

MY SWEETHEART.

Her heart! Perhaps you'd deem her talk to be exact, just five feet seven; Her arching feet are not too small; Her gleaming eyes are bits of Heaven. Slim are her hands, yet not too wee— I could not fancy useless fingers; Her hands are all that hands should be, And own a touch whose memory lingers.

That hue that lights her oval cheeks Recalls the pink that tints a cherry; Upon her chin a dimple speaks A disposition blithe and merry. Her laughter ripples like a brook; Its sound a heart of stone would soften; Though sweetness shines in every look. Her laugh is never loud nor often.

Through golden locks have won renown With bards, I never heard their raving; The girl I love hath looks of brown; Not tightly curled, but gently flowing. Her mouth? Perhaps you'd term it large. Is firmly molded, full and curving; Her quiet lips are Cupid's charge; But in the cause of truth unswerving.

Through little of her neck is seen, That little is both smooth and slightly; And falls as ample in its sheen, Above her bosom gleaming whitely. Her nose is not the proper size; Without a trace of upward turning, Her shell-like ears are wise and wise, The tongue of scandal ever sprung.

In mirth and woe her voice is low, Her calm demeanor never fluttered; Her every accent seems to go Straight to one's heart as soon as uttered. She never coquettish as others do; Her tender heart would never let her. Where does she dwell? I would I knew! As yet, alas! I've never met her.

—Samuel M. Peck, in N. O. Times-Democrat.



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CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

"Then we have no time to lose," said the woman, calmly. "These people are all friends. You are to change your garments immediately. My servant will help you. Explanations and further directions must wait."

She called the negro servant and said to him: "Now, then, Fan, be as quick as you can. We are fifteen minutes late."

"This way, professah," said the servant, with a grin, as he pointed to the old mill.

Laport, without further words, made a bow and followed the negro into the dilapidated structure. Here, in one of the recesses where there remained a clear space and a flooring, there was a hamper such as is used at picnics. There were one or two plates and a napkin conspicuous on its strapped lid. The negro brushed them away and hurriedly tore open the basket. It was packed tightly and carefully with a complete outfit of clothes, which the man lifted out and spread in a pile upon a clean newspaper. Laport was watching him with curious interest.

"Excuse me, sah," said the servant, "you ain't got no time. You got to git dem duds off lively. I'se goin' to dress you. Take 'em off—take 'em off—I'se got to put 'em in dis yere wicker works."

Thus recalled to the urgency of the moment Laport began at once to divest himself of the disguise he wore. As fast as he relieved himself of his clothing, the negro placed it in the hamper, and when it was full he excused himself and carried it away.

He was not gone more than five minutes, and when he came back he was empty handed. What he did with it Laport never knew. But even then he had an instinctive feeling that its complete destruction or effectual hiding had been provided for.

Fan then proceeded to dress him in the most expeditious, but the same time the most scrupulous, manner. In spite of the nervous anxiety of Laport, he could not help wondering at the systematic provision that had been made for a thorough and complete change of appearance. The linen, cuffs, collar, studs, sleeve buttons, finger ring, watch chain, had not been forgotten. He was quickly dressed in a handsome suit of gray tweed, an immaculate vest and a fine soft black hat with a broad brim. He was shaved with marvelous dexterity, fitted with a flowing gray wig and gold glasses, a pair of silk stockings and riding boots with spurs, a field glass thrown over his shoulder and rouge given to his face; and when Fan held up a little mirror before his eyes, Laport saw himself transformed into a comfortable well-to-do governor with a florid face that indicated good living.

"Excuse me, sah," said Fan, as he admired his work. "You'll hav' to sojourn up; jes' frown out your bress and put yer shoulders back. Yer got a bad sag in yer backbone. Det duds ain't made for it. Jes' one more pint—good nuff, if yer can hold him dar."

Fan ran his eye over the details and looked at a little watch that he carried in his vest pocket. Laport saw that it was exactly like the one Kent had given him and that the woman had exhibited while he was on the millstone. Indeed, it reminded the servant to replace in Laport's vest pocket the time-piece that Kent had given him. He did this with the remark: "Dat's de general's time. T'other one's for to make a gallus show."

A moment later he had gathered up all the evidences of his work and summoned the lady who appeared to be his mistress. She came in flushed, as if she had been riding, looked at Laport critically and said:

"You are Dr. Samuel Franklin, of Cincinnati, and I am your daughter. You are to assume, to the best of your ability, the manner of a rather peremptory but kind-hearted parent. You can scold me for my extravagance a little if you like. You are to carry this roll of bills and when called upon pay our expenses. You are also to take this little checkbook and draw your check as I direct. Further directions I can give as we journey. The horses are at the door."

Five minutes later Laport was on the back of a handsome horse, riding by the side of a jaunty and spirited companion. Immediately behind them rode three others, who made up the

group. The way for some distance was across fields, but presently the horses came into one of those grass-grown lanes that divide farms, and a little later struck a common country highway running southwest. Not a word was spoken by Laport's companion for a mile or two except an occasional direction as to speed. But after an hour's ride they came to a group of houses, when she said: "It is necessary that we show ourselves here. You are to preserve the air of the father of the family—that is all."

At the largest of the houses the party drew up and asked for a drink of water of a man at the door. While it was being served Laport remained in the road—the rest drew up chattering at the door and managed adroitly to tell the man how they had been disappointed in their ride and were hurrying back to Shirleville. Some questions were also asked about better roads; and then, with flippant jests, some coin was flung to the man and they started off again. It was now half-past three o'clock and a ride of half an hour brought them to an interesting and evidently not much traveled road. "We turn south," said Laport's companion. "The rest go on to Shirleville. Do you understand? There is no telegraph on our route."

The moment they were in the new road she said: "I shall have to ask you to make the best time you can for the next five miles, until we come to another highway. Your horse has a good gait—let him have his head."

She then struck her animal and Laport followed her. The pace was a painful one, for he no longer had the suppleness of youth. But determination supplied him with endurance, and they rode at a rapid pace through an uninhabited tract, and he was much relieved when they turned once more into a well-traveled road that ran in a westerly direction, and his companion said:

"You can take it easy now. We will walk our horses here and let them dry. We are safe. If you are pursued the scent will lead to Shirleville."

She drew up by his side as she spoke. "I can now tell you," she said, "what your route will be. We shall stop for the night at a hotel in Charlotte. It is ten miles farther on. You will pay our bill in the morning with a check

CHAPTER V.

On Friday morning a tired and dusty traveler in a miserable Tennessee wagon was driven up to the rugged screevity in Henderson county now known as Fort Sarge. It was then a wild, overgrown region and all the traveler and the negro who drove him could see sticking out of the brush half a mile up the rocks was the unpainted roof of a small frame house. The traveler got out, stamped his feet as if he was cramped by long riding, gave the negro a two-dollar bill and began climbing the rocky bank.

It was Laport.

He sat down on the doorstep of the house somewhat winded by the climb and looked about him. The prospect to the east and north was open revealing what appeared to be a desolate wilderness of rocks and forests, with here and there the blue peaks of the distant mountains showing between. While he sat there, the door opened; a man whom he did not recognize appeared and spoke to him familiarly.

"Come inside, professor—you can rest yourself much better indoors."

He looked at the speaker. It was Kent, but save for something in the tone of his voice, Laport did not know him. He appeared broader and heavier and older.

He considerably assisted Laport to rise, saying: "I've been waiting breakfast for you. You may dismiss further anxiety. Your troubles are ended. You must be hungry after your long ride."

Once inside the house, a well-spread table presented itself and the men sat down.

"Let us," said Kent, "avoid the usual formalities. Explanations will prepare the way to rest. You are naturally amazed at what has taken place and anxious to know the motives of my action. I will proceed at once to relieve your mind and replenish your system. Let me advise you to drink coffee—it is a necessary prophylactic in this place."

He called to a servant who came in from the one other apartment and brought the meal. Laport looked on with expectancy and was silent, while Kent both ate and talked.

"You have been most cruelly wronged," he said. "You are not guilty of murder, for that was not

chimerical, let me remind you that the details of your rescue ought to convince you that I am a man of method, accustomed to deal with facts and adjust myself to circumstances. You are under some obligations to me. I propose to avail myself of those obligations in only one way—it is by making a confidant of you and depending upon your sense of loyalty, no matter what arrangement we effect. The pledge is implied. I have to put myself in your hands to a certain extent. You are a free man. You are not directly or indirectly to betray my confidence, even if you do not stay with me. That, I merely say, is understood."

Laport bowed his head in acquiescence.

Kent smiled. "It is hardly necessary for me to say to you that I would not have this confidence in your sense of loyalty if I had not acquainted myself with your character and I hardly would have taken the extraordinary means to secure your services if I had not believed I could depend upon you. Verbal pledges are unnecessary, my dear sir.

"In carrying out the vast projects which I have in my mind for the rectification of some of the evils of society, I shall necessarily come in collision with society, and it was necessary first of all to find a secure place safe from interruption, impregnable and unknown to the world, where I could carry on the extensive organizing scheme. That place is under your feet."

"I do not understand you," said Laport, looking curiously about him.

"Under this floor," continued Kent, "is the entrance to the largest cave that has probably ever been explored by man. I discovered it by accident seven years ago. I bought this piece of land and erected this house over the entrance. I purpose to buy the whole two thousand acres of wild land that covers a great portion of it, and erect here a large building ostensibly a sanitarium. It is for the fitting up of this underground domain that I have taken such pains to secure your aid. I need in it an electrical plant; a water system; electric railway, and heating apparatus, besides means of defense and other modern appliances. I have estimated the cost of my internal—or, perhaps, I should say, intestinal—improvement at something like a million dollars. It is for you to say, when I have taken you over the ground, if you will sell me your mechanical skill for a year and what it will be worth."

Kent waited for a reply.

After a moment's hesitation Laport said: "It seems to me, sir, that at this time I am not in a position to make terms. If you succeed in demonstrating to me the practicability of your plans, the best I can do is to offer you my services and advice in so far as the scheme meets with my approbation."

"Well, I can only say that such an arrangement will not do at all. I do not intend to implicate you in any of my schemes. I wish to employ your constructive ability at a reasonable price. If the work that I want done is practicable to the engineering and mechanical mind, and you give me your services for a year, will fifty thousand dollars compensate you?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WELL TURNED.

One Man's Idea of the Proper Sphere of Woman.

A discussion arose lately at a dinner-table upon the basis of the right of suffrage, when the following colloquy took place:

"I do not think," said one of the party, "that all men should indiscriminately be permitted to vote. There must be some restriction; and if you tear away all barriers, you may as well extend the privilege still further and admit women to the polls."

"Women!" quickly replied a spirited lady on the opposite side of the table—a disciple, perhaps, of Miss Grimké. "And why should women not vote? Do you mean to say we are inferior to the other sex?"

"By no means, madam. The ladies, I admit, have generally their intellectual powers as vivid and as well cultivated as those who have assumed the title of 'lords of creation,' but, then, I like to see them in their proper sphere."

"Their proper sphere! And pray, sir, permit me to ask: What do you deem their proper sphere?"

"Why, madam, the sphere of woman is—a—it is a celestial sphere."—N. Y. Ledger.

IT WAS A HIT.

A boy sat on one of the window seats in the post office corridor reading a novel while his boot-blacking outfit furnished a rest for his feet. By and by a severe-looking man who was strolling about noticed him and halted to ask:

"Boy, are you reading a novel?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought so! Getting yourself ready to enter a career of crime?"

"No, sir."

"But that will be the inevitable result. It's an Indian story, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"Some trashy detective yarn, then?"

"No, sir."

"Then there's a boy in it who runs away from home and performs heroic and unheard-of deeds!"

"No, sir. It's about a bootblack right in this town. He got his first start in life by a gentleman coming up to him in this very place and giving him fifty cents to black his shoes!"

"Ah—um! Man was a fool!" growled the philanthropist, as he trotted along and left the lad to take the broad path to the gallows.—Detroit Free Press.

Remarkable Foresight.

"But why do you marry her if you have found her to be such a shallow and worldly woman?"

"Well, I calculate that a divorce will be a blamed sight cheaper than a breach of promise case."—Detroit Tribune.

A Discovery.

"I know now what rain is," sang Mollie, gieefly. "Tain't nothing but a leak in Heaven."—Harper's Young People.

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