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ROSE LACY'S MARRIAGE.

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Well, Denis?—our poor old grand-ther used to say to me, long ago—“Well, Denis, half the miseries in the world proceed from unhappy marriages.” Now it is our firm conviction that the good old woman was perfectly correct in her idea, and that ill-assorted marriages are productive of most of the evils which this wretched world is thronged: it is, indeed, to be deplored, that many females evince a decided partiality for what glitter and makes a dash. They prefer a red coat to a simple one—a showy exterior to an unassuming plainness! They are as the moth, that is attracted by the brightness of the flame, and will buzz delighted about it, even until its fiery wings are burned, and its heavenly dust is lost. Many things in this world that look bright, pretty, and gay, lead us to astray!

Young ladies, reflect on this; and we leave little doubt you will find it perfectly correct.—So much by way of preface—now for our story.

Rose Lacy was not beautiful; she could not boast of a delicate regularity of feature, and a dazzling fairness of complexion, but she had the merriest laughing eyes, the sweetest pouting lips, and the prettiest smile of any of the beauties in the little village of S—. Her hair did not cluster about her neck in wild negligence, as the hair of heroines generally does; but was neatly plaited, and combed smoothly over her forehead, which appeared doubly white from its raven contrast. Her figure was tiny, but she was round and plump as a partridge, and agile as a mountain goat; while a perpetual rose-like blush in her cheek made her be generally admired. She was of a peculiarly susceptible disposition—merit or joy passed through her veins with the rapidity of summer lightning, and lit up her eyes and face with beautiful and unalloyed gladness; while sorrow—the deep woe of others, for she had scarcely known grief herself, in a moment could draw the warm tears of sympathy from her pitying eyes, and the deep sigh of compassion from her benevolent heart.

Rose was the only daughter of Roger Lacy, a man of substance, and as steady a specimen of an Irish farmer as you'd see in a day's walk,—and that in the middle of summer, when they're long. Roger's dwelling presented as comfortable an appearance as his person, and "a better kept" together or snugger bit of land nor his, you wouldn't see for many a mile. His son, for his family consisted of one son and one daughter, was an industrious, hard-working, attentive youth; and to see Roger in the evening, seated before his door, quietly smoking, and the red sun shining on his happy face—while his son and Rose were chatting together, as the former was settling some spring flowers in the little garden before the door, you could boast of having beheld as peaceful and delightful a picture of rural happiness as one will often witness in the course of a long life. Her brother was to Rose a being really to be loved, and her warm heart gratefully treasured up all his kindnesses; and his feelings for her were somewhat similar—he would chat to her, and laugh with her, and call her his "gentle Rose," and his "patty Rose," and his "darlin' Rose"—would smooth down her hair, and kiss her cheek; and when she tript lightly from his side, his heart would breathe forth a blessing and a prayer that the future life of his "little sister" might always be as happy as the present.

Rose was exactly eighteen—that age when all impressions are so readily received—when a pattern was held at a certain holy well in the neighbourhood, famous for possessing a myriad of virtues. Her father and brother attended it, and Rose of course could not be left at home alone, and so she was also with them. After the ceremonies usual in such cases had been performed, of course the boys and girls got up a dance, and equally of course Tom Lacy and his sister joined the light-hearted group, while "old Roger" joined a couple of friends, who were quietly taking a

drop of the native together, undisturbed by the dancers, and so had sought a corner of the pale tent where the festivities were carried on. Rose was footing it away right merrily with a comely boy, who was not a little proud of his bright-eyed partner, particularly as he noticed the displeased pout that sat on many a sweet lip around, as its possessor felt that she was quite eclipsed by the "forward" thing which a thin but finely formed youth joined the group. The moment he appeared, all the frowns disappeared, as if by magic, and there was a general smile amongst the females, and a pleased whisper of—"sure enough here's Dick Brady, himself?" but he merely nodded to one or two acquaintances, amongst whom was Tom Lacy, and then stood silently looking on at the dance, his dark eyes following the quick and graceful motions of Rose, with much seeming pleasure. When she once or twice caught the full glance of that sparkling eye, her colour heightened—she knew not by what impulse, and she was it coquetry that guided her. He gave more careful of her motions—threw back her head with a proud gesture, and looked as she did so, more engaging than ever—nay, absolutely beautiful! Dick Brady was handsome—very handsome—had full black eyes, well curved lips, and curling chestnut hair—his figure was slight and more formed for agility than strength, but yet was finely built and symmetrical. His temper was lively and violent, and his character that of a libertine; but then, no one could be angry with Dick Brady, he was so handsome and so polite, and though a little wild to be sure, as reformers sakes make the best husbands, at least so said all the village maids.

When the dance had concluded, and Rose, flushed and panting, had taken her seat beside her brother, the stranger, on whom all eyes were fixed, drew near and began a conversation with him. His voice was soft and low, and his language better than that she had been accustomed to; and it was evident, that although it was her brother he addressed, it was her he was speaking to. Tom Lacy gave him but short and monosyllabic answers, and he was so silent that he was not pleased with the advances; but Rose, when she saw the double envy she then created, urged by that vanity that is inherent in woman, (dadies, we beg your pardon I looked, and smiled encouragement. After a while she asked her to dance and although her brother said so, she said yes, and her neck blushed as she said it. He danced well—in fact Dick Brady did every thing well; and then his hand pressed hers so softly and his eyes looked into hers so gently, and so full of admiration, while in his low sweet voice, he complimented her on her graceful motions, that she started once or twice, and her heart leaped against her bosom, as she found that she had for a moment totally forgotten her brother and his displeased look.

The following day her brother spoke to her and warned her again to Brady, and told her he was a dissipated and a bad dispositioned man, and said that he wished her not to cultivate his acquaintance. What struggle in her bosom was it that caused her to hesitate?—why did she not at once promise what he desired, as she would of old?—we know not—we are but a simple narrator of facts, and suffice it to say, that she did hesitate for a moment, while her eyes assiduously avoided meeting his, and then all at once filled up, and she burst into tears, and hid her face in his bosom, and confessed, as she then thought, that it was but vanity urged her to mind him, and nothing else—adding a promise, that she would not act contrary to her beloved brother's wishes; and all was well for a fortnight—and then—Rose Lacy broke her promise. Whenever she went out alone, she was certain to meet Dick Brady, and he would salute her so respectfully, and hope she was well in so genteel a voice, that she began to deem her brother's prejudices ill-founded. Once or twice, too, as he asked permission to walk beside her for a little, his soft melancholy eyes looked much intently, that she could not find it in her heart to refuse him; and then dissimulation first entered into her mind, for she foolishly thought, that if she never mentioned

it, it would make no matter, as how could her brother be uneasy about what he knew nothing of. This species of intercourse continued some time, and she awoke not from her dream, till she found that her affections were firmly fixed upon the very man of whom her brother had warned her. He had told her that he loved her—he had asked her to promise to be his—his melting tones he confessed his follies, adding, that she might, if she willed it, be the means of estranging him from them for ever; and the next morning, when her brother wished her good day, her heart did not expand to him as usual, for that heart had been glighted to another.

Dick Brady, wild and inconstant as he was, really felt for Rose a sincere and unfeigned affection, and one unalloyed with any thought of shadowy impunity. She was so gentle and confiding, that he could not but respect and love her. He thought that he could live with her and with her alone, and be happy; and so he could, were his temper less violent, and less sensitive to sudden impressions, and were he not so easily led by any thing that promised pleasure. But the deep poison of dissipation, when once it has entered the heart, cannot be easily eradicated—in fact it is almost invulnerable.—Well wate that her father and brother would never agree to their union, he tried to persuade her to a private marriage, and succeeded. This step once taken, he gradually led on from one thing to another, was changed in every respect, and moved about the house, no longer in light and life, but silent and sad, and guiltily looking—wishing to confess her union, and yet fearing how it might be received. When it could be no longer concealed, the rage of her father, and the misery of her brother at being deceived in "Rose" were the first circumstances that made her regret her imprudent conduct; and when the former, flaming with passion, exclaimed—

"This, Miss Rose, since you've chosen for yourself without consulting your father or your mother, you may go off to your husband and never dare again, while you've life, to cross a fibre of mine."

She fell at his feet, clasped his knees, and looked imploringly into his face—

"Oh, father!—dear father!—don't say that—don't turn me from you with anger—my father!—I was wrong—I was mad—I—Father! won't you forgive me?—only look kindly at me, as you used—pardon me—Father, jewel, don't break my heart by refusing!"

The old man was somewhat moved with those imploring accents, but answered not; and then she turned to her brother, who stood full of sorrow at a little distance, and continued—

"Oh, Tom! won't you intercede for your sister; won't you speak a kind word for her own poor Rose? didn't you often tell me you loved me dearly—now, will you turn from me, too?—Oh, Tom, however, say— but say that you're not angry with me, my father'll forgive me this—won't you answer me?—Tom—are you silent, too?"

A tear stood in her brother's eye, at this appeal, and he advanced and raised her up, and tenderly pressing his lip to her cheek, answered—

"Yes, Rose!—I did, and I do love you dearer than a sister, and though you have deserved it, and never wronged it was my fault to warn you, but I couldn't rule your conduct—so Rose, I freely, and from my soul forgive you! and may God grant that you may never have cause to weep for your sudden choice."

"Amen!" fervently and loudly responded his father, and it seemed as if there was something prophetic in his fears; and then seeing that his son had acted wisely, and forgiven her, the good old man's short-lived anger was dissipated, he drew her to his bosom, and putting her cheek with a fond embrace, assured her of his complete forgiveness.

For some time after this, Rose was as happy almost as she could wish, for her husband paid her every attention, and gave up entirely all his former wild courses. He had a

boat costing a few miles from her father's house; and it was thither, after the first week they both retired. This land was productive, but had been neglected for some time previous to his union with her; but now he worked daily for its improvement, and appeared so industrious, and so fond a husband, that Tom Lacy frequently came to see him, and almost had forgotten all his former prejudices. However this was of short duration—for his sickle mind, as soon as the novelty wore off, began to grow tired of such regular improvement, and the land gradually again began to wear the appearance of neglect. His brother-in-law remonstrated with him, but in vain; and his wife—his faithful and pretty Rose, who had sacrificed so much for him, beheld him daily becoming more and more cold to her, with a breaking, though unperceptible, and appeared so hard acquainted with a set of idle, half-raised farmers and labourers, who spent whatever money they could earn, in the ale-house, and soon for their society, almost entirely gave up that of his wife. She had often wept on his return from these midnight orgies, and prayed him to think of what the end of such courses might be; but the burst of fierce passion and fury with which such remonstrances were received, frightened her from renewing them; in fact, till she saw it, she could never believe that one, who always was before so gentle, could have such a violent and uncontrollable temper. Her father and brother saw that all was not right, but did not know the extent of Brady's ill conduct—for though the concealment of it was to burst Rose's heart, she would not let it be known, and smiled and tried to be cheerful whenever they came; but the genuine joy was dead within her, and the affection pointed her as if her soul was seared.

Affairs went on in this way for about a year, and towards its close, Rose, though in the situation of a young and inexperienced mother, was left almost alone for whole days and nights; and when her husband was present, he was gloomy and morose. His furniture had been sold piece by piece, to defray some debts which he had contracted; and his land was lying waste for want of a little care and personal attention. Rose observed, too, that latterly he did not appear in want of money, and a horrid idea flitted over her brain, but was instantly banished. Her father, in consequence of their being at some distance from each other, could not see all the decay in their circumstances, but whenever he did perceive it, he attributed it to the badness of the times, or some such thing, and came forward to help them, both with money and otherwise; and as Rose made no complaints of her husband's ill treatment, though the bloom had left her cheek, and the merry laugh had fled from her eye, he concluded that they lived as happily together as others; and forbore any questions. Not so her brother, he was too well accustomed to note each change in the check of his "patty Rose," not at once to perceive that all was not right, and so he watched her anxiously, and perceived her altered mien, with a sad thoughtfulness. He came to her and spoke to her, and asked her if there was any difference between her and her husband, and she answered him with evasion, as she dreaded to confide the secret of her unhappiness, even to her once best beloved brother. Such were the first fruits of her ill-considered marriage.

There were numerous other organized gangs of robbers existing in the neighbourhood of the village of S—, and they formed the general conversation, about three years from the marriage of Rose Lacy. Report said that they all were under the conduct of one leader who was called the "handsome captain" as a few terror-stricken maids had fancied they met him at various times prowling about the high roads, and had given exaggerated accounts of his personal perfections. One thing was certain, namely, that the houses of several of the gentlemen who had seats in that part of the country, were broken into and robbed, despite of the watchmen and exertions of the owners, and all else to discover any retreat for the marauders, was hidden in complete obscurity. In fact, to such a head had this system proceeded, that the magistrates offered a large re-