

QUAINT COURTSHIPS

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Quaint courtships by William Dean Howells & Henry Mills Alden

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WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS & HENRY MILLS ALDEN

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Harper's Nouvelles

EDITED BY
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS
AND
HENRY MILLS ALDEN



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MARGARET DELAND

AN ENCORE

NORMAN DUNCAN

*A ROMANCE OF WHOOPING
HARBOR*

MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN

HYACINTHUS

SEWELL FORD

JANE'S GRAY EYES

HERMAN WHITAKER

A STIFF CONDITION

MAY HARRIS

*IN THE INTERESTS OF
CHRISTOPHER*

FRANCIS WILLING WHARTON

THE WRONG DOOR

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

BRAYBRIDGE'S OFFER

ELIA W. PEATTIE

THE RUBAIYAT AND THE LINER

ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL

THE MINISTER



Introduction

To the perverse all courtships probably are quaint; but if ever human nature may be allowed the full range of originality, it may very well be in the exciting and very personal moments of making love. Our own peculiar social structure, in which the sexes have so much innocent freedom, and youth is left almost entirely to its own devices in the arrangement of double happiness, is so favorable to the expression of character at these supreme moments, that it is wonderful there is so little which is idiosyncratic in our wooings. They tend rather to a type, very simple, very normal, and most people get married for the reason that they are in love, as if it were the most matter-of-course affair of life. They find the fact of being in love so entirely satisfying to the ideal, that they seek nothing adventitious from circumstance to heighten their tremendous consciousness.

Yet, here and there people, even American people, are so placed that they take from the situation a color of eccentricity, if they impart none to it, and the old, old story, which we all wish to have end well, zigzags to a fortunate close past juts and angles of individuality which the heroes and heroines have not willingly or wittingly thrown out. They would have chosen to arrive smoothly and uneventfully at the goal, as by far the greater majority do; and probably if they are aware of looking quaint to others in their progress, they do not like it. But it is this peculiar difference which renders them interesting and charming to the spectator. If we all love a lover, as Emerson says, it is not because of his selfish happiness, but because of the odd and unexpected chances which for the time exalt him above our experience, and endear him to our eager sympathies. In life one cannot perhaps have too little romance in affairs of the heart, or in literature too much; and in either one may be as quaint as one pleases in such affairs without being ridiculous.

W. D. H.

An Encore

BY MARGARET DELAND.

ACCORDING to Old Chester, to be romantic was just one shade less reprehensible than to put on airs. Captain Alfred Price, in all his seventy years, had never been guilty of *airs*, but certainly he had something to answer for in the way of romance.

However, in the days when we children used to see him pounding up the street from the post-office, reading, as he walked, a newspaper held at arm's length in front of him, he was far enough from romance. He was seventy years old, he weighed over two hundred pounds, his big head was covered with a shock of grizzled red hair; his pleasures consisted in polishing his old sextant and playing on a small mouth-harmonicon. As to his vices, it was no secret that he kept a fat black bottle in the chimney-closet in his own room; added to this, he swore strange oaths about his grandmother's nightcap.

"He used to blaspheme," his daughter-in-law said, "but I said, 'Not in my presence, if you please!' So now he just says this foolish thing about a night-cap." Mrs. Drayton said that this reform would be one of the jewels in Mrs. Cyrus Price's crown; and added that she prayed that some day the Captain would give up tobacco and rum. "I am a poor, feeble creature," said Mrs. Drayton; "I cannot do much for my fellow men in active mission-work. But I give my prayers." However, neither Mrs. Drayton's prayers nor Mrs. Cyrus's active mission-work had done more than mitigate the blasphemy; the "rum" (which was good Monongahela whiskey) was still on hand; and as for tobacco, except when sleeping, eating, playing on his harmonicon, or dozing through one of Dr. Lavendar's sermons, the Captain smoked every moment, the ashes of his pipe or cigar falling unheeded on a vast and wrinkled expanse of waistcoat.

No; he was not a romantic object. But we girls, watching him stump past the schoolroom window to the post-office, used to whisper to each other, "Just think! *he eloped.*"

There was romance for you!

To be sure, the elopement had not quite