

ABSOLUTION.

I.	II.
I am so sorry.	Better than you, sir.
No you are not.	Couldn't, if you tried.
I will do better.	Men are concealed.
Better than what?	Can't be denied.
III.	IV.
I have been thinking—	You are unfeeling!
Ah, that is news!	You are in tears!
We should part kindly.	None of your business!
Just as you choose.	So it appears.
V.	VI.
Careless and scornful?	Now I am going.
Ah, not so fast!	We cannot part!
But I forgive you.	What is to hinder?
Wait till you're asked.	Fate, and—my heart.
VII.	
What are you saying?	
You will be mine?	
You are so—precious!	
You are—divine!	

(For the Canadian Illustrated News.)

AN INVOLUNTARY ELOPEMENT.

WHEN I called at Brocktown, on my way home from my summer holiday, I had certainly not the slightest idea of meeting my Matilda Jane.

I am attached to Matilda Jane, and I rather flatter myself that Matilda Jane has a reciprocal feeling toward me, consequently when I so unexpectedly encountered her on my evening walk I immediately came to the conclusion that it would be desirable to prolong my stay for a few days.

The friends whom Matilda Jane was visiting seemed at once to recognize the tender relations existing between us, and received me with cordial hospitality. We had a series of the most charming excursions and pic-nics, and my holiday, which had so far been rather a dull and prosaic affair, bade fair to culminate like the last scene of a pantomime, in a perfect blaze of triumph and delight.

My leave of absence had nearly come to a close when I suggested to Matilda Jane that we should make a short excursion through the exquisite scenery of the Thousand Islands, near which Brocktown is situated. She assented at once with the engaging readiness which this charming girl ever evinces when anything like a pleasure-trip is proposed; and we made our arrangements accordingly.

We were to take the mail steamer which left Brocktown in the morning and disembark at a port some thirty miles up the river, returning home in the evening by train with which we were assured we could hardly fail to make connection.

It was a glorious July morning when we started on our excursion. A cool fresh breeze tempered the heat and crisped the bright surface of the river into a thousand glancing little wavelets which leaped and sparkled as though rejoicing in the bright sunshine. Matilda Jane approves of this description as "sweetly poetical." Under the combined influences of glorious weather, lovely scenery, and last, though not least, an excellent dinner, the hours fled rapidly by, and it was not till we arrived at our stopping-place that we noticed we were considerably behind time, and that it wanted only a few minutes of the hour at which our return train was due, while the depot was distant some three miles from the wharf.

Trusting, however, to the proverbial unpunctuality of the railway, which of course was not the Grand Trunk, we were but little disturbed, but landed and drove to the neighbouring village. Here we learned to our dismay that the horrid railway was untrustworthy even in its vices; that the train had already arrived and departed, and that there were no means of returning home that night. Here was a pretty fix; we were totally unprepared for such an emergency, and, as Matilda Jane pathetically remarked, "hadn't even a hairpin," while to add to our dismay I suddenly recollected that I had come away from home almost unprovided with money.

Matilda Jane's pecuniary means were also extremely limited, and on calculating our combined resources we found we had not sufficient with the strictest economy to pay for our night's lodging and take us home in the morning. What was to be done? was the question which we debated with much animation. It was manifestly impossible to remain in the sequestered village where we then were, the accommodations of which were confined to a very small tavern with only one habitable chamber, which the proprietor, who persisted in regarding us as a newly-married couple on their honeymoon, tendered for our use with effusive but objectionable hospitality.

We, therefore, decided to take the next up-train to Queens-town—a course of proceeding which, although it took us still farther away from home, would yet land us in a more sophisticated place where Matilda Jane had acquaintances residing, to whom, in case of need, she could appeal. Accordingly we drove off to the railway station over three miles of the vilest corduroy road in the whole of Upper Canada. This description of road is usually regarded by travellers with a just and holy horror, but for my own part I shall ever have a grateful remembrance of this particular portion of our journey.

We progressed in a continued series of bumps and jerks which sent Matilda Jane flying into my arms at intervals of about half a minute. My Matilda is of a plump and soft construction, and I found the performance inexpressibly delightful.

I was perpetually on the alert like an expert wicket-keeper at cricket, watching with extended arms for the moment when the animated ball of muslin opposite should be propelled toward me, and I am bound to say I made very few misses. I fear, however, that my partner in the game did not find it as agreeable as I did. My style of architecture is somewhat bony and angular, and at intervals when she came into unusually violent collision with any especially knobby protuberance I distinctly heard a smothered groan. Still the dear girl bore her sufferings with the heroism of a martyr, and in what seemed to me a remarkably short space of time we arrived at the station and took our passage on the up-train.

During the journey Matilda Jane began to have great misgivings as to the explanation she should offer to her friends concerning our *escapade*, and naively remarked:

"You see, dear, they will make more fuss about it than if we had run away in earnest."

I feel it due to myself to state that I thereupon immediately offered to 'make it in earnest,' but was pulled up short by the enquiry as to how we could get married without money, to say nothing of subsequent arrangements. This was a poser, and I relapsed into silence.

Her misgivings culminated when we arrived at our journey's end, and after much discussion we came to the conclusion that our best plan would be to seek some quiet, cheap and retired inn where we could get board and lodging suited to our finances, and try to keep our mishap a secret from all but our friends at home, to whom we had telegraphed. This seemed delightfully easy in theory, but when we tried to put it into practice we began to realize the difficulty of an unmarried couple in our position without baggage, and with limited means getting decent and respectable accommodation in a small country town. Up one street and down another we dragged our now weary limbs in search of this retired and respectable haven of refuge, which seemed as difficult of attainment as the El Dorado of the old voyagers. We were in momentary dread of meeting some one who would recognize us, and we dodged round street corners and down by-ways in a slinking and suspicious manner which seemed to attract general attention to our proceedings.

At length we came to a quiet and decent-looking house, dignified by the title of "Temperance Hotel," in the public room of which was seated an elderly lady of staid and matronly appearance, reading a book whose very binding was suggestive of morality and total abstinence from gilding and all other vanities. Matilda Jane nudged my arm.

"This is the very place for us," she whispered; "go in and see if you can make arrangements and I'll wait here."

After a little hesitation I entered with a sufficiently embarrassed demeanour and mentioned my desires. The old lady put down her spectacles and looked at me in a severe, not to say suspicious, manner. Presently she caught sight of Matilda Jane peeping in a guilty manner round the corner of the door. Her suspicions seemed to be confirmed. She rose from her seat and said in an annihilating and withering manner, and with a strong nasal twang:

"Young man, do you know where you air?"

"Lord bless me, yes ma'am," I stammeringly exclaimed;

"this is an hotel, is it not?"

"You air on the downward path of perdition," the old lady continued, with great vehemence and a total disregard of my reply. "Return before it is too late; take that unfortunate young woman back to her lawful husband and repent! and if you don't get out of this right away I'll send for a pleece-man."

The old lady uttered this terrific threat with intense ferocity and volubility, and I beat a hasty retreat.

I hurried Matilda Jane round the corner, and said in agitated accents,

"Matilda, this is getting serious; we are evidently the objects of universal distrust; that insane old party actually thinks you are somebody else's wife and that I have run away with you!"

Matilda Jane was horror-stricken, and went back on me in what I considered a rather ungenerous manner.

"My dear," she said, "you make your inquiries in such a sheepish manner that it's enough to excite suspicion in itself."

I was rather piqued. Matilda Jane is usually complimentary, and I didn't like it, so I retorted rather crustily:

"Well, you don't look particularly innocent yourself!"

"Innocent!" she replied, opening her eyes very wide; "my dear I feel exactly as if I had committed a murder and didn't know what to do with the body. The fact is," she continued, seeing that I was annoyed, and hooking her arm into mine in a delightfully cosy and confidential manner, "the fact is it does not do for people of our appearance to go into these second rate places; it naturally excites suspicion; it isn't as if we were common looking people."

I felt much better. Matilda Jane is a girl of great discernment, and I quite agree with her.

"The best thing we can do," she resumed, "is to go to the best hotel in the place and take our chance of meeting any one we know. If we are to be found out we had better be found in a respectable place."

"But how about the money?" I replied; "we shan't have enough to pay our bill and take us home."

"Then you must see the proprietor," she retorted, and explain how we are situated, and of course he will trust us or take a cheque for the amount of our bill."

I didn't much like the anticipation, but as I could suggest no better course, I silently assented, and we wended our way to the principal hotel, which was a sufficiently imposing looking edifice. Having escorted Matilda Jane to the drawing-room, I descended to the office, and accosting a smart looking clerk behind the counter, requested to be accommodated with two rooms for the night. He pushed toward me a huge folio volume and politely requested me to register our names. I hesitated for a moment, and then did so in as indistinct a manner as possible. The clerk looked for a moment at my vile calligraphy, and then said carelessly, "Any baggage, sir?"

I replied in rather a lame manner that we had no baggage.

"All right," he returned cheerfully, "in that case you must please pay in advance."

My face became scarlet, and I began confusedly to explain the state of the case. The clerk listened with an engaging smile on his countenance, and before I had got through three sentences of my laboured explanation, interrupted me.

"Don't trouble yourself to explain," he cried cheerfully, "I know all about it: you missed the train, and not expecting to stay all night, you didn't bring money enough with you; that's about the size of it, ain't it?"

"Exactly so," I replied, inexpressibly delighted at the remarkable intelligence of this young man.

"Ah," he continued, sardonically, "and you'll give a cheque for your board, won't you? or you'll remit the money when you get home, won't you? Oh yes, I know your little game; but what disgusts me with you dead beats," he continued, with an air of inexpressible disgust, "is that you ain't got more invention; you always come with the same stale old story. Why if I was in the swindling line myself I'd invent fifty better excuses than that any day in the week."

Two or three bystanders set up a derisive howl, and I felt and must have looked like a detected pickpocket. In imagination I already saw Matilda Jane and myself ignominiously expelled from the doors of the inhospitable hostelry to wander about the streets forlorn and homeless.

Suddenly a happy thought occurred to me. I took from my pocket my watch, a valuable gold one, and handing it to the clerk, said with as good an assumption of polite sarcasm as I could assume—

"Possibly, sir, as your bill for one night cannot be very large, you will be satisfied with that as security in the mean time."

The clerk took the watch, examined it carefully and de-

liberately, and then returning it to me with a polite bow, said:

"Excuse me, sir, I see it's all right; we are so often taken in that we are obliged to be very careful. James, show the gentleman to number twenty-four. We dine at six, sir."

Feeling like a relieved criminal, I returned to Matilda Jane, to whom I did not relate the indignities to which I had been subjected, but rather, I fear, led her to believe that the air of innate gentility which I had fondly flattered myself I possessed had been sufficient to allay all difficulties. We had a first-rate dinner and a good night's rest, and returned home next morning.

Of course we had to submit to any amount of chaff about our little adventure, and I have a strong suspicion that Matilda Jane's female friends regard me as somewhat of a muf for allowing the affair to terminate in so unromantic a manner. For my own part, I am determined that the next time I go on a similar excursion I will take care to be provided with a sufficient supply of funds to meet all possible contingencies.

N. H. F.

"SHODDY."

Eli Perkins has been lecturing the Saratogians on shoddy and its symptoms. He says:

"When a strange family arrives at our hotel you must watch them closely. Divinity puts up certain infallible signs to distinguish the ignorant and vulgar from the children of culture and virtue."

First—If the lady comes into the parlor with a diamond ring on the outside of her glove, it is safe to ask her how much she gets a week. ("Hear, hear!" and several ladies put their hands under their paniers.)

Second—If Providence erects a dyed mustache over the mouth of the man, it is to show that he is a gambler or a vulgarian. (Cheers, when two Americans Club men, a gambler, and four Plug-Uglies from Baltimore put their hands over their mustaches.)

Third—If, when that new family enter or leave a room, the gentlemen rush ahead, leaving the ladies to follow, there is something "shoddy" somewhere.

Fourth—If the man presents the ladies to the gentlemen, instead of vice versa, and they all shake hands on a first presentation, then you may know they hail from Oil City.

Fifth—If, when they go into dinner, they do nothing but loudly order the waiters around, and talk about the wine, you can make up your mind that they are the first waiters they have ever had and the only wine they ever drank. If they pick their teeth at the table, or take out their false teeth and rinse them in the tumbler, (a voice, "Sheet 'em on the spot")—yes, my friends, I say that to their teeth.

Sixth—If, when the gentleman sits in the parlor talking to a lady, he don't sit up straight, but sprawls all over the sofa, puts the soles of his boots on the lady's dress, on the furniture, or wipes his shoes on his own white linen pantaloons, you'd better refuse an introduction to him. (Applause, when eight young fellows who sat with their legs radiating like the wings of a wind-mill, or sprawling one foot cross-legged in the empty air, whirled themselves right side up.)

Seventh—If the ladies in that party white-wash their faces, redden their lips, black their eyebrows, or bronze or yellow their hair, just you think this is another sign which Providence puts up so you can shun them. Enamel and dyed hair are social beacon lights to enable you to keep off the rocks of Cyprus. Just you keep away from such people, for they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Voice from a young lady—"But we want to look beautiful, Mr. Perkins."

But this will not make you beautiful, my children. Any sweetheart who is so shallow as to take whitewash for the human skin, or rouge for the rose-cheeks of nature, is too much of a sap-head to make a good husband, and if he is smart enough to see through your deception, why he will surely leave you in disgust. (Applause by the gentlemen, while several ladies wiped their faces with their pocket-handkerchiefs.)

Eighth—If, when this family get into their carriage to ride to the lake, the young ladies appear in gaudy colors, throw over their laps a bright yellow and red or blue afghan, and the coachman wears a gold hat-band and a sprawl-tailed yellow livery, with velvet collar, and holds brass-bespangled horses by white reins, you may know that the owner keeps a livery stable, and that this is his first carriage. (Voice—"Hit 'em again, Eli.") No, my friends, I've said out.

Art and Literature.

Mr. Gladstone has been elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Science.

Miss Emily Faithfull's lectures, now in course of delivery, are on the following subjects: 1st. Eight Months in America; 2nd. English and American Orators; 3rd. American Poets; 4th. The present aspect of the Woman's Movement in America.

Dr. Kingsley, brother of Charles Kingsley, and the original of "The Doctor," in the book called "The Earl and the Doctor," has started with Lord Dunraven for the Yellowstone.

Among a lot of historical documents sold in Paris last month were some letters of Louis XIII. and Marie de Medici, and an autograph letter signed by Richelieu.

Lord Houghton is about to re-edit Keats' Life and Poems for the Aldine Series.

The English weekly "Once a Week," has changed hands.

Dr. Dollinger has been elected President of the Munich Academy of Science.

It is stated that the Roxburgh Club is going to issue a volume of coloured photo-lithographs, possibly accompanied by autotypes, of the earliest and choicest illuminations in MSS. in the Bodleian Library, beginning with those of the Anglo-Saxon Gospels.

The fourth centenary of Michael Angelo's birth will be celebrated next year at Florence.

The French Government have purchased for about \$41,500 the fine fresco known as "La Magliana," attributed to Raphael.

Speaking of "Caliban, The Missing Link," by Prof. Wilson, of Toronto, the *Illustrated London News* says: "It is, from a certain point of view, creditable to Canada and flattering to the mother country that a Canadian professor should have devoted no small amount of original thought, acquired knowledge, and subtle ingenuity to a consideration of the wonderful manner in which Shakespeare unconsciously anticipates and satisfies the most startling problem of the nineteenth century. Inseparable from the honoured name of Darwin, and to a conscientious attempt at rehabilitation, in the cases of two plays, of Shakespeare's text."