

Heiress and Wife.

CHAPTER XXVII.—Continued.

The remark was so unexpected Rex seemed for a few moments to be unable to reply to it. Looking at the eager, expectant face turned toward him, it appeared ungenerous and unkind not to give her one affectionate word. Yet he did not know how to say it; he had never spoken a loving word to any one except Daisy, his fair little child-bride.

He tried hard to put the memory of Daisy away from him as he answered:

"The question is so important that most probably I thought more of it than of any words which should go with it."

"Oh, that is it," returned Pluma, with a wistful little laugh. "Most men, when they ask women to marry them, say something of love, do they not?"

"Yes," he replied, absently.

"You have had no experience," laughed Pluma, archly.

She was sorely disappointed. She had gone over in her own imagination this very scene a thousand times, of the supreme moment he would clasp his arms around her, telling her in glowing, passionate words how dearly he loved her and how wretched his life would be without her. He did nothing of the kind.

Rex was thinking he would have given anything to have been able to make love to her—anything for the power of saying tender words—she looked so loving.

Her dark, beautiful face was so near him, and her graceful figure so close, that he could have wound his arm around her, but he did not. In spite of every resolve, he thought of Daisy the whole time. How different that other love-making had been! How his heart throbbed, and every endearing name he could think of trembling on his lips, as he strained Daisy to his heart when she had bashfully consented to be his wife!

That love-making was real substance; this one was only the shadow of love.

"You have not answered my question, Pluma. Will you be my wife?"

Pluma raised her dark, beautiful face, radiant with the light of love, to his.

"If I consent will you promise to love me better than anything else or any one in the wide world?"

"I will devote my whole life to you, study your every wish," he answered, evasively.

How was she to know he had given all his heart to Daisy?

She held out her hands to him with a charming gesture of affection. He took them and kissed them; he could do neither more or less.

"I will be your wife, Rex," she said with a tremulous, wistful sigh.

"Thank you, Pluma," he returned, gently, bending down and kissing the beautiful crimson lips; "you shall never regret it. You are so kind, I am going to impose on your good nature. You have promised me you will be my wife—when may I claim you, Pluma?"

"Do you wish it to be soon?" she asked, hesitatingly, wondering how he would answer her.

"Yes," he said, absently; "the sooner it is over the better I shall be pleased."

She looked up into his face, at a loss how to interpret the words.

"You shall set the day, Rex," she replied.

"I have your father's consent that it may take place just as soon as possible, in case you promised to marry me," he said. "Suppose it takes place in a fortnight, say—will that be too soon for you?"

She gave a little scream of surprise. "As soon as that?" she murmured; but ended by readily consenting.

He thanked her and kissed her once more. After a few quiet words they parted—she, happy in the glamour of her love-dream; he, praying to Heaven from the depths of his miserable heart, to give him strength to carry out the rash vow which had been wrung from his unwilling lips.

In his heart Rex knew no one but Daisy could ever reign. Dead, he was devoted to her memory.

His life was narrowing down. He was all kindness, consideration and devotion; but the one supreme magnet of all—love—was wanting.

In vain Pluma exerted all her wondrous powers of fascination to win him more completely. How little he dreamed of the depths of love which controlled that passionate heart, every throb of which was for him—that to have won from him one token of warm affection she would have given all she held dear in this world.

"How does it happen, Rex," she asked, one evening, "you have not asked me to sing to you since you have asked me to be your wife? Music used to be such a bond of sympathy between us."

There was both love and reproach in her voice. He heard neither. He had simply forgotten it.

"I have been thinking of other things, I presume. Allow me to make

up for it at once, however, by asking you if you will sing for me now."

The tears came to her dark, flashing eyes, but she forced them bravely back. She had hoped he would clasp her in his arms, whispering some sweet compliment, then say to her: "Darling, won't you sing to me now?" She swept toward the piano with the air of a queen.

"I want you to sit where I can see you, Rex," she demanded, prettily; "I like to watch your face when I sing you my favorite songs."

Rex drew his chair up close to the piano, laying his head back dreamily against the crimson cushions. He would not be obliged to talk; for once—just once—he would let his fancies roam where they would. He had often heard Pluma sing before, but never in the way she sung to-night. A low, thrilling, seductive voice full of pleading, passionate tenderness—a voice that whispered of the sweet irresistible power of love, that carried away the hearts of her listeners as a strong current carries a leaflet.

Was it a dream, or was it the night wind breathing the name of Daisy? The tears rose to his eyes, and he started to his feet, pale and trembling with agitation. Suddenly the music ceased.

"I did not think such a simple little melody had power to move you, she said.

"Is it a new song?" he asked. "I do not remember having heard it before. What is the title of it?"

He did not notice her face had grown slightly pale under the soft, pearly light of the gleaming lamps, as she held the music out toward him.

"It is a pretty title," she said, in her low, musical voice, "Daisies Growing over my Darling's Grave."

In the terrible look of agony that swept over his handsome face, Pluma read the secret of his life; the one secret she had dreaded stood as clearly revealed to her as though it had been stamped in glowing letters upon his brow. She would have stood little chance of being Rex's wife if Daisy Brooks had lived.

Who would have dreamed the beautiful, proud young heiress could have cursed the very memory of the young girl whom she believed to be dead—lying all unwept for in a neglected, lonely grave?

Rex felt sorely disturbed. He never remembered how the remainder of the evening passed. Ah, heavens! how his mind wandered back to that sweet love-dream so cruelly broken. A mist as of tears spread before his eyes, and shut the whole world from him as he glanced out of the window and up at the star-gemmed sky—that was his Daisy's home.

"I hope my little song has not cast a gloom over you, Rex?" she said, holding out her hands to him as she arose to bid him good-night—those small white hands upon one of which his engagement-ring glowed with a thousand prismatic hues.

"Why should it?" he asked, attempting to laugh lightly, I admired it perhaps, more than any other I have ever heard you sing."

Pluma well knew why.

"It was suggested to me by a strange occurrence. Shall I relate it to you, Rex?"

He made some indistinct answer, little dreaming of how wofully the little anecdote would affect him.

"I do not like to bring up old, unpleasant subjects, Rex. But do you remember, what the only quarrel we ever had was about, or rather who it was about?"

He looked at her in surprise; he had not the least idea of what she alluded to.

"Do you remember what a romantic interest you once took in our overseer's niece—the one who eloped with Lester Stanwick from boarding-school—the one whose death we afterward read of? Her name was Daisy—Daisy Brooks."

If she had suddenly plunged a dagger into his heart with her white jeweled hands he could not have been more cruelly startled. He could have cried aloud with the sharp pain of unutterable anguish that memory brought him. His answer was a bow; he dared not look up lest the haggard pain of his face should betray him.

"Her uncle, he was no relation, I believe, but she called him that, was more fond of her than words can express. I was driving along by an unfrequented road to-day when I came across a strange, pathetic sight. The poor old man was putting the last touches to a plain wooden cross he tree, which bore the simple words: 'Had just erected under a magnolia—To the memory of Daisy Brooks, aged sixteen years.' Around the cross the grass was thickly sown with daisies."

"She does not rest here," the old man said, drawing his rough sleeve across his tear-dimmed eyes; "but the poor little girl loved this spot best of any."

Pluma wondered why Rex took her just then in his arms for the first time and kissed her. He was thanking her in his heart; he could have knelt to her for the kind way she had spoken of Daisy.

A little later he was standing by the open window of his own room in the moonlight.

"My God!" he cried, burying his face in his hands, "this poor John Brooks did what I, her husband, should have done; but it is not too late now. I shall honor your memory, my darling; I shall have a costly marble monument erected to your memory, bearing the ashes of dead hope. He sealed the memory of Daisy, beloved wife of Rex Lyon, aged sixteen years. Not Daisy Brooks, but Daisy Lyon. Mother is dead, what can secrecy avail now?"

He would not tell Pluma until the last moment. Straightway he ordered a magnificent monument from Baltimore—one of pure unblemished white, with an angel with drooping wings overlooking the tall white pillar.

When it arrived he meant to take Pluma there, and, reverently kneeling down before her, tell her all the story of his sweet, sad love-dream with his face pressed close against the cold, pulseless marble—tell her of the love-dream which had left him but ashes of dead hope. He sealed the letter and placed it with the outgoing morning mail.

"Darling, how I wish I had not parted from you that night!" he sighed.

How bitterly he regretted he could not live that one brief hour of his past life over again—how differently he would act.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

While Rex was penning his all-important letter in his room, Pluma was walking restlessly to and fro in her boudoir, conning over in her mind the events of the evening.

Rex had asked her to be his wife, but she stood face to face with the truth at last—he did not love her. It was not only a blow of the keenest and cruellest kind to her affection, but it was the cruellest blow her vanity could possibly have received.

To think that she, the wealthy, petted heiress, who counted her admirers by the score, should have tried so hard to win the love of this one man and have failed; that her beauty, her grace, her wit, and her talent had been lavished upon him, and lavished in vain. "Was that simple girl, with her shy, timid, shrinking manner, more lovable than I?" she asked herself, incredulously.

She could not realize it—she, whose name was on the lips of men, who praised her as the queen of beauty, and whom fair women envied as one who had but to will to win.

It seemed to her a cruel mockery of fate that she, who had everything the world could give—beauty and fortune—should ask but this one gift, and that it should be refused her—the love of the man who had asked her to be his wife.

Was it possible that he should learn to love her?

She told herself that she should

take courage, that she would persevere, that her great love must in time prevail.

"I must never let him find me dull or unhappy," she thought, "I must carefully hide all traces of pique or annoyance."

She would do her best to entertain him, and make it the study of her life to win his love.

She watched the stars until they faded from the skies, then buried her face in her pillow, falling into an uneasy slumber, through which a beautiful, flower-like, girlish face floated, and a slight, delicate form knelt at her feet holding her arms out imploringly, sobbing out:—

"Do not take him from me—he is my world—I love him!"

And with a heart racked by terrible jealousy, Pluma, turned uneasily on her pillow and opened her eyes. The stars were still glimmering in the moonlight sky.

"Is the face of Daisy Brooks ever to haunt me thus?" she cried out, impatiently. "How was I to know she was to die?" she muttered, excitedly. "I simply meant to have Stanwick abduct her from the seminary that Rex might believe him her lover and turn to me for sympathy. I will not think of it," she cried; "I am not one to flinch from a course of action I have marked out for myself, no matter what the consequences may be, if I only gain Rex's love."

And Pluma, the bride soon to be, turned her flushed face again to the wall to dream again of Daisy Brooks.

She little dreamed Rex, too, was watching the stars, as wakeful as she, thinking of the past.

Then he prayed Heaven to help him, so that no unworthy thought should enter his mind. After that he slept, and one of the most painful days of his life was ended.

The days at Whitestone Hall flew by on rapid wings in a round of gaiety. The Hall was crowded with young folks, who were to remain until after the marriage. Dinner parties were followed by May-pole dances out on the green lawns, and by charades and balls in the evening. The old Hall had never echoed with such frolicsome mirth before. Rex plunged into the excitement with strange zest. No one guessed that beneath his winning, careless smile his heart was almost breaking.

One morning Pluma was standing alone on the vine-covered terrace, waiting for Rex, who had gone out to try a beautiful spirited horse that had just been added to the stables of Whitestone Hall. She noticed he had taken the unfrequented road the magnolia-trees shaded.

That fact bore no significance, certainly; still there was a strong feeling of jealousy in her heart as she remembered that little wooden cross he would be obliged to pass. Would he stop there? She could not tell.

"How I love him—and how foolish I am!" she laughed, nervously. "I have no rival, yet I am jealous of his very thoughts, lest they dwell on any one else but myself. I do not see how it is," she said, thoughtfully, to herself, "why people laugh at love, and think it weakness or a girl's sentimental folly. Why, it is the strongest of human passions!"

To Be Continued.

BRITISH TELEGRAPHERS PRAISED.

Especially Good Work Done by Them in the Field in South Africa.

British telegraphers have recently received a good many compliments. The King has thanked them for the services they rendered at Osborne and at Windsor during the last illness of Queen Victoria, and the German Emperor has decorated Charles Mullens, the operator who was sent from London to work the cable laid temporarily from the imperial yacht Hohenzollern to the shore.

The cross bestowed on Mullens is a handsome piece of work. On the front is the imperial monogram W.R., surmounted by a Crown, and on the back is an inscription setting forth that the recipient had rendered service to the State. If Mr. Mullens should ever care to settle down in Germany the cross will entitle him to draw a modest pension.

Equally gratifying to the telegraphers is the emphatic testimony to the excellence of their work during the war in South Africa. Field Marshal Lord Roberts, in the full despatches just published in the official London Gazette, says that, despite the enormous difficulties of the country traversed, his telegraphers almost always managed to keep him in communication with all his scattered forces in the enemy's country.

Gen. Buller writes of their technical knowledge, their unwearied perseverance and their high state of efficiency, adding "all officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Telegraph Department have done exceptionally well. The only fault I have to find with them has been that they have been sometimes too anxious to keep their line up and have incurred undue risk."

Gen. Sir George White declares that the service of the telegraphers during the historic siege "was of the highest value and conducted greatly to the successful defence of Ladysmith." The use which Gen. Baden Powell made of his small band of telegraphers is by this time pretty well known. All his outlying forts and lookout posts at Mafeking were connected with headquarters, and he was thus able to receive reports and issue orders for all parts of the defence instantaneously. Signalling was reduced to a fine art and maintained by heliograph lamp and flag. Megaphones were also made and used in outlying trenches and posts, and phonophores, attached to ordinary telegraph lines, were used on the armored trains which used to bother the Boers so much.

A FATHER'S STORY.

He Tells How His Son Regained Health and Strength.

Had His Spine Injured and for Two Years Was Unable to do Any Work and for Most of the Time Was Confined to the House.

Mr. M. D'Entremont, a well known farmer living at West Pubnico, N.S., writes:—"I believe it is only right that I should let you know the benefit your medicine—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills—have been to my son, Constant, sixteen years of age. For several years he was almost a constant invalid, the result of an injury to his spine while working with his brothers on the farm. He grew weak and listless, had no appetite, and for two years was unable to work and was for the most of the time confined to the house, and for a part of the time to his bed. He suffered considerably from pains in the back; his legs were weak; and he had frequent headaches. At different times he was attended by two doctors, but got no benefit from the treatment. Then I procured an electric belt for him, but it was simply money wasted as it did not do him a particle of good. One day while my son was reading a newspaper he came across an article telling of a cure in a somewhat similar case through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and he then decided to give them a trial. After the second box was taken there was a marked improvement in his condition. He continued the use of the pills until he had taken eight boxes, and they have restored him to health. His appetite has returned; the pain has left his back; he has gained flesh; is able to ride a bicycle, enjoys life and is able to do a day's work as well as any one of his age. This letter is given gladly so that others may learn the merits of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and find a cure if ailing."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure such cases as the one noted above because they create new, rich, red blood, thus strengthening weak and shattered nerves. They do not purge and weaken like other medicines, but strengthen from the first dose to the last. Sold by all dealers in medicine or sent post paid at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

IN THE QUEEN'S LIFETIME.

Ladies who attended drawing-rooms kissed the queen's hand only at their first presentation.

One of her majesty's special treasures was a little white marble bust of herself at the age of ten years.

Her majesty had three crowns. The lightest weighs eight ounces, and has in it 2,073 white diamonds and 523 rose-brilliant.

On every occasion on which the queen visited the house of lords the state crown was borne before her majesty on a cushion.

It was on the day of the queen's birth, May 24, 1819, that the first trans-Atlantic steamer started from Savannah for Liverpool.

Twenty-two dolls' cushions, made by the queen when ten years old, are still in existence. So is her favorite toy book, called, "Ellen; or the Naughty Girl Reclaimed," and published in 1811.

Queen Victoria received about \$120,000,000 from the British nation in payment of her official salary. This would make about 170 tons of gold in English sovereigns or more than two tons of gold for each year of her reign.

The queen's entry in the duchess of Fife's book of "Likes and Dislikes" runs thus: "God has been so good to me, and given me so much to make me happy during my life, that now, in my old age, I will not confess that I have any dislikes."

The queen owned 11 yachts during her reign—the "Royal Charlotte," "Royal Sovereign," "William and Mary," "Royal George," first "Victoria and Albert," "Fairy," "Elfin," second "Victoria and Albert," "Alberta," "Osborne," third "Victoria and Albert."

HOW TO KEEP STEEL BRIGHT.

To remove rust from steel, put the article, if possible, in a dish of kerosene oil or else wrap the steel in a cloth saturated with the oil. Leave it a day or two. Then apply, if the spot is obstinate, salt wet with hot vinegar or scour with brickdust. Rinse thoroughly in hot water and dry with a flannel cloth, giving a last polish with a clean flannel and a little sweet oil.

SPRING LASSITUDE

And all the Debility and Depression of This Trying Season can be Avoided by the Use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food.

Of all preparations for purifying and enriching the blood and toning up the system in spring, or after a long illness, none can approach in specific medical action the wonderful properties of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, the great blood builder and nerve restorative.

Unlike any remedy you ever used, it exerts a natural and gentle influence over the kidneys, liver and bowels, restoring them to a condition of perfect health and regularity, and through the medium of the circulation of the blood gives new life and vivifying energy to each and every part of the human frame.

You may have made the mistake of using salts or other strong and weakening purgatives in the spring. Such treatment can never build up and strengthen a weakened and run-down system. The habitual use of salts does more to shorten life and hasten the ruin of the filtering and excretory organs than any custom you can name.

The blood is thin and watery in the spring and demands of nature just such restorative ingredients as are

contained in Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and hence the popularity of this famous food cure. Instead of tearing down the tissues of the body, it builds them up, renews the nerve cells, forms firm muscles, increases weight, and gives color to the cheeks and elasticity to the movements.

You can keep well this spring and avoid the feelings of lassitude and depression by beginning at once to use Dr. Chase's Nerve Food. It is the most common sense treatment that science ever devised, and on account of its gentle and constant upbuilding influence can be used with pleasure and comfort by men, women and children.

There will be no pimples, humors or skin eruptions if you keep the blood pure. No craving of the blood and nerves for nourishment if you use this favorite prescription of Dr. A. W. Chase. The pains, aches, weaknesses and irregularities of other springs will be unknown to you if you reconstruct and reinvigorate the system by the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, Fifty cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Company, Toronto.