









**A YOUNG SCHEMER.**

"Yes, I am sure that would be the best plan," mused Jean Scott aloud, clasping her hands around her knees, and looking up through the trees at a little patch of clear sky shining down between the leaves. "Mr. Stuart is rich and handsome," she said, "and he is just what I need. Phoebe ought to marry him. He must do it—and let that stupid old Barnard go. I am sure—positively sure, Victor Stuart would suit her best, and I will make the match."

It was Sunday afternoon, and Jean was out under a big oak tree in the front yard. A book lay on the grass beside her, and a little cripped chicken, rescued from the horse lot, nestled in a fold of her buff linen gown.

She was a supple, slender girl, olive-skinned, grey-eyed and black-haired, and just bordering on 18.

With the calm confidence of inexperience and positive ignorance, she had made up her mind to meddle in a very delicate matter—namely a love affair.

The Scotts were country people, owned a good farm and lived comfortably, and John Barnard, a neighboring farmer, had long loved Phoebe, the eldest daughter of the house, and a very pretty girl of 20.

The matter had not disturbed Jean until two things occurred. Her father suffered some reverses of fortune, and Victor came up from New Orleans.

She felt peculiarly grateful to him, for he was not only young, handsome and rich, but he had also saved her life on a certain occasion, when she had been more reckless than when in running a horse-race with her brother.

Her pony took it into his head to run away, and Miss Jean's white neck might have been broken had it not been for the timely appearance of Mr. Stuart, who threw himself in front of the unruly horse and checked him.

At least the Scotts did not see anything of him.

"What is the matter, Phoebe?" Jean inquired tenderly.

"Nothing at all," "Are you troubled—about—about—John?" dragging the words out hesitatingly.

"Well, I am sorry you wounded the feelings of one who has always been our friend."

"So am I, but I did it for your good. I promise you I will never meddle again."

"Why did you do it?" curiously.

"And then Jean made a clean confession of her match-making."

"But, of course, if you intend to grieve your eyes out about John Barnard, I give up the whole affair."

"Oh, you blind, silly child. What is for me than any other indifferent acquaintance. Do you think he loves me?"

They have not made more on the average than \$7 per week this year and must have more money.

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