

place, stock and all, is worth about fifty thousand dollars, and in addition, there is the forty dollars a year and the profits of the farm for the last twenty years, almost intact, amounting in all to about twenty-five thousand dollars. So you see that when they get married they are going to get a great lift.

"The only thing that troubles me," continued Mr. Van Hasset, drawing his chair up close to Delancey's, and speaking to him in a low, confidential tone, "is that Tom aint aggressive enough. He comes up here and sits around and don't say much, but just looks at her. He don't make no headway, and when after I had been over and suggested to his father that he should hurry him up, he told him that there was lots of time. Because I thought that way myself at one time I didn't marry Elizabeth Polk, and Phyllis is a good deal like her in many ways. But, see here now, you're a stranger to me, and I have been, like a fool, letting you on the inside of my own family affairs. I daresay you could have, picked them up in the village, anyhow' but it is hardly my place to tell you. But I like your face and one fact drifted into another before I rightly considered what I was doing. You promise that you won't repeat anything that I have told you?"

"Certainly," Delancy promised.

Up the road at that moment there came a solitary horseman. "Tom Polk," said Mr. Van Hasset. "Just excuse me one moment."

When he came back Delancy was gone. He had come to the conclusion that he was tired, but inwardly he felt that he was envious of Tom Polk who was going to enjoy the company of, as he had ascertained, a very nice young girl. "And so," he said to himself, "to bed with the lark and up with the sun, or is it the other way around? I forget which, but I know it is deucedly early." And then he went to bed.

"When he awoke that morning he had confused notions of having dreamt of the maid of the inn of Pocohasset. He had been no longer Ned Delancy but a brave English knight of 'ye olden tyme, mounted upon a prancing black steed, clad in

heavy armour, a lance in his hands and the clamor of applause in his ears. He had been at one end of the tilting course and Tom Polk, of Pocohasset, similarly attired and mounted, had been at the other. Midway there had been a gallery, filled with beautiful ladies and brave men, and there, fairest of them all, he had seen Phyllis Van Hasset. There had been a blare of trumpets, shrill and defiant, and as they died away he had set his spurs deep in the flanks of his good steed and pressed onward to meet his opponent, Tom Polk, of Pocohasset. Midway he had met him, with his face set and deadly white and with the courage of despair shining in his eyes. There had been a shock, Polk's lance had glanced harmlessly aside, his own had struck true and a second later Tom Polk, of Pocohasset, had lain in the dust while his horse flew riderless down the course. He had wheeled around and turned toward the gallery and standing there, Phyllis Van Hasset, of Pocohasset, with a bright warm smile upon her joyous face, had proclaimed him her true knight; the crowd had given a great cheer and—then he had awoken and found the early morning sun glancing merrily through the windows of his room in the inn of Pocohasset.

He sprang energetically out of bed and glanced at his watch. It was just six o'clock. "The sun and the lark have both beaten me this morning," he thought. When he arrived downstairs he found the office deserted. A walk before breakfast would do him good, he convinced himself, and so he went outside and found seated upon a water pail, turned upside down, the object of his dream. Around her were gathered a hundred chickens. She was engaged in feeding them. He watched her unobserved, for a few moments and saw that certain members of the flock were treated with the most evident partiality. Then she turned and saw him, greeting him with a cordial smile.

"Are you not up rather early?" he asked. Most of the young ladies of his acquaintance began the day about nine.

"I have been up since five," she replied. Then she looked up at him quickly and said, "Did you ever feed chickens?"