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# Uncle Terry

By  
**CHARLES CLARK MUNN**

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**T**WO days of Alice's visitation passed like a summer breeze. The first day they drove to the old mill and spent the entire forenoon gathering lilies and watching the great wheel that dripped and clattered between its moss grown walls. It was a curiosity to Blanch, for never in her life had she seen one of those old time landmarks, now so rare. That afternoon they drove to the mountain's top and saw the sunset, only to be late home to Aunt Susan's tea biscuit and cold chicken, and having a surprising appetite. The next day they made a picnic trip to another mountain, leaving the horse halfway up and walking the rest of the way. At noon they returned, and beside a cold spring that bubbled beneath a rock they opened their lunch baskets. Then they picked flowers, hunted for wintergreen and decked the horse and wagon with ferns and wreaths of laurel—only simple country pleasures, it is true, but they at least had the charm of newness for two of the party. That evening they sang all sorts of songs from gospel hymns to comic operas, and Blanch showed in so many ways that she admired her new found friend that there was no further restraint.

"I wish you would stay with me until my school begins, Blanch," said Alice at the close of the evening. "If you knew how lonely I am, I am sure you would."

"I might be persuaded to make a longer visit next summer," was the answer, "if you will return this visit next winter. Will you?"

"I won't promise now," answered Alice. "I am afraid I should be out of place in your society. I'm only a country girl, you know."

"I shall feel hurt if you don't," responded Blanch.

"I should like to see that schoolhouse Frank has spoken of several times," she said a little later, "and that barefoot girl he told about."

It was the first allusion to his interest in her that Blanch had made, and Alice colored.

"We will drive by where that girl lives tomorrow," responded Alice, "and, if you like, will call and see her. She is the most original little old woman in my school."

The next morning, when Frank and his sister were alone for a few moments, she said, "I am going to do you a good turn today, Sir Mahomet, and have a headache," and, laughing a little, "if you are wise you will improve your opportunities and persuade your 'Sweet Alice' to go after pond lilies and leave me here."

"I could not think of going after lilies," Alice replied when he proposed the trip, "and leaving your sister alone, and then it is almost too warm to be out in the sun this morning. If she feels better this afternoon we will go there when the sun gets part way down."

Blanch kept quiet all the morning and after dinner was the first to propose another trip to the lily pond. "I am in love with that old mill," she said, "and I want to see it when the sun gets down so it will be shady there."

When they reached the spot she at once developed an unusual interest in the mill and began an animated conversation with the miller regarding it and its history.

"You two go after lilies," she said when Frank had the boat ready, "and leave me here. I'm afraid the sun on the water will bring back my headache."

"All right, only your smiles will be wasted on the miller. He is too old to appreciate them. We won't be gone long," said Alice as she stepped into the boat. And now what spirit of mischief had come over her? She joked

and jested on all manner of subjects—the boat, his rowing, Blanch's interest in the miller—and her blue eyes sparkled with roguish intent. She bared one round arm to the elbow and, pulling every bud and blossom she could reach, pelted her cavalier with them.

"Did you learn that stroke at college," she asked when one of his oars slipped, "or is that the way a yachtsman always rows?"

In response to all this he said but little, for he was thinking how best to say what was on his mind. He headed the boat for the shore, and as it came to a stop he said: "Let's get out and sit on the bank, Miss Page. I want to rest."

"Oh, we must not stop. It's almost sundown, and, besides, I want more lilies."

"Won't you get out, Miss Page?" he asked. "I've something I want to say to you and—and it's nice to sit in the shade and talk."

Without a word or even a look she arose and, taking his proffered hand,



"Tell me, Alice," he pleaded,

stepped out of the boat. Only a few steps up a mossy bank offered its temptation, and with quick gallantry he drew his coat off and spread it for her to sit upon.

"It's nice and cool here," she said, "but we must not stay long. Blanch will be waiting."

Frank had thought many times of what he would say and how he would say it, but now that the critical moment had come his well chosen words vanished. He had remained standing and for a moment looked at Alice as she sat with hat hidden face, and then his heart-burst came.

"Miss Page," he said in a low voice, "you must know what I want to say, and—and I've come all the way from Maine to say it, and can you—is there any hope for me? Is there just a little?"

He paused, but no answer came, only he head sank a trifle lower, and now even the tip of her chin was invisible beneath the hat. It may be the movement emboldened him, for in an instant he was beside her on the ground and had one hand a prisoner.

"Tell me, Alice," he pleaded, "is there any chance for me? Say just one word—only one! Say 'yes!'"

The prisoner hand was at his lips now, and then she raised her face, and—oh, divine sight!—those blue eyes were filled with tears.

One instant flash of heaven only, and then a change came. She arose quickly and, turning away, said half pettishly: "Oh, please don't speak of that now and spoil our visit. Let us go back to the mill."

But still he held the little hand, and as she tried to draw it away he said pitifully: "Do you mean it, Alice? Is it no? Oh, don't let me go away without one word of hope!"

Then she raised her one free arm and, resting it against a nearby tree, pressed her face upon it and almost whispered: "Oh, don't ask me now! I can't say 'yes,' and I can't say 'no.'"

"I shall believe that your heart says 'yes,'" he responded quickly, slipping one arm around her waist, "and until you do say 'no' I shall keep on loving you just the same."

She drew herself away and, turning a piteous face toward him, exclaimed, "Don't, please, say another word now, or I shall hate myself as long as I live if you do."

For one moment he stood dumfounded, and then it dawned upon him. "Forgive me, sweet Alice, he said softly, "for speaking too soon. I believe I know why you feel as you do, and I shall go away hoping that in time you will come to know my mother better. And since you have said that you can't say 'no,' I shall anticipate that some time it will be 'yes.' Now we will go and gather lilies."

Then, as he led her to the boat, his arm once more stole around her waist, and this time she did not try to escape its pressure.

When, two days afterward, the brother and sister were ready to depart, Blanch put one arm caressingly around Alice and whispered, "Now, remember, you have promised to make me a visit

next winter, and you must keep your promise."

And poor Romeo, standing by, had to look the love that was in his heart while he envied his sister her parting kiss.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

**W**HEN Frank and his sister were away from Sandgate she said: "Well, my dear Ben Bolt, did you capture sweet Alice that afternoon? You must have made an effort for she showed it plainly."

"No, I did not," he answered frankly, "but I made a break, and as she didn't take it amiss I feel hopeful. The fact is, sis, she is the most proud spirited girl I ever met, and mother is the ogre that stands in the way. If mother approves of Alice I am all right, but if she doesn't receive her with open arms it's all day with me."

"I could have told you that the day after we arrived there," answered Blanch, "and I am not surprised. Now—with a laugh—"you must court mamma for a few months as well as your pretty Alice. It will do you good, for you never have been over-dutiful."

Frank frowned. "Oh, bother these snicky mothers!" he exclaimed. "Why will they turn up their noses at every poor girl? If Alice had rich parents she would be all right, no matter if she were as homely as a hedge fence."

"Maybe that's so," answered Blanch, "but you can't change mamma, and if you want to win your Alice you must do as I tell you and court mamma. Now, I will tell you what to do, and if you're good to me I'll help you do it. In the first place you must stay in the mountains until we go home, and do all you can to please mother. Take her driving, ask her to play whist with you, and when she makes a good play praise it; carry her wraps for her, be solicitous about her welfare and comfort in all things, and treat her just as if she were Alice instead of mamma. Then when she is well cared for, act downcast at times and depressed. Wait a few days before working the melancholy act, and don't say much to other girls. Dance with Edie and me and say sweet things to mamma for a week. Then some day take her out for a drive and act as if you had lost your last friend. She will inevitably ask what ails you, but don't tell her too quickly. Let her coax you a little, and after awhile make a clean breast of it."

"I would suggest you insinuate the girl has favored your suit, but has practically said 'no' because she is so proud to marry into a rich family. That will do more to pique mamma's interest in the matter than volumes of praise for Alice. Don't say too much, but if she questions you about her answer frankly to the point, but convey the impression that you consider your cause hopeless, and leave the rest to me."

Frank looked at his sister in silent admiration. "I didn't know you had such a wise head on your shoulders," he said at last.

(To Be Continued.)

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