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MILTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1886. NO. 16.

VOLUME 25.

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A YOUNG GIRL'S WOOING.

By E. P. ROE,
Author of "His Sweetheart," "From Jest to Earnest," &c., &c.

"Yes, Madge," he began, quietly, "you sung well. You had the rudiments of a fine voice years ago. In gaining strength you have also won the power to sing."

"Yes," she said, simply.

"Do you sing much?"

"I do not wish to sing at all in the hotel. I did not study music in order to be conspicuous."

"Have you studied it very carefully?"

"Please leave out the word 'very.' I studied it as a young girl studies, not scientifically. I had a good master, and he did his best for me. Poor Herr Brachmann! he was sorry to have me come away. Perhaps in time I can make progress that will satisfy him better. I could say that he was often dissatisfied."

"You don't mean to suggest that you are going back to Santa Barbara?"

"Why not?"

"True enough, why not? It was a foolish question! You doubtless have strong attachments there."

"I have, indeed."

"And it's natural to go where our attachments are strongest."

"Yes; you have proved that to-day."

"You evidently share in my brother's disapproval. Mary would soon become quite reconciled."

"If I have no right to feel either approval or disapproval, while you have an undoubted right to please yourself."

"Indeed? Are you so indifferent? If you think Miss Wildmere objectionable you should disapprove."

"If you find her altogether charming, if she realizes your ideal, is not that sufficient? Everything is very much what it seems to us. If I as a girl would please myself, you, surely, as a man have a right to do so."

"Do you propose to please yourself?"

"Indeed I do."

"You will be disappointed. You have formed a version of it, I imagine, though, that you are somewhat different from other girls whose future husbands must be idealmen, but who are content themselves to remain very much what their milliners, dressmakers, and fashion make them."

"I can at least say that I am not content; and I am also guilty of the enormity of cherishing ideals."

"Oh, I've found that out, if nothing else. Ideals among men are as thick as blackberries, you know. Jack Henderson dances superbly."

"Yes; he quite meets my ideal in that respect."

"Perhaps you left some one in Santa Barbara who meets your ideal in all respects?"

"There was one gentleman there who approached it nearly."

"How could you leave him?"

"He came on with me,—Mr. Weyland."

"Pshaw! He's old enough to be your father."

"And very like a father he was to me. I owe him an immense deal, for he helped me so much!"

"You did not let me help you?"

"Yes; I did. I wrote to you for books, and read all you sent me; some parts of them several times."

"You know that is not what I meant. I am learning to understand you somewhat, Madge. I hope you may realize all your ideals, and find some young fellow who is the embodiment of the higher life, aspirations, and all that, you know."

Her laugh rung out musically. Mrs. Muir heard it, and remarked to her husband: "Madge and Graydon are getting on better. They have seemed to me to clash a little to-day."

Mr. Muir made no reply, and Graydon, as he mounted the steps, whispered, hurriedly, "What you said about Miss Wildmere was at least just and fair. I wish you liked her, and would influence Henry to like her, for I see that you have influence with him."

She made no response by word or sign.

The ladies soon retired, and Graydon waited in vain for another interview with Miss Wildmere. While he was looking for her on the piazza she passed in and disappeared. He at last discovered Mr. Arnault, who was smoking and making some memoranda, and, turning on his heel, he strode away. "She might have said good-night, at least," he thought, discontentedly, "and that fellow Arnault did not look like a man who had received his congé."

That this gentleman did not regard himself as out of the race was proved by his tactics the next morning. Before reaching the city he joined Mr. Muir in the smoking-section of a parlor car, and easily directed their talk to the peculiar condition of business. Mr. Muir knew little in favor of his companion, and not much against him; but devoutly hoped that he would be the winning man in the contest for Miss Wildmere. He also knew that the firm to which Mr. Arnault belonged had held their heads well up in the fluctuations of the street. Both gentlemen deplored the present state of affairs, and hoped that there might soon be more confidence. "By the way, Mr. Muir," Mr. Arnault remarked casually, "if you need accommodation we have some money lying idle for a short time, which we would like to put out as a call loan, and would be glad to place it in good conservative hands like yours."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Muir, with a shrewd glance at his companion, "perhaps you and your principals would find it safer to keep your money at home. I have invested had declined still further. He had not lost any faith in them at all, knowing that they had a solid basis, and would be among the first to rise in value with returning confidence. He had gone so far and held on so long that it was a terrible think to give up now. Comparatively little money would probably carry him over to perfect safety, but his means were locked up in the banks stringent, and he had already strained his credit somewhat. Mr. Arnault's proffer occurred to him again, and at last, as he thought, the expedient. He called upon his brother, who was affable, off-hand and business-like.

"Yes, Mr. Muir," he said, "I can let you have thirty thousand just as well as not; as the times are, I would rather some security, however."

"Certainly, here are bonds and stocks, which, though depressed, are good in the end. You are aware that they will be among the first to appreciate."

"In ordinary times I would think so," [illegible]

"How soon do you think you may call in this money?"

"Well, the prospect looks as if you may keep it as long as you wish at the rates named. They are still, I know, but not above the market."

Mr. Muir had thought it over. If he failed, he was assured that his assets would eventually make good every dollar he owed, with interest, while, on the other hand, even the small sum named promised to replace his fortune and restore him to his wealth. The transaction was soon completed.

Mr. Arnault was highly satisfied that he also took a firm hold of a valuable ally. The loan, however, was made from his personal means, leaving the business affair free. He had made up his mind to win Stella Wildmere, and would not swerve from the purpose thus engaged herself to absolutely. Then, even though she might be willing to break the tie through pecuniary embarrassment, he would stand aloof, where he was on a footing greater than that of friendship, besides. She was the belle who, in his set, had been adored by all, generally, and his good fortune, — success in everything on which he placed his heart, — was proverbial. Prior to her to Graydon, and then, because of her poverty, he was willing to renounce him for a more fortunate man, would not answer at all. Humiliation, perhaps, would be have to her, for, in connection with all others, she had had an instinctive knowledge of this fact. The events of the previous day, with her father's note, therefore confirmed her purpose to keep both men in abeyance until the scale should turn.

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. WILDMERE'S STRATEGY.

Wednesday morning was cool and cloudy, and a large party was forming to climb to Spy Rock. Graydon was longing for more activity, and since the day was so propitious, Miss Wildmere consented to go. Of course Madge was in readiness, and in charming costume for a walk. The moment they were on the steep path he had to admit that she appeared the superior to Miss Wildmere. The one owed her bloom to artificial and metropolitan life; the other had gone to nature, and now acted as if her foot was on her native heath. Her step was light, yet never uncertain. Her progress was easy, and, although different, was quite as graceful as if she were promenading the piazza, proving that she was an adept at mountain-climbing. It was evident, however, that to Miss Wildmere a mountain was a *terra incognita*. She trod uncertainly, her feet turned on loose stones that hurt her, and before the first steep ascent was passed she panted and was glad to sit down with others, more or less exhausted.

Madge's breathing was slightly quickened, and color was beginning to come in her usually pale face, yet she had lent a helping hand more than once.

"How easily you climb, Miss Alden!" gasped Miss Wildmere. "Have you taken lessons?"

"Yes," she replied, smiling sweetly, "and from a master."

Miss Wildmere also was beginning to discover a problem in Madge; she could not patronize, snub, or apparently touch her with shafts of satire. The young girl treated her with cordial indifference, as one of the guests of the house. She appeared to be capable of enjoying herself thoroughly, with scarcely a consciousness of the local existence, unless, as in the present case, she was addressed. Then she would reply with perfect courtesy, but in some such ambiguous way. It soon became evident to Graydon that the two girls were hostile, and this both amused and vexed him. He was beginning to learn that Madge was the more skilful opponent. She was never aggressive, yet seemed clad in polished armor when attacked, and her quick replies flashed back under the light of her smile. By acting, however, as if Miss Wildmere were never in her thoughts, except when in some way obtruded upon them, she gave the keenest wound. The flattered girl enjoyed being envied, hated, and even detested by her own sex, but to be politely ignored was a new and unwelcome experience, and she chafed under it, not so secretly but that Graydon observed her annoyance.

After a rest they started on again, he with Miss Wildmere falling to the rear. Before Madge passed around a curve in the path she saw a lily on a bank above her, and with the aid of her alpenstock sprung upon the mossy shelf, plucked the flower, and leaped down with an effort so quick and agile that it seemed like the impulse of a bird to get something and pass on. She put the flower in her belt, and a moment later was hidden from view.

"I hope you observed that feat," Miss Wildmere remarked. "Indeed, Miss Alden appears inclined to call attention to her feet this morning."

"I hope the ladies will observe them," he replied; "the gentlemen will, for they are pretty. Did you note that her boots are adapted to walking? You could climb with twice the ease if your heels were not so high. For mountain scrambling a lady needs short skirts, and boots like those that Miss Alden wears. You should see the English girls walking in the Alps. It's my good fortune, however, that you are partially disabled this morning. Here's a steep place. Take my arm and put all the weight upon it you can,—the more the better. Lean on me as if you trusted me."

There was a slight frown on her brow as he began his speech, but it soon passed, and she said, softly, as she still lingered, "Well, I'm not an athlete. I should value more a man's strong arm than strength of my own."

"You know that the arm of one man is over at your service."

"Ever implies more patience than any man possesses."

"I should think so; yet you will find me reasonably patient."

"Everything is a matter of reason with men."

"Our reason assures us that certain things are a matter of heart with women. Therefore we hope."

"Men are much too exacting. They reason a thing out and make up their minds. If they base any hopes on women's hearts, they should remember what unreasoning organs they are,—full of hesitations, doubts, absurd fears, and more absurd confidence at times. Have you ever seen a bird hovering in the air, not knowing where to alight? Give it time, and it makes its selection and swiftly follows its choice. No good hunter flashes at it in the hope of capturing it during the moment of indecision."

"Indeed, Miss Wildmere, if I understand your little parable, I think Mr. Arnault errs egregiously, yet he does not frighten the bird into a very distant flight."

"You do not know how distant it is."

"No; I only see that he goes straight for the bird the moment he sees her."

"He might have found a more considerate policy wiser." Then she added, gravely, with a little reproach in her voice, "Mr. Arnault is an old friend and a friend of papa's, whom he often favors in business. I think, not unnatural, that he would prove that I am not inclined to be disloyal toward old friends. You have just defended Miss Alden against a little feminine spite on my part. That was nice. In the same way I defend Mr. Arnault, whom, for reasons equally absurd, you do not like together. I'm only a woman, you know, and a little spite is one of our prerogatives. After all, it doesn't amount to anything. I would do as much for Miss Alden as for any one in the house. (Quite true, which was nothing.) You know how girls are."

"Certainly, especially when both are reigning belles."

"The men are always the rulers sooner or later," said I shall give my allegiance to those gentlemen friends who are his least like myself,—tolerant natures, yet not blind. Mr. Arnault is coming, to-night to spend the Fourth. I must give him more courtesy of my time. I should be ungrateful if I did not, but I do not wish you to feel toward me or him as I should toward you and Miss Alden if I saw that you were together a great deal. Now, you see how frank I am, and what a compliment I pay to your masculine superiority."

"Miss Wildmere, I think I understand you; I hope I do. Your manner of greeting me on my return from long absence proved that you were not disloyal to an old friend. If you could keep me in mind for years, I can hope I am not forgotten during the hours when others have claims upon you. I have ever kept you in mind, and I might say more. If women have a little natural spite, even in some situations are endowed with enormous selfishness, and the germ of appropriation grows almost into a deformity.

"I do not expect to see deformities of any kind in Graydon Muir," she said, laughing. "Now that we understand each other, so well, give me your hand and pull me up this steep place before which we have stood so long, while getting over another little steep place that lay in our path. I'm glad the others have all gone on, for now you can help me all you choose, and I shall not care."

He did help her, with a touch and freedom that grew into something like caresses. He felt that he had revealed himself almost as completely as if he had spoken his love, and that he had received and was receiving more than encouragement. She did not rebuke his manner, which was that of a lover. There was no committal in that, nothing that could bind her. She permitted the arousal of his hope, that he had been in her thoughts during his long absence, and the natural inference that her mind was still free because of his hold upon her heart. This belief filled him with gratitude, and inspired him, as she intended it should, with generous thoughts and impulses toward her. What if she did prefer to maintain a little longer the delicate half reserve that precedes a positive engagement? It only insured that the cup of happiness should be sipped and enjoyed more leisurely. She had seen too much life, and enjoyed too many of its pleasures, to act with precipitation now. She understood him, and yet loved him well enough to be jealous of one whom she believed he regarded as a sister. With amusement he thought: "She is not even that to me now. Hanged if I know what she is to me beyond a pretty, vexatious puzzle!"

Miss Wildmere's strategy had accomplished one thing, however. Believing that he was absolved by Madge's course from everything beyond cordial politeness, he had resolved to carry out her rival's wishes. It was no great cross to forego Madge's society, and if Miss Wildmere saw that he was not consoling himself during the hours she spent with Arnault, she would shorten them in his behalf.

After reaching a certain point he suggested: "Instead of scaling that rocky height after the rest of the party, suppose we follow this grassy wood road to parts unknown. It will be easier for you than climbing, and you are better society than a crowd."

She assented smiling, and Madge did not see Graydon again until they met at dinner.

She was pale, and looked weary. "Oh," she thought, "perhaps my hopes are already vain! They have been alone all the morning. He may have spoken; he looks so happy and content that he must have spoken and received the answer he craved. If so, I shall soon join the Waylands in my native village, for I can't keep up much longer without a little hope."

"You are tired, Madge," he said, not unkindly.

"A little," she replied, carelessly. "A short nap this afternoon will insure my being ready for the hop to-night."

CHAPTER XV.

PERPLEXED AND BEGUILED.

Madge was so discouraged that she contented herself with a manner of listless apathy during dinner, and then retired to her room. Graydon was giving her so little thought that there was slight occasion for disguise, and less incentive for effort to interest him.

"The struggle promises to be short and decisive," she moaned. "Perhaps it has been already decided. I had no chance after all. He came here fully committed in his own thoughts to Miss Wildmere. I have merely lost my old place in his affection, and have had and shall have no opportunity to win his love. If this is to be my fate it is well to discover it so speedily, and not after weeks of torturing hope and fear. I'll learn the truth, with absolute certainty as soon as possible, and then find a pretext to join the Waylands."

At last the fatigue of the morning brought the respite of sleep, and when she waked she found late evening shadows in her room, and learned that Mr. Muir had arrived, it being his purpose to spend the Fourth and the remainder of the week with his family.

Weariness and despondency are near akin, and in banishing one Madge found herself better able to cope with the other. At any rate, she determined to show no weakness. If Graydon would never love her he should at least be compelled to respect and admire her, and he should never have cause to surmise the heart-poverty to which she was doomed. Still less would she give her proud rival a chance to wound her again. Miss Wildmere might make Graydon's devotion as ostentatious as she pleased, but should never again detect on Madge's face a look of pained surprise and solicitude.

She made a careful toilet for the evening, telling Mr. Muir and her sister not to wait for her, as she had overslept herself.

"Where is Madge?" Graydon asked, at the supper-table.

"She did not wake up in time to come down with us," Mrs. Muir replied.

"What does it matter?" Miss Wildmere so fills your eyes that you see no one else. When is it to be, Graydon?"

"Madge evidently sees quite as much of me as she cares to," he replied, somewhat irritably. "I have not asked when it is to be, or whether it is to be at all. I suppose," he added sarcastically, "that in consideration of my extreme youth I should obtain permission from my family before venturing to ask anything."

"That remark is absurd and uncalled for," Mr. Muir replied gravely. "Of course you will please yourself, as I did, and we shall make the best of it. But you have no right to expect that we shall see the lady with your eyes. I cannot help seeing her as she is. I do not like her, but if you choose to marry her, rest assured I shall give neither of you cause for complaint. Now, according to my custom, I will hand my wife, you could not expect me, as your brother, to be indifferent, still less could I pretend an approval that I don't feel; but I recognize that you are as free as I was when Mary's suitor, and I do not think that you can reasonably ask more. Our relations are too intimate for misunderstanding. You know that, in my present plans and hopes, I look forward to receiving you as a partner at no distant time. If such purposes are carried out our interests must always be identical."

"Pardon me, Henry," said Graydon, warmly, "and do not misunderstand my hasty words. I know you have my best welfare at heart,—you have ever proved that,—but you misjudge my choice. Even Mary begins to see that you do, and woman's insight is keener than man's. You attribute to the daughter the qualities you disliked in the father. Is it nothing that she has waited for me during my long absence, when she could pick and choose from so many?"

"I'm not sure she has been waiting for you; her manner towards Mr. Arnault yonder suggests that she may still pick and choose."

"Bah! I'm not afraid of him. She could have taken him long since had she so wished."

Others who had seats at the table now approached, and prevented further interchange of words on so delicate a subject. Nevertheless Mr. Muir's arrow had not flown wide of the mark, and Graydon thought that Miss Wildmere was unnecessarily cordial towards his rival, and that Mr. Wildmere, who had also come from the city, was decidedly complacent over the fact.

Graydon's furtive observation was now cut short by the entrance of Madge, and even he was dazzled by a beauty that attracted many eyes. It was not merely a lovely woman who was advancing towards him, but a woman whose nature was profoundly excited. What though she moved in quiet, well-bred grace, and greeted Mr. Muir with natural cordiality? The aroused spiritual element was not wanting in the expression of her face or in the dignity of her carriage. Her deep, suppressed feeling, which bordered on despair; her womanly pride, which would disguise all suffering at every cost, gave to her presence a subtile power, felt none the less because intangible. It was evident that she neither saw nor cared for the strangers who were looking their curiosity and admiration; and Graydon understood her barely well enough to think, "Something, whatever it may be, makes her unlike other girls. She was languidly indifferent at dinner; now she is superbly indifferent. This morning and yesterday she was a gay young girl, eager for a mountain scramble or a frolic of any kind. How many more phases will she exhibit before the week is over?"

Poor Madge could not have answered that question herself. She was under the control of one of the chief inspirations of feeling and action. Moods of which she had never dreamt would become inevitable; thoughts which nothing external could suggest would arise in her own heart and determine her manner.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Beware of weaving the fingers on the tongue in counting bills. Smallpox may be communicated in that way. Some banks have taken the precaution to fumigate all bills received from Montreal, but others have neglected to do so.

The profits of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for August were $199,701 in excess of those in August, 1884, while for the eight months ending August 31st the profits show an increase compared with the same period last year of $1,686,81[illegible].

Cost of Prohicition in Iowa.

Burlington Gazette.

Under the cowardly fear of a supposed popular majority, and in pursuance of a corrupt political bargain and sale, every right that is dear to free men has been wantonly outraged, in Iowa. The right of trial by jury has been denied. The right to acquire, possess and protect property has been annulled. The right to enjoy and defend liberty has been set at naught. The rights to be secure against unreasonable seizures and searches has been violated. The right to be free from criminal prosecution, except upon indictment by a grand jury, has been overruled. And all these and similar enormities have been committed in the interest of a measure which half the people, and more, never did believe in, which large numbers of its pretended advocates repudiate by their daily practice, and which, instead of being able to point to practical benefits as an excuse, has proven itself, over and over, anywhere and everywhere, the most signal and disgusting failure on record.

Pickpockets' Methods.

When a mob of pickpockets start out to "work a crowd" on a train, they break into two. The operator, in leather fans his intended victim. The, in plain English, means that he ascertains the location of his victim's money. He gets alongside of the man whose pocket is to be picked, and with rapid movement he dexterously passes his fingers lightly over every pocket. His touch is so delicate that it enables him to locate the boodle, and to ascertain its character, whether a roll, a purse, or a pocket book. The surging of the crowd, especially on a crowded railway train, accounts to the suspicious traveller for the occasional jostling which one receives. It is found that the most common receptacle for the pocket book is the left trousers front pocket. When the victim is selected the of the brace of thieves plants himself quarely in front of him, while the other crowds up behind him on the right side. The operator in front, under cover of a newspaper or a coat thrown over the arm, feels the pocket, and if the victim is a stiff necked or straight backed man in a standing position, he finds the lips of the pocket than a mere touch. In this case it is dangerous to attempt the insertion of his hand. A very low toned clearing of the throat, followed by a guttural noise, is the signal for his pal to exist a gentle pressure upon the victim's right shoulder. This is so gradually extended that the traveler yields to the pressure without knowing it, and without changing the position of his feet. This throws the lips of the pocket open for the operator in front, who does not insert his hand and attempt to draw the book out, but works the lining. He draws it out an eighth of an inch at a time without inserting his fingers more than half way.