a moment. "Others, though, may have been more observing."

"I am sorry the thing was ever done," said Mrs. Westerly, thoughtfully. "Still, I did it, as I thought, for the best."

Then she relapsed into silence, and soon after quitted the room.

Bella left her seat, turned toward the window, and anxiously looked forth.

"Here he is!"

The blood rushed to her cheeks and receded again, and she became faint; but before her visitor was announced she had glided back again with a sweet smile, holding out both hands as she exclaimed—

"Captain Gray, I am happy to meet you; when did you arrive?"

He took only one hand, courteously, almost coldly, for its touch felt like that of a snake to him. He seated himself at her request; but there was in his manner that frozen calm telling of a strong will mastering strong emotion.

"How are your mother and—cousin?" at last he asked, in a strange voice.

"Mother is well. Bertha—is—well—I hope."

Her voice faltered in spite of her efforts to speak calmly.

"Bertha is not at home, perhaps you would say?"

"No; I am sorry to say," she commenced, and tears stood in her eyes, tears of agitation, vexation, of fear, not grief. "Bertha has been unfortunate, and mother is so inflexible that she—"

"Sent her to goal, perhaps?" exclaimed Gray.

"Yes; but it was such an outrageous theft. I never would have believed it if I had not seen—"

She hesitated.

"Seen what?" asked Gray, his eyes fastened on her face.

"Why, seen her with some of the articles in her possession. Believe me, I would have done anything to save her."

"And you did all you could? You said, 'She did not do this thing—she has been misrepresented. And you fell on your knees, begging your mother to have mercy? Speak, Miss Bella! Did you plead thus for your cousin?'"

"She is not my cousin save by marriage," replied Bella, who had grown white and frightened.

"Oh, not your cousin, save by marriage. Then it did not matter to you. Not a connection of the fashionable Westerlys—only a young, fair, friendless girl—too fair, perhaps! I wonder not, Miss Bella, that you had no heart to plead for her!" And he made her a chilling bow. "But you say you are certain Miss Gray had committed the theft?"

"I have said it, sir!" replied Bella.

"When is the trial to take place," he asked.

"There will be no trial! I shall not appear against her!"

"There is to be a trial, and soon, too. Some way the truth must come out;

some way she must be vindicated. My wife must have no stain upon her reputation."

Taking up his hat, he left her, almost speechless, for the words, "my wife," fell like cold iron on her heart. Then she gave way, and flinging herself on the chair, cried, "I have lost my soul for nothing! For nothing—for nothing!"

"Bertha!"

"Gilbert!"

"In those two words all was expressed. Oh, the tears of joy that Bertha wept in his arms! At last through her tears, she asked, "And you do not think me guilty?"

"Guilty!—my love, my Bertha!"

"Then I am happy, whatever comes."

"Not so happy as you will be soon. Bertha, can you bear a great blessing?"

"What can you mean!"

"How long has your father been dead," he asked, his arm still round her waist.

"My father!" was all she could gasp.

"Has it never occurred to you, darling, that you might possibly see him again?"

But he had no need to say more, for she glided from his arms and fled into those of the man who now entered, saying, "Father, father! is it really you. Oh, indeed, I am happy!"

A crowded court witnessed the trial of the prisoner charged with theft.

Bella was soon in the witness box, and her story told, when, almost fainting, she left the court for a few minutes.

When she returned, her strength deserted her again, for her eyes saw in the place she had just left, Louise, her dressing maid. She entered as the counsel was saying, "Well, you can go on now and state your evidence."

"I came home that night about a quarter to twelve, and we—Mary and I—went into Miss Bertha's room to light our lamp, when we heard a footstep and I was frightened, so I sprang for the closet; and I saw Miss Bella enter the room. She found the key of the trunk, then she opened it, and took something in her hand. I then saw her put the chain in, and then something else; and then she—"

The witness was silenced. Mrs. Westerly had thrown back her veil, disclosing a horror-stricken face; she was endeavoring to unfasten the bonnet of her daughter, who had fainted.

What a day it was for Bertha! Her father beside her, her lover more devoted than ever. It was only saddened by the thought of Bella Westerly, who fled from the city, hiding herself no one knew where.

Thought He Must Be Cooked.

Merchant Traveler.

"Ain't you almost boiled?" enquired a kid of a gentleman calling on her father and mother.

"No, little one, I can't say that I am. On the contrary, I feel quite comfortable."

"That's funny. I should think you would be."

"Why so, Daisy?"

"Oh, because I heard mamma say your wife kept you in hot water all the time."

"Don't Ask Me To Marry You."

Detroit Free Press.

A Detroit man got stuck in the mud while out riding in the country the other day, and while engaged in trying to yank his buggy out of the mud hole with a fence rail, was accosted by an athletic young woman, who, after observing the situation, said:

"You stand by the horse while I heave on the rail, and don't be afraid of getting mud on your hands and boots."

Their united efforts released the vehicle and the Detroitier returned thanks and asked her to get in and ride.

She hesitated, looked up and down the road, and finally said: "Stranger, I'm blunt spoken. Who are you?"

He gave his name and residence, and she continued:

"I'm over twenty-five, worth \$500 in cash, know all about housework and this is leap year."

"Yes, I know, but for heaven's sake don't ask me to marry you," he replied as he saw the drift.

"See here," she continued, looking him square in the eye, "I'm a straight girl, wear a No. 7 shoe and I like the looks of you."

"Yes, but don't—don't talk that way to me!"

"Stranger, it's leap year and I'm going to pop! Will you have me or not?"

"I—I'm already married!" he faltered.

"Honest Injun?"

"Yes."

"Well, that settles me, and I won't ride. I'll take a cut across the field over to old Spooner's. He's got four sons and a fool nephew, and I'll begin on the old man and pop the crowd clear down to the idiot, for I've slummed around the world just as long as I'm going to. Good-bye sir—no harm done!"

Another Good Boy.

A Detroit grocer was the other day hungrily waiting for his clerk to return from dinner and give him a chance at his own noonday meal, when a boy came into the store with a basket in his hand and said:

"I seed a boy grab up this 'ere basket from the door and run, and I run after him and made him give it up."

"My lad, you are an honest boy."

"Yes, sir."

"And you look like a good boy."

"Yes, sir."

"And good boys should always be encouraged. In a box in the back room there are some eight dozen eggs. You may take them home to your mother and keep the basket."

The grocer had been saving these eggs for days and weeks to reward some one. In rewarding a good boy he also got eight dozen bad eggs carried out of the neighborhood free of cost, and he chuckled a chuck as he walked homewards.

The afternoon waned, night came and went, and once more the grocer went to his dinner. When he returned he was picking his teeth and wearing a complacent smile. His eye caught a basket of eight dozen eggs as he entered the store, and he quired:

"Been buying some eggs?"

"Yes; got hold of these from a farmer's boy," replied the clerk.

"A lame boy with a blue cap?"

"Yes."

"Two front teeth out?"

"Yes."

The grocer sat down and examined the eggs. The shells had been washed clean, but they were the same eggs that good boy had lugged home the day before.

Queer Place for a Mouse.

Boston Globe.

First Lady—"Oh, dear, I feel I shall faint."

Second Lady—"Why, whatever can be the matter?"

"Oh such a dreadful feeling on the top of my head. It feels awful queer; it's paralysis, I know it is."

A kind-hearted policeman took the lady into a store. Some one brought some bay rum, and somebody else brought a smelling bottle.

Where do you feel the most pain?" asked a sympathetic sister.

"Oh, right on the top of me head."

The policeman gently lifted the bonnet. There was a wild scream of fright, a gathering and grasping of skirts and a wild stampede for chairs and counters as a wee little mouse ran out of the bonnet and hid himself under a wrap that lay on the floor.

A physician had to apply restoratives to fourteen females who did not revive until a big lazy cat had paralyzed the poor little mouse.

He Was Too Vain.

Boston Globe.

"I think it about time," said Mrs. De Laine, "that people stopped talking about Pull-man cars. I'm tired and sick of hearing about the men. I think they ought to be called Pull-woman cars, for they carry more women than men."

"I am told," said her husband, in a crushing tone, "that they were named for a man who invented them."

"The more shame for him," she retorted; "he ought to have named them for his wife."

Melons, Heat and Picnic.

Nashville Banner.

A Davidson county farmer planted four acres in watermelons. By the time his melons were ripe the market had dropped to ruinous figures. Adjoining his melon patch is a beautiful grove. He gave a picnic and allowed no water to be brought on the premises. A large crowd gathered under the friendly shade of the trees. The day was hot, and the people thirsted, but no water was in sight. In the midst of this agonizing state of affairs the farmer rushed his melons in on the grounds, and they went off like hot cakes at high prices.

A Watch Made of Straw.

New York Sun.

A young man in prison at Karlaus, Bohemia, has constructed a marvel of ingenuity in the shape of a watch eight centimetres in diameter and two in thickness, made from the only materials available to him—straw, thread, two needles, and a small piece of paper as dial plate. It goes for six hours, and with a little more necessary material could be made to go for twelve.