



BY THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

"We'll have to take that money, Mr. Seraggs," John said.

"So you've concluded to accept the accommodation, eh?" Seraggs replied as he again brought forth the papers.

"No," John said, "we have only concluded to get robbed."

"Well, call it what you please, Mr. Green," said Seraggs, "but it is an accommodation, just the same. If we didn't let you have the money you'd suffer, for you can't get it anywhere else on any terms."

John had no inclination to argue the matter, so he made no reply, and Seraggs proceeded to draw up the papers. In a few minutes the writings were completed, signed and delivered, and John received his money. He and Mary immediately left the office, and with sorrowful hearts walked down the street, and after making some purchases at the store drove home.

CHAPTER IV. THE BLATFORDS.

When old Farmer Green announced to the world that he had disowned and disinherited his son he felt he had put the finishing stroke to his duty. When he thundered forth the awful edict he ended his connection with this story, so we gently drop him out of its pages, feeling that his absence can be well explained by a simple fact, and he figures in the narrative to the end, therefore it is necessary to go back and give a little further account of him.

At the time John and Mary married, Hiram Blatford had been a widower for two years, and he remained so until after his daughter removed to Kansas. Soon after that event, though, he met Miss Sarah Spickler, an elderly spinster, and asked her to share his home. Miss Spickler having been on the matrimonial market for a good many years with no bidders for her hand, was desperate enough to accept any sort of offer, and accordingly she snapped Blatford up in short order.

"I know that, Sarah. I do not misunderstand you. I know how it pains you to have to say such things, but you feel it to be your duty, and you do it. I thank you, my dear wife, with all my heart for your disinterested mindfulness of me. Let us now drop the subject and try to forget it. It is not right that you should afflict yourself with thoughts of one who is so far beneath you in point of goodness, and I will try and think of her with as much charity as possible. It is a sad thing to feel the ingratitude of one's own flesh and blood—a sad thing to be a parent and to be spurned by the child for whom I have done so much. But I can live over it, Sarah, and perhaps in time forget. There, we will say no more about it."

The good Sarah was quite willing to let the subject rest, since she had gained her point. Dinner being at that moment announced, she went out and took her place at the head of the table, from which position she beamed smiles of love and tender sympathy on the old fool, her husband, who sat opposite her nursing his martyred soul. Not once, as he sat at that board laden with a superabundance of the choicest viands, did old Blatford feel a tinge of pity for his poor daughter, who was an outcast from home, a stranger in a strange land, denied even the food necessary to stay the pangs of hunger. And yet he consoled himself and imagined that he had a wounded heart; he, a man who was as void of heart as the veriest flint.

A week or so after the incident described Sarah came to Hiram with a letter from an adjoining state, in which letter she was informed of the death of a married sister. Her sister had left three children, and Sarah's tender heart prompted her to take them and care for them if Hiram wasn't averse to it.

"Bring them right along," Hiram said, "we have plenty and they must not suffer. Send for them at once."

"Ah! old man, where was your conscience, your sense of right, that it did not prick you when you thus opened your home to a horde of strangers, and admitted them to the place that belonged to one who needed it more? Where was your good angel that it did not whisper to you of the sorrow and trouble, the foundation of which you that moment laid with your own hand. Bitter, bitter will be the regrets following that act, old man, and though they may follow at a long distance, they will surely follow, and terrible will be their work when at last they come."

The orphans were duly installed in Blatford's house, and by him were educated and supported. The eldest, a boy named Harry, was taken into the bank, and of him we shall hear more later on, as he figures quite extensively in this history, which would probably be less sad if it were less true.

CHAPTER V. MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

With their dearly secured "accommodation" John Green's family managed to get through the winter without suffering anything beyond severe privations. Their clothing and fare was, of course, common and limited, but that was nothing so long as it kept them from starving and freezing.

It was a long, dreary winter, especially to Louise, off on the prairie, with no friends or companions, and no books or papers, and with nothing to do but to drag idly through the days. The nearest neighbor lived two miles away, and that being Markham's, they might as well have been forty miles away for all the good they were to Green's, for since that night when Markham talked so absently to Louise there had been no intercourse between the two families.

Louise grew pensive and melancholy, and it was plain that she longed for a different life, though she never uttered a complaining word. Once shortly after Christmas she and her mother were alone in the cabin, and after they had sat a long time in silent Louise suddenly said:

"Mother, I wish I could manage some way to go on with my education."

"So do I, Louise," Mary answered, "but I can't think of any way that it

can be managed. If we had the books I could help you with your studies, but we haven't the money to buy books."

"I know that, mother, but I was thinking that I might borrow some."

"I don't know who you could borrow them from, Louise. I don't suppose anyone about here has them."

"I know who has them," Louise replied, "but I don't know whether you would want me to get them of him. Paul has lots of books that he brought from school with him, and he has often proposed to let me have them."

"Paul Markham?" Mary asked.

"Yes," said Louise; "he has the books I need, and he has begged me to take them."

"Louise," Mary said after awhile, "you know how old Markham talked to you that night you went to the store, and you know we have had nothing to do with them since, and you know that we can't accept any favors from Paul."

Louise arose for a minute or so looking out into the snow-covered prairie. Unconsciously she let a sigh escape her, and though it was soft and low, the quick ears of her mother caught it.

"Louise," Mary called, "don't fret about the books, for we shall try to get them soon."

"It is not the books, mother," Louise replied as she came and put her arms about her mother's neck and laid her face on her bosom. "I can wait for them."

"Then what makes you sad, my child?" and Mary stroked her daughter's hair and tried to lift the bowed head.

"What is it you sigh for?"

"I'm afraid you and pa do not like Paul," and Louise buried her face deeper on her mother's breast. "He is so good and generous, and is all the friend I have in the world aside from you two, and I'm afraid you do not like him."

"Why, I'm sure I have nothing against him, child. He is a quiet, honest, industrious young man, and if it wasn't that he is a Markham I couldn't say a word against him."

"He is a Markham, mother, but he is not like his father. He is as generous and kind as he can be, and I do wish you and pa would be friendly with him."

Mary began to have a suspicion of something underlying this uncommon interest in Louise in Paul, and for several minutes she was undecided how to proceed. Finally she took the girl's head in her hands and lifted it up until the face was opposite her own, and if she had wanted any further evidence to confirm the truth of her surmises, she would have found it in the telltale blushes that swept over the fair young cheeks.

"Louise," she said, "don't keep any secrets from me, but tell me why you take such a deep interest in Paul."

"Because—don't think me silly, mother, for I can't help it. I love him."

These last words were spoken in a faint whisper, but Mary understood them, and drawing her child to her, pressed her close to her bosom, and thus they remained for a long time. Mary was the first to break the silence.

"Paul shall never receive anything but the kindest treatment from me," she said, "and I know John will treat him as a gentleman. Paul is a good man, and if you love him he shall have my love, too."

"Thank you, mamma, I knew you would like him for my sake, and you will like him better when you know how good and noble he is."

Then another long silence followed, after which Mary said:

"Has Paul spoken to you of love, Louise?"

"No, he never has. That is, not exactly."

"And are you sure you love him?"

"I know I love him, mamma, he is so good and kind, and is all the friend I have aside from you and pa."

The mother smiled faintly at the girl's earnestness and stroking the soft, brown hair gently, said:

"Louise, you are young yet, a mere child, and I'm afraid you do not know your heart as well as you think. You have a great liking for Paul as one is apt to have for a good friend when friends are few. You admire his kindness of heart, for, poor child, you have

known little enough of such in your life. You like and esteem Paul above all others, but perhaps you may not love him. Love is a broad and a deep thing, and you are too young to understand what it really is. Go on thinking of him as you do, if you wish, and always treat him with the kindest consideration, but do not go beyond that. If he speaks to you of love do not encourage him, and make him no promises. Tell him that you are young and that I wish you to wait a year or two longer before you enter into any compact affecting your whole future life. But perhaps this is all unnecessary precaution. He has said nothing, and perhaps he may not say anything for a long time. It may be—do you sure he loves you, Louise?"

"I know he loves, mamma. I—I can't tell you how I know it, but I do know he loves me, and some day he means to ask me to be his wife. I'm sixteen now, and in a year or two I shall be a woman, and then he will speak and you will not object. Will you?"

"No, not unless I have better reasons than I know at present. But a year or two is a long time, Louise, and we need not consider now what we will do then. It may not be necessary for me to say any or no to Paul, for you may see him differently then. You may see some one else that may supplant him in your heart."

"Oh, mother, that is impossible! No one can be to me what Paul is. I could not be so ungrateful as to give him a second place in my heart, when he has been so good to me."

The mother smiled again. She was assured from these last words of her daughter, that Louise had mistaken her heart, and that what she felt to be love

was only gratitude and friendship. She understood how easily one of Louise's age, and one placed as she was, could deceive herself, and she could not believe that the child knew her own heart. For a long time she was silent, and for a time doubts, fears and misgivings possessed her. She realized how easily one of the girl's age and temperament could be deceived. She was inexperienced, and knowing nothing of human nature, judged all mankind by her own standard, and reckoned all hearts like hers, pure, innocent and honest. Whether she really loved Paul or not, he was her idol, and she looked up to him as a paragon of perfection, and was that confident and trusting that she would not, and could not, doubt him in anything.

Such thoughts as these ran through the mother's mind, and she trembled for the safety of her child. Then she recalled all she knew of Paul. He was a man of perfect character, and in all the years she had known him he had not been guilty of an ungentlemanly act. This review of the young man's past somewhat reassured her, and she felt thankful that it was Paul who held such an influence over her daughter. She was far safer with him than with most men.

So after considering the matter well, Mary decided to say no to nothing to antagonize her daughter's sentiments. She remembered only too vividly what the result of such action had been in her own case, and she knew that young lovers could not be driven. She realized that harsh measures would only bring the lovers closer together, and result in the very thing she was anxious to avert—a premature marriage. So at last, taking Louise's hand in her own, she said:

"Do as I have told you, Louise; treat Paul as kindly as you can, and remember him as your best friend, but do not make him any promises. He knows you are too young to think of marriage, and he will not think it hard to leave you free for a year or two longer. You are free to keep company with him and to love him, and when you are a year older, if you want to promise to be his wife, if you can do so with my consent. I think I have offered fair terms, Louise, and I hope you will consider them such."

"I do, mamma, I do, and I am willing to do as you say, and I know Paul will be, too. I will never have any secrets from you, and never go contrary to your wishes. Paul and I will wait, and neither of us will think it hard, since you wish it, but nothing, mother, can part us. Nothing, nothing."

Alas that Louise's fond hope was doomed to be blasted, and that one undreamed of should come between her and Paul—come in a way, too, to bring her the trying ordeal of her life.

CHAPTER VI. PAUL AND LOUISE.

Louise accepted Paul's books now and with her mother's aid she studied them well and faithfully. She had attended school sufficiently back east to lay the foundation for a fair education, and being bright-minded and quick to learn, she made excellent progress with her studies and bid fair to gain a good education even under such unfavorable circumstances.

Mary was a good scholar and well adapted to the duties of teaching, and she never tired of aiding Louise. Then Paul came over quite frequently in the evenings and he was not by any means averse to giving such assistance as lay in his power. In fact he was so anxious to teach Louise and pursued the task with such diligence and earnestness that it was apparent that he derived fully as much pleasure, if not profit, from it as Louise did. Paul was a most exemplary teacher, and nothing was too difficult or too hard for his efforts so long as it was for Louise's good. He never wearied of explaining dry, tough arithmetical problems or of conjugating juiceless verbs. But it must be remembered that Paul's pupil was a select one, and it is more than probable that almost any young man, feeling as the did, would have done equally well or at least labored with less success.

Louise not only progressed in her studies, but she spent some very happy evenings, and the remaining months of winter passed off much more pleasantly than she had anticipated. John and Mary always welcomed Paul to their house, and as they came to be better acquainted with them they grew to liking him more and more. He was of a happy disposition, and he had a way of making people forget their sorrows and troubles, and often he chirked John up out of a fit of downheartedness and brought a smile to his lips and a twinkle of pleasure to his eyes. Paul made it a point to take the cheerfullest view of the future, and sometimes he went off into the wildest flights of fancy in speaking of what he contemplated accomplishing for himself. His dreams were extravagant, but dreaming them was better than repining.

Paul had studied of his own. He was reading medical works and was going to be a doctor. He had taken one course at a medical college and hoped to return the next fall to take another course in his claim, and get money to pay his way. His sole possession was the claim, and he could mortgage that as Green had his, "on long time and easy terms," but he hoped to have a home ere long for himself and Louise, so he hesitated to raise money in that way. Old Markham had money, but he was

kin do it at his own expense. I ain't in no makin' gentlemen out o' sellin' that 'nd better be at work tillin' the soil. Not a bit I ain't, an' by jinks I won't do it, neither."

But Paul's design was not to be thwarted by that sort of talk, and he resolved to work his own way. He planned to raise a crop and get the means to continue his study that way if possible, and if the crop failed again, he would mortgage his land.

So the winter passed and the spring came, and a soft, warm haze lay over all the endless stretch of prairie. Again the poor settlers brought out their plows and set to work to break up the soil and plant the crops, full of hope and confidence. With the return of the bright spring sunshine, came back the bright expectations that ever buoy up the hearts of honest, struggling mortals, and the faces of the pioneers shed the cloud of fear and doubt that had hung over them like a dark mantle.

John Green was among the more industrious and persevering of all the farmers in his section. He began work early, and every day he was in his field plowing and planting. He had a double incentive to work, for his family must live and that debt on the farm must be paid. He went at it cheerfully, and as he trudged to and fro across the field in the long furrows, singing blithely, no one would have guessed what pangs of trouble had racked his soul all through the long, tedious winter. He was not of a brooding disposition, and even under the most trying circumstances he could feel cheerful so long as there was ever so dim a ray of light before him. He had work to do now, and there was a prospect of good results, so he felt confident once more, and in the thought of the bright future which his fancy painted he lost sight of the hardships of the present.

"It is a long lane, Mary," he sometimes said, "that has no turn, and I believe in our case the turn is near at hand. We have had a long siege of misfortunes, but I think we have about reached the end of the list. The prospects are flattering for an abundant crop, and with the amount of stuff I have in cultivation we only want a fair yield to enable us to pay off the mortgage and have plenty left to tide us over the year. We'll come out all right, and within a short time we will be comfortably fixed with a good home and plenty of everything to live on. Why, what's a little hard time, anyhow? It don't amount to anything and is soon over, and it don't hurt us any, but only makes us appreciate our good fortunes all the more when they do come. Inside of two years we can look back on the past few months and laugh over our privations and wonder what it was we fretted about. We'll come out all right."

And John went off to his work singing as happy as a king, and Mary looked after him smilingly, equally as confident as he.

Paul, too, applied himself to his work, and as he plodded after the plow he dreamed of the future, of the time when he should be a doctor, and have a cozy little home with Louise for his mistress. Ambition or love ought either to be sufficient to urge a man on to his best endeavors; but when they combine, as they did in Paul's case, there is no telling what strength they will put into a man's arm nor what determination into his heart.

Thus it was that among all the settlers on that great level plain there were none that devoted themselves more sedulously to work than John and Paul, and as the season advanced and the spring months gave place to those of summer, there were no fields in all the settlement that looked more flourishing or promising than theirs. And each of these men, sanguine natured as they were, counted the victory won, and each in his way made his plans for the future and constructed innumerable castles in the air.

Every Sunday now Paul came to John Green's house, for it was distinctly understood all around that Paul and Louise were to marry by and by, though not a word relative to the matter had passed between their parents. Often the young people read from the same book, as they sat on a bench outside the house, and on such occasions they seemed to have a vast amount of difficulty in making out the words, for they brought their eyes close down to the page, their faces almost touching, and the words they sometimes pronounced were not printed on the page at all. But every person who has counted knows how that is.

One day Paul and Louise went for a stroll on the prairie. It was a clear, calm Sabbath, such as summer Sabbaths usually are, and a misty haze danced about near the green earth. They walked on and on, mile after mile, and at last coming to the road that ran over toward Paradise Park, they turned into that and went on to the east.

"About the 1st of September," Paul was saying, "I shall be ready to go back to school. There will be a year of separation, and it will seem long, but when it is passed I will come back and build up a home, and then we will marry and settle down in it to live as happy as can be."

Louise gave a little start, and after casting a hurried glance at Paul, looked down and blushed. Paul noticed her manner, and thinking it due to embarrassment went on:

"I have not forgotten, Louise, what you told me your mother said, and I do not ask you to promise me anything—until the year is out. I am quite satisfied with that, for I know that you love me, and it requires no words to reveal your heart to me, and no promise to make me understand that you will be my wife."

"I do love you, Paul," Louise said, "with all the fervor of my nature, and I will never love you less. You are so good and noble. But, Paul, you—"

"What is it, Louise?" Paul asked.

"I—I don't know," Louise replied. "I suppose I am foolish, Paul, but I can't help it. I am so common and insignificant, and you will be thrown among so many women who are beautiful and accomplished."

For a moment Paul was unable to understand the girl's words, but after a time a light began to break on his mind, and with a light, cheerful laugh he drew her closer to him and said:

"And so you think I will be so blinded and dazzled by the beauty and accomplishments of other women that I shall forget my little girl away off out here on the plains? Is that the brilliant idea that has edged its way into your mind?"

Louise walked on some distance before she replied, half vexed at herself for uttering words that showed she doubted Paul's constancy, and half glad that she had uttered them, as it gave him an opportunity of reasserting his love

for her. Louise was an uncommonly sensible person, but the most sensible girls love to play the coquette just a little. Finally, after the lapse of a minute or so, she looked up into Paul's face and said:

"Why shouldn't I love you?"

"Why shouldn't I forget you?"

"Yes."

"Then I will ask why shouldn't I?"

"Because, Paul, I am so insignificant and small, and you can win the love of whom you please. I know there must be grand ladies out in the world, and as compared with them, I am so common. You cannot help but see the difference and know how much more worthy of your love they are than I."

At this point Paul placed his hand over her mouth and stopped her speech. "There, you have gone far enough," he said, "and I will not hear another word. I have done nothing to deserve so poor an opinion from you, and you have no right to talk so. I would never have such an opinion of you, Louise, never."

Paul spoke like one very deeply hurt, and in an instant Louise was all contrition. She saw that she had wounded Paul, and she would not hurt him for the world. She was anxious to make amends, but she was at a loss how to proceed, and again they walked on in silence. She thought of various things to say, but none of them were suited to the occasion, and so at last,

when the long silence was becoming oppressive and she felt that something must be said, she decided to come out boldly and beg his forgiveness. Laying her hand on his arm she looked wistfully into his face, and with lips all a-tremble, said:

"Paul, I am a silly thing, and you must not mind what I say. I do not mean to doubt you, dear, good Paul, and I want you to forgive me, will you, Paul, and forget what I was foolish enough to say?"

(Continued.)

Trying to Arrange Alteration to Suit All but Hogs.

An Illinois merchant who was taking baling powder in bulk from a Chicago firm called at a quarters the other day to say that there was something wrong with the goods.

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"I think we ought to have a more perfect understanding," continued the dealer. "Now, then, you adulterate before you send me; then I adulterate before I ship; then the retailer adulterates before he sells, and the consumer can't be blamed for growling. I want to see if we can't agree on some schedule to be followed."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, suppose you put in ten per cent. of chalk; then I put in twenty per cent. of whitening; then the retailer puts in thirty per cent. of flour. That gives the consumer about forty per cent. of baling powder, and unless he's a born hog he'll be perfectly satisfied. You see, if you adulterate fifty per cent. on the start and I adulterate as much more, and the retailer adulterates as much more as both together, it's mighty hard for the consumer to tell whether he's investing in baling powder or putty. We must give him something for his money. If it's only chalk."—National Weekly.

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The reputation gained by the Perkins Mill in the past has induced some unscrupulous persons to imitate the mill and even to make our name and apply it to an inferior mill. Be not deceived. None genuine unless stamped as below. We manufacture both painting and geared mills, tanks pumps etc., and general Wind Mill supplies. Good Agents wanted. Send for catalogue and price list. PERKINS, WIND MILL & AX Co.,
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