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WHICH WILL SHE MARRY.

BY MARO O. ROLFE.

John Myers loved Florry Castle, the prettiest and the most bewitching girl in Boroville, a place noted far and wide for the beauty and intelligence of its ladies.

Florry's father was the wealthiest merchant in town and John was his clerk.

Now, do not imagine that I am going to repeat the oft-told story of the penniless youth who loved a princess; for if you do, you will be disappointed. John was Florry's equal in everything save in one respect. While she was the most careless, romping, fun-loving young lady in the world—she had attained to the mature age of seventeen—John was the most diffident fellow conceivable, blushing like a girl at everything, always appearing, he fancied, as bashful people are apt to, at the greatest disadvantage whenever he attempted to put his best foot forward, and doubly awkward he thought, whenever he essayed to utter more than the commonest of common-place expressions to Florry.

Surely he was not handsome, in the general acceptation of the term. Tall, angular, almost awkward at times, there was very little of gracefulness about him, it is true, and his great sensitiveness led him to think these little disadvantages infinitely more conspicuous than they really were. But Florry, overlooking all this and seeing only his blue eyes and wavy brown hair, clustering about a broad, high brow, white as marble—pleasant enough things to look upon, surely—noting his constrained, diffident manner when in her presence, and his many odd little attentions to herself and her wishes, and discerning his great love for her through all, at last began to pity him heartily for his want of confidence in himself; and we all know to what tender passion pity is akin.

Once he heard her express a wish to read a book, the last new novel. It was not for sale in Boroville, and he wrote to the publishers, directing them to mail it to Florry's address.

When he came to dinner one day, she sat near a window, turning over the leaves, with the bright sunlight falling in a mellow glow upon her queenly little head. She looked lovelier than ever just then; and he tried hard to keep back the flush that mantled his face as he saw her for the first time in the enjoyment of his anonymous gift.

"Oh, John," she cried, with a pleasant look in her face that did his heart good, "you know how I have longed to read 'Charlie's Bride,' and now some good fairy has made me twice glad by sending it to me. I'm sure it must have been Mrs. Chester. She's always so thoughtful, and she said she'd not forget me when she returned home."

"I'm very glad you've got the book, Florry," he said simply, but in a strange, constrained sort of way that made her look up.

"Why, John," she said, "does anything trouble you?"

"No, Florry," with half-averted face. "Why do you ask?"

"Because ——"

"Because what, Florry?"

"Nothing." Then changing the subject, and with a quick, shy glance up into his face: "The book is splendid, John. I could bless the one who gave it!" Then obdurately: "Mrs. Chester is very kind."

Mrs. Chester still. John turned away.

And so matters went on for a full month, and then Casper Ducey came to Boroville, astonishing all with his handsome face and attire, his lavish expenditure of money, his fast horses, his fast driving and his fast life altogether. He was a thorough man of the world, dashing, brilliant, fascinating; and, as far as external appearances went, wealthy; and external appearances go a great ways in such a place as Boroville.

Mrs. Digby approved of Casper Ducey. Mrs. Digby was an oracle in Boroville. She was a handsome woman of five an twenty, a lively young widow, whose second mourning became her charmingly, and who, some people said—but some people are not to be relied on to any great extent, you know—would not be particularly averse to trying the marital yoke again, so lightly had she borne it, with a suitable partner, of course. In company with her late husband, the widow had spent several seasons at the various places of summer resort, besides passing a winter at the capital; and she was considered infallible authority on all matters relating to society at large. She was pretty, intelligent, dressed in excellent taste, and was believed to have a snug little fortune all her own. So, you see, she was a very nice little bit of femininity as the world would say. Quite a little company of the *elite* of the village assembled in the widow's parlor one evening, and Mr. Ducey was the subject of their conversation.

"Yes, Mr. Ducey is a very desirable gentleman," said the widow. "We must welcome him to our circle. He is handsome, witty and accomplished, and—of course he is rich; but that don't matter so much, you know. We met him at Newport three years ago—poor, dear Harry and I." And she gave her handkerchief a very uncertain twirl, that left the shadow of a doubt in the minds of some of her listeners whether it was intended as an evidence of her uncontrollable sorrow, at the remembrance of her "poor, dear Harry," or to attract the attention of Tom Lacy, who was flirting outrageously with Mabel Townley, at the further side of the room. And so Casper Ducey had a passport to the society of Boroville, and was received with open arms.

"How do you like him Florry?" John Myers asked one afternoon, as Mr. Ducey whirled past the window in a basket phaeton, nodding gracefully to Florry, and then turning to make some witty remark to Mrs. Digby, who occupied the seat at his side. The widow laughed, showing every one of her white front teeth to the fullest extent of propriety. She was exultant and her face showed it; and John and Florry and Mr. Ducey saw it; and John and Florry smiled, and so did Mr. Ducey—in a quiet, gentlemanly sort of way.

"Oh, I like him exceedingly well," said Florry, in reply to John's question. "He spent last evening here, and he's going to take me out in the morning for a ride to the lake with that splendid turnout of his. How delightful!"

"Which?" almost savagely—"Ducey or his horses?"

"Both, to be sure;" then saucily. "What a stupid you are, John. I meant the ride."

Florry rode with Casper Ducey the next morning and many mornings thereafter; and John Myers and the widow grew jealous. Ducey became Florry's constant attendant, accompanying her to concerts and parties, and taking her for boat rides on the lake and long drives over the pleasant country roads. They walked together, sung together, danced together. In short, it came to be a notable fact that Florry Castle and Mr. Ducey were very deeply in love with each other, or were flirting beyond all propriety. He brought her flowers and music, and read poetry to her in his rich, clear voice—by and by he made love to her in the same voice. To say that Florry was not charmed with her brilliant cavalier would be in direct opposition to the facts of the case. All thoughts of poor John Myers were, for the time being, vanished from her mind. She had no time now for odd little chats with him, as of old—perhaps the inclination was wanting also. John became desperate, and resolved one evening to tell her all. He could no longer stand silently by and see matters go on as they had been going for a few weeks past.

He found her alone in the parlor.

"Florry!" half fearfully.

"Why, John!" with a little start of surprise. "You have been so shy of me of late. So you have not forgotten me quite?"

"Forgotten you, Florry!" There was a world of reproach in his earnest voice. "I shall never forget you. I —"

"I hope not, John," she interrupted. Maybe she apprehended what he might have said. "I have something to tell you, John. To-day I promised to marry Caspar Ducey."

She was cruel, and she knew it. It is best so, she thought, he must know it some time.

"And you love him Florry?" after a long pause.

"Yes," without looking up.

"Better—better than you could ever love me?"

"I—I think so, John."

His face was pallid, and his voice trembled as he said;

"Then God bless you, Florry, and make you happy. I wish you all joy and peace, now and hereafter!"

Never till this moment had she comprehended the full depth of John Myers' love. How nobly self-sacrificing he was—this man who could thus give his heart's idol up to an another, because he thought she would be happier with him. What a world of anguish those few words cost him none could comprehend but himself and another—One that reads all our hearts. How she pitied him as she thanked him for his kind wishes.

He toiled patiently on at the old, monotonous drudgery in the counting-room, striving to crush his wild, unavailing love, to drown it amid the ceaseless cares of business.

The widow Digby, tired of her futile fishing for the "great catch," as she mentally styled Ducey, put a fresh bait on her hook, and cast her line for Tom Lacy; and as the latter gentleman's heart had long since become enslaved by her pretty brown eyes, he was a comparatively easy victim. Then the widow exulted over little Mabel Townlay, who did not care a straw for Lacy, and was satisfied in the proud consciousness that she had a lover at any rate.

After awhile, the Borovillians arranged to have a grand picnic in Crimp's grove, a mile out of town. Of course all—that is, all who belonged to the "circle,"—were expected to attend. "The Quimbys, the Brodalles, the Thomases, Mr. Ducey and Florry and Tom Lacy, besides Dr. Grantou and his cousin Miss Ellis, and ever so many more, are going," said the widow, "and we shall have such a splendid time."

"Of course you will go John," said Florry.

"Oh, Florry, I cannot."

"Why?"

"Because—because"—hesitatingly, "I have business of importance to attend to at the store."

"Oh, but you must go, John," persuasively. "It will be the last picnic of the season, and—and you know I am going away soon. Caspar insists on my naming an early day for our marriage, and you must go just this once for my sake; and you need recreation—you are working too hard.

And so he promised to drive over to the grove about the middle of the afternoon—"in time to partake of the refreshments and come home with the rest," he said. Why Florry insisted on his going, she scarcely knew. Maybe she thought he was working himself to death, for he had been looking unusually pale and thin, of late.

At last the all important day came, as most days do, and an eventful day it was, to three at least. Just after dinner the picnic party took up their line of march to the grove, looking not unlike a battallion of hotel waiters, laden as they were with plates and platters, cakes and biscuits, and all the other things that go to make up the delicious array that we see spread out on a picnic table, to please the eye and tempt the palate.

Florry waited a long time for Mr. Ducey. He came at last very late, offering no excuse for his want of punctuality, and acting, she thought, very strangely altogether.

He seemed in unusually good spirits that day, however, and all unpleasant thoughts were banished from her mind long before they came in sight of the grove, with its gay banners fluttering merrily from the wide spreading boughs, and the jolly party gathered in happy groups here and there, or wandering in couples through the shady labyrinths that extended on every side, showing transient views, through the swaying foliage, of the green hills beyond.

By and by, John Myers came, looking flushed and heated; but whatever was passing in his mind, he maintained an outward calm.

"I'm so glad you've come!" said Florry. "We're enjoying ourselves finely."

Just then word came that the refreshments were ready.

"There's Mab Townley over there, John, and she looks lonely. Go and wait on her to the table," and the little witch fluttered off, leaving him no alternative but to obey.

The company were just taking their places at the refreshment stands, and Florry stood quite still, looking anxiously around for her escort, who had not yet returned. Five minutes more slipped by, and still he did not come. She felt grieved and mortified. He had never been so neglectful of her before. What could be the matter.

"Where is Mr. Ducey?" some one asked.

His protracted absence was now for the first time generally noticed.

"Yes, where is he?" from a chorus of voices.

"What have you done with your cavalier, Florry?" Mabel Townley broke in. "You must learn to take better care of him in the future."

"He is old enough to take care of himself," said Florry lightly, yet with a red flush on either cheek.

"Very true," whispered Mrs. Digby confidentially to Tom Lacy. "He's five and thirty, if he's a day. To think of such a chit of a girl as Florry Castle marrying a man old enough to be her father—the very idea?"

Mr. Lacy, as in duty bound, agreed with everything the enchantress said.

"We must find him," said somebody. "He may have met with an accident."

And a dozen of the party hastened off in various directions through the grove in search of Casper Ducey. One of the girls found him out at last, as a little scream attested, and they were all around him in a moment.

He was lying prostrate on the ground, just within the shelter of a little thicket not far away, with his eyes closed and his face looking swollen and purple.

"What is the matter?"

"Is he dead?"

"He's in a fit!"

Three or four of the girls screamed in a breath; the gentlemen looked at him hard then at each other, but said nothing. Dr. Granton glanced at the red, bloated face, then ruefully at Florry.

"Speak!" she cried, with pale lips. "Is he dead?"

"Florry, the Dr. replied kindly, "it is best to use plain language. Mr. Ducey is drunk!"

She was silent a moment, standing motionless as a marble, staring into vacancy, like one in a dream. Then the pallor in her face gave place to a hot, angry flush, and her black eyes flashed as she said:

"And this is true?" There was no denial, and she went on: "Then he is dead to me. I never wish to look upon his face again. I want him to know how utterly I scorn him after what has happened. Give me a pencil and a bit of paper, John. I will write a few lines for him to read when he comes out of his stupor; then I wish you would take me home.

She had finished in a moment.

"You shall all hear it," she said bravely. "It is not a love letter!"

And she stood up in the midst of the excited throng, whose eyes were all fixed eagerly on her resolute little face, and read what she had written:

"MR. DUCEY—*I scorn and detest you! I never want to see you again!*

FLORENCE CASTLE."

It was very brief, very concise; but it answered Florry's purpose—it was to the point. She bent over and drew something from the breast-pocket of his coat. It was a small flask. Then she rolled the paper up and thrust it through a dainty little ring, which she had slipped from her finger. Next she drew the stopper, and after emptying the contents upon the grass, replaced it with the roll of paper. Then she put the flask back where she had found it.

"He will discover it there soonest," she said simply. "Come, John, we will go now."

The grove was deserted in a few minutes, and Casper Ducey, in his drunken slumber was its sole occupant.

They never saw him again. His reign was over. One of the places that knew him once knew him no more, and that place was Boroville.

What John and Florry said that afternoon, as they rode home, we will not attempt to conjecture, but certain it is that Mr. Castle gave his sanction to their betrothal that very night. And so John won Florry after all.

SHOEING HORSES.—It is almost impossible to get a horse shod without having the frogs cut away. All veterinary surgeons, all horse men, all leading blacksmiths agree that the frogs should not be pared one particle not even trimmed. No matter how soft and pliable the frog is, cut it away smooth on all sides, and in two days it will be dry and hard as a chip. You might as well cut off all leaves of trees and expect them to flourish as to pare away the frog and have a healthy foot. The rough spongy part of the frog is to the foot what leaves are to the trees—the lungs. Never have a red hot shoe put upon the foot to burn it level. If you can find a blacksmith that is mechanic enough to level the foot without red-hot iron, employ him. The burning process deadens the hoof and tends to contract it. If you do not think so, try the red-hot poker on your finger-nail, and see how it will effect the growth of that. There are many other important points in shoeing horses, but these two are of more importance than all the rest, level to the apprehension of men not skilled in horses, and the two most regarded.

It takes eleven pounds of milk to add one pound of live weight to a calf; and an ox that weighs one thousand three hundred pounds will consume twenty-two pounds of hay in twenty-four hours to keep from losing weight. If he is to fatten, he must have just twice that quantity, when he will gain two pounds a day. This is one pound live weight for eleven pounds of good hay. To obtain fifty cents a hundred for his hay, a farmer must sell fat steers at five dollars and fifty cents per hundred pounds.

ANECDOTE OF HENRY CLAY.—It is known that Mr. Clay was remarkable for his recollection of faces. A curious incident of this wonderful power is told of his visit to Jackson, Miss., in the year 18—. On his way the cars stopped at Clinton for a few moments, when an eccentric but strong-minded old man made his way up to him, exclaiming, as he did so, "Don't introduce me, for I want to see if Mr. Clay wil know me."

"Where did I know you!" said Mr. Clay.

"In Kentucky," answered the keen-sighted, but one-eyed old man.

Mr. Clay struck his long, bony finger upon his forehead, as if in deep thought. "Have you lost that eye since I saw you, or had you lost it before?" inquired Mr. Clay.

"Since," said the man.

"Then turn the sound side of your face to me, that I may get your profile."

Mr. Clay paused for a moment, his thoughts running back many years. "I have it!" said he. "Did you not give me a verdict as juror, at Frankfort, Ky., in the great case of the United States versus Innis, twenty-one years ago?"

"I did! I did!" said the overjoyed old man.

"And is not your name," said Mr. Clay "Hardwicke?"

"It is, it is," replied Dr. Hardwicke, bursting into tears. "Did I not tell you," he said to his friends, "that he knew me, though I have not seen him from that time to this? Great men never forget faces."—*Bench and Bar, by L. J. Bigelow.*