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6-180. ly.

NEEDLE AND THREAD.

'An old bachelor?' said Honora Maywood.

'That's what he told me, just in so many words,' said Mrs. Pennyacker, who stood on the threshold of her best room, with her head tied up in a pocket-handkerchief and a hair-broom in her hand wherewith she gesticulated, after a tragic fashion, as she talked, while Miss Maywood, tall and slender as a wild lily, stood in the hall, with a roll of music under her arm, and her slight figure wrapped in a shabby black shawl. 'And he's willing to pay my price, cash down, every Saturday night. Never attempted to beat down a penny, if you will believe it my dear.'

'Why should he?' said Honora. 'Most people do, my dear,' said Mrs. Pennyacker. 'A wrinkled old widow like me, who has her living to earn, is mostly fair game for everybody. A real gentleman, my dear—every such of 'em. But he's a little particular, I'm afraid.'

'I suppose most bachelors are,' said Miss Maywood, smiling. 'Yes, my dear—yes!' nodded Mrs. Pennyacker. 'But this gentleman is beyond the average, I think.'

'And if he is?' 'Nothing,' said Mrs. Pennyacker, making a dab with her broom-handle at a stray moth, which was fluttering blindly against the garnet damask window curtains—nothing except that one don't quite know where to have him. He drinks old English breakfast tea, and he wants his pie crust made with the best Alderney butter, instead of lard as is good enough for other people; and he must have ventilators to all the windows, and an open grate instead of the base-burning stove; and—I hope you'll not be offended, my dear—but he particularly dislikes a piano.'

'Dis-likes a pi-no!' said the little music teacher, reddening in spite of herself.

'And he says he, 'I hope there's no piano in the house. A piano,' says he, 'plays the deuce with my nervous system, with its everlasting tum tum! These were his very words my dear. So I courtesies, and says I, 'You will not be troubled with one here, sir. And so, my dear, I'll be grateful if you won't mind doing your practicing until he's out for his daily walk; from one to three, just as regular as a clock.'

Miss Raymond looked up piteously in the old landlady's face.

'I will do anything to oblige you, Mrs. Pennyacker,' she said earnestly. 'I haven't forgotten how much I am indebted to you both in actual money and for kindness, which money can never repay.'

And the soft blue eyes filled with tears as she spoke.

'My dear, don't say a word,' said Mrs. Pennyacker, hastily. 'You've been sick, and you've got a little behindhand and its quite natural you should be a little low spirited now and then. But you mustn't get discouraged. Things will look up after awhile. And you are quite welcome to stay here until you are able to settle up your little account.'

Honora Maywood sighed, as she remembered how often her little advertisement, had been inserted in the daily newspapers, without attracting the least notice from the world of patrons and pupils. There were so many capable music teachers, willing to give lessons at moderate prices, nowadays, and how was any one to know how sorely she needed money.

And as the time crept on, and no pupils came, Honora began seriously to ask herself whether she could go out in some menial capacity, or stay genteelly at home and starve.

'Clothes, ma'am!' Honora started from her reverie, as the washwoman's stumpy little girl banged herself, like a human battering-ram, up against the door with a preposterously large basket on her arm.

'Yes,' said Honora, coloring. 'Put them down, Sally. But I—I am afraid it is not convenient to pay your mother today.'

'Mother didn't say nothing about the pay,' said Sally, wiping her forehead with a white of her arm and sniffing herself well-nigh off her feet. 'I was herself well-nigh off her feet. I was that damp and muggy on Monday and Tuesday, as starch wouldn't stick, and she hopes you'll excuse all mistakes as they shall be done better next time.'

'I dare say they are quite right,' said Honora, with a little sigh, as she marvelled at this unexpected excess of courtesy on the part of her landlady.

But when Sally had stumped off down the stairs, her flapping slippers beating a sort of tattoo as she went, and Miss Maywood took off the fringed towel that

covered the basket of clothes, she gave a little start.

'Shirts,' said Honora, 'and socks and turn-over collars, No. 16, and great big pocket handkerchiefs, like the sails of a ship, and white vests, and—goodness me! what does it all mean? Mrs. Mulvey has sent me some gentleman's wardrobe by mistake. I must send these back at once.'

But then Miss Maywood looked down at the articles in grave consideration.

'I never had a brother,' mused Miss Maywood; 'and I can't remember my father: but of this I am quite certain—if I had either one or the other I should thank any girl to mend their wardrobes if they looked like this. And Mrs. Mulvey can't send before night and unfortunately I've nothing to do, so I'll just mend this poor fellow's clothes whoever he may be. A half starved theological student perhaps, training for the Polynesian Islands, or perhaps a newspaper reporter, or a clerk under the dazzling skylights of some dry goods palace. At all events he is worse off than I am for he can't mend his own clothes, and I can.'

And the smiles dimpled around Honora Maywood's little rosebud of a mouth as she sat down to darn holes, sew on tape and insert patches.

'He'll never know who did it,' said Honora to herself, 'but I dare say he will be thankful; and if one gets a chance to do a little good in this way, one ought not to grudge one's time and trouble.'

But as Honora stitched away, she mused sadly whether or not she ought to accept a position which had offered itself of assistant matron in an orphan asylum, where the work would be most unendurable, and the pay next to nothing, with no Sundays or holidays, and a ladies' committee, consisting of three starched old maids, to 'sit' upon her the first Friday of every month.

'I almost think I'd rather starve,' thought Honora. 'But, dear me! starving is a serious business when one comes to consider it face to face.'

Sally Mulvey came back, puffing and blowing like a human whale, in about two hours.

'Mother says she's sent the wrong basket,' said she breathlessly. 'I thought it very probable Sally,' said Miss Maywood.

'And mother's compliments,' added Sally, 'and she can't undertake your things no longer, Miss Maywood 'cause she does cash business, and there ain't been nothing paid on your account since last June.'

Honora felt herself growing scarlet. 'I am very sorry, Sally,' said she. 'Tell your mother I will settle my bill as soon as I possibly can.'

Sally flounced out of the room, red and indignant, like an overcharged thunder-cloud, and poor little Honora, dropping her hands, burst into tears.

'Pretty girl that—very pretty,' said Mr. Broderic, the old bachelor, to his landlady.

'Do you mean—' 'I mean the young lady boarder of yours that I see on the stairs now and then,' said Mr. Broderic. 'Nice figure—big, soft eyes, like a gazelle. Did some one tell me she was a music teacher?'

'That's her profession,' said Mrs. Pennyacker. 'But there ain't many pupils as wants tuition, and poor little dear, she has a hard time of it.'

'Humph!' grunted Mr. Broderic. 'What fools women are not to have some regular profession! If I had a daughter I'd bring her up a self supporting institution.'

And Mr. Broderic disappeared into his room in the midst whereof stood a girl with flapping slippers, a portentous shawl and bonnet which had originally been manufactured for a woman twice her size.

'Who are you?' demanded Mr. Broderic.

'Please sir, I've come to bring your things,' said Sally chattering off her lessons like a parrot. 'And please sir, her 'umble duty, and 'opes they'll suit, but it was damp and muggy Monday and Tuesday, and starch wouldn't stick; and she 'opes you'll excuse all mistakes, as they shall be done better next time sir—please sir.'

'Who mended 'em,' demanded Mr. Broderic, whose hawk-eye had already caught sight of the dainty needlework on his garments.

'Nobody mended 'em,' said Sally, 'and mother says it is easy to see as the new get is a bachelor, on account of the holes in his boots and toes, and the strings off his dickeres.'

'I can tell who mended 'em,' said Mrs. Pennyacker, 'for I see her at it, the pretty dear Miss Maywood. And says she, 'I don't know whose they are, Mrs.

Pennyacker, but says she, 'they need mending and a kind action never comes amiss.' No more it does, sir, Lord bless her.'

'Humph!' says Mr. Broderic; 'she's right—no more it does. And she is a regular little scientist at the needle, is Miss Maywood. Just look at that patch, Mrs. Pennyacker! Euclid's geometry could not produce a straight line or truer angle. See the toe of that stocking! It is like a piece of Gobelin tapestry. That is the way I like to have things done!'

And Mr. Broderic never rested until he had been formally introduced to Honora Maywood, and thanked her with equal formality for the good services she had unwittingly rendered him.

It was a golden October evening that Honora came down into the kitchen where Mrs. Pennyacker was baking pies for her eccentric boarder, with the crusts made of the best Alderney butter instead of lard.

'Oh, dear! oh, dear!' said Mrs. Pennyacker; 'what a thing it is to be an old bachelor.'

'He won't be an old bachelor much longer,' said Honora, laughing and coloring, as she laid her cheek on the good landlady's cushioning shoulder.

'What do you mean?' said Mrs. Pennyacker.

'He has asked me to marry him,' said Honora after only two weeks acquaintance. He says that a girl who can mend stockings as I do needs no other test. And he says he loves me and—'

'Well?'

'I almost think I love him!' whispered Miss Maywood.

OFF-HAND TALKS.

Sim Jims.

THE NEW DOG.

If you want to see trouble, and a heap of it, give your small hopeful a puppy.

No puppy is complete without the companionship of a small boy.

The dog that has grown up to doghood with his early training neglected by the small boy is no dog at all, but an adulterated, miserable growling cur.

I have a small boy. Likewise a small dog. The latter was presented by a friend. No; not a friend because no friend would seek to blast my life and harrow my soul.

Unversed in the matter, I took the puppy home with smiles lighting up the waste places in my contentance.

The canine was committed to the care of the aforesaid boy, with multitudinous and emphatic instructions.

The result was a painful distance on the part of the dog and an affectionate tenacity on the part of the boy. It was Damon and Pythias, with an unwilling Pythias.

The first night the weather was cold and the wind howled. So did the pup. He was on the back porch possessed of the idea that inside the house was a more fitting place for him. Hence he clamored for admission.

His entreaties were heard by the boy, and here commenced a profound and prolonged desire on the part of the boy to have the poor puppy brought into the house.

Much dissenting by the mother. Positive prohibition by the father. Absolute mutiny and riotous demonstrations by the boy. Full chorus.

At breakfast the dog was invited into the dining room—said invitation was extended by the boy in private.

The invitation was accepted by the dog with thanks. He took his place unperceived under the table and watched for the crumbs.

The boy watched for opportunities to drop portions of his breakfast beneath the table. These were also thankfully accepted by the dog.

But alas! The argus eyes of a pair of parents were upon the proceedings. They loved the boy, but bore no special regard for the cur. Hence their argus eyes espied the serpentine disposition of the boy's breakfast they fired upon the dog. That is to say, he was evicted. In other words he was everlastingly bounced.

The boy set up a yell. It was his choice pet. That yell cost him a very choice chastisement.

After breakfast the dog was called out from his hiding place and the trouble commenced in earnest.

It was a very patient dog, likewise tough. He stood his punishment like a martyr.

enticing the dog into the house. It was a dog day on an enlarged scale.

By night every leg of the cur was broken at least twice. Both eyes sightless. Two ears demolished. Hair gone. Bark feeble, and whine totally extinct.

The remains were carried to a near pond and deposited with a flaut. Grief clouded the brow of the boy. Joy lit up the face of an aggravated mother; and the community in rapture.

Vale dog.—Sunny South.

SARAH BERNHART.

[Atlanta Sunny South.]

Sarah Bernhart is here. I've seen her. And she is so thin.

It takes two of her to make a shadow, and its only the ghost of a shadow at that.

She could make her toilet behind a knitting needle, and enjoy a nap on the edge of a razor.

She is like a coupon ticket, and can fold herself up like a coupon ticket, and be carried in her pocket book.

She is likewise slender and long. Likewise eccentric. Eccentricity is her tramp card. It brought her fame, money, children, lovers and finally to America. It is likely to carry her to the dickens.

And she's thin. Too thin. She is the champion thinist. She dines sumptuously on a match and drinks thin water. To thin water you must strain it through a blanket.

But she is here. She brought her coffin with her. Every night she lies down in the coffin to see how much thinner she gets. The last report was that she was almost as thin as church fair oyster soup. It is almost impossible for her to get much thinner now and live.

When she dies she is to be buried in that coffin. The coffin is also thin. It looks like a butterknife case, only there isn't as much room sideways.

But she isn't likely to die. She's too thin. Old death must go out into the back yard and practice his aim on a telegraph wire. His reaping hook could hardly graze her if she stood sideways to him.

She gives her doctor lots of trouble. When she washes her face she cuts her hair with her features—they are so thin. The doctor gets out his microscope and makes a search for the hands. He does this every day.

Her nose is wonderfully thin. Thin unto sharpness. She poked it into somebody's business the other day and it cut up jack.

They had lots of trouble bringing her over from Europe. The captain of the steamer wanted to chain her down to keep the ocean breezes from carrying her away, but she was too thin. She slipped through the links of the chain.

She was sea sick in the voyage and was sick unto death. The surgeon recommended a mustard plaster, but they couldn't find enough of her to put it on. She was too thin.

In the morning her maid has to sue out a search warrant to find her in the bed. She had a habit of slipping under the bottom sheet and gets lost.

She was never married. There was never enough of her to get spiced. She is so thin.

And she is pretty—pretty thin. The girls are going crazy over her. They eat state penance and drink vinegar to get thin. It's fashionable.

Her dressmaker has no trouble. She cuts off a strip of silk, fits it on a broom-handle and the thing is done. I mean the dress. No buttons. They tie it around her like we do a sore finger. The fit is superb. She is so thin.

She came over here to play. She's an actress. She plays in light comedy. The lighter the better. It suits her thinness. Her favorite role is the Lost Hair, or rather the lost air.

She also sculps. When she sculps she wears pants. The pants would fit tight on a hairpin.

And she paints. Her paintings are thin. You can see through them. You see she paints on glass.

She also sings. Sharps and flats suit her. Her voice is thin. It can go through the eye of a needle. She once sang an opera in G sharp through one of the pores of her skin. The poor pore instantly closed up for repairs. Her voice was so thin and cutting.

She never wears stockings. Socks are cheapest. It is such a distance to the end of her limbs.

Her hair is thin. She brushes one hair at a time and ties a tag on the end—'hair No. 1,' and so on. At night she curls the roll, and if all the hairs are not there she raises the hair of her maid. Her maid wears made hair.

Sara will not practice the customs of American girls. She tried a few and failed. Tried to chew gum and it commenced to fatten her right away. Didn't want to get fat.

Tried to play croquet and flirt with four men at the same time. Failed in this also. There she will ignore our customs and stick to her own. She is so thin.

And Fate of an Old Bachelor.

That blessed baby had been howling in the street car for nine blocks and the Galveston News, until everybody else in the car had escaped except a bald-headed old Galvestonian, who rubbed the top of his dome of that: hi, scowled, grimaced, fumed and gave every other evidence of being annoyed.

'I hope the baby don't disturb you sir,' said the mother pleasantly.

'No, madam, it does not,' he said, savagely gritting his teeth.

'I am so glad. Was afraid it did—little tootsy wootsy, yam, yam.'

'No, madam it don't disturb me,' he said still more savagely. 'Little tootsy, fidellectics only disturbs people in the adjoining county. It has made a charming idiot of me five blocks ago. And springing through the car window, he gave a maniacal hal! hal! and disappeared around the corner.'

Frave it by Mother.

While driving along the street one day last winter in my sleigh, a little boy six or seven years old, asked me the usual question. 'Please may I ride?'

'I answered him: 'Yes, if you are a good boy.'

He climbed into the sleigh; and when I asked again, 'Are you a good boy?' he looked up, pleasantly, and said, 'Yes, sir.'

'Can you prove it?'

'Yes, sir.'

'By whom?'

'Why, by my ma,' said he, promptly. 'I thought to myself, there is a lesson for boys and girls. When a child feels and knows