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Belle's Step-Father.

It was my last quarter at Madame Carini's French and English establishment for young ladies, when I became engaged to Allan Appleton.

Of course, there was a whole *cordon militaire* of rules, and regulations at Madame Carinl's relative to those natural enemies of boarding-schools, the gentlemen. We never went out except under the protecting wing of an elderly governess. We were expressly forbidden, even at church, to cast our eyes in the direction of the big square pew occupied by Mr. Clanroyal's young gentlemen—and no masculine creature younger than the tutors, old Dr. Canomile and the Reverend Athanasius Archer, Rector of St. Pontifex, was ever allowed to cross the threshold of Madame Carini's establishment.

But, for all that, I, Belle Forester, contrived to become engaged to Allan Appleton, and this is how it came to pass:

It was my misfortune, not my fault, that when I was out shopping with Miss Leggett, the drawing teacher, I proffered a counterfeit bill in payment for a pound of chocolate creams, half a pound of Boston chips, and two orange ices. I didn't know it was counterfeit: how was I to know ? Some fiend in human shape had passed it off upon me, and it was all the bill I had. The orange ices were already devoured, the candy papered and "done up;" Miss Legget had only a quarter in her shabby purss—and the shop-keeper was evidently beginning to regard me in the light of an audacious confidence woman, when Allan Appleton, who was buying cough drops, came forward, like a new Chevaller Bayard to my releif.

"Allow me to lend you the money," he said:

So, of course, I allowed him. What else could I do? And I asked him for his card, so that I could return the loan as promptly as possible. Even Miss Legget found no fault with that.

"Allan Appleton?" said I, involuntarily. "Oh, what a pretty name?"

"Do you like it?" he said, his dark eyes sparkling with amusement.

"But mine is quite as pretty," I added. "Mine is Bella Forester."

"Miss Forester! Miss Forester! We shall really be too late if we stand here any longer," whispered Miss Leggett, jerking at the sleeve of my lace sacque; and so I had togo.

I returned the two-dollar bill the next morning in a little note, which, of course, had to be submitted to Madame Garini; but Allan acknowledged its receipt in a charming billet, enrapped in a roll of new music, which madame supposed I hap ordered by mail from Messrs. Fiddlebow & Semiquavel Wasn't it fun?

Well, of course, we became engaged. He sent me his photograph, and I return ed the compliment, in spite of madame and her cordon of spies. He confided to me the fact that he was studying for a ciuil engineer's place. I told him that I lived in New York, and should graduate in next June. We both vowed eternal constancy, and I wore a little turquois ring on a bit of black velvet around my neck—his *gage d'armour*; but I nearly cried my eyes out when he went to New York to finish his profession.

I was hesitating whether to confide my newly grown affection to my mother or not, when a letter arrived from her.

"Dear mamma!" I whispered, pressing the scented lilac paper to my lips. "I will tell her. She has always been the sweetest, dearest friend I have in the world, and although the heroines in the novels never confide in their mothers, yet I am sure they cant have such a darling little mamma as mine, or else they would.

And then I unfolded the letter and began to read it.

"I scarely know how to tell you my dear Belle," she wrote, "that after ten years of widowhood I have at last resolved to marry again. This step has not been decided on without long and anxious consideration; but I have at last concluded that, in this course of conduct, I shall best consult both your happiness and my own."

"Pshaw!" cried I, flinging down the letter and bursting into tears. "A step-father! Oh, how odious! How disgraceful! Mamma to marry again, and at her age."

For I, from the vantage point of seventeen, thought my thirty-six-year mother a sort of female Methuselah.

And then, curious to learn the name of my new relative that was to be, I picked up the letter again, brushed away the mist of tears, and read ou:

"I am to be married to-morrow. We start on our wedding trip immediately, and shall be at home to welcome you when you graduate. Oh, my darling, I am sure you will love Allan Appleton—no one can help it—and he, on his part, is prepared to receive you with all the affection due to a child. There is to be sure, some slight disparity in our years—"

"Slight disparity! I should think there was!" I cried out. "Allan Appleton! And married to mamma! Oh, false, fickle villian!"

And I went shreiking into hysterics. Madame Carini tried to console me.

"*Ma fille*," argued she, "why do you take this little domestic event so bitterly to heart? You have gained a new father—"

Don't!" cried I, wording off the words as if they hurt me— "oh, madame, please don't!"

"And," added the preceptress, mildly, "at your dear mamma's age, what is more natural than that she should marry again? Be content, ma fille. Accept your destiny as it is dealt out to you, and write a note of congratulation to our sweet mamma on this auspicious period of her life."

"I won't!" I sputtered, "I'll never go home again! I'll work a typewriter! I'll go on the stage! I'll beg in the streets sooner than acknowledge my—my step-father."

And, as soon as I could get rid of Madame Carini and her distasteful condolence, I wrote a scathing note to Allan Appleton:

"I scorn you as you deserve. I return you your troth, and warn you never to look upon my face again.

BELLE."

And I threw the turquois ring out of the window, where it alighted, like a tiny blue dew-doop, among the branches of a climbing honey-suckle.

To my mother I wrote nothing at all. It was evident that she expected no immediate reply, and I could hardly trust myself with pen and paper. But upon one thing I was esolved: I would never go back home again and call Allan Appleto "father." I asked Madame Carini to try and get me a situation somewhere.

"You, ma fille? With your rich, mother!"

"Alas! if she had not been rich, madame," I broke out, "no fickle young adventurer would have perjured himself to become her husband."

"My dear, think it over; think it over!" soothed madame. "Do nothing rashly."

"I have thought it over. My mind is made up. I will write an advertisement at once if you will kindly allow me to use your name as a reference."

The advertisement was written, accordingly, but before it could appear in the paper Fate had taken the the matter into its owh hands. I fell ill of a fever, and a black of dreary unconsciousness swallowed up all my hopes and fears and bitter pangs of mortification.

When I again recovered my senses I was in my own familiar little chintz-draped room at home with the old china dragons I had so feared as a child staring down at me from the mantel, and Barbara, my mother's swarthy maid, tiptoeing about my room,

"Barbara!" cried I trying to raise myself on my elbow, but signally failing in the attempt, "how came I here."

"They brought you home, Miss Belle, while Mrs. Appleton was absent on her wedding trip."

"Mrs. Appleton!" I remember it all now. Oh, why had I not died of that weary, burning fever? I turned my face to the pillow with a groan.

"Are you in pain, Miss Bell? questioned the maid. "Shall I bathe your forehead again?"

"No?" I answered, petulantly. As if Barbara's lotion could reach my aching heart! And then there was a silence, broken presently by the light footsteps that I knew well—ah, so well!

"Belle! My love! My darling!"

Aud I was looking into the blue stars of my mother's tender eyes.

"You may come in, Allan, and speak to your new daughter," said my mother, softly. "Belle, dearest, have you not a smile for your father?"

I steeled myself for the encounter which seemed unavoidable; but to my surprise, instead of Allan Appleton's fair, boyish face and blond mustache, I found myself looking at the benign counteance of a silver-haired man of fifty, at least.

"Are you Allan Appleton?" Said I, vaguely.

"That is my name," he answered, smiling. "But there is another young person who answers to the appellation—my nephew—who is anxious to learn how soon you can receive company in your sick-room.

I put out my hand and gave my step father a kiss which satisfied my mother.

Yet it all did not surprise me that followed in the wake of that long ever. Everything seemed perfectly natural and as it should be; and, oh, I was so happy!

Just a week afterward I was dressed and carried down into the Oak parlor in my step father's arms.

"You are as light as a little doll, Belle," said he, smiling.

And, lo and behold! there was Allan Appleton, junior. waiting for me down stairs, and looking as handsome as ever.

"Oh, Allan," cried I, "why didn't you write and tell me how it really was."

"My darling," he remonstrated, ruefully, "what was a fellow to do after such a note of dismissal as you wrote to me?"

"But I thought—I thought you had married mamma!"

"But how was I to know what you thought?" retorted he, laughing.

"Oh, Allan," with downcast eyes and trembling lips, will you forgive me?"

And so, of course, it was all right again.

Allan and I are to be married at Christmas. I never knew a father's care, but I think it would be impossible for any one to be nicer than "papa," as I call Allan's uncle. And I do think we are happiest household in the world.—*Amy Randolph in New York Ledger.*

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U. S. Gov't Report.

Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

The Ladies' Home Journal.

The art of giving lawn parties, and a score of new ideas for all kinds of out-door fetes, make the subject of an excellent paper by Mrs. A. G. Lewis in the July *Ladies' Home Journal*, the same magazine presenting another striking feature in Mrs. Potter Palmer's exhaustive paper on "Women an the World's Fair." Mrs. Palmer, as President of the Board of Lady Managers of the World's Columbian Commission, speaks with authority upon a subject with which she is familiar. An article which will likewise elicit interest is "A day in an Adirondack Camp," by Jessamy Harte, the eldest daughter of Bert Harte. Miss Harte makes her literary debut in this number of the Journal. Miss Fannie M. Johnson contributes a sketch, with portrait, of Mrs. Edward Bellamy, the wife of the celebrated nationalist, and Alice Graham McCollin gives the first authentic sketch ever published of Anna Willess Williams, the young lady who posed as model in 1878 for the head of the Goddess of Liberty, which now adorns the face of our silver dollars. The Rev. Dr. Talmage takes a new departure by discussing "The Horse and the Race Track." The fiction of the number includes, besides the conclusion of Sarah Orne Jewetts story, "An Every Day Girl," two excellent short stories "The Byrntell Golden Wedding," by Majorie Richardson, and "The Story of Two Hearts," by Isabel A. Mallon The other editors fill their departments with all that is interesting and attractive, and altogether there seems no end to the good things in this issue of this popular magazine. *The Ladies' Home Jonrnal* is published by The Curtis Publishing Company of Philadelphia for ten cents per number, and One Dollar per year.

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A Chance for Composers.

In order to stimulate American composition, *The Ladies Home Journal* has just made public an attractive series of liberal prizes for the best original musical composition by composers resident in the United States and Canada. The prizes call for a waltz, a piano composition, a pleasing ballad and a popular song, an anthem and the four best hymn tunes. The competition is open until November 1st, next. The opportunity has an additional attractiveness since the prize compositions will form part of a series for which Strauss is writing an original waltz, and Charles Gounod and Sir Arthur Sullivan each an original song.

Literary Note.

BOOK NEWS for July is rich in illustrations from new books, and presents lifelike portaits of Col. Alexander McClure, of the Philadelphia *Times*, and of Richard Harding Davis, the young Philadelphian, whose stories of life in American cities havs made him famous. Col. McClure's book on "Lincoln and men of War Times" is reviewed at length and an article on Professor Smith's "Philadelphia Magazine" also has in it much of interest Mr. Dole's letter tells the publishing news from Boston, nnd Mr. Williams' article gives his usual discriminating views on picked books of the monta.

Examiners Notice.

The undersigned duly appointed by the County Commissioners of Caroline County, as examiners on the new County road in the Fourth election district of Caroline County, beginning at the County road leading down to the Wheeler wharf in Choptank and running with the present road laid down along the river through Choptank to Main street thence with said street to the road leading to the farm of E. S. Zell, thence with said road to the South side of the peach orchard on said farm, thence at right angles and with said peach orchard across the lands of E. S. Zell to the mouth of Hunting Creek or Linchester River at a point opposite the wharf on the Dorchester shore and at this point to join the County Commissioners of Dorchester county with a ferry, hereby give notice that we will meet at Choptank on Thursday August 4th, at 10 o'clock a. m., to execute our commission.

ROBERT M. MESSICK,
JOHN A. TRIBBITT,
PERRY D. TAYLOR,
July-7-30d Examiners.

CLOSING OUT

—:HIS:—

Entire Stock!

M. J. Young, of the Reliable Clothing House, gives notice to the public that he will make sales of his entire stock of Clothing, Shoes, Boots, Hats, Caps, and Furnishing Goods at reduced rates from now on, until all Goods are sold, to retire from business-

He will also make sales of his property. REAL and PERSONAL.

5-12 M. J. YOUNG.