Farmer Tucker's Girls

BY HANNAH A. SHALLCROSS.

"HUMPH! Marrying for love is all nonsense," declared the eldest Miss Tucker, severely, as she threw away the novel she had been reading, and stretched her feet closer to the warm fire that was blazing in the old-fashioned fireplace. "I intend to marry for money."

"Why, Neva?"

The eldest Miss Tucker was christened Geneva.

"How can you say so?" cried her younger sister, opening a pair of big, blue eyes, mystic and tender, with thickly-curling golden lashes. "I think it would be the nicest thing in the world to fall in love with a handsome young man, with eyes as black as coal, and live in a pretty cottage, all covered with vines."

"Stuff!" interrupted Neva, snappishly, curling her red, but rather shrewish lips, in a scornful manner. "Love is all bosh! I wouldn't care if I never saw a cottage, or a vine! To be mistress of a brown stone house in the city, with frescoed walls and Turkey carpets, and a boudoir paneled in blue velvet, is my ambition, and I'll accomplish it, too! With servants in livery and a superb dining room, handsomely furnished—a marble top sideboard filled with silver plate and painted china, cut-glass decanters and goblets, and pickle stands—if I could have all that, I wouldn't care a snap for such nonsense as romance and love."

The entrance of Tom, the hired man, bringing a fresh back-log for the fire, interrupted them. He stirred down the embers till they glowed like a bed of melted rubies, threw on a huge, spice scented log, fringed with scarlet lichens and gray moss, and turned to leave the room, a handsome, manly-looking fellow in spite of his handsome suit of butternut jeans.

"Tom!"

Miss Geneva snapped the out word as if disdaining herself for speaking at all, and determined to cut it as short as possible.

"Bring a bucket and take these ashes up!" she commanded, haughtily. "And stamp the snow off your feet before you come into the sitting-room again."

"Oh, Neva! You've hurt his feelings; how could you!" cried Honora, her blue eyes flashing and her cheeks glowing indignantly.

"Feelings!" sneered Geneva. "The idea of a hired man having feelings! That's one of your odd notions, Nora. Besides, if he don't know his place better than that, I'll teach it to him, that's all."

Tom reappeared with a bucket and shovel and proceeded to take up the ashes, while Miss Tucker cast a withering glance at him as much as if she were a detective and he a hardened criminal in the act of committing burglary.

"Well, well," muttered Aunt Betsy Tucker to herself, as she turned the heel of the blue yarn sock she was knitting. "Who'd a thought, after two years at boarding school Genevy would hev come home with sich notions as that? Shucks! I'd rather be an old maid forty times over, than marry a man for his money, like she talks of doing. I don't believe in no sich! It's nothin' but riches an' fine clothes from mornin' till night with her. Her head's plump full of it. But Honory, bless her; nothin' could spile her. She's got a heart as soft as a robin red-breast, and while Genevy is a naggin' and a scoldin' at Tom from mornin, till night, Honora more'n makes up fur it by her sweet words an' smilin' looks. An' that makes me think. What was it she said about coal-black eyes? Tom's eyes are blacker'n any coal I see, an' the way he looks at Nora out of 'em is enough to turn any girl's head. Wal, she might do wuss than to marry Tom Alderberry, though she is as pretty as a pink, an' good as any angel that ever lived!"

And Honora Tucker was a very pretty girl; with eyes like summer gentians and cheeks as pink as the velvety petals of a Michigan rose.

* * * * * *

The air was keen and crisp, but clear, and gleaming ice crystals hung from every tree and shrub, sparkling like diamonds.

"Nora! Nora!" called her sister, see what an elegant carriage with silver-mounted harness and a servant in livery. Oh, my!"

"And a span of matched horses!" cried Nora, enthusiastically, as she peeped from the dimity-curtained window.

"Where can they be going?" cried Neva, devoured with curiosity.

"Girls! Geneva! Yer pa wants you an' Honory in the best room," called Aunt.

"It's someone to see us," cried Geneva; and springing to the looking-glass she quickly smoothed her rather neglected tresses.

"My! how tousled my hair is!" cried Nora, peeping over her shoulder at the shining coils of red-gold hair wound around her head, and curling over like tendrils over a brow low and smooth. "But I haven't time to fix it now. Hurry up, Neva! Maybe its our fairy godmother in a pumkin coach, like Cinderella's, with six field mice for footmen."

"Stuff!" cried her sister, crabbedly; "don't be a goose, Nora!"

Farmer Tucker, with corduroy overalls tucked into the legs of his cowhide boots, stood in the best room talking with a tall, elegantly dressed gentleman. Miss Geneva paused a moment to bestow a withering glance on Tom, who stood by the door in the hall.

"What are you loitering here for?" she demanded, tartly. "Eavesdropping, I suppose! Go about your work, or I shall inform on you immediately."

Tom made no reply, but his face lighted up as he caught a look from Nora's blue eyes, and a low-breathed "Never mind, Tom," from her red lips.

"Here they be," cried Farmer Tucker, with a glow on his honest face, as the girls entered the room. "There is my gals, Judge Alderberry."

Alderberry?

The sisters stared. Could this elegant gentleman in the finest of broadcloth, with diamond studs sparkling on his bosom, be any relation to Tom?

They were soon enlightened.

"Gals, this is Tom's father," explained the old farmer; "an' he's jest found out whar his son is. Got mad and driv him off because he wouldn't marry a—a

"An heiress," smiled the judge.

"Yes, whoever he pleases," repeated the judge; and if he prefers to live in the country he shall have the best farm in the State, and the finest house money can build; for Tom's my only child, and all I have is his."

"But you must stay to dinner with us, Judge Alderberry," insisted Miss Geneva, hospitably, as soon as she recovered her scattered senses; "you and Mr.—Mr. Tom, too."

And she hastened to congratulate the once despised "hired hand."

But Nora, blushing like an October peach, slipped away to the vacant sitting-room to quiet the sudden beating of her heart.

Tom going away! Tom, with his handsome coal-black eyes?

"Nora," whispered a tender voice, "Nora, darling, will you love me and be my little wife?"

And there was Tom, with her head drawn close upon his breast.

* * * *

"Sarves Nevy jest right," soliloquized Aunt Betsy, as she dished a jar of ruby-hued quinces into the old-fashioned china preserve dish. "Sarves her jest right. Mebbe she'll larn a lesson arter this. But I don't know; 'pears like some folks is as hard to larn sense as one o' them antymires that pesters us so in the summer time, a-gittin inter the vittles an' things."

And it is presumable Miss Geneva never did "larn sense," as she is still on the unmarried list.

A SMALL CHURCH was sadly in need of general repairs, and, a meeting was being held in it with a view of raising funds for that purpose. The minister said $500 would be required. A very wealthy (and equally stingy) member of the congregation rose and said he would give one dollar. Just as he sat down, however, a lump of plaster fell from the ceiling and hit him on the head; whereupon he rose hastily and called out that he had made a mistake—he would give $50. This was too much for an enthusiast present, who, forgetful of everything, called fervently, "Oh, Lord, hit him again!"

A few day ago, while two boys were on there way home through the farm of Mr. B. H. Bright they came across a colt which was very friendly and the boys proposed to take a ride. One of the boys held the colt while the other mounted. The weight of the boy broke the colt's back and he died in a few hours. The colt, while young, was prized highly by its owner.—*Queenstown News.*

A TEACHER asked a little boy to spell responsibility, which he did. "Now, Tommy," said the teacher, "can you tell me the meaning of that big word?" "Yis, mum," answered Tommy, "If I had only four buttons on my trousers, and two came off, the responsibility would hang on the other two."

There's a greater demand made on the strength of the mother when nursing than at any other time. She has just gone through the shock and strain of maternity, her vitality is at its lowest and the food she eats must nourish two lives.

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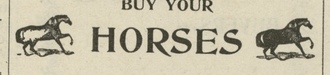

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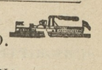

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6.45	WORTON	12.00
6.54	LYNCH'S	11.51
7.01	HEPBRON	11.44
7.21	KENNEDYVILLE	11.24
7.38	BLACK'S	11.07
7.54	LAMBSON'S	10.51
8.08	MASSEYS	10.37
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