



CHAPTER I.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

The sky was a vault of fleckless blue, the sun a great, gleaming sapphire, the air bracing as pure as air can be, the autumnal day drawing to a close.

Hopetdale was a peaceful hamlet, but beyond its kind in certainly one progressive point—it had a young ladies' seminar, of unusual excellence, and a young man of more than usual acumen was enjoying the beautiful day and taking in the distant turrets and peaks of the Institute of learning in question at that eventful hour, for him, when our story opens.

He had the look of an artist, and the equipment of an artist surrounded him. He had chosen the slope of a woodland grove for his camp-stool, and had set his easel facing the village. The flanking leaves of a broad-spreading tree sheltered him. Air, earth and sky were in harmony with the artistic impulse, but just now he seemed in thoughtful rather than an active mood.

His brush had fallen to his side, and the canvas showed only a few large patches of color. It seemed as if he had come out to paint Nature, and had been shamed from feebler effort by the glorious brush of Nature itself. The sun, which dashed the white villas with pale gold, made the sunacs a great ensanguined blur of crimson, and, mingling with the varicolored tree-tops, produced those exquisite shades and alternations of color and beautiful effects which no pen has ever yet delineated.

"I wish she would come," he murmured. "I wonder if she will come?"

His words were a sigh of longing and anxiety, and he continued to gaze at the distant turrets as if "she" was a fairy, with power to fly straight through the air to his side.

There was a rustling among the dry twigs back of him, but he did not hear it. Then there was a quiver of branches overhead, and down came a hundred fluttering leaves.

"Caught in a shower, Mr. Dreamer! laughed a bright, bell-like voice. "Is this the way you work at the great picture that is to charm the world?"

"Edna!"

Over went stool and easel as the young man sprang to his feet, as if from an electric shock. Red as the red, red leaves strewn about him flushed the handsome face, and brighter than the crystal rays of sunshine glowed his pour-ou-looking eyes down into responsive ones brighter yet, while he clasped the hands, both hands, that had shaken the bough overhead, sending earthward the fluttering messengers of mischief.

"So wanted to see you!" he breathed, thrilling at the trustful glance of those pure eyes.

"And I so wanted to see you, but—Raymond!"

He was a privileged character, this athletic, handsome-faced young fellow, all soul, all art, all love, for they were affianced, yet her tones were a tender reproach, a mock serious mandate, as his eager lips came a trifle dangerously near sweeping her velvety cheek. She had managed to shrink back and disengage her hand, and with the tip of one pearly pink finger she pointed back the way she had come.

There was a roguish twinkle in her eye, as Raymond Marshall stoled quickly in the direction indicated. He bowed and—greeted, dolefully but submissively.

His visitor had not come unattended. Back in the grove, a girl of her own age was toying with the rattling tops of the blanched golden rod.

"Was it necessary," he began, and then uttered, quite testily: "Always that girl!"

"Raymond! how dare you!" came the spirited interpolation, and Miss Edna Deane showed the fire of her quick nature in a sudden, indignant flash of those captivating eyes. "Beatrice Mercer is my friend."

"I wish she wasn't. Of all your associates I distrust her the most," ventured Raymond Marshall.

"You ought to be ashamed!" commented Miss Tyrant, severely, "and you ought to feel grateful to her, instead of otherwise."

"Grateful?"

"Yes; that is if you really care about seeing me. You know the rules of the school, and this young lady may leave its sacred precincts unless accompanied by one of the teachers. Poor Beatrice has to teach for her tuition, and they invest her with the dignity and judgment of a duenna. So, when I told Miss Chandler, the principal, that I had the headache, that I thought I spied you so lonesome and industrious over here, and felt that the encouragement of my criticism on your beautiful picture might hurry up its completion, she reluctantly admitted that such a proceeding would be quite proper if Beatrice accompanied me."

Raymond Marshall winced at the thrust at his indolence. He brightened up, however, as he said:

"Never mind. All that will soon end, and soon we shall have no friend, chaperon or duenna to mark the completeness of happiness. Oh, my little love!"

Edna's head had dropped on her breast, and she shook her head slowly.

"If only—if only Miss Chandler would speak!"

"Yes," interupted Raymond, excitedly; "if she would only speak. Just look at it! Here we are, two loving, harmonious souls. I think the world of you, and you take pity on me, and hope to make me famous some day by marrying me and securing the right to order me to work. My family are delighted with you. Even prim Miss Chandler acknowledged it would be cruel to part us, but—that dreadful mystery! She cannot consent because she is not a relative. She cannot secure a relative's consent, because she does not know any such. Was there ever such a stickler for propriety—was there ever such a maddening muddle?"

Edna's head rested consolingly on her lover's arm, as the face clouded.

"Oh, it is not quite desirable," she said, cheerfully. "Let me consider the real facts of the case. Raymond, and be patient. Here I am, a nobody, a girl from nowhere. I seem to have been placed at the seminary here at 10 years of age, without a memory of early childhood. Miss Chandler says a mysterious gentleman brought me here, paid ten years' tuition and board in advance for me, and—that's all."

"Not a letter since—not a visit since?"

"Not even a hint. Here I was left, was I an orphan, was I abandoned here, or was the mysterious gentleman my father, who, for lack of a dead mother's

the betrayal of the least emotion, as answered solemnly, but not unpleasingly:

"No. I am only your father's friend—his servant—his messenger."

"And—he has sent for me?"

Every word was a throb of suspense and painful uncertainty. A father! Then she was not utterly friendless? A father! But why had he left her loveless, neglected, all these years?

"Miss Chandler will tell you," answered the stranger. "She recognizes the authority by which I appear."

"Dear Edna, let it be smiles rather than tears," spoke Miss Chandler, coming to Edna's side and placing a caressing hand about her. "It is all quickly told. You have a father, and he has sent for you."

"But—"

"I cannot tell you more. This gentleman only tells me to strict silence, rather, leaves me in complete ignorance of the motives for all this mystery, but insists that you shall leave once. Of one thing be assured, however. I am satisfied that you are going into kind hands. All will be well. This letter will convince you. It is from your father." And Miss Chandler nodded to the stranger, who handed Edna a sealed missive.

She barely glanced at it through her beaming tears. She read only the first few lines, beginning:

"My child, there have been vital reasons for my seeming neglect of you, but there are still vital reasons why suddenly, abruptly, you must sever your connection with your dearest friends and hasten to me. When I explain you will know why no one must know—"

Edna crumpled the unfinished missive in her pocket at this stage, for Miss Chandler was giving her directions to go to her room and pack up hurriedly.

In that apartment Beatrice Mercer joined her. With a strange, wondering light in her eyes, she listened to Edna's story of the hidden summons.

"I shall be allowed to

write to you, to explain everything when I find my father," sobbed Edna as she clung to Beatrice in a fervent embrace. "Beatrice—Raymond?"

The scintillating eyes of the dark beauty flashed wickedly, but the expression was veiled from poor Edna's tear-blinded sight.

"I shall tell him—"

"That I could not bid him good-bye, they would not let me. Tell him I will get his word, as soon as I can. Oh, this mysterious beauty unnerves me! I do not even know where I am going. Good-bye, dear friend. Good-bye, good-bye."

A clinging kiss emphasized every word. The tearful Miss Chandler waved her last adieu from the door. Her somber companion helped her into the carriage, and the wheels grinding down the soft road seemed to be tearing her very heart-strings, as Hopetdale faded from view in the distance and the vehicle bounded forward, carrying innocent Edna Deane to meet a strange, solemn mystery.

Twilight closed in about the landscape, as the carriage dashed across the country for the nearest railway station.

Twilight, folding its mystic shroud about the old seminary structure, was shut out securely from one room at least.

With locked doors and shades drawn, Beatrice Mercer sat at a table in her apartment, poring over a letter, studying it, analyzing it, re-reading it.

It was the crumpled missive, half read by the distressed Edna. How had it come into her possession? By design, the gleaming, calculating eyes told, for those eyes had the mask down now, all alone by herself.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ABOUT MILK.

When condensed milk was first introduced, thirty years ago, the idea was lauged at. The inventor carried the entire daily supply for New York City in a ten-quart pail, delivering it personally to patrons. He died worth \$100,000, made out of the business, which has grown to be a gigantic industry. The products employed are very simple, the fresh milk being very easily converted into a great copper tank with a steam jacket. While it is being heated sugar is added, and the mixture is then drawn off into a vacuum tank, where evaporation is produced by heat. The vacuum tank will hold, perhaps, 9,000 quarts. It has a glass window at the top, through which the operator in charge looks from time to time. He can tell by the appearance of the milk when the time has arrived to shut off the steam, and this must be done at just the right moment, else the batch will be spoiled. Next the condensed milk is drawn into forty-quart cans, which are set in very cold spring water, where they are made to revolve rapidly by a mechanical contrivance, in order that their contents may cool evenly.

When the water does not happen to be cold enough, ice is put in to bring it down to the proper temperature. Finally the tin cans, of market size, are filled with the milk by a machine, which pours into each one exactly sixteen ounces automatically, one girl showing the cans beneath the spout while another removes them as fast as they are filled. People in cities nowadays use condensed milk largely in preference to the uncondensed, regarding it as more desirable, because of the careful supervision maintained by the companies over the dairies from which they get their supplies. For their consumption the product is delivered unsweetened, but even in this condition it will last fresh two or three times as long as the ordinary milk, by reason of the boiling to which it has been subjected. Milk fresh from the cow contains 88 per cent. of water, condensed milk 28 per cent. The latter is fed to a great many babies, partly on account of the difficulty found in obtaining pure milk from the average milkman. It may be well to mention here that the one-cow's milk business is a swindle, and a delusion. To supply milk to customers regularly from the same cow is not possible, in practice, though, perhaps, it might be done.

"I didn't know that it was that way, teacher," she said, sweetly; "I want you to have the biggest half."

"Thank you, my dear," said the teacher, who suddenly discovered that it took very little learning to be generous and thoughtful.

## FOR OUR LITTLE FOLKS.

A COLUMN OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THEM.

What Children Have Done, What They Are Doing, and What They Should Do to Pass Their Childhood Days.

A FROG HE WOULD A-WEING GO.

Sir Frog looked out one summer day, Found the world so bright and himself so gay.

He said, "A-woeing I will go, As my grandpa did, long, long ago."

It took him a day to climb his coat,

and the flies to cigar his shirt."

Then away, till Miss Mouse's home he sees,

And pretty Miss Mouse a-tasting cheese.

How He Judged.

While it is true that some of the

most precious and accurate writers

have been exceedingly slovenly in

their personal habits, and while some

men who were thoroughly bad in

their private lives have certainly

acted in their public careers as if im-

pelled by the noblest and loftiest mo-

tives, yet it is generally the case, that

one reveals his true character in the

ordinary affairs of life.

A country innkeeper, relying in-

distinctly upon this principle, one

day in the last century startled a

casual guest, who happened to be

a gentleman attached to the roya-

court, by a confident prediction re-

garding the Archbishop of Toulouse

who had just been appointed to of-

the great offices of life.

The gentleman, looking over his

mail, which he had ordered to be

sent to the inn, exclaimed:

"There are great changes in the

Government!" The Archbishop of

Toulouse has been chosen Minister.

"As for France, if that is true,"

said the innkeeper.

"Why so?"

"He will turn the kingdom upside

down. He will make no end of trou-

ble," returned the landlord, with an

ominous shake of the head.

This was quite possible, and some-

thing like it did really happen, but

only persons who knew the inner

workings of political affairs could

have predicted it so positively then,

and M. de la Houssay was

what the source of the innkeeper's in-

formation.

With judicious urging

he induced the landlord to turn over

his inn to him.

He had the look of an artist, and the

equipment of an artist surrounded him.

He had chosen the slope of a wood-

land grove for his camp-stool,

and had set his easel facing the

village. The flanking leaves of a

broad-spreading tree sheltered him.

Air, earth and sky were in

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