

"In which case I might find my Greek and Latin useful, notwithstanding my previous doubts of its utility."

"And still fail to come off the victor, Master Tom; for what I lack in variety, I might requite in quantity. So beware." Saying which she went into the kitchen.

It was nearly twelve o'clock that night when a valise received the last article. When Tom saw that there was no need to resort to paper parcels, he said: "Well, mother, you've taught me how to pack anyway."

The following day they were to leave Toronto. On their arrival at the Union Depot they found waiting for them on the platform, besides a few family friends, a vociferous crowd of students, who kept them busy, until the starting of the train, shaking hands, and treated the public ear to a medley of college songs, sung with such gusto that left no room for doubt that Tom was a favorite with his classmates.

At Montreal they connected with the Allan Line steamer *Parisian*, which, after an ordinary voyage, landed them at Liverpool, whence they took train to Plymouth, driving from there to Edenvale.

At their destination, Tom was made acquainted with his aunt and uncle and their niece, a vivacious young lady of his own age, who, since the death of her parents, had shared their hospitality and protection.

A few days served to effect on intimacy between the young couple, which sanctioned the use of the familiar abbreviations of their names—Nel and Tom—and they became, as Tom expressed it, "good chums."

Dame Nature had not withheld from Tom Twitchett his share of good looks, or of affable manners; moreover, he carried himself with a manly, independent grace and was a genial, jolly fellow to boot. Consequently he had many friends, and Nellie Jeffrey was one of the number whom his sociability and good nature drew to him. He could sing a good song when he liked with that musical baritone voice of his, and it was invariably one with a rousing chorus to it, in which he insisted everyone present should join. Nellie also had a pleasing voice, and sang alto in the choir of the Episcopal Church. She had heard her "cousin Tom" trollying snatches of college songs about the house, so she made up her mind that he should accompany her to the next choir practice in the school-room. Tom, nothing loth, was willing to blow the organ if she wished him to do so; Nellie therefore impressed him into the choral service of the parish church.

So on the evening when the choir met weekly to rehearse the hymns and anthems for the following Sunday, Tom went with "Cousin Nel," was introduced all round as her "Canadian Cousin," and was soon on good terms with each. He was not a little flattered that all the girls insisted upon his joining the choir for the period of his sojourn in the village; but, more than all else, he was gratified by a few words of praise in regard to his vocal powers which Miss Fairweather, the organist, had remarked aside to Nellie, and which she repeated to him on the way home.

"A fine girl, Miss Fairweather. Seems to be very modest and retiring—bashful even," he commented.

"She's 'the pink of perfection'—sincerity personified in fact. All the girls like her, and the gentlemen, too, for the matter of that, but she makes them keep their distance."

"Yet she doesn't seem prudish."

"A girl can be reserved without being prudish, you know."

"That's so."

"She's a dear girl—my most intimate friend. By the way, she's coming to take tea with us on Thursday next."

"Is that so? I am very glad of that, for I want to get better acquainted with her."

"Now, Tom, you need not get so interested; it's no use. She has had several good offers, it is currently reported, but she's still 'heart-whole and fancy free,' and, to the best of my knowledge, she intends to remain so. She is not like other girls. She's so devoted to her mother, who is an invalid and a widow, that I believe she thinks it would be a sin to harbor matrimonial considerations in her mind. If the idea got abroad that she was willing to marry, the whole bachelor population of this village would fall at her feet and beg her to take her pick."

"So you don't think I would stand any show?"

"No, you would not stand *any* show, as you say."

"Pshaw! Nel, you're sentimental," said Tom, laughing outright.

"Wait until Thursday and see who'll be sentimental *then*, Mr. Stoic."

"I'd just like mother to hear you talking about me getting married, she'd go for you pretty lively for putting such precocious notions into the head of a young saw-bones who has never yet physicked a man for a fee."

"Well, now, that's the very thing I'm trying to dissuade you from."

"I protest against your diagnosis of my case; you want to prescribe before I am sick."

"You're worse than you think you are, Tom; when I introduced you to Fanny Fairweather I saw, from your eyes, that your case was hopeless."

"Great Scott! In this country you surely don't expect a fellow to be booked for matrimony as soon as he has said 'How d'ye do?' to a girl?"

"Not exactly; but you know every disease has its peculiar symptoms."

"Come, Nel, no quackery. You needn't try to foist upon me some patent nostrum for the cure of broken-heartedness because I happened to look cross-eyed at Miss Fairweather this evening. Nellie Jeffrey's world-renowned Anti-Heart Disease, warranted to restore to its normal shape and action the broken heart, however badly shattered. Or maybe this would be more striking: £5,000 reward for the worst case of broken heart that Dr. Jeffrey's Unparalleled Dissuasion will not heal! Take me in as partner, Nel, and I'll furnish all the testimonials you want."

"You cannot change my opinion with ridicule. 'He laughs best who laughs last!'"

"Joking aside, Nel, I admire her devotion to her mother, it bespeaks for her a genuine, self-sacrificing disposition."

"Wait until Thursday evening, Tom."

"Say, look here, Nellie Jeffrey! There was an inelegant expression in vogue among the boys when I left college, which was both *thrice* and cutting. It was used as a verbal missile to hurl at the promulgator of a stale joke. It was simply 'Chestnuts!' Now, Nellie, don't tempt me to utter slang."

"What a queer expression."

"It *is* a queer expression. So beware."

"But I only said, and I reiterate: Wait till Thursday."

"*Chestnuts!*"

"How dare you? I'll box your ears for that. Take that, now," and she boxed his ears, and they both laughed heartily.