

# A Mistake

The Story of How Two Sisters Were Reunited.

By PAULINE D. EDWARDS

Although the Horner sisters had lived in the same house for forty years, during twenty of those long years they had not exchanged a word.

No one in Rosedale knew why Abigail had suddenly taken up her residence in the north wing of the old house and Sophia had settled her belongings in the sunny south half. At the time conjecture had been rife, but the nine days' wonder had settled into a strong conviction that they had disagreed over the "property," for it was shortly after old Judge Horner's death that the estrangement began.

Every Sunday morning the sisters stepped primly down the gravelled path to the gate and in wordless silence wended their way to church and up the aisle to the Horner pew. In vain had the pastor remonstrated with them singly and together. While open to reason and conviction on every other point, they were dumb regarding the cause of their wordless strife.

It was June now, and Sophia was digging among her paucities. She was slight and pale, with a pleasant, mild face that now and then started one by settling into firm lines around the mouth. Abigail's features were cast in a sterner mold, and the lines about her mouth were deeper, and this characteristic feature in both sisters was known as "Horner spunk," and it was generally agreed that "Horner spunk" was at the root of the trouble.

Abigail stood under the cedars with a copy of the county paper in her hand. She was slowly reading an article for the fifth time:

The Rev. Paul Weemers, pastor of the Park Methodist church, New York, will preach in the First church at Rosedale on Sunday evening next. It will be remembered that the First church of Rosedale was Mr. Weemers' first charge, and his return will be the occasion of much pleasure to his old friends and parishioners. Mr. Weemers will be accompanied by his wife.

She looked across the boxwood hedge into Sophia's garden. The news would interest Sophia as well as herself. Abigail thought of this as she stood there looking at Sophia's stooping form. There was a certain stern integrity about Abigail that urged her to break the long silence and to impart the news she had read to her sister. There was an underlying tenderness, too, toward her younger sister that the bitter resentment of years could not destroy. She resolved that Sophia should not be taken unawares.

She leaned over the hedge and dropped the newspaper under Sophia's nose.

Sophia squeaked with surprise as the paper rattled among the pansies, and there was blank astonishment in her nearsighted eyes as she lifted them to gaze upon the grim, uncompromising face of her sister.

The latter pointed to the paper with an old time gesture of command, and Sophia, adjusting her spectacles, sought the wrong page with agitated eagerness. Then she turned the sheet, and presently a nervous cluck and the dull reddening of her cheek announced that she had found the item. In her excitement the younger woman spoke, "He will call," she said softly, as if to herself.

The next day was Saturday, and all day long Sophia's lavender muslin hung on the clothesline, bending and swaying in the soft west wind like a misty wreath of Sophia herself. Abigail looked sternly upon the dress. She had been on her way to the front chamber to look over a well preserved summer silk, but the sight of the dress seemed to proclaim the boldness of Sophia—a boldness that was unexpected and that seemed to rouse a stern maidenliness in the older woman. She reddened darkly and went hastily downstairs again.

In the solitude of her own front room she sat and thought. The stern upbringing of the Horner girls had discouraged the coming of suitors, and it was not until after their father's death that Paul Weemers came to preach at the First church. He had been equally attentive to both sisters, and it was perhaps natural that each should believe herself to be the preferred one and the other an interloper. When Paul received a call to a larger parish he came to say goodbye, and when he asked old Hannah if Miss Horner was in the sisters appeared simultaneously. Suddenly Abigail was called away, and when she returned to the parlor the young minister had gone and Sophia was standing at the window with a bewildered look on her pretty face.

Then a white rage had taken possession of Abigail, and her tongue had loosed upon the frightened Sophia, who turned fiercely with upbraiding contradictions. After that scene, which no one witnessed, began the long silence. As her thoughts wandered back to the past she knew she had been unjust to her sister, for really neither of the sisters had any real reason for thinking Mr. Weemers was in love with her, which made Abigail's outbreak toward her sister all the more unjustifiable. It was of these things that Abigail was thinking.

The next day was Sunday, and Sophia stepped down the path alone, her worn hymn book clasped in her mitted hands. She cast many anxious, backward glances at the north wing,

where Abigail's stern profile was outlined against the windowpane. She was bent over the pages of a religious journal, and it was evident she did not intend to go to church that morning. Sophia went on alone, swinging her fresh muslin skirts and holding her head rather high, quite unaware that Abigail was watching her with accusing eyes of mingled pity and resentment.

Sophia did not know why she was hurrying to church that morning with a pink spot in either faded cheek, but her heart beat quickly, and she was conscious of a pleasant excitement at the idea of seeing Paul Weemers again. That was all. She fluttered the leaves of her Bible as she waited for the service to begin. She wondered vaguely where Mrs. Weemers would sit and concluded that she was the fashionably attired woman who sat in the minister's pew. She was a plump, pretty woman, with dark hair waving back from a fresh, youthful complexion. Then Paul Weemers came in, and Sophia gasped with surprise. He was rather stout and much older, and his hair and beard were quite gray.

The next morning while the sisters were attending to their separate household duties the doorbell tined dimly. Abigail went into the front hall and, peering through the side window light, saw a man in clerical garments accompanied by a woman. She paused for a moment with a hand on the knob; then she opened the door.

"Now, Miss Abigail, I don't believe you recognize me," exclaimed the man heartily. "I didn't see you in church yesterday, although I am sure that I recognized your sister."

"Mr. Weemers, isn't it?" asked Abigail coldly. "Won't you come in?"

"Yes, and this is my wife; my dear, this is Miss Horner, one of my old friends and parishioners."

"I have heard my husband speak of you and your lovely old house, Miss Horner," said the lady pleasantly. They went into Abigail's cool parlor. "Where is Miss Sophia?" inquired Mr. Weemers with evident interest.

"I will call her," said Abigail reluctantly.

She stepped across the hall and opened Sophia's door. That was the signal when there was company for both.

"Don't you care, Sophia," she whispered with fierce intensity as her sister followed her into the room.

Sophia was visibly agitated. She stammered greetings to the minister and his wife, which Abigail tried to cover by commonplace remarks, but there was an atmosphere of constraint over the four people.

"Will you have some refreshment?" asked Abigail presently. "It is a very warm day," she observed. She left the room and presently returned with foaming glasses of root beer and a plate of freshly cut sponge cake. She ate nothing herself, but looked intently from her sister to Mr. Weemers and then at the minister's wife.

The latter set down her glass. "Do you know, Miss Horner, that when my husband told me he was coming to Rosedale on Sunday I was delighted. The first thing I said was, 'Now I shall see the Horner teapot!'"

Abigail's face softened. "So he remembered our teapot?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed. I have a mania for old china, and Paul shares the mania. He has spoken of the teapot as such a lovely example of willow pattern, and I told him I positively must see it."

Abigail went to a walnut cabinet and brought forth a large blue and white teapot. It had been in the Horner family for many generations and was a treasured heirloom.

"How perfectly lovely!" exclaimed Mrs. Weemers, while her husband hung over it in silent admiration. Suddenly he straightened back in his chair

and laughed heartily.

"You do not know, Miss Abigail, how hard I strove one day, many years ago, to ask you to sell me that famous teapot. I had seen it and succumbed to its beauty. I remember, just a day or so before I left Rosedale, I called to say goodbye and at the same time to ask if you would sell it, but I realized my presumption and hardly hoped you would do so. I tried to broach the subject, but somehow I couldn't seem to make any headway. I recollect that you were called from the room, and I tried to approach your sister on the subject, but she seemed to want to talk of everything except the teapot, so I gave it up and went away. I wrote to you once and asked about it, but as I never heard from you I presume the letter went astray."

Abigail and Sophia were looking at each other over the blue teapot. There was a startled expression in Sophia's eyes, while Abigail looked pityingly at her sister.

Abigail found her voice first. "My sister and I would like to give you the teapot, Mrs. Weemers," she said, with decision in her tones. "There is no one to care for it after we are gone, and you and your husband seem to prize it so highly we would like you to have it."

"But—we cannot—it is too much"—stammered Mrs. Weemers.

"Oh, yes!" cried Sophia eagerly. "You must take it. We want you to have it. Abigail and I have so many old-fashioned things."

Abigail left the room to wrap the teapot in paper and to escape the effusive thanks of the delighted Weemers. Sophia followed her sister, trembling with some unexplained emotion.

Removing the lid, Abigail thrust her hand into the teapot and drew forth a yellowed envelope. She held it toward Sophia.

"It's yours," she said shortly.

"No; it's yours," returned Sophia.

"If it's mine," said Abigail in grim tones, "I'll burn it up." And she thrust it into the stove.

"Shall we have tea together in the big dining room tonight, Abigail?" asked Sophia timidly.

"Of course we will," said Abigail.

## CLIMBING TO SUCCESS.

Advice to Young Men Who Want to Get Ahead in Business.

President Bedford of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey has himself traveled unaided every step of the way from the valley of obscurity to the summit of success. I asked Mr. Bedford to tell some of the things he had learned during his journey, to give some suggestions or pointers for the guidance of other climbers.

"Well," he began, "my advice to every young man would be this:

"Do everything you are told—and do it with all your heart and strength—willingly, cheerfully and enthusiastically, and then look around for more work to do.

"Don't measure your work by hours, but by what it is possible for you to accomplish from the time you enter in the morning—and be early rather than late—until the place closes in the evening, and don't quit the moment the place officially closes if there is work still to be done.

"Read and study and think along the lines of your business. Learn what it is all about, what service it contributes to making the world go round more comfortably and efficiently. Cultivate the habit of looking ahead, of acquiring as much foresight as possible. Have imagination and vision.

"Then try to plan out your life, to map out a course; consider and calculate the steps necessary to carry you

toward your goal; go forward step by step—and don't get your sequences mixed. Do one thing at a time. If your job at the moment is to keep books master bookkeeping thoroughly and study the fundamentals of accountancy; don't merely keep your books mechanically. From accountancy go on to study finance, and this will help to open other doors. Or if a man starts in a manufacturing department let him first master that department and then learn all there is to be learned about other departments. Thus will he become familiar with the whole process of manufacture.

"His next step would be to learn the outlets and the uses for his manufacture—the market for his product. By studying what and how much his market will take or will not take he becomes a capable merchandiser man. This double knowledge of manufacturing and merchandising qualifies him to fill an executive position and opens the way to rise to the very top, whereas the fellow who was content to jog along in a rut in one department will still be about where he began."—B. C. Forbes in Leslie's.

## Loyalty Must Be Blind.

It is generally believed that business and poetry have nothing in common, yet when Tennyson wrote "The Charge of the Light Brigade" he committed to paper the most vital lesson a business employee can learn—the lesson of blind, blithe loyalty. No commercial organization can live in which loyalty is lacking; none can largely succeed in which it is lukewarm. The man who accepts pay must give more than his time, more than his intelligence; he must give also his heart. The boss may blunder, but the right kind of employee goes ahead anyway, doing the best he can.—Electrical Merchandising.

## Tools For the Farm.

In Farm and Fireside are given the following list of the tools every farmer must own:

"Under the title of 'Repair Shop,' C. I. Gunness, a Massachusetts machinery expert, lists the following tools as invaluable on every farm. The chest includes rip saw, crosscut saw, claw hammer, steel square, jack plane, block plane, spirit level, brace and set of auger bits. Many other tools might be mentioned, but with those listed practically all of the necessary farm carpenter work can be done."

## Declaring War.

There is a real distinction between declaring war and declaring that a state of war exists. A government declares war when it purposes to make war on another country. It declares that a state of war exists, as the United States did when another government had already attacked it.

## Fleas.

Fleas are abundant in the orient and afford the subject of many proverbial expressions. This insect is only twice mentioned in the Scriptures, in Samuel xxiv, 14, and in the same book, xxvi, 20.

## Her Expression.

Slickton—They tell me your daughter sings with great expression. Flickton—Greatest you ever saw! Why, her own mother can't recognize her face when she's singing.—Puck.

## Not Being Done.

He—What did you think of the play? She—It wasn't true to life. He—How so? She—Well, the wife continually asks for money and gets it.—The Lamb.

An act of yours is not simply the thing you do, but it is also the way you do it.—Wendell Phillips.

## Begin to Save Now.

How many people say to themselves, "Next year will find me with a nice little savings account," and then realize later on that it was like so many other good resolutions—never carried out. The time to begin is now. Nothing is ever gained by indecision. Begin by doing without some one thing which, possibly, may not come under the head of extravagance and still is not a necessity. It is not so much the amount you save at first that counts, but it paves the way for the systematic saving, which in the end makes the successful men and women of tomorrow. —S. W. Straus.

## The Island of Hongkong.

Hongkong is an island about eleven miles long, with a width of from one to three miles, and consists almost entirely of a series of hills. There is a good road around a portion of the island on the sea front, but the grades up the mountains are too steep for practical automobilism, and the streets generally are not wide enough and not strongly enough constructed to permit the use of heavy cars upon them.

## Father's Peaceful Role.

There is nothing in the theory, advanced by the funny papers, to the effect that indignant fathers kick objectionable suitors down the front steps. All a father does when his daughter entertains a young man who is objectionable to him is to growl to his wife. —Topeka Capital.

## So He Rose.

An Irish M. P. once declared with due solemnity, "Mr. Speaker, I cannot sit still here and keep silent without rising and saying a few words!"—London Telegraph.

He who conceals a useful truth is equally guilty with the propagator of an injurious falsehood.—Augustine.

## Plant Meat Eaters.

It has long been known that such plants as Venus' fly trap actually catch and squeeze to death flies and other insects alighting on their leaves, but the discovery is comparatively recent that the plants digest the softer parts of their prey by means of a peptic ferment secreted by the leaves.

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