

WEEKLY CORVALLIS GAZETTE

Corvallis, May 23, 1879.

A PERFECTLY, AWFULLY LOVELY STORY.

BY M. S. B.

There was once a perfectly modern girl, with perfectly modern ways, who saw perfection in everything that happened to meet her gaze.

Such perfectly lovely things she saw, and perfectly awful, too. That none would have dared to doubt her word. So perfectly, perfectly true.

The weather, she said, in summer time, was perfectly, awfully warm. The winter was perfect, too, when there came some perfectly terrible storm.

She went to a perfectly horrid school, in a perfectly horrid place, and she had perfectly horrid teachers there. Did things up perfectly brown.

Her lessons were perfectly, fearfully long, but never were perfectly short. And when she failed, as often she did, her face grew perfectly red.

The church she attended in perfectly mag— With a perfectly perfect awe. The last time she went to church, she was perfectly perfect.

The latest style is perfectly sweet— The last time she went to church, she was perfectly perfect. The books she reads are perfectly good. (Just here we raise a doubt.)

A ride she took was perfectly grand, On a perfectly perfect horse. With a perfectly perfect friend of hers, who happened to pass that way.

The perfectly elegant fair she'd seen, When on a perfectly perfect ride. And the graphic description she gave us all, Was simply a modern mistake.

The perfectly splendid foam dashed up, In a perfectly perfect way. And the perfectly terrible waves came down, In a perfectly perfect life.

I might go on with this "perfectly" poem, And write to the end of my patience out. But I fear to wear my patience out. Will bring to an end my rhyme.

—Chicago Saturday Herald.

Only a Flirtation.

It was at Bannsburg, a fashionable watering-place, in the beautiful region of the Hartz. The hotels were crowded, and the gardens and promenades brilliant with well-dressed, happy-looking people. The season was one of unusual gaiety, for a regiment of cavalry was quartered near, and balls, concerts and picnic excursions were the order of the day.

Among the English and American visitors, none attracted more attention than Helen Russell. Not that she was by any means the fairest of the many fair women there assembled; but her grace and wit, her expressive, spirituelle face, and a certain magnetic charm of manner, which American girls possess above all others, attracted to her side many upon whom the charm of mere physical perfection had no such power.

She was perfectly aware of this, and in her secret heart rather gloried in it.

She was seated, this evening, at her window, looking out upon the beautiful grounds, and the lovely hills and valleys beyond, while listening to a grave, matronly lady, who seemed very much in earnest in what she was saying.

The young lady turned to her at length, with an amused smile, and said: "Why, auntie, you take the matter a good deal too seriously. Of course I am only flirting with him."

"Flirting? and you engaged to be married?"

"There is no harm in a little innocent amusement such as this. It isn't even a serious trifling, but merely a little playful trifling, *pour passer le temps*."

"Helen, what would George Drewry think to hear you say this?"

A slight blush crossed the fair face, but she answered lightly: "He would think nothing at all about it, auntie. George is too sensible to notice such trifles. He knows that I love him."

"And Captain von Harling?"

"Knows that I am flirting. If we are satisfied on that point, I don't see why any one else should be concerned," she answered half pettishly.

"You forget the girl with whom he was said to be in love."

"Minna Frieland, the little German beauty? Why she is only the forester's daughter. I don't think he had any idea of marrying."

"Report said differently. Her family is good, though in a station beneath his own. Colonel von Grose informed me, and I think with a purpose—that Von Harling had declared to him his honorable intentions toward the girl, who is said to be as good as his beautiful."

"Very impertinent, in Colonel von Grose," said Helen, flushing, "or three weeks' waltzing and promenadeing 'under der linden'."

"No doubt she understands it. These German girls seem to catch on so quickly to trouble themselves about trifles. The pretty fraulein is welcome to her handsome lover. I wouldn't for the world seriously interfere between them. And as we leave here in a week's time, the captain will forget me, as I shall him, and no one but the boy for our three weeks' waltzing and promenadeing 'under der linden'."

Mrs. Mason shook her head. She had no fear of her niece's becoming too much interested in the young German officer; but she was a lady of the "old school," and in her eyes nothing could justify the woman who, with hand and heart pledged to one, could deliberately indulge in coquetry with another. Besides, she could not feel so certain as Helen of the harmlessness of the "amusement" in which she indulged.

The captain was evidently very much interested in the charming American girl. More than once, of late, had Mrs. Mason detected a look in the frank blue eyes of the young officer which betrayed more than perhaps he was himself aware of; and only last night she had noticed the prolonged stroll under the lindens, and the whisper at parting, which had called a slight flush to Helen's cheek, even while she laughed and threw back a gay repartee.

This it was which had brought upon the young lady the remonstrance of her aunt, to which she had replied that it was "only a flirtation."

On the day following, there was an excursion to a point noted for its picturesque scenery. Helen Russell was of the party, escorted by a French count, whose attentions to the fair American were becoming rather marked. The young captain evidently had not relished this interference, but to-day, being on duty, he was compelled to resign himself to his rival monopolizing some hours of the society which he himself found so charming.

And the ivory colored ruins of the old castle, the party dispersed. Some sketched, some lounged and chatted on the green, and others strolled about in poetic meditations and quoted poetry.

So they enjoyed themselves, and after a while they awoke to the prosaic fact that they were very hungry, and that, having intended a brief stay, they had neglected to provide refreshments.

There was a house of some kind in the valley below. They could see its quaint gables, through the beech trees; and thither the polite French count now volunteered to proceed on a foraging excursion. Doubtless, he could there procure some good brown bread, milk and honey—a pastoral refreshment, much affected by the fashionable Bannsburgians.

Helen Russell stole away from the gay party, in order to enjoy alone the lovely prospect visible from the ruined tower. She experienced a strange charm in the situation.

The gray walls of the old castle, the masses of tangled ivy, the wild moor-tain scenery, the deep, solemn stillness pervading the whole—all were for her a spell of romance. She wondered what fair lady had, centuries ago, stood on the battlements where she was now standing, watching perchance for the gleaming armor or floating plume of the expected lover.

A rustling amid the ivy startled her. Had her fancy conjured up this fair vision? There stood before her a young girl—not more than seventeen—with the loveliest and most innocent face that she had ever beheld. She was somewhat pale, and there was a very touching expression in the soft, appealing eyes.

"I am Minna Frieland," said the beautiful apparition, timidly; "the daughter of the forester who lives here. Helen took in the whole lovely face and figure at a glance.

"No wonder that he should have been charmed with her," she thought; but she only said, in a graceful, half-playful acknowledgment of the introduction: "Minna! Helen Russell—a visitor at the Spa."

The girl's blue eyes dilated; a quick flush rose to her cheek, and Helen noticed the slight tremor of her lips. She needed no words to interpret these signs of emotion.

"She has heard some nonsense about that foolish flirtation," she thought, remorsefully. "I must try to undo it."

"I came to invite the fraulein to partake of refreshments at the Forester's house," she said, gravely. "The fraulein's friends will go."

Helen called to the party below not to wait for her, and she followed slowly with her pretty young guide.

"I have heard much of you," she said, in the sweet, winning way with which she knew how to charm. "I know a friend of yours—Captain von Harling. He often speaks of you."

This was perhaps an exaggeration, for of late the captain had not mentioned the fraulein's name.

"I have heard of the fraulein Russell," was the girl's low reply. "The fraulein has been some time at the Spa?"

"Some time, but shall leave in a few days."

"So soon?" She looked up with a sudden, eager light in her eyes. "Will the fraulein return?"

"I do not expect to revisit your beautiful country, which I like so much." And she added with a frankness which she used with this unsophisticated little maid: "Did not your friend, Captain von Harling, tell you I was going home to be married?"

Helen knew that Von Harling had no intention of her engagement, but she had been so easily accomplished.

Minna looked up with eyes full of eager surprise.

"It is not true, then, what they told me!" she said, impulsively.

"What have they told you?" asked Helen, kindly.

"That—Oh, fraulein, forgive me! but I was so unhappy, and now to hear you say this is such joy! I—I thought you liked him, and had won his heart from me!"

"My poor child!" said Helen Russell, placing her arm around the waist of the girl, who, seating herself on a mossy rock, had covered her face with both hands, and was silently weeping—"my poor child, you have greatly misunderstood both Capt. von Harling and myself."

"I am sure we would have been—oh, yes, fraulein, he is changed! See—beneath those willows by the river we used to walk every day—every day, and now he seldom comes, and I think that we shall never again walk there as we have done. I go there still, but alone."

Helen soothed and reassured her. Her heart was strangely moved by the artless words of the girl, who seemed to have been all unconsciously poured forth from the girl's full heart.

She bitterly regretted the folly of her own conduct, and felt also some indignation toward Von Harling, in thinking that he could have so heartlessly neglected this innocent, loving girl for a flirtation with a stranger.

No doubt she was herself partly to blame for it; for had she not encouraged and led him on, until that parting whisper of last night had startled her into the same error?

That evening, Helen Russell met the Prussian officer more coldly than usual. It was time, she thought, that their trifling should be brought to an end; and, for this purpose, she gave more than ordinary encouragement to the attentions of her new admirer, the French count, without considering that, in so doing, she might be creating a fresh difficulty.

In fact, there was a spice of coquetry in Helen's nature, of which she was herself scarcely aware. On this evening, in the crowded saloon, flushed with dancing, excited by the homage paid her, she forgot the lesson of the morning.

She smiled on the admirers who crowded about her on all but Von Harling, who stood apart, surprised and bewildered at the sudden change, and more troubled than one would have expected, considering that there had been between them and the fair American "only a flirtation."

He watched her as she floated past him, with the count, to the divine melody of one of Strauss' sweetest waltzes. A white glove fell at his feet, and he picked it up, and, turning aside, stealthily thrust it in his breast.

Then he left the hall, and walked thoughtfully under the lindens, where, until this evening, he had had a fair companion on his arm to reply with ready wit to the sentimental speeches, which, commencing in affected gallantry, had come to be too much in earnest.

What were his thoughts, we cannot say; but he was startled out of them by a voice at his elbow.

"Monsieur," said the count, with a stiff bow, "mademoiselle desires the glove which she unfortunately dropped, and which monsieur picked up."

"I will do myself the honor to return mademoiselle's glove in person," was the somewhat haughty reply.

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Turning the Tables.

BY EMMA LEE.

"Now what a pleasant evening we can have all alone!" said little Mrs. Grey, dropping the crimson curtains in the cozy sitting-room and turning to her husband as she spoke.

"But," monsieur," persisted the Frenchman, quite as loftily, "mademoiselle desired that I would bring her the glove."

"Monsieur has my answer."

"Monsieur then refuses to deliver the glove?" inquired the count, his dark eyes beginning to glitter.

"To the lady, monsieur, I will deliver it."

"Monsieur, is this an insult?"

A slight shrug of the shoulders was the reply, and she drew nearer the shaded light on the center-table, and picked up a book. "Hark! there is the door-bell."

"Stay, I will answer it," said Fred, suddenly forgetting his weariness; and springing up, he went hurriedly into the hall.

"Rosa," he said, presently reappearing at the door, "It's Davis; I have promised to go with him to B—street, to seek a sick friend of his. You won't be lonely, pet, with so much to entertain you?"

"With a kiss he was gone, with her 'Don't stay long!' ringing after him. Rosa sat listening till the sound of their foot-steps died away.

"Now I shall have to spend the evening all alone. Oh, dear!" she sighed, discontentedly.

At that moment she spied a bit of paper lying on the carpet, and stooping, picked it up. It ran thus:

"Opera at half-past eight. Will call, Davis."

"Ah!" said Rosa, her brows contracted as she spoke. "That's it!" and she tossed the note into the fire. "That detestable Davis—and Fred, too!" she finished, the tears springing to her eyes quickly.

"Oh! she finished. 'If I could only go to-night!' And with a little sigh she sat down again, and looked into the fire. Soon the door-bell rang again.

"Show him in!" was her reply to Katie's announcement, in rich Irish brogue. "Gentleman see ye, mem!"

"I wonder who it is?" she murmured, passing her hand over her fair hair. "Why, George!" an instant later was her delighted exclamation. "When did you come?"

"Further exclamations were lost in fond kisses from the lips of the tall, bearded young man.

"My darling little sister! So you are glad to see the wanderer?" was the first affectionate query.

"Indeed, I am delighted!" warmly responded Rosa. "How handsome you have grown, George!"

"Flatterer!" smiled her brother. "But where is Fred?" he asked, suddenly. "I am anxious to make the acquaintance of the bright eyes that I never have seen."

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"How handsome you have grown, George!"

"Not at all! Not at all!" responded George, as they heartily shook hands. "I am delighted to meet the happy fellow who won my pet sister."

"Fred," said Rosa, demurely, as they entered their own apartments, "is that friend of Davis' better? And 'very gravely'—how came you to attend the opera?"

"Rosa," cried Fred, turning impulsively, and catching her in his arms. "Don't tease me! How could you frighten me so, darling?"

"Did you care so much?" whispered Rosa, nestling closer. "But you deceived me, and I felt so badly! If you had only told me! But we will be good now, won't we?"

"Of course we will," said Fred, penitently, choking over the tender reproach. "I never will again, if you forgive me this once. I was punished, I think; I thought I had lost my wife. But—added, quickly—"we did call to see the bright eyes."

"Smart woman, that little wife of mine," he remarked to Davis, as he told him about it next morning. "Turned the tables neatly."

"Humph!" muttered Davis. "Told you so!"

Corvallis Lodge No. 14, F. & A. M. Holds stated Communications on Wednesday or preceding each full moon. Brethren in good standing cordially invited to attend. By order of W. M.

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"O, George! If we could only go!" "And go we will!" said George, rising and looking at his watch. "How soon can you be ready?"

"In fifteen minutes," laughed Rosa, gleefully, and she ran blithely away to dress.

There was a slight stir in the house as a couple entered; very late they were, and all eyes were turned upon them.

The lady slender and graceful, with great azure billows of silk falling about her in shimmering folds, pearls braided low in her brown hair, and a snowy opera cloak drawn carelessly about her shoulders—the gentleman, stout, nonchalant, wearing that air of polished, affluent foreign travel, and devoted to his companion, whom he seated with careful tenderness.

"Grey," said Davis, giving his friend a nudge, "who is that last party that is making such a sensation?"

Grey turned carelessly and looked; the girl descended upon them, and he stared blankly at the lady, who fluttered her spangled white fan with the faintest suggestion of a smile, as she turned to her companion with a remark, which he bent his handsome head low to hear.

She turned scarlet, then pale, and clutched Davis fiercely by the arm.

"Why," he gasped, "it's Rosa! and who the deuce has she with her?"

"I don't know," returned Davis, indifferently. "Some friend, probably. Sit down, Grey; don't make a fool of yourself!"

"I won't sit down!" retorted Fred, irascibly. "Friend! My wife here with another man!" And with an impression he strode from the house. "I'll go home," he muttered, angrily, "and see what it all means. Serves me right for leaving her! How lovely she was! I didn't know she was half so beautiful! But my proud darling at the opera with another? I cannot understand it!"

A few minutes' rapid walking brought him to his home.

"Kate," he inquired, summoning that worthy, "where is your mistress?"

"Sure, she went out," volubly explained the girl, "with a fellow gentleman who came soon after your sister, and was glad to see her. I thought he'd never stop kissin' her."

"That will do; you can go!" sternly commanded Mr. Grey. And he slowly made his way into the little room he had left at home before with such different feelings. The light was burning brightly, the papers scattered about, the open book, even the little laced trimmed handkerchief, that in her haste she had dropped upon the floor, all spoke eloquently of an old bachelor who orders a dinner in course at the station, and raves because he has not time to eat it before the "fifteen minutes for refreshments" is over.

Old maids drink weak tea, and it cures their headaches. Old bachelors drink strong liquor, which gives them headaches.

Old maids are modest; they think their youth is over and their beauty gone. If, after a while, some autumnal love is given them, they take it as a sort of miracle, and hope people will not laugh at them for "marrying so late in life."

Old bachelors believe that all women are in love with them, and that they must carefully guard themselves from traps laid to inveigle them into matrimony. They also fondly cherish the belief that should they eventually become married men, the world expects them to exhibit great taste in women by their choice, and that the "other fellows" will laugh if their portion be not tender youth and beauty; also, that when they marry many women will expire of jealousy.

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