

CHAPTER VIII.—1836-1837.

BLIND STUDENTS, ALSO, HAVE "SPORTIVE" MOODS—SOCIALS, MUSICALES, AND SOIREES—HAZING—TENDER ATTACHMENTS—"INNOCENT" THEFTS—A WATERMELON ADVENTURE—DEAR MR. STEVENS' FIFTEEN-MINUTE NAP—A GOOD LAUGH OVER THE AFFAIR.

**B**LIND students, as well as others, have their merry and sportive moods. They can "see" a joke, just as well as if they were not debarred from physical sight; and many are the "games" that they perpetrate upon each other.

It may readily be surmised, then, that our amusements in the Institution were many and varied; and that we indulged in most of the pleasant little plays and other diversions that vary the monotony of "seeing" school-people.

Our socials, musicales, and soirees, were largely frequented by friends from outside, as well as by those of our own number.

Even the cruel process of "hazing" was not always left out of our school-life, although, of

*Love Laughs at Locksmiths.*

course, it was constantly discouraged by the teachers, and the more orderly of the pupils. I suppose we considered ourselves entitled to all the privileges of other schools!

Of course, the Institution being co-educational, more or less "tender attachments", of greater or less duration, were formed: and in these cases, love often laughed at oculars, as well as locksmiths. The chapel was a favorite place for short "spooning" seasons, and several students who could manipulate the piano, had preconcerted chords which they struck, or tunes which they played, to let each other know that they were there, and waiting for an interview.

Now and then an innocent theft occurred. One in which I am half ashamed to confess I was interested, took place one evening in the garden. The teachers and students had cultivated a fine lot of vegetables: and among them we knew that there were some luscious watermelons, and our mouths naturally watered for a share.

All at once, a rumor was circulated that these melons were to be sold for the benefit of the school! Whereat, a quiet consternation-meeting was held, and we decided that, when it came to what we considered as partly our own melons, there were different ways of bene-

fitting the Institution. A few of us decided to have at least one of the largest of the juicy oblong globes, that very night.

I was only eighteen years old, then, and may be pardoned for relishing an adventure that savored somewhat of the madcap variety. Taking with me into the garden one of the smaller girls, I concealed her as well as I could (for it was a moonlight night), told her to hang on for dear life to a large watermelon that presented itself, and started out to do a little reconnoitering with the senses of touch and hearing.

Ah! a step!—I knew it right well: it was that of Mr. Stevens, the gardener.

"Why, Mr. Stevens!" I exclaimed: "you here?—How do you happen to be walking up and down at this hour of the night?"

"I'm watching out for some of them miserable boys that's tryin' to steal the melons", said the kind but reliable old gentleman. "I'll catch 'em, yet."

"Don't you want me to watch awhile for you, Mr. Stevens?" I inquired, demurely. "You go in and rest: your voice sounds tired. Go and sit down for fifteen minutes, and I'll stay out here, and watch for you. And depend upon it, if a single boy comes, I'll let you know."

Saying this, I led the dear old gentleman indoors, seated him in an easy chair, placed my cool hand on his brow to soothe him a little, and told him to sit there and rest, while I would go on watch for a quarter of an hour. Then I went back to my little stowaway in the garden.

"Take the melon, if you're big enough, and run for our room as soon as you can!" I whispered. She needed only one set of directions; and girl and melon were soon missing.

At the end of the fifteen minutes, I went back to Mr. Stevens, and told him that not a boy had been near; and, having by this time enjoyed a good rest and a quiet little nap, he went back to his vigil, with thanks.

When I returned to the room, the dissected fruit was all ready to be still further dissected: and we enjoyed it all the better for the mild little adventure.

A few years afterward, I told the Superintendent about it, and we enjoyed a hearty laugh together over the incident. "To think how you blind children were all the while getting the start of us 'seeing' people!" he chuckled. As for good Mr. Stevens, the gardener, he had then gone on where, it is to be hoped, wicked boys and girls do not molest, and where watermelons would not be particularly refreshing.