

DALLAS, SATURDAY, MAY, 31
YOUNG MARTIN AND OLD MARTIN

pected to meet him at Mrs. Miller's about this time.

"Martin might go round with you," said Anny. "I am afraid your folks 'way down on the Neck will worry if you are late. I should worry, if I had such a darter out all alone." The sharp old woman looked at young Martin, and he knew that then and there she had divined his hopeless secret. Matilda, also, intercepted these glances, and was astonished and disturbed. Was a circus man to be thrown out of his buggy at Mr. Pell's door, that she might discover a secret impossible to learn otherwise? What did it mean? Young Martin, too, was miserably flustered; he had a painful sense of his mean home, the homeliness of his mother, the commonness of his father. Not in this fashion would he have selected to make Matilda's acquaintance. A shade fell upon them all. Old Martin got up for his pipe, also embarrassed. Young Martin, telling him to sit still, found it, and held a match for him to light it. Well it was something to see this little fellow so gentle, and through goodness so refined, Matilda thought rising to go. She held her hand out to Mrs. Pell, and then kissed her. There were tears in Matilda's eyes; why, no mortal could guess.

"Shall I wait upon you to Mrs. Miller's?" asked Martin, simply.

"If you please."

And the pair walked down the yard. Mrs. Pell saw with a kind of dismay that Matilda's bonnet was just above young Martin's flat cap. "I wish, father, he had on his tall hat," she said. Old Martin patted his knee with his fist, and broke his pipe.

"Lord, I used to smash pipes in New London. But it's no use, Anny, we ain't high enough up in the world for them Northwoods. Martin must have blowed out his smits with that darned offside; he has gone from one big thing to another, and now it he ain't trying to reach up to that six-foot gal."

"I'll tell you what he's got to. He put that gal over our fence when he thought she was in danger, when that Edgar Willis jumped over, and left her behind him."

"Old Martin's cup was full. He could say nothing, but stared at the fire till Anny began to be alarmed. Then he said, solemnly, "Suppose I go there."

"Where upon arth, father?"

"To New London, to tell 'em this circumstance, you know. There was a man there who used to advise me on just such pints."

Anny put old Martin to bed at once with a spoonful of pica and gin, and he was himself the next day.

Matilda shook hands with young Martin at the Millers' door, and saying the simplest thing she could conjure up, told him that but for his impulse that night she might have been much farther off—and showed him the skirt of her dress; there was a rent in it which turned him cold to look at.

"Yes," he replied, "I thought the horse was bearing down on you when I caught you. Oh, heavens!" and he clasped his hands together with passion—"I am all gratitude. But you mustn't thank me. Yes, you may—but I only did what I ought to have done for any helpless person."

"and Edgar Willis?"

"He is not a blacksmith, and is to be excused." This was Martin's first sarcasm.

"Well, good night"—and Matilda put out her hand again; she only felt the very tips of his fingers, and could not decide whether his hand was rougher than her father's. She was silent on her way home; her brother entertained her with an account of the circus trouble and upset. He had seen Edgar Willis with the man that had been turned out of his buggy, and he could not tell which looked the most scared.

The world went on the same afterwards. Martin drove work like the very old chepi, old Martin remarked to Anny, but he fell off on his musical evenings, appearing restless of nights, and went about more. One night he brought home a brand new suit of clothes

with a blue neck-tie, and told his mother that he had joined the Cotillion party. Every week there was to be one, and he had engaged to play in the band alternate weeks; the other nights he should go on the floor.

"Now who was that plaguy chap in New London," said old Martin, musingly—"who used to cut such tremenjis pigeons wings?"

"Martin," said his mother, sadly, "I almost wish father and I had stayed in his New London; it might have forraded your plans, and you been the better for it. I feel as if we was your drawbacks—and how could we help being poor ignorant crecturs? And oh, Martin, I see as how you are addicating yourself; we did not think of doing so and I don't see how to make things out."

"You see," interpolated old Martin, "he has got stamini, and status, and, a staking fund of character, which we haven't."

"Never you mind, old man—got bacca, haven't you? Smoke it. Mother just go right on helping me. It's all right, I tell you. Where's my billed shirt?"

Unfortunately, at the first party Martin played, perched upon the little platform behind one fiddle, a clarion net and a flute he looked very small, and his dreadful instrument very large. It was remarked how mildly young Martin played that night. Somebody told Matilda Northwood that he was staring his head off at her.

"My, exclaimed another, "If the musicians are going in for staning, Tilly will have conniptions."

"By no means," calmly replied Matilda, turning her full regards upon Martin, who did not happen to be playing at that moment. His quiet, fair face was flushed, and his fair hair, brushed off his forehead, was curly with the heat. He was dressed like a gentleman, too; she thought his dress as well fitting as that of Edgar Willis, though the tailors were not the same. Martin shivered at her glance, then he looked back and gave her a grave bow in return for hers. He was melancholy, and reflected upon what his mother had said; it was all true. The only way her father (meaning Matilda's) would allow him to approach her, would be with money, and by the time he had earned enough somebody else would be her husband. More than once Matilda looked in his direction, and perceived that his heart was not in his playing. He was afraid to look at her; he might burst into tears if he did, she looked so pretty, and he was so far from her. She danced every set, of course. Once when the company was marching round the hall, she came with her partner close to the side of the platform, and stood for a moment near him. He heard her say that she was tired, and warm, and didn't think it was so very pleasant after all. Martin felt so comforted that a great gulp came in his throat, and he asked if that 'ere offside was pulling him down.

"Shut up, you fool," answered Martin, "or I'll pitch you headlong into the middle of the next dance."

Matilda heard this, and she felt better, too. She admired pluck, and every time she came near this little fellow he gave her an instance of it.

The second party young Martin joined as a dancer. Nobody knew where he had learned to dance at all; but no man went through his paces with more grace.

"He learned on the anvil, and old Martin made him dance on the hot iron, I suppose," sneered Edgar Willis.

"Down in New London, maybe," laughed another.

"I wish," said Matilda Northwood to Edgar Willis, "that Martin Pell heard your speech; but there is no fence for you here."

"Well, Tilly, if you are going to keep punishing me I must bear it; a fellow can't always control his nerves," he answered. "Your preserver is close by, I see; going to take him out?"

Matilda was stung. Martin kept aloof, and she understood; that the advance must come from her. Martin was on the alert, and at a motion from her, he was bowing, and asking her for the next set. It was, an ordeal for him. Matilda was at the head of the hall, above the salt which divided those "who worked for their living,"

and those who had money enough to live without actual labor. The male and female ancestor of every person in Tacktown was a laborer or tradesman of some sort; but there was not common sense enough for anybody to blow those airs away, till Matilda and young Martin did that night.

"Where shall we take our places?" asked Martin, very pale, and his lips shut so tight, and his eyes so determined that Matilda's heart beat with pleasure. She knew that he could be tested.

"At the head of the first set."

There they stood, the first couple on the floor—All eyes upon them. Matilda kept her face toward him, and smiled resolutely. Her spirit passed into his. He grew. She was fluttering her fan carelessly.

"Let me fan you," he said, and took it from her, and no polite dandy could have flirted it with more grace than our young Martin; he twirled it first before her face, and then bestowed a whiff upon his own.

"Well, I never!" gasped the looker-on. "Should think his face would burn! Just like Matilda Northwood to amuse herself so."

But Edgar Willis did not agree to this, he felt she was in earnest. They were well aware, Matilda and Martin, that they were the objects of criticism. As the sets slowly formed they ventured to look into each other's eyes. Martin's flushed, and he did not feel quite so self possessed. Matilda went pale, but each knew that the look exchanged happiness. She wore a pretty bracelet.

"How would you like to have me forge you one?" he asked, as she twisted it round her wrist.

"I will wear it, she answered.

"What if it be of iron, and I could give you ornaments of no other sort?"

"All the same."

Oh, Matilda, be careful I can't bear but little."

"She took the fan now, and somehow their hands touched.

"Not from me, Martin? I might ask you to bear a great deal from me."

The tender accent of her voice was unmistakable. She kept her face concealed from the crowd with her fan and handkerchief, and Martin stood very near her, almost face to face; in fact they were as much alone as if they were in the wilderness which blossom as the rose. The heart alone know-how to discover that matchless solitude where love is first revealed. Again he began, and so did the violin and flutes.

"The other day, when I went over to Begham for this suit of party clothes, I made a resolution. I put something in this vest pocket, and determined that if ever you would dance with me, I would offer it to you, and that if you refused me, I would never wear the suit nor dance, again."

He was so nervous that he put his hand to his neck-tie, as if he would denude himself of the Nessus apparel at once. Matilda was so moved, every demonstration that this obscure little young Martin made pleased her more and more. She slyly put out her hand to take his gift. It was a ring, and he not only slipped it into her hand, but on her finger. It was a pretty ring too—an emerald circled with pearls.

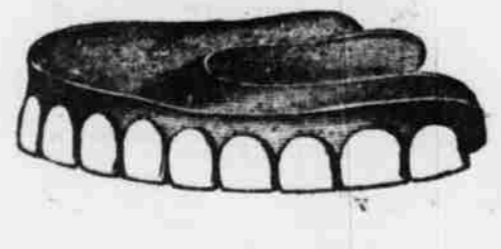
"You know what I mean," he whispered.

"How becoming your suit is," she answered; "do wear it. The next dance is yours 'Hull's Victory'—and the next—"

"All Matilda?"

"Every one!"

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