

"Thank you, Mr. Graham, I would be obliged if you would go." Bill waited for nothing more, but seized his hat and coat and set off for Nell.

Miss Darrel stayed with her uncle, whose house was only a short distance from the church, so that it did not take Bill more than a few minutes to reach there.

In answer to his knock, Miss Darrel herself appeared.

"Good evening, Mr. Graham," she said, holding the door open. "Won't you come in?"

"I guess not, miss. I—I thought that you might like to ride over to the practice to-night. The snow's pretty deep for walking."

"Why, thank you, Mr. Graham. That's so good of you. I would have been there earlier, but I had to remain with the children till auntie came back; I shan't keep you waiting long."

Miss Darrel had a wonderfully sweet voice that made Bill's heart thrill to listen to. But it was her eyes that held him bound. They were dark eyes, and they had a tender melting expression. To Bill, as the lamplight fell upon them, they shone with a sweetness unutterable. He knew in a vague sort of way that she was tall and slender, that her hair rose in a full wave over a broad forehead, and that her mouth was gentle but firm in expression, but it was those glorious eyes that held him in a thrall.

In a short time she was ready and they set off. Now, all would have been well but for the peculiarities of that old mare, Nell. She had been a preacher's horse for many a day, and, accustomed to men timid and unlearned in horsemanship, had imbibed certain definite ideas of her own. She brought Bill and Miss Darrel up to the door of the church in fine style, but seemed determined not to end her journey until she reached the shed. By pulling hard, Bill was able to reduce her motion to a kind of see-saw, forward and back. Miss Darrel essayed to step out of the cutter, but Nell made one of her forward springs at the same moment, and she tripped and fell.

Just then a figure stepped out of the darkness and seized the horse's bridle, and in the "Whoa, Nellie," Bill recognized the voice of Lizzie Munro. He sprang out to assist Miss Darrel, but she had at once picked herself up and was already at the church door.

Bill led Nell away to the shed. Then he hurried into the church and hastened to make his apologies to Miss Darrel.

"It was that horse of mine, miss! She's often cranky like that." She flashed upon him a glance that was merry and mischievous, but with pretended severity replied:

"I understand, Mr. Graham, but you should have somebody along to hold her head."

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By a gracious dispensation of fortune the night of the box social was the only one of all that week in which the weather smiled. So from far and near, from log cabin and frame house, from Methodist home and Presbyterian, and even from among the "sects," who frowned upon amusement as of the devil, came