

KATE'S ESCAPE.

BY LA GARRE.

It was a cool, beautiful September morning, and Kate Howard sang blithely as she fitted through the wide hall which ran the length of the grand old house, which was her home. She was passing the library door, when her father called her to come in. On entering she found him with an open letter in his hand.

"I have just received word from my friend Seymour, that he will visit us next week," said he. Kate shrugged her shoulders; "papa's friends" are not generally very entertaining to young people.

"He will be accompanied by his nephew, for whom he has been guardian, who has just returned from an extended foreign tour. He is a young man of excellent family, and heir to an immense fortune. It has long been Seymour's wish—as, also, mine—that you and his nephew should marry when you had reached suitable ages. You are now twenty, and that is quite old enough. They will be here on Tuesday, and I desire that you look your best, and be as agreeable as possible."

He was interrupted by Kate, who, being possessed of considerable spirit, did not relish being summarily disposed of. "Do you think I am going to marry a man I don't know, and never saw?" she asked, indignantly.

"Do you wish to sell me, as if I were a share in railroad stock, or had no more heart or soul than a lump of coal?" "Kate," said her father, sternly, "to whom are you speaking?"

"I don't care!" she cried, excitedly. "I hate Seymour and all his relations, and if his nephew were rich as Croesus, I wouldn't marry him! There!"

It had been a favorite project of her father's, and Kate had heard it hinted at ever since she had been out of school. She had only laughed. The idea of things assuming such a tangible shape had not occurred to her.

Blushing deeply at being caught in such a rude act, Kate drew down her veil and gazed stationarily on the passing landscape. Station after station was passed. Half an hour more and she would be in Stanley, free from Seymour and his nephew. The very thought was refreshing. She almost laughed as she thought of the discomfort her departure would cause both the "contracting parties," as brother Charlie called her father and Mr. Seymour.

Her reverie was broken by the stranger, who courteously offered her a book he had just taken from his satchel. Kate accepted his proffered kindness, and more for politeness' sake than for any other reason, began to read.

A quick jerk, a crash as if the heavens were falling, a sudden stop, and Kate was precipitated into the arms of the gentleman at her side.

Everybody was frightened. The ladies shrieked and gentlemen looked anxious. The peddler grasped his satchel containing the "superior blacking," and the maiden lady still held fast to her pocket-book as she cried out: "I shan't say so! These cars are mighty unsafe!"

No one knew exactly how it happened, but the engine had been precipitated down the steep embankment dragging the baggage-car with it. Fortunately no one was injured, though some were considerably shaken. Of course everything was confusion, the gentlemen all left the cars, and several ladies also. Kate, knowing the danger, if any, had passed, remained in her seat.

He, on reader, is the veritable nephew of Seymour. Having no desire to be married to a snuffing boarding-school miss, as he mentally pictured Kate, he had left his guardian to proceed alone to the house of his old friend, while he went to Stanley to visit an old college chum. As he walked and talked with Kate he thought more than once, if some one as bright and witty as she had been his uncle's choice, his would not have been so terrible a fate after all.

The conversation turned on books, and they were in the midst of an animated discussion concerning their favorite authors, when the depot at Stanley was reached, and Kate was warmly welcomed to her grandfather. Near him stood a young gentleman, to whom he had evidently been talking. This young man asked her permission to be introduced to her, and she, with a smile, introduced him to Mr. Howard as Mr. Cecil Allard. After the usual greetings Mr. Howard presented his granddaughter to both the young men and Kate had the opportunity of thanking Mr. Allard for his kindness to her. She rather wondered at the peculiar smile which pervaded his countenance, as he grandfather pronounced her name, but it passed away as he acknowledged her thanks by a graceful bow, and assured her "Twas nothing."

Mr. Howard, after a cordial invitation to Mr. David to bring his friend to the farm house, took Kate to the carriage, and they rode away. A short drive over a smooth, quiet road, brought them to the farm house, and grandma Howard received her guest with open arms. Kate found her visit, as she expected, rather quiet, but the woods were beautiful, and she took frequent walks, bringing as trophies of her search great handfuls of lovely leaves, or a new scene in her sketch book. Sometimes she would take a book and read an hour in the calm autumnal solitude. Thus the days fled.

soft voice whispered in her ear, "old stories of love, she must have been a willing listener, for the hours rolled by unheeded, and Mr. and Mrs. Howard had long been dreaming, when he pressed the last burning kiss upon her forehead and was gone."

The next day found them seated in the train steaming toward the city. Kate was rather troubled as visions of her father's indignation flitted through her mind—for he was determined she should marry a wealthy man, and her lover, alas! assured her he was not rich. But as she glanced at his manly form, and thought of the rich graces of his mind she felt she would not give him up for all the wealth the world contained. When they reached the city Kate wished him to allow her to go home alone.

"I know papa will be furious, and he might say something you would not like. Indeed, I'd rather see him first and prepare his mind for what's coming, you know," she said, laughing. But with the same courteous smile she had before observed, he insisted on accompanying her.

"Better have it over with at once," he said. So it was with secret misgivings she entered her own drawing-room, and found her father and brother there. The usual home greetings were over, and Kate felt rather than saw her lover draw her father aside, and in a low tone say something which she knew concerned her. Mr. Howard demanded in an icy tone:

"Who, and what are you, sir?" To which he answered something that caused her father to break into a hearty laugh as he seized him by both hands and led him to where Kate sat. "My dear daughter," said he; "here is Cecil Allard, Mr. Seymour's nephew. He wishes to marry you, but as you have so emphatically declared you'd never speak to him, I am obliged to tell him his suit is hopeless."

But Kate was already in her lover's arms. To this day (and they have been married a year) he teases her about her escapade.—Cincinnati Times.

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