

A MERE OUTLINE.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Ah! help me! but her face and brow
Were lovelier than lilles are
Beneath the light of moon and star
That smile as they are smiling now—
Of white lilles and brown
Of sweetest white beneath the moon:

White lilles in a flood of bright,
Pure incandescence of liquid light
That overflows some night of June,
When all the azures overflows
The ocean of the daisy-bed,
So marvelous her face and brow,
Their beauty blinds my fancy now.

And there—the oval chin below,
Carved like a canmine cameo
With one exquisite dimple, swirled
With swimming light and shade and whirled
The daintiest votive poets know—
The sweetest whirlpool ever twirled

By Cupid's finger-tip—and so

The deadliest maelstrom in the world.

And then—beleid—gone mad!
And riotous—what eyes she had!
Let any devils—down the line
With violet tresses through and through,
And then—colorless and dull
Cmpared with some beautiful!

I tell you that her eyes were bright
As noonday and as dark as night!

As bright as the blinding bars
Of sun—set to sunny skies,

And yet as deep and dark—her eyes—

And lustrous black as blown-out stars.

A "BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT."

BY M. C. FARLEY.

She was tall and strong and resolute looking, with a handsome dark face that somehow impressed the beholder with the feeling that the owner was a person of very high courage, and of more than average strength of mind. She stood leaning lightly against one of the big stone pillars of the veranda, carelessly pulling off the tops of the long grasses that grew about her, the clinging cloth dress revealing the fine outlines of a figure that was almost statuesque in its elegance. She was saying in a tranquil tone to her small audience, consisting of one person only, as she scattered the heads of grass in heaps about her trim feet, that she hated lovers, and that marriage was only another form of slavery scarcely less obnoxious than that annulled by the Emancipation proclamation.

"All of which I grant you, but which still doesn't change the present circumstances," placidly remarked her interested auditor; as he calmly lit a fresh cigar and changed his position on the garden bench. "Though I must confess Miss Renfrew that to my mind there is a 'distinction with a difference'."

The young lady frowned.

"In this case it is a moneyed 'difference' and a moneyed 'distinction' Capt. Hazard," said she, pointedly. "You are a great flint, and I have heard you declare a hundred times that matrimony is a folly you would never be guilty of."

"To be sure," assented the Captain, lazily blowing the blue rings of smoke upon the air. "But you know that circumstances alter cases, particularly in the present instance."

"But I do not wish to marry you."

"Oh! of course not—most certainly not," retorted the Captain, with a cheerful smile, that enraged his fair companion more than words could have done. "But you know the terms of the will as well as I. It is unfortunate that, while our mutual friend adored us both, and endowed us equally with her worldly goods in her last will and testament, we find it so hard to comply with the obligations it imposes upon us. However, you can renounce your share of the fortune, Miss Renfrew, by refusing to become my wife. That alternative is always left you."

She shut her teeth tightly together, and looked defiantly at her companion.

She saw a tall, slightly-stooped figure, clad in the undress uniform of a Captain of the Guards. The sun that now threw his slanting beams through the foliage of the old elm tree shone on a face that had seen a hundred battles, and that was, even at, as proud and cold and resolute as her own.

"I am too poor to throw away my inheritance," said she, haughtily, pulling at the grass again. "And you know that I am poor; too—"

"For that matter so—and," said he. "And you are taking advantage of my poverty—"

"Indeed, no," disclaimed the Captain, hastily; "you can always refuse to comply with the obligations laid down in the will, Miss Renfrew."

"But I—I won't refuse," cried she angrily. "I won't refuse. Mark that down, Capt. Hazard."

A dark red spot burned in the Captain's pale cheeks for an instant, and he sighed deeply. But whether the sigh was cause by a feeling of relief or disappointment was impossible to determine.

"Then you will be my wife?"

"I will marry you to secure my share in the estate of the late Mrs. Ford, and for that reason only," said she, slowly and scornfully. "You are not to suppose that I love you for I do not."

"Thank you. I never suppose anything, Miss Renfrew."

"It is to be a *business arrangement*," she continued, with an angry stamp.

"Oh, certainly! A business arrangement only—I understand you," assented he, politely. "Viewing marriage in the light of a business relation will enable us to manage the whole affair with a circumspection and precision that might be wanting were we prompted by other than mercenary motives."

"I shall continue on flirting after we—that is—I shall do exactly as I please after—" She choked and hesitated.

"After we are married," said the Captain, quietly, finishing the sentence for her. "That is to be expected, and, 'pon my word, I think I will, too. None of those hum-drums lives for me, where Darby and Joan seclude themselves from the world and its fascinations, for each other. No, Miss Renfrew, we'll each have a hundred strings to our bow—if we can get 'em, and we will manage to spend our late friend's money in decent though good style and have a pleasant time while it lasts. We will look upon this marriage from now on in the light of a business affair—a sort of partnership, as it were, which does not limit either one of us to any certain and circumscribed round of duties. By the terms of the will, we shall have to keep the house on the avenue open a certain portion of each year, and do some entertaining. But that is easily managed. You can have your great friend and admirer, Jackey Littlefield, at the house as often as you

like, and I hope you won't forget to invite a few of the young ladies whom you know I have a preference for. I'm certain we'll get along famously in this way."

Miss Renfrew stared hard at the Captain. Was there the faintest, almost imperceptible, ring of sarcasm in his words and tone? But no, that could not be. Capt. Hazard had been a flint and lady-killer from his youth up, and the sentiments he now expressed were, of course, his real ones. Both the Captain and Miss Renfrew were the proteges of one who, though now removed by death, seemed to reach out to them her protecting arms from the grave.

Both had been very distantly related to the late Mrs. Ford, though they were in no wise connected by ties of blood to each other. They were the only relatives Mrs. Ford had left in the world, and as a consequence were her natural heirs. It had been her favorite plan in life to see those two obdurate people marry each other, and thus keep her fortune united in the family. But as they disappointed her in this, and each one seemed to strike out in an opposite direction as if anxious to conquer worlds for themselves, Mrs. Ford had given up in despair, and in a fit of chagrin made her last will and testament after a fashion peculiarly her own. Her fortune, valued in stocks and bonds, besides the elegant residence on the avenue, ran up into round numbers. All this she left unreservedly to the Captain and Miss Renfrew, providing they married each other in a given length of time. Failing to do this, the entire property was to go to the State, with the exception of a few hundred.

It had been difficult to conjecture what the Captain's thoughts were as he listened to that singular will. As for Miss Renfrew, if she was very high and mighty before she found out what the will was, she became twice as high and mighty afterward, and it did seem for some time as if the State would actually be the beneficiary after all.

Neither the Captain nor Miss Renfrew were in the first flush of youth. The Captain was 40 years old, if a day. He had endured the hardships of war, and had come home while yet a very young man, a sort of battle-worn hero, with a halting step that seemed the very perfection of grace to the women, who immediately set him up as a god of war and worshiped at his shrine accordingly.

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