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Heiress and Wife.

CHAPTER II.

One bright May morning some sixteen years later, the golden sunshine was just putting forth its first crimson rays, lighting up the ivy-grown turrets of Whitestone Hall, and shining upon a little white cottage nestling in a bower of green leaves far to the right of it, where dwelt John Brooks, the overseer of the Hurlhurst plantation.

For sixteen years the grand old house had remained closed—the plantation being placed in charge of a careful overseer. Once again Whitestone Hall was thrown open to welcome the master, Basil Hurlhurst, who had returned from abroad, bringing with him his beautiful daughter and a party of friends.

The interior of the little cottage was as bright with bustling activity. It was five o'clock; the chimes had played the hour; the laborers were going to the fields, and the dairy-maids were beginning their work.

In the door-way of the cottage stood a tall, angular woman, shading her flushed and heated face from the sun's rays with her hand.

"Daisy, Daisy!" she calls, in a harsh, rasping voice, "where are you, you good-for-nothing lazy girl! Come into the house directly, I say." Her voice died away over the white stretches of waving cotton, but no Daisy came. "Here's a pretty go," she cried, turning into the room where her brother sat calmly finishing his morning meal, "a pretty go, indeed! I promised Miss Pluma those white mulls should be sent over to her the first thing in the morning. She will be in a towering rage, and no wonder, and like enough you'll lose your place, John Brooks, and 'twill serve you right, too, for encouraging that lazy girl in her idleness."

"Don't be too hard on little Daisy, Septima," answered John Brooks, timidly, reaching for his hat. "She will have the dresses at the Hall in good time, I'll warrant."

"Too hard, indeed; that's just like you men; no feeling for your poor, overworked sister, so long as that girl has an easy life of it. It was a sorry day for me when your aunt Taiza died, leaving this girl to our care. A deep flush mantled John Brooks' face, but he made no retort, while Septima energetically piled the white fluted laces in the huge basket—piled it full to the brim, until her arm ached with the weight of it—the basket which was to play such a fatal part in the truant Daisy's life—the life which for sixteen short years had been so monotonous.

Over the corn-fields half hid by the clover came a young girl tripping lightly along. John Brooks paused in the path as he caught sight of her. "Poor, innocent little Daisy!" he muttered half under his breath, as he gazed at her quite unseen.

Transferred to canvas, it would have immortalized a painter. No wonder the man's heart softened as he gazed. He saw a glitter of golden curls, and the scarlet gleam of a mantle—a young girl, tall and slender with rounded, supple limbs, and a figure graceful in every line and curve—while her arms, bare to the elbow, would have charmed a sculptor. Cheek and lips were a glowing rosy red—while her eyes, of the deepest and darkest blue, were the merriest that ever gazed up to the summer sunshine.

Suddenly from over the trees there came the sound of the great bell at the Hall. Daisy stood quite still in alarm.

"It is five o'clock!" she cried. "What shall I do? Aunt Septima will be so angry with me; she promised Miss Pluma her white dresses should be at the Hall by five, and it is that already!"

Poor little Daisy! no wonder her heart throbbed painfully and the look of fear deepened in her blue eyes as she sped rapidly up the path that led to the little cottage where Septima grimly awaited her with flushed face and flashing eyes.

"So," she said, harshly, "you are come at last, are you? and a pretty fright you have given me. You shall answer to Miss Pluma herself for this. I dare say you will never attempt to offend her a second time."

"Indeed, Aunt Septima, I never dreamed it was so late," cried conscious Daisy. "I was watching the sun rise over the cotton-fields, and watching the dewdrops glittering on the corn, thinking of the beautiful heiress of Whitestone Hall. I am so sorry I forgot about the dresses."

Hastily catching up the heavy basket, she hurried quickly down the path, like a startled deer, to escape the volley of wrath the indignant spinster hurled after her.

It was a beautiful morning; no cloud was in the smiling heavens; the sun shone brightly, and the great oak and cedar-trees that skirted the roadside seemed to thrill with the song of birds. Butterflies spread

their light wings and coquetted with the fragrant blossoms, and busy humming-bees buried themselves in the heart of the crimson wild rose. The basket was very heavy, and poor little Daisy's hands ached with the weight of it.

"If I might but rest for a few moments only," she said to herself, "sighing the cool, shady grass by the roadside. 'Surely a moment or two will not matter. Oh, dear, I am so tired!'"

She sat the basket down on the cool, green grass, flinging herself beside it beneath the grateful shade of a blossoming magnolia-tree, resting her golden head against the basket of filmy laces that were to adorn the beautiful heiress of whom she had heard so much, yet never seen, and of whom every one felt in such awe.

She looked wistfully at the great mansion in the distance, thinking how differently her own life had been.

The soft, wooing breeze fanned her cheeks, tossing about her golden curls in wanton sport. It was so pleasant to sit there in the dreamy silence watching the white fleecy clouds, the birds, and the flowers, it was little wonder the swift-winged moments flew heedlessly by. Slowly the white lids drooped over the light-blue eyes, the long, golden lashes lay against the rosy cheeks, the ripe lips parted in a smile—all unheeded were the fluted laces—Daisy slept. Oh, cruel breeze—oh, fatal wooing breeze to have inhaled hapless Daisy in your soft embrace!

Over the hills came the sound of baying hounds, followed by a quick, springy step through the crackling underbrush, as a young man in close-fitting velvet hunting-suit and jaunty velvet cap emerged from the thicket toward the main road.

As he parted the magnolia branches the hound sprang quickly forward at some object beneath the tree, with a low, hoarse growl.

"Down, Towser, down!" cried Rex Lyon, leaping lightly over some intervening brushwood. "What kind of game have we here? 'Whew!' he ejaculated, surprised; "a young girl, as pretty as a picture, and by the eternal, fast asleep, too!"

Still Daisy slept on, utterly unconscious of the handsome brown eyes that were regarding her so admiringly.

"I have often heard of fairies, but this is the first time I have ever caught one napping under the trees. I wonder who she is anyhow? Surely she can't be some drudging farmer's daughter with a form and face like that?" he mused, suspiciously eyeing the basket of freshly laundered laces against which the flushed cheeks and waving golden hair rested.

Just then his ludicrous position struck him forcibly.

"Come, Towser," he said, "it would never do for you and me to be caught staring at this pretty wood-nymph so rudely, if she should by chance awaken just now."

Tightening the strap of his game-bag over his shoulder, and readjusting his velvet cap jauntily over his brown curls, Rex was about to resume his journey in the direction of Whitestone Hall, when the sound of rapidly approaching carriage-wheels fell upon his ears. Realizing his awkward position, Rex knew the wisest course he could possibly pursue would be to screen himself behind the magnolia branches until the vehicle should pass. The next instant a pair of prancing ponies, attached to a basket phaeton, in which sat a young girl, who held them well in check, dashed rapidly up the road, Rex could scarcely repress an exclamation of surprise as he saw the occupant was his young hostess, Pluma Hurlhurst, of Whitestone Hall. She drew rein directly in front of the sleeping girl, and Rex Lyon never forgot, to his dying day, the discordant laugh that broke from her red lips—a laugh which caused Daisy to start from her slumber in wild alarm, scattering the snowy contents of the basket in all directions.

For a single instant their eyes met—these two girls, whose lives were to cross each other so strangely—poor Daisy, like a frightened bird, as she guessed intuitively at the identity of the other; Pluma, haughty, derisive, and scornfully mocking.

"You are the person whom Miss Brooks sent to Whitestone Hall with my mull dresses some three hours since, I presume. May I ask what detained you?"

Poor Daisy was quite crestfallen; great tearsdrops trembled on her long lashes. How could she answer? She had fallen asleep, wooed by the lulling breeze and the sunshine.

"The basket was so heavy," she answered, timidly, "and I—I sat down to rest a few minutes, and—"

"Further explanation is quite unnecessary," retorted Pluma, sharply, gathering up her reins. "See that

you have those things at the Hall within ten minutes; not an instant later."

Touching the prancing ponies with her ivory-handled whip, the haughty young heiress whirled leisurely down the road, leaving Daisy, with flushed face and tear-dimmed eyes, gazing after her.

"Oh, dear, I wish I had never been born," she sobbed, flinging herself down on her knees, and burying her face in the long, cool grass. No one ever speaks a kind word to me but poor old Uncle John, and even he dare not be kind when Aunt Septima is near. She might have taken this heavy basket in her carriage," sighed Daisy, bravely lifting the heavy burden in her delicate arms.

"That is just what I think," muttered Rex Lyon from his place of concealment, savagely biting his lip.

In another moment he was by her side.

"Pardon me," he said, deferentially raising his cap from his glossy curls, "that basket is too heavy for your slender arms. Allow me to assist you."

In a moment the young girl stood up, and made the prettiest and most graceful of courtesies as she raised to his face he never forgot. Involuntarily he raised his cap again in homage to her youth, and her shy sweet beauty.

"No; I thank you, sir, I have not far to carry the basket," she replied, in a voice sweet as the chiming of silver bells—a voice that thrilled him, he could not tell why.

A sudden desire possessed Rex to know who she was and from whence she came.

"Do you live at the Hall?" he asked.

"No," she replied, "I am Daisy Brooks, the overseer's niece."

"Daisy Brooks," said Rex, musingly. "What a pretty name! How well it suits you!"

He watched the crimson blushes that dyed her fair young face—she never once raised her dark-blue eyes to his. The more Rex looked at her the more he admired this coy, bewitching, pretty little maiden. She made a fair picture under the boughs of the magnolia-tree, thick with odorous pink-and-white tinted blossoms, the sunbeams falling on her golden hair.

The sunshine or the gentle southern wind brought Rex no warning he was forging the first links of a dreadful tragedy. He thought only of the shy blushing beauty and coy grace of the young girl—be never dreamed of the hour when he should look back to that moment, wondering at his own blind folly, with a curse on his lips.

Again from over the trees came the sound of the great bell from the Hall.

"It is eight o'clock," cried Daisy, in alarm. "Miss Pluma will be so angry with me."

"Angry!" said Rex; "angry with you! For what?"

"She is waiting for the mull dresses," replied Daisy.

It was a strange idea to him that any one should dare be angry with this pretty gentle Daisy.

"You will at least permit me to carry your basket as far as the gate," he said, shouldering her burden without waiting for a reply. Daisy had no choice but to follow him. "There," said Rex, setting the basket down by the plantation gate, which they had reached all too soon, "you must go, I suppose. It seems hard to leave the bright sunshine to go indoors."

"I—I shall soon return," said Daisy, with innocent frankness.

"Shall you?" cried Rex. "Will you return home by the same path?"

"Yes," she replied, "if Miss Pluma does not need me."

"Good-bye, Daisy," he said. "I shall see you again."

He held out his hand and her little fingers trembled and fluttered in his clasp. Daisy looked so happy yet so frightened, so charming yet so shy.

Rex hardly knew how to define the feeling that stirred in his heart.

He watched the graceful, fairy figure as Daisy tripped a way—instead of thinking he had done a very foolish thing that bright morning. Rex lighted a cigar and fell to dreaming of sweet little Daisy Brooks, and wondering how he should pass the time until he should see her again.

While Daisy almost flew up the broad gravel path to the house, the heavy burden she bore seemed light as a feather—no thought that she had been imprudent ever entered her mind.

There was no one to warn her of the peril which lay in the witching depths of the handsome stranger's glances.

All her young life she had dreamed of the hero who would one day come to her, just such a dream as all youthful maidens experience—an idol they enshrine in their innermost heart, and worship in secret, never dreaming of a cold, dark time when the idol may lie shattered in ruins at their feet. How little knew gentle Daisy Brooks of the fatal love which would drag her down to her doom!

(To Be Continued.)

The Young Grow Old Before Their Time.

When youth shows infirmity, when old age creeps in before its time, when the days that should be the best of manhood and womanhood are burdened with aches, pain and weakness, we know that the nervous system is wearing out and that there is imminent danger of nervous prostration, paralysis, locomotor ataxia or insanity.

How we admire the old in years—crowned with silver hair, yet erect in stature, faculties retained with vigor necessary to the declining years—cheerful, bright, grand old age. How lamentable is youthful infirmity, middle-aged enfeeblement, parting of the ways too soon, told by restlessness, starting up violently during sleep, morning languor, tired, fagged, worn-out; trembling limbs, worried brain, mind aimless and dejected.

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IT WILL PURIFY AIR.

Important Quality of Sodium Bioxide Discovered by French Savants.

Two French chemists, Drs. Desgrez and Balthazard, have recently made a discovery that may, in its effects, prove to be one of the important scientific events of the century. They have shown that, by a property hitherto unsuspected, bioxide of sodium will purify and re-purify air indefinitely. This means, roughly speaking, the removal of the chief obstacle to submarine work and to all other pursuits requiring a constant renewal of air by mechanical means. Its commercial value along many lines can hardly be estimated.

To the credit of several mice, forgotten and left to die, the discovery must be credited. In the laboratory of the two distinguished chemists the little rodents had been placed for some experiments, in a closed glass globe, and then forgotten. In the nature of things the air of the globe should have been soon exhausted, and the mice have perished of asphyxiation. Great was the amazement of the chemists, therefore, when, several days later, they had occasion to use the globe, and found the mice still alive; somewhat thin, to be sure, but exhibiting no difficulty in their breathing. Casting about for some explanation of the mystery they decided in lieu of any other enlightenment, that a small block of bioxide of mercury which had been left in the globe must have wrought the miracle of the unexpected prolongation of life. They tested the matter. Rabbits and dogs were shut up with a block of the bioxide in hermetically sealed glass receptacles just large enough to hold sufficient air for half an hour or so. After five hours and a half the animals were still breathing regularly and placidly just as if they were in the open air.

Then it was decided to experiment with human subjects. A diver's helmet was constructed with a lining of the bioxide of sodium. The air capacity of the helmet was only about five pints, but the air being purified and oxygenized by the action of the chemical, the wearer was able to remain under water for an indefinite period.

There was no longer any room for doubt that a discovery had been made which, while of extraordinary simplicity, will be an invaluable aid to progress and to the comfort of life. It was shown by chemical experiments that wherever carbonic acid gas is present, bioxide of sodium fastens on it avidly to get at the carbon and combine with it. Incidentally a proportionate quantity of pure oxygen is set free. That is to say, the bioxide of sodium is the most efficient scavenger of vitiated air yet discovered. It needs no preparation of any kind; its mere presence suffices; and it is absolutely insatiable. As long as there is a morsel of the bioxide left and the tiniest whiff of carbonic acid gas for it to play on, it continues its purifying march.

Perhaps one of the most interesting applications of the newly learned properties of the bioxide will be in the development of submarine navigation. Experts claim that the oxygenizing compound will solve at once the difficulty of providing under-sea vessels with a constant supply of fresh air at normal pressure.

On land the uses to which the bioxide may be put are endless. It will be used to purify the air in hospitals. Mining operations will be rendered much more safe by its use. Crowded factory rooms can be kept always full of fresh, sweet air. In theatres and places of public meeting people can breathe freely again. In schools children will be brighter and healthier for its presence.

It has been pointed out, also, that the bioxide will dispense with the need of opening windows in winter time. Instead of losing three-quarters of the artificial heat of our rooms through windows opened for ventilation we may if we like keep our apartments hermetically closed from November until May, and have a constantly equable temperature with no fear of sudden chill; the air, none the less, always perfectly pure, and the coal bill cut down to one-fourth of the present amount.

The two chemists to whom the scientific world owes its new knowledge of the air-purifying qualities of the bioxide frankly admit that the discovery was pure chance.

"That is the great joy of scientific work," said Dr. Desgrez to a gathering of his fellow savants; "that any day in the most accidental manner one may hit upon the most surprising secrets of nature, and when a million such discoveries have been made there will still be millions more to make."

Mrs. Millions—the clergyman spoke quite bitterly of the extravagant entertainments given by wealthy members of the congregation. Millions—Did he mention any name? Mrs. Millions, with a sigh—No; he didn't mention a single name.

Do not, when narrating an incident, continually say "you see," "you know" &c.

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