

## NAOMI'S CAPTIVE.

The blackbirds were whistling melodiously in the bowery old orchard at the back of the house; the tiger-lilies and clove-pinks were in blossom under the window, and far-off and clear, in the silence, you could hear the "swish, swish" of Abel and Matthew's scythes on the hill; and Naomi Russet, putting back the curls from her forehead, looked out on the sunny fields and sighed softly to herself.

"Such a day for the Sunday-school picnic!" meditated she. "How I should like to have gone, if only I had possessed a dress fit to wear. I've never even seen the new minster yet, and I'm sure I could have played croquet as well as any girl there; and the striped tents on the lawn would have been such fun. But I won't have Josie Merrill sneezing at my last summer's hat, and I think it would mortify me to death to hear Amabel Ryde laugh at my faded muslin dress. Ah!"—with a second deep sigh—"to think of all the berries I picked to buy that lovely rose-colored muslin, and how shockingly the colors washed out the very first time it went into the tub!"

"Naomi!" screamed the shrill voice of her aunt Russet from the stairs above, "are them tarts baked?"

"Baked and cooling on the window-sill," said Naomi with pardonable pride. "Twelve of them. Real beauties, too."

She looked with an artist's eye on the tender, dainty little tarts, where the deep, wine-crimson of the raspberries blushed beneath a delicate network of flaky crust; for Aunt Russet had "work-people" to board in the haying season, and these same sons of the soil had a very fair idea of what good board meant.

"How's the custards?" said Aunt Russet.

"Just gone into the oven," answered Naomi.

"Well, when they're done, put in the meat-pie," directed Mrs. Russet. "And run out and pick the peas and look if the summer-cabbage is big enough to pull and mind you don't forget to take a good-sized piece of pork out of the brine to cook with the boiled beef."

Naomi frowned to herself in the seclusion of the cool kitchen until her black brows nearly met.

"Pork!" said she to herself in what would have been a soliloquy had she been dramatically inclined. "And peas! And bread to bake! Oh, dear, why wasn't I born a lady, so that I might have been playing croquet under a striped tent, this morning, instead of cooking dinner for my aunt's boarders?"

And flinging a blue gingham sun-bonnet over her black curls, Naomi left the cup-custards beside the raspberry tarts and flitted out into the garden, her stepping to smell of a scarlet-velvet cluster of sweet-williams, then gathering a tuft of silver-green love-in-a-mist, until at last she settled down before the high hedge of marrow-fat giants, while the pea-pods rattled merrily down into her tin milk-pan like a shower of green hail.

There is nothing in the occupation of picking peas to forbid thought. And as Naomi worked on, she dreamed a bright, impossible dream, wherein she had escaped from toil, drudgery, all dwarfing details, and stretched the wings of her soul in upper air.

For Naomi Russet had been educated for a teacher. Her artistic nature had been cherished, her intellect had been fostered; and then came death, poverty, desolation, and all her hopes had ended in her aunt Russet's farm-kitchen!

And still Naomi did not despair. For the possibilities in youth's calendar are infinite—and she was only eighteen!

At length, glancing up from her swift occupation, she saw a tall figure stride down the sheltered lane that led to the kitchen-door, enter it, pause a second and glance furtively around, and then—oh, horror of horrors!—gather up all the golden custards, the circles of wine-red raspberries into a basket on his arm!

"It's a thief!" was the thought which flashed instantaneously through her brain. Dropping her pan of peas on the ground—for our little heroine was not deficient in the spirit of her revolutionary grandmothers—she swung herself swiftly over the garden wall, and jumping into the low kitchen window, had flung her shawl over the intruder's head before he was even aware of her presence. Opening the cellar door, which was close by, she pushed him down the stairs, and then, drawing the outside bolt, she paused for breath.

"Aunt Russet!" she shrieked up the stairs, "come down quick with the old musket, and keep guard on this robber until I call Mat and Abel from the field."

"What!" screamed Aunt Russet. "A robber?"

"I caught him in the very act of stealing my tarts and custards!" explained breathless Naomi. "A decent looking man, too, dressed in black. And I blinded him with my shawl and pushed him down cellar!"

"Good land of liberty!" ejaculated Mrs. Russet, as she came stiffly down the stairs, carrying the old musket extended at arm's length, as if afraid that it might take a fancy to explode prematurely. "Well, Meliss Megley *did* say something about the sewin' clevis *did* say something about there bein' tramps around, but we live so kind of out-of-the-way here that I didn't trouble much about it. Run, Naomi, as fast as you can, for if he bangs ag'in the cellar-door while you are gone I know I shall drop down dead with fright!"

Away sped Naomi, fleet as any Atlanta, through the bloomy sedges, across the fallen tree which spanned the brown-waved trout-brook, and up the hill to where Matthew and Abel were cutting down long swaths of fragrant grass.

"Boys!" she cried, breathlessly, "I've caught a tramp! Come! Make haste! He's down cellar! And your mother is watching the door with your father's old musket."

Abel dropped his scythe; Matthew held his in mid-air, glittering and sharp, as if he meant to cut somebody's head off. And then they started full run down the hill, with Naomi still leading the van.

"Mother, give me the musket!" said Matthew, as he reached the cellar-door, flushed and out of breath. "Open the door, Abel! I'll soon settle this villain!"

While Mrs. Russet got behind the stairs, and Naomi, thrilled with the righteous pride of conquest, stood at the locked kitchen-door, so that the flying captive might be deprived even of that apparently impracticable means of egress.

Slowly, cautiously, as befitted the stress

of the moment, Matthew Russet opened the door.

"Now, then," said he, "come out here, or I'll know the reason—Why?" suddenly changing his tone, "it's Mr. Maddex! It's the new minister! I beg ten thousand pardons, sir. I don't see how this can possibly have happened! Naomi, child, come here."

"Oh, no offense in the world," said the tall, pleasant-looking culprit, emerging from the damp cell, with the plaid shawl picturesquely draped over one shoulder and the condemnatory basket still on his arm. "It was a little sudden, just at first, and I'm afraid the tarts that Mrs. Crumbleton sent me for are crushed into 'pi'—but there has evidently been a misunderstanding somewhere. No doubt, things can be explained satisfactorily."

"Mrs. Crumbleton!" echoed Mrs. Russet, "why, Mrs. Crumbleton lives in the next house, where there's a bay-window and three Gothic chimneys."

Mr. Maddex made a laughing gesture of dismay.

"Then," said he, "the mistake is mine. We didn't have enough good things for the little folks' table, you see, and so we all went foraging—the church-warden, Mr. Dale, the two Steelkirks and I. And I was detailed in this direction where, unfortunately, I was not quite sure as to the localities. Mrs. Crumbleton told me to come to her pastry-room and take possession of whatever I could find. And I supposed I was acting up to the spirit of her behest. I am sure I beg pardon, it—"

But here Naomi came forward, blushing, shame-faced, a thousand times more beautiful, had she but known it, than ever she had been before.

"It was all my fault," she said nervously wringing her hands. "All my awkwardness. Please, Mr. Maddex, forgive me!"

The clergyman looked placidly upon her confused face. What a dryad it was, what a rose-faced wood-nymph, with rings of silken jet shading her forehead and deep eyes fringed with long, black lashes.

"Do you suppose," said he, pleasantly, "that I bear malice for the merest mistake in the world? We are friends; let us shake hands upon it!"

And then Naomi felt consoled.

After all, the tarts were not injured, although the cup custards were badly damaged. Naomi and Abel walked as far as the highroad with the young clergyman, and they all got to laughing over the mishap of that morning, like three school-children.

"The prettiest and most poetic face in the parish!" said Mr. Maddex to himself, as he pursued his solitary way toward the picnic-ground, after they had left him. "It was worth being shut down cellar to see the look of awe and self-reproach steal over the brow and lips! I'll make a sketch of her, as soon as I can get to my study."

From which soliloquy it may be inferred that Mr. Maddex was not at all unfavorably impressed by the country maiden.

And Naomi? "I never was so ashamed in my life!" she thought, as she picked up the emerald avalanche of pea-pods on the garden-path. "Nor yet so happy!"

Poor, pretty Naomi! She had not yet learned that none of life's honeyed draughts are entirely devoid of bitterness. And she did not know that she had taken Mr. Maddex captive twice that day—once in body and once in spirit!

It was the beginning of a romance. The end—who can tell?

## PUTTING ON FLESH.

People Who do So Are Not to Be Congratulated.

The undue accumulation of fat in the subcutaneous tissues and around the internal organs is not only an inconvenience, but a diseased process. In perfect health, with proper diet and a reasonable amount of work, the percentage of fat ought not to exceed about five per cent. of the body weight (Burdach), and more than this indicates a departure from the healthy metabolism of the organism. It shows that the constructed forces are working in a wrong direction, and the energy which is used in the useless storing up of fat leaves the other tissues and organs in want. Consequently the adult man or woman who is "putting on flesh," is not generally to be congratulated.

Fat people are less able to resist the attacks of disease or the shock of injuries and operations than the moderately thin.

In ordinary every-day life they are at a decided disadvantage; their respiratory muscles cannot so easily act; their heart is often handicapped by the deposit on it; and the least exertion throws them into a perspiration.

This last fact is curiously misunderstood; it is almost universally looked upon as an actual "melting" of the subcutaneous fat, and is considered to be nature's method of getting rid of the superfluity. But this is not correct, for in spite of its greasy appearance, sweat only contains a trace of fatty matter, rarely more than 0.1 per cent, and this comes, of course, from the cells of the sudoriparous glands, and primarily from certain constituents in the blood.

A person whose limbs and body are covered with adipose tissue is in the position of a man carrying a heavy burden and too warmly clothed. How great this burden can become may be seen by the effects of a sharp illness, which sometimes gets rid of this abnormal material at the rate of two or three stones in as many months, or even weeks. It is, in fact, the exertion, causing increased circulation in the skin, and consequently increased filtration into the sweat glands, which makes the perspiration, not the dissolving of the fat, which is practically untouched.—*The Hospital*.

## The Pedagogue's Wooing.

The pedagogue among his pupils had a matter of fact. A matter of fact. He loved her; who would not? Her eyes were soft, and turned to his with saucy glance full of fire; and when his tiresome Latin put her out, her pretty lips were all too prone to pout.

He longed to kiss them—love had made him mad—but did not dare.

One morn he met her on the way to school. The hour was late; but wait he would not, could not. Thus he sighed: "Sweet maid, I prithee, be my leucous bride! Already hast thou marked, nor need I tell, That I have loved thee long and passing well; Nor time nor absence can my passion cool; Let's conjugate!"

"Ah!" with arch modesty replied the fair, "That would be fine; for, as thou know'st, Small stock of learning can thy pupil boast. The first declension now absorbs my thought; The verb I have not yet at all been taught, I cannot conjugate; all I may dare Is to decline!"

## THE WAITING JULIET.

The house in question was what Peter the Scholar (who corrects my proof-sheets) calls one of the ruinous sort—the front facing a street and the back looking over a turf garden, with a lime-tree or two, a laburnum, and a lawn-tennis court marked out, its white lines plain to see in the starlight. At the end of the garden, a door, painted dark green, led into a narrow lane between high walls, where, if two persons met, one had to turn sideways to let the other pass. The entrance to this lane was cut in two by a wooden post about the height of your hip, and just beyond this, in the highroad, George was waiting for us with the dog-cart.

We had picked the usual time—the dinner-hour. It had just turned dark and the church clock, two streets away, was chiming the quarter after eight, when Peter and I let ourselves in by the green door I spoke of, and felt along the wall for the gardener's ladder that we knew was hanging there. A simpler job there never was. The bedroom window on the first floor stood right open to the night air, and inside was a faint candle light flickering, just as a careless maid would leave them after her mistress has gone down to dinner. To be sure, there was a chance of her coming back to put them out; but we could hear her voice going in the servants' hall as we lifted the ladder and rested it against the sill.

"She's good for half-a-hour yet," Peter whispered, holding the ladder while I began to climb; "but if I hear her voice stop, I'll give the signal to be cautious."

I went up softly, pushed my head gently above the level of the sill, and looked in.

It was a roomy place, with a great half tester bed, hung with curtains, standing out from the wall on my right. The curtains were of chintz, a dark background, with flaming red poppies sprawling over it; and the further curtain had the dressing-table, and the candles upon it, and the jewel-case that I confidently hoped to stand upon it also. A bright Brussels carpet covered the floor, and the wall paper, I remember—though, for the life of me, I cannot tell why—was a pale gray ground, worked up to imitate watered silk, with sprigs of gilt hollyhock upon it.

I looked round and listened for half a minute. The house was still as death up here—not a sound in the room or in the passage beyond. With a nod to Peter to hold the ladder firm, I lifted one leg over the sill, then the other, dropped my feet carefully upon the thick carpet, and went quickly round the bed to the dressing-table.

But at the corner, and as soon as ever I saw round the chintz curtain, my knees gave way, and I put out a hand, to the bed post.

Before the dressing-table and in front of the big glass in which she could see my white face, was an old lady seated.

She wore a blaze of jewels and a low gown, out of which rose the scraggiest neck and shoulders I have ever looked on. Her hair was thick with black dye and fastened with a diamond star. Between the two candles the powder showed on her cheeks like flour on a miller's coat. Chin on hand, she was gazing steadily into the mirror before her, and even in my fright, I had time to note that a glass of sherry and a plate of rice and curry stood at her elbow among the rouge-pots and powder puffs.

While I stood stock-still and pretty well scared out of my wits, she rose, still staring at my image in the glass, folded her hands modestly over her bosom, and spoke, in a deep, tragical voice.

"The prince!"

Then, fashing sharply round, she held out her thin arms.

"You have come—at last?"

There was not much to say to this except that I had. So I confessed it. Even with the candles behind her, I could see her eyes glowing like a dog's, and an uglier poor creature this world could scarcely show.

"Is the ladder set against the window?"

"Since you seem to know, ma'am," said I, "it is."

"Ah, Romeo! Your cheeks are ruddy—your poppies are too red."

"Then I'm glad my color's come back; for, to tell the truth, you did give me a turn just at first. You were looking for me, no doubt?"

"My prince!" She stretched out her arms again, and being pretty well at my wits' end, I let her embrace me. "It has been so long," she said; "oh, the weary while! And they illtreat me. Where have you been all this tedious time?"

I was not going to answer that, you may be sure. By this, I had recovered myself sufficiently to guess what was near the truth—that this was a mad aunt of the family below, and that the game was in my hands if I played with decent care. So I met her question wit another.

"Look here," I said; "I am running a considerable risk in braving these persecutors of your'n. Hadn't we better elope at once?"

"I am ready."

"And the jewels? You won't leave them to your enemies, I suppose."

She turned to the dressing-table, lifted her jewel-case, and put it into my hands. "I am ready," she repeated; "let us be quick and stealthy as death."

She showed me to the window, and, looking out, drew back.

"What horrible, black depths!"

"It's as easy," said I, "as pie. You could do it on your head—look here." I climbed out first and helped her, setting her feet on the rungs. We went down in silence, I choking all the way at the sight of Peter below, who was looking with his mouth open and his lips too weak to meet on the curses and wonderment that rose from the depths of him. When I touched her and handed him the jewel-case, he took it like a man in a trance.

We put the ladder back in its place and stole over the turf together. But outside the garden door Peter could stand no more of it.

"I've a firearm in my pocket," whispered he, pulling up, "and I'm going to fire it off to relieve my feelings, if you don't explain here and now. Who, in pity's name is she?"

"You mug—she's the Original Sleeping Beauty. I'm eloping with her, and you've got her jewels."

"Fardon me, Jem," he says, in his gentlemanly way, "I don't quite see. Are you taking her off to melt her or marry her? For how to get rid of her else?"

The poor old creature had halted, too,

three paces ahead of us, and waited while we whispered, with the moonlight, that slanted down into the lane, whitening her bare neck and flashing on her jewels.

"One moment," I said, and stepped forward to her; "you had better take off those ornaments here, my dear, and give them to my servant to take care of. There's a carriage waiting for us at the end of the lane, and when he has stowed them under the seat we can climb in and drive off—"

"To the end of the world—to the very rim of it, my hero."

She pulled the gems from her ears, hair, and bosom, and handed them to Peter, who received them with a bow. Next she searched in her pocket and drew out a tiny key. Peter unlocked the case, and, having carefully stowed the diamonds inside, locked it again, handed back the key, touched his hat, and walked off toward the dog cart.

"My dearest lady," I began, as soon as we were alone between the high walls, "if the devotion of a life—"

"Her bare arm crept into mine. 'There is but a little time left for us in which to be happy. Year after year I have marked off the almanac; day by day I have watched the dial. I saw my sisters married, and my sisters' daughters; and still I waited. Each had a man to love and tend her, but none had such a man as I would have chosen. There were none like you, my prince.'

"No, I dare say not."

"Oh, but my heart is not so cold. Take my hand—it is firm and strong; touch my lips—they are burning—"

A low whistle sounded at the top of the lane. As I took her hands I pushed her back, and, turning, ran for my life. I suppose that, as I ran, I counted forty before her scream came, and then the sound of her feet pattering after me.

She must have run like a demon; for I was less than ten yards ahead when Peter caught my waist and pulled me up on to the back seat of a dog-cart. And before George could set the horse going her hand clutched at the flap on which my feet rested. It missed its grasp, and she never got near enough again. But for half a minute I looked into that horrible face following us and working with silent rage; and for half a mile at least I heard the platter of her feet in the darkness behind. Indeed, I can hear it now.—*Memoirs of a retired burglar*.

## THINGS OF VALUE.

The day will come when God will judge over again all those things that are judged amiss.—*Bernard*.

The test of every religious, political, or educational system, is the man that it forms.—*Amiel*.

"Listed," as the brokers say, at a "100 Doses One Dollar." Hood's Sarsaparilla is always a fair equivalent for the price.

Little minds are tamed and subdued by mistreatment, but great minds rise above it.—*Washington Irving*.

Other Cough Medicines have had their day, but Putnam's Emulsion has come to stay, because its so nice and so good.

The test of your christian character should be that you are a joy-bearing angel to the world.—*Beecher*.

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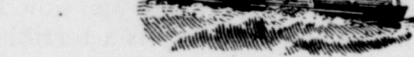
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