One Way of Love.

She was a clerk in the treasury at Washington on a salary of nine hundred dollars a year; he was in the postoffice enjoying the privileges afforded by an income of twelve hundred. Once in a while there was a holiday, when they would take the boat down to Mount Vernon, if it was warm, and spread their lunch in the shade of its historic trees and patronize nature as successfully as if they were nabobs. Sometimes they had tickets given them for a comedy or tragedy, when they laughed or cried with the discernment of millionaires and the old families. On Sunday mornings they sang in a choir and walked out to Long Bridge later in the day, or strolled in the Capitol grounds and surprised the first violet in its hiding place. Helen's landlady told every new boarder that Mr. Van Vleck "was going with" Miss Hildreth, but Miss Helen always protested that he was merely a friend, that they were neighbors at home and had gone to school together when they were in their pinafores; and the landlady always sniffed when she remarked, "If he's nothing but a friend I should think there'd be a secession of his love-making sooner or later."

One day when they were rambling about Mount Vernon together Helen fell into a romantic vein. "Suppose this is my country seat," said she, "and I have furnished it in the Queen Anne style, and I'm entertaining the creme de la creme, just as they do in novels"——

"A sort of Lady Geraldine—and I am the poor poet, eh?"

"All but the poetry," mocked Helen.

"Now suppose this is in my manor house," suggested Theodore, "furnished in the renaissance, let us say—I'm making great demands on your imagination—and I'm entertaining all the swells. I've lured you here on the pretext of looking for a four-leafed clover, but really to ask you if you will share my magnificence with me; what should you say?"

"I should put my lessons in gymnastics into use and then jump at the chance."

"And if I should ask instead,

"'Come, share my cottage, gentle maid?'"

"Don't!" cried Helen.

He looked at her a little blankly.

"You don't mean that you care so little for me?"

"I don't mean anything. Don't let us talk about marrying and giving in marriage; we are happy enough as we are."

"But if I don't marry you some other fellow will."

"Nonsense; penniless girls are a drug in the market. I've seen misery enough from marrying on a small salary; I've seen people living in two rooms on 'water and a crust,' so to speak, doing their own work, with no pleasures and no society, and no hope of amendment; people who thought love would tide them over all the quicksands—and presently the hallucination wore off, but the quicksands remained; reproaches set in; she grew bitter and unlovely, and he morose and neglectful"——

"Then you think love an hallucination?"

"I think marriage is a mistake on twelve hundred a year. If I became dowdy and hadn't time to cultivate a taste for esthetics or whatever was the fashionable craze, and grew jaded and spiritless with the uncongenial task of washing pots and kettles and stewing over a range, and if nobody turned to look after me as I passed, one day you would find yourself disenchanted. Then, supposing the new administration should push you out of office, even for a month, or you should fall ill? No, we are happy enough just as we are; don't let us discuss marriage; let us wait, like Mr. Micawber, till something turns up."

And so Van Vleck waited. Perhaps he was disappointed in Helen's views, but he refused to confess it even to himself; all women felt so, he supposed, cared more for shadow than substance, or mistook the one for the other; it was their poetic temperament which made poverty hateful to them and splendor their natural atmosphere, and he applied himself more diligently than ever to his idea, working far into the night at times.

"You were not at the President's last evening," one of his fellow clerks said to him later.

"I? No; I should think not."

"But Miss Hindreth was there; she and Mr. Sterling, M. C., were hand in glove. I heard him ask her to go and hear 'Lohengrin' to-morrow night."

"Mr. Sterling is in luck," was all Van Vleck ventured to say; he did not choose to carry his heart on his sleeve for every clerk to peck at. If Mr. Sterling was fascinated by Helen, it surely was no fault of hers; many a man had been bewitched by her before the elderly congressman, only Theodore forgot that they had all been needy suitors—and as for Helen, he felt as sure of her as of seed time and harvest.

But on one occasion he left his work early and hastened to see her; a cloud of ugly rumors had assailed him and interfered with his tasks; she could brush all the cobwebs out of his heaven. He met her coming down the staircase in a white evening dress, with flowers in her hand—costly exotics, such as wealthy lovers send their sweethearts, such as he had never dared to buy.

"Where did they come from?" he demanded.

"They grew, I 'spects—like Topsy," answered Helen, laughing uneasily.

"Where did you get them, Helen?"

"You are inquisitive, Mr. Van Vleck. They were sent me."

"By Mr Sterling?"

"You do credit to your nationality; you're a capital Yankee. Yes, by Mr. Sterling, of course."

"Helen," he cried, beneath his breath—"Helen, are you going to marry Mr. Sterling?"

"—I believe I am," she said, dropping her eyes.

Theodore never knew exactly how he found his way out of the house; he was vaguely aware of brushing against a stout gentleman in a fur-trimmed ulster, as he shot into the street; of a stately carriage and pair standing at the door, and a dark-browed lady leaning out to look after him.

The next day he resigned his position in the postoffice, and his savings from the banks left Washington. It were well, indeed, if he could put deserts and mountains between Helen and himself. It seemed to him as if the earth had reeled from its orbit and it required [illegible] him to readjust himself to the sidereal [illegible]. His idea was all that was left to him; he put into it all his earnings; he devoted heart and soul to its development, and he finally forgot himself and Helen Hildreth in his work and its success.

It was seven or eight years later that they met, odly enough, on the Mount Vernon boat. Her vivacity was no longer the spontaneous effervescence of youth and hope; she was a trifle "passee," perhaps.

"Wealth and splendor have not proved all her fancy painted them," he thought, as their eyes met. "Mr. Van Vleck," she cried, "who would have thought of meeting you here!" Was the pleasure which brightened her eyes and deepened her somewhat exaggerated dimples a reminiscene of her power, or was Mrs. Sterling a married flirt, he wondered. "We have heard of you often, to be sure," she purred. "The newspapers have not been silent concerning you and your great invention. I've always felt an ownership in that invention, do you know? I felt as if I were behind the scenes, let into the secret before the rest of the outside world, when it was only a dream. I've resented every infringement——"

"I am flattered that you remember my small affairs," said Theodore, somewhat humbly.

"Remember," she repeated, with a lingering accent, "I have nothing else to do."

"I come down here sometimes," she pursued, after a brief pause, "when we have a holiday, for the sake of 'auld lang syne' and try to believe I am seven years younger and the world before me where to choose. I like to come when the peach trees are in bloom, as they were that day when we 'built our castles in the air. Mine have crumbled into dust."

"Mrs. Sterling, I am sorry to hear you speak so."

She stared at him an instant, blushed and drooped her eyes in the old effective way. "Haven't you heard," I didn't marry Mr. Sterling?"

Perhaps she expected Theodore to beam with sudden happiness and rehearse the old story she had refused to hear once before.

"You left no address, you know," defending herself from the reproaches she anticipated. "Mr. Sterling died before the wedding day was set. I thought you would see it in the newspapers. I am a treasury girl, yet, Theodore. Do you know that I sometimes wish that I had never seen Mr. Sterling?"

Only the fates know what Van Vleck would have answered, but just at that moment a bit of "crepe lisse" floated into their neighborhood, and a voice like a summer brook cried, "Oh, my veil, Theodore!" Theodore put out a hand, but it eluded him; Helen made a quick movement and caught it on the wing.

"Let me introduce you to Mrs. Van Vleck, Miss Hildreth," he said. "She would like to thank you."[—Our Continent.

MRS. GARFIELD IS VERY WELL OFF.—Mrs. Garfield has $300,000 in Government bonds, the result of the subscription. Then her husband's life was insured for $50,000 which she promptly received. She was also paid the salary of the President for the unoccupied first year, amounting to about $20,000. Then add to it about $30,000, the total value of Garfield's estate. That was the total amount, and after all the abuse that was received, that he was able to accumulate in a life time of fifty years. That makes $400,000, does it not. I suppose that the income from this total of more than $400,000 will be, perhaps, $16,000 a year. She is also put on the penson list at $5000 a year. So she is comfortable and can raise her children well.

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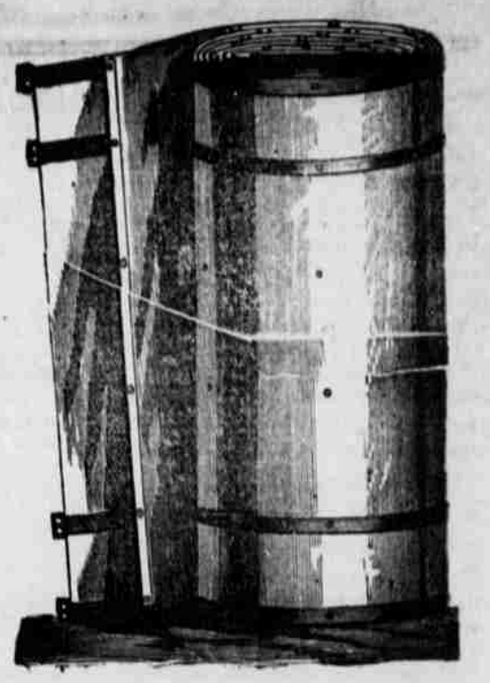

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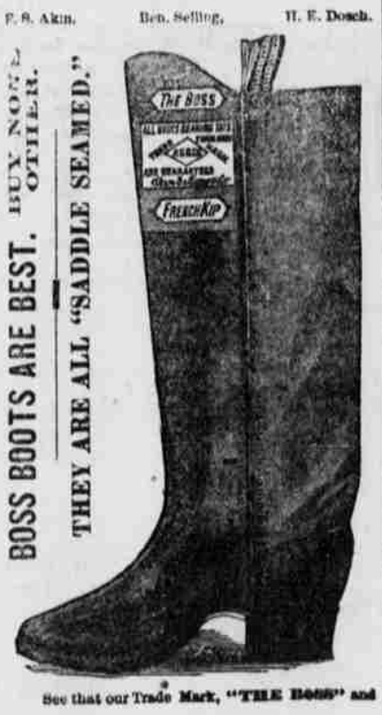

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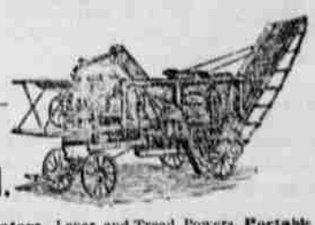

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