The Carleton Sentinel.

Select Tale.

My Wife and How I Won Her.

You can see her through the folding doors yonder. What a picture she makes sitting in the glow of the firelight, with her baby on her breast! She's the handsomest woman in the State—the very handsomest. Did you ever see a more perfect face? Her cheeks look like pink as a shell lying against the dark velvet of her chair. I wish you could see her eyes once! When she smiles, they gleam like morning stars!

And see's a figure, too! She'd look every inch a queen in kingy-woolsey, only she would not wear the stuff for a kingdom. She's as up-fitted in her tastes and habits as any princess royal might be. None but the very daintiest and most elegant apparel suits: soft, noiseless silks, costly Indian webs, and old laces worth their weight a hundred times in gold.

And yet, day in and day out, at home and abroad, she wears that old torquoise brooch! You wonder at it, no doubt. Well, thereby hangs a tale, which you shall hear.

It begins with the old torquoise brooch. I bought the clumsy, showy trinket just twenty-five years ago. I was a boy then, the callow clown of manhood just sprouting on my chin. We lived in a little cottage in the heart of a green, grazing district—mother and I—and she made butter-pads, and sold them at the village market for a livelihood. I did nothing, of course.

My mother was a widow, and I her only son and idol. She would as soon have taken out her Sabbath gray silk, and defiled it by the labor of a wash day as she would have suffered me, her only son—the hope of her fond hear—to tend the cows and run errands. She did all this herself, toiling cheerfully from dawn to dark, that I might sit undisturbed in my cool, shady cottage-parlor, and write noble verses—verses that were to glitter in the dim mysterious future; verses that would bring fame to the blind mother who worshipped me one sin-gle pang, never gave her an unkind word.

But, bless me, how I ramble! Jen-nie, that's my wife yonder, says I never can come to the point, and she's about right.

But here we go for a fresh start. I wrote my verses, and got them in form, and mother moulded her butter-pads, and both of us dreamed our dreams of immortal fame. Meantime I fell in love.

It happened after this wise: One summer afternoon I had gone to the rectory. Mr. Ives, beside being a divine, was both author and scholar, and being a staunch friend of mother's, I decided to go to him for help and advice touching my literary schemes. I reached the valley through which the river runs, and was in the act of climbing the hill upon which the old rectory stood, gray and ivy-grown amid its ancestral oaks, when a great clatter, and a woman's shrill cry of fear, brought me to a sudden stand-still.

Right down the hill path came a run-away horse, with a little shell of a car-riage rattling at his heels, and in the carriage a woman. I can see her this minute, her white hands tugging at the reins, her face like marble, her golden hair streaming out like a banner.

I was a good, stout youngster, and no coward, so I made a rush for the colt's head at once, and succeeded in catching him by the bit, just as he was about to dash down the ravine. I mastered him, and saved the girl from harm, but I got my shoulder wrenched out of place in doing it.

What did I care? I would willingly have risked my life for her for the moment she turned her face upon me. Then and there I fell in love; and, old fellow, you may laugh, but one's first attack goes hard.

I was dreadfully in earnest, and she was all smiles and encouragement. For-got to tell you her name? So I have.—Jennie Ives it was, and she was the rec-tor's daughter, just returned from school at her lovely throat my turquoise brooch?
For an instant I lost my breath.

"I think you are Mr. Trowbridge," said the lady.

And the brown eyes flashed on me like two luminous stars.

My dead heart gave a great thrill.

"I am Mr. Trowbridge," I answered.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but I haven't the honor"—

"No, no; you don't know me, of course," she put in, simply. "I am Jennie Palmer, and I live at the old rec-tory yonder. I came home from Paris a month ago, and I happened to hear your name. Mr. Trowbridge," and the starry eyes gleamed on me again, "do you remember this old brooch? I wear it? Ah, I see you do, I have worn it ever so many years—ever since I was a bit of a girl—and mamma told me the story. It was such a wretched story, and I've always felt so sorry for you, Mr. Trowbridge, that all my life I've hoped I should meet you some day. I think mamma treated you shamefully, though, of course, it was right she should marry papa; and when I heard you were living up here all alone, and wouldn't be friendly with any one, I just made up my mind to make you a visit. I've come, you see, and I want you to treat me civilly; and mamma wants you to come down to the rectory to supper, and go with us to the orphan's fair to-night. Mr. Trowbridge please say you will!"

She held out her soft little hand, and I took it, of course, and escorted her out to my own domicile; and an hour later I accompanied her home to the rectory, and was heartily welcomed by my first love, a fair and portly matron, the mother of four or five stalwart sons.

"My dear Chancy, how glad I am to meet you again! And, bless me! how you have improved! I never dreamed you would make such a distinguished looking man! I will forget and forgive the past, of course. Jennie wears your turquoise brooch, you see; she has worn it for years. I'm sure you and she will be fast friends."

She was right. I found the daughter a hundred times more winning than ever the mother had been, and I loved her with a love whose strength and tender-ness put my egotistic boyish passion to shame.

I asked her to be my wife, and she put her hand in mine, and answered me simply:

"Yes, Mr. Trowbridge, I will be your wife, I have thought of you so much, and worn your old brooch so long, I don't think I could ever have cared for another as I care for you."

I gave her precious gifts—diamonds and pearls—for her marriage gems, but she would pin her bridal laces with the old turquoise brooch, and wears it now as you see, as she sits tipping with the adoring love.

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