

Love Finds A Way.

BY JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH.

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(Continued.)

"My father trusted him, saw him right loyally (he flung the words at her angrily with help from the trumpet), trusted him utterly and always. They were like brothers. From my earliest childhood I have had Mr. Matthews held up to me as an exemplar, a man of probity and good judgment. You must not slander my guardian in my presence, 'Mother' Spillman. I can't allow it. Excuse me if I seem rude."

"I see, I see! He has bewitched you as he bewitched your father before you and his sister before him. If one should come back from the dead to warn you, it would do no good, no good, Thomas."

Tom recoiled with a nervous laugh, a poor assumption of ease. The flowers wrapped about his father's letter, the marked passage in his father's Bible, the dimly described figure bending over his father's desk, all rushed into his mind clamoring for recognition as celestial messengers whom he had treated with scant courtesy. He took refuge in levity.

"Oh, come now, 'Mother' Spillman! I have great respect for spooks and am sure I should never dare to treat one with disrespect. But a mere mortal is quite another thing. It would not be an easy task for any one in the town to convince me that my guardian was other than the high toned gentleman and clear headed business man my father's selection of him as a friend and my guardian proves him. I think I can safely intrust my affairs to him until I am ready to take the helm myself."

At which the old woman's wrath flamed out fiercely. Tom had risen from the hassock while speaking. It was time for him to go on to the Matthews. 'Mother' Spillman rose, too, confronting him majestically. She stretched out one palsied hand imperiously.

"Don't speak of Horace Matthews and Rufus Broxton in the same breath, at least not in my presence. Don't couple thoughts of them in your young soul. It is desecration. I am wasting my breath. My words are falling on deaf ears. But the time may come when you will ask in bitterness of spirit why no one warned you against Horace Matthews. It shall not be on my conscience that I was too great a coward to do it. I tell you, Thomas Broxton—"

"Mother!"

Miss Malvina stood in the doorway regarding her mother angrily. The loud tones of the quavering old voice had carried beyond the front gate. The imprecation that was ready to be hurled at the lawyer's head sunk into a plaintive whine.

"They are all against me. Everybody's for him. Even my own child is ready to revile me for Horace Matthews."

Tom stood looking from one to the other of his two old friends with pitying eyes. Rumor had informed him that "Mother" Spillman was "getting queer," but he had no idea that the wreck of her mind had progressed so far.

Miss Malvina touched her own forehead significantly. Tom nodded his comprehension. He took up his hat. Malvina followed to the gate.

"Tom, dear, of course you will forget every word she said against Mr. Matthews. I didn't hear her, but I saw her mania. It's nothing but a—"

"Tom, I can't fancy what ever

has given her poor, feeble brain such a twist in that direction. She's gone cranky—I can't deny it—poor dear! Everybody knows Mr. Matthews is just above suspicion of any sort, Tom."

Tom said "Of course," with a twinge of self reproach for having even listened to anything to the contrary, and rode away with his big heart as full of commiseration for the mother and daughter as it was empty of the suspicion the old woman had tried to pour into it.

CHAPTER VIII. AN ACCIDENT.

Fixing a coldly rebuking eye upon the moody young face opposite him, Mr. Matthews tapped the library table impatiently with a paper cutter.

"I am afraid, Thomas, you are not giving me your undivided attention." And Tom, blushing guiltily, said he was afraid he was not. He tried to make amends by staring stolidly at the map of Europe which lay spread out on the table between him and his guardian. The ivory paper cutter once more resumed its peregrinations.

He could command his eyes and his ears even if his heart had gone astray. By planting his elbows on the table and firmly clamping his jaws between both hands he secured the attention of those useful organs and put them entirely at his guardian's service. But his heart and brains were another matter. Both played truant and absolutely refused to be drawn into consideration of this proposed tour of foreign parts. His day was proving distinctly disappointing, but he need not advertise that fact to all the world. With dull ears he heard his guardian's voice.

"Now, when your dear father and I projected this identical tour our intention was to go directly to Paris"—the paper cutter halted directly over the black spot standing for that fascinating metropolis—"and from there—"

With rebellion in his heart Tom was summing up his grievances. Olivia had not emerged promptly on his arrival. Her long delay had the effect of making him feel crudely premature and not eagerly welcome. All the sparkle had been blown off the day by her tarrying. Her father excused her on the score of a headache, superinduced by loss of rest. When she did appear, however, cool and fresh in her crisp, pretty house gown, with shining eyes and red ripe lips, it was impossible to accept that fiction of a headache.

"We planned to remain in Paris six weeks on our first visit, confining ourselves principally to the art galleries and the places of historic interest. You see that was or would have been just after the days of the commune."

Tom's ears reported his guardian's words, and when Olivia did come his heart complained. He had gone forward eagerly to meet her, almost ardently. She must have read all his adoring thoughts in his burning eyes and flushing cheeks. His telltale cheeks had gone flaming hot at sight of her. She had smiled at him as indulgently as if he had been a young spaniel flisking at her heels, and for the brief space of time lapsing between his coming and the summons to dinner she had patronized him so openly that he had successfully imposed upon him an uncomfortable sense of extreme juvenility. He gnawed his budding mustache in impotent rage.

"Poor, dear Rufus!" his guardian droned. "He had the making of a fine artist in him. Doubtless that six weeks in Paris would have been most profitably spent by us. From Paris we meant to go by easy stages"—here the paper cutter ambled erratically over the map, descriptive of the easy stages—"until we reached Florence—Florence, the home of classic art, the scene of immortal Savonarola's unappreciated efforts and martyrdom."

What a finished young lady the pretty little thing had blossomed into on the strength of a debut! He had tried to talk to her of the future, giving it a tinge of common interest—hers, his, theirs. She had persisted in questioning him, with a matronly air of superior age, about his studies and his wardrobe and his physical condition. He had alluded to his guardian's wish that he should travel and intimated that half a dozen words from her adverse to the project would settle his mind permanently. No power on earth could make him put the sea between her and him if she would bid him stay.

Instead she had wrinkled her pretty brows sagely and said: "Yes, papa and I talked all that over before you came home, Tom, dear. It is really the right thing for you to do. A man is so crude, so incomplete, you know, until he has seen something of the world, until he has measured himself by oth-

er standards. Now, there is Mr. West-

Tom stared at the map of Europe with hot cheeks. Reason convicted him of having acted very like a fool at that juncture.

"Father or son?" he asked bluntly.

"Son, of course," Olivia had answered sweetly. "He is only three years older than you, Tom, dear, but he is so polished, so cultivated, so broad, entirely owing to travel, you see."

"I admit his perfections," Tom had snapped with the rudeness of an untraveled donkey.

"I like him immensely," Olivia had reported, with arched eyebrows and frosty emphasis, which had made Tom rejoice in the summons to the dining room. He had followed his lofty young hostess in meek silence.

He wondered if she would pin a napkin about his neck and cut up his food for him. She was assuming such vastly superior airs he was prepared for anything, everything. He was ready to snarl at everybody. His lovely vision was fading behind a bank of dark, leaden clouds.

Olivia looked at him furtively once or twice during the rather constrained meal. She wished her father had not thought it necessary to warn her against Tom's "boyish foolishness." It had made everything so difficult, so awkward, and it was "spoilng the poor dear's holiday." But "papa had said" he would be seriously angered if she allowed Tom to pay her any sort of loverlike attentions.

And so the awkward dinner had dragged its slow length from soup to coffee, and Olivia had not followed the men into the library, as Tom had fondly hoped she would.

(To be Continued.)

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