

THE EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, May 11 1872.

BASHFUL BOOTS.

[CONTINUED.]

When I reached the turn of the wood, at the top of the hill above, I stopped to look back. My little acquaintance stood just where I had left her, gazing wistfully after me. I took off my hat, she curtseied, and then I plodded into the forest.

The night, at Whithby, I had occasion for my pencil case, a thin, golden one, with my name engraved on it. I could not find it anywhere. "Where have I left it?" I had quite forgotten that I had used it in the spring-house and might have dropped it there.

I never returned to the old farmhouse. In the next winter I went abroad, for I had a comfortable fortune, and I wished to finish at a German university. Afterward I became an atheist, and subsequently traveled extensively. Ten years in Europe had only made me love the institutions of my country the more. But, before I left, I wrote to her. I went to Rome on a farewell visit. To me, as to many others, that wonderful city was the one city of the world, to which go back, again and again, with increasing affection.

The morning after I arrived, I walked to St. Peter's to hear, in the canon's chapel, the music of Pius IX. While listening to the chanting, I happened to glance up at one of the twelve pillars on the left, and saw there a woman's face, so wistful, so exalted, that for the time she looked like one of Fra Angelico's angels.

"It won't do," said my friend, Charley Hargrave, putting his arm into mine, when the congregation was dispersing.

"I saw whom you were looking at, but said nothing, for your mother. She is the subject of the song, my dear fellow, and has lots of ears, and counts disputing her smiles. Stop, here she comes, and Prince Borgia is with her, to whom they say she is engaged.

We had by this time reached the aisle outside. As the lady passed, she looked up, as if some instinct had told her she was the subject of our conversation. For one moment our eyes met. A thrill went through me. Never before had I known such a love, but from that moment I was hopelessly lost.

"Who is she?" I stammered, when she and her escort passed out of hearing.

"Miss Vonberg, a great heiress."

"German."

"No American, though of German descent, I am sure. The subject of the last week, that she has finally made her choice, must be true; for that was Prince Borgia, as I said before; and only some influential person, one of the Pope's guard, as he is, for example, could have got a permit to that gallery. The last American girl I saw was Miss Vonberg; the other was Miss Vonberg's chaperon, for she is an orphan. You'd have known all this if you had been here through the winter, as I have been. Why, the young English swells used to crowd to the tables of hotel at Miss Vonberg's. I came just to catch a sight of her at dinner. I had intended to move to private apartments in the Palazzo Goldoni, to avoid being stared out of countenance."

Why was it, that, notwithstanding this friendly warning, I went back to my hotel to think of Miss Vonberg? Was I mistaken in fancying that, in passing, she had looked me with evident interest? At night I dreamed of her; dreamed that she had made me happy; and woke to find out my delusion and to wish I could have slept on forever, with dreams so blissful.

But sleep would not come again. Besides I had an engagement with an old dame, who had come to accompany him, his wife, and his wife's mother, who drove out on the Campagna. There had been some remarkable excavations made lately at Sora, which he wished me to see. So I dressed, breakfasted and joined my friend.

We had finished our investigations, and were about to re-enter our barouche, when we saw a carriage, drawn by a team of wheats, and glancing up at full gallop, a carriage approaching at full gallop. In vain the coachman urged at the frightened steeds. On, on they tore, the barouche bounding from side to side behind them, threatening the lives of the ladies, who seemed to be the only occupants of the carriage, and from one of whom came the shriek.

It was but the work of an instant for me to rush forward, seize the nigh horse, twist the bit until I threw him against his fellow, and stop the carriage with a lurch that snapped the pole and sent the coachman reeling from his seat. In another instant my carriage had come to my aid, the teams had been out, and all danger was over.

I stepped to the door, had in hand, to assist the ladies to alight. The one nearest me, an elderly woman, whose shrieks had rent the air, fairly tumbled into my arms. I took both my friend and her, and showed them to the carriage to the bank by the roadside, where we put her down. Then, leaving my companion and the ladies of the party to stand to her, I hurried back to the barouche.

But before I could reach it the other carriage, dragging lightly out, had met us half way. Apparently as cool and composed as if in her drawing room at home. As I began to apologize for my delay, she threw back her veil and smiled, revealing the face of Miss Vonberg.

I felt as if I walked on air.

"Friend, will make yourself sufficiently?" she said, in a clear and most musical voice. "I had given ourselves up for lost, when you rushed forward so bravely."

Never shall I forget the emphasis on these last words, or her looks as she spoke them. "It was nothing," yet my heart beat high and proud. "Nothing more than any other would have done."

"Pardon me," she answered. "I do not think so. It was an even chance that the horses would trample you to death, and only heroes take such a risk as that." Her green, June-like eyes met the other's with a smile.

She had seated herself in her carriage. But now, as if sensible she had been too frank, she colored violently and moved quickly forward, saying, "Excuse me, but aunt, I perceive, is calling me."

"How shall we ever get back to home?" cried the poor old lady, who had recovered from her faint. "I never, never can trust myself behind those horses again!"

"If you will accept them, the keys of my friend and myself are at your service," I said.

"But you will have to walk back to home."

"That is a trifle," I replied.

To be continued.

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