

suit him till he gets another, and I won't marry him either, unless he asks me to!" with a glance at Bill.

"I won't promise not ter ask ye," said Bill, "fer there's no accountin' fer what a man'll do, 'ith a pretty woman a turnin' of his head."

"Dam it, ye old Bluebeard! Are ye a courtin' of my wife afore my eyes?" asked Mr. Durkee, in a pet. "What have I done Priscilla, that ye should use me like this?" plaintively.

"I hate to see a man make a flunky of himself," retorted Priscilla.

"Who's made a flunky of himself?" asked Mr. Durkee, evidently much discomfited by her withering disdain. "Ain't I done everythin' I could for ye, Priscilla? Don't I dress ye in the best o' style? Look at that hat," appealing to Bill. "Don't I do most o' the washin', an' ain't I allers a pamperin' of ye? And you," turning to Bill, "this's the way ye do, is it, arter I get ye out of a mess?" Mr. Durkee's red face wore a look of injured dignity.

"There goes Miranda! You go along with her 'n' save me the trouble o' gettin' a divorce," persisted Priscilla, with cutting severity.

"Here's a pretty go!" exclaimed Mr. Durkee, in petulant despair, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and, despite the inflamed condition of his neck, dropping his head.

Bill stole a glance through the window. Miranda was actually going out into the road, looking neither right nor left. Bill's spirits rose with each step that carried her away. When she was fairly out of sight he turned to Mr. Durkee, blusteringly, "I don't know as you got me out o' no mess!" then smiled to Priscilla as though to her the credit was due.

"Didn't I bring Priscilla over?" looking appealingly at his wife.

"Ye told me ye was up ter their capers 'n' knew how ter manage um."

"What's that?" Priscilla inquired, with a satirical laugh.

"I meant um all but you?" exclaimed the miserable Durkee. "I did, Priscilla, honest Injun!"

"N' ye said ye didn't go squiggin' round, but married sorter off hand," persisted Bill. "Made no more account o' it than as if 'twas killin' a cat?"

"Oh! ye was a laughin' at me, was ye?" exclaimed Priscilla in a high rage.

"No, I swear I wa'n't, Priscilla!" earnestly. "I wouldn't do no sech thing!"

A thump at the door interrupted them. Bill turned pale and sank into a chair.

"It's Mirandy come back," he whispered.

Mr. Durkee tip-toed to the window and reported "It's a young feller."

"The West boy after Mirandy's trunk," said Bill, springing toward the door.

The trunk was deposited in the wagon and the boy handed Bill a sealed letter, with the exclamation:

"Here, you old Morman!"

"What's that, ye rascal?" exclaimed Bill, catching him by the arm.

"Le'me alone, Munsey!" said the boy, with swaggering disrespect. "When ye've read that letter ye won't have spunk enough ter lick a boy, even."

Bill's trembling legs carried him back to the house. "You read it," he said to Priscilla.

Priscilla tore away the envelope and read:

I've seen Lawyer Smith and he tells me he will take care of the case. He says he'll sue you for \$10,000. If you want to settle send to  
MIRANDA.

"There's a bit o' fight to her," said Bill, wiping his forehead. "P'raps I was a little quick about it."

Priscilla was examining him with a peculiar expression. From experience Mr. Durkee understood what that expression meant. His own fat face took on a rather queer look as he eyed his friend, and said:

"You ain't jest what one might call spunky."

Bill looked up and trembled at what he saw.

"I hate a coward!" Priscilla exclaimed.

Mr. Durkee coughed—a disagreeable cough that forced Bill to explain:

"Oh, I ain't afraid! Not a bit! But Mirandy's so quick, ye know. I didn't know but what—er—p'raps—"

"We'd better get along toward home," said Priscilla.

"I guess we've made a mistake interferin' here!" exclaimed Mr. Durkee, pulling himself out of his collar as much as possible. "We'd better go!"

"I'm glad I married a man!" said Priscilla, placing her arm through her husband's.

"Thank 'ee, my love!" Mr. Durkee lifted his hat gallantly, and they left the house.

"I hope ye ain't goin'?" said Bill. "If Mirandy should come back—"

"Drive along, Mr. Durkee," said Priscilla, coldly.

"Good day, Willum!" said Mr. Durkee, with a satirical smile. "I hope when next we meet ye'll feel spryer," and away they rode, while Bill, with conflicting emotions of sheepishness, rage and terror, went into the house and locked himself away from the world.

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the Pattern-Goldthurst wedding, Alice and Marie entered the ladies' parlor of the Grand hotel in Boston. During the journey from Linn, a tinge of sadness had often blurred Marie's happy, hopeful dream of the future, as she thought of Little John in his fruitless search for her. Alice had dissipated this one alloy to her companion's pleasure by declaring:

"Your little, old lover will see you as often as he wishes, soon. You will have our house in the city for your place of rendezvous!"

As they had entered the parlor Alice had said, with her contagious sprightliness.

"Who would suspect that we were runaways?" Then Marie was given directions for her further guidance.

"I must now leave you," said Alice, with her pretty air of patronizing solicitude, "and hurry back to my husband that is to be! My friend will call for you, and as I have described you, you need feel no alarm if you are scrutinized rather closely. And now good bye, dear! I regret this parting even for so short a time, for I have learned to love your very dependence on me. It is a strange freak on my part," with a caress, "for I'm not considered very demonstrative, not even by Mr. Pattern."

Marie's foolish little heart was thrilled with an innocent exultation at the thought that she alone knew of the impulsive affection hidden by the beautiful, haughty exterior.