

THE FLOWER BED.

"Come see our mother's flower bed. It is in full bloom, do not think it is a waste of ground. The richest soil that could be found. The flowers stay in such a long time. The first girl with wonder said, 'Dear me there's not a single cloud. How do they ever stay so long?' 'I thought just like that. We'll be here all day.' 'What's the secret? Why has our flower garden been so successful? Some eight million flowers now. They did not have a single water drop. Where can we find such a flower bed? What told the flowers to stay so long? There were blights, but not once. For they received what she sent. About their plants, who made her. The flowers with her never grew. Put on a little rock like a cross. Butterflies in their beds of gold. The flowers are the best in the world. Four months in the flower bed. At last good flowers only come. French took her through the room. With all their windows and their trees. The flower garden was a picture. Robert L. Rogers' cottage, Homestead.

HOW HE GOT HER.

"Do you want to marry me, Jenny?" "I would be mad, Tom. Tom, you know." "What do you mean by mad?" "You know well enough what I mean, and you know that I am right." "Yes," merrily, "I think I do know. You mean that I am poor and you are rich, and poverty multiplied by two is madness."

Jenny, a pretty little blonde, with bright golden eyes and sweet, however, said nothing, but looked down and wrote her epigrams on the ground with the pencil she held in her hand. Then, a lambskin, bound straightened, began with dark brown hair and shoulders, and large blue eyes, lay half reclining at her feet.

"Tell me the sum and the answer!" he said.

Tom Jenny said nothing, but continued to write hieroglyphics, while a little smile crept over his cheeks and nose. "I see how it is," he said. "While I have given you many hours of pleasure, I have done nothing but make you sad."

"What do you mean?" she asked, sharply, giving him an admiring glance. "Oh, nothing, to make you very angry," he replied. "It is just this. Some of those sage female veterans, who have gone through life satisfied to exist with that which appears to me, alone makes life undesirable, have talked you into a way of thinking and new feelings. It is making me sorry the man you love. For you do know, Jenny—you know me do."

The girl was silent a little while, and then she said plaintively:

"I did believe I loved you, Tom. I'll acknowledge it, but I am still now, and think maybe I was wise taken."

"Pshaw!" said Tom; "think maybe. If you don't believe it, with all your life ahead of you, you will not mention either when I say you love me still. You know you love, and yet you are going to marry that swelling Ralph Harley. Don't do it, for I know it; though perhaps you don't quite know it yourself yet. Are you engaged to him?"

"That is an important question and I must answer it." "Then, I will take it for granted that you need not do it."

"You needn't do any such thing, Tom."

"Well, you did answer my important question, after all."

"I was not going to let you think what you pleased."

"I might have answered it anyhow, for most I am going to tell you what sort of a life I have had. I have not had it a bad life, but it might not be the best life I have had. But, please, I will place my case by showing my record. I can't conceive you of the divine right of love above every other claim. I'll throw up the case. I know you love me; I know I love you."

"Why, Jenny, I could get all my life living just as I live a short time. If you would be with me, I could live a long time. You are the only person who will marry somebody else, and it will be all the same with me then. Better is a drowsy wife where love is than a sealed and fatigued result. Do you know what that is?"

"Of course I do; any child would know."

"You don't, though, for all you think yourself as wise. It means just that it is better to marry than not to marry. Come, Tom," said the girl, with a smiling look.

Tom noticed these symptoms, and, wisely concluding to press his suit to further just then, walked along by his side without saying another word.

There was to be a balloon ascension, and Tom suggested it would be nice to go up in one of the balloons. He had on several such expedition clothes, and was quite an enthusiast in the subject of aerial navigation.

There was a big crowd gathered about the balloon when the big balloon was being inflated with gas. Tom was under the balloon, when Jenny, two young maidens and Mary, who had joined them made up of the young women's chapter.

"I think it is time to go up," said Jenny; "I asked."

"Oh, I think it would be splendid, if I could get up, but I am sure I should be," replied Jenny.

"I don't know to take the trip, but just a little way."

"How could we do that?" "We'll get out in the car, and the men will say, 'We'll get out in the car, and the men will say, we are a hundred feet or so from the ground, and when you have seen what it is like they'll pull us down again. Come, get in and try it, you're no idea how nice it is."

Jenny hastened, looking at her watch. "No, Jenny, said Aunt Jane, for whom the bell had rung, "It will not permit you to try any such experiment. Suppose the rope was to break; where would you be then?"

Tom said there was no danger of the rope breaking, but Aunt Jane, who made up her mind to go to the balloon party, said she didn't believe there was. "Will you go, Jenny?" asked Jenny, whose heart was all in a flutter between excitement and fear at the idea.

"Yes," replied the maiden lady dubitously. "I've always wished that I could go up in a balloon, and now that I've got a chance to do it without getting into trouble, I'm danger, Mr. Arrington."

"Why, Sarah," said Miss Jane. "I'm astonished at your encouraging Jenny in such a wild, hazard-making adventure."

Tom soon had his arrangements made and helped the two ladies into the car.

"Will you go?" he said, not very directly, "I do." "I don't know what people generally do in such cases."

"They pack and pay and skip."

"Nothing else?" "Yes, they chitter chatter before I leave."

"I'm not afraid, but I will stay on terra firma."

"All right," said Tom, stepping into the car where the ladies were already seated. "Let her out, he was at the top of the steps. "That fellow hasn't the pluck of a woman," he growled, as they slowly started off.

"Oh, Tom, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to take advantage of my situation to make me do such a foolish and dangerous thing, but at the same time you are right to do it," "I haven't got any right to do it."

"I've got a perfect right to do what you want to do, and what is for your happiness. Come, promises! We must go to the church, and if you don't I'll let you know. You only care to do just what you say, and keep me in the clouds again, and keep you there forever."

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