THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - - March 8, 1872.

BY PRIVATE SCHOOL.

(CONCLUDED.)

She never answered a word, but just kissed me on both cheeks, and stroked my hair tenderly for a minute or two. Then we parted for the night, and I went away in the morning before Mr. Deane was up.

Aunt Rachael was out of sight of "death's door" long before I had reached her, as I had confidently supposed she would be, but she welcomed me heartily, and the kisses of the children soothed somewhat the sore spot in my heart.

For the next three days the activity of the "busy bee," long impaled on a poetical pin, was not to be compared with mine. If there were any gifts of healing in mere work, I was determined to have them out of it; but the image of Mr. Deane was ever in my mind's eye, and as people say who have not been to the "Normal," I got no better fast.

Last of all I went huckleberrying with the children, and picked as for my life.

"There's a strange man coming across the field," said one of them.

I looked up after a minute, and took Mr. Deane's offered hand.

"If you teach school as you pick berries your fortune will soon be made," he said, the glad look in his eyes which seemed to banish that dreadful wife of his to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"How did you find me?"

"By my wits, chiefly." Your grandmother was so mysterious over your departure as if you had gone into a convent, but when I told I had good news for you she relented and gave me the clue of your hiding-place."

"Aunt Rachael directed you here."

"Precisely."

"What is your good news?"

"I have heard of a school that you can have for the asking."

"I am extremely obliged to you."

"It is a private school, and very small; but it has the reputation of being difficult to manage; and from all that I know of you, I have concluded that you will be the right person. Will you undertake it?"

"Yes, if you are sure of my fitness."

"I haven't a doubt of it. I said the school is small—it has, in fact, one scholar aged thirty-two, and his name is John Jacob Deane."

If I said anything or committed myself in any way for some minutes after this astounding speech, I have entirely forgotten it.

"And that letter"—I found myself saying after a while.

"Was from my sister to her husband, who had deserted her. It was to look after him and bring him to reason that I was riding post-haste to Meriden that wild night. She inclosed it in a letter to me. I forgot to mention," he said, after a pause, which was not without eloquence of its own, "that my school begins about the first of September.

"Not if I am to teach it," said I. "I shall spend that month and others after it in turning all my fortunes into the pretty things that I have always longed for."

When Miss Rebecca Verjuice, my former room-mate at the "Normal," heard the story of my engagement, she intimated darkly that mine would be one of the matches founded on gratitude.

"John Jacob," said I solemnly, when I saw him again, "if you are to marry me out of gratitude, tell me at once, that I may be off to my Aunt Rachael, while there is yet time."

"My dear little school-mistress," he replied, "if I had been moved only by gratitude, I should have proposed to your grandmother."

BAFFLED VILLAINY.

CHAPTER I.

A LAWYER AND HIS CLIENT.

San Francisco with its one hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants contains, perhaps, more material for the novelist than most cities of three or four times its size, and consequently, is a very tempting field for a romancer. But there is no intention in the present instance to attempt a sensational story as the incidents to be narrated are founded on facts, and though they may be regarded in more than one particular as of singular and stirring interest, they only in truth unveil a phase of actual life. There is a simple tale to be told without any elaboration of fancy or sensational coloring, and the only thing fictitious about it is the substitution, for obvious reasons, of spurious names. Otherwise it is literal.

In ——street, at the time of this story, the doorway of a large building was well lined with professional sign-plates, on one of which was painted in gold letters "Marcus Spearwell, Attorney at Law. Room 8." Ascending the stairs to the upper-floor, room 8 was discovered at the end of a long passage-way having so imperfect a light as to render it difficult to read the door numbers. This might not have been the case in clear weather, but on a dull, cloudy day, such as the one which must introduce the reader to the place, the semi-darkness was not only disagreeable but sufficient to test the strongest eyesight.

The bells of the city were ringing the hour of noon when a man, after reading the sign-plates, mounted the stairs and slowly walked along the dark passage. After getting about half way he halted, and taking a box of matches from his pocket struck a light, by the assistance of which he examined the doors on both sides, and then proceeded some steps further on.

"D—n it!" he at last exclaimed, again halting, "this must be the room."

Without the ceremony of knocking he opened a door and entered, and immediately confronted a face within two inches of his own which belonged to a gentleman who apparently was on the point of leaving the room.

"Is your name Marcus Spearwell?" the visitor abruptly enquired.

"That's me," replied the other, commencing to rub his hands and assuming an insinuating smile. "Glad to place my services at your disposal, sir; pray take a seat, my time is yours."

The speaker belonged to that class of persons whose age defies discovery. He might have been only thirty-five, or, just as likely, full on to fifty. Whether the wrinkles on his face were the growth of years, of dissipation, or of passion, no one could determine, and it was equally difficult to decide whether his glossy black hair owed its color to nature or artificial dye. Leaving those points unsettled, his complexion was sallow, his face clean shaved with the exception of a small moustache, and he wore glasses. The expression of his eyes was the most noticeable feature of his face; it was wavering, sinister and suspicious; and his lips and chin confirmed the bad opinion which his eyes suggested of his character. Marcus Spearwell might have been a shrewd lawyer, but his physiognomy stamped him alike mercenary, unscrupulous, and treacherous.

To be continued.

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