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The Apple Seed.
Come hither and listen; a tale I'll relate
Of a little brown seed and its wonderful fate;
In heart of an apple in autumn 'twas found,
Then was buried deep down in the dark, silent ground.

The frost soon enshrouded its own little bed,
And snows drifted o'er it, by chilling winds I spied;

The day and the night were alike where it lay;

Of the pale winter sunshine it knew not, one ray.

The white drifts all vanished one mild April day,

And frost that encased it all melted ere May;

It sprang to the surface as soon as 'twas freed

And raised two green banners—the brave little seed.

It grew and it spread as the fleet years went by;

It sheltered the cattle, while birds of the sky

Built nests 'mong its leaves and there reared their young,

And the gay boys and girls on its low branches swing.

Should you sail to the East—the wide ocean o'er—

And search every page of its magical lore,

You never will find a more marvelous thing

Then the blossoming out of that tree in the Spring.

And apples grew on it, so rosy and fair

It seemed the red sunset imprisoned lay there;

Down 'mong the tall grasses they dropped from the tree,

Where the children would seek them with shouting and glee.

When harvests are garnered at fall of the year,

The corn-husks all stripped from the glossy, gold ear,

This queen of the fruits, that the season had graced,

In the cellar's cool darkness was carefully placed.

In long winter evenings around the bright fire

The family gathered—from infant to sire;

Then apples were brought and a circular row

On the hearthstone was placed to roast in the glow.

A fair, laughing maid, with a keen, glancing stare,

A ribbon would make of an apple's smooth peak,

Then the fresh, supple length would use as a test

Of the name of the lover who loved her the best.

Around her bright head she would give it a twirl,

Then a gentle dash downward, with a twist and a quiril;

And scoffing, but blushing, her shoulder looked o'er

At the letter it made as it fell to the floor.

The silver-haired grandma her knitting laid down,

And taking an apple, all roasted and brown,

She story on story in retrospect traced,

As the dear toddling babe she indulged with a taste.

The provident housewife made many a dish,

As luscious and wholesome as mortal could wish,

Of their rich, juicy pulp, oh, a wonder, indeed,

—[C. A. M. Webb, in Boston Transcript.]

THE GOVERNESS.

"Angelina!" cried Mrs. Duncan, as she fluttered into her daughter's boudoir, "what shall I do? I've just received a 'regret' from Madam Bouteille, and I don't know what is in the world I am to do with the count."

"You're sure he is coming?" queried Angelina, anxiously.

"Oh, yes! He's all right—the dear fellow! I had the sweetest note from him, saying that he would be charmed. But now that Madam Bouteille isn't coming, there will be no one who can talk to him. Angelina, I wish you would give a little more attention to your French."

"I have just been taking a lesson, mamma," Angelina replied. "Mademoiselle La Fonte has taught me a new verb this afternoon."

Mrs. Duncan glanced at the little French governess, hitherto unnoticed, and said, patronizingly:

"I hope you will take great pains with her pronunciation, mademoiselle. I always said that French did not amount to much without a pronunciation."

"There is no language which does," replied the little governess, quietly.

"Of course not! Angelina, are you through with your lesson? Those laces have come from McKay's, and I do want to talk to you about this dinner! Yes, mademoiselle, you may go now; but you must not forget that you are to translate my bill of fare into French—will you?"

"No, madam, I will not forget."

She quitted the room with a bow and bearing that showed she had not always been a mere teacher of French to young children and giddy girls. Indeed, there had been a time when the old La Fonte family had stood to all Provence as a type of the bluest blood of France. But the Franco-Prussian war had made a beggar of the once rich family, and left Valeria with a widowed mother, who soon died of grief.

"Mamma," said the fair Angelina, as she watched the slender, gray-robed figure out of sight, "why don't you get mademoiselle in the place of the Bouleau woman?"

"What?" screamed Mrs. Duncan. "Give the place next to Count de Beaupre to a governess!"

"You needn't tell anybody who she is. She is well-enough looking, and knows how to behave."

"Know how to behave? It was well for the fair Angeline's plans that mademoiselle did not hear her."

"I shall sit on one side of the count," said Angeline, airily. "Of course he will talk to me a great deal, and if I get stuck, mademoiselle can help me out. On the whole, mamma, I think that is a very good plan. Madam Bouteille could probably have monopolized him. You know she is crazy after the men, and especially Count de Beaupre. Besides," concluded Angeline, very forcibly, "it's too late to ask anybody else!"

"I suppose it is," said Mrs. Duncan, ruefully.

And it was decided that they would have mademoiselle, who was commanded to accept the invitation on the pain of losing her situation.

Angeline was enraged because the stubborn little governess would not borrow a dress of them.

"She will look like a guy, mamma. She can't have anything fit to wear."

"Well, my dear, it is all your fault," said Mrs. Duncan.

But mademoiselle did not look like a fright. When Count de Beaupre entered the reception-room, his beauty-loving eyes singled out at once a slender, curving figure, in antique brocade which had grown yellow with age, but was so unmistakably distinguished-looking that all the ladies were wild with envy. Mrs. Duncan introduced him.

"Mademoiselle," said the courtly young lion, bending his fine head to look at the fair, sweet face beside him, "I am charmed to meet so lovely a countrywoman in a foreign land! Is it possible that we have met before? Your face reminds me of one I have seen somewhere."

"I think not," Valerie answered, flushing with pleasure at the sound of a voice that spoke her native tongue so perfectly. "I have been in America for twelve years."

"Madam," he said, bowing, "the future Countess de Beaupre has no further need of your patronage."

"Countess de Beaupre?" was all she could gasp.

And Valerie soon found herself standing alone, bewildered, in the middle of the room, while the man she loved was holding her hand and saying, tenderly:

"Valerie, darling, you will let me verify that statement—will you not? I love you with all my heart. Will you take it, and my title and me? I want you so badly!"

"Dinner is served."

Count de Beaupre glanced at his card and saw that he was to take Mademoiselle La Fonte out to dinner. His pleasure was unmistakable.

They were soon chatting volubly in French. Angeline Duncan sat next to them. She put in a word now and then at random, for she couldn't understand a word they were saying. But the count's puzzled "Comment?" (How?) and "Je vous demande pardon!" (I beg pardon!) soon silenced her.

As for Valerie, she was growing animated. Her face flushed prettily under the count's admiring gaze, and she was quite oblivious to the javelin glances hurled at her by Mrs. Duncan. The count had hardly looked at Angeline.

"Who was that pretty girl I took out to dinner?" he asked, later in the evening.

"Mademoiselle La Fonte," said Mrs. Duncan, coldly. "Is it possible you admire her, count? She is not much of anybody. We just had her to make up the party."

Mrs. Duncan was angry, or she would not have said such a thing.

As for the count, he saw that he had made a mistake; but Mademoiselle La Fonte was wholly unconscious.

Shortly after, coffee was served, the guests departed, and Valerie came up to the hostess, when the party had dispersed, to ask whether she might not go home.

"Yes, and stay there!" retorted Angeline, angrily. "How dared you presume to flirt with a guest of my mother?" You forget, mademoiselle, that you are not here as a social equal. We did not expect you to play any of your adventures games upon Count de Beaupre."

"Miss Duncan," cried Valerie, growing deadly pale, "you have not yet acquired the right to insult me!"

"Angelina," said Mrs. Duncan, in a low tone, "don't be too hasty. Remember that it is hard to get a good governess on mademoiselle's terms."

"I don't care," cried Angeline, growing into tears. "She kept Count de Beaupre away from me all the evening."

"Miss Duncan," said the little governess, with much dignity, "I assure you that I had no such an intention."

"That will do, mademoiselle," said Mrs. Duncan, coldly. "You can go now."

So the poor girl hurried out of the room, and met the Count de Beaupre, waiting, hat in hand, in the hall. She saw by his face that he had heard all.

"I thought you had gone!" she stammered.

"I waited for you," he answered, in French. "I thought you had no escort. May I have the honor of seeing you home, mademoiselle?"

"I have no carriage!" faltered poor Valerie.

"What is at the door. Alley me!"

So the little governess found herself rolling home in state.

"I ought not to let you do this," she said, hurriedly. "I am not one of Mrs. Duncan's guests, monsieur; I am only her governess."

"The name of La Fonte is very dear to me," said the count, gently. "My father's best friend was a French general, who was killed at Sedan, and that was his name. A brave fellow he was, too!"

"It was my father!" cried Valerie. "My father was General Gascoigne La Fonte. Oh, monsieur! did you know him?"

"Know him?" echoed Count de Beaupre. "I should say I did! "He saved my father's life twice. I was a bit of a boy, but I remember it well. Ah! now I see why your face seemed so familiar to me. Mademoiselle La Fonte, you, and I ought to be good friends."

"I will do my part," said Valerie, warmly.

And the count, having taken her hand in his, found occasion to hold it again.

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