

The Sunny South.

Devoted to the Interests of Boys and Girls.

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CAUGHT.

BY FIDELIA.

Devoted to E. A.

[CONTINUED.]

The face of the young man flushed with eager hope and ill-concealed expectation, as he waited for Edith's reply. And it came to him, with blushes innumerable and many droopings of her pretty curly head. Though why she should have shown such signs of confusion, Edith could never have told.

"Men are such tyrants. Of course, I don't wish to spoil your pleasure, though I have no doubt you would go *anyway*. So I suppose I will have to say—yes. That is, if you won't let those terrible horses run away with me."

"Selim and Ali are not so terrible as your fancy paints them, Edith. They shall conduct themselves with such propriety, that you will acknowledge them to be perfect models of well-tamed horses."

They were standing on the steps of Mr. Atwood's residence, and this conversation was being carried on. Harold had walked home with Edith from church, and even now was

looking back over his shoulder. "Lafayette," said he, "take care, or you will lose your prize." "Lafayette," said he, "take care, or you will lose your prize." "Lafayette," said he, "take care, or you will lose your prize."

Harold Manvers was descended from a line of noble ancestors, as any one might have known, from the kingly bearing and proud, erect manner in which he carried himself.

What added to this was a habit he had acquired of throwing back the well-formed head when moved in any way. His figure would have been pronounced too slender, if that had not been balanced by an unusual width of chest, and by the shoulders being what is generally termed "square." But his regal figure was admirably proportioned, and all pronounced Harold Manvers a fine-looking man.

Waving masses of soft brown hair were tossed back from a forehead, where intellect had stamped her unmistakable seal. The features were sharp in their outline, betokening the highest type of refinement and cultured tastes. A drooping moustache, well agreeing with the dark brown hair, shaded a mouth which was almost feminine in its delicate proportions, and yet possessing that firmness of outline which spoke of a resolute nature and characterized him as a man who would do and dare anything, and who could and would overcome any difficulty that stood in his way.

Now Edith was just the reverse of the firm Harold. A combination of all the grace of Tennyson's "lily maid"—"Elaine the fair the lovable; and the subtle witchery of the 'wily Vivien.'" A little below the medium size, she was a creature of life and animation; one, whose love any man—even such a man as Harold Manvers—might do to win.

Truth could beam from her "bonny blue eyes," as well as mirth could sparkle in their ever-varying yet ever-constant depths.

The shining ringlets and waves of rich golden hair reflected every stray sunbeam as it toyed with, and rested so lovingly in their

countless tangles. And that one particular feature of a woman, which will beautify the plainest face; her *mouth*, where the slightest variation in her feelings could be distinguished.

"Then her lips, so rich in blisses!

Sweet petitioner for kisses!

Pouring nest of bland persuasion,

Ripely smug Love's invasion."

No uncommon woman was Edith Atwood. Only an ordinary, sweet, loving girl,—just like us all, a true daughter of Eve.

But although standing on a moon lit piazza, bathed in silver radiance, and fanned by the gentlest of summer zephyrs, is very pleasant to the young and heedless, still—the careful old folks always remember that "it isn't good for you to be out in the evening air so late, my dear." So with a laughing "Yes, mamma; I'm coming now," and a hasty good-by to Harold, "my dear," was obliged to follow her prudent mother into the house, leaving Harold to himself—*just then*—very agreeable musings, and his solitary walk home.

Thursday morning dawned as clear and beautiful as the most exacting weather hunter could desire. Not a cloud dimmed the golden splendor of the day, and there was a sufficient quantity of blue in the sky, to furnish every Dutchman in Holland with a uniform of that color.

As Harold Manvers drove his magnificent thorough-breds up to Mr. Atwood's pretty city residence, he saw Edith waiting in the door, literally "on the tip-toe of expectancy."

A very lovely picture she made, her lithe, graceful figure showing to perfection against the dark frame-work of the doorway. Of course, gentlemen are not expected to be wise on the subject of a lady's outfit. But Harold did think the fresh, spotless material, dotted with blue forget-me-nots looked very cool and refreshing; and that the little bow of blue ribbon nestled very bewitchingly in the depths of Edith's sunny hair, and well matched her sapphirine eyes.

Just then, those eyes were dancing with the pleasure of the moment; for she fully appreciated the delight of almost flying past the square of pretty houses, not packed closely side by side, as our economical Northern neighbors arrange them, but glorying in the refreshing greenness and beauty of the ample lawns and gardens that surround our lovely Southern homes.

I say, let us be thankful that we have room and time enough to spare, in order to adorn and beautify even our city residences, and to train up our children and brothers and sisters to love the beautiful as well as the useful. Not to prize alone that which fills your pockets with money, men of the world and of this grasping age but that which fills our lives with sunshine, and gratifies our Southern passion for the beautiful. In all descriptions of the South, which have come under my notice, I have all ways smiled with delight and—I hope—a pardonable pride, when I read what they say of us—that there is scarce a house that is not surrounded by a flower-garden, *Beauty* of every description is natural to us.

Everybody knows what a picnic is like; so I will spare my readers a description of what is so familiar to all of them. Selim and Ali fully sustained their reputation for being well-behaved animals; and spirited as they were, even their Arab fire had to yield to the firm will they were so accustomed to obey; so nothing

occurred to mar the pleasure of the drive.

After the company had partaken of a bountiful repast, in true picnic style, on the lawn, which on that side of the house gradually sloped down to the water's edge, every one seemed seized with a sudden desire to ramble away in couples. Wherever any observer who had nothing better to do than to watch others, might turn, he would see one and then another pair stray off to the various romantic little nooks and corners, with which "Riverside" so abounded, and which are so delightful to the youthful tastes. As is the case on every similar occasion, every hundred yards or so, you might be in imminent danger of coming upon pairs of lovers, in all the various stages of progression, and who seemed perfectly oblivious to the fact that there are other (and *other's*) people in the world besides them.

Harold and Edith soon found themselves standing in the shade of a spreading cedar, which almost overhung the river. The gentle slope had here given place to an abrupt declivity—what would be commonly called "a steep hill." Not many feet from the foot of the hill, the placid river glided along, with the calm flow of a deep stream near its mouth. This bank was not all difficult ascent or descent, provided one was careful enough to watch every step. The grass, which had been the slight, and pressing, and made what the *bank* might denigrate a bold adventure, really a trivial undertaking to those who were guarded in their actions.

As I said, Harold and Edith were standing side by side, at the top of the hill, watching the silent beauty of the scenery. The intoxication of the moment was too much for even Harold Manvers' strength of character to resist easily. With the one his heart loved so truly, by his side; while he gazed at her eyes, softened by that far-off look that betokens a mind occupied with one thought alone, and that is so becoming to *some eyes*; while he seemed like a thirsty man, to drink in the new beauty of the face wearing a subdued look so rare to one of Edith's lively temperament, and which was caused by the quietness around; how could he restrain himself? How could he keep back the words that struggled so wildly to escape from his lips? Though he intended to control his language, he resolved that he would no longer deny himself the privilege of yielding to the sudden impetuosity that had of late, so often overcome his sober judgment.

He would speak no matter what might be the consequences.

"I know—I feel myself that all this is very beautiful, very charming to the senses.

But Edith, I want you to listen to me just one moment. Will you not?"

"Well, I am listening now. It was real cruel, Harold, to draw me away from all this beauty, and I don't know whether I will forgive you or not."

"Perhaps you will have more still to forgive, when I have told you what I will. Dear Edith, can't you see that I love you with my whole soul? I am not one to go into raptures, but I would like to hear you say from your heart, 'I love you, Harold.' Do you think you care for me enough to say that?"

How proud of him she felt! Standing—her prince among men—and asking her love as a precious gift, not demanding it as a right. And she loved him dearly; she knew it now, and she meant to tell him so, too.