

AT MASS.

Ave Maria. Thus the choir is singing...

Gratia Plena. On the sombre rafting...

Ave Maria. How my heart does flutter...

Dona Nobis. Blessed Mother, help...

JULIA'S CHOICE.

"Don't you be satisfied with being nothing but a farmer, Alfred, my son..."

"I wonder what Caleb is going to make of himself. I suppose a doctor or lawyer..."

"I don't want you, to my son. Merchants are the great men now-a-days..."

"Caleb says if his father had lived he would have been a farmer. He thinks there is nothing like it."

"Let him think so, Alfred. But do you look higher. I spoke to your uncle to find a place for you in some store in the city..."

"Caleb is always talking about what a charming place this is, when he is home from college."

"Well, let him; he hasn't a very aspiring mind. He lacks ambition. Anybody can see that, for he is always carried away with vulgar notions..."

All the hopes and aspirations of Mrs. Thurber were realized in a shorter time than she dared to hope for.

Caleb, mentioned above, was the son of a distant relative of Mrs. Thurber, a lawyer of considerable wealth.

Perhaps no more of the young man's patrimony stuck to the fingers of Mr. Thurber than the law would allow...

The next year Caleb went to college, the farm was let and the family removed to the village, a prosperous place of wealth and enterprise...

Alfred had meanwhile greatly prospered. He had gained the confidence and esteem of his employers and had been advanced till he held a prominent place in the large establishment with a good salary.

"That is no matter of yours; it is your duty to obey your mother, who knows what is best for you a great deal better than you, a girl of 18."

"I expect to live with the man I choose for my husband, and not you. You had a choice of a man, and I expect the same privilege myself."

Meanwhile the orphan Caleb had graduated from college, but what were college honors compared with the city triumphs

of Alfred. He had been wont in days past to consider Caleb as his superior, but he now sorely deigned to notice him. Caleb held to his love of those things which Alfred's mother considered vulgar.

However, Caleb was disposed to take quietly what was passed over to him and make the best of it. His superior scholarship at once opened to him an excellent opportunity as a teacher, which he at once accepted...

With this feeling Caleb accepted the position offered him, and for three years gave himself to the duties of a teacher in a high school.

With the people of Thornville, success was the highest virtue; or, if not a virtue, it stood in their minds as of greater value than what silly people called virtue, morality or culture.

Lucy was much like her mother, ambitious and fond of show and parade, and when her marriage took place it was made a very notable affair...

But the next daughter, Julia, was a very different girl. Her beauty was less striking, but yet vastly more attractive to any one who could feel the power of real excellence, beauty and sweetness combined.

But in this she was destined to a great disappointment just as her hopes were on the point of realization. Alfred and his wife came one day from the city, in their usual style with a driver and span, and with them came a gentleman whom it hardly would do to call young, though some years this side of forty.

He was looked upon by the family and the people of Thornville, for he spent several days there, as quite a lion. The very thing which Mrs. Thurber desired did occur; Mr. Hurlburt fell deeply in love with Julia, but, incredible to relate, Julia was so cold and distant toward him as though it were impossible for her heart to feel the soft passion of love.

"Julia!" she exclaimed, "what do you mean by holding correspondence with one so much beneath you?"

"You have not always thought him so, mother."

"Well, you know, child, that affairs with us have changed within the past few years, and though Caleb is well enough in his place, I will teach him better than to aspire to the hand of my daughter."

"You will do no such thing, mother," said Julia, calmly looking her mother in the face.

"Do you mean to intimate to me that you are going to refuse Mr. Hurlburt and then accept this worthless boy Caleb?"

"I do not only intimate, mother, but I will say plainly, I shall never accept any intimacy from Mr. Hurlburt, of whom I know no harm; but Caleb has my heart no, and had it ever since I knew I had a heart made to love."

"You silly, foolish girl, I command you to put a stop at once to all such silly notions. I will have none of it. Mr. Hurlburt is just the match I have been hoping for you, and I am not going to be disappointed by any silly notions of yours."

"Mother, did you marry father simply because your mother loved him, or took a fancy to him, or because you loved him?"

"That, mother, is your estimation of the two men and the two positions, not mine."

"Just look at the position of your sister Lucy, and the society she moves in and the style she lives in. I should think you would be ashamed to bring such disgrace on your brother and sister as to condescend to marry a man whose highest ambition is to be a farmer. Julia Thurber a farmer's wife! Just think of the degradation and disgrace to the family, Julia!"

"Mother, it is wholly useless for us to talk further upon this subject. I prefer to follow the dictates of my own heart if there is nothing against Caleb Thornton only that he proposes to become a farmer, than even you, whom I have never before refused to obey."

"You stubborn, willful child," said Mrs. Thurber, as she rushed passionately from the room.

During the last year of Caleb's services in the high school, his eye caught the advertisement of the Thurber farm for sale, as is stated, "at a bargain."

That, of all places on the earth, was the one most desirable to Caleb, and it had within a few weeks become more especially so, as within that time Julia Thurber had accepted the offer of his hand and heart, and in language which convinced him that his love was fully reciprocated.

There was a friend of his in Thornville to whom he wrote to ascertain the lowest sum the Thurber farm was to be had for, and found that it was several hundred dollars less than he had anticipated, and, as it was within his means, he at once secured it.

When it was known he was intending to leave the school at the end of the year, the authorities made even a higher bid for his services another year, and as he was still young and Julia still under twenty, they both thought it best for him to continue and accept the proffered salary.

The Thurber farm had, to one who could appreciate the beauties of landscape and almost everything attractive in nature, more than ordinary attractions. It was located at the southeasterly foot of a mountain whose local name was Gray Beard.

The rear of the farm indeed extended part way up the slope of the mountain, but this was the only woodland part of the farm. The wood ran along to the eastward of the house extending up a long but not difficult hill, the top of which was crowned with wood and timber.

During the last year prior to the marriage of Julia and Caleb, the great banking house of Thalgenburg & Hurlburt had failed and gone into bankruptcy, and this quite reconciled Mrs. Thurber to the choice of Julia. But before many years were passed other houses failed. One of those periodical returns of disaster to trade and business closed up many establishments once thought firm as the hills, and that to which Alfred belonged was one of them.

Both Alfred and Lucy's husband were reduced almost to penury. It was hard for their wives to give up the style in which they had lived. Alfred was obliged to accept some position in a manufacturing establishment to keep himself and family from starvation.

Alfred no longer came to Thornville in a carriage with a span and driver. Thin and careworn with uncongenial toil, and worse than all a thousand times, with the complaints and reproaches of a wife whom he could no longer support in extravagance and fashion, and who, in consequence, showed him too plainly that she really never knew or felt for him that love which alone can be a man's solace in the hour of trial and adversity.

"Ah," said he to Caleb one day, as he came to the old home, now almost a paradise of comfort and thrift, "what a fool have I been to be allured from real comfort and a life worth having, to become a slave to the city."

"Come out now. The farm is large enough for you and me, too," said Caleb. "I find more, yes, twice as much as I can do well myself with all the help of my wife, and she is a jewel to me. Come, and you shall have just as much land as you can manage and welcome."

"Caleb, it cannot be; my wife would rather die than leave the city, and so I must stay and do the daily treadmill round for my daily bread and a place to lay my head, and that none of the best and happiest."

Caleb would have been willing to have Julia's father and mother return to the old farm and live with them, for their means of subsistence had well nigh run out, but Julia herself objected. She knew the temper and disposition of her mother too well to have her with her, though she was perfectly willing to support them where they were.

"I prefer," said Julia to Caleb, "to bring up our children without any interference, and you know grandparents are often disposed to interfere in behalf of their grandchildren to their disadvantage. We can make them just as comfortable where they are."

She was a sweetly inexperienced young housekeeper, as one may gather from her remark when some one suggested that she should purchase spring mattresses. "Yes," she replied, "if they are in season we'd better have some."

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