

# My Friend's Engagement.

"When a woman says she will, she will, you may depend on it, and when she says she won't, she won't, and that's the end on't."

It was a charming face, despite its frown and pouts; a piquant little countenance, with hazel eyes lighting it up as sunshine does a pleasant landscape.

And yet no one ever thought of calling Nervie Lloyd beautiful, though to me she was more, and her sweet face with its varying expression was a study for which I knew no weariness.

A soft, dark complexion, just tinted with vermilion where the oval cheeks rounded from the perfect chin and low, smooth forehead, deepening in shade as roses do, as the rich color neared the centre—cherry-red pouting lips, and the veriest pearls of teeth ever exposed in a smile.

A petite figure, dimpled and rounded, an embodiment of perfect symmetry, a step the poetry of motion, and a voice clear and silvery as a bird's note. She was a little sprite—half woman, half child—who knelt at my feet, exclaiming—

"There, it's all done now! Hal Andrews and I are engaged!"

"Engaged?"

"I looked up, expecting of course to see blushes and smiles, but I saw instead, an angry pout, a pair of flashing eyes sparkling through a mist of tears, and a bright anger-spot upon each cheek."

"Engaged?" I repeated, "and to Hal Andrews? What do you mean?"

Being the lady's hostess and especial friend, and feeling the responsibility of the trust reposed in me by her parents, in committing their daughter to my charge for the summer, I felt it incumbent upon me to make this inquiry, though, knowing the rather contrary and secretive spirit of the young person, I had not the remotest idea of receiving any reliable answer. But, instead of a reply, Nervie Lloyd dropped her face into my lap and began to cry as if her heart would break.

"Don't spoil your eyes," said I, "if you are engaged to that handsome, intelligent—"

"Blockhead!" ejaculated Nervie. "That ugly, ignorant blockhead; he just deserves a fool's-cap, and then—"

"You would be well matched, I think, judging from your description of the young gentleman, and the actions of a certain young lady who shall be nameless."

Minerva, raising her tear stained face, brought her white, even teeth together as if she wished the young gentleman in question had been between them.

"You know, dear," she said, "I gave his sister Sophie my album to write in a few weeks ago; and this morning, when I went after it, I found it with an abominable scrawl of that audacious—"

"Society, my dear!"

"Well, read it yourself, then; I never saw such impertinence in my life."

She drew a soiled, crumpled, gilt-edged leaf from her pocket, and I saw in a moment how rudely it had been torn from its violet perfumed mates.

Smoothing the delicate tinted paper upon my knees, and rubbing out the creases with some difficulty, these lines became visible, written in a careless yet, elegant hand.

### LINES DEDICATED TO MISS LLOYD.

In ancient time the fabled goddess famed  
For wit and wisdom was Minerva named;  
But times are changed, and now, as I observe her,  
The very opposite is named Minerva.

"But we're engaged," laughed the young lady, in a sort of insane glee. "As you are reading that gentleman's versification, here is another specimen of his admiration for his betrothed wife—"

Another piece of crumpled paper, the leaf of an old school book, on which was written in pencil—

Fair ladies wear,  
To give a contrast to their lily faces,  
Rich sables rare;  
Minerva, should she follow their example,  
Would wear  
The covering of the Polar bear.

"He admires skim-milk complexions, like Miss Malvina Woodard's for example—great weary looking blue eyes and—"

"But I don't inebriate about Miss Malvina. She quite a pretty young lady, if I am any judge."

"Young lady! Twenty five if she's a day. Pretty! Turn up nose—red hair—"

"Beautiful auburn, dear!"

"Then grass is auburn. I call red red."

"Fie, Nervie!"

"Well, fie as much as you like, I shall have my say out—only; remember this: Hal Andrews loves Vine Woodard better than he does his eyes, and he hates me worse than poison, and yet for all that we are engaged, and shall be married at Christmas!"

"Nervie!"

"That's it, put on your look of horror, hold up your hands, open your eyes and mouth, and say 'Nervie!' Then, when you have fully given vent to your dismay, listen to me while I to thee the tale unfold."

"Hal and I were children together. I suppose we liked each other well enough then—he always used to take my part, and Sophie and I used to be jealous of his attentions. Well, by and by we grew to think a good deal of each other."

Here the crimson overspread the dimpled shoulders and rounded neck turned towards me.

"One day Hal wrote me a note. He used often to do this, but I mean a particular note; here it is, read it for yourself, and a copy of the reply I sent."

Two little, yellow papers—these were neither crumpled nor torn—were taken from the little maiden's pocket, and given into my hands. The one I opened first read as follows—

"MY DEAR LITTLE NERVIE,—I have asked a good many favors of you since our

school days began, and now, as they are about to terminate, I have one of much greater importance to beg of you. We are both too young to think of marrying yet, but will you, some time before five years have expired, make me the happiest fellow alive, by giving me the right to call you mine always?"

"Yours truly,  
HAL ANDREWS."

The reply.

"DEAR HAL.—Yours received—if papa and mamma are willing—yes."

"NERVIE"

"So you really did love him, Nervie?" I questioned, giving back the little yellow notes.

"Yes—love in the past, never in the present nor future tenses, remember. I did love Hal, the wretched tease, but I thoroughly hate him now. Well, I was about to say, after awhile he became acquainted with one pretty girl, then with another, and he gave me the cold shoulder whenever we met at any party or picnic; sometimes scarcely noticing me at all. After a time he became acquainted with Vine Woodard, and he's grown more hateful and unbearable to me ever since."

"And you pined in loneliness, and nunk-like reclusiveness, during the whole time?"

"Me? I did nothing of the sort—let him know how I cared for him indeed!—just the contrary. Did I ever practise my look of scorn and contempt before you? No! Well, it's rather annihilating, and if Hal and Vine Woodard didn't feel their insignificance, it's no fault of mine. Pined in loneliness! Not I. I flirted desperately with Charlie Morse, and Ed Stanley, and Paul Lyons; but do you suppose that odious Hal Andrews cared? Not a whit!"

"Well, what of it?"

"Can't you see? Here's the whole case in a nut-shell. Hal and I are engaged—I've changed my tactics—we are engaged, and he either has to give up his adorable Malvina and marry me, whom he hates worse than poison, or I'll sue him for breach of promise, or frighten him into the belief that I will, in order to be revenged. I wrote him a note this morning, and told him I hoped he remembered our engagement, and that I should appoint Christmas as our wedding-day, giving him a gentle hint regarding a law-suit, in case he refused to live up to the spirit of the letter he wrote me nearly five years ago. I suppose I shall hear from him in the course of the day. My! won't he rave? Give up his adorable Vinal—marry me! I can see in imagination his look of horror and consternation, and I've taken especial pains to tell our insufferable gossip, Miss Nott, as a profound secret, of our engagement, and it'll be all over the town by tonight."

"Nervie!"

"Oh, don't be horrified! Just think of Hal engaged to the opposite of wit and wisdom, this contrast to a polar bear! Bah! which do you suppose he will think best to do; take the bitter pill, or forfeit several hundred pounds as a balsam to heal my wounded (?) heart?"

"Not able to say?" I replied, looking quizzically into the flushed but pretty face turned now towards me.

"Well, I think he'll be vexed about it. At any rate, he can't help himself, and I'm glad of it, for I'm sure I hate the fellow."

And with this somewhat suspicious answer, Minerva Lloyd rose to her feet and shook out the folds of her dress.

"But, Nervie," said I, "you don't really mean to marry Hal Andrews with such feelings as you now entertain towards him?"

"No; I've no idea whatever of marrying him, but I'll make him believe so, and everyone else, until the very last minute, and then I'll jilt him."

"You're a very wicked and foolish girl," said I, but I doubt if my friend heard me, for in her gay carelessness she was trilling a light song as she ran merrily upstairs.

Half an hour afterwards, when I went up to call Minerva to tea, I found her crying over an old likeness of Hal Andrews. I knew it was his, though she quickly thrust it into her pocket, for the very simple reason that when a moment afterwards, she drew forth her handkerchief to wipe away the suspicious tears, out tumbled the photograph upon the floor.

But at tea she was unusually gay, laughed and jested, and told my fortunes in a teacup, predicting I should be an old maid to the end of my mortal career, which prophecy, by the way, has proved untrue.

After tea, when the twilight was falling, and the stars were coming out one by one, Nervie stole out into the garden, and when looking after my charge some half-hour later, I found her in the arbour earnestly engaged in conversation with Hal Andrews. What induced me to listen I cannot conceive, unless a feeling of the responsibility resting upon me in regard to my friend's conduct silenced my scruples.

I do not honestly believe it was mere curiosity, so it must have been pure anxiety that made me overstep the bounds of good breeding in the palpable manner I did.

Hal possessed a rich, manly voice, and a handsome open countenance, which, as it was turned partially towards me, I admired more than ever.

The clear hazel eyes, high, full forehead waving chestnut hair, Grecian profile, ruddy complexion, and dark moustache I thought improved in the moonlight.

I pardoned little Nervie then for having given him an unrequited love, and but for a locket containing a certain manly face that lay against my heart, I might have found myself guilty of a like absurdity.

As it was, anything of the kind was out of the question, and shielded from observation as I was by a climbing tendril of sweet briar, I heard Hal saying—

"Certainly, I shall hold you to your promise, Nervie. I had supposed that question settled some years ago. You will find me ready at the appointed time."

"What?" gasped Nervie.

"I am sure you cannot fail to understand me. Even if I had thought to do otherwise, your delicate hint in regard to a suit at law would have decided me, for I would rather marry you than pay the damage your broken heart would sustain."

"You surely would not marry me and love another?" said my little friend, in a pleading tone.

"Why not? Men often do such things, and women, too, for that matter. It's nothing when one gets used to it," said Hal nonchalantly, concluding his sentence with a whistled tune no one, perhaps, ever heard before or since.

Nervie crushed a handful of flowers she held and scattered their fragrant petals over the grassy carpet of the little arbour.

There were tears in her eyes, and they dropped down over her cheeks and fell upon the little fingers still crushing the fragrant blooms.

"I'll take it all back, Hal," she said at length; "I just wanted to tease you."

"And have 'bitten your nose to spite your face,' to use the old saying. Now, it strikes me I have you as fast as you had me a moment ago. In case you refuse to fulfil your contract, after the letter I received from you this morning, how much damage shall I claim for my lacerated heart? I have no hesitancy in regard to my notes to you coming before the public, and, of course, I suppose, have a like feeling in regard to yours."

"Oh, Hal!" Nervie was now thoroughly frightened and in earnest. "You know I wouldn't have anything of the kind done for the world. Let it all go. I know you don't want to marry me, and I don't you, I'm sure."

"Why don't you?"

"Why—why—"

"You are in love with Charlie Morse, or Paul Lyons, or Ed Stanley, perhaps?"

"No, I'm not!"

"Then what is your reason, eh?"

Hal broke off a tendril from the arbour vine, and threw it playfully over Nervie's dimpled shoulders.

"Because—because," she said tremulously her voice nearly breaking down between the words, "I wouldn't marry a man who did not love me."

"Then where's the objection to marrying me Nervie? Of course I love you, and if you had not been such a little coquette, I should never have given you reason to doubt it. I was a fool to ask you to bind yourself to me five years ago—you with your youth and inexperience—and I realized it afterwards, but I could not say to you 'Consider yourself free, Nervie,' without being misunderstood by you as wishing my own liberty. Besides, had I kept no other company but yours, you would have felt under obligation to do the same, and so I tried another plan, intending, unless you were otherwise provided for before Christmas, to ask you, as I do tonight, dear—when shall the happy day be?"

I did not wait to hear the reply, but, half an hour later, Nervie came up to my room, her face radiant with smiles and blushes, and the very same words upon her lips she had so differently uttered a few hours before—

"There, it's all done now! Hal and I are engaged!"

"Ah!" said I sleepily, "what about the goddess of wisdom and the polar bear?"

"Do hush, will you?"

A little rosy palm was laid softly over my mouth, and a pair of pouting cherry lips were pressed to my cheek.

"You poor fated-to-be old maid," whispered the rosy lips, "how I pity you! You must come to our wedding at Christmas." And so I did.

### Rosa Bonheur.

Rosa Bonheur's studio in Paris is being rapidly dismantled and all her paintings sent to their respective purchasers. The celebrated animal painter is an exemplification of the old adage, "A prophet in his own country," etc., for, strangely enough she has never aroused much enthusiasm among her own countrymen. She felt this indifference bitterly, and was frequently heard to remark: "Alas! my beloved France will never shelter the offspring of my brush." Her words were prophetic. It is doubtful whether a single canvas of hers has found a purchaser in France; all her best known works, at least, have gone to England and America, which countries have always been singularly appreciative of her work.

### Mr. Passant.

Mr. Silverthread stood in his spacious drawing-room graciously welcoming the guests who had thronged to his musicale. Mr. Goldberg, an intimate friend, approached, and in a whisper asked permission to introduce a few friends, which he did as follows:

"Mr. Myers, seven millions; Mr. Huber, five millions; Mr. Smith, two millions; Mr. Miller, one million."

"And who is the gentleman just behind you?" asked the host.

"He? Oh! he's only a celebrated professor."

### Sea-Sickness, Nausea,

and maladies of this type yield quickly to the almost magical power of Nerviline, and if you suffer periodically from any of these troubles, just keep Nerviline at hand. A few drops in sweetened water will give almost instant relief and in the course of half an hour the cure is complete. Your money back if you do not find it so.

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### TRUST IN STEAMBOAT CLERKS.

They Used to Carry Thousands of Dollars. Yet Gave no Receipt.

"Men are more distrustful of each other in these days than they were in the days when the public carrier system was less perfect than it is now," said Captain Frank M. Mahan to a Chicago Journal reporter. Captain Mahan, who retired from the river service many years ago is now a manufacturer of fire apparatus in Chicago.

"Things have changed considerably since I used to clerk on the Mississippi in the early forties," he continued. "At that time there were no railroads, express companies, or letter-of-credit systems in vogue. For a long time I was master of a boat that ran between Galena and St. Louis. We started from Galena with about half a cargo of lead, and the rest of the cargo, consisting of provisions principally, would be picked up in towns along the river."

"When we got to St. Louis we got rid of our cargo, and lay over three or four days picking up a new load for the return trip. By that time the commission merchants to whom the provisions had been consigned would have sold the goods delivered by us."

"Their clerks would then be sent with envelopes containing proceeds and account of sale. These would be given to the clerk of the boat, who would place them in the vault. Thousands of dollars would sometimes be sent up and down the river in packages and envelopes. Receipts for money or goods were never given or asked for."

"Once I made the trip intrusted with the delivery of ten shot bags filled with gold, which was consigned to merchants along the river. Although the system then in vogue would be declared 'loose' in these days money rarely went astray."

"During the twenty years I served as clerk or master of a steamboat there were only two instances where valuable packages went astray. One day in the spring of 1848, John Tracy, a clerk of one of the Mississippi steamboats, was sitting on the levee checking freight, when a gentleman handed him a package containing \$500."

"Tracy was busy at the time and put the money in his overcoat pocket. When the boat returned complaint was made because the package had not been delivered. No trace of the missing envelope could be found, and Tracy was charged with having stolen its contents. One of the first cold days we had Tracy opened an old cubby hole in which he had thrown his overcoat six months before."

"He wore the coat several days, when one day his attention was called to a hole in the lining. Putting his hand down in the lining he pulled out the missing package containing the \$500."

"Two years later a clerk I knew on the Anthony Wayne received \$150 from a merchant at Churchville, a little town just below Keokuk. The package was directed to a merchant at Mineral Point. Instead of placing the package in the vault the clerk put it in a pigeonhole, where it lay all winter, that being the boat's last trip for the season. It was discovered and delivered to its owner the following spring. The same system was in vogue, all along the river."

"Once the clerk on the boat on which I was master received \$10,000 from a New Orleans firm to be delivered to a merchant in St. Louis. No receipt was given at either end of the route."

"Valuable scarcely ever went astray, and embezzlement was almost an unknown word. I remember how the defalcation of a Missouri bank cashier, who ran away with \$8,000 was at one time the talk of the west. I delivered many packages to Gen. Grant when he was in business at Galena, J. Russell Jones and Capt John B. Fitzgerald, now of Chicago, were both well-known rivermen before the war."

### The Only Gentleman.

She was middle-aged, well groomed and wore her glasses with a Bostonese air, but when she entered a crowded State street car in front of the public library the other

night not a man stirred to offer her a seat. She seized hold of a strap and gazed about her with a stony glare for a few seconds when a somewhat intoxicated individual near the front of the car arose and with that comical alcoholic gravity, motioned her toward the seat which he had just vacated.

"Here lady," he spluttered, "taksh my sheat."

The woman seated herself and regarded the other passengers coldly.

"Your the only gentleman in the car, sir!" she declared with a sardonic smile.

The drunk swayed forward slightly and then he looked into her face genially.

"You betsh yor d— life I am," said he.

### Warts Are Unightly.

That is the reason no one is clamoring for a few more warts—make them fashionable and a remedy to grow warts would quickly be made a financial success. Yes, Putman's Corn and Wart Extractor removes them, works quickly and without pain—any druggist will tell you more about this remedy.

### New British Artillery.

The rearming of the British artillery and the replenishing of the stores of ammunition and other war material will, it is stated, necessitate a vote at the next session of the British Parliament of from forty to sixty millions of dollars. A good deal of this money has been already spent or anticipated, the Krupp works in Germany being employed on an order for fifteen batteries of quick firers, large orders having been placed in the hands of Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim in England for guns and mountings. One order is for forty-two of the 4.7 inch guns that are reported to have proved very serviceable in the South African war, and another is for thirty-five howitzer batteries with the wagons, limbers and carriages. The same firm is also at work on the mountings for twenty-seven garrison battery 9.2 inch guns of the Vickers type, one of the most powerful and destructive weapons in either the British land or sea services.

As the orders for these ornaments were given without reference to Parliament, the necessity for them must be very urgent. The despatch of arms and ammunition to India for the rearmament of the British garrisons there and the discarded rifles to the native regiments proceeds as rapidly as the arms arrive. Arrangements for making smokeless powder, and other war materials have also been made, the establishments being located in central India.

McSwatters—Another duel in Kentucky. McSwatters—Both contestants killed? McSwatters—Neither of them touched; but six spectators are expected to die.

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