

A Romance of the Early Days.

Among the many legends of our province there are none more prevalent than one which had its beginning a little more than a half-century ago. The hero, John Carey, who dwelt in a very romantic and prosperous section of Prince Edward Island, was then in the prime of life. He had been living alone for some time, but had just completed all preparations to adorn his comfortable dwelling with a charming bride.

One beautiful evening in June as he strolled along the shore with his most intimate companion, Terry Coyle, he seemed to be in deep thought. Terry was silently drinking in the beauty of the evening. The sun was slowly disappearing behind the western hills, casting beautiful reflections in the sky. There was not a sound to disturb the stillness, save the rippling of the waves, as they broke on the shore, and the twittering of the birds as they sang their hymns to the departing day. Suddenly John broke the deep silence.

"Terry," he said, "will you do me a favor one of these days?"

"If I can," responded the other, "I will do so."

"Well—I've been thinking of getting married—"

"To whom, pray?" interrupted Terry in a very surprised tone.

"Oh, to an old friend of mine, Terry. You do not know her. Her name is Alice Conway and she lives in K—."

"Very good indeed, John, that's what you should have done long ago. I am very glad to hear such good news."

"Yes, Terry, I should have married earlier, but you know I never had the courage."

He then continued to describe his friendship days with his intended bride and explained all the arrangements that had been made, not forgetting to mention in detail what the different persons concerned had said on various occasions. The conversation became so interesting that both had forgotten about the favor that John had asked. At length, however, Terry, growing

anxious to know who was to be groomsman, inquired concerning the matter.

"That's just the favor I wished to ask of you," replied John.

"All right," answered Terry, "I am very pleased to be so honored by you".

The early part of the following Saturday afternoon found them well on their way to K—. They arrived at the bride's home about four o'clock and after hearty greetings had passed among all, the merry-making began. It was customary in those days to begin celebrating, about three days before the marriage, and accordingly quite a number of guests had already assembled.

Somewhat later in the evening, our hero became quite exhilarated and unconsciously fell under the influence of Bacchus rather than of Cupid. The latter, ever jealous, directed his winged arrows to the heart of Terry, so that he became quite interested in John's fiancée. After they had been talking together for some time, John and Mr. Conway joined their company. The swaying groom made many apologies, which under his present condition, were very disgusting to Alice. When she could no longer bear his attentions she said, half in anger and half in sorrow:

"Get away! I am not going to marry you."

Then a storm of bitter words followed from both, and Terry, really interested in John's welfare, thought it better to take him to his room and leave Mr. Conway to talk to his daughter.

"No! I will not marry him," was the only reply that she would give to her father's persuasive words, and he knew from experience that, with her, threats were of no avail.

Terry soon reappeared while John wandered far into the land of dreams. The former listened for a time to Mr. Conway and his daughter. Presently he said:

"Miss Conway this will never do. It would be too bad to have no wedding and let all the guests depart——"

"Certainly not," interrupted her father. "It would be scandalous. Everyone will know of it, and it would be a black mark on John's life for the rest of his days and even more so on your own."

"I don't care!" replied Alice in the same stubborn tone. "I am not going to marry him and be miserable and unhappy for the rest of my days."

"As you wish, daughter," answered her father in a tone of despair mingled with anger.

"Well, this is too bad," began Terry. "It is a shame to have the wedding stop. Will you not marry him, Miss Conway?"

"No! I will not do so. I am determined not to marry him."

"Well then," replied Terry in a hesitating voice, "since you are not going to marry him, I do not think that I'd be taking any advantage of him or doing him any wrong by asking you to marry me."

As the proposal was quite unexpected Alice seemed to consider it a very good proposition and, after a moment, replied:

"No! you are not doing him any harm, for I certainly will not marry him. It makes no difference to him what I do."

"Well, what about me?" began Terry. "Shall I ask your father?"

"My daughter's business is no longer mine. She can do as she pleases," Mr. Conway replied in a sarcastic tone which suggested that the proposition was a ridiculous one.

Alice did not appear to hear her father's words. The proposal appealed very strongly to her. Perhaps if she had had time to consider the matter, she would have refused; but under present circumstances she replied:

"Since it is my own business, Mr. Coyle, I will marry you and I thank you for your proposal."

"I, too, am happy for your kind reply," answered Terry.

Mr. Conway left the room somewhat angry yet not altogether displeased. Terry and Alice had many things to discuss and therefore talked until after midnight. When Terry was alone in his room, many strange thoughts ran through his

mind. He had come down to act as groomsman, yet he would return with a bride. He thought that John would doubtlessly blame him for it all. Then there was the fear also that perhaps Alice might change her mind and renew her promises to John.

All this while, John was enjoying peaceful slumber and when he awoke next morning, his mind was quite clear and he remembered the occurrences of the previous night. Of course he was still ignorant of what had taken place after he had retired. He arose quickly and soon appeared in the dining-room. Alice was busily engaged in helping to prepare breakfast, yet she did not fail to notice how refreshed John appeared, and how handsome he looked in his new suit of homespun. Both merely spoke and then remained silent. John would occasionally steal looks at Alice as he ate his breakfast, wondering the while if she were yet angry with him. She soon noticed his behaviour and felt that she should tell him all that had occurred the previous night.

Poor John was filled with sorrow, but he spoke not an angry word. As he arose to go he held out his hand to her saying:

"Let us part as friends. You have done right my dear girl, and you have taught me the best lesson I've ever learned. That you and Tarry may be forever happy is the wish of one unworthy of you. Good-bye."

Then the door closed behind him and in a few minutes the sound of his carriage wheels died away in the distance. Alice could not help watching him until he disappeared around the bend in the road and then his true worth dawned upon her. His parting words were yet ringing in her ears, and in vain she tried to check the tears as they flowed down her ruddy cheeks. She was truly sorry but realized that it was now too late to repair the injury that was wrought by her cruel words. He was gone from her forever.

As we follow John, the hardest of hearts cannot fail to feel a touch of sympathy for him. How he had planned to have

Alice with him on the way to church and to have the wedding announced that very Sunday! Now all his fond hopes were shattered. He truly realized that he should settle down as soon as possible, and since Alice was gone, he cared not whom he should marry. He finally came to the conclusion that he would not go home alone.

Having arrived at the church, he looked in vain for one familiar face. When service was over, however, a gentleman came up to him and after introducing himself, extended John an invitation to dinner which he gladly accepted.

In the course of the afternoon the conversation changed from a discussion of various topics to that of the young people of the parish, and John seized the opportunity to get the names of some of the most popular young ladies. He now felt that the purpose of his visit here, had been attained and accordingly rose to go; but he could not refuse the kind entreaties of Mr. Trainor and his hospitable wife to remain with them for the night. Next morning, however, he bade them good-bye and as they believed, set out for home.

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On Wednesday morning as the parishioners of K—gathered to attend the wedding of Terry and Alice, they were not a little surprised to see our hero, John, gallantly lead his handsome bride, Catherine Kelly, to the rail. He had met her at her home whither he had gone directly from Mr. Trainor's and had persuaded her to marry him. Both couples were united in the holy bonds of matrimony and of their success in life it is sufficient to say that many of their children and grandchildren are now industrious and respected citizens of our province.

B. L. W. '22.

