

WITH THE AID OF THE WIDOW.

BY PETER M'ARTHUR.

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In affairs of the heart man, especially a young man, needs a disinterested woman to guide, to encourage or to check him, as the case may require. Now Harry Watson was so fortunate as to have a charming widow as his confidant and friend. She was several years his senior, and he was once very much in love with her—or thought he was. She had poohpoohed his proposal and told him that, although she thought him a fine, clever young fellow, she had no desire to take boy to raise and that he mustn't talk nonsense. Of course he was very tragic and visited the west to hunt grizzlies, hoping to be masticated by one, but he presently came to his senses and returned to New



"HOW DO YOU KNOW I AM IN LOVE?"
York. He was naturally rather shame-faced when he met the widow, but she was so jolly that he soon forgot his previous absurdity, and they became fast friends.

But about the middle of the season a change came over him. The widow wondered a little at first and then smiled. He was absent-minded, had no confidences to impart and could no longer be relied on for an escort.

"Well, Harry," she finally inquired when her patience was exhausted, "with whom are you in love now?"

"How do you know I am in love?"

"Oh, I am familiar with the symptoms, and besides I have seen you in love before!"

"No, no!" he exclaimed ruefully. "I never knew until now what love means!"

The widow thought of some wild protestations she had once heard and smiled, but her smile was good natured and forgiving.

"Really," she said, "this looks serious, and perhaps I was wrong in not interfering sooner! But come, tell me who she is?"

"Miss Townsend."

"Esther?"

He nodded.

The widow blushed slightly and murmured something altogether irrelevant about taking a boy to raise, after all. Then she exclaimed:

"That is the first sensible thing I have ever known you to do! Have you proposed to her yet?"

"No, indeed! She knows nothing of how I feel toward her!"

"Perhaps not," said the widow. "Some girls are queer."

"And besides she seems altogether unapproachable. Something seems to make it almost a sin to think of loving her."

The widow understood this at once. Esther's mother had died some years ago, and, being the only daughter, Esther had become the housekeeper for her father and brothers, and in consequence she naturally assumed a matronly attitude toward young men.

"You poor boy!" said the widow in humorous sympathy. "What would become of you if it were not for me? But if you obey my orders I will guarantee that you will win her."

"What must I do?" asked Harry, brightening.

"You must go and propose to Esther tonight."

"I haven't the courage."

"You don't need courage. A proper amount of fear and trembling helps a man wonderfully when he is proposing."

Harry argued for awhile, but the upshot of the matter was that he obeyed the widow and sought Esther with a carefully prepared proposal on the tip of his tongue. Being so occupied with this it was only natural that his conversational efforts were of the blundering kind that would be cruel to repeat. And after the first few minutes Esther was no more at ease than he was, for embarrassment is very contagious among lovers, whether they realize that they are in love or not. Finally, after much disjointed chat, Harry made the plunge, like a man closing his eyes and leaping over a precipice.

"Miss Townsend, I know that I am pre—that I—er—I love you."

Her reply was an inarticulate murmur of surprise.

"I cannot dare to think that you will consent to be my wife just now, but perhaps some day—will you not let me hope? I will do anything to win your love."

"Please don't, don't, Mr. Watson! It is impossible."

He sank back into his chair with a groan and covered his face with his hands.

"I am so sorry this has happened," she said with forced calmness. "I like you very much, and I thought we were always to be friends, but you can see that it is impossible for me to marry. It is my duty to take care of papa and my brothers and try to take the place of my poor mother."

"I felt from the first," said Harry sorrowfully, "that it was hopeless to think of you. You are too good for me."

"Don't say that, please, for I like you very much more than any one I know. If I ever did—marry it would be just such a man as you—good, clever and generous. But you see that it is impossible, don't you?"

He looked into her appealing eyes, but could not answer. Nothing is so sublimely tragic as a beautiful girl sacrificing herself to a mistaken sense of duty, and she appeared so sublime to him that he couldn't help thinking her in the right.

"Please leave me now, Mr. Watson. I am so sorry this has happened. You must forget me—not that I shall always like to think of you as a friend, and when you have forgotten this—please go. I must be true to my duty."

When Harry had reached the street, the weight of his disappointment pressed down on him in the darkness and maddened him. He loved her more than ever and was utterly without hope. When he had walked about until his sorrow had somewhat exhausted itself, he began to crave sympathy and naturally sought the widow. It was a delicate matter to handle, but she questioned him tactfully and soon learned all that she wished to know, and that was that his love was undoubtedly returned.

After talking the whole matter over Harry felt comforted, and he felt sure that the clever widow was going to do all in her power to help him. But he did not imagine that while they were discussing the subject the peerless, self-sacrificing Esther was weeping bitterly and almost rebelling against her fate. It was only by magnifying her duty to an appalling grimness that she finally recovered her composure and soothed the pain at her heart to an aching numbness.

As soon as the widow felt that Harry had recovered from the first bitterness of his disappointment she ordered him to go and call on Esther. He obeyed, and a few such calls restored to some extent their old relationship, and they could talk more like brother and sister. And one evening she talked to him in most sisterly fashion, warning him wistfully to beware of the wiles of the widow.

"You know I look on you as a brother, and I should not like to see one of my brothers as much in her company as you are. Of course she is very nice, but people say she is so designing."

"The little minx," said the widow when she heard of it. "I know I am designing, but she will find that it is for her happiness I am doing it now—and incidentally for my own—or just the reverse."

She of course diagnosed the case as one of jealousy and was pleased. Harry didn't understand the last part of her remark, but he did not question.

"Are you going to the Madison musicale?" the widow asked.

"Yes. Esther and her father will be there," Harry replied.

But it is not necessary to follow them through this last scene, which could have but one result—happiness for both.

It never occurred to Harry that the widow had ordered him to propose to Esther so that she could bring her father, as if by accident, to see the little scene. She had watched his movements, and, judging the correct moment to a nicely, had brought Mr. Townsend to that part of the conservatory. He liked Harry too much to interrupt, which the widow had taken care to learn before she took the step, but he was naturally surprised. Of course she promptly sympathized with him on losing his housekeeper and so wrested from him the proposal which she had long ago planned. She had not counted on Esther overlooking her part of the drama, but that only hastened the action of her plot, and she was not sorry when she heard of it.

Harry was naturally profuse in his thanks, for his happiness so blinded him to everything else in the world that he thought it was for his sake it had all been done. When this dawned upon the widow, she laughed loud and long.

"Oh, go away," she laughed, "to your billing and cooing with Esther! You are such a pair of fools you should be happy together." And she added something mischievous:

"You see, I am in a sense taking a boy to raise, after all. But you will find me a very indulgent mother-in-law."

An Antifat Failure.

A New York restaurant recently undertook to cater exclusively for obese people. Nothing of a fattening character was served. The establishment was hailed with delight by a large crowd of banters. Its history was as follows: The first day 100 ate there, the second 90, the third 80, and so on down until the proprietor found himself without a single patron until the sheriff came and took everything in sight.

COST OF GOOD ROADS.

DEPENDS UPON LOCALITY AND METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION.

Improved Machinery Has Done Much to Lessen the Expense of Road Building—Well Built Stone Roads the Cheapest.

the widow tapped him on the shoulder with her fan.

"I have come to ask you for that favor," she said.

"I am willing to do your bidding."

"Take Esther into the conservatory and propose to her."

"I can't."

"You must. If you do, I think I can promise you that you will win her—not tonight, very soon afterward. But you must propose tonight."

Hope made him courageous, and he did as he was directed.

When he had found a sufficiently retired alcove in the conservatory, he renewed his proposal and pleaded with the stately beauty. But it was in vain.

"It cannot be," she answered. "My duty is quite clear to me; and I must sacrifice my own feelings to it. I feel that to take care of my father in his declining years is a trust imposed on me by my dead mother."

"Then you are not indifferent to me?"

"She was too honest to deny her love. She bowed her head in assent, and the tears welled to her eyes.

"You do love me, Esther?"

"Yes."

"And yet you will sacrifice both our hearts?"

"It may seem cruel, but I know that I am doing what is right."

"Good heavens! What can I do?"

"You must go away somewhere. I did wrong to ask that our friendship continue. It increases the pain for both of us."

He groaned in misery.

"I am very, very sorry," she said.

They looked at each other silently for awhile. At last a slight sob shook her, and she murmured:

"I must get papa to take me home."

She turned and walked away from him quickly. Before she had gone a dozen paces she stopped as if transfixed and looked with dilated eyes into an alcove she was passing.

Then she ran back to Harry and, almost fainting, caught his arm.

"Take me home! Take me away from here!"

He hastened to call a carriage. When they had entered it, Esther began to



"TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE!"

cry, and he tried to console her. Instinctively he put his arm about her, and she did not resist. A moment after—it was the natural thing to do—he kissed her, and, leaning her head on his shoulder, she wept until her sorrow had abated. He could not imagine what was the matter, but when they arrived at her home she enlightened him. As she was leaving him in the conservatory she had seen her father kneeling before the widow proposing to her and had seen her grant him a kiss of acceptance. All her illusions about duty vanished in an instant. Her father was getting another to take care of him, and her occupation was gone.

"I shall leave home!" she cried angrily. "If he marries her, I must leave home!"

"I have a home to offer you," said Harry.

But it is not necessary to follow them through this last scene, which could have but one result—happiness for both.

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THE LIQUOR MEN.

They Hold an Interesting Meeting, are Honored and View the City Sights. From Wednesday's Daily.

The Nebraska Liquor Dealers association began a very interesting two-days' session in this city yesterday and meetings are being held today. The convention is largely attended and it is believed is a forerunner of yet more successful conventions.

The first session was called to order in Margarita's hall yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock by John C. Tierney, president, of Omaha. Other officers in attendance are Pat Stanton, vice president, Tibben; Charles Krug, secretary and treasurer, Omaha.

Mayor J. Simpson extended a welcome to members of the association in a well worded speech and was followed by Ex Mayor Bear who emphasized the welcome and made some other pleasing remarks.

The report of the secretary was read and referred to a committee.

Committees were appointed on applications, finance, by-laws and constitutions, claims, etc.

The president and Charles F. Tuttle of Omaha, the official attorney of the association, gave short talks and the convention adjourned until 7:30.

The evening session was called together by the rendition of several pieces of music by the band after which the musicians serenaded the various saloons.

The convention was again called to order by President Tierney after which the reports of the committees were heard.

The members of the association were invited to the Turf Exchange where Wm. Blatt, the proprietor, and the Krag Brewing company had prepared for them a choice feast of good things to which ample justice was done by the members of the invited guest, the business of the day having had a splendid effect on appetites.

The various saloons of the city are tastefully decorated with national colors and other ornaments.

This afternoon the members of the association were provided with carriages and headed by the band, started out for a drive about the city and to see the principle sights, the gentlemen being very well pleased with the excursion and the appearance of the city.

Teachers' Program.

The Norfolk section of the Teachers' Reading Circle of Madison county will meet in the high school building at 1:30 p. m., Saturday, November 18, 1899.

Following is the program:

Music—Instrumental, Miss Ruth Maturan.

Paper—"Facts of History;" "History in Fiction," Miss Pearl Widman.

Paper—"History Taught by Biography;" "History in Poetry," Miss Lena Mills.

Music—Vocal, Miss Allie Johnson.

Paper—"History as Expressed in Architecture;" "History as Expressed by Painting," Miss Pearl Reese.

Paper—"History in Language;" "History in Religion," Mrs. Buffington.

Music—Instrumental, Misses Morrow.

Paper—"History in Fable;" "History in Tradition," Miss Kate McNeil.

Discussion of relative value of subjects, D. C. O'Connor.

Music—Instrumental, Miss Lotia Blakeley.

A BRIGHT IDEA.

But Weary's Fard Found a Fatal Flaw in the Scheme.

"Pete," exclaimed Meandering Mike, "I'm gittin' restless!"