

THE RUSE.

BY NATHANIEL P. WILLIS.

(Concluded)

The boat lay sleeping on the water, as they drove into the shade of a large tree near the landing, and a general exclamation of pleasure broke from every lip but Philip's.

Mr. Skefton took the helm, and seated Alice beside him; and the tutor, with what seemed a proper modesty in the eyes of the company, sat alone in the shade of the fore-sail, watching the curling of the ripple as the boat leaped away before the wind, and shot out towards the middle of the lake. There was just breeze enough to fill the sails, and flutter the many-colored ribbands with which the boat had been decorated, and when Alice was called upon for a song, her voice floated away over the lake, as if the wind had found utterance, and was touching the waters to music.

They were now under considerable way, and Mr. Blair proposed that they should steer for a near island, which, sheltered from the wind by a high hill upon the shore, lay like a fantastic cloud on the bosom of the lake—its trees and rocks all hanging below as distinctly pencilled as the reality. In a few minutes the boat slid along side its fringed edges, and all leaping on shore, were soon lost to sight among its deep shadows.

"Miss Blair! Miss Blair!" shouted Mr. Skefton, as he left the boat with a *petit-maitre* care for the integrity of his Day and Martin. Mr. Blair, however, in compassion to the tutor, whose silence and abstraction from the rest of the party he attributed to modesty and neglect, had insisted upon Alice taking his arm, and they were now walking leisurely along a green path, which led round the island in a direction different from that which the rest of the party had taken.

"And so you won't tell me," said she, "what has come over you, and why you look as grave and as sensible as a dictionary, when, by general consent, even mine 'molley's the only wear'?"

"Am I so grave, Miss Blair?"

"Are you so grave, Miss Blair? One would think I had not got my lesson to-day. Pray, sir, has the black ox trod on your toe since we parted?"

Philip tried to laugh, but he did not succeed. He bit his lip and was silent.

"I am under orders to entertain you Mr. Blondel, and if my poor brain can be made to gird this fair isle, I shall certainly be obedient. So I begin with playing the leech. What ails you, sir?"

"Miss Blair!"—he was going to remonstrate.

"Miss Blair! Now, pity I'm a quack! for whip me if I know whether Miss Blair is a fever or anague. How did you catch it, sir?"

Really, Miss Blair?"

"Nay, I see you don't like my doctoring. I give over. And now I'll be sensible. It's a fine day, Mr. Blondel."

"Very."

"A pleasant lane this to walk in—if one's company were agreeable."

"Does Mr. Skefton stay long?" asked Philip abruptly.

"No one knows."

"Indeed! are you so ignorant?"

"And why does your wisdom ask that question?"

"I beg pardon; but I thought there seemed to be quite an understanding between you this morning."

Alice stopped. She was going to speak angrily; but there was an expression in his eye of serious uneasiness which checked her. She resumed his arm.

"You are incomprehensible to-day, Philip, and so much graver than usual, that I fear something has befallen you. You have heard bad news, perhaps, and my levity has wounded you."

"I have had no letters," said Philip, coolly, straining with his rising tenderness.

"No? well, then, what ails you?"

"Oh! nothing—nothing. Don't trouble yourself about me, Miss Blair! It's not worth while to check your gay spirits for me."

"Is it not, indeed? I begin to agree with you, Mr. Blondel. It is not worth while to check my gay spirits for you. I hear some one coming. I excuse you, sir."

"Willingly, no doubt," said Philip pointing significantly to Mr. Skefton, who appeared toiling towards him through a tangle of briars at a little distance.

Alice stood looking after him a moment, and then darting off rapidly in another direction, was soon out of sight and hearing.

All were again embarked, and they were sailing merrily before the wind. Mr. Skefton's gaiety was unabated, and Alice astonished every one with her spirits.

"You had better pack and make for home," said Mr. Blair, as the sails began to slacken. "A—my dear, assist Mr. Skefton in passing the boom."

She sprang lightly upon the seat, and had just passed the sail over her head, when the wind struck it, and she was overboard in an instant. Philip made a desperate leap astern from the forward deck, but she had kept her hold upon the bough, and before he rose to the surface, Mr. Skefton had coolly drawn said he, as a tear forced itself into his eye, care.

it in, and lifted her into the boat.

Philip came up at a little distance, and, shaking the water from his thick hair, stared wildly about him.

"Ah! you may swim up, young man!" said Mr. Skefton, "I have rescued Miss Blair."

With a few vigorous strokes, made like the bounds of a lion, he laid his hand on the stern.

"You'd better swim round to the other end of the boat," said the cit, pushing Philip's forehead with his forefinger, and pulling away the skirt of his coat; "you are too wet to come in here."

"Rise, sir!" cried Alice, in a tone of mingled contempt and authority, as she leaped like a greyhound over him, and offered her hand to Philip; "rise and assist him, sir!"

Mr. Skefton started as if he had been struck with lightning, and plunging his arms up to the elbows in water, dragged him into the boat.

"Good e'en to you, sir knight!" said Miss Blair—galloping up on her beautiful grey, in a romantic bridle path of the woods. She sprang lightly from the saddle as she spoke, and, tossing the reins on her horse's neck, clapped her hands three times. The spirited animal, throwing up her head with a neigh of delight, sprang away home through the wood like a startled fawn.

"So you won't offer your arm to an errant damsels!" Philip offered it instantly.

"Thank you!—I looked for you in vain in the library, and, supposing you had walked out, I jumped upon Kate, whom you have petted till she watches all your motions, and with a loose reign she has brought me to you. Have I broken your dream?"

"Yes, most agreeably."

"Thank you again! Heigh ho! I want to say a thousand things to you. When do you leave us?"

"In a few days."

"So soon."

"My term has expired."

"But are you going to play tutor forever?"

"I should be almost willing, if I could select my pupils."

They walked on for some time in silence.

"Mr. Blondel—Philip I mean," said Alice, "I have not thanked you for your generous exertions yesterday."

"Don't speak of them, Miss Blair."

"Miss Blair!" repeated she, looking at him reproachfully.

"Alice, dear Alice," said Philip, correcting himself earnestly; and again he was silent.

"I have played a strange part," he said at last—"perhaps a dishonorable one, in intruding myself beneath your father's roof."

"Was it not necessity, then?" asked his companion eagerly.

"Oh! no, no!—shame to say it—no. I loved you, Alice—"

He stopped, for she put her hand to her side, and breathed painfully. A brook was rippling away through the sere leaves near them, and he seated her upon a fallen tree, and supporting her on his arm, bathed her temples.

"Excuse me for proceeding," he continued, "when perhaps you are too ill to listen; but I leave you soon, and I may never have another opportunity to say what I must say if I would live." He paused and collected himself with a strong effort.

"I endeavored, when we parted, to forget you. I was but a boy, yet I appreciated you too justly to suppose that I, even if I could win you, was capable of making you happy."

He felt his hand pressed almost imperceptibly.

"It was vain however, utterly vain! I could as soon die as forget a word you had spoken. By-and-by a class-mate told me that he was coming to be your family tutor, and I bought the privilege—and came."

"Dear, dear Philip!" murmured the sweet girl—dropping her head upon his bosom.

"Heaven bless you for that word!" said the lover, and he leaned over her, and pressed his lips for the first time, in an impaled kiss upon her forehead.

"I am glad you have come, Alice," said Mr. Blair, as his daughter walked into the library the next morning, so earnestly engaged in pulling a rose to pieces, that she could not raise her eyes. "I was just about sending for you.—Sit down—I wish to speak to you upon an important—blushes, ha! You anticipate me! Well, I see how it is; he has been to me to ask my permission, and I told him—but no matter!—I see it's needless to ask you if you have any objection."

Alice threw her arms about his neck and kissed him affectionately.

"Well, well, don't smother me. I was going to tell you. He wants to be married on Monday, and to-day is Saturday, and you must be published, you know. So take my pen—this confounded rheumatism in my fingers!—take my pen and write both your names, and I'll send them to the minister.

Alice sat down, and with a trembling hand wrote her own name and Philip Blondel's in the common formula, and handed it to her father, who folded it without reading, and gave it to the servant.

The father was silent for a few minutes after the door closed.

"This is rather sudden, my dear child," story well, and should be guarded against with

and he turned over his papers hastily to conceal his emotion; "it is rather sudden, I say—but he is as able to take care of you now as he ever will be; and if I must part from you, why, I can bear it now better than if I were to think of it longer. God bless you, my child—God bless you!" and he covered his eyes with his hand, and motioned for her to leave him.

Alice kept her room till the morning of the wedding; and when Mr. Blair and his proposed son-in-law were too busy in making settlements to have the time even for church between Saturday and Monday.

They were to meet in the library previous to going below. It was not quite the hour, and Philip was there alone. He stood in the recess with his arms folded on his breast, his lips and cheeks perfectly colorless, his eyes bloodshot, but calm, and his limbs motionless as marble.

"I congratulate you, sir," said the minister, Mr. Williams entering and approaching him with a cordial smile. He did not hear him.

"I congratulate you, sir," repeated the minister.

Philip started and looked at him a moment. Comprehending him at last, "You have mistaken the person, sir," said he, and motioned him off impatiently.

The good man gazed at him with astonishment.

"This is Mr. Philip Blondel, unless I mistake."

"Mr. Augustus Skefton, the gentleman whom you are to marry, will be here presently, sir," said Philip, pausing after every word and turning again from him.

The minister took a paper from his pocket and handed it to him. It was the publication of Philip Blondel and Alice Blair, written in that lady's own hand. Philip staggered and leaned against the wall. At that moment the door opened.

"Permit me to express my happiness," began Mr. Skefton, stopping the bride at the door, and offering his arm to enter.

Alice looked surprised, bowed slightly, and was passing on.

"My daughter," exclaimed Mr. Blair, in a tone of astonishment. She stopped, and he approached and whispered something in her ear.

Alice started and looked surprised. Mr. Skefton came up and attempted to take her hand, but she withdrew it with an offended air, and looked timidly at Philip. He was at her side in an instant. As she took his arm, the color rushed to his face, and he clenched something into his right hand firmly.

Mr. Skefton twirled his white glove and looked puzzled.

"Mr. Blondel!—Alice," said the father, in a tone of remonstrance, at the same time making an attempt to take his daughter from Philip.

"Leave the lady, sir," said Mr. Skefton; but he met Philip's eye, and checked the step he was about to take towards him.

"Gentlemen!—Mr. Williams!" said the father, in an agitated voice. "Will you leave us one moment?—My daughter stay with me."

They left the room. Philip paced the hall with a firm step, and an expression in his eye from which Mr. Skefton recoiled in voluntary, as he passed the place where he stood. Not a word was spoken by either until Mr. Blair made his appearance.

"Mr. Skefton," said he, addressing that gentleman with a formal bow, "it pains me to inform you that we have been laboring under an unaccountable mistake. My daughter has supposed herself engaged to Mr. Blondel, who is a gentleman of fortune and family—"

"Hem! indeed! hem! said Mr. Skefton, walking towards the door.

His barouche stood ready to bear off his bride to the city. He seized his hat, and, without a word, walked out of the house.

"Give your honor joy!" said the coachman, looking back for the bride.

"Go to the devil with your joy!" said his master, leaping into the barouche, and pulling down the curtain. "Drive on!" he shouted in a voice almost choked with passion.

The astonished coachman gave the horses the reins. The moment they started, a swivel, which was placed on a neighboring hill, was fired, the bells began to ring, and every turn he met the neighbors in carriages and on foot, coming to pay their compliments.—As he drove through the village, the shoemaker, and the grocer, and the tailor, came out and bowed—the children ran up and tossed in flowers—and, as he passed the church, a troop of young men saluted out on horseback, and accompanied him a mile or two on his way, with every demonstration of joy.

I shall never forget the evening when the president rapped on the desk, after prayers, and requested us to be seated, read, while a smile struggled for expression on his benevolent face, the expulsion of Philip Blondel, for having committed, contrary to the express law of the institution—MATRIMONY.

The Philadelphia Inquirer says that a band of impostors, pretending to be Polish refugees, are prowling about the country, preying upon the humane and charitable. They tell their

story well, and should be guarded against with

—that is long as he had a chance to be heard before the court, and to speak his mind upon

things in general, he did not care what was done with him—he was willing to go to the state prison for the glory of God—*et cetera*—and much more was said in such a violent, rambling, and incoherent manner as fully to justify the verdict of the jury.

From the Philadelphia Daily Chronicle.

VENTRILLOQUISM.

A very amusing and interesting occurrence took place a few evenings since, at a select evening party in — street. Some time after the company, which was very large and respectable, were introduced, and had become deeply absorbed in the amusements

of the evening, around a blazing fire on the hearth, on a sudden a hollow plaintive cry, as of one in distress, was heard apparently to proceed from the chimney. The company

all rose on the instant, and gazed upon each other in breathless silence; again the voice was heard saying, "Oh hep me! hep me! or I'll smudder in dis place."

"Put out the fire!" exclaimed half a dozen voices in the room, and the pitcher of water was quickly on the spot. While some fled in haste to the dressing room, with consternation depicted

on every countenance, a young gentleman stepping close to the fire-place called out "Who's there?" "O, poor Tom, the weeps," groaned the voice up the chimney. "Poor fellow!" sighed the ladies, "O! help him out."

"How long have you been up there, my dear fellow?" asked the gentleman. "Nearly a week, sir." "Oh my gracious," again sighed the ladies, "he must be almost starved." "Poor Tom's ho," again groaned

the man in the chimney, and the very hearts of his auditors died within them. The excitement having now risen to an almost painful pitch, it was time for poor Tom to get himself out of that smoky place as quick as possible. Accordingly, he slid gently down from his station into a side cupboard, built against the chimney way, which fortunately

was locked, and still more fortunately, the key not to be found! "Oh murder! murder! m-u-r-d-e-r!" shouted poor Tom in the cupboard—"give me something to eat or I'll starve outright!" The strings of every reticule in the room gave way at the word, and half their rich contents were quickly at his service, and had poor Tom then actually appeared, he would doubtless have been greeted with a more 'pitless storm' of almonds, mint drops, and pound-cake, than his sooty sweepship ever before experienced.

Of course none knew of the construction of the place, save the mistress and her family, who had fled the field in search of the key, upon the first intimation of the change the enemy had made in his position, before a second thought told them of the utter impossibility of any mortal transferring himself from the chimney to the closet.

"Burst open the door," said the young spokesman, and upon a kind of rumbling noise being heard in the closet, as of note of preparation, two or three appeared determined to faint at all events—and the young man was induced to exclaim, "Ladies and gentlemen, have you never heard of ventriloquism?" A roar of laughter from a majority of the company followed the question, as the conviction of the truth flashed upon their senses, that one of the company was highly gifted with the rare and astonishing power of ventriloquism! Yet so deeply were some impressed with the belief in the reality of poor Tom, and his distressing situation, that it was almost impossible to induce the more superstitious to forego it; and the fatal closet was regarded with an eye of jealous suspicion, till at length the key was found, which proved