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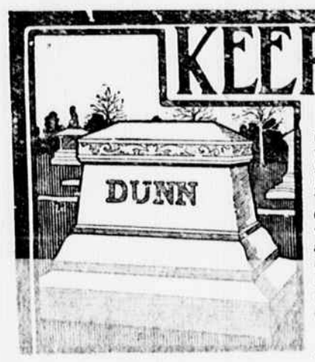

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A. S. ABEL COMPANY
Publishers and Proprietors,
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SARAH'S YOUNG MAN.

Sarah Blake was neither very young nor very beautiful, but her father owned the best and biggest farm in Horley, and being an only child, she was accounted an eligible match in thrifty circles.

Dick Sanders and Ted Brant were rival suitors for her hand. She had but to say the word which of them she'd have; but it was just that which made her hesitate—there was so little choice between them.

Such delays are always dangerous. While Sarah wavered, uncertain which to hold and which to let go her captives, both at once, slipped the leash.

They might have pleaded that they had done no worse than others. For when Jenny Allen's father came with his handsome daughter to dwell in Horley, there was a general flocking of the swains about the shrine of the new idol, and Ted and Dick only followed the rest.

But Sarah Blake was not a woman to view a lover's defection lightly. Nor did it weaken her resentment to divide it between the two. She had quite sufficient for both; and it being uncertain which of them she would have chosen, in meting out her anger she gave each the disadvantage of the doubt.

Jenny Allen was civil and polite to all without showing any particular preference to any. Dick Sanders and Ted Brant were foremost among her admirers! Indeed, the others stood a good deal in awe of them and hung back, for they were a pair of rather churlish, brawny chaps, little inclined to brook competition, and whose ill will few cared to court. Between themselves the question of which should yield was fast reaching a point where its settlement by "wager of battle" seemed inevitable, when things took a turn which put a new face on affairs.

Will Harvey came from the city to spend his vacation at his aunt's in Horley. One day while sauntering, rod in hand, along the charming little river that wound through the valley, Will unexpectedly came on something that drove all thought of fishing completely out of his head.

On a mossy bank, shaded by overhanging boughs, sat a young girl deep in the pages of a book. Her profile, which was towards him, presented an almost perfect contour. The shower of glossy ringlets which fell upon her beautiful neck and shoulders stole a new tinge from every shifting glimmer of light sifted through the undulating leaves. Her cheeks would pale and flush and her eyes flash and melt by turns with the varied emotions called up by what she read.

Will would have gladly remained a silent spectator of a sight so lovely, but he felt that he had no right to do so.

Advancing in a manner to attract the girl's attention, he raised his hat and asked some commonplace questions about certain localities in the neighborhood. These answered in a voice so musical that it made his heart flutter, he found more things to ask about, till by degrees a conversation sprung up which lasted till the young lady, suddenly remembering how long it had continued, with a blush caught up her gypsy hat, bade him a pleasant good day and tripped lightly away.

Thus began the acquaintance of Will Harvey and Jenny Allen. But it did not end there. For if Will Harvey's first stolen glimpse of Jenny settled her title, in his eyes, to be called the loveliest creature in the world, it is quite as certain that her first impressions of the handsome stranger were hardly less exalted.

A formal introduction soon followed, and in a short time Will and Jenny were so constantly together that the rural gossips began to talk of their engagement as a thing quite settled.

This was wormwood to Dick Sanders and Ted Brant. They began to look askance at Will Harvey, and were only restrained from picking an open quarrel with him by reflecting that he was a trim built, wiry fellow, who mightn't be so easy to handle, to say nothing of the plucky look there was in his keen, dark eyes.

One day as Dick was strolling down the lane, sulking as usual over his bad fortune, he met Sarah Blake.

He felt confused and awkward. He knew Sarah had a valorous tongue, and he had no ground to expect any mercy. To his surprise, however, she met his clumsy greeting graciously, and for the time seemed disposed to forget past grievances.

"I've news," she said, "news you'd give a good deal to know."

"What is it, Sally?" he asked coaxingly.

"Oh, never mind."

"Come, Sally, for old acquaintance sake."

Was it a smile or a scowl she gave him then? Dick wasn't sure and was beginning to tremble again when Sarah resumed her gracious mien:

"Well, seeing it's you," she said, "I don't mind telling. Jenny Allen is going to elope with Will Harvey tonight. He's to be at her father's back garden at twelve o'clock, his face covered with a black mask. When he gives a low whistle, thrice repeated, she's to come out and then they'll flit together. Here are all the details in a note in her own hand which I picked up after seeing it drop from Will Harvey's pocket as he cantered down the road half an hour since. Read for yourself."

Dick ground his teeth as his eye ran over the lines which confirmed every word of Sarah's statement.

"What are you going to do?" asked Sarah with a provoking coolness that roused Dick's fury.

"Do?" he growled. "I'd pommel the villian if I could only lay hands on him!"

"I can put you on a better plan."

"What is it?"

"Disguise yourself as the letter indicates. Be on the spot a little before the time. Give the concerted signal, and when the lady comes flit with her yourself. Ten to one, when she sees the trap she's in, she'll marry you to avoid exposure. At any rate you'll earn her father's gratitude by thwarting Harvey's plot."

"But suppose Harvey, too, comes before the time and we meet at the gate?"

"Knock him down, beat him senseless, give the signal and get away with the prize before he comes to."

"I'll do it!" cried Dick, his eyes flashing fiercely. "Good by Sally; I'll have the news for you when we next meet!"

It lacked a quarter to twelve when Dick Sanders, his face masked, stole up to Mr. Allen's garden gate. At the same moment a man similarly disguised approached by another path. For an instant the pair confronted each other. Then both sprang forward, striking out with might and main. Blows rained thick and fast. The combatants were well matched. After a mutual hammering for ten minutes, without advantage on either side, they grappled and went down together. Then they scuffled and bit and scratched till they rolled apart from sheer exhaustion and lay glaring at each other in helpless rage. Both their masks were tore in tatters, and as the bright moonlight beamed down upon their battered faces each uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Ted Brant!" panted the one.

"Dick Sanders," gasped the other.

"I thought it was that scoundrel Harvey!" replied Dick.

"So did I!" rejoined Ted.

A brief comparison of notes disclosed that Sarah Blake, after her interview with Dick, had had a similar one with Ted, the result being as above narrated, a desperate encounter in which each thought he was pommeling away at Will Harvey. The letter, we need hardly say, was the the amiable Sarah's own production.

Before Dick and Ted were presentabl again Will Harvey and Jenny Allen were happily married with the full consent of the latter's father, who, indeed, had never opposed the match.

Sarah Blake is still a maiden.—The World.

STATE DISPENSARY BOARD, CAROLINA HELD UP BY COURT.

ORDERED BY JUDGE PRITCHARD TO HOLD FUND INTACT.

GENERAL CREDITORS BILL.

COURTS, NOT STATE BOARD, TO BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO PASS UPON VALIDITY OF CLAIMS THAT ARE BEING ASSERTED.

Asheville, N. C. Dec. 21.—As the result of a creditors' bill filed today, on which Judge Pritchard issued an injunction, claims involving several hundred thousand dollars against the old state dispensary in South Carolina, are involved and a big legal fight will ensue in the federal court.

The bill was filed in Charleston yesterday, but the afternoon before it was presented to Judge Pritchard and an injunction issued restraining the state board, which is charged with the duty of distributing the funds from the old dispensary machine, from paying out any money either to individuals or into the state treasury, as was threatened, until further orders. It is not known what funds are on hand, but the claims will reach an aggreate of several hundreds of thousands, it is said.

The bill was filed on behalf of the Wilson Distilling Company but is a general creditor's bill.