

Love Finds A Way.

BY JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH.

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(Continued.)

"Trust them for doing that; but, as for her chasing the shadows out, that's more'n she can do. Malvina—more'n anybody can do. They are gathering thicker and blacker and heavier, and the storm will burst over that poor boy's head without one friendly voice to give him warning."

"Dear me, mother, how do you worry over Tom! He's all right. His father trusted Mr. Matthews if you don't. Give him warning of what?"

Miss Malvina performed as many of her daily duties within reach of her mother's ear trumpet as was practicable. It saved time and steps. Just then she was hurriedly buttoning up her stoniest pair of boots. They would be waiting for her up at the Hall. There was no end of things still to be done.

The stand for the band was to be decorated, and Jess would be wanting to know how many turkeys were to be dressed, and all that cut glass was to be washed. Glancing up from her low stool she saw something that made her stare curiously—marks of damp yellow clay on the soles of her mother's ample Oxford ties, which were crumpled conspicuously on the hassock in front of the chair. She fired an impatient protest through the old lady's ear trumpet.

"Mother, you have been walking about out of doors without your rubbers."

"Rubbers! Out of doors! Walking about! Who says so? Who saw me? What are you talking about, Malvina Spillman?"

Her voice was so shrill and her manner so excited that Miss Malvina looked at her in growing alarm. "Mother is certainly turning queer."

A loud she said soothingly: "Well, you've got a right to prowl around if you feel like it, mummer. I only don't like you to go out without overshoes. Good old ladies are getting scarce, and I want to keep mine a great many years to come."

"Oh, I'm all right, child! What made you think I had been out of the house?"

"Clay on the soles of your shoes, and your white flannel wrapper is all bedraggled about the hem, mother."

A look of intense cunning came into the faded eyes. The old woman chuckled audibly.

"Well, you are one for finding a body out. I thought I heard somebody at the chicken coop last night, Malvina."

"You heard, mother?"

"Oh, I'm not as deaf as you think I am nor as blind neither! Why, I could go from here up to the Hall the darkest night that ever came and go all over the house without stumbling a toe, if I wanted to."

"I hope you won't want to, mother."

Just then, with a swish of starched petticoats and a catching of hurried breath, Mrs. Deb Lyons presented herself in the cottage doorway. She had a roll of cloth in her hands.

"I just thought I would step over, Miss Malvina, and ask you if I might run up Johnny's breeches on your machine. Mine's got the very old mischief in it, and the child'll die outright or go plum crazy if he don't have a pair of new breeches to wear to the coming out party."

"Is your Johnny invited to the party?" asked "Mother" Spillman, with a slight infusion of sarcastic incredulity in her voice. "Not that he ain't good enough."

Mrs. Deb laughed frankly.

"After a fashion, he's invited. Miss

Ollie told him if he would fix up real nice he might pass lemonade around among the folks. He is in her Sunday school class, you know. She is a real sweet young lady. My, but what an affair it is going to be! They say Miss Ollie's dress is going to outshine anything Miss Jeanne Westover's fetched over from Paris."

"I'd be rather glad," said Malvina inconsequently, "to have you sit with mother while I'm gone." Then, with lowered tones: "She's been so restless lately. I don't know what she'll be up to when she's alone. I have put the machine in the back room so that I can sew when mother's asleep. Sometimes I think she hears the buzz."

"I'll watch her. Thanks for the machine. I guess you'll be on hand before I have to get back home to see about Deb's dinner."

"Oh, yes, long before then." And Johnny's mother passed into the shed room, closing the door between.

"I'm going now, mother. I won't stay any longer than I'm obliged to," said Malvina. She bent a few moments later and kissed the withered forehead. She omitted to announce Mrs. Lyons' occupancy of the shed room. Nothing irritated the old woman more than to be put under surveillance, and after that recent outburst discretion was advisable. To Mrs. Lyons Malvina spoke a final word of caution.

"She can't hear the machine in here nor see it neither unless she was to come across the room and look into the shed room for something. She ain't likely to do that. Sometimes her eyes do her a good turn. It might vex her if she thought you were watching her."

"All right," said Mrs. Lyons, dropping into a husky whisper. "I'll be as still as a mouse."

Left to herself, as she imagined, "Mother" Spillman developed an activity that made Mrs. Lyons forget all about her Johnny's breeches as she sat with her hand on the wheel and her eyes stretched wide with astonishment. Presently she stole from the machine and glued her eyes to a crevice in the wall.

Rising from her chair, the old woman began feebly shaking its cushions about with quick, impatient motions. Getting down on her knees, with outspread hands she felt over the entire surface of the chair. Evidently keen disappointment was the only result. Whatever she was looking for she did not find. With a sigh of discouragement she finally rose to her feet, a tall, gaunt, masculine figure, and stood with folded hands gazing down upon the vacant chair, muttering audibly:

"Lost, lost, lost! And it is my fault. Somebody has stolen it. Poor Tom, poor laddie, I'm the only friend you've got left! I'll find it, Tom, trust me. I promised your mother I'd be a friend to you, and I will be. I'll find it, Tom. I'll never give over till I do."

A fluttering sigh, and the tall form dropped back upon the cushions, the white head drooped upon the headrest, and "Mother" Spillman was soon lapped in sudden slumber, so profound and so prolonged that Miss Malvina had been home half an hour before she was aware of it.

Mrs. Lyons considered it her duty to report the strange episode of the cushion beating and the dreamy monologue to Miss Malvina, who looked anxious and perplexed.

"Mother has been acting so queer lately that I think I'll have the doctor up to see her after all this excitement is over."

"I surely would if she was my mother," said Mrs. Lyons, "and the sooner the better," having ministered which dubious comfort she folded Johnny's completed breeches in a tight little bundle and trotted briskly home to see about Deb's dinner.

Miss Malvina was glad to think the excitement would all be over in two days from that time. She was neglecting her mother and leaving her too much time to brood in. Then she tried on her new gown again.

The black silk, trimmed with real lace and jet, in which she was to help Ollie receive had been hanging in her closet for two weeks. Mr. Matthews had presented it. Miss Mally had never owned anything nearly approaching it in point of elegance. She would have been ashamed for any one to know how often she had tried it on, "so that I shan't feel too new to it," she told herself each time, with a little apologetic laugh.

The last two days of preparation sped by on wings, full to the very brim of excitement and triumph.

"Everything is just perfectly lovely!" said Olivia, dancing into her fa-

ther's presence on the great day, arrayed for conquest. He held her at arm's length, looking her over admiringly. From the crown



She felt over the entire surface of the chair, of her shining head to the tips of the pink satin slippers peeping from beneath her chiffon ruffles she satisfied him utterly.

"Is it all as you wanted it, my love, my precious one?"

"Everything, papa, everything. It looks like fairyland, and Titania could not be happier than I would be—if—" "An 'if' already? But wait."

With one arm around her slim waist he drew her into the back parlor, where a long, old-fashioned mirror was built into the space between two windows. From the marble slab supporting it he took a case of faded blue velvet. From it he took a string of pearls, which he clasped about the girl's neck himself.

Ollie gazed at the tableau he and she made in the long mirror with glowing eyes. She knew herself beautiful. It made her happy.

(To be Continued.)

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