

Our Page of Original Articles.

A CHANGE OF HEART.

BY ELLA M. TRIMBLE.



OUR correspondents:—Judge Dunbar, of Kingstons; Miss Kate Dunbar, his daughter; Miss Nellie Dunbar, his sister, of Mapleville; Mr. Charles Devine, Miss Kate's betrothed.

Miss Kate to Miss Nellie Dunbar:

MY DEAREST AUNT:—

We start for New Hampshire in the morning. How I wish you were going too. We expect to meet our English friends, the Conants, there. I am sorry poor Charlie can't come with us, but here is a piece of news for you. He is going to spend the summer in Mapleville. I am sending a letter of introduction to you by him. Use him well for my sake. Love to Grandma. Yours lovingly,

KATE.

Miss Nellie to Miss Kate Dunbar:

By this time you are, of course, settled down to a summer of enjoyment. I would that I were with you, but my post is beside mamma. Your poor Charlie, as you call him, has been with us twice since his coming here. We are, I am afraid, but a dull family, after you and all his city friends. However we will entertain him to the best of our ability, whenever he can spare time to visit us.

Mr. Devine to Miss Kate Dunbar:—

There must be something seriously wrong with the postal system between here and the White Mountains. I haven't had a letter from you for nearly two weeks. Do telegraph or telephone me, or come to me. I have haunted the office mail bag, until they think I am expecting a legacy or a reprieve for the summer. Why didn't you tell me your aunt was young? Why she looks younger than yourself even. I fully expected to meet a dear old maiden aunt. I do hope the time will not be long till these summer excursions of yours will be undertaken with me as your sole guardian.

Mr. Devine to a friend:—

MY DEAR TOM,—Imagine a fellow pegging away in a dusty, fusty, law office with all his friends enjoying themselves in the various parts of the earth, where pleasure and fellow idlers are to be found for and with the money. Judge Dunbar's stepmother resides here. Her stepdaughter, the Judge's youngest sister, lives with her. I was somewhat surprised when I first called at their home, for I had anticipated meeting a benign maiden aunt, in Miss Dunbar. But behold a dainty young maiden, pretty beyond the ordinary, and looking not a day over nineteen. I fancy she has not the most pleasant life of it, for Mrs. D.'s, between you and me, rather—well, fussy.

Miss Kate to Mr. Devine:—

So you were surprised when you saw Aunt Nellie? You are not quite complimentary to me, sir, when you say she is younger looking than I, for I can assure you she is twenty nine and I am, oh! within years of that you know. Our English friends, the Conant's, are here, and some of their friends who came with them. We are going from here to Hot Sulphur Springs. I am looking forward to a lovely time. I know it is lonesome for you, Charlie, with all of us enjoying ourselves so far away. And you wrote that you hoped I would travel under your guardianship soon or some,

thing to that effect. Now I have been thinking how very satisfactory everything is as it is. Don't you think so, too? We are so sure we love one another and we are so very satisfied and content that it makes one almost afraid that marriage may not prove so eminently satisfactory. However, we are not going to try it for a while yet, are we dear? It would be a pity to spoil our present harmony by anything untried and indefinite for some time to come.

Miss Kate to Miss Nellie:—

These friends of the Conant's are such lovely people. There is the mother, two daughters and a son. The son is about the handsomest man I've ever seen and so distinguished in his manner. We are all going in one party to the Springs. I am so glad they have changed their plans and are going with us. How is Charlie getting on? I hardly ever find time to write him, and his letters are often unopened in my hurry. I'll have to make it up to him by extra devotion when I go back, I suppose. Go back—I hate to think of this summer ever ending. Charlie is such a fussy old poke sometimes. I must give him some of these English gentlemen's ideas of smartness—if I can. I'd like to hear him pay compliments with the grace and the ease of Mr. Rivers.

Mr. Devine to his friend:—

Here, to put it briefly, is the situation. Have I been a fool to engage the affections of Kate, only child of Judge Dunbar? Can I for years to come afford to give her the position she would care to fill? May not this engagement be a hindrance to her marrying a man who will be able to indulge all her fancies, who can travel or stay in a luxurious home as he sees fit? And to heighten my doubts, or I should say to deepen them, comes the thought, does she really care for me or is this love she professes to have, but the first passing fancy of a young girl? For, my dear Tom, I confess to you only, that she has written but three times during all this summer, and in one letter she hinted plainly that marriage was not at all to her taste for an indefinite time to come.

Miss Nellie to Miss Kate:—

I am going to say a few serious words. They will not, or rather, they ought not, to interfere with your present pleasure, for if all is as I trust, your heart is here, and so your pleasures are not unalloyed. Do you think, dear girl, that you are using Charlie just as you ought? Mamma worried him into confessing that he very seldom hears from you and to judge from his face he was taking it quite to heart. Be careful, my dear. The friendship of a day is not to be weighed for one moment against the love of a man with whom you expected to spend a lifetime. In family, if not in wealth, Mr. Devine, I know, is the equal at least of those English people, or of the Dunbars. Your father recognized that fact when he consented to your engagement. If it were not for that stupid will which forbids him resigning anything until his death I know your father would settle enough upon you to make you independent of Charlie's profession at once. I would that it could be so and that you were happily married to him, for I am sure he could make any woman happy.

Mr. Devine to his friend:—

Many thanks, Tom, for that cheering letter of yours. The tragedy or the comedy, whichever it may prove, is deepening in interest from the fact that I have discovered that had I never become engaged to Miss Kate Dunbar I should speedily have found, I believe, that Miss Nellie Dunbar is a woman who could make any man happy. May the end of the summer cure me of this new madness.

Miss Kate to her aunt:—

I am so dissatisfied it is spoiling all my fun. Papa is beginning to scold me for being

so frequently in Mr. Rivers' company, and when he notices anything of that kind—well. Then you must send me a scolding too. If you think Charlie would make any woman happy, I do wish you would marry the stupid old thing yourself. Seriously, dear auntie, I am almost afraid my engagement to Charlie was a dreadful mistake. We should have thought it over longer. We were much too hasty. I know he is honorable and nice and all that, but think of all I shall have to give up. I am really afraid that some day I shall get thinking it over so strongly that I shall break with him entirely.

The same to the same:—

What do you think? Mr. Rivers proposed to me last night. It was so dreadful of me to have led him on so far, considering that I am engaged. Oh, I don't know what to do. I wish this had happened last summer.

And yet another:—

I have accepted Mr. Rivers. I could not do anything else, for I love him with all my heart. Papa is furious. Calls him a fortunehunter and lots of equally bad names. I have mamma on my side, though. I am awfully sorry for Charlie, but so glad to find I had made a mistake before it was too late.

Mr. Devine to his friend:—

MY DEAR TOM,—The expected, the half-expected, half-hoped-for has come to pass. My fiancée has written, with many regrets for me, that she is engaged to another man. As a rule girls break off with the first before they definitely decide on another, but Miss Kate and her mother don't do business that way. A rich and aristocratic Englishman is not to be compared to a penniless barrister. Excuse me, old fellow, if I seem rude, but it naturally cuts a man up to be thrown aside so easily. I find my very fear that I should love Miss Nellie and so be untrue to Kate, has sent me headlong into loving her. Therefore I cannot seriously regret Miss Kate's change of mind. It's a delicate point to handle, though. A fellow cannot be too precipitate without a certain loss of self-respect.

Miss Kate to Miss Nellie after some weeks:—

So you are going to marry Charlie Devine. Well I hope you may be happy. You can't put any trust in some men, though. I dare say he was flirting all summer with you, though, as you were my aunt and knew that he was engaged to me I think you might have respected that fact. But you are more suited to him than I was, in age anyway. Poor Charlie must be at least ten or maybe twelve years older than I. Aren't you a little afraid to begin housekeeping on Charlie's small income? I am sorry we cannot be at the wedding. Our time is so taken up in preparation for my own marriage which must, of course, be in proper accordance with Mr. Rivers' wealth and position. Papa is so cross and stingy I can't understand him at all. I think if I were you I would be pretty sure of Charlie's love before I leaned too much on it. A fellow who could forget a girl as quickly as Charlie has pretended to forget me is not to be trusted.

Judge Dunbar to his sister:—

From the bottom of my heart I wish you happiness, you and Charlie. I am sorry my foolish little daughter did not see his worth while she could, though I am afraid she would have made his life a burden. But poor child I fear she will learn her bitter lesson now. It seems that our fine Englishman is wholly dependent upon his mother's whims and fortune. On her part she wants to be rid of her expensive son and to hand him on to an heiress was the proper thing. When it came to making settlements and she found that my hands were pretty well tied, she weakened. In the meantime my wife is in hysterics and Kate in the sulks. Her Englishman hasn't as much intelligence as her pug. I can't bear to thwart my daughter, yet how can I see her throw herself away. It is but the glamor of a supposedly brilliant wedding that is attracting her. When, after a while, she sees Rivers in all