

## SELF-RAISED

BY

EMMA D. M. SOUTHWORTH

A picturesque scene that old St. Mary's church presented. It was situated in a clearing of the forest beside the turnpike road. It was built of red brick, and boasted twelve gothic windows and a tall steeple. The churchyard was fenced in with a low brick wall, and had some interesting old tombstones, whose dates were coeval with the first settlement of the state.

Many carriages of all descriptions, to the car of the gentleman, were scattered about, drawn up under the shade of the trees. There were horses and donkeys were tied here and there. And groups of negroes, in their gay Sunday attire, stood gossiping among the trees. Some young men, as usual, were loitering at the church door.

The judge's carriage drew up under the shade of a forest tree and the judge and Ishmael then alighted, and leaving the horses in charge of the coachman went into the church. The congregation were already assembled, and soon after Judge Merlin and his guest took their seats the minister entered and took his place at the reading desk and the services commenced.

There was little in this Sunday morning service to distinguish it from others of the same sort. The minister was a good man and a plodding country parson. He read the morning prayers in a creditable but by no means distinguished manner. And he preached a sermon more remarkable for its practical bearing than for its eloquence or originality, his text being in these words: "Faith without works is dead."

At the conclusion of the services, while the congregation were leaving the church, the minister descended from the pulpit and advanced towards Judge Merlin, who was also hastening to meet his pastor.

There was a shaking of hands. Judge Merlin, who was an eminently practical man in all matters but one, complimented the preacher on his practical sermon.

And then, without waiting to hear Mr. Wynne's disclaimer, he beckoned Ishmael to step forward, and the usual formula of introduction was performed.

"Mr. Wynne, permit me—Mr. Worth Mr. Wynne."

And then there were two simultaneous bows and more hand shaking. But both the judge and Ishmael noticed the wistful look with which the latter was regarded by the minister.

"He is comparing likenesses," thought the judge.

"He is thinking of the past and present," thought Ishmael.

And both were right. Mr. Wynne saw in Ishmael the likeness to both his parents, and noted how happily nature had distinguished him with the best points of each. And he was wondering at the miracle of seeing that the all-forsaken child, born to poverty, shame, and obscurity, was by the Lord's blessing on his own persevering efforts, certainly rising to wealth, honor and fame.

Mr. Wynne renewed his pressing invitation to Judge Merlin and Mr. Worth to accompany him home to dinner.

And as they accepted the minister's hospitality the whole party moved off towards the parsonage, which was situated in another clearing of the forest about a quarter of a mile behind the church.

The parson was blessed with the parson's luck of a large family, consisting of a wife, several sisters and sisters-in-law, and nieces, and so many sons and daughters of all ages, from one month old to twenty years, that the judge, after counting thirteen before he came to the end of the list, gave up the job in despair.

Notwithstanding, or perhaps because of this, for "the more the merrier," you know, the family dinner passed off pleasantly. And after dinner they all returned to church to attend the afternoon service.

And when that was ended Judge Merlin and Ishmael took leave of the parson and his family and returned home.

When they reached Tanglewood and alighted the judge, who was first out, was accosted by his servant, Jim, who spoke a few words in a low tone, which had the effect of hurrying the judge into the house.

Ishmael followed at his leisure. He entered the drawing room and was walking slowly up and down the room, when the sound of voices in the adjoining library caught his ear and transfixed him to the spot.

"Yes, papa, I am here, and alone—strange as this may seem."

It was the voice of Claudia that spoke these words.

### CHAPTER VIII.

WHY CLAUDIA WAS ALONE. Do not be amazed at life. 'Tis still the mode of God with His elect: Their hopes exactly to fulfill. In times and ways they least expect.

Who marry as they choose, and choose, Not as they ought, they mock the priest, And leaving out obedience, lose The finest flavor of the feast.

—Coventry Patmore.

Ishmael stood transfixed to the spot—for a moment, and then breaking the spell with which the sound of Claudia's voice had bound him, he passed into the hall, took his hat from the rack, and said to Jim, who was still in attendance there:

"Give my respects to your master, and say that I have an engagement for this evening which obliges me to withdraw. And give him my adieu."

"But Mr. Ishmael, sir, you will wait for tea. Lady Vincent is here, sir, just arrived—" began Jim with the affectionate freedom of a petted servant.

But Ishmael had left the hall, to keep his promise of spending the evening with Reuben and Hannah.

Claudia, standing by her father's side in the library, had also heard the sound of Ishmael's voice, as he

spoke to the servant in the hall and she suddenly ceased talking and looked as if turned to stone.

"Why, what is the matter, my dear?" enquired the judge, surprised at the panic into which she had been cast.

"Who?"

"Ishmael?"

"Yes, Why?"

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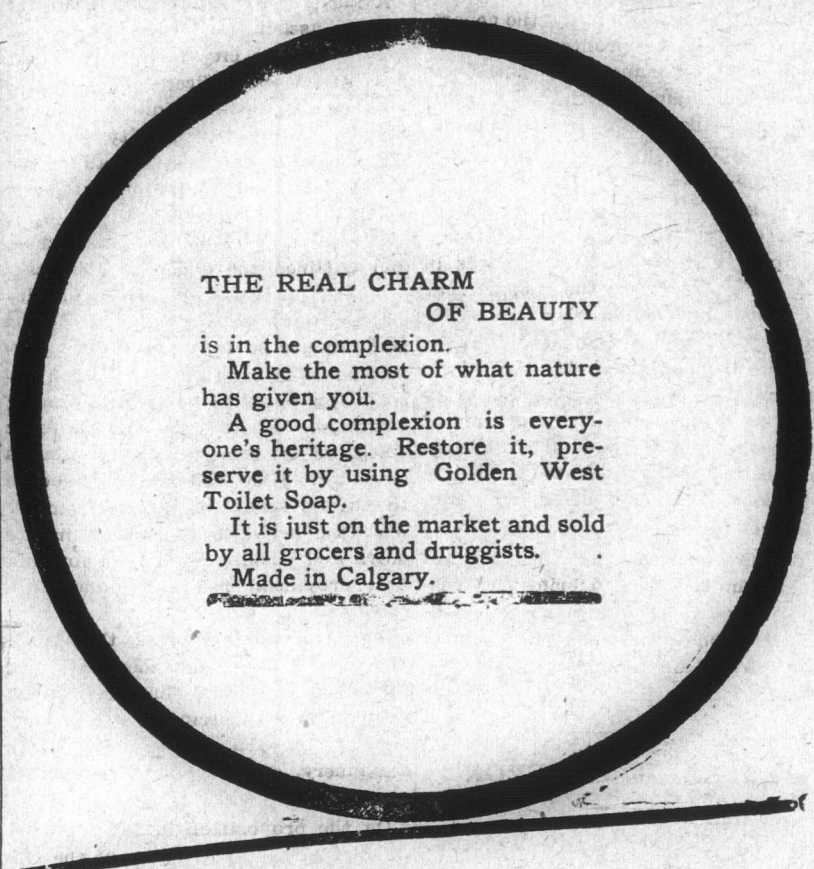
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