## A Brave Girl.

BY HETTIE M'CAMMON.

A brave little thing was Blanche Eldredge, despite her five feet of stature—brave enough to lift the burden that her father had found too heavy for his feeble hands. The old man was possessed of a tender, sensitive nature, and a feeble will. Shrinking from pain or rebuff himself, he had not sufficient strength of will to inflict either, even when he knew it was necessary for the best interests of himself or others, and whether it was a neighbor asking the accommodation of his name to a note, or his son Leonard begging off from a deserved flogging or clamoring for an unlimited supply of pocket-money, the result was the same—he yielded as son and neighbor knew he would.

It is easy to guess the end. In a few years, of his fine farm there was left but a few barren acres around the house, and his son, having grown up a handsome, graceful young scoundrel, finished a career in Aldenville that had shamed and disgraced all his kin, by forging his father's name to a note for a thousand dollars; and having received the money he left his home for the distant city. Of course his father paid the money—he could not have his son sent to State prison—but the blow killed him, and the burdens that had bowed him even to the grave fell upon his daughter's slender shoulders. The only sensible action of his life was the willing of the house and the few acres that remained entirely to Blanche, leaving her mother and aunt solely to her care. And nobly Blanche justified his trust in her, though it was up-hill work. Her mother a nervous, fretfful invalid, who had never lived anybody but herself and her son, conceived the idea that her husband had wronged her terribly by setting aside all her rights and passing her over with a mere charge to Blanche to take care of her. "Just as though I was a child," she said, angerly, "and incapable of taking care of myself. It was insulting, and showed that he had no respect for me to leave me dependent on my own child, a girl of eighteen, who knows nothing of business." And so she whined and fretted on, her dissatisfaction greatly strengthened by letters from Leonard, in which he expressed a great deal of virtuous indignation on the same subject, but he gave himself no further trouble concerning his mother and sister, save, as often happened, he found himself in want of money, he did not hesitate to apply to his mother for loans which were never repaid.

For the next four years Blanche fought hard, and but for the steady pull which Leonard, through his mother, kept on her purse-strings, she would have won the battle.

"A brave girl, indeed," said Squire Fletcher, admiringly, "with pluck and energy enough to furnish out half the young men in the county."

But when his son Allen carried *his* admiration to the point of loving and desiring to marry her, the squire blustered and stormed after the usual fashion of fathers who have forgotten their own youth. The girl was a jewel in herself, but then, her worthless, scoundrelly brother, her whining, fretful idiot of a mother, her hopelessly crazed aunt—what man in his senses would voluntarily take such burdens on himself!

"Yet Blanche has borne these burdens a long time, and without murmuring," said Allen.

"The more fool she," retorted the squire.

The discussion ended as such discussions usually do. Allen fully resolved to marry Blanche just as soon as he could induce her to say yes, even if it cost him his inheritance, while his father was equally resolved that Allen should give up the girl he loved and marry the heiress he had chosen for him; and if Allen had yielded to his will in this matter, the old man in his heart of hearts would have despised him as a mean-spirited hound forever after.

But Blanche was as proud in her own way as the squire himself, and when this avowed determination was reported to her, she unhesitatingly declared that Allen should never lose his inheritance through her.

And now appeared another actor in the drama. Ralph Lyndsay, immensely wealthy, handsome, forty, and a widower, sought in their quiet little village that rest and freedom from care essential to the full recovery of his health, almost lost in the cares and anxieties of business.

His wealth and position, soon known, secured him prompt recognition from those who termed themselves of the higher class, and avoidance of society forming no part of his programme, he accepted most of the invitations so freely extended to him.

It was at a picnic he first met Blanche Eldredge, and her fresh, bright beauty, that no amount of toil or care could dim; her frank, simple manners, attracted him wonderfully. And his interest was not in any degree lessened by the hints and innuendoes of some of his lady friends, who did not all approve of his interest in one whom no respectable man could think of marrying.

The long summer days came and went wearily enough to poor Blanche. Never before had her burden seemed so heavy. Her farming operations were not so successful as they had been; her best cow died; Leonard's applications for money were more frequent and urgent than usual; Aunt Rachel fell ill of a slow nervous fever; and all the while here stood Ralph Lyndsay ready, at a word, to assume all her burdens, to make all rough ways smooth for her tired feet.

The man went openly enough, though delicately and generously, about his wooing. The whole village—for that matter, the whole world—might know that he loved this little country-bred girl, and wanted her for his wife.—Time had been when he dared not so openly brave the world, but years had brought courage and knowledge, and even in the hurrying, grinding mill of commerce, he had learned to recognize the value of other things besides wealth.

As the summer drew to a close, the pluck that Squire Fletcher so much admired, and that had carried Blanche over so many difficulties, seemed to fail; her energies, both of mind and body, overworked for so long, gave way at last beneath the strain. Oh, if she could only give up the struggle; if she only dared lie down and rest—she was so tired, so worn out. And this marriage would give her the rest so earnestly desired. It would give her freedom from all pecuniary cares; and what all women, however self-reliant they may be, long for, it would give her protection, the sense of being cared for.

On all sides she was beset with entreaties not to forego the wonderful benefits that would flow from this marriage, Her mother whined and fretted all day long, calling Heaven to witness that she had done her duty by this ungrateful daughter, who now refused to make a trifling sacrifice of inclination, though it would secure plenty to all her family.

Leonard, too, who had somehow heard of the affair, wrote to her, imploring her not to let this chance of setting them all up in life, as he termed it, slip through her fingers, alluding to his own difficulties in terms which, though vague, filled her heart with wildest terror.

There seemed no help for her; even Allen—I have hardly patience to write his name—failed her now, taking it into his wise head to grow suddenly jealous, torturing her by half-affected distrust, accusations of coldness, and all the rest of a jealous lover's fancies.

His father was quick to take advantage of this mood, and one day after Allen had left Blanche in anger because she would not end all difficulties by marrying him at once, the squire proposed to him a journey on some business that required the personal attention of one of them. Allen consented at once, believing that his absence would bring Blanche to terms, and a few hours later he had left the village.

Blanche received his farewell with a calmness that astonished and enraged him; but I think, if he could have looked beyond the calm face—if he had even guessed at the intolerable ache that filled her heart—he would surely have staid and helped her to bear this new trouble.

But he went, and her vaunted courage failed at last. In utter weariness she yielded to fate. And so Ralph Lindsay clasped her hand and and kissed her cold lips in seal of the promise so hardly won.

They gave her little time to repent; and one soft cloudy October day there was a stir and bustle all through the house, penetrating even to that distant chamber where, for fifteen years, Rachel Temple had hidden from the face of man waiting ever for the lover who had won her heart with loving, lying words, and then fled like a coward, leaving to others the task of telling her that he was already bound by irrevocable ties. But he had said he would return, and to this promise her darkened mind still clung, forgetful of all else. Even the wan, wasted face, framed in bands of silvery hair, that gazed back at her from the mirror, never awakened her to a perception of the truth that her youth had gone by like a dream,

But to-day some strange perplexity troubled her dream Little Blanche, that child, going to be married? Twenty-two, was she? Slow, painful consciousness struggled into her brain, as she looked at the girl who stood before her in the white robes of a bride: but looking at her with eyes sad as her own holding a woman's sorrow in their depth-Rachel Temple questioned no further.

After Blanche left her she sat for a moment in thought, then rising hastily, she opened a drawer, and taking out of it a white shawl of finest, softest Canton crape, she draped it in graceful folds over her wrapper, a chintz of gravest, soberest tints. A black velvet ribbon was tied around her hair in the fashion of fifteen years before, and then she prepared to descend the stairs which she had not seen since that day, so long since, when her brother had carried her up fainting, almost dying.

The parlor door was open when she reached it, and as she stood there in the full glare of the light, glances of astonishment met her on all sides, and a murmur of amazement not to be repressed, ran round the room. The old feeling of shrinking, torturing, fear and shame returned, and she was about to turn and fly, when her glance suddenly fell on a group in the center of the room, and she stood motionless, almost breathless. Mr Warden, the minister of the Church she had attended, when a girl, was standing with book in hand, while before him stood Blanche her face corpse-like in its pallor and beside her a tall man, who turned a handsome wondering face toward the door.

It was on this face Rachel Temple's gaze rested. Only a moment, and the look of wistful longing, waiting had gone from her face, the sad eyes shone with a glad tenderness, and the thin lips parted in a smile that seemed to bring back some of the brightness of youth to the worn face.

"At last!" she said, in clear, ringing tones, as she went toward them. Oh, Ralph, I *knew* you would, come."

In deadly terror and amazement, Ralph Lindsay shrank before her approach. Was it some horrible nightmare, or was this pale shadowy woman, with gray hair and love-lighted eyes, the ghost of that Rachel Temple whose dark, bright beauty had once inspired him with such a mad passion—a passion that caused him to forget truth and honor toward her, and loyalty to the wife he had wedded for money, and had left to die alone among strangers and menials; He would win Rachel or die, he swore, but in the hour when he rejoiced in knowledge of the fact that her heart was all his own, a summons to the death-bed of his neglected wife, betrayed his treachery to Rachel's indignant friends.

But he parted from her before the secret had been revealed to her, promising to return soon. And when the unhappy wife, who had given so much and received so little, had been buried out of sight, he did return, to hear that the revelation of his business and treachery had killed Rachel Temple.

She had been seized with brain fever, and her brother had come to her. As soon as she could be moved he had taken her home, where she had died, almost on the threshold, it was strongly hinted, by her own hand.

This was the story that had reached her friends—the story that they repeated to Ralph Lyndsay in good faith, amid bitter reproaches. And, scoundrel as he was, it had left a dark shadow on his life, for he had really loved her, as a man loves but once.

Curiously enough he had never heard her brother's name, taking it for granted that it was the same as her own, nor yet the name of her native village, and he had come to Aldenville, never dreaming of the blow fate had in store for him there.

No wonder he shrank in horror and affright from this pale spectre, that yet bore a shadowy resemblance to his lost love. Face to face they stood, her eyes holding his, but in *his* face was no answering gladness, and the words so long waited for came not from his lips. The man was literally dumb--stricken speechless.

The glow faded from Rachael's face, the old troubled, perplexed look crept back to her eyes.

"Ralph," she spoke slowly, pitifully, "why will you not speak to me?"

"Because, Rachel, he is a scoundrel, who, for once in his life, has no lie ready."

This answer, delivered by Squire Fletcher, as striding into the middle of the room, he laid a heavy hand on Ralph Lyndsay's shoulder, produced a startling effect.

The stern denunciations of the squire, the hysterical sobs and cries of Mrs. Eldredge, the sudden arrival of Allen Fletcher, haggard, dusty, travel worn, the efforts of Ralph Lyndsay to maintain his haughty self-possession, the mild, grave tones of Mr. Warden, as he strove to make peace—it was a scene of bewildering tumult; but it was stilled as Rachel Temple sank dying to the floor, almost at Ralph Lyndsay's feet.

It was in *his* arms she was lifted to the lounge, it was on *his* face her eyes opened, and his voice whispered in her ear:

"Rachel, my only love, can you forgive me?"

"Forgive *you*, Ralph!" A smile brightened the white face once more. "I have nothing to forgive, for I loved you. But, oh, Ralph, I have waited so long," and with these words on her lips, she died—her lonely waiting was over.

A few days later they buried her, and then Ralph Lyndsay went back to the city, where he is still known as the keenest and shrewdest of business men.

And when, a little later, Blanche Eldredge pledged marriage vows to Allen Fletcher, there was no interruption, even though the squire was present; and more than ever the squire admires her, still sounding her praises as a brave girl.


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6 ft x 30 in. x 20 gauge.
7 " x " x " "
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JUST RECEIVED:—
One Car Load Choice Canso and other Brands
HERRING
in whole and half bbls.
—ALSO—
No. 1 Table Codfish.
OATMEAL,
CORNMEAL,
BUCKWHEAT, FLOUR, &c.
A. & R. LOGGIE.
Black Brook, Dec. 27, 1881.

GENERAL BUSINESS.

Golden Ball, Shoe Store
—AND—
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The Golden Ball Boot and Shoe Store is the oldest established in Miramichi. It is now fifteen years since we commenced business exclusively in the above line, and we can now point with pleasure, to hosts of patrons, who have invariably, purchased from us, during that length of time. The reason is plain. We buy entirely from the best manufacturers, consequently our goods give satisfaction. We might purchase cheap, shoddy goods (that are only meant to sell and not to wear) but by pursuing that policy, it would be impossible to retain our customers. The best goods are the cheapest in the end.
We have full lines of
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A few Splendid Parlor Suites, in Raw silk and in Hair Cloth.
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Chatham, Aug. 26, 1881.

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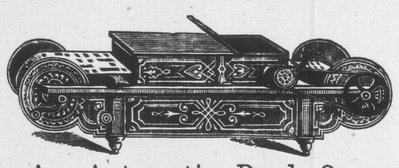

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JAMES McDONALD, } Executors.
R. HUTCHISON, }
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Photograph Frames,
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The Monitor Oil Stove.
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This is a compact and durable stove burning ordinary coal oil.
Perfectly safe, and free from smell. Can easily be carried from one room to another in a few seconds, handy for ironing, baking or preparing meals in hot weather.
Just the thing for Hotels and Restaurants.—12,000 of these stoves have been sold in the United States.
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Chatham, June 22, 1881. JOHN BROWN S r 22

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Very Heavy.
A very large stock of
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Ladies' Berlin Wool Shawls,
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This is a bona fide Cost Sale for the Holidays.
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Chatham, Dec 3.

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Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore existing under the name of
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has been dissolved this day by mutual consent and the business of
Photographing and Picture Framing
will be continued by Mr. E. H. Thomson, at the old stand, and all bills due the late firm are payable to him, and all debts owed by them will be paid by him.
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E. H. THOMSON.
Chatham, N. B., Aug. 23rd., 1881.

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Pictures framed to order.
*Call and see for yourselves.*
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NEW RAISINS,
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MINCE MEAT,
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FLAVORING EXTRACTS,
SPICES, ALL KINDS, NUTS,
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PULVERIZED, PARIS LUMP,
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GEESE, TURKEYS, DUCKS.
30 Tubs Choice Butter,
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SAUSAGES, BOLOUGNIES AND A FULL LINE OF GROCERIES.
BOTTOM PRICES!
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Most simple, efficient and portable mill of its size in the world.

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