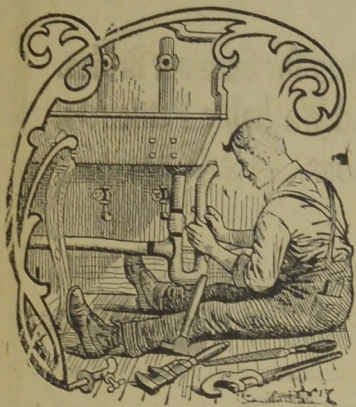


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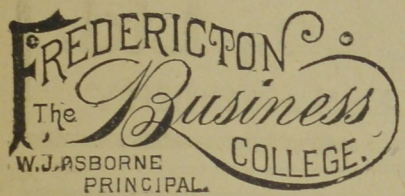
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"Here, let me help you," commanded the captain, getting down on one knee and taking a foot in his lap. "Tut, tut, tut! You're wet. Been some time since I fussed with button boots. Lace or long legged cowhides come handier. Never wore cowhides, did you?"

"No, sir."

"I s'pose not. I used to when I was little. Remember the first pair I had. Copper toes on 'em—whew! The copper was blacked over when they come out of the store, and that wouldn't do, so we used to kick a stone wall till they brightened up. There, there she comes. Humph! Stockin's soaked too. Wish I had some dry ones to lend you. Might give you a pair of mine, but they'd be too scant fore and aft and too broad in the beam, I call 'em. Humph! And your top riggin's as wet as your hull. Been on your beam ends, have you?"

"I don't know, sir. I fell down in the bushes coming across. There were vines, and they tripped me up, and the umbrella was so heavy that—"

"Yes, I could see right off you was carryin' too much canvas. Now take off your bunnit, and I'll git a coat of mine to wrap you up in."

He went into his bedroom and returned with a heavy "reefer" jacket. Ordering his caller to stand up, he slipped her arms into the sleeves and turned the collar up about her neck. Her braided "pigtail" of yellow hair stuck out over the collar and hung down her back in a funny way. The coat sleeves reached almost to her knees, and the coat itself enveloped her like a bedquilt.

"There," said Captain Cy approvingly—"now you look more as if you was under a storm rig. Set down and toast your toes. Where's that letter you said you had?"

"It's inside here. I don't know's I can get at it, these sleeves are so long."

"Reef 'em—turn 'em up. Let me show you. That's better. Hum! So you come from the depot, hey? Live up that way?"

"No, sir! I used to live in Concord."

"Concord? Concord? Concord where?"

"Concord, N. H. I came on the cars. Auntie knew a man who was going to Boston, and he said he'd take care of me as far as that and then put me on the train to come down here. I stopped at his folks' house in Charlestown last night, and this morning we got up early, and he bought me a ticket and started me for here. I had a box with my things in it, but it was so heavy I couldn't carry it, so I left it up at the depot. The man there said it would be all right and you could send for it when—"

"I could send for it? I could? What in the world—Say, child, you've made a mistake in your bearin's. 'Tain't me you want to see; it's some of your folks' relations most likely. Tell me who they are; maybe I know 'em." The girl sat upright in the big chair. Her dark eyes opened wide, and her chin quivered.

"Ain't you Captain Cyrus Whittaker?" she demanded. "You said you was."

"Yes, yes, I am. I'm Cy Whittaker, but what—"

"Well, auntie told me—"

"Auntie! Auntie who?"

"Auntie Oliver. She isn't really my auntie, but mamma and me lived in her house for ever so long, and so—"

"Wait, wait, wait! I'm hull down in the fog. This is gettin' too thick for me. Your auntie's name's Oliver and you lived in Concord, N. H. For—thunder sakes, what's your name?"

"Emily Richards Thomas."

"Em—Emily—Richards—Thomas?"

"Yes, sir."

"Emily Richards Thomas! What was your ma's name?"

"Mamma was Mrs. Thomas. Her first name was Mary. Sue's dead."

WHITTAKER'S PLACE

Just what you want to see your letter: I've got it now."

She lifted one of the flapping coat sleeves and extended a crumpled, damp envelope. Captain Cy took it in a dazed fashion and drew a long breath. Then he tore open the envelope and read the following:

Dear Captain Whittaker—The bearer of this is Emily Richards Thomas. She is seven, going on eight, but old for her years. Her mother was Mary Thomas that used to be Mary Thayer. It was her you wrote to about keeping house for you, but she had been dead a fortnight before your letter came. She had bronchial pneumonia, and it carried her off, having always been delicate and with more troubles to bear than she could stand, poor thing! Since her husband, who I say was a scamp even if he is dead, left her and the baby she has took rooms with me and done sewing and such. When she passed away I wrote to Seth Howes, a relation of hers out west and, so far as I know, the only one she had. I told the Howes man that Mary had gone and Emmie was left. Would they take her? I wrote. And Seth's wife wrote they couldn't, being poorer than poverty themselves. I was afraid she would have to go to a home, but when your letter came I wrote the Howeses again. And Mrs. Howes wrote back that you was rich and a sort of faroff relation of Mary's and probably you would be glad to take the child to bring up. Said that she had some correspondence with you about Mary before. So I send Emmie to you. Somebody's got to take care of her, and I can't afford it, though I would if I could, for she's a real nice child and some like her mother. I do hope she can stay with you. It seems a shame to send her to the orphan asylum. I send along what clothes she's got, which ain't many. Respectfully yours, SARAH OLIVER.

Captain Cy read the letter through. Then he wiped his forehead.

"Well!" he muttered. "Well! I never in my life! I—never did! Of all!"

Emily Richards Thomas looked up from the depths of the coat collar.

"Don't you think," she said, "that you had better send to the depot for my box? I can get dry some this way, but mamma always made me change my clothes as soon as I could. She used to be afraid I'd get cold."

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN CY did not reply to the request for the box. It is doubtful if he even heard it.

Mrs. Oliver's astounding letter had, as he afterward said, left him "high and dry with no tug in sight." Mary Thomas was dead and her daughter—her daughter, of whose very existence he had been ignorant—had suddenly appeared from nowhere and been dropped at his door like an out of season May basket, accompanied by the modest suggestion that he assume responsibility for her thereafter. No wonder the captain wiped his forehead in utter bewilderment.

(To be Continued)

The annual convention of the California State Federation of Labor will be held in Fresno, commencing October 6.

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Accounts may be opened in the names of two or more persons, withdrawals to be made by any one of them or by the survivor.

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PERSONAL

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar A. Poole of Mobile Illinois are on a visit to this city and are the guests of Mrs. Henry Chestnut, Waterloo Row. Mr. Poole was for many years a trusted official of the celebrated implement firm of Deere & Co of Mobile. Mrs Poole is a frequent visitor to Fredericton.

Paper matches are built into a new paper cigarette box.

Officials of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor expect a record-breaking attendance at the coming annual convention of the organization, which will meet in Wausau on July 16.

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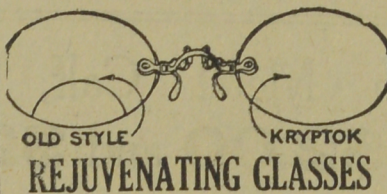
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