

THE LAST KISS.

(An Incident of the Wreck of the City of Indianapolis.)

BY CHARLES W. HUBNER.

"Among the confused mass who were struggling and screaming, there were nothing but mud and sand and his wife. The conduct was in marked contrast with that of the other passengers. The panic which had seized the others was not shared by them, but their blanched faces told that they realized the peril which surrounded them. The only movement of anyone was now to turn the head to the chilling atmosphere. They stood together, their hands clasped in each other's, as if to fulfill the mortal vow of standing by each other in the vast tide of human forms, and in terror. As the train careened with a roar from one side to the other, and while the spray and waves were drenching them at every moment, the husband turned and imprinted a kiss upon the companion of his life, and while thus embracing a second time, the train was washed away and not seen afterward. Mr. Cox says the scene was one which will remain in his memory until his dying day."

Boston Herald.

The breakers roar, the mad winds howl,
Sharp smites the icy blast;
The stony sides riven by the rocks,
The doomed sink at last.

With dread din and thundershock,
Their wide mouths flocked with spray;
The hungry billows leap on deck,
Like wolves upon their prey.

Against the onset of the sea,
The fury of the gale,
What human heart may hope to stand?
What arm, save God's, prevail?

Alas, alas! O cruel Death,
Thine is the victory!
Gorge with an hundred victims more
Thy monstrous maw, O Sea!

But look! Who stands so calm there
Upon the reeling deck?
Unmoved amid the shrieking throng,
The clamor of the wreck?

A stately form in manhood's prime,
Stern-browed and eagle-eyed,
A slender woman sweet and fair,
Close clinging to his side;

Scour'd by the sharp sting of thongs,
Drenched by the ice-cold sea,
They shrink and shiver, and their cheeks
Are wan as dead men's bones.

It is the lashing sheet that makes
Their bodies shrink with pain,
And not the dread of death that cowes
The hearts of craven men;

For see how calmly, heart to heart,
Hand close clasped in hand,
Amid the riot's madding din!

Stand as they stood long years ago,
Proud groom and happy bride,
She to him as angels are,
And to her fond heart's pride.

Ah! who can know the thoughts that burned
Those brave, calm brows beneath?
The ages in that moment lived?
Those face to face with death?

A shock—a lurch—an awful crush!
The shank-like rock-fangs rip,
The steel-clad sides, and with a roar
The wild waveswhelm the ship!

One brief embrace of loving arms,
One fond farewell kiss,
And with all his heart, heart to heart,
Sink in the dread abyss!

O, Death, thou hast thy victories,
O, Life, thou hast thy fame;
Yet love can do heroic deeds
That shall your triumphs shame.

But never a diviner deed,
Even by Love was done,
Than when her apostrophe
In this last kiss she won.

Southern World.

KITTY'S COOKING EXPERIMENT.

BY M. C. FARLEY.

The band was playing the "Beautiful Blue Danube," but John was too angry to care for the music. He hurried his pretty fiance into the conservatory, and hidden behind a tall palm whispered fiercely in her ear, "You promised me that you wouldn't dance again with that Fitz Simmonds, and I've counted three waltzes, besides a polka or two. What does this mean, Kitty?"

"I think it means that you're inclined to find fault with me, John, and to be jealous." Kitty smiled saucily up into her companion's angry face.

"But your promise, Kitty; what of that?"

"To be sure, John, I told you I would not waltz again with Fitz Simmonds. But you know promises are like pie-crusts—made to be broken, and I couldn't help it. Fitz dances divinely."

"Fitz Simmonds is a cowardly sneak, burst out young Mason, in quick passion. "And I forbid you to dance with him again."

"You forbid me," repeated Kitty with withering emphasis and a proud toss of her head.

"Yes, I forbid you," retorted John in a sudden heat. "I will not permit my wife to go dancing around any ball-room with Fitz Simmonds's arms about her waist."

A dangerous flash shot from Miss Kitty's eyes.

"In the first place, Mr. Mason, you are ridiculously jealous. And in the second place, permit me to return your ring, and to inform you that so far as I can help it you will never have a wife to dance around a ball-room with anybody."

John ground the tiny ring under his heel.

"Now, Kitty, —"

But there was no Kitty. She had disappeared like a flash among the throng at the open door. And ten minutes later he saw her handed to the carriage by his hated rival.

If John Mason retired to his couch that night, or rather that morning—for the hour was long enough past midnight—in no enviable frame of mind, what must have been Kitty's feelings as she sought the privacy of her own room, and meditated upon the downfall of all her former hopes. Two stray tears trickled down her dear little nose as she put up her crimped before the glass and caught a glimpse of the ringless forefinger whereon John's diamond had so long had an abiding place.

"As if any body could care two straws for Fitz Simmonds, the silly thing," said Kitty, crossly, getting into bed. "And John—oh! dear me. No girl in the world ever had so much trouble as I."

Long enough before Kitty's blue eyes opened John Mason had packed his valise and announced to his mother that he intended to go out into the country and spend the summer at one of his places down the river, and that on no account was she to send him any messages, invitations, or anything else. He declared savagely that he hated the world. "All he asked now was to be let alone," and away he went.

It was six weeks after John Mason's departure that the great bank failure occurred in Smithville. Kitty went down to dinner one day and was greeted with

the astonishing news of the failure, coupled with the intelligence that all the McCord money was sunk in the general disaster, and that now the bank had bursted the McCords—meaning the widow and her four daughters—hadn't a penny with which to bless themselves.

"What on earth is to be done," gasped Kitty, pale with astonishment and terror. "Here's Nell and Bess and little Flo, all younger than I am, and there isn't a thing we can do to earn money."

"Do!" ejaculated Mrs. McCord, "we can all starve I suppose. We can all starve in a heap together."

"What a pity that you can't teach music, Kitty," said Flo, disconsolately.

"Or if you could only have a class in drawing," added Bess.

"Or that mamma were only a first-rate dressmaker," put in Nell.

Mrs. McCord lifted up her hands in horror.

"No McCord ever yet descended to menial labor," said she, loftily. "Kitty hadn't such a temper she would long since have been well married and settled, and in such a crisis as this she would have then been able to offer a home to her afflicted family."

Kitty, mind you, was barely 19.

"I know what I can do, girls," said she, laughing. "Do you remember the lessons I took at Miss Parlor's cooking club? Well, I can cook—even mamma has to admit that."

"I shall write to your Uncle Potipher and ask him for assistance," said Mrs. McCord, loftily.

"Uncle Pot! Oh, dear me!" ejaculated the four girls in chorus. "He's too awfully stingy for anything!"

"He'll only send you some tracts and a lot of advice," said Nell.

Kitty said nothing, but going to the library she looked over a file of the daily papers.

"Uncle Pot," muttered she, running over a list of late advertisements. "I'd rather be dead than live with that hateful old thing. We would be obliged to eat bread and water and be told ten times a day how much it cost him to keep us. Mamma may go to Uncle Potipher if she likes and take the girls along; but, as for me, I'd rather work."

She paused at one of the late advertisements that happened to catch her eye, and read it over twice:

WANTED—A COOK—in a gentleman's family, where there is neither companion or children, a strictly plain diet is required. Ten dollars a week paid to satisfactory parties. Apply at once, by letter, to P. O. Box 10, Brier Lodge, Thornfield."

Kitty read it once again.

"No children and no company! I think it would be just the thing for me," thought she. "Anyway, I'm going to try it."

Miss McCord did not wait to hear from Uncle Potipher. Upon second consideration, she decided it would be as well to go and make him a visit, and then apprise him of her loss of fortune.

"By which time," said Kitty, calmly, "I will be settled into some kind of business or other, and Uncle Pot will take the thing more kindly. He won't be so apt to feel as if we had taken him by storm, and intended to stop with im *bougre malgre*."

"I hate French, Kitty. Besides, it is bad taste to interlard your sentences with foreign quotations," said her mamma. "And I shall leave you in charge of the house, though I want you to remember that you are a McCord, and I expect you to behave yourself accordingly. Don't do anything to disgrace the family. Perhaps your Uncle Potipher will offer us a home with him, and so put our present difficulties to flight for a while, anyway."

Kitty's "tip-tilted" nose tilted a trifle higher at the idea of Uncle Potipher offering them a home, but she made no reply, and helped with the packing, glad when at last they were off. Kitty had written to "Box 10, Brier Lodge."

She didn't much like the idea of doing menial duties, but just now there was nothing else she was qualified for. To be sure, she could play a little, and sing a little, and, like all other fashionable young ladies of her set, she had some skill at drawing. But to tell the whole naked, unlovely truth, her knowledge of these branches was too much defective for her to attempt to teach any one of them. Besides, Kitty detested teaching in any shape. Only in one thing had she become proficient, and that one thing was the unfashionable art of cooking.

Miss Parlor never had a more apt or more interested pupil than Kitty, who had entered at once into the respective merits of soups and roasts, and puddings and pies, with a zest that betrayed an appreciative spirit.

A letter came that day from Brier Lodge. Kitty had given Miss Parlor herself as her reference, but it seemed as if this had been unnecessary. The reply to the application had evidently been written by the housekeeper, who urged Miss McCord to come on at once.

When Kitty read this letter a feeling of dismay came over her. She looked at her dimpled white hands.

"And so I am really to be cook in a kitchen apron?" asked she, irrelevantly.

"You are adorable in anything," asserted Mason, keeping a tight grip on her.

"But that isn't the question, will you marry me—quick now?"

"Mr. Mason, Esquire," cried she, dropping a courtesy; "dear sir, I will. How does that suit you?"

"That suits me perfectly."

Miss McCord returned to town that very day, and a few weeks later there was a quiet wedding that made her Mrs. John Mason and put an end forever to her flitting possibilities, though there was every reason in the world for believing that at the same time it opened a vast and never ending sphere for unlimited experiments in cooking.

Kitty was terribly angry when he found himself referred to in the local paper as a "prig." He appealed to his acquaintances, if there was anything of the prig about him; and the universal verdict rendered was that there was not. Indeed, the editor of the paper, who happened along at the moment, also admitted it. "Then why in thunder do you call me one?" roared Bass.

"Calm yourself, my dear fellow," said the editor. "It was all owing to the compositor, who put an 'r' between the 'p' and the 'i.'" Bass went off in orographic study.—*Exchange.*

Lodge—in answer to her question as to the distance and direction of that desired haven. With a quaking heart, Kitty climbed into the democrat wagon.

"Really this is horrible," thought she, as the hired man took a seat beside her and calmly explained the merits of the team, and finally asked her, after some skirting round the corners, if she "had a steady feller? an' if she hadn't, why she might count on him for a regular Sunday night business, if she'd only say the word."

However, they were not long in arriving at their destination, and without more ado the new cook was installed in her new domain.

The first thing to be done was to prepare the supper. Kitty thought Miss Parlor was a failure when the fault-finding lord of the Lodge returned the eggs for the fourth time before he would condense to eat them.

The next morning her trials began in good earnest. The master of Brier Lodge was not only fastidious, but capricious as well, and Kitty soon discovered that she was not only expected to cook the meals, but to wash the dishes and blacken his boots as well.

"I'll die before I'll touch those odious boots," said she, rebelliously.

"And I'll report you to the master if you don't," said the old housekeeper.

Ten dollars a week, or Uncle Potipher! The thought came like a flash into Kitty's mind, and she picked up the boots. It was something she had never done in her life before, and, moreover, in this particular art, she had received no lessons from so distinguished a teacher as Miss Parlor. It was no wonder the horrid boots did not reflect to her credit. She put them down in disgust. Tears came into her eyes. The coffee boiled over, the ham was burning, and the muffins, that had promised so well in the beginning, were browned to a crust. Kitty burst into tears. In the midst of her distress the housekeeper came into the kitchen with an order from the master to the cook. Cook was wanted in the dining-room. Kitty marched up-stairs much against her will and entered the presence of her employer, who sat with his back to the door.

"I'll tell you what it is, cook," cried out this personage in a strangely familiar voice, as she walked toward the table. "I have a friend coming to dine with me to-day, and there must be game dinner."

Kitty was staring hard at the speaker. She remembered that voice only too well; and here she was, with a kitchen apron on, and a smudge of coal dust staining her right cheek—cooking his meals, washing his dishes, and, yes—blackening his very boots. Oh, dear! She was on the point of running out of the room, when the gentleman, surprised at her silence, turned himself about and stood face to face with his new cook.

"Kitty McCord!" ejaculated he in genuine amazement.

"Oh, John!" gasped Kitty, ready to sink with mortification.

Mr. Mason didn't stand on ceremony. Two long arms swung themselves about Kitty's waist, and a kiss alighted on the little smudgy cheek.

"Oh, you heavenly girl," cried John ecstatically. "You've come to make up, haven't you?"

Kitty remembered her position. She knew that if worse comes to worse his crowd can whip your crowd. He talks loud, and wants to convince people that he is brave, but generally he is a weak-minded coward.

If a young man selects respectable company, treats everybody well, is kind to high and low, rich and poor, just the same, goes out of his way, if occasion offers, to do a kindness, speaks well of all, or says nothing, and never, knowingly, does an injury to any person, he can go through life and never be called a liar and never have occasion to fight. He can so conduct himself that if a person should call him a liar he would not get time to fight, for every friend he had would know the charge to be false, and they would insist that the person making the charge should take it back and apologize, it would seem such a monstrous injustice to the friends. But, if a young fellow is a liar, and talks too much with his mouth, and is constantly saying things about people behind their backs that are not so, and he is selfish and mean, and would not do a kindly act, except he could make a point by it and have everybody know it, if he is a liar, and a mean one, who cares nothing for the anguish and heartaches he may cause by his lies, he is liable to be called a liar any time, and maybe it is best for such persons to resent it and fight, for they will occasionally be mauled, and it will eventually do them good and teach them a lesson.—*Peck's Sun.*

"And Fitz Simmonds?"

"Just wear this ring of mine again, and name an early day for our marriage, and you may dance with Fitz Simmonds until he drops. Now then."

Kitty burst out laughing.

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