

A Partner with Capital

I

No man ever received that delicate little piece of feminine mechanism universally designated “the mitten”¹ that he did not come to the conclusion that its donor was entirely destitute of a heart; it appearing to him altogether incredible that having one she could possibly refuse to deliver it over to his keeping on demand.

Practical experiment had proved to the entire satisfaction of several gentlemen who might be named that Clara Belmont was utterly and hopelessly destitute of the desirable organ. It was a great pity! Such a splendid woman! Such glorious black eyes! Such magnificent hair! Such ___-like grace and dignity! Such a mind! Ah! That was the difficulty—that mind. Whoever heard of a woman so rich as to be possessor of both a mind and heart? An anomaly universally voted impossible.

And so one after another became confirmed in the opinion that Clara was that psychological phenomenon, that beautiful and rare monstrosity—a woman without a heart. I wonder whether, if any of them had overheard her confidential chat with Minnie Lancing, the day after Mrs. Monteith’s reception, they would have understood her any better?

“Sighing for more hearts to conquer that you look so solemn?” said Minnie **[end of page 1]** playfully. “O, but didn’t I envy you last night! What wouldn’t I give to have lawyers, bankers, and merchants devoting themselves to me; and there you stood as cool and indifferent—as if they had been so many wooden images! Poor me! I should have felt quite rich with only Will Norton at my side, if I hadn’t seen you continually surrounded by an admiring throng! I didn’t dance but twice, and I verily believe you had half a dozen invitations for every set.”

“So that’s your dream of bliss—to be admired by the gentlemen and receive a great many invitations to dance! Really, Minnie, you’re aspiring!”

“Well, I don’t care what you say, Clara, I will own that this kind of life is fascinating to me. It is so new. I do believe my head, which was never as sound as yours, would be completely turned if I were in your situation. To have all the money I want to spend, and then to be beautiful and admired—O would it all be glorious!”

“My dear little coz, it isn’t glorious at all; on the contrary, it is insufferably stupid. What does it all amount to? You spend your evenings in uncomfortable clothes that you’re in constant fear of treading on or spotting, talk to uninteresting people that you don’t care a pin for, and come home tired and disgusted, to sleep half the next day, **[end of page 2]** and spend the other half in getting yourself up for something else equally stupid.”

¹ Editor’s note ☺: “To give the mitten to” means “to dismiss as an unwelcome suitor” or to reject as a lover. See Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary at 1152 (1979).

“I must say you’re the strangest girl, Clara Belmont. If you’d been laying yourself out to captivate someone, and hadn’t succeeded, I can see that you might feel dissatisfied. But here you have everything anyone can think of, and all masculinity in abject submission at your feet, and you’re sublimely indifferent to the whole and quite disgusted with the world! I do believe now that’s the secret of your power! That calm indifference of yours—I wish I had it! Don’t suppose I could put it on. I never could put on anything!” added Minnie reflectively.

“Who’d imagine my innocent little country cousin, with her quick blue eyes and round childish face, was so strongly inclined to coquetry? Truly, Minnie, I’m shocked at you with your good sensible bringing up! I’m afraid city life is corrupting you.”

“Now, do you know, I believe it is just because I was brought up so strict, in such steady, quiet, old-fashioned ways, that I have a longing for gay fashionable life? I haven’t the peculiar talent for a coquette. Nor the beauty—but O, if I had wouldn’t I carry on a brilliant campaign and make conquests? They say it’s vain and frivolous for girls to spend their time that way. But I don’t think so. There is a heroic element in it. Don’t all the **[end of page 3]** world admire Caesar and Napoleon? Why? Because they conquered nations? Now I say it requires as much power and capacity to conquer a heart as to take a city, and more, because invisible forces are more subtle and difficult to deal with and require more wisdom and stratagem than material ones, and so a successful flirt is more worthy of admiration than a successful general.”

“Perhaps so, but you see I don’t consider either worthy of admiration, and don’t imagine that either is made materially happy by the gratification of an inordinate love of power.”

“What makes them work for it then? And why do you go on attending parties and making yourself attractive and making conquests for, if you don’t enjoy it?”

“I don’t know. One must have some object and I don’t see anything else. People generally seem to be drifting along in a very aimless way, living for no particular reason excepting to eat, drink, and wear nice clothes. Men labor to get fine establishments, and women consider themselves fortunate in being invited to share them; and follow a long dull life in which the main object of the pair is to maintain their position in society, and see their children well started on the same track; and so on from generation to generation. Now, what does **[end of page 4]** it all amount to? What’s the use. The only pleasure I can see in life is to have pleasure when you’re a girl, and that doesn’t pay. I’ve reached the point that Solomon had when he wrote Ecclesiastics—which is the only book in the Bible that I understand. “

“Well, then, if you’re tired of the world and all its vanities why don’t you go to the minister for spiritual consolation?”

“What, Mr. Vernon? He’s as thoroughly world-minded a man as any of them. Of course he says the world is a fleeting show, and life is a bubble, and all is vanity, because that’s his business. But he doesn’t think so. He thinks just as much of his house and furniture and popularity as anybody. He preaches to suit his congregation, and never dares to condemn a sin that wasn’t committed two thousand years ago.”

“He isn’t like our minister then. O, Mr. Benton is splendid! He’s just as handsome! With large black eyes and dark beard! All the girls are dead in love with him.”

“Very strong proofs of his spirituality.”

“Wait, I haven’t got through. What I was going to say was that he lost a splendid place in the city with a salary of four thousand a year, because he thought it his duty to preach politics; and now he’s living at Pine Grove on eight hundred! He supports his mother and an old maid sister, who are real hateful and aristocratic **[end of page 5]**, and are continually grumbling because he didn’t keep his place in the city. He is just as kind and self-sacrificing, and good! I wish you knew him!”

“I wish I did, then. What a refreshing contrast he would be to everybody here. I believe I’ll go home with you and set my cap.”

“You mustn’t. He can’t afford to get married. Besides he never looks at the girls. But seriously, what’s the matter with you, Clara? I should think you’d been what Aunt Polly would call ‘disappointed.’”

“So, I have, Minnie, though not in your meaning of the word. My disappointment consists not in having loved and lost, but in never having found one whom I could love. I used to dream of love when I was a school girl. I had firm faith in it then. I didn’t entertain a doubt that every couple who got married had actually fallen in love, and would be perfectly happy and devoted to each other, through all time. But you see, my dear, it isn’t so at all. People make the best bargains they can, just as they would in getting a new dress or a picture. I don’t see anything but self-interest in the matter all the way through.”

“Why, Clara, don’t you suppose Gus Clifford and Will Amesbury and Mr. Ferguson really love you?”

“Love me? Of course they don’t. They don’t **[end of page 6]** know the meaning of the word. Mr. Ferguson thinks I’d set off his establishment handsomely and that my father is a gentleman of wealth and position, and that altogether it would be an advantageous union. Perhaps the others you mention have a passing fancy for me, which they imagine to be love. So, Minnie, I have refused many proffered hands, but I never refused a heart, because none was ever offered me. I sometimes doubt whether such a thing exists.”

“I’m sure, Clara, that Ned Richardson loves you. He makes a perfect fool of himself about you. He seems to be good, too, so far as I can see; and he’s very intelligent—and refined in his tastes.”

“Pshaw! He’s been just as much in love half a dozen times with in a year; and probably will be twenty more before he is married. I tell you, Minnie, my ideas of love and marriage are so exalted that I believe they’ll result in my being an old maid. But come! If we’re going to the opera tonight it’s about time we were making preparations.” And the girls were soon engaged in an animated discussion respecting opera cloaks and flowers.

Although fine looking, Clara was by no means a perfect beauty. Her power lay rather in the fact of her intellectual superiority to most in her circle of society, than to personal attractiveness. She was a natural and original, and possessed a **[end of page 7]** depth and richness of nature which, though none of her admirers were capable of appreciating, drew them toward her by an irresistible fascination.

Clara understood herself little better than her friends understood her. The rare blessing of a friend who would have been to her undeveloped nature what the sunshine is to the opening flower, had never been hers. She had grown to womanhood virtually alone. The death of her mother while she was still a child had left her to the care of a widowed aunt—whose principal solicitude concerning her was that she should dress becomingly, play and dance well, and in the fullness of time terminate a glorious career by marrying an “establishment”—man supposed to be thrown in but not mentioned. Her father was one of that class of men who are at home only in their working rooms, and whose hearts, if they ever possessed any, have become buried so deeply beneath the drift and allusion of bank stocks and dividends that it would be a hopeless task to excavate the possible remains. George and Aggie were some years her junior, and had not yet grown to be companions for her. Among her large circle of acquaintances she numbered few whom she could call by the sacred name of friend, and some who were capable of sympathizing with her. A woman of ___ intellect and intensely ardent affection, she **[end of page 8]** found nothing in the outer world to satisfy the _____. Her five years at boarding school, from fourteen to nineteen, were years of happiness. The art, history, literature had been her world. Intellectual hunger was satisfied, and the heart had not yet become too clamorous in its demands. But in the three years which succeeded she had learned the bitter lessons of disappointment and distrust in humanity. Her only real happiness she found in her library, and, too often she closed her book in very weariness because it only awakened a craving within her which she knew not how to satisfy.

Her cousin was in many respects quite her opposite. Minnie Lancing was a simple hearted, joyous country girl of eighteen, whose astonished blue eyes had but recently opened upon city life. In development, she was a child, artless rather from the force of education, and, as she had ingenuously acknowledged, from incapacity to be otherwise, than from the hearty contempt for insincerity which activated Clara. She was impulsive, warm-hearted and generous. Thus far she had lived only in the world of sensation and was satisfied. Her home in the retired town of Pine Grove, was a plain red

house, surrounded with fruit trees and furnished with old fashioned strait backed chairs, high post bedsteads, and rag carpets. Her time had been spent [end of page 9] principally in making butter and cheese, reading and attending singing schools and evenings with a certain ____ farmer's son in whose evidently sincere love she had considered herself happy until her two months of city life, and the attentions of so brilliant and talented a gentleman as Will Norton had tended to unsettle her convictions on that point.

II

“Wanted – an assistant editor for a weekly paper; either on a salary or as a partner with capital. Address W.J.R. Box No. ____--New York.’ That’s just the thing for you, Clara! I should think it would be splendid fun; better than teaching any time. What do you say?”

“That I’ll answer it, though I haven’t much hope of getting the position. Probably some ‘partner with capital’ will offer his services, and my humble application won’t be appreciated.”

The above colloquy took place in a farmer’s kitchen; dramatis personae, Minnie Lancing, in a somewhat dilapidated dark calico, sleeves rolled up, and floury hands holding a copy of a city daily; and Clara Belmont, in equally humble attire, engaged in the fascinating employment of chopping meat for mince pies. A year had passed since we last saw them, but the changing season had brought with them changes of pastime. The sudden death [end of page 10] of Mr. Belmont had necessitated a settlement of his somewhat complicated financial affairs, and, as too often occurs in such cases, it was found that his children were left with a mere pittance. Clara found from her estimate that their small income was insufficient to support George and Aggie at school. She must maintain herself and assist them. Teaching, the great resort of impecunious womanhood, was the only resource that occurred to her. Clara was proud, she would ask no assistance from relatives and former friends; and with the exception of a cordial invitation from her aunt in Pine Grove to accept a home with her, none was volunteered.

The autumn months were spent in advertising and making applications for positions, but without avail. Those who have made similar efforts know that age and experience are considered indispensable requisites in the profession of teaching. At least she had accepted the very pressing invitation from aunt, uncle and cousins to visit Pine Grove, insisting laughingly that she had come to “hire out,” and should work for her board till she could do better. So, while she was learning the various and complicated arts of housewifery, and becoming quite interested and ambitious in her novel employment, she watched the ____ for a light to illumine her future.

“Yes, Minnie, I believe this would just suit me. Hope they give me the literary [end of page 11] department, and not expect me to write political editorials,” said Clara, as she folded her note of application. I shall hardly dare hope for success, though, the advertiser evidently expects only gentlemen will apply.”

“Did you tell him your capital consists in a pair of black eyes, fine head of hair, Grecian nose, two red lips, and one womanly heart? Perhaps those might be more acceptable than bank notes to W.J.R.”

“I didn’t imagine they would, so only mentioned my educational qualifications and belief that the work would be congenial to my tastes. I mentioned Professor Egbert, my old teacher, you know—as a reference. He would speak kindly of me I am sure.”

A few weeks later Clara received a reply. She broke it open immediately.

“What’s the news? Are you going to leave us, that you look so delighted?”

“My services are accepted. Professor Egbert it seems is an old college friend of Mr. Richmond, and he is quite ready to engage me on his recommendation. How fortunate! Mr. Richmond says he had hoped to secure a suitable partner with capital, but cannot find the right kind of man, so shall have to give it up. Is sorry he cannot offer me a larger salary. Only six hundred dollars the first year. I shall take the ___ train ___ George will take me to the depot. Must run upstairs and pack my trunk this minute.”
[end of page 12].

“What a hurry you are in to leave us! You must be very fond of your home and friends! I shall be so lonesome when you are gone, I shall be tempted to commit suicide,” said Minnie following Clara to her room.

“Of course I am sorry to leave you.”

“Perhaps you are. I fail to see any palpable proof of it.”

“Well, Minnie, you know I must be at work. Now let’s see! Six hundred -- how am I going to get along on it? I must allow George and Aggie two hundred at least; that will leave me four hundred, just about enough, with earnings to defray current expenses. Well, I have a good supply of clothing on hand. Think I can get along. Shall have to take up with a second rate boarding house, or else board myself, which I believe would be the least of two evils. Where did you put my dark merino? I shall leave my party dresses here, and the silks, excepting the black one. I shall have no use for them this season.”

“It is too bad you’re going before Will Norton comes ___! I wanted you to help entertain him. I’m sure he’ll find it dull enough here and be disgusted in half an hour!”

“My dear coz, let me say just one thing to you before I go, and don’t be offended with my frankness. All Will Norton’s compliments aren’t worth one look I saw from the honest blue eyes of poor Frank **[end of page 13]** Howell last night.”

“Are you going to take both trunks, Clara?” asked Minnie, turning away to conceal the deepening color in her cheeks.

“No, only this and the satchel. Remember what I said, Minnie, don’t cast your pearls before swine.”

“Then you like Frank? I had an idea you wouldn’t fancy him at all, and dreaded to have you see him.”

“You ought to be ashamed of yourself for that speech. He’s the finest specimen of a man I’ve seen for many a day. I should certainly make myself agreeable to him if I hadn’t the discernment to see it’s too late for me!”

“Now, Clara!”

“Let me tell you, Minnie, if you reject his love you will do both yourself and him an irreparable wrong.”

“So you do believe in love, after all? Am glad to find you improving! If you would only stay here, now, and listen to Mr. Benton preaching you’d come around right in ____ of time. Why don’t you blush?”

“Don’t feel in the mood. I believe I’m all ready! Wonder what my future is going to be like! I’ve read stories about girls who had to support themselves and had very romantic times, and I always thought it would be fun. I should think so now if I didn’t feel anxious about George and Aggie. I don’t want them to suffer.” **[end of page 14].**

III

It was on a clear, cold January morning that Clara found herself wandering among the business streets of New York in search of Mr. Richmond’s office. The bright sunshine and invigorating atmosphere had their effect on her spirits. There was something in the novelty of her position which excited and fascinated her. A new future lay before her—one entirely different from that which she had been wont to contemplate. She looked at both pictures. In one she saw a life of ease and luxury, a home rich in all that gold could purchase; spacious rooms, velvet carpets, costly furniture. The other showed her a life of toil and self-denial, her home a single room, affording but the simplest comforts. Both lives lonely; the former aimless and wearisome, the latter noble and beautiful. And her heart thrilled with the purest joy she had ever known, as she thought how gratefully she accepted the future God had given her.

A few moments walk brought her to her destination. She ascended the long flight of musty stairs wondering what awaited her at its head. On a glass door at her right she found inscribed – “Office of the Christian Citizen: W. J. Richmond, Editor and Proprietor.” Opening it quietly, she found herself in a good-sized pleasant room with two front windows at each of which stood a large square writing-table, well-supplied with pens, ink, mucilage, paper weights, letters, papers and manuscripts. A row of shelves on

one **[end of page 15]** side of the room supported large bound volumes of the Congressional Globe, Patent Office reports, pamphlets, and a variety of miscellaneous literature. The walls were adorned with maps, and files of newspapers suspended from wooden frames. A neat, straw matting covered the floor, three or four armchairs with leathern cushions, and a spring lounge completed the furniture of the room. Altogether there was an air of cheerfulness and good taste about it which influenced Clara favorably.

As she entered she found two men engaged in animated conversation. The older, who proved to be the gentleman she sought, rose to meet her. Clara introduced herself, and received a cordial, gentlemanly welcome, which made her feel at once at home. She was introduced to Mr. Floyd, and shown to a seat. "I will speak with you in a moment, Miss Belmont," Mr. Richmond had said, and the conversation was resumed.

Our heroine, meantime, amused herself with studying the two faces before her. The gentlemen were both fine looking, yet there was a striking contrast between them. Mr. Richmond was a good sized, well-proportioned, middle aged man, with dark blue eyes—clear strait-forward eyes, expressive of sincerity and kindliness—dark hair and long, dark beard in which a thread of silver was now and then visible. He had a firm but pleasant mouth, and a full, high forehead, in which lines of care were **[end of page 16]** already beginning to show themselves. Clara's fears, if she had entertained any, vanished at once. "A good, genial, fatherly soul," she said to herself, and turned to his companion.

Mr. Floyd was a small, compact, wiry man, of not more than thirty, with keen black eyes, black hair and whiskers, a nose rather long and sharp, very fair complexion, and handsomely rounded forehead. He would have been pronounced handsome, but Clara felt, she knew not why, strangely repelled from him.

"I'll tell you what it is, Richmond," he said, gesticulating earnestly, "those fellows'll come down fair and square. All they want is a pledge from you."

"What kind of a pledge?" asked Mr. Richmond quietly.

"O, you know! About B___; nothing definite, only you're to keep mum for awhile, and just cast a little quiet influence now and then in a certain direction. You see there's no use battling people all the while! Everybody gets tired of it, and it don't do any good. We can't expect perfection anywhere; least of all in politicians. We must take the world as it is, and work in the leaven of truth silently and quietly as we have opportunity."

"That is precisely what I am trying to do. But if I understand you, what these gentlemen desire is that I shall cease working in the leaven of truth and replace it by occasional minute grains of falsehood."

"By no means. By no means. Only that you should work wisely and ___ly **[end of page 17]**. Why there is L___; you see to what he has risen. Acknowledged to be the oldest statesman in the country. How did he get there? By understanding human nature,

knowing just when and where to say certain things, and how far to go, and when to hold his tongue. Now there's that Dover speech. You didn't like it; neither do I. But don't you see it was absolutely necessary for the success of the party ticket in that state, that that particular district should be carried? Those fellows had to be brought in, and nothing else would have done it. Look at it in that light and it's a masterly production. It won't do to be squeamish. We must have success before we can bring about all the good we want to accomplish; and to obtain success we must use policy. Think how much good L___ is doing, that he never could have done outside his position."

"I am not convinced that L___ is doing more good than harm. I tell you I never feel sure of these double-faced fellows, courting first this party, then that, and whispering to each privately that he's humbugging the other. You never know where to find them. Can't depend on them. I'm afraid L___ is working for himself, not God."

"O' come, Richmond, you are too uncharitable. L___ is a member of the church, and a very devoted Christian. Contributes largely to the support of the Gospel, at home and in heathen lands. Why he is considered **[end of page 18]** one of the pillars of the church!"

"I wish he'd contribute more to the support of the principles of the Gospel in Washington."

"My dear Sir, don't you see he'd never have got to Washington to do anything if he hadn't pursued the very policy you condemn? I tell you that's just the rock you stumble on! You won't take the strait road to success when it's often before you. Here you have a chance of enlarging your paper, increasing its circulation, and extending your influence a hundred fold."

"Of what use what my influence be if it wasn't cast on the right side?"

"First, catch your hare! First, get your influence, and then wield it for what you choose; but be sure you get it first!"

"Not at the sacrifice of principle."

"O, no. of course, not. They don't ask you to sacrifice your principles. Not at all. I told them, says I, you can't catch Richmond with chaff; he's a got a stiff backbone, and he'll stand up strait for what he calls principle. You can't do anything with him without ___ can make him see, as plain as black and white, that he's going to do good! Now all they want of you is just to support them in every good measure, and if you do see a few little things that are not quite to your liking, why just keep still about it. They're coming on just as fast as public opinion will let them."

"And therefore I feel it my imperative duty **[end of page 19]** to influence public opinion, and push it up to a higher point."

“Certainly! Certainly! That’s just what I’m driving at. You must enlarge your sphere of influence, and there’s only one way to do it. You and more capital; that you acknowledged. It will be impossible for you to keep afloat another summer without outside help. Now just yield a little to present necessity. Stoop to conquer. I can raise twenty thousand dollars for you in a fortnight. In two years H___ will be in the field; his nomination is a forgone conclusion. Support him and your fortune is made.”

Mr. Floyd,” said Mr. Richmond earnestly, rising and standing before him; “you can tell the gentleman whom you represent that I am not so poor that I cannot afford to keep a conscience. So long as I wield a pen you may rest assured that I shall not be silent concerning any moral question before the county. There is but one safe course for nations, and for individuals. To obey the plain, simple commands of God, and the dictates of conscience, To do justice and love mercy. If we act in accordance with the first principle of righteousness we cannot fail of ultimate success, but if we resort to the low trickery of worldly-minded politicians, we are lost.”

“All that would sound very well in a theological treatise, but in politics it strikes me as decidedly out of place.” **[end of page 20]**

“What would you think of the philosopher who, after having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the Laws of nature, should proceed to act precisely as if there were no such laws; having discovered, for instances, that the atmosphere refracts light, and that to ascertain the true position of the heavenly bodies they should be viewed from the center of the earth, should neglect to make due allowance for paralla__ and refraction, in calculating the position and movement of the planets, asserting that the laws of nature were all very fine in treatises on astronomy and Natural Philosophy, but of no practical value in business calculations? Now I maintain that the laws which govern the spiritual universe are no less an unalterable, and of no less importance in their practical application, than those of the physical.”

“O, well, if you’re going off into all that fog I can’t follow you;” said Mr. Floyd, rising to go. I don’t know what you’re talking about. I’m no theologian or philosopher, only a plain, practical business man with – I flatter myself – a respectable share of common sense, and believe in dealing with the world on business principles. Well, good morning! Will run around again in a few days. Think of what I have said.”

Clara drew a breath of relief when Mr. **[end of page 21]** Floyd closed the door behind him. She had never considered herself impressible, and she could not understand the strong prejudice she had taken against him. The purport of the conversation she had heard she could but imperfectly comprehend, but she had learned enough to convince her that her previously formed opinions of the two gentlemen were correct.

After a little preliminary conversation our novice was made acquainted with her new duties. She was to take charge of the literary department of the paper, read proof, complete news, and answer some business letters. One of the writing tables was assigned to her, and she immediately entered upon her labor. Her first employment was the

preparation of an almost illegible manuscript for the press. Next she had several magazines to look over and notice, then a pile of dailies to read up for news, and lastly several columns of proof, which, with some instructions from Mr. Richmond, she learned to correct quite readily. So passed the day, and so passed many succeeding days and weeks.

In a letter written to her cousin some months later, Clara said; “I find my new life – though of course not devoid of trials – much pleasanter than I anticipated. In the first place it is a delightful sensation to feel that **[end of page 22]** you are earning money! I never felt so rich and independent as when Mr. Richmond handed me my first fifty dollars. I am learning to pity poor girls who don’t earn their own money! I can almost sympathize with those business men whom I used to despise because they thought of nothing but money getting. Truly I am quite astonished to find what a fascinating employment it is!

“I’ve found a boarding place in the outskirts of civilization which suits me very well. Not stylish, of course, but neat and comfortable. The landlady is a good hearted, fat, motherly body who pets me like a daughter. Mr. Richmond is an unusually kind, genial man, and very good to me. I am beginning to learn a strange lesson; that adversity is kinder than prosperity. I have never been happier than now.

“I enjoy my occupation and the facilities it gives me for learning. I have received such a rapid influx of new ideas, since I have been here, that I believe I shall have to build an extension to my brain! Verily I never knew so much of human nature before. I never knew there was so much that was laughable and cryable about people. I always thought they were rather prosy and uninteresting than otherwise, but I have changed my opinion. I see gentlemen, here, in **[end of page 23]** their business character, instead of their drawing room one, and I must say they’re vastly more entertaining. I do love to hear them talk! They’re just big boys, only they have ships and stores, instead of kites and balls; that’s all the difference! And the politicians – it would make you laugh to see them trying to wriggle and twist themselves into office! I don’t wonder they don’t want us women to know anything about politics! I appreciate their motives, and admire their good sense and discernment. You ought to see them come here and try to buy up Mr. Richmond to support them. I never knew before that people did such things, but it seems that a great deal of that sort of business is carried on. Sometimes it only amuses one and makes one laugh, and sometimes I feel like crying to see people so corrupt and selfish. I should lose all faith in human nature if it wasn’t for Mr. Richmond. He towers above them all, so grand and majestic in his simple unaffected goodness and purity! He doesn’t seem to know that he is doing anything remarkable or think of any other way, but just to keep on his strait-forward course, doing what he considers his duty. I believe if the wealth of the Rothschilds was offered him to swerve a hair’s breath from the path of rectitude it wouldn’t be a temptation. His character which I have studied every day for six **[end of page 24]** months transcends any ideal I had ever formed. It is worth more than my lost fortune to have known him, to have become convinced that humanity is capable of so much. You know my old bad habit of looking down on people? I have learned, now, to look up. I feel very humble, sometimes, if you’ll believe me. I have

discovered that I am selfish and narrow, and am quite dissatisfied with myself, and yet I feel a strange peace and heart rest that I never knew before.”

Clara wrote thus, not because she entertained any idea that her cousin would comprehend it, but from an imperative necessity she felt to express herself to some one, and Minnie being her only confidant she must, per force, choose her.

“Really, my philosophic coz,” wrote Minnie in reply, “it’s very edifying to see you in such a fervor of enthusiastic admiration for any one that wears coats! I always said that you’d take it hard if you ever did get in love, and I see plainly your hour’s come at last! Tell me all about him! Is he handsome – and single? I think you told me he was middle-aged, so I took it for granted that he was married, and gave up all hope of making a romance of it. Your affairs are getting decidedly interesting.

“Will Norton has been here again **[end of page 25]** and – you know I never could keep any thing from you, so I must tell you we’re engaged. Now don’t blame me about Frank. I’m sure I felt real bad about it, and cried till I made myself sick. But what could I do? You ought to have heard Will talk! He gave me a beautiful gold locket with his picture in it. Father and Mother like him very much.”

To which Clara replied – “Two things in your letter surprise me. First, your engagement with Mr. Norton – but on that subject I said all I had to say long ago. So now I can only wish you all the happiness in the world, which, be assured, I do most sincerely. Second, your charge that I am in love with Mr. Richmond. I had never thought whether I loved him. It was a new idea to me. But since you suggest it, I have been looking into my heart, and I find that I do love him very much. Yes, I will be frank with you; more than I ever loved any other human being. A love mingled with veneration. A love deeper and purer than I had ever imagined. And yet I do not want to marry him – at least I had never thought of such a thing till you mentioned it. It is happiness enough for me to know him. I feel perfectly happy and at rest in his friendship and kindness. I do not think I should be jealous or at all unhappy if he loved another, provided she was **[end of page 26]** worthy of him. Can this be, really, love—such love, I mean as they make marriages with? I never read of anything like it. I do not think it is. So to your accusation that I am ‘in love’ – in the ordinary acceptance of the term – I return a decided negative.”

“You ask if Mr. Richmond is handsome, and single; to both which questions I have the pleasure of replying in the affirmative. I only learned very recently that he was unmarried. Cannot say that I experienced any sudden emotion of delight upon receipt of the intelligence – another proof that my regard for him is not of the character you imagine.”

There are two experiences in the awakening of love in the soul; the first where the glad heart joyfully pours out its treasures before the one whom it has found worthy; the second when it begins to crave love in return. Clara was now in the first period. Time brought her to the second.

IV

We would that it had been amid sylvan shades, as beneath Luna's gentle beams, that Walter Richmond and Clara Belmont first learned to love. Alas! Romantic readers, that the beautiful revelation took place in an editor's sanctum, and amid such unsanctified surroundings as amid Congressional Globes, New York City dailies and Patent Office Reports! Perhaps they did not need the accessories which **[end of page 27]** lovers usually crave, that they seemed to get along so well without them. Probably the rattling of street carts along the pavement answered (?) the purpose of a murmuring stream, and the ink-stands, mucilage cups, and pen-racks were transformed into lilies and roses, in their eyes. All we know is that before another frosty January morning came around they were "engaged," and in due time our heroine was installed mistress of a tasty little cottage home in a suburban village.

George and Aggie, with the generous assistance of their brother-in-law, have completed their school course, graduating with high honors, and are now proud and happy in maintaining themselves.

Will Norton fell a victim to the reigning belle of the next season, and one day came his wedding cards to Minnie, in place of a letter. Frank Howell, who had been waiting for some such crisis, was only too happy to step in and put together the broken fragments of Minnie's heart; a work which was __ly and successfully accomplished; and a simple and quiet wedding in Pine Grove was the result. Frank has recently become a candidate for Congressional honors, and as he is a man of integrity and sound principle the Christian Citizen does not hesitate to support him.

Lavinia Goodell, Janesville, Wis.