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BY MARY J. HOLMES.

CHAPTER VI.

Katy Lennox had been very sick, and the bed where Wilford slept had stood in the parlor during the long weeks while the obstinate fever ran its course; but she was better now, and sat nearly all day before the fire, sometimes trying to crochet a little, and again turning over the books, which Morris had brought to interest her—Morris, the kind physician, who had attended her so faithfully, never leaving her while the fever was at its height, unless it was necessary, but staying with her day and night, watching her symptoms carefully, and praying so earnestly that she might not die, not, at least, until some token had been given that again in the better world he should find her, where partings were unknown, and where no Wilford Cameron could contest the prize with him. Not that he was greatly afraid of Wilford now; that fear had died away just as the hope she would never meet him again.

Since the September morning when he had left her, she had not heard from him except once, when in the winter, Morris had been to New York, and having a few hours' leisure on his hands, had called at Wilford's office, receiving a most cordial reception, and meeting with Mark Ray, who impressed him as a man quite as highly cultured as Wilford, and possessed of more character and principle. This call was not altogether of Morris's seeking, but was made rather with a view to pleasing Katy, who, when she learned that he was going to New York, had said inadvertently, "Oh, I do so hope you'll meet with Mr. Cameron, for then we shall know that he is neither sick nor dead, as I have sometimes feared."

And so Morris had sought his rival, feeling repaid for the effort it had cost him, when he saw how glad Wilford seemed to meet him. The first commonplaces over, Wilford inquired for Katy. Was she well, and how was she occupying her time this winter? "Both Helen and Katy are pupils of mine," Morris replied, "reciting their lessons to me every day when the weather will admit of their crossing the fields to Linwood. We have often wondered what had become of you, that you did not even let us know of your safe arrival home," he added, looking Wilford full in the eye and rather enjoying his confusion as he tried to apologize.

He had intended writing, but an unusual amount of business had occupied his time, and he turned appealingly to his partner, in whose expressive eyes Morris read that Silvertown was not unknown to him. But if Wilford had told him anything derogatory of the farm-house or its inmates, it did not appear in Mark Ray's manner, as he replied that Mr. Cameron had been very busy since his return from Silvertown, adding: "From what Cameron tells me of your neighborhood and fishing there, and I had last fall half a mind to try it."

This time there was something comical in the eyes turned so mischievously upon Wilford, who colored scarlet for an instant, but soon recovered his composure, and invited Morris home with him to dinner. "I shall not take a refusal," he said, as Morris began to decline. "Mother and the ladies will be delighted to see you again. Mark will go with us, of course."

There was something so hearty in Wilford's invitation that Morris did not again object, and two hours later found him in the drawing room at No. — Fifth Avenue, receiving the friendly greetings of Mrs. Cameron and her daughter, each of whom vied with the other in their polite attentions to him.

Morris did not regret having accepted Wilford's invitation to dinner, as by this means he saw the home which had well-nigh been little Katy Lennox. She would be sadly out of place here with these people, he thought, as he looked upon all their formality, and contrasted it with what Katy had been accustomed to. Juno would fill her out-right was his next mental comment, as he watched that naughty lady, dividing her courtesies between herself and Mr. Ray, who being in every way desirable, both in point of family and wealth, was evidently her favorite. She had colored scarlet when first presented to Dr. Grant, and her voice had trembled when she took his offered hand, for she remembered the time when her liking had not been concealed, and was only withdrawn at the last when she found how useless it was to waste her affections upon one who did not prize them.

When Wilford first returned from Silvertown, he had, as a sure means of forgetting Katy, told his mother and sisters something of the farm-house and its inmates; and Juno, while ridiculing both Helen and Katy, had felt a fierce pang of jealousy in knowing they were cousins to Morris Grant, who lived so near that he could, if he liked, see them everyday. In Paris, Juno had suspected that somebody was standing between her and Dr. Grant, and with the quick insight of a bright, smart woman, she guessed that it was one of these cousins—Katy, who was very brother having described Helen as coming to him, and for a time she had hated poor, innocent Katy

most cordially for having come between her and the only man for whom she had ever really cared. Gradually, however, the feeling died away, but was revived again at the sight of Morris Grant, and at the table she could not forbear saying to him: "By the way, Dr. Grant, why did you never tell us of those charming cousins, when you were in Paris? Brother Will describes one of them as like a little water-lily, is so fair and pretty. Katy, I think, is her name. Wilford, isn't it Katy Lennox whom you think so beautiful, and with whom you are more than half in love?" "Yes, it is Katy," and Wilford spoke sternly, for he did not like Juno's bantering tone, but he could not stop her, and she went on: "Are they your own cousins, Dr. Grant?" "No, they are removed from me two or three degrees, their father having been only second cousin." The fact that Katy Lennox was not nearly enough related to Dr. Grant to prevent his marrying her if he liked, did not improve Juno's amiability, and she continued to ask questions concerning both Katy and Helen, the later of whom she persisted in thinking was strong-minded, until Mark Ray came to the rescue, diverting her attention by adroitly complimenting her in some way, and so relieving Wilford and Morris, both of whom were exceedingly annoyed. "When Will visits Silvertown again, I mean to go with him," she said to Morris at parting, but he did not tell her that such an event would give him the greatest of pleasure. On the contrary he merely replied: "If you do you will find plenty of room at Linwood for those four trunks which I remember seeing in Paris, and your brother will tell you whether I am a hospitable host or not."

Biting her lip with chagrin, Juno went back to the drawing-room, while Morris returned to his hotel, accompanied by Wilford, who passed the entire evening with him, appearing somewhat constrained, as if there was something on his mind which he wished to say; but it remained unspoken, and there was no allusion to Silvertown, until, as Wilford was leaving, he said: "Remember me kindly to the Silvertown friends, and say I have not forgotten them."

ing out again somewhat darker than before, and lay in rings upon her head, making her look more childish than ever. But to this Morris did not object. He liked to have her a child, and he thought he had never seen her so beautiful as she was this morning, when with glowing cheeks and dancing eyes, she greeted him as he came in. "Oh, Dr. Morris!" she began holding up a letter she had in her hand. "I'm so glad you've come! Wilford has not forgotten me. He has written, and he is coming again. If I will let him; I am so glad! Ain't you? Seeing you knew all about it, and never told Helen, I'll let you read the letter."

And she held it toward the young man leaning against the mantel and panting for the breath which came so heavily. "Something he said apologetically about being snow-blind, for there was that day quite a fall of soft spring snow; and then, with a mighty effort which made his heart quiver with pain, Morris was himself once more, and took the letter in his hand. "Perhaps I ought not to read it," he said, but Katy insisted, and thinking to himself, "It will cure me sooner, perhaps," he read the few lines Wilford Cameron had written to his "dear little Katy."

That was the way he addressed her, going on to say that circumstances which he could not explain to her, had kept him silent ever since he left her the previous autumn; but through all he never for a moment had forgotten her, thinking of her the more for the silence he had maintained. "And now that I have risen above the circumstances," he added, in conclusion, "I will come to see you, if I may, just drop me one word, 'come,' and in less than a week I shall be there. Yours very truly, W. Cameron."

Morris read the letter through, feeling that every word was separating him farther and farther from Katy, to whom he said: "You will answer this?"

"Yes, oh yes; perhaps to-day." "And you will tell him to come?" "Why—what else should I tell him?" and Katy's blue eyes looked wonderingly at Morris, who hardly knew what he was doing, or why he said to her next, "Listen to me, Katy. You know why Wilford Cameron comes here a second time, and what he will probably ask you, and he goes away, but, Katy, you are not strong enough yet to see him under so exciting circumstances, and as your physician, I desire that you will let him wait at least three weeks before he comes. Will you do so, Katy?"

"That is just as Helen talked," said Wilford mournfully. "She said I was not able." "And will you heed us?" Morris asked again, while Katy after a moment consented, and glad of a respite from what he knew to a certainty would be, Morris dealt out her rapid pulse, but did not retain her hand within his own, nor lay his other upon her head, as he had sometimes done.

He could not do that now, and so he hurried away, finding the world into which he went far different from what it had seemed an hour ago. Then all was bright and hopeful, but now, alas! a darker night was gathering round him than any he had ever known, and the patients he visited that day marvelled at the whiteness of his face, asking if he were ill. Yes, he answered them truly, and for two days he was not seen again, but remained at home alone, where none but his God was witness to what he suffered; but when the third day came, he went again among his sick, grave, and unchanged in outward appearance, unless it was that his voice, always so kind, had now a kinder tone and his manner was tender, more sympathizing. Inwardly, however, there was a change for Morris Grant had laid himself upon the sacrificial altar, willing to be and to endure whatever God would eventually be for his Katy. To the farm-house he went every day, talking most with Helen now, but never forgetting who it was sitting so demurely in the armchair, or flitting about the room, for Katy was gaining rapidly. Love perhaps had nothing to do with her dangerous illness, but it had much to do with her recovery, and those how she improved, her cheeks growing round and full, and her eyes shining with returning health and happiness.

At Helen's instigation, Katy had deferred Wilford's visit four weeks instead of three, but in that time there had come two letters from him, so full of anxiety and sympathy for "his poor little Katy who had been so sick," that even Helen began to think that he was not so proud and heartless as she supposed, and that he did love her sister after all. "If I supposed he meant to deceive her I should wish I was a man to go with flashing eye, as we heard Katy exulting that he was coming 'to-morrow.'"

This time he would stop at Linwood, for Katy had asked Morris if he might, while Morris had told her yes, feeling his heart would harden if he would be to entertain his rival. Of himself Morris could do nothing, but with the help he never sought in vain, he could do all the best chamber, should be prepared for his guest, bidding Mrs. Hull see that no pains were spared for his entertainment, and then with last one in April, which would bring Dr. Morris Cameron a second time to Silvertown.

CHAPTER VII. Wilford Cameron had tried to forget Katy Lennox both for his sake and her own, for he foresaw that he could not be happy with that family, and he came to think it might be a wrong to her to transplant

her into a soil so wholly unfit for which her habits and affections had taken root. His father once had abruptly asked him if there was any truth in the report that he was about to marry and make a fool of himself, and when Wilford had answered "No," he had replied with a significant "Umph! Old enough, I should think, if you ever intend to marry, Wilford," and the old man faced square about, "I know nothing of the girl, except what I gathered from your mother and sisters. You have not asked my advice, I don't suppose you want it, but if you do, here it is. If you love the girl and she is respectable, marry her if she is as poor as poverty, and the daughter of a tinner; but if you don't love her, and he's as rich as a nabob, for thunder's sake keep away from her."

This was the elder Cameron's counsel, and Katy's cause rose fifty per cent, in consequence. Still Wilford was sadly disappointed, so much so, that his partner, Mark Ray, could not fail to observe that something was troubling him, and at last frankly asked what it was. Wilford confessed the whole, telling him far more of Silvertown than he had told his friend, and then asking what his friend would do were the case his own.

Fond of fun and frolic, Mark laughed immoderately of Wilford's description of Aunt Betsy bringing her "herring-bone" patch work into the parlor and telling him it was a part of Katy's "settin' out," but when it came to her hint for an invitation to visit New York, the amused young man roared with laughter, wishing so much that he might live to see the day when poor Aunt Betsy Barlow stood ringing for admittance at No. — Fifth Avenue.

"Wouldn't it be rich, though, the meeting between your Aunt Betsy and Juno?" and the tears fairly poured down the young man's face. But Wilford was too serious for trifling, and after his merriment had subsided, Mark talked with him candidly of Katy Lennox, whose cause he warmly espoused, telling Wilford that he was far too sensitive with regard to family and position.

"You are a good fellow on the whole, but too outrageously proud," he said. "Of course this Aunt Betsy in her pongee, whatever that might be, and the uncle in his shirt sleeves, and this mother whom you describe as weak and ambitious, are objections which you would rather shield, but if you love the girl, you were to transport the whole collection to New York," he added, as he saw Wilford's look of horror, "but make up your mind to endure what cannot be helped, your position is such that you cannot well be affected by any marriage you might make, provided the wife were right."

This was Mark Ray's advice, and it had great weight with Wilford, who knew that Mark came, if possible, from a better line of ancestry than himself. And still Wilford hesitated, waiting until the winter was over, before he came to the decision, which, when it was reached, was firm as a granite rock. He had made up his mind at last to marry Katy Lennox if she would accept him, and he told his mother so in the presence of his sisters, when one evening they were all kept at home by the rain. There was a sudden uplifting of the Bell's eyelashes, a contemptuous "bruz of her shoulders, and then she went on with the book she was reading, wondering if Katy was at all inclined to literature, and thinking if she were it might be easier to tolerate her. Juno, who was expected to say the sharpest things, turned upon him with the exclamation, "If you can stand those two feather beds, you can do more than I supposed," and as one means of showing her disapproval, she quit the room, while Bell, who had taken to writing articles on follies of the age, soon followed her sister to elaborate an idea suggested to her mind by her brother's contemplated marriage.

Thus left alone with her son, Mrs. Cameron tried all her powers of persuasion upon him. But nothing she said influenced him in the least, seeing which, she suddenly confronted him with the question, "Should you tell her all? A husband must have no secrets of that kind in his wife."

Wilford's face was as white as ashes, and his voice trembled as he replied, "Yes, mother, I shall tell her all; oh! you do not know how much it has been for me to bring my mind to that, or how sorry I am Geneva died—" "Hush!" came warningly from his mother as Juno reappeared, the warning, indicating that Geneva was a name never mentioned, except by mother and son.

As Juno remained the conversation was not resumed and the next morning Wilford wrote to Katy Lennox much of joy, and Dr. Grant so much of grief. To wait four weeks, as trial to Wilford, who counted every day, which kept him from Mrs. Grant and that perpendicular Helen he knew, for Katy in her letter had wholly their suggestion; and Wilford was anything but complimentary until a new idea was suggested, which drove every other consideration from his mind.

Wilford was naturally jealous, but the fault had once led him into so deep trouble that he had struggled to overcome it, and now, at its first approach, after he thought it not to believe that Morris cared especially for Katy. But the mere possibility was unendurable, and in a started again for Silvertown.

As before, Morris was at the station, his cordial greeting and friendly anxiety in that quarter, and making that his resolve anew to trample the demon jealousy under his feet, where it

could never rise again, Katy's little monser, he thought, and her presence would have been bright indeed had it proved all that he pictured in the direction of the farm-house. Katy was waiting for him, and he did not hesitate to kiss her for a moment as he kept her for a her off to see if her illness had left any traces upon her. It had not, except it were in the increased delicacy of her complexion, and the short hair now growing out in silky impatient as he saw how childish it long it would take for it to attain its former length. He was already appropriating her to himself, and New York, with Morris Grant standing before his jealous gaze, he could with her beside him, and even now, jealousy gone, he saw no fault in her; it was only her hair, and that wise she was perfect, and in his light at meeting her again, he forgot to criticize the farm-house and its occupants, as he had done before.

They were very civil to him—the mother overwhelpingly so, and Wilford could not help detecting her anxiety that all should be settled this time. Helen, on the contrary, in his opinion that she was strong-minded and self-willed, and making him resolve to remove Katy as soon as possible from her influence. When that if Katy told him "yes," he should probably place her at some fashionable school for a year or two, but on the way to Silvertown he had not changed his mind. He could not wait a year, and if he married Katy at all, it should be immediately. He would then take her to Europe, where she could have the best of teachers, besides the advantage of traveling; and it was a very satisfactory picture he drew of the woman whom he should introduce into New York society as his wife, Mrs. Wilford Cameron. It is true that Katy had not yet said the all-important word, but she was going to say it, and when late that afternoon they came from the walk he had asked her to take, she had listened to his tale of love, and was his promised wife. Katy was so content, and she had frankly confessed to Wilford her love for him, telling him how the fear that he had forgotten her had haunted her all the long winter; then with her clear, truthful blue eyes looking into his, asking him why he had not sent her some message if, as he said, he loved her all the time.

For a moment Wilford's lip was compressed and a flush overspread his face, as drawing her closer to him, he replied, "My little Katy will remember that in my first note I spoke of certain circumstances which had prevented my writing earlier. I do not know that I asked her not to seek to know those circumstances; but I ask it now. Will Katy trust me so far as to believe that all is right between us, and never allude to these circumstances?"

He was kissing her fondly and his voice was so winning that Katy promised, and then came the hardest, the trying to tell her all, as he had said to his mother he would. Twice he essayed to speak, as he often something sealed his lips, until at last he began, "You must not think me perfect, Katy, for I have faults, and perhaps if you knew my past life you would wish to revoke your recent decision and render a different verdict to my suit. Suppose I unfold the blackest leaf for your inspection?"

"No, no, oh no," and Katy playfully stopped his mouth with her hand. "Of course you have some faults, but I would rather find them out myself. I could not hear anything against you now. I am satisfied to take you as you are."

Wilford felt his heart throbbing wildly with the feeling that he was deceiving the young girl; but if she would not suffer him to tell her, he was not to be censured if she remained in ignorance. And so the golden moment fled, and when he spoke again, he said, "If Katy will not now read the leaf I offered to show her, she must not shrink in horror, if ever it does meet her eye."

"I won't, I promise," Katy answered, a vague feeling of fear creeping over her as to what the reading of that mysterious page involved. But that was soon forgotten, as of Dr. Grant, thought to probe her a little by asking if she had ever loved any one before herself. "No, never," she answered. "I never dreamed of such a thing until I saw you, Mr. Cameron," and who loving nature shone in every lineament of her face, upturned to receive the kisses he pressed upon it, resolved within himself to be to her what he ought to be.

"By the way," he continued, "don't call me Mr. Cameron again, as you did just now. I would rather be your Wilford. It sounds more familiar;" and then he told her of his projected tour to Europe, and Katy felt her pulses quicken as she thought of London, Paris and Rome, as might yet look upon. But when it came to their marriage, which Wilford said must be within a few weeks—she demurred, for this arrangement was not in accordance with her desires; and she opposed her lover with all her strength, telling him she was so young, not eighteen till July, and she knew so little of housekeeping. "I must be at least at home until she learned at least the art of making bread!"

Poor ignorant Katy! Wilford could not forbear a smile as he thought how different were her views from his, and tried to explain that the art of bread-making, though very desirable in most wives, was not an essential accomplishment

THE DURHAM GAZETTE

EVERY THURSDAY AT THE CHRONICLE PRINTING HOUSE, DURHAM, ONT.

Subscription rates: The Gazette is published weekly, except at stated intervals.

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