

THE EVENING NEWS.

Monday, — March 12, 1872.

MAGGIE'S MCMETT.

MARRIAGE.—The great unknown. Higher education, with its many a secret of your future, mother of a score or thirty stamps. Name age, and sex can be given, with a slight discount. Price, \$100.00.

"And this is your advertisement, Morgan? Ah well! I suspect your dupes are principally schoolmaids and school-girls."

The speaker was a young man about five-and-twenty, thin, down the local paper with a merry peacock laughter. He was very handsome, with dark eyes, that sparkled beneath the long lashes, with almost boyish glee. The young man addressed, knowing the advertising columns as the Signor Marini, was no other than the young man from Morgan, a regular school-maids' follow, who, after trying his hand at various trades, and failing in all, had finally hit upon the above mode, which gratified his indolent disposition, by calling forth little exertion save the example of that literary ingenuity of which he possessed a large share. He had formerly been a friend of Jack Carleton's, when an hour or two before the opening of this story, he had come with him on his return from a prolonged Continental tour, undertaken nominally for the benefit of his health, but more possibly to get rid of the large income left him by his father.

The young men had grasped hands cordially enough when they recognized each other, and soon after adjourned to the dining-room of Morgan, to have a talk over old times.

It was during this talk that Morgan confided to his friend his present mode of living, with strict injunctions to keep it a profound secret, "as of course you, see, old fellow," said he, "it might prove my ruin if known."

Jack, however, did not see how his friend could be in a position of ruin than as compared to what he was at present.

You were always a good-for-nothing scamp, Tom," said he.

"And you were always a lucky dog, Jack," returned Tom. "By the way, what are you going to do with yourself this Christmas?"

"Why, to spend it in the jolliest style at the Jolliest Hotel," Christian replied, smiling. "They have not made me as lucky this year, I grant you; and I expect grandfather and the other men will go mad with joy when I make my sudden appearance there."

With this startling conclusion, Mr. Jack Carleton elevated his legs till his feet rested on the mantelpiece.

"Barry Holt Manor, in Nottinghamshire," inquired Tom, "is it?"

"The very same old boy," said his companion. "Why do you ask?"

"Only that I had a letter from there to day," replied Tom.

"A letter? What about?" inquired Jack, with innocent coquetry.

"Why, concerning my advertisement, of course," answered Tom, summing up some points.

"Ah, one of my grandfather's guests, I suppose, has got a letter," said Jack.

"What's his name?"

"It is not a name," replied Tom; "she signs herself 'Maggie Barton'."

"Maggie Barton!" exclaimed Jack.

"I knew her at least I did. May I read it?" he asked eagerly.

It was a short letter, in a girlish hand-writing, describing her hair and eyes, and promising to be favored with secrets of her future husband, by return post, of course. Inclosed in the envelope was the fee of thirty stamps.

Carleton had the letter up before his eyes long after he had read it. The writer's name, "Maggie Barton," was associated with a very pleasant picture in this young man's mind. Long ago, on a bright summer day, in the sunlight glancing through the leaves, the girl sat on the grassy slope of a party. One figure in particular seemed very plain in his memory; it was that of a girl about twelve years old, with her golden hair falling from under the broad brim of a sun-hat with blue ribbons. He could see her distinctly now, the graceful figure, raised on tiptoe, to reach some unnameable flowers or fruit, the white fingers clasping the bunching stems, the bright eyes under the shadow of the hat, and this was Maggie Barton. Then he, a tall lad of seventeen, easily reaching the coveted treasure, caught the wily beauty by the hair, saying, "Will you give me a kiss for this, Maggie? Will you pay me whenever I choose to claim it?"

"I'll pay you a dozen, if you like, Jack," was the reply, and the boy broke away and joined her companion.

But the very next day Jack departed without his kiss, for a continental education; and, as you see, Maggie Barton's name was almost one of the first to cross his path on his return.

And so she was one of his grandfather's guests at Barry, and he (Jack) would see her in his dreams, half asleep, and, standing there with a ledger in his hand, schemes entered this young man's head, worthy of such a reckless fellow as he was.

"I'll do it," he thought. "I don't care for anyone else, and of course she is not engaged, or why did she answer such an advertisement?"

"Morgan," he said, suddenly, "will you do a favor?"

"Anything you like," replied the signor, in a pleasant tone.

Jack drew an envelope from his pocket, and selecting one like those of himself from about a dozen, as told it on the table.

"Morgan," said he, "I want you to send this to Miss Barton; his answer to her application; and I mean it shall come true, old boy."

It was Christmas Eve, and Miss Maggie Barton was putting the last touches to her evening toilet for the forthcoming ball. She was tall, and you would think stately, till you saw her face and then the piquant expression of the brown eyes and the demure laughter of the lip led you to suppose her to be merry than dignified; and if your observation extended to her conduct during the evening, I am sorry to say you would be compelled to acknowledge her a little "fat."

She had dismissed her maid, and, with her pretty head a little on one side, was trying the effect of a scarlet gown among the amorous puffs of hair. Of course, Miss Barton wore a crimson—
all ladies do, now-a-days—and a long curl behind her left ear. Presently the gentlewoman's maid, who had been sitting by the fire, and drew from beneath a book cover, a card de visite; and the gentleman on the card was Mr. Jack Carleton.

But of course, Maggie did not know this. The very existence of such a person had long passed her mind; for, even had she remembered the name, it would have been difficult to associate the striping of grandfather's planks with the elegant, mustached, young gentleman before her.

In truth he was elegant. Leaning against a carved pedestal, upon the top of which reposed the model military of Newmarket, in company with a most foul vase with drooping flowers, and an amputation of a whole nose, the back ground of his composition, the back ground, Miss Barton directed it with satisfaction.

"So this is my future husband, according to the astrologer," said Miss Barton. "The gipsy woman said I should marry a brute. Listen! what an idiot I am to have written such a fool's letter. I dare say I am a dupe, and I suppose the very existence of this piece of elegance is a myth. More fool I!"

The card was held off to be viewed in a more favorable light. "Very good, certainly!"

To be continued.

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