

AT CROSS PURPOSES.

Felicia was planting flower seeds in the front yard after supper, when Peter Lemmon drew up his old sorrel nag close to the fence.

"Evenin', Felicity! I see comin' long that your garden's back'ard an' yer crops not as for'ard as they might be. Your sister Marshy might ha' done better than git Pierce Manson to manage the farm. It ought to perduce morn' it does." He leaned over the fence and spoke in a lower tone. "Felicity, I want to have a talk with you. Have yer some time. Now, if I come over tomorrow—Sunday—couldn't I speak to you?"

"I suppose so," she struggled to say, with a lump in her throat.

"All right, I think a lot of you, though ye might not have noticed it, Felicity," and with that he rode away, leaving her greatly bewildered.

She had seen the girls in the neighborhood, one after another, engaged and married, and become mistress of their own homes, until she had begun to look upon herself as an old maid, and to think with a sigh that no such happy fortune awaited her.

And yet, here at last, was a lover! She had noticed that of late Mr. Peter Lemmon had several times come to the house and seemed inclined to be friendly with her, though, until his own words and looks just now, it never occurred to her that his visits had any reference to herself, and Marcia had said that he came on business.

She could not marry him. Oh, no! she could never bring herself to that; but it was something to know that at last she had a beau, and that it was in her power to accept or refuse an offer of marriage.

Presently she walked slowly toward the house. Marcia was in the back porch, washing her hands in a tin basin that stood there.

"What was he talking about?" she asked in her usual abrupt straightforward way.

"About the crops and"—Felicia could not prevent the color rushing into her face. "He said he would be over tomorrow evening."

Marcia gave her a curious look, and then broke out in a short, sarcastic laugh.

"Well, I do declare!" she said, and without another word she turned away.

Felicia looked after her resentfully. Why should she laugh? Was it at the idea of her having a beau or of that beau being Mr. Peter Lemmon? Certainly he was not a lover that a girl would be proud of—with his long lank figure, hooked nose, sallow skin and little cunning gray eyes, to say nothing of his shabby style of dress and his reputation for stinginess; but he was a religious man of good standing, and owned the best farm in the neighborhood, adjoining their own and Marcia had no right to laugh at him or herself!

Upstairs at the open window of her room, she could hear Marcia and Pierce Manson talking on the porch below.

Pierce always before going home for the evening would sit a while on the porch talking to the sisters about farm matters and other subjects.

Felicia noticed of late that Marcia, hard and sharp with everyone else, was not so with Pierce Manson.

He was five years younger than she, good looking and manly; but Marcia, who had been jilted in her youth, and had since pretended to despise all men, was still a handsome woman, and some men, while afraid of her temper, admired her beauty.

"What do you think?" she said to Pierce. "Felicity thinks she has caught a beau. She says Mr. Lemmon's coming to see her tomorrow."

"Old Peter Lemmon? Why, it's absurd!"

"I don't see it. He's got money and a fine farm, and stands as high as anybody hereabout. It would be a first rate thing for Felicia."

"You don't think she would marry him?"

"She would if she could. I believe she would marry anyone to get away from here. She wants a home where she can have her own way."

There was a moment's silence, and Pierce said:—

"What would you do if she should leave you? You couldn't get along by yourself here."

"Oh, I'd risk it!"

Pierce crossed the porch and took a seat on the bench where Marcia was sitting. Felicia could see them both from her window.

"Marcia," he said with a little embarrassment. "I want to say something to you—to ask you a question."

"Very well," she answered, taking up the cat and stroking it.

But the animal, unaccustomed to such friendly attention from her, sprang away and fled up to Felicia's room.

"What was it you wanted to say?" said Marcia.

And Pierce moved up a little nearer her on the bench.

"I wanted to till you that—to ask you whether—if—"

At that moment a voice was heard, calling from the road, and Pierce rose. "It is father," he said. "He told me he would come by for me in the buggy. But, Marcia, if I come over tomorrow evening can't I speak to you then?"

The very words almost that Peter Lemmon had spoken to Felicia!

The girl drew back with a strange, sharp pang at her heart. Until this moment she had not known how much Pierce was to her, and hot tears sprang into her eyes.

She felt herself seized with a sudden reckless desperation, and whereas, a moment before, she had shuddered at

the thought of becoming Peter Lemmon's wife, she now firmly made up her mind to marry him.

Sunday, true to his appointment, M. Lemmon called. Felicia, who had been watching from her window, met him at the door and showed him into the stiff parlor.

As she passed the kitchen door she heard the voice of Pierce Manson within, but he was speaking in a tone too low for his words to reach her.

"Felicity," said Mr. Lemmon, hitching his chair close to her. "I want to tell you that I've been thinking about you, and the way you're living here with Marshy. I've about concluded that somebody oughter be lookin' after you and your interests. Half the farm and property's yours, ain't it?"

She edged away from him a little and averted her face, that she might not see the sallow visage and sharp, greedy looking eyes. A thought of Pierce's clear, hazel eyes came to her.

"Yes," she answered coldly. "I've left everything equally divided between us."

"Then why don't you *cash* your sheer?"

"I don't know. I've never thought much about it. Marcia manages and I wouldn't know how to do it. We're obliged to live together."

"I'll tell you what's the best thing you can do, Felicity. Have the farm equally divided, and sell or rent out your sheer. I'm willing to take it at a fair valuation. And as to livin' I can offer you a good home away from Marshy, where you can manage and do as you please. I want to make this bargain with you unbeknownst to Marshy. Listen to me, dear."

Felicia shuddered as he thrust forward his unattractive face and laid his hand on her arm. She could bear it no longer.

"I think I hear Marcia coming," she said, hastily rising and going to the door.

She had indeed heard the kitchen door open and shut, and as she slipped into the passage she met Marcia face to face.

"Oh, please go into the parlor and talk to Mr. Lemmon please do!" implored Felicia. "I—I can't bear it."

"Fool!" said Marcia contemptuously. "To think that he wanted to marry you! I know what he's after, though he's keeping it from me. He wants to cheat you out of your land and get you to live with his old idiot aunt, and tend her on like a slave. Why, you blind bat! I and Peter Lemmon have been engaged these two weeks!"

Felicia stood as if stunned.

"Don't stand there staring like a fool!" said Marcia fiercely. "Go into the kitchen; Pierce Manson wants you."

She mechanically obeyed.

As she opened the door, Pierce—who was standing in the middle of the floor—advanced and held out his hand. The sudden change from Marcia's bitterness to his kind and almost tender look overcame Felicia, and she burst into tears.

The next moment she felt his arms about her, and in the following moment, all that she could ever distinctly remember of his words was:—

"And you did not know dear, that I loved you all along? And I was not sure that you cared for me. I had to ask Marcia."

In her little room that night, Felicia wondered if she could be the same girl who had stood there a few hours before watching for Mr. Peter Lemmon. She had a lover now after her own heart, and she had promised to marry him the day on which Marcia would marry Peter Lemmon and go away to her new home.

But she could not help wondering whether, if Pierce had proposed to Marcia as she had evidently expected, Marcia would ever have become Mrs. Peter Lemmon.

IN LIGHTER VEIN.

If it is true that male mosquitoes do not bite, a good many of them have been put out of business by mistake.

Many a good man has got freckles on his reputation by carrying molasses home in a demijohn.

A wise man doesn't encourage indolence in others by doing their work.

HIS BUSINESS.



She—Your brother, the photographer, is getting stout.

He—Yes, he's developing rapidly.

The wind is seldom tempered to suit the short Wall street lamb.

A FALSE ALARM.



Now, bub, you trot right along and fetch old Santy out some turkey or I won't climb down your chimney on Christmas.

Easy-going men usually go the wrong way.

TO BE CONGRATULATED.



Miss Passaye—Yes, I am really engaged to Mr. Oldum. He proposed to me last night at the hop.

Miss R. Caste—And you accepted him on the jump! Allow me to congratulate you.

AFTER THE WRECK.



Samford—I can't understand how a great iron monster like that engine could be crushed like an egg!

Merton—You must remember the locomotive's tender, old man.

Our Melodorous Face.

It is certain that primitive nations have a much keener sense of smell than the members of a highly civilized race. With civilization and the habit of living in an artificial manner, from disease the senses of sight and smell become less acute. Our race may be melodorous without knowing it, but the Japs, being less artificially civilized, retain the primitive acuteness of smell. It is indisputable that the bloodhound and other dogs find the human odor rank enough. It is conjectured that by reason of our habit of eating meat and garlic to excess, drinking beer and spirits and feeding grossly in all respects we are offensive to the clean feeders and temperate people of the far east.

Human Greatness.

It is known that Oliver Cromwell's body at the restoration suffered every kind of indignity at the hands of the royalists and was finally buried at the foot of the gallows at Tyburn.

When the body was torn from the grave in Westminster Abbey in 1661 the head was impaled with those of other regicides on the roof of Westminster hall and left there. It fell during a storm and was picked up, exhibited at a public show and finally sold. Such is human greatness.

Fond Thoughts.

E. W. Johnson

Moderato.

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FIN. Vivo.

D. C. al fine

FOND THOUGHTS.