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Miss Stone.
BY BEATRICE CAMERON.
From American Nation.
CHAPTER II.

He rushed to the window to watch her—a slender and charming figure, with a peachy face, against the dark ground of the phaeton. He felt a sudden regret, which amounted to poignant anguish, that he was a frivolous, flippant minded city man.

Miss Stone was very favorably impressed with Mrs. Briscoomb's new aired man. She met him the next time she drove after butter and eggs.

Mrs. Briscoomb persuaded her to stay to supper, and the hired man had unexpectedly presented himself at the table. He was very pleasant looking—almost handsome in spite of his rough boots and his ill fitting clothing—and he was not half as awkward and red-headed as Hank Grimes. He did not eat with his knife, either; nor scrape his chair on the floor; and the few remarks he made were sensible and even grammatical.

Miss Stone almost disliked to call him "Eben," but Mrs. Briscoomb had introduced him as Eben, and she had no choice.

It seemed quite natural that the hired man should politely and respectfully offer to drive her home. She had walked down, since the day was cool, and it was growing a little dark.

It did not seem at all unconventional, either, that they should take the long st road, in order to see a pretty ravine which Miss Stone had described to the hired man. But when they had reached the ravine they had quite forgotten it. They were talking interestedly on other topics.

"You are fond of farm work and the country?" Miss Stone was saying.

"Very," Eben rejoined, with much enthusiasm.

"You were brought up on a farm?" she added.

"Well, no, not entirely," the hired man responded.

"But you choose farm work because you are fond of it," said Miss Stone warmly. "In that respect we are exactly alike; I love it! I suppose," she added, gently, "that you were obliged to choose something?"

"I—yes, I support myself," Eben responded, with his eyes on his companion's fair face.

"It is nothing to regret—indeed it is not!" Miss Stone declared, comfortingly. "I admire anybody who is independent and ambitious; they're the only people I do admire."

"O that is very good in you," the hired man murmured, tucking the robe more closely about her.

"And I suppose you haven't had many advantages?" Miss Stone pursued, with sympathetic softness.

"Well, I've had—some schooling," the hired man admitted.

"It isn't so great a loss," said Miss Stone, earnestly. "Many of our best and greatest men had very few educational opportunities." It sounded somewhat trite when she had said it; but the hired man was looking at her with warm gratitude. "Nothing is to be regretted but independence and lack of principle."

"You are very kind," Eben said, in softened tones.

The moon was just rising; the daises in the fields shone white un-

der it, and the scent of the fresh crops filled the air.

Certainly the hired man was not to be blamed for driving past Miss Stone's gate when they had reached it, with a glance at his companion which was the perfection of respectful deference, nor was Miss Stone to be blamed for not noticing the gate.

She wondered, when she had gone to bed that night, whether she had gone to bed that night, whether she should not have noticed it, and whether they should not have got back, before half-past nine. But she went to sleep quite sweetly and peacefully. For—in view of her staunch beliefs she felt a pleasant triumph in the fact—she had found Mrs. Briscoomb's hired man remarkably agreeable and—nice. She should tell Mrs. Briscoomb about it the very next time she saw her.

She did not see Mrs. Briscoomb again, however. Eben came over with the butter and eggs. He brought them in small quantities, and came often consequently; and he came when he had no butter or eggs to bring. And Miss Stone, quite necessarily, saw a good deal of him. He came with Mrs. Briscoomb's carriage sometimes, and Miss Stone could hardly have avoided driving with him occasionally.

She thought, at the end of four weeks, that she must certainly go to see Mrs. Briscoomb, and tell her how delightfully her own hired man proved her theories.

Eben was, to say the least, extremely interesting. He was bright and appreciative; he was pleasantly humorous on occasion; and he was

very well informed on a surprising variety of subjects.

Miss Stone pictured a long succession of studious night-vigils. She could hardly wait to tell Mrs. Briscoomb.

It needed only a distant locomotive to bring matters to a climax. Eben's horse saw it as he and Miss Stone drove over the track one evening, and reared and plunged. Miss Stone screamed faintly, and clung to the hired man's arm, and when they were safe on the other side the hired man's was around her.

"Will you let me take care of you always, Miss Stone—Gertrude?" he whispered, in stertyped phrase. "I know you will!"

"What will people say?" she murmured.

"I thought you didn't care," said the aired man, in tender reproach, loosening his arm.

"I don't—I don't!" cried Miss Stone, pulling it tightly again. "You are all I want. I don't care for anybody. And we shall live out here on a little farm of our own!" she said, presently.

"Well, perhaps—summers," said Eben.

"What shall we do winters?" said Miss Stone, wonderingly.

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