

ST. JOHN STAR, SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1906.

A PILGRIM AND A COWBOY - By Edith M. Doane.

Yes, my dear Anna, "and so they were married," like the prince and the princess in the stories of our childhood. Indeed, the whole thing is so like one of those familiar tales that I sometimes find myself wondering what role I assumed.

There was always the good fairy, you remember, and the wicked fairy, and the cruel stepmother, but who was it who endured agonies of anxious days and sleepless nights? There is the part I played. I know I am considered a worldly woman, I know that Margaret's brilliant marriage is supposed to be the result of ambitious schemes. But if the truth were known, my dear Anna, my role in this little drama was rather that of the poor mother left behind in the cottage in the woods.

But I must not anticipate.

You, better than any one, know what my weakness has been in considering a possible husband for Margaret. Not wealth—for the fortune Margaret's father left us ranks high even in these days of ample fortunes—but family. The man Margaret married must be of irreproachable lineage.

Descended as we are directly from the Mayflower Pilgrims (as you remember my husband was a direct descendant of William Brewster, the elder, while I claim John Howland for an ancestor), I have perhaps laid too great stress upon this matter of good birth; at any rate I have always demanded of my own and Margaret's associates.

Imagine my annoyance therefore when, early in the winter, a young fellow good enough in his way but of absolutely no family, persisted in throwing himself and all his worldly goods (inherited by the way, from a coarse but successful father) at Margaret's feet. I disapproved, at first silently, then audibly, then finding active measures necessary I told Margaret that I wished the acquaintance to cease.

"Why?" she demanded.

"You know perfectly well," I argued, "that he isn't our kind. He may be nice enough, but he has no social relations whatever, and as for his family—" I threw up my hands in despair.

"I wouldn't care a rap about his family if I loved him," returned my young lady decidedly. "I don't see the good of family and descent and ancestors any how. For my part, I'm tired of living up to those dusty old Mayflower Pilgrims. I think it is dreadfully stupid to depend upon your ancestors and never amount to anything on your own account."

I was annoyed with her. "You don't realize what you are saying," I returned, "how much this attitude which you are pleased to take distresses me. At all events I forbid you to accept any more of this young man's attentions."

I glanced at her standing tall and graceful by the window. There was a little malicious curve to her lips. The thing must be stopped at once, I thought rapidly.

"We will accept your uncle's invitation to spend the winter on his ranch," I announced, nervously trying to meet a storm of opposition.

But her face was unexpectedly radiant. "In Wyoming! Oh, mother, how lovely!" she cried, swooning down upon me in an affectionate embrace.

Since then I have realized that my fears were groundless. At the time I firmly believed that Margaret had begun to care for the boy and that our only safety lay in the lake. In fact, my dear Anna, Pete for reasons of her own decreed that we go to Wyoming, and so to Wyoming we went.

There, having arranged the play to her liking, with an appropriate stage setting of towering mountains and sweeping plains, Pete lost no time in ringing up the curtain. The first scene dealt chiefly with the effective entrance of the leading man.

"I wonder if you folks will want to

ride over to see the sports at South Pass City tomorrow," drawled Dick, as he lit his pipe. It was the evening after our arrival at Big Horn ranch and we sat on the porch at one end of Dick's cabin.

"Of course we will. What sports?" demanded Margaret eagerly. Margaret has formed the habit of steering always for a good time if there is one in view.

Dick shifted his pipe. "A little celebration we get up every year. Races—expert riding—luscious wild steers. It's a great day for the people around here. Lots of competition between the ranches."

"Did Big Horn ever win?"

"Twice. Prize for riding," admitted Dick, diffidently. "But I'm a little afraid of the Victoria boys this year. There's an Englishman over there who can ride like the devil."

"He's a good fellow, though," mused Dick, as he felt for a match. "You'd like him. I'll ask him over some time."

"Do, I'm wild to know a real cowboy," cried Margaret. Her eyes sparkled, she evidently did not intend to allow her eastern affairs to interfere with any simple western pleasure.

I sighed and glanced at her. Still, a cowboy even might have his uses in sweeping away undesirable memories.

The next morning found us in the grandstand of the South Pass City fair grounds, among the first ranks of the spectators of this genuine Wild West show. The stands were packed. The band blared. Cowboys overrode the arena, riding broncos, things wild, sters, and all directed by a man in a big sombrero, who might have been Buffalo Bill himself, and all his worldly goods (inherited by the way, from a coarse but successful father) at Margaret's feet. I disapproved, at first silently, then audibly, then finding active measures necessary I told Margaret that I wished the acquaintance to cease.

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"RUN FOR IT!" CRIED JIM, AS HIS RIFLE BLAZED AND ONE OF THE INDIANS FELL SLOWLY TO THE GROUND.

A man always has been to Margaret a thing to be smiled upon and encouraged, therefore the increasing and ever lengthening visits of the cowboy caused me no uneasiness. I even allowed her to ride with him.

"It's all right. Let her go," said Dick. "Jim Lancaster is no mamma's boy, but he's straight as a string, and it will do her good."

"I'm glad to hear it," I replied, impatiently. "It isn't Margaret's fault that she is attracted. Your cowboy will have to look out for yourself. He seems capable of it."

He was.

Early one day a speck appeared upon the horizon which resolved itself into the "made-in-England" cowboy, one accepting him and the other refusing him, and addressed them exactly alike and shifted them with my eyes shut, and then I put one in the fire and the other in the mail.

"Which did you put in the mail?"

"I don't know," she answered placidly. "That's just where the fix comes in."

"Cynthia!" I exclaimed, laughing against my will, "and you call that making up your mind?"

"Well," she continued doubtfully, "at first I thought it was rather a good idea. Of course the awkward part is not knowing what I have said to him. And yet, if I had mailed one of the letters, she went on thoughtfully, breaking the ivy stem into small pieces and dropping them on the gravel at her feet, "and opened the other instead of putting it in the fire, I don't see that I should have been any better off."

"At all events you would have known what you had said."

"Yes, but if I found I had mailed the wrong one, I should probably have sent the other after it. And that wouldn't have mended matters."

"Hardly. It certainly is a fix," as you call it; but you have brought it entirely on yourself."

"I could make mistakes, and it's no good crying over spilt milk."

"Then there's nothing for it but to face the situation," I remarked impatiently.

"I don't mind the situation; it's Mr. Peters I don't want to face," Cynthia murmured.

I could think of no suggestion, and silence fell for a moment or two.

"Just think of the unpleasantness of

miners through the maze of their various disturbances to be affected by the symptoms of this impossible cowboy.

"Jim is only a shirder in the Victoria; it's owned by an English syndicate," he went on, shifting his pipe. "I heard something once about some property in England, but he hasn't any money. Still he's an all-around man, and he's a damned sight better husband for a girl than some of those 'Little White' boys you sound for."

I shrugged my shoulders. This subject of the cowboy threatened to become tiresome.

Dick pulled vigorously at his pipe. "He's too good to be played with. If Margaret don't mean anything why can't she let him alone?"

"My dear Dick," I replied, impatiently, "it isn't Margaret's fault that she is attracted. Your cowboy will have to look out for yourself. He seems capable of it."

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I admitted grudgingly that he was good-looking as he flung himself from his horse and came rapidly along the path. His riding clothes were worn and shabby, but he wore them like a gentleman, and the expression of friendliness on his handsome bronzed face was disarming. He swung up the porch steps, two at a time, offering his hand in easy, pleasant greeting. He forgot the hand that I barely acknowledged his presence.

He was fair with an Englishman's fairness, this tempestuous cowboy, and he flushed to the roots of his thick, black hair when I glanced at him, twisting his sombrero in embarrassed silence; then his eyes met mine dejectedly. "I am sorry," he said, "for I wish to speak to you about—Miss Brewster."

Here it came, the case of Mahomet being met by the mountain. "And I," I returned, "wish to speak to you on that or any other subject."

He took the initiative.

"It seemed the only decent thing to do—come first to you. I have come to ask Miss Brewster to marry me—if she will."

He smiled before the gigantic egotism of the man. "I would suggest, then, that you alter your intentions," my

voice was icy. His coolness provoked me beyond endurance. "I refuse to discuss it. I forbid you to speak to Margaret," I cried.

His determined blue eyes met mine stubbornly. It was absurd that at this crisis a momentary picture of a plunging horse and fearless, masterful rider should flash across my memory.

"Margaret would make an ideal ranchman's wife," I suggested with fine irony.

He flushed. "I have never intended it—and at least I can offer her a certain position. I am."

"I am out likely to forget what you are," I retorted, "nor that she is an heiress. Granting that you are honestly fond of her, would an honorable man place himself in the position of a fortune hunter?"

"Fortune hunter!" A dull red crept slowly over his tanned cheeks. "I do not know. Has she a great deal of money?" His voice was strained and uneasy.

"Millions," I replied curtly. Really, the man was more mercenary than I had thought him. I eyed him scornfully. He caught my expression.

"Don't think that! You don't understand. Everything's changed—but you'll advise me. Do you think I might continue to see her—if I don't?"

"No," I said decidedly, "because you would."

"But I cannot—"

"Yes, you can."

The expression on his face would have softened a heart of stone. "I am truly sorry," I said relenting and holding out my hand. He smiled rather forlornly as he took it and after a second's hesitation went slowly away.

"You don't mind if I ride just a little way, mother dear?" questioned Margaret.

I was on the porch reading and I looked up from my book to smile at her wishful face. For three days Margaret had gone around looking as though her hours had been robbed of their sweetness since life (and Victoria Ranch) had nothing to offer. My heart ached for her, but I made no sign.

"What does Dick say? Is it safe?"

"Be careful," I replied, anxious, yet hating to refuse her.

"It's all right—just a little way," she assured me.

"To my dying day I shall remember the picture she made as she stood there, sweet and girlish, in her trim riding habit, her soft hair caught in a heavy braid under the stiff little hat, a faint smile touching her mouth and eyes."

"Very well," I assented, grudgingly. So my dear girl rode away through the yellow sunshine, looking back and laughing and waving her hand cheerfully as she disappeared beyond the edge of the wood.

I never knew how long it was before I became dimly conscious of the pounding of approaching hoofs and glanced up to see a horse and rider tearing down the road on a dead run. Something tense about the familiar, broad-shouldered figure filled me with vague apprehending, and as he flung himself from his steaming horse I rose trembling to meet him.

"Where's Dick?"

His breath came quickly.

"I've frightened you," he added with quick compunction. "There's nothing to alarm you, really. I came to warn Dick. The men had better keep together after tonight; I fancy it would be safer, and it would be a good idea to patrol the outskirts of the ranch. Two or three hands of stray, half-drunk Indians have been sneaking about and they mean mischief."

I gazed at him in speechless horror. I tried to speak but a giant hand clutched my throat.

"There really is no danger here," he insisted reassuringly. "Ask Dick. These stray Indians are a cowardly lot—out-

for stealing. They always sneak around the outskirts of the ranches."

"Margaret!" The word stuck in my throat.

He wheeled around like a flash. "What of her?" he demanded sharply.

"Out there—alone!" I whispered hoarsely, pointing down the road.

He muttered something under his breath and his face went suddenly gray. The next instant he was in the saddle and his horse, stung by his spurred heels, cleared the gate and tore down the empty road. Stunned, stock with horror, I stood, while the pounding hoofs grew fainter in the distance. At the edge of the wood, where my dear girl had turned to wave her hand so cheerily, I caught the glint of sunlight on the shining barrel of his gun.

The wilderness, the wide, sweeping plains, were ever new to Margaret, and she had almost reached a stretch of woodland three miles from home before she realized that it was time to turn. She halted for one farewell look, then caught her horse up sharply, and, fast, frozen with terror, Indians—five of them—with evil, swart faces, were sneaking out from the timber and coming toward her, their horses on a dead run. At the same time she heard galloping hoofs behind, and Jim Lancaster ranged his big bay alongside her. The next instant a flying bullet whizzed above her head.

"Run for it!" cried Jim, as his rifle blazed with a heavy report, and one of the Indians, turning suddenly limp, fell slowly to the ground. Both horses wheeled and tore rapidly along the homeward road as the cowboy's rifle flashed a second time and an Indian's arm hung useless, as he raised his gun again a desperate, frightened cry came from Margaret. Her horse, grazed by a passing bullet, had thrown its head and galloped rapidly away. Almost in one moment the cowboy dropped from his horse, lifted her with a sweep of his arm, and turned to remount as the big bay fell, struck in the neck.

"Lie down, lie down!" he cried forcefully, "close to the horse—flat in the grass—so. Then, with blazing eyes he rose to one knee and leveled his rifle with careful aim.

There was a flash from behind the horse, and a bullet from the Indians answered it.

Flash! Flash!

After awhile the cracking shots ceased, and there was an ominous silence. Jim Lancaster clutched at his life awkwardly—from force of habit he tried to load it—then he sank limply backward.

It was that way Dick and the men found them: the unconscious figure of the Englishman stretched motionless on the crest of grass and Margaret kneeling beside him, trying in vain to staunch the blood that trickled from his shoulder to the ground in an ever-widening crimson stain.

Thus it happened, my dear Anna, that when the case was over, the girl of fragrant bloom Margaret, looking like a summer rose herself, married the cowboy. And because he happened not to be James Lancaster, but rather James Bradshaw, ninth Earl of Lancaster, the marriage was heralded in the length and breadth of the land as another example of European folly in a bought with American gold.

You can imagine my happiness with Margaret married to a title! I dare say I am not indifferent to it, being still human, but my views have undergone a radical change in several directions. After one lives through what I did during the agonizing hours in which I gazed for Margaret, I can't go back to me, one's values are apt to rearrange themselves, and even so impressive a thing as a European title, or so substantial a landmark as Plymouth Rock—may be relegated to an unimportant background.

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THOMAS EMMA - By Mrs. Philip Champion de Crespigny.

"Honor," Cynthia said, balancing herself sideways on the old balustrade overlooking the lake, and dropping it into the water. "I wonder what would do if you were my position."

"Fall into the lake," I replied promptly; "as you will in a minute if you are not careful, and you will find it very deep water."

She swung around to face me sitting opposite to her in a corner of the stone bench on the terrace, and looked agrieved.

"I am in deep water already," she said gently, and with an air of abstraction. "I want your advice."

"And my assistance, I suppose."

I was becoming accustomed to Cynthia's appeals for help; and she had gradually learned to look for my help as a matter of course.

"I should be more than glad if you can find a way to help me, but it won't be very easy," she said, and the unusually childlike innocence of expression in her blue eyes warned me to be prepared for a dilemma out of the ordinary. "It was quite accidental, something that could not possibly have been foreseen."

She puckered her brows and looked at me as though she feared the skies were going to fall.

"It always is," I remarked dryly. "I thought it such a good idea to start with, but now it doesn't seem to have worked out very well."

"What is it?"

She hesitated, and I repeated the question.

"It's Mr. Peters," she said, turning her face away and looking out dreamily across the lake.

"Still Mr. Peters?" I asked with a little surprise. "It has been Mr. Peters for quite a long time."

She made no answer to this, and I watched the sunlight play on her golden hair through the dancing foliage of the big flex tree that overshadowed us. She made a lovely picture, sitting there in her white dress, lying swanlike one foot and to drag against the ivy-covered balustrade.

"I don't know if I have told you that he has asked me to marry him," she went on after a pause.

"Yes," I said, "several times."

"I wish people wouldn't ask me to

marry them," Cynthia said impatiently. "I never know what to say."

There is not much choice, I observed. "You can only say 'Yes' or 'No.'"

"That's just what is so tiresome," she said calmly. "I said nothing. Yesterday he wrote to say he really must have an answer."

"He gave me a week to think it over, as he did not wish to hurry me," she turned from contemplation of the lake and looked at me.

"He has already asked you to marry him more than once. Cynthia: it is not fair to keep him waiting like this. Surely your mind must have been made up one way or the other ever so long ago."

"It wasn't," she said, shaking her head sadly. "It's impossible to make up one's mind in a minute about so important an affair as that. She paused, and then added, "That I sent him my answer by post last night."

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