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THEY MET BY CHANCE.

BY W. H. WILLIAMS.

"Your Aunt Caroline and Cousin Jennie

will be here on the next train, Russell,"

said Mr. Wilder to his nephew. "You

had better take the pony chase and bring

them from the depot."

"Can't. Am going away myself, sir."

"The deuce you are!" responded the old

gentleman, pushing his spectacles over

his forehead and regarding his nephew

with an air of surprised consternation.

"Yes, sir. Charley Hunt invited me

out to his place for a few weeks, and I

thought that I might as well go now as any

time."

"It should say that it was a very strange

time to be leaving home. Your aunt and

cousin will consider it a personal affront,

sir."

"It is not intended as such, sir. Thought

to be frank, considering the object of Cousin

Jennie's visit, I prefer not to see her.

And I must say that she would have shown

more sense and delicacy if she had stayed

away."

"Your cousin is a very lively girl, Mr.

Impudens, and won't be likely to go a-

bagging."

"I don't doubt it in the least. But, for

all that, she won't suit me for a wife,

uncle."

"How do you know that, you conceited

young dog, when you have never seen

her?" enquired the irate old man, bring-

ing his cane down upon the floor with

startling emphasis.

"Common sense teaches us that no mar-

riage can be a happy one that does not

spring from mutual love. And on one

thing I am resolved—that I will never

marry from mercenary motives."

"Nobody wants you to marry the girl

you like her," roared Mr. Wilder, his

face growing purple with rage and ve-

hementation at his nephew's perversity. "All I

ask is that you will stay and see her. And

this is a point I insist upon—yes, sir, I

insist upon it!"

"I am sorry to disobey you, uncle; but

if I should stay it will only give rise to

conclusions that I am anxious to avoid.

But I tell you what, I will re-

linquish all claims to the property you are

so anxious should not be divided. As that

seems to be the main object, I think that

it ought to be satisfactory to all parties."

A few minutes later Russell passed by

the window, raised in hand.

He nodded good humoredly to his uncle

as he glanced in, who glared after him in

speechless rage.

"He shan't have a penny—not a penny!"

he growled as, sinking back in his chair,

he wiped the perspiration from his fore-

head.

"What's the matter now?" said the

gentle voice of his wife Polly, who had

just entered the room.

"Matter enough, I should say. Russell

who your companion was I thought you

were out on your wedding tour."

"No, indeed; never saw the man until

he got into the stage at 11—But, really,

he is the finest looking man I ever saw,

and so agreeable. Who is he?"

"Oh, I'll introduce you when he comes

dinner to-day. I shan't wait for the tea-

tray about supper. You'll have only time

to dress. Mind and look your prettiest."

"And with a roguish shake of his finger

at her friend Nellie ran away to see about

the supper. If Jennie did not "look her

prettiest" she certainly looked very lovely

as she entered the supper room, her linen

suit exchanged for a fresh, soft muslin,

whose simplicity and purity were relieved

by the violet-colored ribbons in the hair

and throat. Russell had also taken great

pains with his toilet, as could be seen by

his spotless linen and carefully arranged

hair. This pause that followed Jennie's

entrance was broken by Mr. Hunt, who,

in response to a meaning glance from his

wife, said:

"Russell! allow me to introduce you to

your cousin, Jennie; Miss Carleton, your

cousin, Russell Wilder."

The embarrassment which followed the

blank astonishment into which this an-

ouncement threw the parties, so unex-

pectedly made known to each other, was

quickly dispelled by the turn that was

given it by their host and hostess.

"I suppose you'll want to look yourself

up for the next stage," said Mr. Hunt, sly-

ly to Russell, who had been talking into

friend's ear so long.

"I don't see," said his wife, turning to

Jennie, "I don't suppose anything could

tempt you to remain, now that you are to

have that hateful, fat, roguish—"

"Nellie!" interrupted Jennie, crimson-

ing, as she remembered her words.

"Well, I won't then. But you must let

me laugh. Just to think of you both run-

ning away from each other and returning

in the same direction and to the same place!

The ringing laugh that burst from Nellie's

lips was too contagious to be resisted even

by those at whose expense it was raised.

This merriment was followed by a gen-

eral good feeling, and a pleasant tea

party never gathered around the social

board. We need hardly say that Russell

did not take the stage next morning, nor

did Jennie seem at all disposed to cut

short her visit on account of her cousin's

unexpected appearance. When they did

go they went as they came together. Mr.

Wilder's astonishment was only equalled

by his delight, on looking out of the win-

dow to see the two walking up the path

toward the house, arm in arm, and ap-

parently on the best of terms.

As for Russell and Jennie they seemed

to regard this unexpected meeting as an

indication of their "manifest destiny,"

accepting it as such, much to the joy of

their uncle, whose darling wish was accom-

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