THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1890.

MARY RAVENEL.

From New York Ledger:

"Hop-picking?" said young Durell, as he took a rosy August apple from his pocket and feed it leisurely to the beautiful white horse, against which he leaned. "Why, yes, it is rather a romantic business, if you look at it from a romantic point of view. You're an artist, eh? Come to sketch our bit of rustic scenery? But there's nothing picturesque about our hop-fields Just sunshine and gold-green of the clusters, and the curling tendrils reaching out for something to grasp at, and the air so blue and clear that one can almost see the straight lines of the sunshine. Of course, it looks pretty to me, for I was born and brought up in it—but—excuse me sir—I can't see what there is specially worthy of an artist's pencil."

Mr. Raymond smiled.

"Do you see those long perspectives of green alleys?" said he with the figures running in and out? And the old woman sitting among the fragrant heaps, with the scarlet cloak, and the two little toddlers at her feet? And yonder feeble, bent old man, with water-cans on his shoulders? Why, there are a hundred bits of genre here, to say nothing of the back ground."

And Raymond took out his mill-boards and color-boxes and set up an impromptu easel, and began to diligently paint.

Squire Durell's son look on with an amused smile. To him, the machinery of the great hop farm was the real business of life. Artists and such like were merely pleasure seeker who disported themselves airily along the outskirts of creation.

"You will find some pretty faces her," said Durell, "if you care for sketching that sort of thing. People come here from all parts of the country in hop-picking time. Gypsies, tramps and respectable poor workers who don't object to turning and honest penny, young people who come here for the frolic of the thing, and poor old wretches that think every season will be their last. It's healthy the doctors say. At all events it is profitable. In hop-season, there isn't a cottage, a farm-house garret, nor even a barn untenanted. There are tents, a white sprinkle of them, down in the meadow by the vines, where people sleep at nights. You can see them from here. You are stopping in this part of the neighborhood? No? My father will be very glad to see you, up at the house, if you will honor us by becoming our guest to-night."

And raising his hat, Daniel Durell went his way, the beautiful, satin skinned white horse following at his heels, like a docile kitten.

"Hugh," said he, to a servant, who had just come down from the house with a hamper, "take a cup of hot coffee and two or three of those white rolls, with my compliments, to that gentleman in the linen coat who is sketching under the trees. And Hugh!"

"Sir?"

"Did you carry the sardine sandwiches and basket of apricots, and the fresh milk to the young girl in black."

The man nodded.

"She didn't want to take 'em, Mr. Daniel," said he. "She was all for calling me back. But I minded your order, sir, and made off as fast as I could, pretending not to hear."

Durell smiled. "That's right," said he. And don't forget the cold meat and the slices of new bread for old Dunstable. He grows fe[illegible] and feebler every day, and there was nothing but the heel of a loaf [illegible] cheese rind in his din[illegible], for I saw it myself."

"[illegible] all right, sir," said Hugh. [illegible] Durell going up to the [illegible], shrewdly noting all [illegible], as they sat and [illegible] the shadow of [illegible] the dolce far niente of th[illegible] [illegible]lly came in- [illegible] where the [illegible] filled [illegible] curtains [illegible]

[illegible] cutlets, breaded and fried in egg, were brought in, hot and hot. The old gentleman's face brightened at the sight of his son.

It has seemed a long day, without you, my boy," said he. "Sit down; sit down. Do you know, Daniel, I've been thinking all the morning, that I wish you'd bring a wife home to the old place? She could be company to me when you are gone. Why don't you think of it, my lad?"

"I have been thinking of it, father," said the squire's son. "But what would you say, sir, if I were to marry a poor girl?"

The squire set down his glass of iced claret. Evidently this was a new view of matters.

"A poor girl, Daniel!"

"But a good girl, father, and as sweet and lovely as yonder half-opened rose-bud. You will perhaps laugh at me," he added, "but I believe I have lost my heart to one of our hop-pickers."

"Daniel!"

"Her name is Mary Ravenel, sir; I never saw her before this season She is picking hops with her aunt or some elderly relative—a pale, and fragile-looking girl, but as beautiful as a dream. And—I love her."

The old squire nodded his head.

"I can trust you, my son," said he, "and whoever you choose to bring here will be as welcome as welcome as the flowers in May."

While all this time, the artist, idly along to observe the various groups, came upon a pale faced girl in black—a girl with large, melting wine brown eyes, straight, pure features, and tender, dark hair, over-hanging her forhead like a mist of jet.

"Miss Ravenel!" he cried in amazement.

"Yes, 'Miss Ravenel,'" she smiled back. "You are surprised to see me here. But the doctor declared that hoping would be the very thing for me. So Aunt Verna brought me, and here we are. And I am accomplishing wonders in the hop-picking line. Sit down here and eat some of these hot-house grapes. They are sent to us daily by an unknown benefactor. That is," as Aunt Verna smiled meaningly, "not exactly unknown. It is Squire Durell's son. He will persist in sending all these delightful things, although I tell him over and over, that I don't need them. I believe he thinks I am a starving dressmaker, or some thing of the kind," with a blush and a smile. "But, oh he is so good! And I like him so much! Now, show me, please, what you have been sketching."

Mr. Durell came down, in the warm, red glow of the summer sunset, to the willow shaded curve of the river where Miss Ravenel liked to sit when her day's work was done.

"I have brought you some of the rare orchids from the conservatory," said he. "You told me, the other day, that you liked flowers."

"I am so much obliged to you," said she gratefully. "But, Mr. Durell, I have something to tell you."

"Stop a minute," he said. I have something to tell you—that I love you—that I want to make you my wife. Dear Miss Ravenel, are you surprised at this? Have you not seen it growing out of my heart by degrees My father is old and infirm, but he is ready to welcome you with all paternal love and—"

"You really love me?" she cried, with wide open eyes. Me, a poor, pale, little hop picker?"

"You, my queen, my ideal!"

"Then," she said all smiles and blushes, "I think I ought to repay you by loving you a little. And I think I do, nay, I am quite certain of it."

"My darling! Oh, My darling!" he murmured.

"But wait, you have not heard who I am."

"You are Miss Ravenel, from Philadelphia."

"I am General Ravenel's daughter. I am here by the doctor's orders, not that I need the daily wages of a hop-picker. But you won't like me any the less, will you for that?"

Mr. Durell stood amazed. Miss Ravenel, the Philadelphia beauty, the great heiress!

"We are stopping at the Clancliff Hotel," said she. "I have my phaeton and ponies there. I will drive up to the House to see your father, since he cannot come to me."

"But I thought you were a poor girl, hiring one of these tents at so much a night," said Daniel, in perplexity.

That's where you were mistaken," said Miss Ravenel, smiling. "But the hop-picking has done me a deal of good Aunt Verna says my checks are redder than they used to be: and I must be better, because—"

"Well?"

"Because I feel so happy," said Mary Ravenel, coloring like a rose

And so Daniel Durell found his life's treasure out among the garlanded hop-poles.

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