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Volume IX. No. 11.

ACTON, ONT., THURSDAY, SEPT. 13, 1888.

Whole No. 428.

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Acton Free Press. THURSDAY MORNING SEPT. 13, 1888.

POETRY

WRITE OFTEN TO THE OLD FOLKS.

"Write often to the old folks," said sister May to me. "You're going off to college, Will. Among strangers you will be. I know you'll work as well as play. But what's the use of that? Please don't forget that we at home will long to hear from you."

poor people there. And he has asked the young ladies hereabouts to contribute twelve shirts—each, don't you see? And they must be made by their own hands."

"So ridiculous!" said Mrs. Hedge. "But old bachelors always do have their quips and cranks," said Mrs. Lacy, complacently, as she remembered a garment of the late lamented Lacy's wardrobe which she promised herself to "do up" and pass on to the Western paupers as a piece of genuine domestic manufacture.

lifted the pillows so as to alter the invalid's position. "Is that any easier, my little man?" said he. "And now the doctor is here I will leave you for awhile."

"Indeed, sir," said poor Mrs. Fontaine. "You are very kind."

"Kind?" he repeated, brusquely. "Nothing of the sort. Kind? Ought we not all to be kind to each other? And now good-evening!"

"So," said he, "these are the shirts?" And with a delicate pencil he drew a tiny cross in blue lead upon each one.

"These are what you call the neck-binding, aren't they?" said he. "That mark will do no harm. See, it is so small that no one would notice it but ourselves. I only want to identify these articles if I should ever see them again. Good-evening, Miss Agatha! Mind you don't sit too close at your needle!"

"My old mother used to say," said he, "that a well-made shirt was the criterion of a woman's ability to make a good wife. These shirts are disgraceful to the Fortville girls—all except three, and each one of the three is marked with a tiny blue cross on the inside of the neck binding."

"I hope you were suited with the shirt, major," she said. "It was beautifully made," he answered.

"I can assure you," she simpered, "that I worked most diligently upon it."

"How did you know?" said Ida, with wide-open eyes. "But don't tell mamma," added Bertha. "Oh, I know a good many things," said the major, smiling. "And I assure you that your secret is quite safe with me."

"The doctor's bill," she said, coloring. "It is so much more than we expected; and—and if you would lend us a little, Major Truxton, I should be so glad to repay it in sewing!"

"I will lend you the money, Miss Fontaine," he said; "but as for sewing—" "Your housekeeper may find something for me to do," said she, wistfully.

"Let me walk along by your side," said he. "Let me tell you, Miss Fontaine, how closely I have studied your character since first Rideoan took me to your sick brother's bedside. Let me confess to you how dearly I have learned to love you; how truly to respect your noble nature. I am a rough, brusque old fellow, I know, but I believe I could make you happy if you would but allow me to hope for your love!"

"But me!" cried she, breathlessly—"I, who am but a poor sewing-girl!" "I love you," he said, simply. "I could do no more than that if you were a crowned queen."

"So he married her, and the once poverty-stricken family live in the brown house opposite the park, where the hot-house flowers scent the rooms, and birds sing to amuse the crippled boy, while every luxury smooths his early-saddened path."

"And Miss Erminia Bruce never knew that her deceit about the special unit of the twelve shirts, which had fallen to her lot, was the straw which turned the current of Major Truxton's fancy. He liked and admired her before; he could never do so again. And Agatha Fontaine was so good, and innocent, and true!"

"And above all things, a wife's nature must be true! At least so reasoned our major, and he was no mean judge of human nature."

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