

lonely; for the village was not far, and I was well known there and had many friends among them, some of the opposite sex, who would have been my lovers, if I had encouraged them. I was thought handsome in those days, I believe, at least I was told so—you could scarcely think so by what I am now. Although I had many admirers, on one only did I smile; he was my beau idéal of all that was good and manly. His name was Edward Munroe (as my aunt pronounced the name she stopped for a moment, as if a choking sensation had come into her throat, and a tear stole down her cheek, which I observed, as I looked up to see why she had paused.) I said nothing, only pressing the hand which lay near me on her lap. My aunt continued: "Edward Munroe—she said it again as if to accustom herself to its sound—was the master of the village school. He was poor, although of respectable descent, and he had taken this situation not alone for the emolument, but with a view to having some time to prosecute his studies for the pulpit, which he hoped to achieve in a couple of years; and I had promised him to be his when that time arrived, and be a helpmate in his pastoral duties.

"Thus matters stood, when one morning my mother received a letter from an old school friend who had married well in the city, and who had occasionally still kept up a correspondence. This letter was to say that her daughter Dora was rather in ill health, and was ordered a change into the country, and would mamma take her for a month if it would not inconvenience her. Of course, what answer could be given under the circumstances. My mother, I saw, did not like the idea, and as for myself, a pang of sadness shot through my heart. I know not wherefore, except it was a presentiment. A reply was sent of polite acquiescence in the request, and in three days Miss Dora Mansfield was deposited at our porch door amidst a variety of trunks, valises and handboxes. It struck me with astonishment as to the requirements of so much luggage merely for a month's visit to a country house, but I soon saw why.

"It was nearly dark when our visitor arrived, and I could not see what she was like until I took her up to my bedroom to remove her cloak and hat. As she took off her wrappings and stood in the bright lamp-light, I was amazed at her exceeding beauty. Large dazzling, flashing black eyes, a complexion of a rich creamy tint, and her raven hair, loosely let down, hung in a rippling, glittering mass to her waist. Her figure was rather tall, and well-developed, showing off to advantage the dark purple silk, trimmed with black lace, that she wore, made in the latest city fashion.

"As I looked at her, I felt as if I had suddenly become disenchanted, something like 'Cinderella' in the fairy tale. Hitherto I had been the 'belle' and 'authority' in our village, but now I had become a dowdy, a plain country girl, beside this queen.

"I was not envious, but I was put down in my own estimation. I must have looked downcast, for our visitor looked at me with disdain, I thought then, and said, with a sudden wide display of her white teeth:

"Are you not glad to see me, Miss Holmes?" "I was half ashamed of my feelings being observed, and laughed, begging that she would excuse my seriousness, and that I was very glad to welcome her, which I tried to persuade myself was the case, but I knew in my inmost heart that it was the contrary.

"We went down to the parlor, where my mother and Edward, who had just come in, (although I had not expected him that evening, or I should have exchanged my brown merino dress for a more tasteful one, as the contrast was decidedly striking between our city beauty and myself,) were seated. I observed Edward start with surprise; he, too, was struck with this marvellous girl.

"During the evening music was proposed, and Dora sang. Her voice was magnificent, and she executed the popular operas of the day with great taste. Here again Edward seemed lost in admiration. I sang too, (but mine was flat, stale, after hers, I thought,) only simple ballads, and my execution was by no means brilliant. I felt, without knowing why, completely overshadowed, trodden down into the dust, by this girl.

"Christianity and common sense vanished and I became diabolical in my heart, and I fear my countenance betrayed my inward perturbation, for Dora looked triumphant, radiant, throwing all her wiles and fascinations towards my betrothed, who appeared pleased and flattered, and, in my prejudiced mind, changed to me, and, with cross petulance, I reproached Edward, thinking me no longer estimated me as the one he thought most of.

"Now, in looking back through the vista of years, I think the comparison that first evening that Dora spent with us must have been very great between us, and I lost greatly in the balance, not by my dress nor my singing, but in the sweetness and snavity of Miss Mansfield's manner, and my cross, contracted brow and abrupt behavior."

"Oh! aunt," I cried, interrupting her, "I cannot fancy you ever being like that. You are so quiet and placid now."

"Ah! my child, through what a furnace of purification have I not passed to make me thus."

My aunt again sighed, and proceeded: "Days passed into weeks, and things did not mend for me. It was with the greatest self-control that I was barely civil to Dora. Edward came frequently, but now, instead of attention to me, he seemed engrossed with my detested rival. She spared no wile that could possibly

attract him, and how weak are often the strongest and coolest men when the snares and wiles of a pretty woman, who is also a coquette, are brought to bear upon him? And so it was with my poor Edward. He loved me still, but it was now a brotherly affection; all his devotion was to Dora. I would have no confidential conversation with her, but my mother, who was earnestly noticing the whole affair, at last spoke one day.

"Dora, my dear," she said, "perhaps you are not aware that Mr. Munroe is engaged to Phoebe. I am sure, if you had known it, you would not have engrossed all his society. I blame my daughter for not having told you sooner."

"Dora only raised her eyebrows, and ejaculated coolly:

"Ah! indeed!" but I am sure, by her manner, that she suspected it before.

"My mother did not seem pleased, and continued:

"I must therefore beg, Miss Mansfield, that while in my house you will be more reserved. No young lady should receive the entire attentions of a gentleman whom another has a greater interest in."

"Dora laughed and said:



KNOW-BALLING.

"What nonsense. I am only flirting." "My mother then launched into a tirade on the evils of flirtation, which only made the beautiful 'imp' laugh merrily. This lecture did no good.

"I spoke to Edward at last, and gave him back my truth, if he wished it; but he told me he admired Dora but loved me. At that time I believe he really thought so, for he was too truthful and guileless to deceive.

"Matters came to a climax. One afternoon, coming home from the village, where I had gone for my mother, I saw Dora walking up and down near the school-house that Edward was the master of. I was surprised, and determined to watch and see the consequences. In a short while Edward came out, and met the deceptive creature with joy. He offered his arm, and they sauntered off to the woods, a little way behind the school-house.

"I was almost crazy, and, with bounding heart and panting breath, I rushed home, throwing myself into my mother's arms, burst into a loud fit of crying.

"My mother was alarmed, not knowing what had happened, but when coherency and calmness came back, I related all.

"My child, my darling, I am sorry for you. I know you are not one easily to get over a trouble of this kind. I am grieved that Edward should have acted thus, but I think his greatest fault is weakness in yielding to the temptress. However, Phoebe, my child, you must dismiss

Edward; do not believe in his professions of love; throw him from your heart as unworthy of you. Bear this trial, my love, as a woman and a Christian."

"I stopped my tears, and promised my mother to do what she thought best.

"Two letters were despatched to the post that evening—one was from Mrs. Holmes to Mrs. Mansfield, and the other was from myself to Edward.

"Two days after I had the satisfaction of seeing the being who had wrought so much trouble for me depart from our threshold. Enraged she was, scarcely offering her hand in 'good-bye.'

"Some days later I received a short, incoherent letter from him whom I once idolized and still loved in spite of all. He seemed torn by conflicting feelings, not wishing to break his faith to me, and yet enthralled by my rival. I replied in a short, decisive note, and thus ended all intercourse between us.

"Edward threw up his situation, and went into the city some weeks after. The day before he left he sought an interview with me, which my mother steadily refused him.

"He left, and I have never seen him since.

"Phoebe Holmes,—When you receive this, I shall no longer be an inhabitant of this world. I am dying, Phoebe, the physicians say 'of a decline,—I say 'of a broken heart.' Can you forgive me sufficiently to read this through? Now, on the verge of the grave, I declare I love you, and no other in this world, my pure and noble Phoebe! I do not surmise as to your being another's. I know your nature too well to believe that. I will tell you all; I must be short, for I am very weak. When I left your village I went to the city, where I obtained a situation, as I thought, good. I gave up the idea of becoming a clergyman, so enthralled had I become by the fair serpent who had beguiled me. I called on Mrs. Mansfield, was received civilly, and at first rapturously by the daughter. I sought an opportunity of pouring out my passion, when, judge of my horror and amazement when the fiend replied, 'Why, surely, Mr. Munroe, you could have seen I was not in earnest; I was only flirting. Some of you men are so matter-of-fact.' She went on to tell me that she was engaged, and had been for two years, to a 'splendid fellow,' as she expressed it, who was away, but that he would be here in two weeks, when she was to be married, and coolly asked me to the wedding. Without a word, without a look, I caught my hat and rushed from her presence. Two weeks after I saw her marriage advertised in the papers. I left the city, and have been a wanderer in the Southern States, getting a little work now and then, but I knew, and was assured, I should not longumber the earth. I have been gradually sinking, and my days, my physician says, are numbered. Pray forgive me, Phoebe. I die in the hope of meeting you in an eternal home.

"EDWARD MUNROE."

My aunt's tears were raining down on the paper as she concluded.

"Now, Minnie," she said, half sobbing, "do you now see why I never married. I am waiting patiently in this world until the Almighty summons me to join my only beloved Edward where we shall never be parted."

I rose silently and kissed my aunt.

"Thank you, aunt, for this recital. You have done more good to me than you can imagine."

"I am happy to hear it, Minnie. Did the 'cap fit' anywhere in my narrative?" asked my aunt.

I blushed and said:

"I am afraid so, but your experience will be a useful lesson to me."

Yes, I was not acting quite right; just then, for I had been flirting tremendously with the most eligible young man in the village since I had been with my aunt this summer, much to the torture and annoyance of a girl to whom he was engaged, and it gave me a delightful pleasure to rival her, yet with no other idea but flirtation, for I would not have married him had he asked me. But now I viewed my conduct with horror, and I became a changed being from that hour.

I am now a happy wife and mother, and in my intercourse with the world I daily observe girls who, through thoughtless flirtations, throw away their own happiness very often, and destroy the happiness of others, which induces me to give this warning to those who like to flirt, hoping it will be as beneficial to them as my aunt's recital was to me.

THE ETIQUETTE OF INVITATIONS.—One of the most reasonable rules of etiquette is that which requires prompt replies to invitations. An invitation should be answered as soon as received, but there are some very foolish people who have the idea that it increases their importance to delay their reply, or that promptness gives evidence of eagerness to accept or refuse.

A HORSE GETTING A CHILD OUT OF A POND.

—A French paper gives the following striking instance of the affectionate instincts in animals: On a small farm in one of the French departments was a young horse whose temper was so untractable that all attempts at taming him failed. The farmer would have parted with him but for his youngest child, a boy about six years old, to whom, strange to say, the animal showed a strange liking; he would come to his young friend and receive food from his hand. He seemed pleased to have his shaggy neck patted by the little fellow. One day all the adult members of the family were out in the field excepting the mother, who, being engaged in the house, left the child playing in the yard, when he fell into a pond, and would have been drowned but for the timely aid of his friend the horse. The animal happening to be loose in the stable, and hearing the familiar voice, came out at a trot, and perceiving the poor child struggling, seized him by his garment and drew him out at the very moment; the mother came to look after him.

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