

THE FIGHT AT THE FORD—A LEGEND OF THE WAR.

Off I linger at eve by wild Rapidan's stream.
Ere the shimmer of sunset has melted away
From the swift-flowing waters that bask in its
beam
Till the shadowy gloam shuts the portals of
day.

While the opaline tints slowly fade from the
hill,
And the voices of nature are hushed and
Then I love to review a fair vista that thrills
Every chord of my heart as I gaze on the
scene.

Tis a spot in whose tranquil repose one may
rest
And forget for a season the tumults of life.
Yet it marks in its space where humanity's laws
Have been cast in the vortex of venganc-e and
strife.

There grim legions opposing in combat were
drawn,
And the greenward was strewn with the shat-
tered and killed.
In the fight that raged fiercely from midnight
When the river ran red with the blood that
was spilled.

Then the vanquished were fled, and the victors
remained.

But to gather the wounded and bury the dead
Or of friend or of foe, while sweet Mercy con-
strained

The stern hearts that before by Destruction
were led.

But at eve all were gone from the Rapidan's
side,
Where was garnered the terrible harvest of
death,
Save the slain in the contest, whom none had
deserved.

He lay by the river-marge gasping for
breath.

In the cause he upheld none more noble than he
Met the foemen who left him to perish alone,
With no balm for his anguish, nor witness to see
How a brave heart could suffer with never a
man.

Though he uttered no plaint his sad fate to be-
wail.

There came one in the beauty of maidenhood's
form,
From her home that was nigh to the death-
stricken vale.

To weep o'er the scene of War's merciless
storm.

While the gentle girl grieved for the havoc she
had

Yet she moved, as if led by a hand from on
high.

To the dell where yet living, but prone on
the ground.

Was the form of the soldier so youthful to die.

Though the soul of the battle begrimed his wan
face;

Though unstanch'd was the wound that bled
in his side;

With that pity that reck's not of person or place,
Sprang the maiden to do what she might ere
she died.

Quick with water caught up in the sash she had
wore

From the river that smiled on the dead while
it flowed.

She layed and refreshed the young soldier for-
lorn,
Till his eyes were relumed with a wonder that
glowed.

"Art thou come from thy heaven, sweet angel
below?"

By degrees his faint voice found the language
to say.

"Let me bless thee, dear soul, for the joy that I
know,

Ere thy presence of loveliness passes away."

"Nay—no angel," she said, "but a weak, timid
maid.

Who is glad to behold that your life is still
spared—

Rest content, injured youth, while I lie me for
aid.

That your hurts may be tended and refuge
prepared.

As I dwell in the vale, though long years
have passed by,

Since the fight at the ford where wild Rapidan
flows.

For the soldier once succored, who thought but
to die,

Has returned to requite what his gratitude
owes.

And the maiden, no longer a maiden, is there,
Still a guardian whose tenderness days but
increase.

Who rejects him in whom she saved from
death—

Whom she crowns with her love in the con-
quest of peace.

—Oscar H. Harpel.

Miss Wickersham's Romance.

BY M. C. FARLEY.

It was an old, old house. Teddy looked up at the many gabled, moss-grown roof, and the faded red-brick walls with feelings of both anger and sorrow.

He was the only heir. In the natural course of events Wickersham farm and the old ivy-grown mansion, built in Colonial times, would be his own, providing he did nothing to offend his aunt, the present incumbent.

Teddy groaned inwardly at the recollection. For two and twenty years Miss Wickersham had been a mother to him. If some people declared that Miss Wickersham had no heart, and was proud and overbearing in disposition and hard to please—her nephew at least had never been made to feel that side of her nature until now.

Some six months previous Maj. Willis had returned from Europe with his daughter, and settled down quietly at Fern Fields, a tumble-down old manor house, which report said was all there left to him of the once great Willis fortune.

The Major had lived abroad the better part of his life. His child had been born on a foreign land, and his wife was buried there. Still, for some unknown reason, he had gathered together the remnants of his once splendid fortune, and, coming home to Fern Fields, was now Miss Wickersham's nearest neighbor.

From the very day of the Major's return to the home of his boyhood, Miss Wickersham had persistently ignored him. Fern Fields, she said, was nothing to her—she wanted nothing whatever to do with the people who lived there, and cautioned her nephew, upon pain of her displeasure, never to have the slightest intercourse with the Willis family. All went smoothly for a short time, when, in some unaccountable manner, Teddy and the Major's daughter chanced to meet, and Ted fell head over heels in love with her at first sight. What was his consternation to find, upon acquainting his aunt with the turn of affairs, that she suddenly flew into a violent passion and ordered him never to speak to the young lady again.

It was all very easy for Miss Wickersham to execute such a command, but it was simply impossible for Teddy to obey it.

There were stolen interviews, and long walks by the riverside, and many an hour was spent in company with the Major himself, when Ted found it impossible to inveigle the young lady out of doors. Of course there could be but one ending to the affair. Recklessly Ted proposed, was accepted, and the Major gave them both his paternal blessing.

Proud and happy the young man went home to his aunt and told her plainly what he had done, not doubting

but that she would accept the inevitable, with tolerable grace at least, when she found it was to be. But he was appalled at her manner.

"If you marry that girl, Teddy, not a cent of my money shall you ever have!" screamed Miss Wickersham at the top of her shrill old voice. "I detest the whole family, root and branch, and there shan't a dollar's worth of my property ever go to benefit one of them in any way if I can help myself, and I guess I can."

Teddy's face fell. It was a bright, handsome, young face, framed in with a lot of yellow hair, that was his aunt's especial pride—though she was too much overcome with rage now to pay any attention to his good looks.

"Just to think," she went on, in her thin, high-quivering key, "that of all persons in the world, you should select Nellie Willis to be your wife. And you know very well, Teddy, what my opinion is of the Willis family—a poor, proud, shiftless set, to make the best of 'em."

Teddy grew very red.

"If rumor is true, Aunt Wickersham, you did not always rate the Willis' at such a low figure—particularly the Major," retorted he, indignantly.

The pale pink that yet lingered in Miss Wickersham's delicate old face turned suddenly to a vivid scarlet. She choked, and hesitated an instant.

"From you, Teddy," said she re-
proachfully.

Directly he had the grace to feel ashamed of himself.

"Forgive me, aunt," he cried. "I am a brute."

"Say no more," said she coldly, motioning him to leave the room, the delicate color in her face having now faded entirely out, giving place to a dull, leaden hue, not pleasant to see.

Once alone, she went to a foreign cabinet that stood in one corner of the apartment, and, unlocking the drawer, took therefrom a small parcel.

"It seems strange how the folly of my youth yet clings to me in my old age," she mused, bitterly, turning the package over in her still white and shapeless hands.

"I will burn these things. Perhaps forgetfulness will come the more readily," she uttered to herself, undoing the parcel, and dropping a bunch of withered roses on the desk.

Still, she hesitated, a thousand memories of a bygone time, struggling through her mind, and a suspicious moisture dimming the brightness of her proud, dark eyes.

"She would only break his heart," she cried at last, impatiently. "They are coquettish, all—father and daughter alike. Teddy shall not have his life spoiled by her—the false daughter—of an unworthy parent."

An instant later and she had flung the little packet into the grate. There was a sudden light puff and a strong perfume from the burning roses, filled the room. The parlor door was thrown open. "Maj. Willis," announced the servant. The room seemed to swim around her, for a moment. She could not have been more astonished to hear a clasp of thunder from a clear heaven.

A feeling of anger brought back her usual self-possession.

"To what am I indebted for this visit, Maj. Willis," she asked with refined politeness.

"To be frank—various causes. I am here, principally, in behalf of the future well-being of our young people," replied the Major, bravely.

"If you are trying to negotiate a marriage between those two, you may as well know, first as last, that I shall never consent to it," said Miss Wickersham, ignoring the fact that her visitor was still standing, hat in hand, before her.

The Major bit his lip.

He glanced critically at his obdurate hostess, as she too, rose to her full height and confronted him, her pale, her eyes flashing, and her white ringed fingers tightly clasping the edge of the old cabinet he remembered of the present incumbent.

It was thirty years since he had entered that house for the last time, as he supposed. He was a young man then, gay and handsome, and very much in love indeed, with the angry lady before him. Thirty years. It was a long time, and yet, how well he remembered even the smallest detail of the room. Nothing was changed now, he thought with a cynical smile, save himself and the little old lady who so ungraciously received him. Unconsciously the Major fetched a deep sigh.

It was evident that, if Miss Wickersham had unhappy memories of a long ago, the doughty Major also had a few that were not so pleasant as they might have been.

"It seems a great pity," said he, recalling himself with an effort, "that two young lives should be made miserable because of a mere whim. I called to-day to speak to you about the settlements I shall make my daughter on the occasion of her marriage. I am not rich, still she will have no mean dowry."

"We will not discuss the subject of your daughter's marriage, as it concerns me not the slightest. I have this to say. If my nephew persists in making Miss Willis his wife, I shall execute a will cutting him off with a paltry dollar. My determination is unchangeable."

There was the least little bit of an angry sparkle in the corner of the Major's eye.

"Miss Willis will not marry for money," said he, quietly shifting his position a little, and resting his elbow on the low mantle piece. "My daughter's happiness is my only consideration."

Miss Wickersham noticed—indeed she could not well help it—what a fine looking man the Major was, in spite of his fifty years. Her heart throbbed a trifle faster as she thought of days long gone past.

"But for her dear sake," continued the Major, "I should not again cross the threshold of this house, Rebecch."

"That is like a man," remarked Miss Wickersham, with biting sarcasm. "But I let it pass. My nephew is of age, and will undoubtedly do as he likes in this matter."

The Major leaned a little more heavily on the mantle piece, his elbow in dangerous proximity to an old, discolored plaster bust of Franklin. He glanced at it casually, and then remem-
bered with a pang the last time he had looked upon it—thirty years before.

"I shall be sorry to have Ted lose his inheritance for my daughter's sake," said the Major presently, putting his hand to his eyes as if to shut out the sight of the room, and the memories it recalled. "But there seems to be no help for it. This being the case, perhaps it might be as well to bring this interview to a close."

Miss Wickersham bowed stiffly. Cold, proud, relentless, she stood there waiting for him to go.

"I might argue as successfully with the Sphinx," thought he, bringing his hand down forcibly on the mantle.

The next instant the plaster cast toppled over and fell crashing against the old-fashioned brass andirons, and lay shivered in a hundred fragments on the floor.

Miss Wickersham gave a little hysterical shriek and flew to the rescue.

Cursing his carelessness, the Major stooped down to help gather up the pieces.

Could he believe his eyes? Right there, with unbroken wafer, was a letter he had himself written, long, long ago.

Miss Wickersham picked it up wonderingly, as she saw her own name on the face of it.

"It is strange how this note ever came in here," said she, breaking the seal slowly.

The Major had not gone soldiering all those years to no purpose. His military experience had taught him wisdom; and patience as well. So he waited quietly until she finished reading the yellow old love-letter.

Miss Wickersham was crying now very softly—very softly, indeed, indeed—but the wary Major saw it and took courage.

"What do you dink, Mr. Tannehill? I

"To be angel and haf wings." Und I goes right in to get my wings. But Mr. Obossle Beter say:

"Stop a bit, Mr. Caesar, we haf a charge to you."

"Mr. Obossle Beter bring der big pook and look him up unt reat out loud:

"Yohannes Atam Haller Caesar, cat-
ties-buyer for Ni Albany, steal one calf
from Ari Armstrong, wort fife toller.
Mr. Caesar, you haf no any wings."

"I say: 'Mine Got in Himmel! What
I do?'

"I dream some more right away. I
tream Ari Armstrong be deat too, und
he coom to Baradise, und Mr. Opossle
Beter say:

"Who be's here a coomin' into Bara-
dice?"

"Und Ari say:

"Ari Armstrong, rich farmer and
member of the church for Lawrence
county."

"Mr. Obossle Beter say:

"Walk right in, Mr. Armstrong." I

say: "Stop a bit, Mr. Obossle Beter, und
prind ouer der pig pook und I look
him und reat out loud:

"Ari Armstrong, rich farmer, cattle
raiser and member of the church for
Lawrence county, steal mules from
Caesar wort \$450." What doinks you
dot, Mr. Obossle Beter?" He say:

"Oh. dot all right; walk right in,
Mr. Armstrong."

"I say, 'Tunder and blichen! How
is dot, Mr. Obossle Beter?'" Mr. Ari

Armstrong's little calf he fines my
cattle out und he goes mit my cattle
off mit himself, und I see dot calf not
yet, und I bay Ari Armstrong fife toller
for dot calf und for dot I haf got
notings. Ari Armstrong steal mules
from Y. A. H. Caesar wort four hunner
and fiftie tollars, und you say, 'dot is
all right, dot is all right; walk right
into Baradise.'

"Mr. Obossle Beter say: 'Mr. Caesar,
dot man dot do a pig peznis is
held in dis court in the udmost re-
spect!'

"I say: 'Mine Got in Himmel! what
I do, dot I may haf wings?'

"Py shimmyn! I goes pack und
stall all der cattles in Hoosier, and dat
makes me respectable!"—Cor. Los-
Angeles (Cal.) Recreation.

Perry's "Singing Birds."

Perry was a rich planter in the Patuxent valley, with a broad vein of humor. The broad, deep Patuxent afforded an excellent cruising ground to the British fleet after it had landed the British troops. One day, while the British ships were lying in the river, Perry got a well-filled hornet's nest, plucked up its openings, put on his working clothes and rowed up to the flagship. In the uncouth local dialect he offered the gray ball to the young officers as a nest full of rare singing birds of remarkable voice, of unusual intelligence and warm attachments. The officers clubbed together and offered a guinea for his birds. This he gratefully accepted and then handed the nest to the unsuspecting young men. He suggested to them that it would be well not to open the nest till he got to shore, inasmuch as the affectionate little things might follow their old friend. This was an excellent suggestion. To make sure the officers took the nest into the cabin and shut the doors, leaving a marine on deck to catch Perry's signal. As soon as Perry felt sure of his