

STEALING A RING

"I have not been saving all these years for nothing," said Robert Lincoln, as he walked along the cliffs with his friend. In another week I shall be Janie Read's husband. Don't you congratulate me?"

"I wish you luck, certainly," returned Henry Graham. "I don't know any girl in town that I would rather marry than Janie—that is, were I a marrying man."

In a few moments the friends parted, Robert walking in the direction of the lighthouse, where he was to relieve the keeper for the night, and Henry returning to the village.

There were sad hearts in the village the next day when it was noised about that young Lincoln had fallen from the cliff in the dark. He had started for the lighthouse and had not been heard of since. But Robert was not dead. In falling he had been caught on a projecting ledge, where he was found by some good fishing people and cared for.

On the porch of a vine-covered cottage was seated a beautiful maiden. Her fair face, rosy with the health which an active country life brings to the cheek of youth, was bowed in her hands, while through her fingers the tears were stealing.

"It was Janie, weeping for him she should never see again. Suddenly steps approached, and Janie sprang to her feet with a scream. Who was this who stood before her so pale and thin?"

"Janie! darling Janie! do not be frightened. It is I—your Robert. Janie did not believe in apparitions, and in another moment she was clasped close in her lover's embrace.

But after the first transports of her joy was over, she suddenly seemed to remember something which called a grave cloud to her brow. Withdrawing herself from her lover's arms, she hid her face in her hands.

"Janie! what is it?" Robert exclaimed. "Why do you look so sad?"

Then amid tears and sobs the girl told him that she had been forced by her father to give her consent to marry one he had chosen for her.

Robert's face grew as black as night. "Who is it?" he exclaimed.

"It is Henry Graham," answered Janie, still sobbing. "He came to father and told him that he had lately been left a large sum of money, and that he could give me a good home. Father was delighted—you know how much he thinks of money—and made me consent. I was so stunned, thinking you dead and gone, that I did not make much resistance. And, oh! it is too late to draw back, for the wedding day is set.

As she spoke, Robert's eyes rested upon a ring which was upon her betrothal finger. It was a turquoise, in the shape of a heart and set in a small hoop of gold.

A sudden, strange expression flashed into his eyes.

"Did Henry Graham give you that ring, Janie?" he asked.

As she assented her lover suddenly clasped her to him.

"Janie! Janie!" he cried, "courage, lassie! We'll be happy yet! A light has broken in upon me. Wait till to-morrow and see if your father still wishes you to marry Henry Graham."

The ring which Janie wore upon her finger Robert at once recognized as one which with other articles of jewelry that had belonged to his dead mother had been in the box which contained his money, and of whose hiding place but one person knew, and that person was Henry Graham!

Like lightning he had guessed the truth. As he had expected, he found his money gone.

Some hours later, with a pale, frightened face (for villains are always cowards), Henry Graham stood by while a constable searched his things and brought to light convincing proofs of his guilt in the shape of the rest of the jewelry, which when he had taken the money he had appropriated also.

When he saw that all was discovered Henry made a full confession. He had always secretly loved Janie Read, and all the time he had been willing himself into Robert's friendship his heart had been filled with envy toward him. Thus, when fate had seemed to put the opportunity into his power he had not been able to resist the temptation of securing the prize he had long coveted. He had known of Mr. Read's love of money, and had calculated rightly on its power in turning him to his wishes. But his evil deeds had found him out; and though, through Robert's refusal to appear against his friend, Henry escaped the imprisonment he deserved, he was punished enough through his guilty conscience, and in witnessing the happiness of the lovers whose lives he had so nearly been the means of marrying forever.

A few months later the little village presented a gala appearance.

It was the wedding day of the two young people, who were beloved by all, and whose romantic story interested old and young.

Matrimonial Harmony.

"Are you as happy now as you were before you were married?" asked Mrs. Yeast of young Mrs. Crimsonbeak.

"Yes, indeed," replied the lady, "and a great deal happier."

"That's strange," suggested the philanthropist's wife.

"Not at all strange," came from the young married woman. "You see, before I was married I used to spend half my time worrying about what dress I should wear when Daniel called."

"But don't you try just as hard now look well when your husband returns home at night?" interrupted Mrs.

"You see," went on the bridegroom's mother, "I don't worry any more, as I have only one dress."

—Yonkers Statesman.

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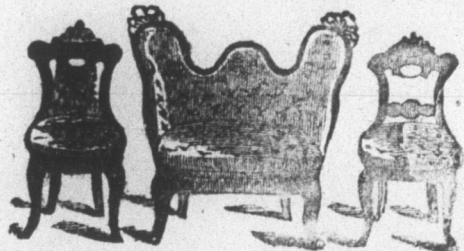
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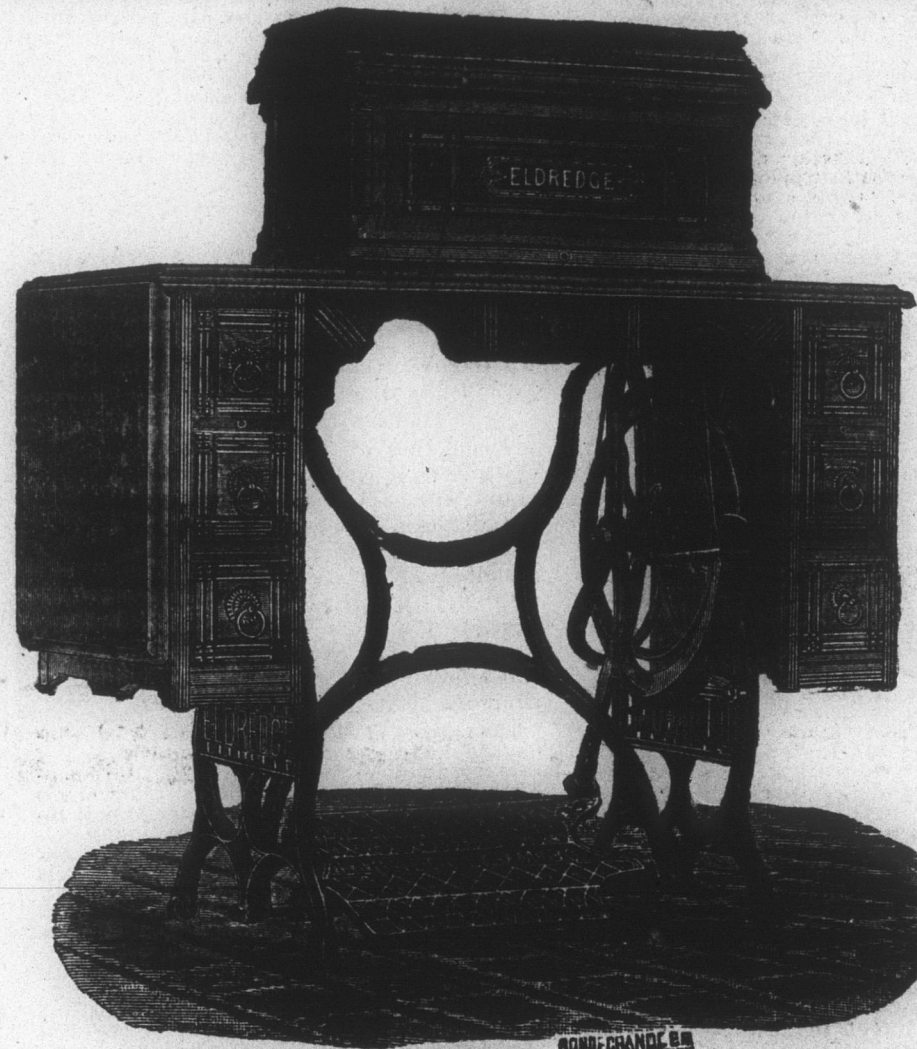
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