

money I might obtain a wife as beautiful as Helen of Troy. But why turn pirate? Here was the money of a pirate ready to my hand, and no Helen could be fairer than Lucy. But there were two obstacles—the hog-yokes and my enlistment. However, as true love never did run smooth, I was rather glad of these difficulties, for like Hercules and Jason, and other heroes about whom I had read, I would prove my worthiness to aspire to the hand of Lucy by my fortitude and perseverance.

I stood in the center of the room while making these reflections, for the Hardys were not ceremonious and had not asked me to be seated. Lucy was setting the table for supper, and had passed out of the room as her mother pointed to her. So we had not spoken. Now she was returning. I felt that a most important crisis in my life had arrived. I must appear to advantage, and so try to fascinate her at first sight. But how? I had always been a boy and an "underling," as the Yankees called it. I had never talked love to any one, and, besides, I was dreadfully embarrassed at the thought of making love to one who seemed more like an angel than a mortal.

But I had no time to think. I could hear her little feet pattering on the floor, and my heart beat a tattoo in accompaniment. Something must be done and immediately. So I braced myself like David Crockett in a fight with wildcats. My attitude was certainly as graceful as that of a bear robbing a beehive. I locked my hands in front, not of my heart when in health, but where I imagined it might be on its way down to my boots. Then I tweedled my thumbs. Next I tried to twist my face into an interesting shape and stretch my mouth into a bewitching smile.

From the best of my recollection I think I must have succeeded most admirably. My impression now is that my smile resembled that of a monkey grinning over the effects of an indigestible dinner. All this took place in much less time than it takes to tell it. The patter of the little feet was drawing nearer and nearer. My angel would have passed me without so much as a look, but having gotten myself up expressly for the occasion, and having already missed a good thing on the hog-yoke question, reversing the tweedle of my thumbs and increasing their speed, I made an effort to confront her boldly, comforting myself with that beautiful passage which says, "Faint heart never won a fair lady." But, unfortunately, as I made the flank movement, I stepped upon a large and healthy clam. My lower limbs being at an angle of nearly ninety degrees, their remoteness was suddenly increased. I felt myself falling. O! the agony of that moment! Ten thousand hog-yoke questions were as nothing to it. I again reversed the tweedle of my thumbs and crowded on all steam. It was no go. The angle between my legs was becoming excruciatingly wide. Suddenly another fear came over me. Half-crazy Peter Hardy had told me when to cut hog-yokes. Suppose, as he looked at me, the insane idea should seize him that a time had arrived for cutting one. The thought was maddening. In the energy born of despair, my tweedling thumbs buzzing like a bumble-bee, my grin elongating

until the top of my head was nearly an island, I squeaked out:

"How der do?"

By that time the angle aforesaid had increased to two hundred degrees; my body came down on the floor, and there I lay, my grin unabated, while the tweedle had grown positively ferocious. Of course, Lucy made a halt, gazed down compassionately upon me, opened her ruby lips, displaying her pearly teeth, as she softly murmured:

"Pooty well, I thank yer; how's all yer folks ter hum?"

For a moment all was still as the house of death. To my mental anguish was added acute physical pain, caused by the strain which I experienced before falling. It is often remarked of a dude lover, "See him spread himself," having metaphorical reference to an old gobbler or peacock. Finally the embarrassing silence was broken by old Peter, who kindly remarked:

"There, wife, I said he was not the young man we were looking for. He didn't know when to cut hog-yokes, and now he is so spread out of shape that he is good for nothing, not even to make a hog-yoke."

Lucy was kind enough to turn away and leave the room. Then her mother came and helped me up, while the old man took a walk in the open air, evidently greatly disgusted.

Mrs. Hardy was very kind to me; told me not to mind the old man, for he was crazy about hog-yokes, and we would get Kidd's money any way. Thus encouraged, I managed to get up and limp along to a chair. My experience in love-making had been brief and not very brilliant. So I resolved to pretend that it was all a joke, and that I fell down on purpose.

Lucy soon returned, completed the arrangements for supper, and I accepted an invitation to partake of their hospitality. Old Peter seemed entirely absorbed with his own thoughts. Lucy was also silent. A good opportunity was thus afforded Mrs. Hardy and myself for arranging our programme. She did the planning, and being perfectly satisfactory to me, I accepted of all the conditions. It was agreed that I should smuggle my clothes on shore, and that while sailing down the "Reach" (I think called "Edgemoggin Reach") I should slip overboard and swim to Deer Isle, get my clothes and hurry to their place, for it was already time to begin cutting hay.

After supper Lucy and I were left alone. This was very awkward for me, and seemed so for her. Although very beautiful, I could not forget how her salutation had betrayed not only lack of education, but good sense and good breeding. My idea of a wife was that she should be highly intellectual, educated and accomplished. True, there was nothing about me to win the love and admiration of such a lady, but the youth of eighteen, however undeserving, is likely to enthrone, in his airy castle, a lady vastly his superior. For beauty Lucy could fill the bill, but her greeting, "Pooty well, I thank yer; how's all yer folks ter hum?" took all the romance out of her beauty.