

The Two Cousins.

BY HELEN FOREST GRAVES.

From the New York Weekly.

"Who is that talking in the hall?" tartly demanded Mrs. Jennifer, and little Lucilla, running to the door, to take a bird's-eye view of matters through its yawning crack, returned with the satisfactory information:

"It's Cousin Olive, saving good by to Mr. Walbridge!"

Mrs. Jennifer contracted her showy black eyebrows slightly

"Is Elsie there, too?"

"Why, no, mamma—don't you remember Elsie went out for a walk?"

Mrs. Jennifer said nothing more; but to one used to the interpretation of dumb show, a world of meaning might have been deciphered in the swift way in which her needle flew in and out of the cambric ruffle she was hemming.

"Olive!" she called, sweetly, as the closing of the front door gave notice that the visitor had at last taken his departure; and by way of answer, a bright faced girl presented herself in the door-way—a girl with shining brown tresses tied with blue ribbon, soft brown eyes, and a fresh, blooming complexion, like the pink blossoms that cluster on the kalmia bushes in May.

"Well, aunt?" she said

"I've been wanting to speak to you for some time, Olive, dear—sit down," purred Mrs. Jennifer. "Your uncle's circumstances are not what they were, as I suppose you are aware?"

"I did not know it," said Olive slightly changing color.

When people are quite dependent on the bounty and good graces of others, they are apt to be slightly sensitive.

"He has been obliged to expend a good deal of money of late, and—I knew you would be perfectly willing to do all you could, if you knew his situation—"

"Certainly, aunt!" said Olive, nervously twisting her fingers together.

"And of course, in a large family like ours, every additional member is felt as an additional burden."

"But, aunt," burst out Olive, "I don't understand you. What do you mean? What is it that you want me to do?"

"Pray don't speak so loud, Olive!" remonstrated Mrs. Jennifer, wildly elevating her eyebrows. "You are so brusque—so startling. I was only going to tell you that Mrs. Parkman mentioned to me yesterday that she wanted a new hand, and that—"

Olive Martin bit her lip—the hot color started up to her cheek.

"A dressmaker, aunt?"

"And why not?" calmly retorted Mrs. Jennifer. "It is the duty of every young woman to do something to earn an honest livelihood."

Olive thought of her Cousin Elsie, white handed and elegant, who did not even make her own bed or dust her own room; she remembered the two Hibernian damsels whose business it was to wait upon Mrs. Jennifer and her younger daughters. She knew that although her own father had died in wretchedly destitute circumstances, yet the time had been when he had helped Mr. Jennifer in such a manner that the latter solemnly promised never to forget the benefit rendered to him; and she also knew that upon that father's death-bed, Moses Jennifer had resolved to take his place toward

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his orphan child as long as they both should live.

"Does my uncle know of this?" she asked, suddenly lifting her frank brown eyes to the crafty face of the matron.

"Certainly!" calmly lied Mrs. Jennifer, without so much as a conscious stricken blush.

"Then it is settled," said Olive, with a certain gasp in her throat. "I will be a dressmaker."

"Is this really and actually your wish, my dear?" asked kind Moses Jennifer, when Olive told him of her determination that evening.

"Is it not yours, uncle?"

Mrs. Jennifer looked up with a little startled glance as the question was asked.

"My wish is whatever will make you feel happy, child!" Moses answered, for in his secret heart he believed that Olive Martin was not contented in his family, and deeply regretted the circumstance.

And after Olive had left the room he turned to his wife.

"She doesn't seem so crazy after the idea as you gave me to suppose Margaret!" he said.

"You cannot always judge by her manner, Moses," answered the subtle wife, who would have deluded the serpent's self had she been in Mother Eve's place in Paradise. "I am sorry to be obliged to say so, but I do think she is a little inclined to be deceitful."

"Poor child, poor child!" muttered Moses Jennifer. "We must remember, my dear, that she is fatherless and motherless!"

Mrs. Jennifer rolled up her eyes sanctimoniously.

"I've always endeavored to act a maternal part toward her, Moses," she sighed.

But not until Olive Martin was safely installed in Mrs. Parkman's work-rooms did Mrs. Jennifer breathe freely.

"She was actually luring Clarence Walbridge away from Elsie under my very eyes and nose!" thought the virtuous matron. "Clarence Walbridge, who is the best parti in town. Well, there's no end to the pretensions of these country-bred girls. I wonder what he could possibly have seen in her big eyes and melancholy, pursed-up mouth! But now Elsie will have a fair chance, poor dear!"

And Miss Elsie Jennifer waded fasted in what she ought to do and say upon the occasion of Mr. Walbridge's next visit—was he lost pink and white beauty, with freckled cheeks, flaxen hair frizzled into the similitude of a yellow cloud, and very red lips, which she was perpetually biting to preserve their coral bloom.

"I'll do my best, ma," said Elsie "but I never know what to talk about when I'm with Mr. Walbridge."

"Pshaw!" quoth Mrs. Jennifer,

"I'm sure Olive Martin could talk fast enough."

"But Cousin Olive knows more than I do," confessed innocent Elsie.

Mr. Walbridge came as usual that evening, and was simperingly welcomed by Elsie Jennifer, in a blue silk dress, with a rose in her yellow flossy hair and blue knots of ribbon fluttering wherever a blue knot could possibly be placed.

"Is your cousin at home?" the young man asked, rather unceremoniously, and Elsie recollected her lesson.

"Oh, didn't you know," quoth she, artlessly, "Olive has left us?"

"Left you?" echoed Clarence Walbridge, more disappointed than he chose to own to himself. "What for?"

Elsie lifted her brows, looked at the carpet, and tried to assume an arch expression of countenance.

"Of course I can't be expected to know certainly," she said, "but mamma and I both had our suspicions. In short, I don't really know how to explain, but I've reason to suppose she has gone away to be married."

[TO BE CONTINUED]

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 30.—James D. BRUGG, one of the survivors of the sea-rot expedition, to day shot and killed his wife's niece, Lottie Carpenter, shot his wife in the shoulder and then shot and killed himself. Since his return from the Arctic regions Bartlett's mind has been weak, as the result of hardships experienced, and yesterday he threatened to murder his wife and niece.

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