Listowel Standard.

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A. ST. GEO. HAWKINS, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

THE LIME-KILN CLUB.

"De odder Sunday arternoon," said the old man as he gave a tug at his shirt collar, "I stopped to look ober a collecksbun of stuff in a yard on Brush street. Dar was a heap of ole chairs, two ole stoves, two or three lounges, a broken bedstead, two ole mattrasses an' I doan' know what else. De stuff spread ober a quarter of an acre of groun, an' yet de hull pile wasn't worf fifteen cents. I turned from de yard to de world aroun' me an' I foun' de same result. Dar am heaps of people, spread ober a vast amount of territory, who am but rubbish to de rest of de world. Dey occupy groun' dat am wanted for better use. Dey consume time an' food an' room wh ch belongs to better men. De man wid his hands in his pockets am rubbish fur good men to stumble ober. De man who sits on a dry goods box am an ash-heap on life's highway. De drunkard am an alley full of blind ditches. Take de world as you find it an' one-half de people in it seem to have come along jist to fill up an' keep de weeds down. We doan' want any rubbish in dis club. We doan' want members to hold de cha'rs down. We doan' want members simply to fill up wid. Uncle David Cane war' axin' me to present his name, an' I had to smile. He began life fifty y'ars ago wid a dog an' a wheelbarrow, an' he's neber seen de day dat he had two dogs an' a wheelbarrow. He's stood an' stood an' sot an' sot, an' he's had no mo' to do wid runnin' de world dan a gate post. Trustee Hornback war' also sayin' dat he'd like to jine to us. You've all seen him. He sticks boaf hands down in his pockets an' walks along wid his head down and his back humped up He eats an' sleeps an' moves about, but he's a hitchin' post. Be keerful whom you recommend, and be twice as keerful whom you wote in. No man who carries his hands in his pockets kin keep pace wid de world."

PETITIONS.

Among the nineteen petitions read and referred was one from three Washington patriots, employed as janitors in the Postoffice Department, and one from the Sub-Treasury in New York. Also the following:

OFFICE OF THE KING OF THE BRUSH,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Lansing, March 10, 1881.

To the Honorable the Members of the Lime Kiln Club of the City of Detroit:

Desirous of receiving from your most illustrious body some recognition of my remarkable beauty and ability, I, Watkins Jehosophat Tompkinson, wisp broom agitator and President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Superannuated Spinsters, respectfully and earnestly make application for honorary membership of your club. Having in charge innumerable elderly females, some token of veneration from so august an assembly as your own would materially aid me in the great scheme which I desire to consummate.

With warm regard and best wishes for your success in the noble work you have undertaken, I am, hopefully, prayerfully and adhesively,

W. JEHOSOPHAT TOMPKINSON,
Instantaneous Dust and Dirt Exterminator.

ELECTION.

The following named persons passed the ordeal of the bean box and are entitled to certificates of membership Charles Dickens Smith, Waterloo Hastings, Governor Sluggs, Meanwhile Johnson, General Jackson Thomas, Colonel Seventeen Frisbee and Judge Paragon Cox.

HE RESIGNED.

The Secretary announced the resignation of Col. Bradawl Chase, and asked what action the club would take in the matter. Pickles Smith expressed great surprise and asked for an explanation, this being the first resignation ever sent in to the Secretary.

"Dar am an explanashun an' I kin soon deliber it,' replied the President. "De odder day as I war gwine up Injiany street an' past de cabin occupied by de Kernel, I heard whoops an' hoots an' yells an' hollers, an' investigated to find de said Kernel pourin' ice-water down his wife's back kase she had broken de handle off de spider. I kinder hinted to him to hold on, an' h kinder hinted to me dat it war none o' my funeral, an' de nex' thing I remember was seein' him sailin' frew a picket fence wid a far-away look in his eyes. I s'pect dat when he cum to an' thought it all ober he made up his mind dat I was a dreful mean man, an' he darfore sends in his resignashun. What shall be did wid it?"

On motion of Trustee Pullback the resignation was accepted, and the following resolution was passed by a unanimous vote:

"*Resolved*—Dat dis club will support its President in doin' so some more."

MAY BE HAPPY YET.

While the Secretary was reading the following letter there was scarcely a full breath drawn in the hall:

HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES,
LANSING, March 8, 1881.

Brother Gardner, President of the Lime-Kiln Club:

MR. PRESIDENT—Several persons here, great admirers of your school of philosophy, hoped that the day would come when their financial pabulum would admit of their joining the Lime-Kiln. We see now a great gulf between us—a precipice we cannot descend—a hight we cannot scale, to unite with your academic institution.

Having repudiated the Legislature and resolved to dissociate the Lime-Kiln Club from it, certainly you cannot expect us, who are, ex officio, members of the Legislature, to affiliate with the Lime-Kiln Club. Philosophers keep the run of philosophers, and no doubt you know all about Socrates, who philosophized in the groves of Athens as you do in Paradise Hall. I hope that history will not record that you were afflicted as Socrates was by his wife Xanthippe, and that while he was a big man in the philosophy club that he run he was rather small potatoes at home and oftentimes hid under the bed. Do you believe that if Socrates had refuted the Areopagus of Athens as you have cast refutations at the Legislature that he could have luxuriated as he did in the respect of wise men. No sir; wisdom is congenial, and if there is a chasm between the Lime-Kiln Club and the Legislature wisdom must be lacking either in Paradise Hall or in the State House

I have another request to make. Formerly we had a fine poet here who signed himself Tim Buktoo. He has stopped his poems, having heard that the Lime-Kiln Club is down on both poets and poetry. If that is the case I hope you will reconsider your resolution, send it back to the committee of the whole, and recommend that Tim Buktoo's verses do **pass**.

Very respectfully yours,
ELIHU WALLACE WEREDONE,
Secretary to Committee on Renovation, Dulcification and the Broomatic Arts.

"Yes, dar am a gulf atwixt de Legistachu' an' dis club," explained Brother Gardner. "Dis club published its want o' confidence in dat body, an' I understan' dat dat body am on de point of repudiatin' dis club. Maybe we has bin too fast. Maybe good an' sufficient explanashuns kin be giben if axed fur. shall darfore pint Waydown Bebee, Givedam Jones an' Harmony Coolback a committee of three to pureced to Lansing an' meet and confer wid a committee to be pinted by de House an' Senate. Dey will report progress at de next meetin' an' we kin take sich ackshun as seems best."

SQUELCHED.

Samuel Shin had for some time been moving about in an uneasy manner, and as soon as the President sat down he jumped up and presented the following resolution:

"Resolned, Dat de present great need of dis kentry am an early spring."

Brother Gardner waited half a minute to hear if anyone favored the resolution, and then said:

"Brudder Shin, you am a good man behind a buck-saw, an' you kin handle a whitewash brush wid grace an' strategy, an' it makes me sorry to see you bit off more dan you can chaw, when it comes to regulatin' the weather. How do you know what dis kentry needs? In de course of a day you move ober four or five miles of groun', an' you go home wid de idea dat you know what de whole world am sighin' arter. When de Lawd gits ready to resign de makin' of de weather into de hands of man dis club will present your name an' vote fur you, but until dat time comes you had better put yer airly spring resolution in yer pocket an' sot down."

Brother Shin wilted away like a pansy hit by the breath of an iceberg, and the President continued:

"We will now go home. We will let natur' go ahead wid her rain an' slush an' snow or mud, or she kin send us gentle breezes an' red roses. We am simply dead headed passengers, an' it am not fur us to blow about how de masheen am run. Let de lights be put out de stove shet up, an' all remember dat de fo'th stair from de bottom am liable to smash out if you b'ar yer full weight on it."
—*Detroit Free Press.*

—A white young loafer eloped with and married a negro girl, at Danville, Va. A row was raised over the match, as is usual in such cases; but there was a novelty about it, in that the man who raised the row was the bride's father. He sensibly objected to a worthless white husband for his worthy black daughter.

AROUND THE WORLD.

—The Rev. Lloyd Morgan stole books from the Public Library of Cincinnati and was exposed. This episode did not end his ministerial career, nor hinder his getting a Baptist church at Kittenning, Pa. After a few years of successful hypocrisy he has again fallen into disgrace, a jury having convicted him on a criminal charge relating to a woman in his congregation.

—Some converts were to be baptized by immersion in the river at Pekin, Ill. The water was icy, which they had expected, and it was also muddy, which was something they could not make up their minds to bear. Therefore they went to a park in which was a mineral spring and pool, and the ceremony was performed in water strong with sulphur.

—Salvini declined a banquet tendered jointly to him and Thomas W. Keene by a Chicago club. Keene is a Western actor of considerable ability, and this season has been traveling as a star. His manager resorts to every conceivable means of advertising him, and Salvini regarded the supper as simply one of those devices. Separate banquets were given.

—When Showerman objected to Daubner making love to Mrs. Showerman, at Waukesha, Wis., Daubner replied, "What are you going to do about it? You haven't the pluck to do anything. See here," and he bared his breast, "you don't dare to shoot me with that pistol you've got in your pocket." Showerman drew the weapon and fired, killing his tormentor.

—A spider's web affords an excellent barometer. An old sportsman of Coldwater, Mich., claims that one preserved in his house has proved almost invariably correct. When rain and wind are expected, the spiders shorten the threads which suspend the web. When reefs are let out, fine weather may be certain; but if the spider remains inert, rain will probably follow within a short time.

—The Empress of Austria had a narrow escape from an ugly accident during her first run with the hounds in England the other day. An unlucky sportsman lost control over his very fresh horse, just as he was going at a fence alongside of the Empress, and his steed cannoned with great force against her Majesty's horse, who was knocked out of his stride, but luckily managed to recover without falling.

—The Vice President of the Western Lumbermen's Exchange estimates that, if the demand for lumber increases proportionately, the forests of the United States will be annihilated in twenty years. The same view is taken by the *Northwestern Lumberman*, which says that "the timber supply of the Northwest is becoming so rapidly exhausted that within the next ten years something like a timber famine may be looked for.

—A woman fell on an icy sidewalk in Hartford and broke her leg. She recovered $500 damages from the city. The owner of the premises in front of which she was hurt was then sued by the city, on the ground that he had violated an ordinance by not clearing the walk of ice. The Supreme Court has decided in this case that the city and not the property owner is liable for injury to a person falling on an icy sidewalk.

—William H. Cochrane, the wealthy President of a bank at Grand Rapids, Wis, murdered Judge Hayden of the County Court last September. He is at large on bail, his trial has been postponed four times, and he boasts of his certainty that he will never be punished. He found a note from the Judge making an appointment to meet Mrs. Cochrane, and at once shouldered a gun, hunted Hayden up, and shot him dead.

—Mr. Lancaster, near London, has forty-six acres of celery, and his celery commands the highest price in market. His plantation, at 10,000 plants per acre, requires 460,000. They are set in trenches, and vast quantities of manure are used. Seven horses are used in his eighty acre vegetable garden. Radishes between the celery bring about $140 per acre, and the celery $250 per acre. The labor comes to $250 per week in summer and autumn.

—A reform platform has been formed by some of the Protestant pastors of Chicago. It contemplates fewer drinking resorts, a discrimination between those saloons and gardens in which beer alone is sold and those in which whiskey and other powerful intoxicants are sold, the former to be open on Sunday from 2 to 8 p.m., and the latter not at all; the prohibition of Sunday performances in the theaters, and the destruction of the lottery business.

—An Indianapolis merchant drove into town every morning, left his horse in a livery stable, attended to business until night and then drove home. The beast was by no means overworked in this light service, yet it grew thin and ill, as though from hard usage. The owner at length discovered that it had been hired out nearly every day by the liveryman. A jury has awarded damages to the amount of the money earned by the horse.

—A trial of machine guns was held at Shoeburyness, England, in January, in the presence of the royal committee, under Vice-Admiral Boys, R. N. The arms participating in the trial were the Pratt Whitney, the Gatling, the Gardner and the Nordenfell, all but the latter being manufactured in Hartford, Conn. The guns were fired at 300 and 500 yards range, besides for rapidity of firing, both stationary and laterally. The Pratt-Whitney led in the trial.

—Queen Victoria's drawing room on Friday Feb. 25, was, according to the London *World*, not a brilliant affair, as, owing to the cold weather, the attendance was very small. The Queen was dressed in a black satin dress trimmed with sable. Some of the dowager ladies felt the cold very much, and one remarked that she had not been in a low dress for the last five years. Miss Ethel Fuller carried off the palm among the young ladies presented.

—Thirty one men and women are on trial at Greenville, O., on a charge of conspiracy to murder. Jacob Long opened a beer saloon in the town, and the Palestine Crusaders, a total abstinence society, drove him away. He boldly returned, and was informed by a paper stuck on his door that his life would be taken if he sold a drop of beer. He presented proof to a grand jury that the threatening document had been voted by the Crusaders, and they were indicted.

—A Young Men's Christian Association was an active religious agency in nearly every city and large town of the United states ten years ago. Only a few of the organizations are in existence to-day, and the survivors are in the largest cities. It was found that they tended to draw young men away from the churches, and, therefore, they lost the countenance of the clergy, who have gradually adopted most of the social ideas on which the associations were conducted.

—The laborers in the St. Gothard tunnel have suffered from a mysterious disease that long baffled all physicians; but an Italian physician, Dr. Giaccone, has now traced it, with the aid of microscopic investigation, to parasitic worms that are engendered by the underground atmosphere and lodge in the intestines of men working in it. A Swiss physician, Dr. Sonderegge, has supplemented this discovery by devising a method of expelling the parasites. The two doctors are hailed in Switzerland as benefactors of their race.

—Mrs. Mackey's ball in Paris at the close of last month was unprecedentedly splendid Rumor went that the cotillion cost $20,000.

—The late Lord Seafield planted no fewer than sixty millions of trees on his estate in the counties of Elgin, Banff and Inverness during his tenure of them.

—Twenty Harvard students nearly broke up a performance at a Boston theater by disorderly conduct, consisting mainly in tossing blazing wads of paper on the stage. They were ejected by the police.

—The splendid chandelier of rock crystal, in the room where the wedding breakfast of the Prince of Prussia, or rather supper, took place in Berlin the other day, is the identical one under which Luther stood at the Diet of Worms. The late King bought it for £4,000.

—Two Cambridge letter carriers, members of churches and possessing high reputations, have been dismissed from their places and are to be prosecuted for stealing fancy advertising cards from letters. The plunder was of slight value, and was taken to add to children's collections.

ABSOLUTELY HER OWN MISTRESS.

BY J. T. J.

First Part.—Courtship.

Clara and her women screamed aloud in chorus at this fresh alarm; it gave new venom to Clutie's claws in the chimney, and made Brutus more desperately determined to break his chain and join in the fray. Jack lighted a lamp, reloaded his gun and got a lantern, and going out soon found that the noise was indeed in the chimney. Up he mounted, Sally, now dressed, screaming to him to fire straight down the chimney, but he left his gun below, and in a minute cried out, "why it's only the cat," for his ears were greeted by a pitiful smothered moll-ow.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Sally, "get a basket and the clothes-line, mother—its Clutie; it's Clutie, I say."

"Indade, thin, it's more than the cat," cried a pitiful voice from the depths' it's, meself, Patrick Mulrooney, sorrow be the day iver came in."

"And what the Dickens are you doing there?" asked Jack, briskly.

Genius is never at a loss; Mulrooney proved equal to the occasion.

"Sure I saw Miss Clara's cat, poor baste, fall over, and I thought I'd get him out for her"—the rest was lost in a peal of laughter from Jack.

"You must be a cat yourself to be able to see in the dark," was the young gentleman's comment.

No sooner was the basket lowered than Clutie took advantage of it, was draw triumphantly to the top, and rushed off in hot haste, not much the worse for the adventure. Then the loop was lowered for Mr. Mulrooney, and by the united efforts of Sally Briggs and Jack he was drawn a few feet from the bottom, when the rope suddenly broke and down he plunged again, the two foolish young people laughing uproariously at the adventure, and congratulating each other that they had not fallen in on top of him. Jack finding that he could not rescue the Irishman alone, told him not to run away, and went off for help to the nearest neighbors, Wellington Swartz, and returned in time with three stout grinning fellows of Dutch descent, and a rope as Jack told Mr. Mulrooney, strong enough to hang him in. Not without much difficulty did they draw him to the top of the tall chimney, and help him down to mother earth; shaken and stifled, where Briggs, her cap awry, awaited him with a cup of coffee.

"Well, you do look a sight," was her congratulation. "There take it," handing him the cup, "it's not poison, for we ain't murderers and thieves and midnight robbers like some as I could name. If you ain't ashamed o' yourself you 'ad ought to be, for a great 'ulking lubberly, good for nothing, Hirishman, as wasn't there fur no good, an' but fur the poor cat as tumbled a top o' you," (with female intuition she had hit upon the truth), "we might all ha' been murdered in our beds."

Thus for the time ended Mr. Mulrooney's attempt to distinguish himself. Jack rode over after breakfast and laid the matter before him, and the priest gave his parishioner a severe rating, and threatened the curse of the church. Pat's kinsmen eluding the clerical visitor, slipped away home.

A reporter getting hold of the story, made a funny paragraph of it, headed "strange rescue of a cat." No one knew exactly the truth, but everyone guessed it, and Mr. Mulrooney could not go abroad without meeting grinning faces. It is easier to stand a frowning disapproval than a laughing one, he advertised his farm for sale; in which he was secretly encouraged by the threats of Father McGrath, who wished to draft him into another congregation and get rid of him. His farm being hilly and picturesque it took the fancy of a young Englishman newly arrived, who bought it for a thousand pounds sterling, three parts paid in cash, and the rest to be paid in a year, so in the June following his March adventure, Mr. Mulrooney left the home of his fathers and the new proprietor took possession.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let no one say that there is need
Of time for love to grow,
Ah! no the love that kills indeed
Dispatches at a blow.
The spark which but by slow degrees
Is nursed into a flame,
Is habit, friendship, what you please
But love is not the name."
"FROM THE SPANISH OF SOPE-DE-VEGA."

Have you ever travelled on the old plank road between Hamilton and Caledonia? I have heard, or I have dreamt that it is gravelled now, and one of the best roads in Canada, but ten years ago, it was simply abominable, full of pitch holes, ruts, hammocks of hardened mud, and deep cavaties of liquid mud unsuspected till you were in them.

Miss Montgomery, who had paid a long visit to Hamilton, partly to get away from Dickey Thompson's persistent reproaches because she had not married his pa, partly to escape a monster house-cleaning and avoid the congratulations of her friends on the departure of Mr. Mulrooney was now returning home by the mail stage on the old plank road. It was a dreary November day, mist covered the earth as a curtain, and nothing could be seen of the magnificent view as the coach crawled slowly up the mountain side. Clara was the only passenger to the top of the mountain when a tall young man with a double-barrelled gun got into the coach, and seated himself opposite to her with the drawling remark "a—aw—rawther misty day."

She scarcely looked at him but politely assented. Coming home was sad work for Clara, and gave a pensive cast to her Madonna-like face. There was no kind old father to look out for the arrival of the coach, no ruddy face with a crown of white hair peering over the gate when she alighted, none dearer to welcome her than Dame Briggs and Sally, and the dog and cat. She was too much pre-occupied with the memory of other journeys never to be renewed, with the loved father whose loss still made a little ache in her heart when she thought of him, to notice her fellow-traveler. She was not aware, that his eyes were devouring her face with intense interest, was scarcely aware of his presence; her idea of him was as misty as the day, till a bump into the first pitch hole threw her right into his arms with a violence that knocked his hat off. He had scarcely time to say 'aw—really'—when, with a desperate struggle the horses jerked the coach out of the hole, and the window fastening striking the cock of the gentleman's gun discharged one barrel, the bullet whizzing over Miss Montgomery's shoulder. The lady gave a slight scream, the coach righted and bumped them on to dry land and the coachman pulled up in obedience to his passengers command, thus expressed:

"Aw—you fellah there, stop, I say, till I discharge the other barrel," which he did in an instant out of the window, causing the horses to start off again at a wild pace, which was speedily moderated by a succession of large mud-holes.

"You will be aw—bruised I'm afraid, and I frightened you—sorry. I'm suah, the hammah of the gun was down, that's how it occurah ed. I aw really think if you would allow me to hold your hands, it would aw steady you, and you would feel the jolts less."

"Oh! no, thank you," said Miss Clara, grasping the sides of the seat firmly, and determined not again to intrude upon her neighbor.

"Are all the roads in Canada" (he pronounced it wodes) like this? I am a strangah."

The pensive face broke into a smile as she answered: "Oh! no, its one of the worst." Bump they went into a hole as she spoke, she kept her seat this time, but the gentleman, off his guard, came sprawling into the bottom of the coach. Miss Montgomery was too well bred to laugh. She sympathized, and the stranger proposed that he should sit beside her, "because, if aw we were wedged together we —" but catching (perhaps involuntary) look of dissent, he concluded, "but aw, really I'm delightfully placed here," and as if to verify his statement the lady was suddenly pitched forward and her fair cheek literally and actually stopped his mouth.

"Oh! I beg your pardon," she exclaimed. "I think perhaps it would be better if we sat side by side."

"I'm afraid you will be hurt," he drawled, moving to her side with an alacrity that hardly corresponded with the languid affectation of his voice. Thus, side by side, they were pumped, jolted, bounced and jerked along the road till they arrived at Miss Montgomery's gate. There they alighted, and the gentleman helped Clara out, carrying her valise to the very door, and saying in answer to a faint remonstrance, "delighted I'm an—ah. I feel as though I knew you quite well, that old pla—ank road is as good as a sea voyage for knocking people togeth—ah. May I be permitted to call, and"—a very long pause ensued—"asking how you are after this fatiguing —aw—journey?"

Miss Montgomery might have supposed by the langour of his voice that he was just about to die on her door step, had not his stalwart active frame and rosy, healthy face contradicted the idea. His features were sufficiently regular, his eyes were dark and handsome, his hair was black and inclined to curl, he had a very youthful appearance in spite of his moustache, and was so tall that Miss Montgomery had to look up at him. Altogether he justified her remark to Dame Briggs, "a very good looking, polite boy, but rather affected." He left his card the next day, and then Clara knew that was the gentleman who had bought the farm of her quondam lover, Patrick Mulroony. His name was John Horace Francis Augustus Feversham, and as his grandfather wore a coronet, the word honorable was prefixed to this long name in the British peerage. Mr. Feversham soon became the rage in the neighborhood, the grandson of a peer, with a relative in the Government suite at Ottawa, his respectability was beyond doubt; he was received con amore, and with open arms. He talked languidly of building in the spring and house keeping. People wondered whom he would marry, but with all their speculations, nobody dreamt that Mr. Feversham dreamed of marrying Clara Montgomery. The young man did, however, and not when he was asleep either. He used to stare at her in church with such persistency, that for a time she thought there must be something unusual in her dress, a spider on her bonnet, or her shawl inside out, but she soon got used to it and set it down to a bad habit and well bred (or shall we say ill-bred) insolence. He met her at the Jacksons and elsewhere, wherever she lisited he happened to be at the same house, showed her a little languid courtesy, once or twice tried to converse with her, but after a few sentences appeared to become exhausted and gave it up. He had no modesty whether false or real, to retard his progress, and only delayed decided attentions till he should understand the lady better, and be sure not to give offense. He heard others speak of her and listened with acute attention.

"Clara Montgomery holds her age wonderfully," said Mrs. Jackson. "She looks always the same, quite young and fresh, one would really think her not more than twenty. I am sure a stranger would never suppose her a middle aged lady."

"What do you call ah—middle aged in Canada?" drawled Mr. Feversham.

"Oh! about thirty," was the reply; "but Clara is only twenty-nine—no she is twenty-eight. She was born the year we were married my love," appealing to her husband.

"Twenty-nine or thirty, what does it matter? Every one knows she's a middle aged woman," was the reply, "and a dooced fine woman, too."

Mr. Feversham answered these statements by the single monosyllable "aw"—and presently hearing that Miss Clara was a good rider and every day in the saddle, he decided to take his exercise on horseback in future instead of walking, and bought a handsome mare. Once mounted he met or overtook Miss Montgomery so often that her cousin Jack at last remarked as he rode up beside them, "We are always falling across you, Mr. Feversham; it's very odd."

"Ya-as—aw—quite a coincidence," was the languid reply, but Clara began to think it was not always accidental. On Christmas Eve a social was held in the public school house for the purpose of improving the minds of the U. E. Loyalists and Papists in the neighborhood, and at the same time getting a little money out of their pockets for the benefit of the English Church, a proceeding at first opposed by the elder gentlemen and ladies as degrading and leveling; but Mr. Feversham assures them that ladies and gentlemen of high rank in England assisted at penny readings for the benefit of the poor, and that Lady Stamford played her harp and sang for the amusement of the operatives on her husband's property. His voice carried the day, and then many meetings and discussions took place before the event came off, as to what part each should take in the entertainment. Mr. Feversham was asked if he could sing.

"Aw—well, yes, a little,' was the answer." 'but I think I had bettah recite something," "How doth the little busy bee," suggested Jack Montgomery. Mr. Feversham turned his dark eyes on him and then lifted his double eye-glass to inspect him as if he had been an insect.

"Not my style," he drawled at last, "I was going to propose the ode to the North-east wind."

Jack made great sport of this proposal when they reached home and recited "Welcome wild north eastah," for his cousins benefit, but she did not seem so much amused as he thought she would be, she did not take any one to be made a butt of, and told him so roundly. "I think it a pity he should recite it," she said, "couldn't you tell him that it isn't suitable for his voice?"

"Not I," replied Jack "it will suit his voice as well as anything else; he'll perform a miracle in spite of all that I could say—he'll make an ass of himself."

"Well don't call him Lord Dundreary any more Jack, there's a dear boy; its in very bad taste to give nick names, and he might hear of it again and it would hurt his feelings."

Mr. Feversham overtook Clara the next day, on her way to the school house to help with the Christmas decorations, and said it was a "a singular accident" that they were both walking, though he had watched her leave home through a telescope. She turned the conversation on the social and politely hinted that the ode he had chosen was not very suitable to his voice, and looking up as she concluded, was surprised by a glance so keen and scrutinizing that it startled her. "You-ah really very kind," he said "flattah-ed I'm su-ah, and what do you think would suit me?"

This question is what Jack would have called "a poser," and feeling in a dilemma, Miss Clara said she did not really know, and Mr. Feversham suggested with even a slower drawl than usual "Motherwell's lay of the Cavalie-ah," "worse and worse," thought Clara, "I wish I had not spoken, he is determined to perform that miracle," but she was silent. "As you object to the North Eastah I will not recite it unless encored," he added.

Miss Montgomery drew down her vail to conceal a smile, but the mischief making west wind, as if in league with the "North Eastah," lifted her veil and Mr. Feversham saw the smile, and Clara knew that he saw it, and blushed for her rudeness, but a minute later came to a stand and looked brightly and boldly in his face. "Mr. Feversham," she said, "if you recite that or anything else the people will laugh at you."

"And you would be sorry?" was the inference he drew, though put in the form of a query. "I am deeply flattered by the interest you take in me, and I will—aw—try and deserve your kindness," and before Clara knew what he was doing, he lifted her gloved hand to his lips and kissed it.

Now in spite of all this, after all this, when the night of the social came, and the school-house was densely packed, Mr. Feversham actually stood up on the platform and recited The Lay of the Cavalier. Could it be the drawling Mr. Feversham who sang out those stirring lines all alive with feeling There was absolute stillness as he spoke, and a ringing cheer when he concluded.

"No shrewist's tears shall fill our eye
When the sword hilt's in our hand,
Heart whole we'll part and no whit sigh
For the fairest in the land.
Let piping swain and craven wight
Thus weep and puling cry,
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die!"

The audience was completely taken by surprise, and that great foolish, well-dressed mob not only cheered but encored. Mr. Feversham turned back languidly at the sound, and looking over the sea of heads his glance for half a second met that of Miss Montgomery; a slight expressive smile crossed his face as if he would say "I told you so," then he did say, addressing the public at large with his usual drawl: "Aw—flattahed, I'm su-ah, but not to tiah you with repetition, I will give you something else."

He paused, and they cheered and laughed as his voice changed, and the attitude, and Welcome Wild North Easter rang out, all its r's distinct and clear, the very spirit of the turbulent wind in the tongue that recited. Cheers loud and prolonged broke forth as he concluded. "Dundreary forever," whispered Jack to his cousin. "I wouldn't have believed it of him."

After that Mr. Feversham dawdled about, handing chairs for the ladies, holding scent bottles, turning music leaves, and occasionally drawling forth a commonplace about the weather, till the performance was at an end. He did not go near Miss Clara, who sang three songs and was encored in each, but the next evening as she was sitting down to tea, the Cornhill Magazine beside her, and two letters to digest with her meal, he was shown in. She felt a little annoyed with Sally for ushering him into that parlor, because now it was impossible to avoid asking him to tea. Mr. Feversham, however, declined tea, declined even to sit down, he was "aw—in such a hurry," yet he lingered, leaning against the chimney piece. He had come to ask a most important question, feeling pretty sure that the answer would be no. He wanted her to know from his own lips that he loved her, to take in that fact and get used to it. He felt that he had called inopportunely, that Clara would rather have the company of her book and letters than his company; he also felt that he would be refused—the first time—and in this he differed from his predecessors.

"Were you very much disgusted with the North Easter?" he began with a smile.

"Disgusted? No. But I felt how impertinent and foolish I had been to give advice unasked, and how one impertinence led to another, and I want to ask a very saucy question."

"Ay—so do I—but yours first," he replied languidly.

"Having heard you recite so beautifully I want to know why you don't always speak in that way and not despise your r's?"

"A north eastah in a lady's drawing-room would be, I think a little out of place," was the reply, but the lazy dark eyes flashed into a fire that contradicted his voice, and puzzled Clara as to what he could mean. She began to feel rather uncomfortable under that intense gaze, when he added, "its inexcusably rude of me to keep you from your tea, Miss Montgomery, but I called with an object; I came to tell you that I love you."

Clara was surprised, startled, and in spite of her self-command a little flustered. "Oh! nonsense Mr. Feversham," she said, "the very idea is absurd, I am years older than you."

"I doubt that—I am like a wintah pa-ah, I have been late in coming to matu-ahty. I am nearah to forty than thirty, if my apparent youth is the only objection."

"I am sorry to pain you Mr. Feversham, but really I cannot think of it for a moment; it is quite out of the question,"

"I am very unfortunate," said the gentleman with a sigh.

"I have noticed sometimes," went on this down-right lady "that you have sought my company, and I think it would be better in future for yourself if you avoided it. You would soon forget me."

"That is impossible," said Mr. Feversham, with more earnestness of voice than he had yet shown.

"But I know it is not," persisted the lady, "will you promise to avoid me in the future."

"What is the use of a fellah making a aw promise that he can't keep?" asked the young man dejectedly. 'When I lie down with my back to this place I always wake with my face to it; its unaccountable pon my soul it is. I nevah sleep but I dream of you, and I think of you all the time when I'm awake. When I'm in youah company I'm satisfied, content. I am not a scientific fellah, but I believe in the laws of attraction and repulsion. Youah the load-stone and I am the pooah needle," was his touching conclusion, "and its no use telling me not to turn this way, because I am—aw—helpless. I will try not to be intrusive and give offense to one so deah to me, but if I fail it will be cruel to reproach me. But youah tea is getting cold, pardon me for intruding so long—pray don't rise—good night"—and he was gone; and deliberately lighting a cigar in the road if Miss Montgomery had only looked after him. That night she dreamed of him. Three weeks passed, six; she saw nothing of Mr. Feversham; then she met him at a great party at Mrs. Jackson's. He paid his respects languidly and asked for "the honah" of a waltz, and when she declined at once took leave of the hostess and went away; for he no longer boarded with Mrs. Jackson, but kept bachelor's hall in the mansion lately occupied by Mr. Mulrooney. Winter passed, spring came tardily, and Clara saw no more of Mr. Feversham, till returning one evening from a long, solitary ride, he overtook her. He did not pass but checked his horse and seemed disposed to chat. Clara scarcely knew what to talk about. She could not speak of his new house just commenced, that would look as if she took an interest in him; there was nothing else new in the neighborhood to discuss, and the weather was soon exhausted. It was fine and cleah and that was all that could be said about it. At last she bethought herself to ask him if he knew about a man who would hire by the day; the man she usually employed was very saucy and would not come, and it was time the flower borders were attended to. Aw-well, yes, Mr. Feversham thought he knew a fellah who would do—would do as he was told; not very clevah perhaps or knowing about flowahs, but aw willing and steady. Should he send him? Oh, yes, Miss Montgomery would be glad to get him to-morrow.

"And shall I arrange with him," he asked "about wages and that?"

"If I am not troubling you too much, and be sure and tell him, he must have his meals with the servants. I have known servants offended because they could not dine with me."

"Really!—Disgusting levelling element in society now, but this fellah is not like that he's glad to eat anywa-ah—will you allow me to help you down?" for by this time they had reached her gate. He dismounted opened it in a trice and lifted her out of the saddle, and lingered there hat off, and bridle in hand, when Sally had led away the lady's pony.

"And what do you want my fellah to do first," he said, "he will be here early befoah you are about."

"Hardly, for I am an early riser, but why do you call him your fellow—is he your hired servant?—because in that case I will have nothing to do with him."

"How cruel," he drawled reproachfully, "I employ him sometimes by the day and find him very useful that's all, but he wants looking aftah."

"What is his name?"

"Ja-c-k—I really forget the othah name. Call him Ja-ck."

"Well, if Jack doesn't know a flower from a weed, he needn't touch those beds till I come, but he can make a new square tulip bed in the middle of that grass," pointing with her whip. "First, he must dig away the sod, then make a square hole two feet deep, and fill it with manure, one layer, then a barrow full of dry leaves, and then the earth nicely broken up and raked evenly. Will you remember to tell him all that?"

"Oh! certainly, delighted to serve you, I'm ure."

"I'm obliged to you Mr. Feversham. Good night."

A profound bow from Mr. Feversham and they parted.

CHAPTER VII.

Sweet lady mine while yet 'tis time,
Beguile my passion and my truth,
And gather in their blushing prime,
The roses of your youth.
—FROM THE FRENCH OF ROSUARD

What more delightful than to rise early on a spring morning when sweet scents exhale from the fresh pure earth, and birds are singing everywhere? The sun was just peeping over the trees as Clara Montgomery woke. All the earth seemed awake too, the stillness of early morning making her only the more sensible of the vivid life and growth about her; the unfolding of delicate leaves, the crocus buds pushing themselves into the sunshine with the earth on their heads, dainty spikes of flowers and blades of grass dotting the dark mould everywhere, as she peeped from her window, joyfully finding by the long shadows that it was very early. She was soon astir singing gaily at her toilet, and wondered as she met Mrs. Briggs in the hall dressing leisurely, at that ruddy matron's face looking sulky on so sweet a day.

"Good mornin' Miss Clara; you shouldn't sing before breakfast unless you wishes to cry before night."

"Why, all the birds are singing, Briggs, and I am sure its so early that they have not had breakfast yet, the sun has not been up an hour;" and Clara turned so bright and smiling a face on her old servant that she softened.

"Miss Clara," she said, sinking her voice, "I can't help making bold to say I think you're weak to employ him to do up the garden," pointing with her thumb over her shoulder to the verandah.

"Why, you know well enough, Briggs, I am glad to get anybody. Is he doing it so badly—is he such a very queer fellow?" and she opened the door and stepped out to see, instantly exclaiming, "My crocus beds are cleaned Briggs, and not a flower disturbed. How nicely they are done! Why, the man is a treasure, and you are the most unreasonable of women—where is he?"

She turned and there was the man gently raking the new tulip bed. He moved his hat gracefully, and said, "Aw—a lovely day Miss Montgomery. I'm glad you approve of Jack, he's not clevah, but he's devoted."

She did not know whether to laugh or be angry, and began dimly to realize that this beau would be hard to get rid of, and a troublesome fellow to deal with. Mrs. Briggs settled all difficulty about "Jack's" meals, by setting a cup and platter in the dining room with her mistress, and she sullenly conducted him to the spare room to wash his hands, carrying his coat for him to Clara's amusement. It was rather a silent breakfast, and Mr. Feversham resumed his spade as soon as it was at an end. He worked hard and wasted no time, only coming to the mistress for orders when absolutely necessary, and just as the sun was setting to take leave.

"And what am I to pay you, Mr. Feversham?" asked Clara quite gravely and assuming all the dignity she could muster.

"You know I am more than paid if I please you and give you satisfaction," was the answer.

"But you do not please me, and as for satisfaction, I never felt more dissatisfied in my life."

"Aw—well, if you won't take my labor for love, give me fifty cents."

She took out her purse and extended the coin.

"Tha—anks—first money I ever earned," he said with a smile. "What shall I buy with it? But no—I'll make a hole in it, and wear it next my heart."

For the present, however, he put it in his pocket, and was saying good evening when Clara arrested him with an earnest "Now don't come back to-morrow, Mr. Feversham. I shall be very angry if you do."

"But the work is not done," he replied; "don't be so cruel as to dismiss Jack befoah the work is finished; it will affect his caractah."

In spite of an effort to command the muscles of her face Clara smiled, and Mr. Feversham regarded the smile as encouraging and contradictory to the command, "don't come to morrow."

That night Clara dreamt of her troublesome, self-constituted gardener and rising early peeped out into the garden before she dressed and was not so much surprised to see him there at work, as puzzled what to do with him. It was impossible not to return his smile as he said, "good morning Miss Montgomery I think I shall get you through this difficulty to-day." And he actually did finish in two days the gardening which had taken her former servant four. Coming to say good night he asked "is there anything else Jack can do for you"

"No thank you. Oh! yes, he can do one thing that will please me very much: he can go away and never come back again."

"An I'm afraid that's a thing he can't do even to please you, but anything in his powah not supah-human, he'll be delighted. He would, aw gladly do anything disagreeable to serve you for love you know—that is for fifty cents a day."

She gave him the money at once saying "Now don't come again I beg till I send for you."

"If you mean this for a final dismissal won't you aw shake hands?"

The lady having extended her hand reluctantly, Mr. Feversham held it a moment to say, "But if the house was to take fiah, I may come without being sent for? Now don't be cruel—good night."

The next day brought a polite little note from Mr. Feversham, begging Miss Montgomery to give him a root of white campanula for his new garden.

What could she do? She had never refused a slip of the rarest flower in her garden to the poorest neighbor, who had the assurance to ask for it. She sent him the root. Two days later a parcel was left by the Hamilton stage for Mr. Feversham with the message, "The gent will call for it himself."

Clara went for a ride to be out of the way when he came, but he cantered up beside her with the parcel under his arm. He had called and was "deselate" to find her from home; the beautiful "flowah" so like herself, had taken root and was flourishing. A few more remarks and he rode on, and Clara could not help admiring his horsemanship. The next day came a dish of trout with his compliments. Briggs brought it to her mistress with the remark, "He's always a-comin' or a-sendin' with some cock and bull." She fain would have tried the argument of her mop upon him, but had not even authority to say 'not at home," for Clara could not be rude to him, and always received him it only to scold him for coming. Every day she saw or heard of Mr. Feversham; now a bouquet came with his compliments; now a single flower of rare beauty; then he called to say he was going to Hamilton; could he—aw—do anything for Miss Montgomery? Change a book at the library or anything?

Clara snubbed him severely, but he returned to the attack with unabated ardor. If she went abroad he met her in walks, in rides, in drives; if she took tea with a neighbor he happened to be at the same house; if she stayed home to avoid him he feared she was ill, and called to inquire after her, undaunted by the last rebuff. His attentions were so decided that everybody saw and remarked about them; some teased her, and asked how old he was; others if she was really engaged to him. Cousin Jack supposed that she was "going to play him like a little trout, and after all let him drop," and Briggs went so far as to say (loud enough for her mistress to hear) that if they were not engaged "they had ought to be, for they've set everybody's tongue a-waggin'." Never had Clara found it so difficult to keep impertinence at arm's length. Mrs. Montgomery was very angry when she heard the gossip, and instead of consulting her lawyer as she usually did in any perplexity, she called on purpose to give her neice a setting down, telling Jack before she started that the girl was a fool not to make an end of the matter as she did with Mr. Thompson, and, on arriving, she seriously and imperatively advised Clara to at once dismiss Mr. Feversham, or else she would be forced to marry him to "save her character." This remark carried such a sting, that Clara was hurt, pained and annoyed beyond expression, and blazed out an angry answer that astounded her aunt, who had always known her as invariably good tempered and equal under the most trying circumstances, ever willing to receive civilly the most unpalatable advice, whether she took it or not. She could not eat her dinner when the old lady had gone, and bitter tears came to her relief when she was alone. Mrs. Montgomery had meant by her strong statement to force Clara into insulting and dismissing Mr. Feversham, but in reality she played a trump card into his hand in the form of a little snow-white note, brought to him that afternoon by Sally Briggs, containing Miss Montgomery's compliments and a wish to see Mr. Feversham and speak to him seriously on a most painful subject. He wrote a line to say he would come that evening, and wisely waited till the sun was down and the moon had risen, knowing very well it was now or never with him. Clara had not lighted the lamp. She was glad of the faint mild luster of the moon, and when she heard his step, went to the open door before he had time to knock and conducted him into the dim parlor, where the only light was the silver radiance from without, fretting the carpet through shimmering leaves. She sat down in the bay window. Mr. Feversham declined to sit, and leaning against the window frame, opened the subject playfully saying:

"Well, what is the difficulty? Can Ja—ack be of any use, Miss Clara?"

For some time he had dropped Miss Montgomery and used the more familiar form of address.

"I don't know. I hope so. I want to get rid of a very troublesome fellow, who has given me pain by making people talk about me, and to me in a very impertinent way. What am I to do with him?"

"I thought so. I would—aw—advise you to marry the fellah. It would stop people's mouths and silence impertinent remarks, and you could—aw—punish him propabbly. He would be quite at your mercy."

"I should be at his mercy, you mean, sir."

"Well, there is more than mercy in his heart for you: it is full of love."

"Mr. Feversham you play with the subject, but I am in sad earnest."

"So am I, nevah was so much in earnest in my life. Did not Sir Water Raleigh play with the axe that took his life? But you are an instrument that can not only take life but give it at a word, for without you life is no life to me. Could I ever forget you and marry another woman? I could not. I should exist, if you drove me from you, I should only half live. I should dawdle away the strength and prime of life most miserably and uselessly. You are my fate, whether I am yours or not; and if you were my wife—at any mercy—as you say, it would be the object of my life, my pleasure, my privilege to cherish, to protect, to foster, as I do the beautiful white flower you gave me. Could I ever be unkind to what I love so well—could I ever neglect, could I annoy? I would cut off my right hand rather than vex you. I would walk twenty miles to save you a petty pain, or give you pleasure. You avoid me so persistently that you do not understand my character at all, and if you dismiss me without giving me a chance you will commit a great cruelty, for I love you Clara—I will call you Clara this once—I love you so that if I knew you cared for a worthier fellow, I would leave the field with a God bless you and never see you again. But not now, because you do not know the man you are refusing, and I feel I could make you happy, far happier than you are now. Give me a fair chance, be what is called 'engaged' to me; allow me to come as an acknowledged lover; put me on probation for six months, and then if you feel you can never love me, I will leave the country at once."

Poor Clara was quite unprepared for a passionate appeal with all the r's in it; she had meant to speak seriously to Mr. Feversham and show him how wrong he was, and he had turned the tables upon her most unexpectedly. Her hands trembled as she answered in great agitation and indecision, "I do not know what to do with you, Mr. Feversham."

"Give me a chance—try me," was the pleading reply. "I will not encroach, I will not claim favors till they are freely given. You may trust me, I am a gentleman, not a blackguard."

"I am sure of that, but I am in doubt about you. I do not know what to think of you. I do not—you are right so far—understand you. Why do you drawl—why do you use an eye-glass? You can see me and know who I am, when I am no larger from distance than a black beetle; and that without a glass?"

"Indeed I can," he replied, "but I use it to put down insolence. When people ask impertinent questions I lift the glass, say aw—and stare at them (but can't see them) for five minutes. It generally crushes them. As for the drawl its partly a bad habit, and sometimes intentional, to give me time to think."

"But your age—I am years older than you."

"I don't believe it. Shall I send for the register of my birth? There may be a year's difference in age—don't know—can't remember when I was born—but I know I was born for you, and I wish—I pray—I hope that you were born for me. Will you try me? Will you give me leave to announce to-morrow that we are engaged—will you give me a chance? You ask me to help you, but it is I who need help. The very clothes you wear, the white drapery that floats about you are dear and sacred things to me because they are yours. Do not banish me."

She was touched at last with his devotion, and standing up looked in his face with tearful, troubled compassionate eyes. The moon shone benignantly on her fair head and seemed to plead love's cause, the tremulous leaves shimmered in his favor, the gentle south wind sighed for him, the very insects humming musically in the grass murmured an appeal and a bird that had gone to sleep hour ago, roused herself once more, and half rose from her nest to twitter a sweet quavering plea for Mr. Feversham. The tender dark eyes softened to compunction by her tears, spoke powerfully in his favor, and so did the sudden self blame implied in the words, "brute that I am I have wounded you. Oh! forgive me dearest."

"Hush! hush! I will give you a chance, I will say we are engaged and try you; but you must not call yourself names, or me either; my dear or anything of that kind before people, I couldn't bear it. Just call me Clara, and you mustn't take liberties understand or I shall leave the country. Indeed I am afraid it's very week in me to yield to you, and will be cruelty in the end, though I do it to spare your present pain, and because I don't know what to do with you."

"I shall not know what to do with myself to-night; I think I shall stroll about till the morning and try and realize my happiness, and then I will daudle up to the Jackson's to breakfast, and announce to Mrs Jackson that I am engaged to you, and that lady will defy the heat, and at the risk of a sun stroke make a dozen calls to tell the news; and in the evening I shall come—may I come? and ride with you Clara?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"Go to; I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages."—HAMLET.

"Clara Montgomery engaged to Mr. Feversham," exclaimed Mrs. Jackson; "did you ever hear of anything so absurd? She's old enough to be his mother."

"Hardly," replied her husband. "I think he's a lucky dog to get her; a superb woman in the prime of life, who can make a delicious pudding and understands book-keeping by single and double entry, to say nothing of two hundred pounds sterling a year and one of the best farms in Glanford. Fortune favors fools."

"I don't think Mr. Feversham a fool except in this," replied his wife.

"Nonsense, my dear; a shallow fellow. I've pumped him twenty times and there's nothing in him to come out. I once gave him a mathematical problem to solve, so simple a baby could have done it, and he just lifted his eye-glass and looked idiotic. He can ride and dance, and that's all you women care about, but fool as he is, he's not such a fool as to underrate Clara Montgomery. The wonder is that she chose him.

* * *

"You remember that sweet young man, mamma, who talked in such a nice languishing way and danced so divinely?" said little Miss Brown, who had just come out. "They say he is going to marry Clara Montgomery isn't it too bad."

"No doubt it's the money that tempted him," replied mamma; "it's a ridiculous match. H'll neglect her and break her heart poor thing, but a woman at her age, my love, is glad to catch at any chance of a husband. I hope you will be suitably wedded before you are out of your teens, for single women are entirely a mistake and sure to do something ridiculous sooner or later.'

"Dang it, I'd like to stand in his shoes, that's all," exclaimed Mr. Gustavus Adolphus Brown, who stood just five feet one inch, and had a *nety retrousse*, and a cast in the eye, "perhaps I might too, but I never had the pluck to propose, she looked so little a goddess, and now my chance is gone. I hope she'll ask me to the wedding," with a sigh. * * *

"Well I never!" exclaimed Briggs in angry confidence to Sally, "to think o' Miss Clara throwing herself away on that long legged yea-nay boy, as can't even speak like other folks, it puts me past patience. It's better to make a fool o' yourself when you're young as I did and ha' done with it."

"I don't know what's wrong with him," said Sally who was young and romantic and liked the idea of a wedding in the house, "folks say he dances well, and 'twas pretty to see him skim over the pond like a bird on his skates last winter, and I'm sure he won two turkeys at the shootin' match."

"And without his eye glass I'll warrant," said Briggs. "Its impudence in him a wearing it, as if he'd sneer at folks as can't do without spec's. Its brazeness as carries him through with everything. I dessay he's counted every pound and acre of Miss Clara's before he put the question. I looked for a comfortable home here for me, and for you after me, and what more natteral than for Miss Clara—if she stayed single—leaving you her bits o' things when she died? And now we're at that man's mercy and may be turned adrift any day."

"Law mother, you're very worldly minded, I'd rather see Miss Clara married than dead (one may lead to 'tother," said Briggs in parenthasis) and I'm sure you might be glad to see her happy, for I feel sure as she'll be happy," ended Sally sentimentally

"She wunt" said Briggs, concluding the the argument with a box on the ear, "so none o' your sauce now, and if it was you as suffered it wouldn't much matter, but it's hard for them as has toiled and toiled ever since they've been born, and looked for summat in their old age, and after all be like the poor dog and his shaddow, and wuss as I may say, for if he didn't get nothing he didn't diserve it, but me as is one in a thousand, I say it's hard."

If Briggs felt in this way, what were the feelings of Mrs. Montgomery when she received a note from her neice telling her of this important engagement? "Jack," she screamed, "come here this instant," and her son, who was chopping in the yard, threw down his axe in all haste, thinking that perhaps the house was on fire, or some unknown calamity had come to light, judging from the agitation of his mother's face. "I have a note from Clara and she tells me that she is engaged to that long-legged, insolent, presuming young wretch Mr. Feversham." Jack gave a long whistle.

"And that's all, is it?" he said, greatly relieved. "Well, he is insolent, and he certainly presumed to ask an important question, or this would never have come about, and he's young, not a doubt of it, and long in the leg as you say, mother, but wretch, that's rather strong language to apply to a fellow who has done no harm; though, to be sure, old Pepy's used the word as a term of endearment."

"Don't mock me," exclaimed the lady, in a high state of fluster and excitement, "are you so foolish, so lost to your own interest, as not to see how this will affect your fortune. She might have been your wife, if you had asked her instead of this shilly-shallying all this time."

"That's a pretty joke, indeed," exclaimed Jack indignantly. "She's old enough to be my grandmother. What next, I wonder? If Feversham likes to marry her, that's another thing, and if I thought he'd make the dear old girl happy I should be positively glad about it, for why shouldn't she have a husband as well as another? But me—I hope you're not going wrong in your head, mother."

"You're a fool, Jack," said his mother severely, "a natural born. Do you suppose Mr. Fever sham will let you have that farm next year without rent, as you have this?"

"I don t care whether he does, or he doesn't. I think it's imposing upon Clara's generosity to take it without rent this year and I told her so. I believe she did it to keep you in a good temper, because she's afraid of putting your back up. I wonder she ever had the pluck to accept Feversham or any man in the face of you and Briggs, and knowing how you'd be down upon her for it. She must have cared a good deal for him, to risk it, or perhaps she forgot you for the time."

Mrs. Montgomery had never been so angry with her son as she was now, and I should be sorry to repeat all she said to him before the interview ended; but when it was over she acted as she invariably did when bent on success in any undertaking, she consulted her lawyer. He listened to her story with great attention, and no one could relate a fact with greater precision and clearness than this good lady when it was to her interest to do so.

"Ahem!" was his thoughtful comment, "do you know anything against this young man's moral character?"

"No, I'm sorry to say I do not."

"Ah! well, that's a pity truly, so much can be made of a little indiscretion, especially in a love affair. All we can do is to delay the marriage till you do. These young sprigs of nobility are generally wild and often sent to Canada because the people at home don't know what to do with them. It's very rash in Miss Clara to marry an absolute stranger. The land would be worth fifty pounds a year perhaps?"

"Sixty, and cheap at that," said Mrs. Montgomery.

"Well, I should think if the worst comes to the worst, Mr. Feversham would not be a hard man to deal with. I was agent for Mulrooney and sold him his farm, and of course asked rather more than it was worth, expecting to be beaten down and chaffered with, but he just said, 'I'll take it,' and paid the money cheerfully. Still, it's a pity for Mr. Jack to lose his cousin; better write to her I think than see her. I think that pen is a good one. Now, if you will write, I will dictate, and I think we shall succeed in delaying the marriage. My dearest Clara—"

"Dearest, indeed! I hate palaver," said Mrs. Montgomery, pen in hand.

"But I don't suppose Miss Clara hates it, and Mr. Feversham will not scruple to use much stronger expressions of affection. I have heard her father call her 'my pet,' and 'my love,' and I should suppose she has always been treated with great deference and affection. The young lady has everything in her own hands and is absolutely free to marry whom she pleases. To bully would be simply to help Mr. Feversham to a wife."

"I suppose I did that the other day when I took her in hand, for the next thing I heard was this engagement."

"Of course, contradiction is the worst thing in the world," said the lawer. "Now if you will write, I will dictate: 'My dearest Clara: It is with extreme pain that I read your letter this morning. I know you think me a coarse old woman—'"

"Oh! that is what you think of me," interrupted Mr. Montgomery, bending her brows rather ominously.

"Not for one moment, my dear madam; but that is what Miss Clara will think after what you have said to her—we lose time—pray go on. 'I know you will think me a coarse old woman after what I said to you and I am sory I said, it because it gave you pain. ('I'm not sorry for that reason')" said the writer parentinhesis, "but believe me, dear Clara, I have your interest at heart, and know more of the world than you do, and if I thought Mr. Feversham loved you and was worthy of you, I should be heartily glad of the engagement.'"

"I shouldn't," protested Mrs. Montgomery. "I begrudge him the money and the land; it has no business to go out of the family."

"Mr. Feversham is graceful and very gentlemanly, I admit," proceeded the lawyer.

"Why, he isn't," said Mrs. Montgomery, "he's a hateful young cockscomb."

"Of course, of course, that's your way of putting it; it means the same thing," assented the man of law, "where did we leave off? Oh! admit—'but you have known him a very short time, dearest Clara, and I think you ought not to bear malice against your poor old aunt or one hasty word, or deny the only request she ever made and that for your own good. I do not want the flower of our family to throw herself away, and I ask—I beg that you will make the engagement a long one, and know more of Mr. Feversham before you marry him.

From your loving old aunt,
SARAH MONTGOMERY.'"

"I think that will do," said Mr. Martineau thoughtfully, not without secret amusement at the bad spelling. "Let me see—we have his grandfather here in the peerage—suppose you write and state that he is about to make a low marriage; he being of the nobility would probably regard it in that light. There is a person of the same name and family—a cousin or uncle probably—holds a Government appointment at Ottawa, you might write to him asking about Mr. Feversham's character. It might elicit something."

"I will," said Mrs. Montgomery.

Jack brought this wily note to Clara the following morning, and it greatly troubled and puzzled her. It was like and yet unlike her aunt, and the fact that a week passed, and yet the old lady kept away instead of fussing and advising as of old added weight to the deceitful letter.

Others called, though Mrs. Montgomery did not, and Clara fancied that these ladies were not so friendly as formerly, that their eyes were rather prying than kind, and their manner a little odd and constrained. Mrs. Jackson said: "I'm sure I hope you'll be happy, dear Clara," as if she thought she wouldn't, and Mrs. Brown did nothing but sigh and shake her head, when she paid a visit. Briggs was constantly tart and ungracious to her young mistress, and wore a cloud of injury on her face. It seemed to Clara

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