

## A STRANGE COURTSHIP.

The day was closing in and the girl at the window could no longer see to read. She looked, instead, into the neighboring garden, bounded by low hedges and wind-bowed firs sharply outlined against a glowing crimson sky. And on the same background the small head made a charming silhouette; the rounded cheeks and dainty pointed chin, the low straight brow and little self-willed nose, and above all the soft halo of fluffy hair. The thin, rasping voice of a mother roused the girl from the thoughts which had saddened her large dark eyes. A list of domestic cares was enumerated, and then the girl's mother approached the window and endeavored to claim the fugitive attention of her daughter by subjects nearer home.

"Maisie," she began, hesitatingly, "I want to speak to you again about—(the girl knew the particular tone of voice, and broke in quickly with: 'Oh! mother, please not that!') 'My dear girl, it's positively ridiculous the way you always interrupt and refuse to listen to reason,' and, with a whine, 'it makes my position exceedingly awkward and unpleasant. What am I to do with you? Do you realize your age, Maisie? Nearly 24. Why, your sisters were all married before they were your age, and Connie had two children."

"At present," the mother went on relentlessly, "I am besieged on all sides by men who wish to marry you, for you are a pretty girl, Maisie—prettier than any of your sisters, and more like your dear grandmother, who was quite a belle in her time—but in a few years nobody will look at you, your chances of happiness will be over forever. Percival Sutton, (Ah! I knew that was coming, sighed the girl)—said he would come to tea this evening and he is very anxious to speak to you. To-night you really must give him his answer, and I can only say that if you send him away with a refusal I will take no more trouble about you. He is the best match in the country; young, rich, intelligent, heir to a baronetcy—and remember none of your sisters are titled—indeed, you cannot do better."

After a pause she went on, "I want to know what stands in your way of doing as the others had sense enough to do—of setting my mind at rest about you, and of taking up a good position in life as the wife of a good man."

"You mean of a rich man!" the girl said languidly, folding her hands, and again turning her eyes to the garden.

A tall man, with bowed head and hands clasped behind him, was walking restlessly over the little lawn, a few inches of freshly fallen snow deadening the sound of his quick footsteps, and the girl watched with unconscious fascination the dark shadowy prints left in the flat whiteness. The tall stranger, with the grave face and athletic, though now stooping form, had never shown the slightest desire to make friends; indeed, had seemed determined to avoid any chance or risk of doing so. Years ago, when the girl's mother had called upon the lonely new comer, she had found him at home, and he only acknowledged the visit by a polite note of thanks explaining that he never made or received calls, and lived a life of study and unbroken solitude. To-night, as her mother talked, and the girl's attention wandered to the growing number of blue-gray footprints in the snow, an unusual circumstance arrested her thoughts and drew her still farther from the sordid and wearisome conversation. A servant came out of the house and handed to the man an orange-colored envelope, which he did not open till he was again alone. Then he disappeared.

The girl returned to consciousness with a slight start, and became dimly aware of a question in her mother's face and voice. She raised, at random, the first answer that occurred to her: "Oh, yes, if you like, mother!" The reply was evidently appropriate. A smile diffused the hard, weary features of the elder woman; the very silk of her gown seemed to squeak sudden approval.

"My dear good child, this is sweet of you! That poor young man will be so happy!" Whereupon the dear good child was enveloped in a black silk embrace and covered with impulsive kisses.

"And you will tell him so yourself, dearie; or shall I see him alone first? I expect you will both feel a little shy and constrained."

"I should like you to see him by yourself, mother," said the girl, rising and wondering with complete disinterest what would be the outcome of her mental aberration and wandering response.

"And I may tell him—" said the mother, eagerly.

"Anything you like," her daughter answered as she disappeared.

The servant entered with a tea tray, made up the fire, and lowered the blinds. The girl passed swiftly through the hall, wrapping a soft gray cloak about her as she went, and then, opening a side door and closing it quietly behind her, she slipped out into the snow-covered garden. In the low hedge which divided it from the neighboring patch there was a broken space large enough to squeeze through, and a moment later she was skimming across the very lawn where she had just seen the owner's footprints multiplying in the snow. As she had expected, he had left his garden door open, and through this she had made her way into the hall, and thence into the only room from which as yet a light emerged. A cosy fire and red shaded lamp showed her a charming study, lined from floor to ceiling with books, and in a deep arm-chair before the fire she beheld her three years' neighbor, the owner of this delightful little sanctuary.

On the threshold she stood still with astonishment. From what she had seen of his face she had not thought him remarkable in appearance—this man was without doubt singularly handsome. She had be-

lieved the bowed form belonged to a man of 50 at least, whereas this man could not have been more, and was probably less than 35. A vague sense of vexation filled her, and she wished she had not yielded to the ridiculous impulse which had brought her hither. Then, in a moment, a revulsion of feeling made her glad, with a great throb of gladness, that she had obeyed the dictates of her folly. He looked up from the fire, gazed at her abstractedly for half a second, and when he spoke his voice showed no surprise.

"Come in and shut the door," was his greeting; "I have been waiting you."

"You are alone, as usual?" she asked, drawing nearer.

"I am always alone. Why in the world did you come?"

"You had a telegram just now, in the garden," she explained; "I feared it might be bad news."

He gave a little hard, mirthless laugh. "Bad news has long ceased to be possible in my life," he said coldly. "Was that why you came?"

"Yes."

"Reason enough to keep most people away," he remarked dryly. They looked at each other and were silent. At last she asked: "Why do you walk round and round your lawn every evening?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Force of habit, I suppose; it is the way I think."

Then, hastily changing the subject, he inquired: "What will your mother say when you tell her where you have been?"

"I don't think it will occur to her to ask. Her thoughts are taken up at the present moment—she glanced at the clock—in accepting an offer of marriage on my behalf. She is an admirable woman; I am her sixth daughter, and when she shall have disposed of me we shall have all been married before the age of 24."

The girl was gazing at him steadily and without flinching; vaguely she found herself wondering if there had ever been a time in her life when she had not known him—when, in fact, this stranger had not been her first and greatest thought, the supreme interest which completely filled the emptiness of her world. So had love come to her unsought, and as yet she knew it not by that name. When she spoke her voice was low and appealing: "Well, it can matter little how one works out one's destiny in the end all will infallibly turn out well. For instance, I shall marry this man of my mother's choice, and perhaps for a few years we shall be miserable together; but at last death will free one of us, and then life's object will become clear and I will view it with the impartiality of my last hour, from the standpoint of age, experience or resignation, as a charming picture in a circular frame, and shall smile to see how well the colors blended."

She laughed hopelessly.

"Poor little girl!" he muttered, rising, and, leaning against the mantel-piece, he looked down at her with yearning, dreamy eyes. "Shall I tell you the riddle of my life?" he asked. She assented.

"Ten years ago I married the girl my father chose for me—an heiress, the only child of rich and indulgent parents. We did not love each other—a punishment which I doubtless deserved. Less than a year after our marriage I first noticed a strange expression in my wife's face, which day by day became more apparent, and then she began to act strangely and say senseless things. Vainly I strove to fight the fear which was fast growing to certainty till at last the violence of a mad woman left me in doubt no longer as to the terrible thing which had come upon me. I discovered then that her grandmother had died in an asylum, and that a brother, whose very existence had been hidden from me, had shot himself while temporarily insane. I won't describe to you the horror of the next few months, when the best brain doctors in London pronounced her case hopelessly incurable, and when I had done all I could to restore the balance of her disordered mind, without avail. I did not want to send the poor thing away; but the matter was taken out of my hands. When I was recovering from a knife wound in my left temple—you see I am destined to carry a reminder of her to my grave—the doctors insisted on removing her to an asylum, and there I have been obliged to leave her ever since."

The girl had drawn nearer to him; his story had been a shock to her, but her thoughts were not of herself. "How dreadful!" she said, "and how lonely you must often be. Why have you never let me know you all these years?"

"I—I dared not!"—he turned away. He did not see the glory of love and suffering that shone in her soft dark eyes. Maybe he heard both in her voice, for there stole into his eyes the light of happiness.

"It was unkind of you," she said: "I might have been better than nothing."

She crept close to him, and shyly put her hands in one of his; he bent over them, holding them to his brow. "Little girl, you don't understand," he said softly. "Better than nothing!—it was just because you were better than everything that I could not say to you 'Come!' Every day since I first came here I think I would have given my soul to see you come in at that door as you did tonight. And so the years passed. I was often lonely, but it satisfied me to know that you were near. It amused me to wonder what we should say to each other if ever we met."

"Yet," said the girl, "I wonder that you can hold such happy theories about life! Do you really believe that your riddle will be solved?"

"I think," he answered gravely, "it was solved by the telegram you saw me open in the garden; it brought me the news of my poor wife's death—and you came to

save me from the horror of my thoughts." The girl would have drawn away her hands, but he detained them; she swayed a little, and he supported her with his arm. "I must go back," she said faintly. He folded her cloak about her tenderly. "I am going to take you home," he said.—Max Hamilton, in St. James Budget.

### General Gordon's Seal.

The seal which General Gordon used on all the documents he signed while shut up in Khartoum had a history, which is narrated in the "Life of Chauncy Maples," missionary bishop of Likoma, East Central Africa. While at Cairo, the bishop stopped at the house of a friend named Floyer, of whom he writes:

Floyer had seen a great deal of General Gordon, and showed me one very interesting letter—the last he received from him. The occasion of it was interesting. Floyer had volunteered to prepare Gordon a seal with his name in Arabic characters upon it. For this purpose he chose an old coin, which he partially melted and refashioned.

When the seal was completed, it was found that two words that had been on the coin were still legible. The words were in Arabic, and signified "The Messenger of God." Gordon noticed them and was much pleased, and in the letter in question commented on them, saying he prayed he might always remember to be as the messenger of God to the Sudan people.



WEAR Trade Mark SUSPENDERS GUARANTEED BORN.

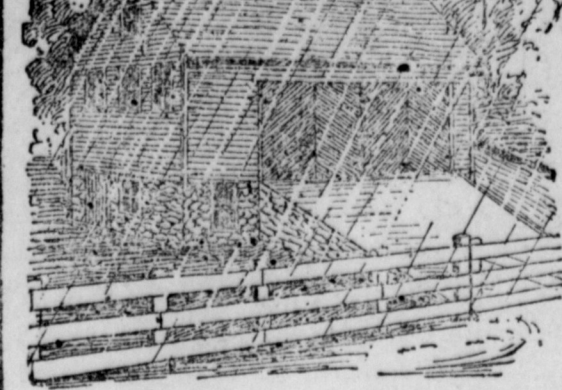
Springhill, to the wife of Laurence O'Brien a daughter.  
Springhill, June 14, to the wife of Wm. Weaver, a son.  
Springhill, June 17, to the wife of M. P. Howard a son.  
Fenwick, June 18, to the wife of Bert Dickinson, a son.  
Springhill, June 14, to the wife of John Dixon, a son.  
Amherst, June 6, to the wife of Alfred Cornier, a son.  
Amherst, June 9, to the wife of John McKenzie, a son.  
Amherst, June 10, to the wife of Fred T. Burke a son.  
Dartmouth, June 14, to the wife of Mr. Payzant, a son.  
Liverpool, June 14, to the wife of George Schultz, a son.  
Bridgewater, June 12, to the wife of Titus Penney, a son.  
Newton, Mass., June 19, to the wife of G. H. Barnes a son.  
Amherst, June 10, to the wife of Clinton Fullerton, a son.  
Westfield, N. S., June 2, to the wife of Jacob Beach a son.  
East Amherst, June 8, to the wife of Fred Black a daughter.  
Kentville, June 12, to the wife of John Driscoll, a daughter.  
Truro, June 12, to the wife of Alonzo McCollum, a daughter.  
Yarmouth, May 27, to the wife of J. B. Jones, a daughter.  
Bridgewater, June 8, to the wife of L. C. Gelling a daughter.  
Amherst, June 4, to the wife of Archie White, a daughter.  
Springhill, June 14, to the wife of John Weatherly a daughter.  
Riversdale, June 9, to the wife of Rev. J. H. Stewart, a son.  
Upper Granville, June 10, to the wife of Harry Goodwin, a son.  
Moleza, N. S., June 15, to the wife of Herbert Mallman, a son.  
Cumberland, June 12, to the wife of Melbourne Bird, a daughter.  
Whycocomagh, May 30, to the wife of Arch McDougall, a daughter.  
Clark's Harbor, June 13, to the wife of John H. Brannen a daughter.  
Parrboro, N. S., June 14, to the wife of W. R. Huntley a daughter.  
Fredericton, N. B., June 18, to the wife of M. A. Giquet, a daughter.  
Nanaimo City, B. C., June 5, to the wife of F. W. Fimora, a daughter.

### MARRIED.

Tidnish, June 14, by Rev. Mr. Fraser, Isaac Oulton to Nellie Read.  
Halifax, June 16, by Rev. Dr. Hartz, Charles Jordan to Ida Horne.  
Kentville, June 4, by Rev. B. N. Nobles, James Taylor to Daisy Croft.  
Springhill, June 15, by Rev. David Wright, Levi Job to Jane Stevens.  
Pictou, June 9, by Rev. A. Macdonald, John H. Pride to Annie Morris.  
Halifax, Jan. 15, by Rev. J. F. Duxan, Richard Powell to Sarah Erwin.  
Malvern Square, June 9, by Rev. H. N. Parry, H. O. Dodge to Kate Parry.  
Yarmouth, June 1, by Rev. Mr. Saunders, Alfred Hilton to Letitia Penney.  
Halifax, June 16, by Rev. Dr. Hartz, Albert W. Street to Bessie J. Smith.  
Middleton, May 23, by Rev. C. C. Burgess, Elijah Smith to Flora S. Weldon.  
Bridgewater, June 8, by Rev. Stephen March, W. S. Tupper to Addie Allen.  
Dartmouth, June 15, by Rev. Thos. Stewart, Harvie Grant to Viantha McLean.  
Yarmouth, June 15, by Rev. J. H. Foshay, Amos L. Odell to Annie McGray.  
Thorburn, May 14, by Rev. Wm. McLeod, William Fraser to Mary Pumb.  
Kennett, Penn., June 8, by Rev. Mr. Hubbell, Dr. John C. Price to Mabel Lee.  
Halifax, June 14, by Rev. Father Foley, George Hauss to Miss Minnie Rono.  
Halifax, June 15, by Rev. Z. L. Fash, Norman E. McPhail to Emma J. Melvin.

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### STEAMBOATS.

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Fredericton.  
(Eastern Standard Time.)

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Leave St. John every day (except Sunday) at 8 a. m., for Fredericton and all intermediate landings, and will leave Fredericton every day (except Sunday) at 8 a. m., for St. John.

Starr, Olivette will leave Indiantown for Gagetown and intermediate landings every afternoon at 4 o'clock (local time). Returning will leave Gagetown every morning at 5 o'clock. Saturday's Steamer will leave at 6 o'clock.

GEO. F. BAIRD, Manager.

## Steamer Clifton.

On and after Monday the 16th inst., until further notice, Steamer Clifton will leave her wharf at Hampton on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings at 5.30 a. m. (local) for Indiantown and intermediate points.

Returning to Hampton she will leave Indiantown same days at 4 p. m. (local)

CAPT. R. G. EARLE, Manager.

### RAILROADS.

## Dominion Atlantic R'y.

On and after Monday, 20th. June, 1898, the Steamship and Train service of this Railway will be as follows:

### Royal Mail S.S. Prince Rupert,

#### DAILY SERVICE.

Lve. St. John at 7.15 a. m., arr. Digby 10.15 a. m.  
Lve. Digby at 1.45 p. m., arr. St. John, 4.30 p. m.

### EXPRESS TRAINS

#### Daily (Sunday excepted).

Lve. Halifax 6.30 a. m., arr. in Digby 12.28 p. m.  
Lve. Digby 12.40 p. m., arr. Yarmouth 3.18 p. m.  
Lve. Yarmouth 3.00 a. m., arr. Digby 11.43 a. m.  
Lve. Digby 11.55 a. m., arr. Halifax 5.46 p. m.  
Lve. Annapolis 7.15 a. m., arr. Digby 8.30 a. m.  
Lve. Digby 8.30 p. m., arr. Annapolis 4.60 p. m.

Fullman Palace Buffet Parlor Cars run each way on express trains between Halifax and Yarmouth.

### S. S. Prince Edward,

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Staterooms can be obtained on application to City Agent.

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W. R. CAMPBELL, Gen. Man'gr.  
P. GIFFINS, Superintendent.

## Intercolonial Railway.

On and after Monday, the 4th Oct., 1897 the trains of this Railway will run daily, Sunday excepted, as follows.

### TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN

Express for Campbellton, Pugwash, Pictou and Halifax.....7.00  
Express for Halifax.....7.10  
Express for Sussex.....16.35  
Express for Quebec, Montreal.....17.10  
Passengers from St. John for Quebec and Montreal take through Sleeping Car at Moncton at 20.10 o'clock.

### TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN:

Express from Sussex.....8.30  
Express from Montreal and Quebec (Monday excepted).....10.30  
Express from Moncton (daily).....10.30  
Express from Halifax.....16.00  
Express from Halifax, Pictou and Campbellton.....18.3  
Accommodation from Moncton.....24.2

The trains of the Intercolonial Railway are heated by steam from the locomotive, and those between Halifax and Montreal, via Lewis, are lighted by electricity.

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. PORTINGIER, General Manager.  
Railway Office, Moncton, N. B., 4th October, 1897.

## CANADIAN PACIFIC RY.

Further particulars, Sleeping car accommodations reserved, etc., on application to