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...IN BLOOM.

"...ough the seed blooms lie
...sycamores.
...ove's sigh
...ly,
...the sycamores.
...ble find rest
...the sycamores,
...ere warm wet days
...est and wet
...the sycamores.'

...ed starships make
...sycamores
...bubbles; the gold beams shake
...pitors, and swift awake
...harps of the sycamores.

...ife's music everywhere,
...Mind as in the sycamores;
...ove beds buzzes, birds pair;
...as thus share wave in the air
...ual harps of the sycamores.

—William Sharp in Harper's.

CUPID AND THE CENSUS.

They were sitting on the stairs in the hall. Both, and as the stairway was narrow they were necessarily rather close together.

They were between the first landing and the hallway, and the glimmering light below left them so completely in the shadow that even if any one had peeped from the parlor they were hidden from observation. It was from the stairs region that they apprehended danger, as the frequent fearful glances of the girl in that direction betrayed. As there was no room for him to dispose of his left arm comfortably he had put it around her waist. Lovers are great economizers of space—and they were lovers.

"Madge, darling," he said, "I shall have to leave this house. I cannot bear the irony and contempt which your mother heaps upon me every day at table."

"What if mother should descend and catch us here?" said the girl, irrelevantly, letting her head sink, with a sigh, on his shoulder, an act which bespoke anything but a desire to escape from her compromising situation until necessity compelled her to do so. His lips met hers, but his thoughts seemed to be running in a sternly practical rather than a sentimental channel, for he continued, "and I have not paid my board for six weeks. It's too bad."

"Then you certainly can't leave, George," she murmured. "Ma would never let your things go out of the house until you had paid her, and how can you going to pay her until you get some work? Besides, what would become of me? I should marry that creature on the second floor front; I know I should. I couldn't resist his importunities without your ever present love to sustain me."

A pause ensued which George devoted to sustaining her in the orthodox lover like way, a proceeding which she submitted to with a demurrer which was not altogether a demurrer.

"I feel awfully blue, dearest," he said. "It did not get a single reply to all those answers I sent to the advertisements in yesterday's papers. I don't know what I'll do."

"Oh, don't get downhearted, George. Something will surely turn up. Perhaps Smalley & Smart will take you back into their office."

"They will never do that. It is very hard to be suspected of dishonesty when one is really innocent. They let me resign, you know; but they are convinced that I have robbed them, and"—passionately—"I sometimes think that even you must distrust me."

"I shall never do that, George," she replied, with a little squeeze of his hand, "and directly you get another situation I will be yours, even if Mr. Philip Van Schaick is a bank president and a millionaire, as ma says he is. I'm little me does not suspect why you left Smalley & Smart's. She is so suspicious and unbelieving."

"I believe that old villain is a fraud, a pretension and a snare. Why doesn't he show himself in his true colors and say what he is, instead of insinuating himself into your mother's affections and letting us all surmise this, that and the other?"

"Perhaps he is nearly as poor as you are, dear."

"Then he must be very poor indeed," said with a little laugh.

"Ah, yes, but I love you."

"Then I am rich indeed. But, Madge, I have an idea—I'll explode the mystery. I'll—what was that?"

There was a noise in the hall. The front door closed with a bang and a heavy step began ascending the stairs. It was Mr. Philip Van Schaick returning from his office down town. Madge picked up her skirts and flew, but not quick enough to prevent the old gentleman from catching a glimpse of her white footwear as she turned the bend in the stairway.

When Mr. Van Schaick reached the hall he looked keenly into the parlor as he passed, and said simply, "I'm home." A moment later his door closed on the second floor front with a very white face.

"I am going down to Madge the details of the little plot, she disclosed herein, of the idea that the crisis was in some way connected with the United States arms, and, for two days he tried to make an appointment with his eyes at the table, but she assiduously avoided his glances. Ma had evidently been expressing her dissatisfaction at the intimacy between the young people, and Madge had on one of her peculiarly erratic fits of complete filial obedience.

On the third morning at breakfast Mr. Van Schaick seemed more than usually absorbed in his morning paper, and though every one in the house knew his aversion to the peculiar journalism of the age—it was obnoxious to his secretive nature, and ran directly counter to his hobby of mysticism—the peculiarly pointed look on his face could not escape observation.

"Some more insignificant personal affairs in the paper?" inquired Mrs. McMurray. "How trivial and objection-able the New York papers are! They lack the dignity of the London Times."

"Thank heaven," murmured George from his end of the table. "A diet of the Times is provocative of insanity."

"That remark, Mr. Darrell, is only indicative of your deplorably bad bringing up. You are hopelessly vulgar."

"Madam," said Mr. Van Schaick, solemnly, "the American newspaper is a disgrace to our civilization. All the best people despise it—I hate it. I subscribe simply to see to what depths of vulgarity and iniquity it is possible for men to descend in print. And now the government of the United States is about to add this immoral, imperfectly institution by adopting its methods in the census enumeration which begins today. Read those questions."

Mrs. McMurray took the paper and read the schedule of questions to be put by Uncle Sam's interviewers in the taking of the census.

"Most impudent!" said Mrs. McMurray, inwardly aglow, when she discovered that all boarders in a house were to be regarded as members of the tenant's family, and included in the same schedule. At last the reticent Philip Van Schaick would unbosom himself as to his occupation and means, and not only that, but any chronic disease, such as rheumatism or gout, would be acknowledged, and Madge would know the worst. Mrs. McMurray's head was so full when she had read the article through that her eyes filled with tears as she looked at Madge, and breathed a silent prayer that her prospective husband was not a victim of gout. After all, her maternal instincts were very strong, and though gout was a most aristocratic complaint, and was the proper disease for a man of wealth, as the annals of all the illustrious families could show, it was an annoying thing to have to nurse a gouty man. A gouty man is so unreasonable.

George Darrell left the table after making a hasty meal, and he was absent at dinner. This was unusual, as he was generally punctual at his meals. It was the only thing about which he showed any marked regularity. Mrs. McMurray noticed his absence, and significantly inquired of Madge where he was.

"How do I know?" replied the young lady innocently. "I suppose he is searching for work. There is a letter from Smalley & Smart on his plate, and I wish he would come in. I would give worlds to—"

"Madge, Mr. Darrell's letters have nothing to do with you. He is up to no good, I'll be bound, when he neglects his dinner."

Madge blushed furiously, but a violent ringing of the front bell and the sudden appearance of the maid of all work prevented her from attempting any vindication of her implied interest in the sky boarder.

"A young man wants to see you, ma'am, about the census."

Mr. Philip Van Schaick's cheek blanched at the announcement, and he almost choked himself in an attempt to appease nature and remain calm.

In a few minutes Mrs. McMurray, Madge and the boarders went upstairs to the parlor, where they found a seedy-looking, clean-shaven young man, with green spectacles, and big portfolio under his arm. He explained his mission, and every one crowded around him as he went through the list of questions. There seemed to be the suggestion of a smile about the lips of the enumerator as he put the question, "Any acute or chronic disease in your family, madam?"

"No, sir," replied Mrs. McMurray, eying him indignantly.

"Only one, Mr. Enumerator," said Madge in a whisper, as she leaned over the back of his chair, "poverty."

"What did you say, my dearest child?" queried her mother in her "great occasion" tone of voice.

"I said that poverty was the only complaint in the house, ma dear," replied Madge with mock humility.

"Oh, I do not care about that," began the enumerator. Then catching sight of the stern, fixed upon him he continued: "The government does not consider that a matter of vital importance. It is not necessarily hereditary, you know. And now, sir," addressing Mr. Van Schaick, "what is your name?"

"Philip Van Schaick," in a voice that trembled with a suggestion of tears.

"Are you white, black, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, Chinese, Japanese or Indian?"

"Sir, you are an impudent—"

"Pardon me. I am simply following my instructions in asking you the question. I must have a categorical answer."

"I am an American born citizen of the United States. The Van Schaicks have lived in Hudson county for generations"——

"Sex—male. Yes—age at nearest birthday, please?"

"Am I bound to answer that?"

"Certainly. The United States government will compare your answer with the register of the parish church in—"

"No impertinence, young man. I am 63."

"Sure about that?"

"Quite."

"Wicked old perjurer," whispered Madge to one of the younger boarders.

"Are you single, married, widowed or divorced?"

"Widowed," with a hesitant sigh.

"What is your occupation?"

Mrs. McMurray breathed hard, and all the boarders looked at each other almost with suspended animation.

"I am a lawyer's clerk," came the reply in low, thick tones, and Mrs. McMurray fainted away. Madge seemed stunned for a moment, and then she ran joyfully out of the room. The great Van Schaick was not a man of wealth after all, and she was free to marry the poor devil of her choice. Ma would certainly see the wisdom in the choice of two poor devils of selecting the one with a lifetime before him.

As the census enumerator was leaving the house Madge ran up stairs and put a letter into his hands. He read it hastily and then placed his arm around her waist. The green spectacles were gone. The census man was George Darrell.

"It is all right, dear," he cried triumphantly. "Smalley & Smart want me back. The real defaulter is found out, and I am to get an increase of salary. And now there are only thirty questions in the census, but I am going to put another. It is one of vital importance—will you marry me?"

She pulled his head and kissed him and then she ran into the parlor to enjoy a good cry.—Curtis Kinglake in New York Commercial Advertiser.

THE NEWS.

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FOR MEN O...

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