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## The Waterville Mail (Vol. 21, No. 34): February 21, 1868

Maxham & Wing

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BY FLORENCE FERRY.

Two little feet, so small that both may nestle  
In one embracing hand—  
Two tender feet upon the untrodden border  
Of life's mysterious land;

Dimpled and soft, and pink as peach-tree blossoms,  
In April's fragrant days—  
How can they walk among the briery tangles  
Of the world's rough ways?

These white-rose feet along the doubtful future  
Must bear a woman's load—  
Alas! since woman has the heaviest burden,  
And walks the hardest road.

Love, for a while, will make the path before them  
Alas! duty, smooth and fair—  
Will cut away the blemishes, leaving only  
The roses blossom there.

But when the mother's watchful eyes are shrouded  
Away from sight of men,  
And these dear feet are left without her guiding,  
Who shall direct them then?

How will they be allured, betrayed, deluded,  
By little unguessed foes—  
Into what maze will they wander,  
What dangers will they meet?

Will they go stumbling blindly in the darkness  
Of sorrow's fearful mists?  
Or find the upland slopes of Peace and Beauty,  
Where sunlight never fades?

Will they go toiling up ambition's summit,  
The common world above?  
Or in some nameless vale securely sheltered,  
Walk side by side with Love?

Some feet there be which walk life's track unswayed,  
Which find but pleasant ways—  
Some hearts there be to which this life is only  
A round of happy days.

But they are few. Far more there are who wander  
Without a hope or friend—  
Who find their journey full of pains and losses,  
And long to reach the end.

How shall it be with thee, tender stranger,  
Fair-faced and gentle-eyed,  
Before whose unstained feet the world's rude highway  
Stretches so strange and wide?

Ah! who may lead the future? For our darling  
We crave all blessings sweet—  
And pray that the life which feeds the crying ravens  
Will guide the only feet.

## LURA DEANE.

Three years had been born, and lived, and died, and Lura Deane was no longer a little girl. She was still living at the Judge's as Philip Welden's governess. She had left the academy the year before, and now took Latin and French lessons of the minister, and was the same half shy, studious girl she had ever been. Nature, though, always intended Lura Deane for a lady—I felt that, the first time my eyes lighted on her—and those three years had achieved her designs. She was not tall or very slender; but there was an instinctive, artistic kind of grace in her every movement, which after all, was only an outward "keeping time" to the song and rhyme in her soul. She was not handsome, any more than she had been in her childhood; but no one who looked down into the clear, mellow depths of those brown eyes, ever called her homely. Her dark, abundant hair still lay in curls around the cheeks, that if not fair, were bright with health and feeling. Lura had learned the conventionalisms of refined society from the Judge and the best guests at his home; she had also become, of late, quite a lioness at Meadow Brook; for it was fully proven at the society that she wrote for several magazines.

It was at the close of these three years that Lura sat one afternoon at her chamber window, and it was a bright picture, such as the poet heart of Jane can alone conceive, that she put aside the dusty, muslin curtains to look on. The poem dropped from her fingers, for there was a more beautiful one written out on the meadows and face of mountains; and the young lady stood still by the window while her spirit read it. At last the little golden head of Philip thrust itself between her and the window frame.

"Why, Philip, where have you been running?" asked the girl, as she wiped the perspiration from the forehead of the beautiful child.

"To see papa, Lury; don't you think he was here just now, and I saw him talking with the gardener at the gate. 'Ah, you young, you've spied me!' he said, as I ran up to the carriage, and then he told me he hadn't time to stop now, he must go the depot. 'He told me to tell you an old friend of his from the South would return with him, and they should be back to supper—isn't it nice, Lury?' and the boy played with the fringe of her apron pocket."

"I don't know, Philip; that will depend upon what sort of a man Mr. Woodley proves himself. But I forget, he is your father's friend, and that is recommendation enough, isn't it, darling?" and she leaned down and kissed him tenderly as they stood by the window.

The young southerner fully sustained the reputation which his relation to the Judge had given him. His fine, eloquent features, his nature, his chivalric manner, and, perhaps, more than all, the brilliant flashes of wit dazzled through his conversation, won the hearts of all who knew him. Lura was quite charmed with the gentleman, for his tone of character was so unlike any she had met before, and her clear, merry, child-life was always a concomitant of Mr. Woodley's playful sallies. She expected to stand in mortal terror of the wealthy fastidious southerner; but after the first day she wasn't afraid of him not the least. Mr. Woodley's conversation was always suggestive, and they talked of poetry and painting, of sculpture and scenery, for hours together; and sometimes the gentleman would pause in the midst of their conversation and look down into Lura's eyes and tell her, half seriously, half earnestly, the light there was like the sunrise he had watched breaking through the mist garment which every night clouded about Mount Blue. The master of the house was called imperatively from home during most of his time, so Lura was left to entertain his guest.

"Papa, aren't you going to take me out to ride this morning?" pleadingly queried Philip Welden, as they rose from the table.

"I can't, my boy," answered his father, stroking the sweet face upturned to his; "I must be off in a half hour, and I shall see those eyes until to-night. Perhaps Mr. Woodley here will take you on your ride, Philip."

"Those eyes"—the blue eyes of his mother—turned imploringly toward the gentleman.

"Yes, Philip, we'll go down by the old mill, and past that remarkable ruin of a cottage with one room, up to the hills, and get a view of the sea before we get back."

"What a travelled wonder you will be, Philip," laughed his governess, as she left the room.

A half hour later, her pupil hastily entered her chamber. "Put up your drawing, Lury, quick," he said; "Mr. Woodley wants to know if you won't ride out with us. You will go, won't you?"

"If I thought you were going on horseback!"

"So did I, but Mr. Woodley has concluded to go in the buggy."

Lura glanced out of the window; it was a delicious summer morning, cool with dew, and fragrant with mountain wilds. She laid down her pencil. "Tell Mr. Woodley I will be there in ten minutes, Philip."

VOL. XXI.

WATERVILLE, MAINE.....FRIDAY, FEB. 21, 1868.

NO. 34.

That morning was one of those occasional passages in the weather when everything is toned and tempered into just the right state for a ride; and the trio of hearts that rolled away from the broad front gate, throbbled up to a louder rhythm of happiness as the green meadows opened before them. Lura, like all poetical, artistic temperaments, had an intense capacity for enjoyment; and that morning the light and gladness that filled her young soul, broke over her lips in the sparkling sallies that answered the southerner in the laugh that rang out with Philip's; and shook up the wood echoes, till you could not have told which was the child's. So they loitered by the old mill and down at the tiny waterfall; a stream of bright waters spilled over the green brim of the knoll, and at last they rode up the winding path of the mountain. They gained the summit and sat down under the trees, that the beautiful view beneath might be carved in their memories.

"What a true sweet interpreter of nature Bryant is," said Lura, breaking the silence, as her eyes wandered off to the sea, that lay a blue line against the distant horizon; "I will tell you my favorite among his poems." Never until that moment had Mr. Woodley beheld a true revelation of Lura's beauty and he sat very still, listening to the words, and looking at the sun-rise-like inspiration of her face.

"Don't you look pretty, Lury?" said Philip, who sat close to his governess, with his eyes fastened on hers as she concluded. He put up his lips and kissed her; then, placing his hands on her cheeks, he turned round her face to the southerner, saying eagerly: "Don't she look beautiful now, Mr. Woodley? Don't you want to kiss her too?" The light in Lura's face went out suddenly in the blush that crimsoned it.

"Why, Philip, sh—sh—!" exclaimed the embarrassed girl; but a voice deep and very tender in its manliness, answered: "I should like, Philip, to gain a life-long permission to do this." "He didn't mean anything, of course he didn't, and I'm very silly to think about it," soliloquized Lura, as she walked up and down her chamber that evening, unconsciously pulling to pieces a bunch of geranium buds which she had fastened in her apron. Chivalric and courteous as he is, it must be a kind of second nature to him to say complimentary nothing to all the ladies with whom he is thrown; but then that look in his eyes! nonsense, I suppose he leaved it off that Italian lady with whom he flitted so desperately; I must think of it no more, and to forget it at once, I'll just sit down and tell grandma she may expect Philip and me down on Thursday to pass the day with her. What an age it is since I was there!"

A domestic put her head inside the door—"Judge Welden says if you please, he'd like to see you down stairs, Miss Lura."

"It's something about Philip, I guess," murmured Lura as she unlocked her escritoire. She was somewhat surprised on going down, to have Judge Welden rise up and request her to take a walk in the garden, remarking that the evening was an unusually fine one. He had never done this before, unless Philip accompanied them. But Lura took the arm he offered her, and they went down one of the broad garden aisles, where the shadows were tangled up with moonlight. Graham Welden was unusually reticent that night, and Lura had to sustain the fitful conversation. At last they approached a large line of rose-bushes that flanked one side of the path. The Judge plucked two or three of the white buds and gave them to Lura, saying she ought always to wear them in her hair—their contrast with its darkness was so exquisite.

His companion smiled. "I wonder, Judge Welden, you can bury all the poetry that is in you, under those old dusty parchments in your studio."

"I do not bury it there, Lura; there is a garden down deep in my soul, where flowers bloom perennially, and the winds murmur their evening melody to my heart. But I did not bring you here to talk of myself. Mr. Woodley has a private interview with me this afternoon, before he went to the lake—can you not guess for what object?"

"Judge Welden? How in the world should I know?"

"Well, then, the matter related wholly to yourself. A true, loving heart, and a fair southern home, await you, Lura, for I am deputed to offer you both this evening; and then in a few words Judge Welden told his astonished companion all. There were very few men, he said, to whom he would willingly resign Lura; but his friend was one of them. His refined tastes, his noble character, his lofty aims, and more than all, his deep loving heart, might satisfy the *man ideal* of her girlhood. "He learned, Lura," concluded the Judge, "the history of your past, this afternoon; and the offer he made you afterward, was one which, to point of wealth and social position, could not be well rivalled. When he returns, shall I tell him our little governess will be his wife?"

Lura put her hand to her forehead; "I am so startled, so confused," she said; "just as a little child would have done. Let me go up stairs and think, Judge Welden; in an hour I will return and answer you. He seemed a little reluctant to let her go, and as she withdrew her hand from his arm, he turned round suddenly and bent his lips to her forehead."

An hour later there was a soft footfall in the sitting-room, and Lura was standing before Judge Welden. She looked very pale and he pushed an ottoman toward her, but she waved it away, saying, quickly: "No, thank you, Judge Welden; I have come, as I promised, to tell you my decision; I cannot be Howard Woodley's wife; will you tell him so, and that I am very grateful to him for the great honor his offer has conferred on me. But I do not love him; that is all my reason, all my answer," and she was gone.

Graham Welden sat there betwixt the moon and the lamp-light, quite confounded at the girl's decision; and yet the man felt somehow that it gave him pleasure. "She is a noble girl to sacrifice so much to her affections," he murmured to himself; but he little dreamed how mighty a revelation had been made to Lura in that last hour; that sitting in the silence of her own room, a great light had beamed down into her woman's heart and shown her the one name written there—*Graham Welden*.

"And you cannot speak one word of hope or promise for my future, when to-morrow I must leave you. Forgive me, Lura, I ought not thus to importune you; but my love makes me very weak."

Lura's bright eyes were dim with tears as she looked up in the southerner's pale face. "Forgive me," she said mournfully, "that I cannot love you, Mr. Woodley, you are so good, so noble, so greatly my superior, that my heart throbs with almost as keen anguish to refuse you, as yours must to hear me. If it were only in my power—but alas it is not!" She spoke these last words more to herself than to her auditor, as they sat together in the shade of the grape arbor in that summer twilight. Suddenly Mr. Woodley leaned down and searched her face with his dark eyes. "Lura," he said, "you love another." Just then they heard the voices of Philip and his father approaching the arbor. Lura half sprang from her seat, and her face was very white as she cried: "Don't, Mr. Woodley. Oh, if you ever loved me, don't speak those words!" But in that pallid face, in the wild, frightened glance toward the opening door, the southerner had read the one secret of Lura Deane's soul.

Late at night as the young governess sat in her chamber, a note was brought her from Mr. Woodley.

Lura: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as we sat together at sunset in the arbor, the closed gate of your heart swung open, and I looked in and read its secret. I need not assure you it is safe with me, as with you. But, Lura, I must look upon your bright face no more; I must listen no longer to the voice sweeter to me than the song of the May birds; and before your brown eyes open on the sunlight of to-morrow, I shall be far from you! I am going from you in love and suffering, that disarms all my pride. Life of my life, glorious incarnation of my woman-ideal, it is very hard to leave you. But now I have read your heart, it is not best I should linger. May you be very happy with the companion of my boyhood, the best friend of my youth. If he does not already, he will learn to love you, Lura. And remember, through whatever paths his pilgrim feet may wander, that all the deep tenderness of a brother shall dwell for you in the heart of

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"Philip," and the girl sprang up suddenly for they were sitting in the shadows of a maple forest, "here it is almost supper-time, and we are two miles from home. We must be off this instant. There, don't mind the rest of the flowers."

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Lura's bright eyes were dim with tears as she looked up in the southerner's pale face. "Forgive me," she said mournfully, "that I cannot love you, Mr. Woodley, you are so good, so noble, so greatly my superior, that my heart throbs with almost as keen anguish to refuse you, as yours must to hear me. If it were only in my power—but alas it is not!" She spoke these last words more to herself than to her auditor, as they sat together in the shade of the grape arbor in that summer twilight. Suddenly Mr. Woodley leaned down and searched her face with his dark eyes. "Lura," he said, "you love another." Just then they heard the voices of Philip and his father approaching the arbor. Lura half sprang from her seat, and her face was very white as she cried: "Don't, Mr. Woodley. Oh, if you ever loved me, don't speak those words!" But in that pallid face, in the wild, frightened glance toward the opening door, the southerner had read the one secret of Lura Deane's soul.

Late at night as the young governess sat in her chamber, a note was brought her from Mr. Woodley.

Lura: In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as we sat together at sunset in the arbor, the closed gate of your heart swung open, and I looked in and read its secret. I need not assure you it is safe with me, as with you. But, Lura, I must look upon your bright face no more; I must listen no longer to the voice sweeter to me than the song of the May birds; and before your brown eyes open on the sunlight of to-morrow, I shall be far from you! I am going from you in love and suffering, that disarms all my pride. Life of my life, glorious incarnation of my woman-ideal, it is very hard to leave you. But now I have read your heart, it is not best I should linger. May you be very happy with the companion of my boyhood, the best friend of my youth. If he does not already, he will learn to love you, Lura. And remember, through whatever paths his pilgrim feet may wander, that all the deep tenderness of a brother shall dwell for you in the heart of

HOWARD WOODLEY.

Tears of womanly tenderness and sympathy, which "only words were not," rained fast upon that letter, as Lura murmured, "How true, how good he is! Oh, if I only had a heart to give to him!"

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prayed Lura, as she hung there on an old abutment of the bridge, which she had grasped when she rose the first time. The waters lay against her neck; the strong current dashed over her limbs; her long brown hair drifted on the waves, and there, for five minutes, which seemed as many weary years, she had sustained herself.

"Hold on, Lura, cried a loud voice, as her hands were relaxing. 'I will save you!' and Judge Welden dashed into the river. But though she heard him, she had no power to sustain herself longer. It was well the river was narrow, or just as it was going down, the strong arm of the swimmer would not have caught that brown hair.

"Wake up, Lura, my beautiful, my beloved!" murmured Judge Welden, as he stood on the bank, with his dripping, senseless, burdened, strained to his heart; and the tears and the kisses of the proud man fell fast on her white face; for in that hour of exceeding peril, Graham Welden had learned that, as he had never loved woman, not even the wife of his early manhood, he loved Lura Deane.

"Does she seem to sleep quietly?"

"Yes as sweet as an infant, Judge Welden. What a mercy it was you happened to be going











