Virgie's Inheritance.

Virgie looked up now with a steady unwavering glance into his eager eyes, although her face was dyed with blushes.

"Mr. Heath," she faltered, "you know I cannot leave my father."

"Of course I know it," he returned, his face lighting. "I do not ask it, darling; I only ask you will you give yourself into my keeping, and then we will devote ourselves to him as long as he lives. Oh, my dearest"—as he saw an answering gleam in her eyes—"you do love me!"

"Yes, I love you," Virgie breathed, with a downcast but happy face; and then she was gathered close to her lover's manly breast in a fond embrace.

"My love! my love! I would serve twice seven years, as Jacob did, in this wild region for the sake of winning that coveted confession from your dear lips. My mountain queen! and you will soon be my wife?"

But Virgie sat up suddenly at this and pushed him from her with gentle force, a frightened look in her eyes. Oh, what have I done? I am afraid I have done wrong!" she cried.

"Wrong, dearest, in confessing that you love me!" Sir William whispered, as he tried to draw her again into his arms.

"But you do not know—I have no right to tell you; no—no, I am afraid I ought not to be your wife," she said, remembering, with a sense of shame and misery, the stigma resting upon her name.

The young man regarded her anxiously for a moment; he understood it all.

"Virgie," he said, "you need not fear to promise all that I ask, for I know what troubles you. I asked your father's sanction before I came to you, and he told me all his sad story. But it need be no barrier to our happiness. I told him so, and he gave you to me—providing I could win you—with his blessing."

Virgie lifted her face, all radiant with a sweet new joy, a sense of exultation in her heart.

"And you were willing——" she began, wondering at the great love that could thus level what she had feared would be an insurmountable barrier.

"Willing, love, to make myself the happiest man on earth," he interrupted, in a voice that actually trembled with joy, "What Mr. Abbot told me does not affect your worth or character, nor his either, and some time I believe the wrong will be made all right. Even if the facts were more serious than they are, they need not trouble us, for I could take you far away from every breath of evil, and as my wife it could never touch you. So you will give yourself to me, Virgie?"

"Yes," she answered with grave sweetness; "if papa thinks it is right, I cannot put my cup of happiness away untasted."

Sir William Heath bent and touched the beautiful girl's lips with his first lover's kiss.

My beloved," he said, "life looks to me now like one long vista of happiness—may it prove so to both of us."

They sat there beneath the shadow of the great pine for more than an hour; weaving bright plans for the future, while the twilight gathered round them. But as yet William had not told his beloved who he was, nor of the long title awaiting her when she should become his wife. Somehow, he strangely reluctant to do so.

Once he had spoken of his home, and Virgie looked up with sudden interest, and asked:

"Where is your home, Mr. Heath?"

An amused smile played about his lips at her question.

"My friends—that is those who love me—call me 'Will,' there," he said, significantly; "and surely, darling you need not treat me with so much formality. Do not call me Mr. Heath any more, Virgie."

"Please tell me where your home is to be—Will," she said, looking up at him with a shy smile, and blushing as the newly spoken name left her lips.

He bent and touched them fondly with his own.

"Je Englaud, love," he returned.

"England!"

"Yes. Shall you regret leaving your own country?"

"No; I think I shall be glad," Virgie answered, with a little sigh of content and relief.

Sir William looked gratified.

"Shall I describe our home to you?" he asked, thinking that perhaps now would be as good a time as any to tell more about himself and what her future position would be.

"Yes, do, please."

"Well, then, imagine a large, old mansion, with many turrets and gables, its time-worn stones grown with ivy and moss, and set in the midst of extensive grounds, with grand, beautiful trees scattered all about. There is a great hall in the center of the house, with spacious rooms on either hand. At the end of this hall is the library, with two large bay-windows overlooking a winding river, which is the pride and glory of the place, and where we sail, and bathe, and fish during the summer months. Over the library there is a lovely suite of rooms, commanding a wide expanse of meadow and upland—a scene that is like a picture all the time—which will henceforth be devoted to the use of the future lady—of Heathdale."

"Heathdale! What a pretty name!" Virgie cried, but still unsuspicious of the title which would become hers when she should go with him as his wife to England, although he had almost given utterance to it, then hesitated, and substituted those last two words.

"Yes, it is a pretty name, and, Virgie, the place is the pride of my heart. At some distance from the mansion there the stables and kennels, where the horses and dogs abide."

"Why, Mr—— Why, Will, what an extensive establishment! You must have——" Virgie began in a tone of surprise, then stopped in confusion.

"Well, I must have what?" he asked.

"A great deal of money to support such a place," she replied, flushing.

"And is there anything very alarming about that?" he questioned, with a quiet smile.

"No; but—I thought——"

"You thought that I could not have much of this world's goods since I had come here to work a mine," Sir William said, completing her sentence, "But, darling, all that was only a ruse; I have been working more for my wife than for gold."

"Will!"

"Darling, it is true; that was my only reason for becoming the purchaser of your father's interest here. I saw you; I loved you; I must have some good excuse for tarrying near you to try to win you; and now that I have attained my object, the mine will have to be disposed of, as I have no further use for it."

Virgie regarded him with astonishment. She had never suspected anything like this.

"How strange," she said with a beautiful flush. "I have thought it almost unaccountable that a man like you should come here to remain. I have imagined that you were an author or a student, and might be investigating the formation of the mountains or studying character in order to write a book, but I never dreamed of anything like this."

Sir William laughed heartily.

"You were making me out to be quite a lofty character, truly," he said; "and now you find your hero only a very human being after all—one who, for the sake of a beautiful woman, has been almost willing to barter his birthright. Have I fallen very low in your estimation, Virgie, because I am not to become a distinguished public benefactor on account of my research and investigation? Has my confession shocked you very much?"

"Your confession has made me a very, very happy woman," Virgie whispered, slipping her hand confidingly into his, her heart thrilled with a tender pride and love that this great man should have sacrificed so much to win her.

"And I am exceedingly proud of this happy woman," returned Sir William, fondly, "I shall take the loveliest bride in the world back with me when we go home to Heathdale."

"Where you will be Lady Heath my Virgie. Ah, I am very thankful that my child will occupy so proud a position in life," said the voice of Mr. Abbot just behind them.

He had come out to seek them, and had approached just as Sir William uttered these last words.

"Lady Heath!" exclaimed Virgie, starting up and turning a very astonished face first upon one and then the other. "What do you mean? I do not understand."

"Haven't you told her?" Mr. Abbot asked of the young man.

Sir William shook his head, with a smile.

"Tell me what, papa?"

"That our friend here is Sir William Heath, of Heathdale, and an English baronet."

Virgie stood in wondering silence for a moment, her face flushed and drooping, while a hundred thoughts flashed through her mind.

Her lover a titled peer of England! This noble man, who might have chosen his wife from the nobility of his own country, had concealed his identity, had buried himself in the wilds of Nevada, and lived like a common miner simply to win her, an humble mountain maiden. He who belonged to an honored race, and possessed both title and wealth, had overlooked the fact that a heavy cloud enshrouded her own and her father's name, and was willing to lift her to the proud position of his wife and the mistress of his beautiful home. These and many other thoughts held her speechless, and made her tremble with something of fear that in the future he might regret it all, and wish that he had never seen her.

"I am afraid I am not fitted——" she at length faltered.

"In point of education, Virgie, you are fitted for the proudest position that could be offered you," her father returned, with some spirit. "All that you need is a trifle more of worldly polish, which you will readily gain as Sir William takes you into society, and I am proud to give you to him. God bless you both, my children."

His voice broke.

He would have been glad to go with her to the scenes of her new life, to watch her develop in a brighter atmosphere and see her hapiness in her proud position. But he knew it could not be; and overcome, for the moment, with the thought of the separation which must soon come, he turned abruptly away and went feebly back to the cottage.

(To be Continued.)

The great value of Hood's Sarsaparilla as a remedy for catarrh is vouched for by thousands of people whom it has cured.

Roosters are a good deal like men. A rooster never gives notice of finding a worm until after he has swallowed it.

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The great lung healer is found in the excellent medicine sold as Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup It soothes and diminishes the sensibility of the membrane of the throat and air passages and is a sovereign remedy for all coughs, colds, hoarseness, pain or soreness in the chest, bronchitis, etc. It has cured many when supposed to be far advanced in consumption.

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THE OPEN FORUM.

Ex-Mayor Macdonald on Ward Reduction.

To the Editor of the ADVERTISER:

Having for a number of years been connected with municipal affairs, I trust you will pardon my now trespassing on your columns in asking to be allowed an opportunity of expressing my views in regard to the bylaw proposing the reduction of wards to four in number—a proposition in my opinion that is retrogressive, utterly uncalled for, and against the best interests of the city. Until I read in your paper of Wednesday evening I was not aware that the bylaw had gone beyond an introduction in the council; true, I was aware the subject had been mooted, but that like many another fad of a similar nature, if not strangled at its birth, had been allowed to die a silent death. The proposal to enlarge the area of the wards by reducing their number is fraught with danger, as it would be the means of centralizing the voting power in the thickly settled business portion of the city, and practically shut out the outside wards or portions of wards from any voice in controlling the election of representatives to the City Council, which would be manifestly unjust to those living outside the magic ring easily to be formed did the bylaw as proposed become law. As an illustration showing the unfairness of the proposition—a person having no landed interest in the city has a place of business in one ward, of which he is the tenant; a branch across the street of which he is also a tenant; a residence in another ward, where he is tenant as well, and again a stable or a peanut stand in another ward, close by—tenant also; this person, as I have stated, would have votes for the whole twelve aldermen under the Municipal Act, as it now stands. While the mechanic, workman, employe or others owning their own residences and land in any one ward would only have one voice in the selection of aldermen or trustees, the party having no landed interest would have, as in were, four voices in making the selection, the first party having interests at stake it the welfare of the city, anchored here as it were, while the other, a mere bird of passage, can flit away at any time, where circumstances or necessities may lead him. True, it may be said that now tenants have these several votes, but the wards being so far divided, there does not exist the same chances, as if the wards were contiguous, as proposed. The wards are large enough in all conscience as at present arranged; larger, indeed, than the aldermen can properly attend to in the interests of their constituents; so that the idea of increasing the members' duties to one-fourth of the city is one that will not commend itself to any alderman who really wishes to do his duty. And this is not all. Many a thing occurs in the ward requiring immediate attention, and if a person, say after quitting work in the evening, has to travel from Dan to Beersheba to find his representative, and then as likely as not fail to find him, it is anything but pleasant for the anxious constituent. My idea is that all aldermen should be residents of the ward they represent. I presume, from what I have read on the subject, the great desire of the people is to reduce the number of representatives. If so, well and good, but why not take some plain, sensible and equitable method to accomplish this end? Why not reduce the number of aldermen in each ward to two instead of three, as at present? Nothing could be easier. Elect the aldermen for two years at a time, one-half the council going out annually. By this means new blood could be introduced when considered necessary, as a check on any wrong-doing that might be supposed to exist. We would have the benefit of experienced representatives, the outside and other wards would be fairly dealt by and the danger of "combines" or "rings" avoided, the formation of which the adoption of the present bylaw appears eminently to be suited for. I would therefor urge that the proposed bylaw be voted down by those having the real interests of the city at heart; else, perhaps, when it is too late, we will find ourselves bound to a system which ultimately will cause trouble and dissatisfaction.

The introduction of this bylaw at the present time is most unfortunate, I mean while the amalgamation of London West is new pending, and if barriers are not placed in the way may be considered as a fixed fact; while in the face of this bylaw the opponents of amalgamation will make a handle of this four ward business to defeat the scheme of annexation, and I fear they will be successful, for others besides myself, believing in the unity of the city and village as of mutual advantage, cannot with any degree of consistency concede to practical disfranchisement, which would be the case should the four ward scheme be carried amid the host of bylaws to be voted upon on 2nd January. The grain may be lost in the bushel of chaff, so parties should be extremely cautious how they mark their ballots. This bylaw is not one that requires immediate consideration, and I think the council would do well to withdraw it at the present time and let the matter be well ventilated before it is too late. Again apologizing for trespassing on your columns, I am, truly yours. D. C. MACDONALD.

London, Dec. 22, 1892.

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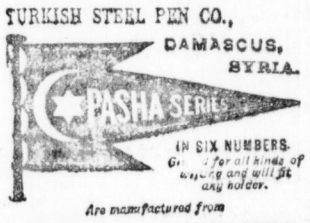

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