

# Heiress and Wife.

## CHAPTER III.

In an elegant boudoir, all crimson and gold, some hours later, sat Pluma Hurlhurst, reclining negligently on a satin divan, toying idly with a volume which lay in her lap. She tossed the book aside with a yawn, turning her superb dark eyes on the little figure bending over the rich trailing silks which were to adorn her own fair beauty on the coming evening.

"So you think you would like to attend the lawn fete to-night, Daisy?" she asked, patronizingly.

Daisy glanced up with a startled blush.

"Oh, I should like it so much, Miss Pluma," she answered, hesitatingly, "if I only could!"

"I think I shall gratify you," said Pluma, carelessly. "You have made yourself very valuable to me. I like the artistic manner you have twined these roses in my hair; the effect is quite picturesque." She glanced satisfiedly at her own magnificent reflection in the cheval-glass opposite. Titan alone could have reproduced those rich, marvelous colors—that perfect, queenly beauty. He would have painted the picture, and the world would have raved about its beauty. The dark masses of raven-black hair; the proud, haughty face, with its warm southern tints; the dusky eyes, lighted with fire and passion, and the red, curved lips. "I wish particularly to look my very best to-night, Daisy," she said; "that is why I wish you to remain. You can arrange those sprays of white heath in my hair superbly. Then you shall attend the fete, Daisy. Remember, you are not expected to take part in it; you must sit in some secluded nook where you will be quite unobserved."

Pluma could not help but smile at the ardent delight depicted in Daisy's face.

"I am afraid I can not stay," she said, doubtfully, glancing down in dismay at the pink-and-white muslin she wore. "Every one would be sure to laugh at me who saw me. Then I would wish I had not stayed."

"Suppose I should give you one to wear—that white mull, for instance—how would you like it? None of the guests would see you," replied Pluma.

There was a wistful look in Daisy's eyes, as though she would fain believe what she heard was really true.

"Would you really?" asked Daisy, wonderingly. "You, whom people call so haughty and so proud—you would really let me wear one of your dresses? I do not know how to tell you how much I am pleased!" she said, eagerly.

Pluma Hurlhurst laughed. Such rapture was new to her.

The night which drew its mantle over the smiling earth was a perfect one. Myriads of stars shone like jewels in the blue sky, and not a cloud obscured the face of the clear full moon. Hurlhurst Plantation was ablaze with colored lamps that threw out soft rainbow tints in all directions as far as the eye could reach. The interior of Whitestone Hall was simply dazzling in its rich rose bloom, its lights, its fountains, and rippling music from adjoining ferneries.

In an elegant apartment of the Hall Basil Hurlhurst, the recluse invalid, lay upon his couch, trying to shut out the mirth and gayety that floated up to him from below. As the sound of Pluma's voice sounded upon his ear he turned his face to the wall with a bitter groan. "She is so like—" he muttered, grimly. "Ah! the pleasant voices of our youth turn into lashes which scourge us in our old age. 'Like mother, like child.'"

The lawn fete was a grand success; the elite of the whole country round were gathered together to welcome the beautiful, peerless hostess of Whitestone Hall. Pluma moved among her guests like a queen, yet in all that vast throng her eyes eagerly sought one face. "Where was Rex?" was the question which constantly perplexed her. After the first waltz he had suddenly disappeared. Only the evening before handsome Rex Lyon had held her jeweled hand long at parting, whispering, in his graceful, charming way, he had something to tell her on the morrow. "Why did he hold himself so strangely aloof?" Pluma asked herself, in bitter wonder. Ah! had she but known!

While Pluma, the wealthy heiress, awaited his coming so eagerly, Rex Lyon was standing, quite lost in

thought, beside a rippling fountain in one of the most remote parts of the lawn, thinking of Daisy Brooks. He had seen a fair face—that was all—a face that embodied his dream of loveliness, and without thinking of it found his fate, and the whole world seemed changed for him.

Handsome, impulsive Rex Lyon, owner of the most extensive and lucrative orange groves in Florida, would have bartered every dollar of his worldly possessions for love.

He had hitherto treated all notion of love in a very offhand, cavalier fashion.

"Love is fate," he had always said. He knew Pluma loved him. Last night he had said to himself; The time had come when he might as well marry; it might as well be Pluma as any one else, seeing she cared so much for him. Now all that was changed. "I sincerely hope she will not attach undue significance to the words I spoke last evening," he mused.

Rex did not return again among the throng; it was sweeter far to sit there by the murmuring fountain dreaming of Daisy Brooks, and wondering when he should see her again. A throng which did not hold the face of Daisy Brooks had no charm for Rex.

Suddenly a soft step sounded on the grass; Rex's heart gave a sudden bound; surely it could not be—yes, it was—Daisy Brooks.

She drew back with a startled cry as her eyes suddenly encountered those of her hero of the morning. She would have fled precipitately had he not stretched out his hand quickly to detain her.

"Daisy," cried Rex, "why do you look so frightened? Are you displeased to see me?"

"No," she said. "I—I—do not know—"

She looked so pretty, so bewildered, so dazzled by joy, yet so pitifully uncertain, Rex was more desperately in love with her than ever.

"Your eyes speak, telling me you are pleased, Daisy, even if your lips refuse to tell me so. Sit down on this rustic bench, Daisy, while I tell you how anxiously I awaited your coming—waited until the shadows of evening fell."

As he talked to her he grew more interested with every moment. She had no keen intellect, no graceful powers of repartee, knew little of books or the great world beyond, Daisy was a simple, guileless child of nature.

Rex's vanity was gratified at the unconscious admiration which shone in her eyes and the blushes his words brought to her cheeks.

"This is my favorite waltz, Daisy," he said, as the music of the irresistible "Blue Danube" floated out to them. "Will you favor me with a waltz?"

"Miss Pluma would be so angry," she murmured.

"Never mind her anger, Daisy. I will take all the blame on my shoulders. They are unusually broad, you see."

He led her half reluctant among the gay throng; gentlemen looked at one another in surprise. Who is she? they asked one of the other, gazing upon her in wonder. No one could answer. The sweet-faced little maiden in soft, floating white, with a face like an angel's, who wore no other ornament than her crown of golden hair, was a mystery and a novelty. In all the long years of her after life Daisy never forgot that supremely blissful moment. It seemed to her they were floating away into another sphere. Rex's arms around her, his eyes smiling down into hers; he could feel her slight form trembling in his embrace, and he clasped her still closer. With youth, music, and beauty—there was nothing wanting to complete the charm of love.

Leaning gracefully against an overarching palm-tree stood a young man watching the pair with a strange intentness; a dark, vindictive smile hovered about the corners of his mouth, hidden by his black mustache, and there was a cruel gleam in the dark, wicked eyes scanning the face of the young girl so closely.

"Ah! why not?" he mused. "It would be a glorious revenge." He made his way hurriedly in the direction of his young hostess, who was, as usual, surrounded by a group of admirers. A deep crimson spot burned on either cheek, and her eyes glow-

ed like stars, as of one under intense, suppressed excitement.

Lester Stanwick made his way to her side just as the last echo of the waltz died away on the air, inwardly congratulating himself upon finding Rex and Daisy directly beside him.

"Miss Pluma," said Stanwick, with a low bow, "will you kindly present me to the little fairy on your right? I am quite desperately smitten with her."

Several gentlemen crowded around Pluma asking the same favor.

With a smile and a bow, what could Rex do but lead Daisy gracefully forward. Those who witnessed the scene that ensued never forgot it. For answer Pluma Hurlhurst turned coldly, haughtily toward them, drawing herself up proudly to her full height.

"There is evidently some mistake here," she said, glancing scornfully at the slight, girlish figure leaning upon Rex Lyon's arm. I do not recognize this person as a guest. If I mistake not, she is one of the hirelings connected with the plantation."

If a thunderbolt had suddenly exploded beneath Rex's feet he could not have been more thoroughly astounded.

Daisy uttered a piteous little cry and, like a tender flower cut down by a sudden, rude blast, would have fallen at his feet had he not reached out his arm to save her.

"Miss Hurlhurst," cried Rex, in a voice husky with emotion, "I hold myself responsible for this young lady's presence here. I—"

"Ah!" interrupts, Pluma, ironically; "and may I ask by what right you force one so inferior, and certainly obnoxious, among us?"

Rex Lyon's handsome face was white with rage. "Miss Hurlhurst," he replied, with stately dignity, "I regret, more than the mere words express, that my heedlessness has brought upon this little creature at my side an insult so cruel, so unjust, and so bitter, in simply granting my request for a waltz—a request very reluctantly granted. An invited guest among you she may not be; but I most emphatically defy her inferiority to any lady or gentleman present."

"Rex—Mr. Lyon," says Pluma, icily, "you forget yourself."

He smiled contemptuously. "I do not admit it," he said, hotly. "I have done that which any gentleman should have done; defended from insult one of the purest and sweetest of maidens. I will do more—I will shield her, henceforth and forever with my very life, if need be. If I can win her, I shall make Daisy Brooks my wife."

Rex spoke rapidly—vehemently. His chivalrous soul was aroused; he scarcely heeded the impetuous words that fell from his lips. He could not endure the thought that innocent, trusting little Daisy should suffer through any fault of his.

"Come, Daisy," he said, softly, clasping in his own strong white ones the little fingers clinging so pitifully to his arm, "we will go away from here at once—our presence longer is probably obnoxious. Farewell, Miss Hurlhurst."

"Rex," cried Pluma, involuntarily, taking a step forward, "you do not, you can not mean what you say. You will not allow a creature like that to separate us—you have forgotten Rex. You said you had something to tell me. You will not part with me so easily," she cried.

A sudden terror seized her at the thought of losing him. He was her world. She forgot the guests gathering about her—forgot she was the wealthy, courted heiress for whose glances or smiles men sued in vain—forgot her haughty pride, in the one absorbing thought that Rex was going from her. Her wild, fiery, passionate love could bear no restraint.

"Rex," she cried, suddenly falling on her knees before him, her face white and stormy, her white jeweled hands clasped supplicatingly, "you must not, you shall not leave me so; no one shall come between us. Listen—I love you Rex. What if the whole world knows it—what will it matter, it is the truth. My love is my life. You loved me until she came between us with her false, fair face. But for this you would have asked me to be your wife. Send that miserable little hireling away, Rex—the gardener will take charge of her."

Pluma spoke rapidly, vehemently. No one could stay the torrent of her bitter words.

Rex was painfully distressed and annoyed. Fortunately but very few of the guests had observed the thrilling tableau enacted so near them.

"Pluma—Miss Hurlhurst," he said,

"I am sorry you have unfortunately expressed yourself, for your own sake. I beg you will say no more. You yourself have severed this night the last link of friendship between us. I am frank with you in thus admitting it. I sympathize with you, while your words have filled me with the deepest consternation and embarrassment, which it is useless longer to prolong."

Drawing Daisy's arm hurriedly within his own, Rex Lyon strode quickly down the gravelled path, with the full determination of never again crossing the threshold of Whitestone Hall, or gazing upon the face of Pluma Hurlhurst.

Meanwhile Pluma had arisen from her knees with a gay, mocking laugh, turning suddenly to the startled group about her.

"Bravo! bravo! Miss Pluma," cried Lester Stanwick, stepping to her side at that opportune moment. "On the stage you would have made a grand success. We are practicing for a coming charade," explained Stanwick, laughingly; "and, judging from the expressions depicted on our friends' faces, I should say you have drawn largely upon real life. You will be a success, Miss Pluma."

No one dreamed of doubting the assertion. A general laugh followed, and the music struck up again, and the gay mirth of the fete resumed its sway.

Long after the guests had departed Pluma sat in her boudoir, her heart torn with pain, love, and jealousy, her brain filled with schemes of vengeance.

"I can not take her life!" she cried; "but if I could mar her beauty—the pink-and-white beauty of Daisy Brooks, which has won Rex from me—I would do it. I shall torture her for this," she cried. "I will win him from her though I wade through seas of blood. Hear me, Heaven," she cried, "and register my vow!"

Pluma hastily rung the bell. "Saddle Whirlwind and Tempest at once!" she said to the servant who answered her summons.

"It is after midnight, Miss Pluma. I—"

There was a look in her eyes which would brook no further words.

An hour later they had reached the cottage wherein slept Daisy Brooks, heedless of the danger that awaited her.

"Wait for me here," said Pluma to the groom who accompanied her—"I will not be long!"

(To Be Continued.)

## CHARLES DICKENS' PRESENT.

Charles Dickens was always very fond of children. One day he was walking in the neighborhood of Gad's hill, not long after he had acquired his property there, when he suddenly ran into a little girl wheeling a doll's perambulator. In an instant the tiny vehicle upset, the dolls being thrown out.

It was a bad accident as far as they were concerned, for wax heads and limbs are not calculated to stand much hard usage. The little maid burst into tears, and, much to the novelist's sorrow, refused to be comforted.

"Then come home with me," Dickens whispered, soothingly, "and we'll see if we can't find some grand waxen lady in silks and satins for you."

So back to the big house the two went, and sure enough, up in his children's nursery he managed to discover a few prettily dressed dolls. With these safely tucked in her perambulator the little girl trotted off.

But it is in the sequel that the best part of the story lies. The child's heart was set on making some return for this kindness, so her parents, who had not the faintest suspicion of her friend's personality, took her to town to choose something. Her choice fell eventually upon a gorgeously bound book.

When Dickens the next day undid the parcel his small visitor brought him he was surprised and delighted to see a copy of "David Copperfield."

Not until many years later, when they met again in society, did the little girl learn who the "kind gentleman" was.

## CORRECTED, AND YET—

In your first edition, said the judge's henchman, you say: Judge Booz, throughout yesterday's session of court, was as drunk as it was possible for him to be. He was sober, and I want you to correct it.

All right, replied the editor of the Evening Wasp. We'll, change it in our next edition. You're welcome, Good day, sir. Pause. Mr. Copikutter, strike out drunk and insert sober in that paragraph.

## GROWING GIRLS

SHOULD BE BRIGHT, CHEERFUL, ACTIVE AND STRONG.

A Great Responsibility Rests Upon Mothers at This Period as It Involves Their Daughter's Future Happiness or Misery—Some Useful Hints.

Rosy cheeks, bright eyes, an elastic step, and a good appetite, are the birthright of every girl. These are the condition that bespeak perfect health. But unfortunately this is not the conditions of thousands of growing girls. On every side may be seen girls with pale or sallow complexion, languid, stoop shouldered, and listless. Doctors will tell them that they are anaemic, or in other words that their blood is poor, thin and watery. If further questioned they will tell them that this condition leads to decline, consumption and the grave. What is needed is a medicine that will make new, rich, red blood, strengthen the nerves and thus restore the vigor, brightness and hopefulness of youth. For this purpose no other discovery in the annals of medicine can equal Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, and thousands of once hopeless girls have been made bright, active and strong through their use. Among those who have been brought back almost from the grave by the use of this medicine is Miss M. C. Marceaux, of St. Lambert de Levis, Que. Miss Marceaux says: "It gives me the greatest pleasure to speak of the benefit I have experienced from the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. For some years I resided in Wisconsin with a relative, where I devoted my time studying English and music, intending to make the teaching of the latter my profession. I was never very strong, and my studies fatigued me much. When about fourteen I became very pale, suffered from severe headaches, and weakness. I consulted a doctor, and acting on his advice, returned to Canada. The fatigue of the journey, however, made me worse, and finally I got so weak that I could not walk without help. I was extremely pale, my eye-lids were swollen, I had continuous headaches, and was so nervous that the least noise would set my heart beating violently. I almost loathed food and my weight was reduced to ninety-five pounds. Neither doctor's medicine nor anything else that I had taken up to that time seemed of the slightest benefit. I was confined to bed for nearly a year and I thought that nothing but death could end my sufferings. Happily an acquaintance of my father's one day brought me a box of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and urged me to try them. I did so, and I thought they helped me some, and my father got more. After I had used a few boxes all my friends could see they were helping me, and by the time I had taken nine boxes I was enjoying better health than I had ever had in my life before, and had gained fifteen pounds in weight. I tell you this out of gratitude so that other young girls who may be weak and sickly may know the way to regain their health."

Girls who are just entering womanhood are at the most critical period of their lives. Upon the care of receive depends their future happiness. Neglect may mean either an early grave or a life of misery. If mothers would insist that their growing daughters use Dr. Williams' Pink Pills occasionally, rich blood, strong nerves, and good health would follow. If your dealer does not keep these pills in stock they will be sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

## LISTENING AT A SALARY.

The candidate, a man who thought himself a fit personage to become an M.P., was giving the first speech of the campaign.

The hall was at first comfortably full, but the audience was not long in finding out with whom they had to do, and began to go out one by one. At last only one remained, and he listened with great attention, thus encouraging the speaker to continue. At the end of half an hour the speaker stopped and politely asked:

I beg your pardon, sir, but I hope I am not trespassing on your kindness. I shall have finished in ten minutes.

Ten minutes? You can go on for another hour, or all night if you like, so long as you don't forget that you engaged me by the hour!

Then the unhappy man perceived too late that it was the caddy who had driven him to the hall.