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A VIRGINIA ROMANCE

By Louise Kimball

John Lee re-read the letter he had just received. "The Mansion House is now yours," it said "although it is badly in need of repairs. I have been able to do nothing in that line for a long time. And I must leave my only child, Brandon who is now 17, in your care. Do what you can as far as education and training go, for Brandon, like the Mansion House, has been neglected."

Lee was a practical New England young man, and as he read the words of his father's cousin, now dead, he frowned. "A Southern house fallen to pieces, and a Southern boy lacking ambition," he summed up his unexpected legacy. The Northern Lee had lost track of their Virginia cousins at the beginning of the Civil War, and beyond knowing that the Mansion House was near the beautiful James River, a little beyond the old Colonial landing place, "Forward Hundred," John Lee was in complete ignorance of the family and their home. He had never even heard of his cousin Brandon.

Being a busy man, John could not, at the time of his elder cousin's death take a trip to Virginia. He contented himself with sending a letter to the young Brandon, urging the youth to come North and prepare for college. "Or if you prefer a business career," he wrote, "I will use my influence to get you started right." He had been shocked and displeased at the almost illegible scrawl he had received in return. The writer "had the thought of leaving Mansion House for the North. 'I don't reckon I could get into Yale,' the letter said, 'and I surely am right happy here. My income is enough for Aunt Eliza and me'—this seemed to be in answer to John's prudent question, 'and as for business—why, I'm arranging the rose garden now, and can't leave anyhow.'"

"He doesn't seem to realize," thought John, "that the Mansion House is, mile now, also the rose garden. No doubt he is tied to Aunt Eliza's apron strings."

Early in the spring an "Exploration Syndicate" opened a correspondence with Lee concerning the desirability of selling the Mansion House for a hotel, and John determined to go to Virginia to overlook the ground for himself.

"If the contractors will give a fair price for the old place," he thought, "I'll sell. It will give me an excuse to see young Brandon at work," for his responsibility to his young cousin weighed on his conscientious New England mind.

Cruising up the lovely river on the lazy little steamer Powhatan, Lee fell under the spell of the beautiful land.

The spirit of his adventurous ancestor possessed him, and he felt a kinship with the soil which his people had helped to win from the wilderness. He thought of his cousin Brandon. "I won't be hard on the lad," he thought to himself, "he is young, and doubtless the traditions of the land have a strong hold upon him."

It pleased him to leave his horse with a groom at the ruined gates of the Mansion House, and approach the building along the winding footpath which led through the unkempt grounds to the house. At the signs of neglect on all sides—the broken down garden seats, the crumbling summer house, and weeds which overgrew the path, John Lee's anger at his cousin rose.

"He's a lazy fellow," thought the energetic New Englander. "Any handy boy could mend these things with a hammer and a few boards. I will not stand for such shillabine." He stopped short and drew a long wondering breath of delight. He forgot the neglect and dilapidation about him and stood transfixed at the entrance to another world—it was the rose garden. Roses of all colors, red, white, pink and yellow climbed and hung and bloomed and perfumed all the air. At the red rose bush, gathering the great fragrant flowers, was the fairest blossom of all—a beautiful young girl, slender and straight, looking with startled, wonderful eyes at the intruder.

Before John Lee could collect his scattered senses she came forward, dropping her roses as she came. "This is Cousin John," she said in a voice which was like music to the man, "welcome to Mansion House. Cousin," John stammered, "are you a new cousin?" Wild thoughts of a secret marriage of Brandon flashed through his mind.

"Why no," laughed the girl, "I'm just the same Brandon. But you don't look the least bit like the heartless northern who thinks of nothing but dollars. You don't seem like a Yankee," she went on, slowly, "who would sell the Mansion House?" She paused, silenced by the look which swept over John Lee's face. "I see," he said slowly, "You are Brandon Lee, and you were named for your mother's people as the southern custom is. I thought you were a boy." He was still bewildered.

"You won't take me away from here and send me to work in the North?" she asked, half laughing, half entreating. "I love the Mansion House, and my rose garden. Won't you let me stay?"

"Let you stay?" he echoed, softly, holding out his hands to her. "Why, Brandon, I beg you to stay here, always, and some day, I hope to have you tell me that I, too, may stay, always—here with you."

PREHISTORIC GAME FOUND

Monsters With Which Antediluvian Man Coexisted.

The remains of the Dryptosaurus or fossil fish, discovered on the Bengawan river, in Java, raised the question of the existence of reptiles of the Cretaceous age, and lying in the crevices of strata, clearly prove that man was contemporary with the later of the giant Saurians. Moreover, the discovery of the Nampoa image, a piece of handwork found in the crevices of strata in Adn county, Idaho, would imply that he had attained some slight degree of art. Assuming that that man was living in the Cretaceous age, the question is, how did he survive his acquaintance with the gigantic Saurians, any of which could plow his way through a suburban street today or trample a herd of elephants to death? How did he escape the shining horns of the Triceratops and Ceratosaurs or Pleistocene Aurochs? The answer to these questions is that even than man possessed intelligence far in excess of that of the other animals. He could utilize his lack of natural weapons by means of sharpened rocks and flints and could, by reason of his greater courage, take refuge on the slopes of volcanoes and other dangerous places where his gigantic foes dare not follow him. At any rate he not only survived the huge creatures of the later reptilian era, but passed into the Tertiary era or Mammalian stage as the most and greatest of the mammals.

Ireland To Have Forests. Ireland has awakened to the value of her forests. A commission appointed by the Government has just made public its report.

The commission urges the adoption of a scheme for the state to plant about 700,000 acres. This, with the 300,000 acres existing, would give Ireland 1,000,000 acres of forest land, an area which the commission considers as essential. About 10,000 acres would be purchased by the state. In mountainous regions and suggested as state forest, while 400,000 acres would be planted by the state, but managed by private owners or by county councils.

Denmark, an agricultural country half the size of Ireland, had since 1852 imported for forests by 175,000 acres. Belgium, in spite of her dense population, has added 75,000 acres to her forests in the last twenty years.

Ireland is particularly suited to soil and climate for the growth of forests, but only 1 1/2 per cent. of her total area is forested.

The Gulf Stream

This great "river of the sea" flows from the Gulf of Mexico (hence its name) through the Florida Strait along the eastern coast of the United States, and is then deflected near the banks of Newfoundland diagonally across the Atlantic. It is estimated to be 150 miles wide off Charleston, and 200 miles wide off Sandy Hook where it spreads fanlike over the surface of the North Atlantic. Off Cape Hatteras its velocity is reckoned at about 1 mile an hour, off the Banks of Newfoundland 1 1/2 miles an hour; then the rate slowly merges into that of the northeasterly drift of the Atlantic—4 or 5 miles a day, its temperature is from 45 to 51 degrees, according to depth and latitude.

Grant's Peppercorn End. The peace that he had so often wished for others came to him at last in the tinner and noisy enduring sense. It was the calm death he had hoped for, a gentle and gradual falling to sleep. The weary, anxious night had passed, the rays of the morning sun stole quietly into the death-chamber; but at last there was another morning for him, another light, glorious, infinite, immortal.

We Poor Men!

Harry is six years old, "pa," he asked one day, "if I get married will I have a wife like ma?" "Very likely," replied his father. "And if I don't get married will I have to be an old bachelor like Uncle Tom?" "Very likely."

"Well, pa," he said, after a moment of deep thought, "it's a mighty tough world for us men, isn't it?"

I Would Be Absolute

And the first thing I would do in my government, I would have nobody to control me. I would be absolute, and who but I. Now he that is absolute, and can do what he likes, can take his pleasure, he that can take his pleasure, can be content, and he that can be content has no more to desire, so the master's over-courtesy, "Don't quit."

Adding to His Offensiveness

The man who told us we always doubtly offensive, if he comes around after the arrival of our troubles and tries to look as if he had forgotten all about it.

Monument

Dr. Griffin—I must say the world is very ungrateful toward our profession. How seldom one sees a public memorial erected to a doctor! Mrs. Griffith—How seldom one doctor, think of our profession!

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