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DEMOCRATIC ALWAYS AND UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES.

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July 5, 1881. L. H. BLALOCK.

A RIBBON.

It was a simple thing to do so much harm—a strip of rose-pink silk—and certainly harmless in itself. But it caused Launce Lisle the worst heartache of his life. I will tell you about it.

Virginia Payne, of Granby, never flirted. That was a fact patent among her admirers. Handsome she was, witty and charming, beyond compare; but never had folly enough to think that the warmest smile that ever parted her red lips meant more than would read in an open book. If Virginia would write between the lines, she had never done so, though she was one-and-twenty.

For three months she had been mistress of Granby, a magnificent old family inheritance. The great mansion of pale gray stone, set among lawns and gardens, beautiful beyond [illegible] Granby had come to her. And there she dwelt with her guardian, Mr. Israel, her aunt Content and a goodly train of servants. The heiress of Granby, being who she was and what she was, was toasted far and near, and naturally would have become a prey to fortune hunters, but for one clause of her father's will. It had been the one prayer of his life, and it was his dying request, carefully worded upon paper, that Virginia, then a child of nine years, should marry Launcelot Lisle. He was his stepson, already a young man of character and weight. But he had never lived at Granby, and when Virginia, at 16, met him, she could not remember to have seen him before.

It was on the day of her father's funeral. Her stepsister had been dead several years, and but for the sister of her own mother, aunt Content, she was quite alone. Launce had a most immediately gone back to London, but he had come to her, shivering in her black robes, under all the excitement, and said gently, that he feared she would be very lonesome—that he wished he could remain at Granby—that he might be of some service to her, etc.; but briefly he was gone, and she had returned to school.

At 18 she was at Granby again, and, with her guardian's approval and personal oversight, saw much company. It was better she should see something of the world before choosing a husband, he said; and so, people argued she was not engaged to Launce Lisle, though Virginia said freely that she was so, unless Mr. Lisle preferred otherwise since her father had wished it. Whatever the truth might be, the fact seemed to make fortune hunters at least frequent. But one fact, as I have said, was patent—Miss Payne never flirted. Many argued the proof of her engagement from this; others instinctively read another cause in a certain vestal purity of the girl's countenance when in utter repose.

In the play of conversation it was charmingly vivacious and fascinating. Her crimson lips and soft black eyes, the white temples and raven hair, helped make up a face which, when fully seen, could never be forgotten. Certainly Launce Lisle thought so, coming upon it suddenly, for another brief week of his life, on a hurried business trip to New York.

It was just after Virginia became legal mistress of Granby. She was spending the winter in the city.

'I say, Launce,' said Peyton Lesley, 'you will see your betrothed to-night. She is to be at Madame Hyacinth's.'

Launce made no reply, but when he was alone with his sister, a very sweet woman, whom he dearly loved, he asked:

'Do you know Virginia Payne, Prue?'

Mrs. Roberts replied that she did.

'Do you like her?'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Roberts, with decision.

That was enough. Launce said no more. But at supper Virginia's name was again mentioned. He heard then that she never flirted.

He was conscious of dressing with unusual care for the evening's entertainment. Before he left the house he took from a trunk a photograph sent him by Virginia's father, some 12 years previously. It represented a slight child of eight, with soft, dark eyes, and a wealth of dark, curling hair. He had the pale child's image dimly in his mind, confused by the memory of the same at 16—a timid girl, trembling in her black dress—when, an hour later, he came face to face with Virginia, in her flush of youthful loveliness.

Mr. Israel, upon whose arm she leaned, welcomed him warmly.

'We are going back to Granby to-morrow. Come soon and visit us,' he said.

Launce did not know what words he used in accepting this invitation—the petite figure in white and gold confused him so; but he had arrived late, and Virginia and guardian were already going, and that was the end of the conversation. He mused over it, thinking that the lady was simply polite, and seemed indifferent simply because she was not so. At sight of the frank, steel-blue eyes, the firm, white brows shadowed by rings of fair hair, the finely chiseled mouth—all of which she remembered perfectly—her heart gave a traitorous leap and threatened so alarmingly to go over to the stranger that she swiftly summoned all her native caution. He did not love her, probably—perhaps never would; and she was very proud. Even her father's wish must be set aside before her rights as a woman to be preferred solely for herself.

But Launce went to Granby. I hardly know of anything on earth that would have kept him from going. Virginia had reigned mistress there only since the previous autumn, but her taste for what was artistic and beautiful had given the interior of the great mansion a striking charm. Lovely pictures leaned from the walls; graceful figures in bronze and marble graced shelves and niches; floors had been relaid in polished wood, and covered with rich skins and foreign rugs. And over this beautiful home reigned a presence the most beautiful he had ever seen, Launce thought. He talked, and rode and drove with Virginia, and she was sweet and gentle. But others talked and rode, and drove with her—sons and brothers of her neighbors whom she had known all her life—and she was sweet and gentle with them. There was Allan Stuart, Godfrey Grey and the Raeburn brothers—Launce could not see a bit of difference between her treatment of them and of himself. He pondered the matter at night, on a sleepless pillow, the moon looking at him through the silken curtains of the windows, that week at Granby. But Launce was a thoroughly manly fellow.

One day when they were out riding with a party of four others, he proposed making a cross cut through the woods to find a whip which he had lost there the day previous, and asked Virginia to accompany him.

'We will meet the others at the turnpike crossing,' he said.

Virginia turned her horse's head readily, all unsuspicious; but, when they were hid among the balsamic firs, she suddenly became aware of her companion's manner. A sudden bloom showed in her cheeks; she began herself the search for the whip.

'I do not care a picayune for the whip. I came this way, Virginia, that I might be alone with you for a moment.'

This did not tend to make the soft cheeks any less vivid, but Launce did not notice.

'I want to tell you something,' he went on, steadily, 'which you have heard from other men, I dare say, but it is nevertheless true from me. I have never in my life seen a woman who suits me as you do, Virginia; and it is not because of what your father wished and planned for us, but because of yourself. But while you are beautiful and attractive, there is nothing wonderful about me; and though I don't know why you should marry me, I wish you would. Not because of your father's wish, either.'

He had taken her hand, stopped the horses, and was looking into her face, with its downcast eyes and tremulous lips.

'Could you love me, Virginia?'

A dimple stirred the soft cheek.

'Perhaps.'

She never knew what startled her horse at that moment, but he shied at some object in the wood, nearly unseating her, and then flew like the wind down the path. Launce followed anxiously, but she had met the others of the party before he overtook her. There was no chance to see her alone again that day, and the next he had set for his departure. But she had confessed nothing, promised nothing, and he was, perhaps, less at ease than before his declaration.

There was company to entertain that day—among the number Tom Arlington. Launce had often heard him spoken of and did not wonder. He was a singularly handsome man, with a brilliant complexion, disheveled hair, curling silken beard, a blase air, and the *tout ensemble* of an artist. Launce looked critically at the rose-and-gold of Tom Arlington's make-up, and did not like him. This before he observed that his attentions to Virginia during the evening were very marked. She talked to him, played for him, sang with him. Poor Virginia! So near to being perfectly happy that she dared not contemplate it, she seized upon the first pretext for concealing her emotion. And that pretext, unfortunately was Tom Arlington.

"Alas! how easy the world goes wrong!
A kiss too much or a sigh too long,
And there follows a mist and a blinding rain,
And life is never the same again."

Launce remembered that Virginia 'did not flirt,' and though he struggled manfully against it, his heart sank like lead before the evening was through. So young, so sensitive, so susceptible to beauty and grace in others, was it likely that he would win her? No, no! he told himself, bitterly. He knew how, alone and unaided, he had battled with the stern realities of life, how he had conquered the temptations of early youth, and worked, out of the hardest and most adverse circumstances, a pure and noble life; but what did that go for with this charming and petted girl, who had ever laid among the roses and fed on the lilies of life? She was as likely—aye, far more likely—to be pleased with the artist, Tom Arlington!

He rose early from the night's troubled sleep, and went down into the garden of Granby. The great golden day lilies were in bloom, and the trees veiled with young green. Suddenly, on a rustic seat upon the terrace, he saw Tom Arlington. He was directly in his path; he could not avoid him without turning directly back, and so he walked on and saw what Tom had in his hand—a ribbon of pink silk, with a rose worked in silver thread upon one end. Now it chanced that Launce knew the ribbon very well. He had marked it knotted among the lace at Virginia's throat, and at sight of it his heart seemed suddenly to stop beating in his bosom. Desperation made him quick-witted and unsparing of himself.

'You have found a ribbon of Miss Payne's?' he asserted, with fine carelessness.

'No,' said Tom, laying it gently between the leaves of a book upon his knee. 'She gave it to me.'

Launce recollected again that Virginia 'never flirted.' He made no further effort to see her alone, but the next day departed from Granby.

Virginia never guessed all this, but before Launce's very wretched summer had passed she began to wonder that she did not hear from or see him again. He had gone back to England, but she knew that he was to return to America in September at least. She could not but think it natural that he should write to her all this time. But Launce was far from dreaming of such a thing. He was trying with all his might to forget her; he succeeded so ill, that at last he determined to visit Granby once more, and behold her betrothed, if not married, to Tom Arlington. He left his horse at the gate with a servant, and came quietly on foot up the avenue. The red leaves of the maples covering the ground made his steps soundless. Suddenly, among the trees, he saw a gray dress, and a man's elegant lounging figure. The latter leaned with a downcast and sullen face, against the trunk of a tree, his countenance and attitude in strong contrast to his costly dress and air of a pleasure-seeker. The man was Tom Arlington, and the lady Virginia in the act of turning toward the house.

'No,' he said, clearly, 'you cannot [illegible] displaying the ribbon I simply and unsuspiciously gave you as a bookmark—displaying it as a token from me—you have acted a falsehood which will never profit you.'

He muttered something.

'Forgive you? No! But I will certainly do my best to forget you,' she answered, and hurried away.

There were tears upon his cheek when Launce overtook her, but her blush of delight burned them away, and she gave him her hand.

'Virginia,' he said, 'I am here to repeat what I told you once. Will you say 'perhaps' again?'

'No,' she answered, with a deeper dimple and a brighter flush; 'now I will say 'certain.'

FIREMANIC HUMOR.

A short while ago the city of Dartmouth being about to purchase a steam fire engine, and being pressed to buy a Silsby, sent out a circular to the various fire chiefs in the United States asking information of the merits and work of the Silsby. Chief Little, of the Griffin fire department, showed us yesterday a pamphlet containing the replies to all the circulars. With one exception the replies were matter of fact, giving simply answers to questions. The exception was replies made by the chief of the fire department of Moberly, Missouri, which we republish:

'What is the population of your city?'

'Six thousand five hundred to seven thousand.'

'Is it hilly or flat?'

'Flat as a pancake—soil muddy.'

'Have you in use a Silsby steam fire engine?'

'Yes, we use it at city officers' funerals, also to pump out a cellar occasionally; hardly ever get it around in time for a fire.'

'Of what size?'

'Medium size in dry weather, but on a muddy night it is bigger than a house and as hard to move.'

'For how long have you been using it?'

'Five years, off and on.'

'Does it give general satisfaction?'

'Yes. Looks immense on parade.'

'What repairs has it required? Cost or nature of—'

'Required, considerable; received, none; cost, nil.'

'Is it easily handled by men, without horses?'

'No! You just bet it ain't. I've been there.'

'Would you advise the town of Dartmouth to purchase one? Population 4,000 to 5,000.

'No. Use buckets, and trust in Providence and fire insurance.'

'What size would you advise?'

'Common, 3 hoop, cedar.'

'What is the annual cost of maintenance for engine and hose?'

'We pay engineer $65 per month and he acts as extra police. Engineer don't get any repairs. Hose don't cost us anything, stand them off for it. You will find it a great saving to pay the engineer in city warrants.'

'Is there any other information you could give on the subject?'

'No. I don't believe there is. We are out of information and in a state of chronic inflammation. This town is strongly Democratic, and therefore water and water engines are not very popular. Have you tried the Bell Punch yet?'

FRIEND ALF:—The above information is tendered 'without money and without price'—only too happy to oblige you. Our fire company is a thing of the past, gone by, and by faith we can't see it at all.' Call again some evening. Ta, ta—McG.

A wasp found in the Yosemite Valley measured six inches from tip to tip of wings, and carried in its grip-sack a javelin three inches long. If that overgrown wasp were to come East and see how fluently a wasp only an inch long can ascend the trousers leg of a small boy and make him dance the racket, it would regret that it wasn't born a dwarf.

When a woman burns her finger she cries a little over it, and keeps the burn in good condition to show her husband when he comes home, and get sympathy. A man in the same condition will stick his digit in his mouth, kick over the office stool, swear at the boy and forget all about it. One is the effect of love; the other of business.

What does a woman care who wrote the declaration that made us free, so long as she can get a bustle for fifty cents?

Cabbage heads are solid, which is considerably more than some men can say for themselves.

How Long Man May Live.

It was Prof. Hufeland's opinion that the limit of possible human life might be set at two hundred years. This on the general principle that the life of a creature is eight times the years of its period of growth. That which is quickly formed quickly perishes, and the earlier complete development is reached the sooner bodily decay ensues. More women reach old age than men, but more men attain remarkable longevity than women. Some animals grow to be very old. Horned animals live shorter lives than those without horns, flies longer than tiny, and amphibious longer than those which inhabit the air. The voracious pike exists, it is said, to an age of one hundred and fifty years; the turtle is good for a hundred years more; and among birds the golden eagle is known to have lived nearly two hundred years, while the sly and sombre crow reaches the venerable age of a century. Passing up in the scale of life to man, and [illegible] pasian, in the year 76, there were one hundred and twenty-four men living in the limited area between the Appennines and the Po of one hundred years and upward, three of whom were one hundred and forty, and four over one hundred and thirty-five years old. Cicero's wife lived to the age of one hundred and three, and the Roman actress Luceja played in public as late as her one hundred and twelfth year.

Coming down to more recent times, the most notable authentic instance of great age is that of Henry Jenkins, of Yorkshire, England, who died in 1670, one hundred and sixty-nine years old. He was a fisherman, and at the age of one hundred easily swam across the rapid rivers. Another historic case is that of Thomas Parr, of Shropshire, a day laborer, who lived to the age of one hundred and fifty-two years. When more than one hundred and twenty he married his second wife, and till one hundred and thirty he could swing the scythe and wield the flail with the best of his fellow laborers. In his one hundred and fifty-second year Parr went up to London to exhibit himself to the king. It proved an unlucky visit, for, violating the abstemious habit of a century and a half, the old man feasted so freely on the royal victuals that he soon died, merely of a plethora. On examination, his internal organs proved to be in excellent condition, and there was no reason why he should not have lived much longer, save for this unfortunate taste of royal hospitality. Professor Hufeland's roll of centenarians includes many more remarkable cases, among them that of Mittlestedt, a Prussian soldier, who served sixty seven years under both Fredricks, fighting many battles and enduring much hard campaigning, and who, after all this, married successively three wives, the last when he was one hundred and ten years old, only two years before his death.

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.

By virtue of its age and value and previous associations, this little prayer has become a classic. It must be very ancient, for who can tell when or by whom it was written? Thousands, from the silver-haired pilgrim to the lisping infant, sink to nightly slumber murmuring the simple petition. It has trembled on the lips of the dying. One instance was that of an old saint of eighty-six years, whose mind had so failed that he could not recognize his own daughter. Very touching, says the relator, was the scene one night after retiring, as he called his daughter as if she were his mother, saying like a little child, 'Mother, come here by my bed and hear me say my prayers before I go to sleep.' She came near. He clasped his white, withered hands, and reverently said:

'Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep:
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take;'

then quietly fell asleep and woke in heaven.'

A distinguished judge, who many years ago died in extreme old age, said that his mother had taught the stanza to him in infancy, and that he never omitted it at night. John Quincy Adams made a similar assertion; and an old sea captain declared that, even before he became a decided Christian, he never forgot it on turning in at night. An eminent bishop, in addressing a Sunday School, said that every night since his mother taught it to him when a babe at her knee he was accustomed to repeat it on retiring.

There is an *addendum* (by whom unknown) which brings in the Intercessor, giving a distinctively Christian tone to the lines:

"And now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take,
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

From another unknown source is a companion prayer for morning, which may be welcome to some of your readers:

"Now I wake me out of sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before the eve,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul receive,
That I may with my Saviour live. Amen."

She asked him what she should get for supper, and he said he didn't care, so that it was a light one. But when she put on the table a plentiful supply of lighted candles he couldn't see the joke.

It was a funny little boy who, when he saw a dairyman feeding his cows salt, said he thought they didn't salt the butter till after it was churned.

A muzzle over a dog's mouth acts as a suspender to his pants.

The South.

The average Northern man knows very little of the obstacles which have been put in the way of prosperous reorganization at the South, the real difficulties under which the Southern people have labored—we mean the intelligent class and those who keep aloof from politics and politicians as much as they can, and whose interests are purely in a business way, both as regards their own and the country at large.

At the time reconstruction was organized the general government had the misfortune to send into Southern cities and States men who had no character and no purpose, except to secure the most dollars that they could, and men who were not particularly scrupulous as to the means they employed. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that some of the Southern people may have had reason to suspect somewhat the sincerity of the Northern people, but some papers prior to the war, and some participants [illegible] by any means the average Northern man, and did not represent in any way the Northern business man, nor the disposition of the Northern people toward the Southern. If the matter had ended here it was unfortunate enough, but it did not. These people, who were so fortunate for themselves to disgrace an official position, to a very great extent either formed or influenced public opinion at the North regarding matters at the South, and in this way they have done irreparable injury to both sections—injury which has been brought about by absolute and intentional misrepresentations—but it is certainly a matter of pleasure that, within the last twelve months, business men of the North have been carefully through the Southern States; they have asked questions, have investigated the authenticity of statements and assertions; they have looked carefully to ascertain who was making all these improvements in building, in manufacturing and mechanical establishments; who owned and managed the banks, and how they were managed. The general answer to all these interrogatories has given many of the Northern capitalists much confidence, so much so that they have invested in various enterprises through the Southern States probably several millions of dollars.

When the writer of this was in Richmond, during the fall of 1880, he was surprised to find that so much of the burnt portion of the city, which was the very heart of the business of the city, had been rebuilt, and with a class of buildings not second to those of Boston or New York. It is said that Secretary Blaine sometime during the past year was in Richmond, with a view to some investment. As Mr. Blaine was driven around he asked who built and who owned that building. He was told the business men of Richmond; names and facts were given. After looking carefully over the railroad and steamboat facilities, as well as the extensive improvements and changes which are going on, it is said that he and several other Northern men invested sums ranging from $25,000 to $150,000 each. By ways of argument, this is of more value than all the twaddle of sectional and political papers for the next twenty years.

The city of Richmond, without doubt, is to be immensely developed as a manufacturing and transportation center within the next ten years. There is not a city on the Atlantic coast that has better facilities, that is really more central as to time and distance, and with the improvements (the legislation for which is now perfected) finished, as they will be within the next few years, a twenty-four feet of water at low tide, safe from all coast harbor troubles, with a half dozen railroads centering—as was shown us, within five hundred feet of the general steamer wharf, in a union depot yet to be built,—coal wharves already lining one side of the river, so that any kind or amount of coal can be had by calling for it, trunk lines connecting with the western water and rail transportation, a place with a very low death-rate in comparison with the population,—there is nothing whatever to obstruct rapid progress in all industrial enterprises, or in those which partake of the nature of mercantile and commercial, of which transportation is one.

The city of Richmond is to-day trippling its facilities for water supply and for fire protection. They are laying out a park of a hundred acres, within easy reach of the central portion of the city; it has drainage so that no trouble can arise by any approximation to a proper sanitary arrangement; and, taken all in all, there is no place we have seen where manufacturers can with more certainty locate than in and about it. The water-power, which is readily utilizable, is in the very heart of the city, and to almost any reasonable extent inside of 40,000 horses; and there is no good reason why all these interests will not rapidly progress, and the matter of the deepening of the river will effect only ocean transportation and iron ship-building, all other interests can go forward with present facilities. And there is not a finer place in the country to live during the whole twelve months than in Richmond.—*Boston Journal of Commerce.*

Another well-planned attempt to take the life of the Czar has just been frustrated. An American cucumber was found in his morning mail.

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