

I WAS ONLY TEASING.

BY ALMA M'KEE.

In a sunny bower
Overhanging with roses
Half reclines a maiden fair;
Dreaming she repose.

Curtains white, with fringes brown
Hide from view the azure;
Golden curls rebellious play
Round her brow at leisure.

Stealing toward the enchanted spot
Cautionously, unfeared,
Comes a youth with bold brown eyes,
Sometimes seen, but rarely.

Cupid's arrow grazed her cheek;
A laugh he cannot smother,
The blue orb flash while red lips say,
"Sir, I'll call my mother."

Induction reigns of sweet desire
In the reigns of sweet desire;
Saucy Will with dauntless mien
Drops down just beside her.

"Maisie, why this cold reserve?
Do you love another?
Tell me truly 'tis so!"
"Sir, I'll call my mother."

"Maisie, will you wed with me?
Am I not your lover?
Do you love me, Maisie, dear?"
"Sir, I'll call my mother."

"False and fail one, then, aden;
I'll no longer woe thee;
Fly to him who has thy heart;
Farwell! now I leave thee."

"Oh, Will, dear, you must not go!
I love thee as none other.
There is no need to hurry so;
I would not call my mother."

A RUNAWAY MATCH.

BY M. C. FARLEY.

A ponderous step sounded in the arrow hallway and a succession of thundering knocks made my door rattle on its hinges. I recognized that easy step, so like the tread of an enraged elephant, and wondered what under heaven had brought Maj. Philpot to my humble lodgings. Before I could answer the raps, the door was burst violently open, disclosing the gross figure of the choleric Major, ho, evidently in a towering rage, talked across the floor, and seated himself in the only safe chair the place afforded. I am far from being a rich man, you understand.

"Hope I see you well," I began, politely, scarcely knowing just how to take him, for his uncertain temper was subject for comment by all who new or had ever heard of him.

"Hope you do, sir; yes, sir," roared he, bringing his cane down on the floor with a bang. "You're old George Green, ain't you?"

"I am George Green, at your service, sir," said I, smothering my indignation in his brusque manner, "and, as to my ge—"

"To the d—l with your age, man!" interrupted the Major, with a grunt. Who the deuce cares how old you are? I never as a choice morsel for tea-drinking women. I came to see you today because I have heard about you, and am told you are the very man I want to do business with."

"You do me proud!" said I, as the Major paused for want of breath. Shall be happy to serve you in my small way, if—"

"Lord save us!" ejaculated the Major, growing alarmingly red in the face in his efforts to make himself heard the full length of the block. "Why on earth don't you keep still and let me speak. Only one man may talk when I'm around, and I'm that man! D'y'e ear that?"

"Anybody can hear you that chooses to listen, if he isn't as deaf as a doorstop!"

The Major is a rich man and I am not, but there the difference in favor of the Major ends; and perhaps nobody ever had talked to him like this before. Any way he calmed down a trifle. "I'm told you are a detective," he rowled, in a deep bass that had all the effect of pent-up thunder in my little room.

"I am."

I flattered myself that if, as they say is, "brevity is the soul of wit," my reply must absolutely have had a paralyzing effect on the drowsy Major. But nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he actually seemed to be pleased to think I had said so little.

"I'll tell you what it is, Green," he roke out, presently, in a stentorian tone, "I'm in a dreadful fix, and I want our help. Understand?"

"Perfectly."

"There's my daughter. You've heard my daughter, haven't you?"

"Often."

"And she's got no end of beaux and such like fol-de-rols. They all swear by the crook of her little finger that she's the one object in the world worth saving."

"To be sure."

"And what with the fifty thousand dollars that her grandmother left her—fifty thousand gold dollars! think of it! I don't feel inclined to dispute the point. By ardent young men most ladies with fifty thousand dollar bank accounts are objects to be desired, and my Arabella seems to be no exception, sir, sir, and the irate father brought his mighty fist down with a resounding thack on his ponderous leg that threatened to split the broadcloth, and, rising to his full height, fairly bellowed, if my daughter Arabella's judgment is blinded by the little god called Cupid, Arabella's dad, sir, is up and coming, and feels himself able to cope with a thousand fortune-hunting lovers; let them come singly or in pairs—or in battalions, even!"

"I've no doubt about that," as the Major paused to gather in a little wind and glared wickedly at me from the corner of his one eye; "and, if I understand it, you want my assistance in outwitting the rascals."

"That's the very thing!" roared he, in a tone that made the windows rattle. "That's just it, exactly! You've hit the nail slap on the head! It's this way: My Arabella has actually lost her senses, and gone head over heels in love with young Pillkins—know him?"

"Intimate."

"Poorer than a church mouse, prouder than Lucifer, and a damned Democrat in politics! By the Lord Harry! Arabella needn't think for a minute that she can foist young Pillkins on her old dad as his son-in-law. No, sirree. I hate his poverty. I hate his pride. I hate his demotion politics. I hate his very name—Pillkins—puff!"

Pillkins was a lawyer, and once upon

a time had been a rival of my own. He was proud; he was poor; and, moreover, he was my sworn enemy. If I could spoil his prospects of marriage with the Major's heiress, I determined to do so. Here was my revenge, and revenge is sweet. That is, those who have had an opportunity to know say it is, and I believe them.

"Pillkins knows what I think of his trying to marry my daughter. I've told him. Not only have I told him in plain words that he is a fortune-hunter, but I enforced it by kicking him off the front piazza no longer ago than this morning," went on the Major.

"And what did he say to that?"

"Say," roared Philpot, prancing angrily about the room. "Good Lord! He just got up, bowed politely, lifted his hat, if you'll believe me! the impudent dog! and, says he, 'Since you adopt heroic treatment, my dear Major, I shall feel obliged to follow your example and prosecute this courtship in a heroic manner. I'll have your daughter, or I'll die trying to win her. Remembah that. But he's mistaken; no Pillkins will ever wed a Philpot—perish the thought. I overheard them planning an elopement, and I intercepted a note from him not two hours ago, in which he gave her the details, and set the time, even to the hour. It is to take place to-night. We give a grand party, you know, and she is to slip away after supper, when the carriages are drawn up in line before the pavement and the guests are taking their departure. She is to put on a long dark wrap, and carry a tuberose in her hand, by which he is to recognize her. There is to be a carriage handy. She is to enter it, and the driver is to go to the—devil. But, unknown to Mr. Pillkins, Arabella's old dad is to put in his appearance just at this opportune time and stop the performance, and Arabella herself is to be yanked upstairs and sent to bed."

"And what am I to do?"

"You are to come to the ball as a guest. I will introduce you to my daughter, and you must shadow her during the whole evening. She must not be allowed to evade us. I would go home now and lock her up and have an end to it all but for the party. It would never do for her to be absent when our guests arrive. I've spent a small fortune on this party, and I want it to be a success, and I am determined not to give up the entertainment, nor to allow Pillkins to run away with me."

"I'll be there early," said I, eagerly.

"Do. I'll give you a hundred dollars to help me outwit the rascally Pillkins. He's entirely too smart in his own estimation. And if he thinks he will ever feather his nest—figuratively speaking, of course—with Arabella's \$50,000 why, then, he'll do it through old Philpot's mistake—that's all."

"You can depend upon me, and I never expect to earn a hundred dollars more easily than I will to-night, my dear Major. Let me see: tuberoses—dark wraps—waiting carriage at about 3 o'clock in the morning. I give you my word, Maj. Philpot, that if Pillkins gets away with Arabella to-night you may use my head for a football."

"Good. I'll expect you early," and with that he tore himself away.

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I hired an elaborate evening suit and took my way to the Philpot mansion. The Major lived in elegant style in a big brown-stone house on Schuyler avenue. He had given me a card, which I sent up by the servant. Instantly the Major came into the study where the servant had conducted me to wait a moment.

"Gad!" says he, "you look like a dandy."

"I am a dandy," says I, "for to-night, any way. How goes it?"

"Lovely. Arabella suspects nothing. She is rather more affectionate than common, but, in view of her intended flight, perhaps not more so than is natural."

A heavy velvet curtain that concealed a doorway trembled slightly and caught my attention for a moment. What if somebody should overhear us; but no, that was impossible. I stepped toward the curtain, but at that moment the beautiful Arabella herself appeared in the farther recess.

"My daughter, this is Mr. Sidesinger, of Columbus. Miss Philpot, Mr. Sidesinger," says the Major, introducing I was confounded.

The Major and I had agreed that I should be known that evening as a Mr. Sidesinger from Ohio—a particular friend of his, whom he had not met with in a long time.

"As an old friend of her father's, I hope Miss Philpot will reserve me a few of the dances on her tablet," says I to the young lady.

"As many as you like," said she, affably, and I marked as many as I dared.

She called away just then by a lot of fresh arrivals; but I managed soon to make my way through the crowd into the ball-room. I knew she would not attempt to leave the house before supper, so there was nothing to worry myself about. You know it isn't often that a poor detective gets a chance to mingle with the fashionable swells as an equal, and I wanted to make the most of it.

Whenever I thought of Pillkins—and it was often enough to keep me in good humor—I could not help but laugh in my sleeve at the trick we were going to play on him. To earn a hundred dollars and be revenged on your enemy at the same time is enough to make anybody cheerful, and Miss Philpot had no occasion to complain of inattention on my part, when in the course of the evening I claimed her for a partner. I danced her and Iiced her and I walked her four thousand miles, I firmly believe, around the big conservatory. I frequently caught the Major's eye, but he smiled the broadest kind of approval, and long before supper-time I had earned the undying hatred of a score of young fellows who envied me my good luck in putting the rest of her adorers in the shade—so to speak. As the hour grew later I noticed Miss Philpot began to cast furtive glances toward the little study. The Major, busy with his guests, still took time to send me two lines by a servant, bidding me to be on my guard. I determined not to take

my eyes off his wayward daughter, and though it was impossible to be constantly at her side, still I hovered near enough to see every motion on her part. What puzzled me most was the fact that, contrary to our expectation, she made no motion to leave the parlors. It was long past 2 o'clock. The dancers had tired themselves out and were now scattered here and there in the dressing rooms, or stood wrapped and ready to make their adiems. The time had come, if at all, when the elopement would be attempted. I gradually approached Miss Philpot, but a crowd of people were around her.

"Carriage for the Misses Fenton," "carriage for Col. Bellairs," "carriage for Mr. Parkinson and ladies," cried a number of voices at once, and a stream of people drifted down the broad steps. Miss Philpot languishingly advanced into the hall. I followed closely. She was without the prescribed dark wrap and the tuberose. She seemed not to have the slightest idea of running away with Mr. Pillkins. Was it all a mistake of the Major's excited fancy after all? I could not help but think so. Still, I waited. Miss Philpot lifted her head and glanced casually in my direction. The stream of people melted away before her. As I pushed my way through the crowd that surged into the broad hall, she stepped quickly near the wide open door. A roll of carpeting had been laid down the steps and across the pavement. I worked my way toward her, determined to keep her within reaching distance. At that moment a barouche dashed up, and halted suddenly opposite Miss Philpot.

"Carriage for Catherwood," cried the driver. The door opened, as if by magic—a tall form sprang out.

Miss Philpot glided forward. At that instant I recognized Mr. Pilkins.

"No, you don't," said I, clutching Miss Philpot's flowing robe, as she flew toward him. The filmy dress gave way in my hand; the carriage door closed upon her white figure and the driver closed upon her.

"Fifty dollars to you if you follow and overtake that carriage," I yelled to the driver and jumped into the vehicle.

We tore down the street like mad, leaving Maj. Philpot standing at his deserted home filling the night air with imprecations. The fight and the pursuit had taken place in much less time than it takes me to tell it now. It had been almost instantaneous in its quickness, and I did not like to be balked at this stage in the game. Where now was my revenge, and where too were my hundred dollars? Come what would I determined at all hazards to overtake the runaway.

"Lay on the whip," I cried to my driver.

"The horses are in a dead run," he answered back. "We ain't more than half a block behind Mr. Pillkins."

"Then you recognized Pillkins?"

"Oh, yes."

"Keep 'em in sight, and if they stop at any place, increase your speed and catch up with them."

We raced down Broad street, turned the corner of Fourth, and headed for the river.

"Where can that infernal fellow be going?" I thought, watching anxiously the carriage as it dashed over the road in advance of us. We chased them for nearly an hour, when I perceived that we were gaining perceptibly. The driver of the barouche noticed it, and pulled up suddenly in the middle of the road.

"I'd like to know what in the deuce you fellows are racing me for at this time of night," cried he.

"I want Miss Philpot," I retorted, jumping down and opening the door of the barouche.

The driver laughed sardonically.

"You won't find her here."

The night was nearly as light as day.

The moon shone so brightly that one might almost have read print without glasses, precluded the idea of her having escaped from the carriage without my knowledge.

"Miss Philpot," says I, putting my head inside the carriage, "you must return to your father."

The carriage was empty; Miss Philpot was not there—nor yet Mr. Pillkins, either.

I was confounded.

"What hocus-pocus work is this?" I cried, angrily. "She was here, for I saw her enter this very vehicle an hour ago."

The driver laughed again; a quizzing, hateful laugh that made me long to knock him down.

"Oh, yes, to be sure she was here. She just got in at one side of this herd coach, and she immediately jumped out at the other side, as per arrangement. And that there Pillkins had a big water-proof that he slipped over her white ball dress and slipped her into a gig as was waitin' for 'em at the corner.

And they're man and wife by this time, in spite of all the detectives in Illinois. Pillkins give me twenty dollars to race off here and lead you a wild goose chase, and I'm darned if it hasn't been the best joke in the business to see you smart Alecks fooled so.

"Hoofor for Pillkins."

It was enough to make any man swear, and I swore curses not only loud but deep.

Both the drivers laughed.

"I'll take my fifty dollars, Mr. Green," said the fellow I had employed; "and if it's all the same, I'd like it now."

In a dejected and surly mood I returned home.

It was a week afterward that Maj. Philpot thundered down my little hallway, and, thundering at my door once more, thundered himself into my small room, and filled up my best chair with his rotund figure.

"It's a damned fine little game they played us, eh, Green, isn't it?" said he, blandly, as he pulled out his big pocket-book and unrolled some bills.

"By George! You know my Arabella had Pillkins hidden behind the curtains in the library that night of the party, and they overheard every blamed word we said, and laid their plans to outwit us," and he roared with laughter.

I was amazed.

"But you don't mean to say, do you, Major, that you've taken that scamp

into your friendship after such a trick as he served you?"

The Major only laughed the louder.

"All's fair in love and war, Green, and here's your money. I ain't giving it to you, you know, because you succeeded in keeping my Arabella from eloping, but just for the reason that you failed to do so. Pillkins is a brick—a perfect brick—do you hear that? And the Major slapped his legs with immense satisfaction.

"He's poor, I know, but he's sharper than lightning, and as to his politics, while I don't vote as he does, yet they do say that the Democrats are going to run him for the Legislature this fall; and if he pulls in at the head of the race—and I'll bet my bottom dollar he will—why Arabella's dad, sir, will stand in with him to the last cent of his pile."

"What about Arabella herself?" says I, completely dumfounded at this turn of affairs.

"By gad, sir! Arabella is actually worth fifty thousand dollars more, in my opinion, than before she eloped with Pillkins. Sharp girl is Arabella—just like her old dad, sir, for all the world. Bless you! they both came home next morning bold as lions, and my Arabella plumped herself down on my left leg, and, handing me her marriage certificate, says, as smilingly as you please: 'We're married in spite of your Mr. Green, papa; and here we are, and what are you going to do about it?'

"And what will you do about it?" says I.

"By the Lord Harry!" roars the Major, "there was only one thing I could do—and that was to forgive em; and I did it right on the spot."

So this was the kind of revenge I was getting