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"Pure, loving, innocent and unsuspecting," was Marian Hazelton's verdict, and she followed wistfully every movement of the young girl, as she fitted about the room, chatting as familiarly with the dressmaker as if she were a friend long known instead of an entire stranger. "You look very young to be married," Miss Hazelton said to her once, and shaking back her short rings of hair, Katy answered, "Eighteen next Fourth of July; but Mr. Cameron is thirty."

"Is he a widower?" was the next question, which Katy answered with a merry laugh. "Mercy, no! I don't marry a widower! How funny! I don't believe he ever cared a fig for anybody but me. I mean to ask him, 'I would,' and the pale lips shut tightly together, while a resentful gleam shot for a moment across Marian's face; but she quickly passed away, and her eyes were as sweet as ever as she last bade the family good-night and repaired to the little room where Wilford Cameron had once slept.

A long time she stood before the glass, brushing her dark hair, and intently regarding her own features, while in her eyes there was a hard, terrible look, from which Katy Lennox would have shrunk in fear. But that too passed, and the eyes grew soft with tears as they turned away, and falling on her knees, moaned sadly. "I never will—no, I never will. God help me to keep the promise. Were it the other one—Helen—I might, for she could bear it; but Katy, that child—no, I never will," and as the words died on her lips, there came struggling up from her heart a prayer for Katy Lennox's happiness, as fervent and sincere as any which had ever been made for her since she was betrothed.

They grew to liking each other rapidly, Marian and Katy, the latter of whom thought her new friend greatly out of place as a dressmaker, telling her she ought to marry some rich man, calling her Marian altogether, and questioning her very closely of her previous life. But Marian only told her that she was born in London; that she learned her trade on the Isle of Wight, near to the Osborne House, where the royal family sometimes came, and that she had often seen the Queen, thus trying to divert Katy's mind from asking what there was besides that apprenticeship to the Misses True on the Isle of Wight. Once indeed, she went farther, saying that her friends were dead; that she had come to America in hopes of doing better than she could at home; that she had stayed in New York until her health began to fail, and then had tried what country air would do, coming to North Silvertown because a young woman who worked in the same shop was acquainted there and recommended the place. This was all Katy could learn, and Marian's heart history, if she had one, was guarded carefully.

They had decided at last upon the wedding dress, which Helen reserved the right to make herself. Miss Hazelton must fit it, of course, but to her belonged the privilege of making it, every stitch; Katy would think more of it, if she did it all, she said; but she did not confess how the bending over that dress, both early and late, was the escape-valve for the feelings which otherwise would have found vent in passionate tears. Helen was very wretched during the pleasant May days she usually enjoyed so much, but over which now a dark pall was spread, shutting out all the brightness, and leaving only the terrible certainty that Katy was lost to her forever—bright, frolicsome Katy, who without a shadow on her heart, sported amid the bridal finery, unmindful of the anguish tugging at the hearts of both the patient women, Marian and Helen, who worked on so silently, reserving their tears for the night-time, when Katy was dreaming of Wilford Cameron. Helen was greatly interested in Marian, but never guessed that her feelings, too, were stirred to their very depths, as the bride's preparations progressed. She only knew how wretched she was herself, and how hard it was to fight her tears back as she bent over the silk, weaving in with every stitch a part of the clinging love which each day grew stronger for the only sister, who would soon be gone. Only once did she break entirely down, and that was when the dress was done, and Katy tried it on, admiring its effect, and having a second glass brought that she might see it behind.

"Isn't it lovely?" she exclaimed, "and the more valuable because you made it. I shall think of you every time I wear it," and the impulsive girl wound her arms around Helen's neck, kissing her lovingly, while Helen sank into a chair and sobbed aloud. "Oh, Katy, darling, Katy, you won't forget me when you are rich and admired, and can have all you want? You will remember us here at home, so sad and lonely? You don't know how desolate it will be, knowing you are gone, never to come back again, just as you go away."

In an instant Katy was on her knees before Helen, whom she tried to comfort by telling her she should come back—come often, too, staying a long while; and that when she had a city home of her own, she should live with her for good, and they would be so happy. "I cannot quite give Wilford up to please you," she said, when that gigantic sacrifice suggested itself as

something which it was possible Helen might require of her; "but I will do anything else, only please don't cry, darling Nellie—please don't cry. It spoils all my pleasure," and Katy's soft hands wiped away the tears running so fast over her sister's face.

After that Helen did not cry again in Katy's presence, but the latter knew she wanted to and it made her rather sad, particularly when she saw reflected in the faces of the other members of the family the grief she had witnessed in Helen. Even Uncle Ephraim was not as cheerful as usual, and once when Katy came upon him in the woodshed chamber, where he was shelling corn, she found him resting from his work and looking from the window far off across the hills, with a look which made her guess he was thinking of her, and stealing up beside him she laid her hand upon his wrinkled face, whispering softly, "Poor Uncle Eph, are you sorry, too?"

He knew what she meant, and the aged chin quivered, while a big tear dropped into the tub of corn as he replied, "Yes, Katy—did—very sorry."

That was all he said, and Katy, after smoothing his silvery hair a moment, kissed his cheek and then stole away, wondering if the love to which she was going was equal to the love of home, which, as the days went by, grew stronger and stronger, enfolding her in a mighty embrace, which would only be severed by bitter tears and fierce heart-pangs, such as death itself sometimes brings. In that household there was, after Katy, no one glad of that marriage except the mother, and she was only glad because of the position it would bring to her daughter. But among them all Morris suffered most, and suffered more because he had to endure in secret, so that no one guessed the pain it was for him to go each day where Katy was, and watch her as she sometimes donned a part of her finery for his benefit, asking him once if he did not wish he were in Wilford's place, so as to have a pretty bride as she should make. Then Marian Hazelton glanced up in time to see the expression of his face, a look whose meaning she readily recognized, and when Dr. Grant left the farm-house that day, another than himself knew of his love for Katy, drawing her breath hurriedly as she thought of taking back the words, "I never will," of revoking that decision and telling Katy what Wilford Cameron should have told her long before. But the wild wish fled, and Wilford's secret was safe, while Marian watched Morris Grant with a pitying interest as he came among them, speaking always in the same kind, gentle tone, and trying so hard to enter into Katy's joy.

"His burden is greater than mine, God help us both," Marian said, as she resumed her work.

And so amid joy and gladness, silent tears and breaking hearts, the preparations went on until all was done and only three days remained before the eventful tenth. Marian Hazelton was going home, for she would not stay at the farm-house until all was over, notwithstanding Katy's entreaties were joined to those of Helen.

"Perhaps she would come to the church," she said, "though she could not promise," and her manner was so strange that Katy wondered if she could have offended her, and at last said to her timidly, as she stood with her bonnet on, waiting for Uncle Ephraim, "You are not angry with me for anything, are you?"

"Angry with you!" and Katy never forgot the glitter of the tearful eyes, or their peculiar expression as they turned upon her. "No, oh, no; I could not be angry with you, and yet, Katy Lennox, some in my position would hate you, contrasting your prospects with their own; but I do not; I love you; I bless you, and pray that you may be happy with your husband; honor him, obey him if need be, and above all, never give him the slightest cause to doubt you. You will have admirers, Katy Lennox. In New York others thought your husband will speak to you words of remembrance, but don't you listen. Remember what I tell you, and now, again, God bless you."

She touched her lips to Katy's forehead, and when they were withdrawn there were great tears there which she had left! Marian's tears on Katy's brow; and it was very meet that just before her bridal day Wilford Cameron's bride should receive such baptism from Marian Hazelton.

CHAPTER IX.

On the morning of the 9th day of June, 18—, Wilford Cameron stood in his father's parlor, surrounded by the entire family, who, after their unusually early breakfast, assembled to bid him good-bye, for Wilford was going for his bride, and it would be months, if not a year, ere he returned to them again. They had given him up to his idol, asking only that none of the idol's family should be permitted to cross their threshold, and also that the idol should not often be allowed the privilege of returning to the place from whence she came. These restrictions had emanated from the female portion of the Cameron family, the mother, Juno and Bell. The father, on the contrary, had sworn roundly that he would sometimes swear at what he called the contemptible pride of his wife and daughters. Katy was sure of a place in his heart just because

of the pride which was building up so high a wall between her and her friends, and when at parting he held his son's hand in his, he said:

"I charge you will be kind to that young girl, and don't for Heaven's sake go to cramming her with airs and nonsense which she does not understand. Tell her I'll be a father to her; her own, you say, is dead, and give her this as my bridal present."

He held out a small box containing a most exquisite set of pearls, such as he fancied would be becoming to the soft, girlish beauty Wilford had described. Something in his father's manner touched Wilford closely, making him resolve anew that if Katy were not happy as Mrs. Cameron it should not be his fault. His mother had said all she wished to say, while his sisters had been gracious enough to send their love to the bride, Bell hoping she would look as well in the poplin and little plaid as she had done. Either was suitable for the wedding day, Mrs. Cameron said, and she might take her choice, only Wilford must see that she did not wear with the poplin the gloves and belt intended for the silk; country people had so little taste, and she did want Katy to look well, even if she were not there to see her. And with his brain a-conjuring, and his hands busy with plaid, and gloves, pearls and Katy, Wilford finally tore himself away, and at three o'clock that afternoon drove through Silvertown village past the little church, which the Silvertown maidens were decorating with flowers, pausing a moment in their work as he went by. Among them was Marion Hazelton, but she only bent lower over her work, thus hiding the tear which dropped upon the delicate buds she was fashioning into the words, "Joy to the Bride," intending the whole as the centre of the wreath to be placed over the altar where all could see it.

"The handsomest man I ever saw," was the verdict of most of the girls as they came back to their work, while Wilford drove on to the farm-house where Katy had been so anxiously watching for him.

When he came in sight, however, and she knew he was actually there, she ran away to hide her blushes, and the feeling of awe which had come suddenly over her for the man who was to be her husband. But Helen bade her go back, and so she went coyly to Wilford, who met her with loving caresses, and then put upon her finger the superb diamond which he said he had thought to send as a pledge of their engagement, but had finally concluded to wait and present himself. Katy had heard much of diamonds, and seen some in Canandaigua; but the idea that she, Katy Lennox, would ever wear them, had never entered her mind; and now, as she looked at the brilliant gem sparkling upon her hand, she felt a thrill of something more than joy at that good fortune which had brought her to diamonds. Vanity, we suppose, it was—such vanity was very natural in her case, and she thought she should never tire of looking at the precious stone; but when Wilford showed her next the plain broad band of gold, and tried it on her third finger, asking if she knew what it meant, the true woman spoke within her, and she answered tearfully:

"Yes, I know, and I will try to prove worthy of what I shall be to you when I wear that ring for good."

Katy was very quiet for a moment as she sat with her head nestled against Wilford's bosom, but when he observed that she was looking tired, and asked if she had been working hard, the quiet fit was broken, and she told him of the dress "we" had made, the "we" referring solely to Helen and Marian, for Katy had hardly done a thing. But it did not matter; she fancied she had, and she asked if he did not wish to see her dresses. Wilford knew it would please Katy, and so he followed her into the adjoining room, where they were spread out upon tables and chairs, with Helen in their midst, ready to pack them away. Wilford thought of Mrs. Ryan and the check, but he shook hands with Helen very civilly, saying to her playfully:

"I suppose you are willing I should take your sister with me this time."

Helen could not answer, but turned away to hide her face, while Katy showed one dress after another, until she came to the silk, which, with a bright blush, she told him "was the very thing itself—the one I intended for to-morrow," and asked if he did not like it.

Wilford could not help telling her yes, for he knew she wished him to do so, but in his heart he was thinking bad thoughts against the wardrobe of his bride elect—thoughts which would have won for him the title of hen-huzzy from Helen, could she have known them. And yet Wilford did not deserve that name. He had been accustomed all his life to dressing dress, and in his mother's parlor, and in the old sisters' boudoir, while for the last five weeks he had heard at home little else than the probable tattle-semble of Katy's wardrobe, bought and made in the country, his mother deciding finally to write to her co-sin, Mrs. Harvey, who boarded at the Revere, and have her see to it before Katy left the city. Under these circumstances, it was not strange that Wilford did not enter into Katy's delight, when after she told him how Helen had made every stitch of the dress herself, and that it would on that account be very desirable for her. This was a favorable time for getting the poplin off his mind, and with a premonitory "ahem," he said: "Yes, it is very nice, no doubt; but, and here he turned to Helen, "after Mrs. Ryan's services were declined, my mother determined to have two dresses fitted to sister Bell, who I think is just Katy's size and figure. I need not say," and his eyes back an unflinching glance, "I need not say that no pains have been spared to make these garments everything they should be in point of quality and style. I have them in my trunk, and," turning now to Katy, "it is my mother's special re-

quest that one of them be worn to-morrow. You could take your choice, she said—either was suitable. I will bring them for your inspection."

He left the room, while Helen's face resembled a dark thunder-cloud whose lightning shone in her flashing eyes as she looked after him and then back to where Katy stood, bewildered and wondering what was wrong.

"Who is Mrs. Ryan?" she asked. "What does he mean?" but before Helen could command her voice to explain, Wilford was with them again bringing the dresses, over which Katy nearly went wild.

"She had never seen anything as elegant as the rich, heavy poplin or the soft lustrous silk, while even Helen acknowledged that there was about them a finish which threw Miss Hazelton's quite in the shade. "Beautiful!" Katy exclaimed, "and trimmed so exquisitely! I do so hope they will fit!"

"I dare say they will," Wilford replied, enjoying her appreciation of his mother's gift. "At all events they will answer for to-morrow, and any needful alterations can be made in Boston. Which will you wear?"

"Oh, I don't know. I wish I could wear both," Helen, which shall I?"

Katy appealed to her sister, who could endure no more, but hid her head among the pillows of the bed and cried.

Katy understood the whole, and dropping the silk to which she inclined the most, she flew to Helen's side and whispered to her: "Don't Nellie, I won't wear either of them. I'll wear the one you made. It was mean and vain in me to think of doing otherwise."

During this scene Wilford had stolen from the room, and with him gone, Helen was capable of judging candidly and sensibly. She knew the city silk was handsomer and better suited for Wilford Cameron's bride than the country plaid, and so she said to Katy: "I would rather you should wear the one they sent. It will become you better. Suppose you try it on, and in seeking to gratify her sister, Helen forgot in part her own cruel disappointment, and that her work of days had been for naught. The dress fitted well, though Katy pronounced it too tight and too long. A few moments, however, accustomed her to the length, and then her mother, Aunt Hannah, and Aunt Betsy came to see and admire, while Katy proposed going out with Wilford, but Helen kept her back, Aunt Betsy remarking under her breath, that "she didn't see for the life of her how Catherine could be so free and easy with that man when just the sight of him was enough to take away a body's breath."

"More free and easy than she will be by and by," was Helen's mental comment as she proceeded quietly to pack the trunk which Morris had brought for the voyage across the sea, dropping into it many a tear as she folded away one article after another, and wondered under what circumstances she should see them again if she saw them ever.

Helen was a Christian girl, and many a time had she prayed in secret that He who rules the deep would keep its waters calm and still while her sister was upon them, and she prayed so now, constantly, burying her face once in her hands, and asking that Katy might come back to them unchanged, if possible, and asking next that God would remove from her heart all bitterness towards the bridegroom, who was to be her brother, and whom, after that short, earnest prayer, she found herself liking better. He loved Katy, she was sure, and that was all she cared for, though she did wish to see her release her before twelve o'clock on that night, the last she would spend with them for a long, long time. But Wilford kept her with him in the parlor, kissing away the tears which flowed so fast when she recalled the prayer of Uncle Ephraim, with her kneeling by him as she might never kneel again. He had called her by name, and his voice was very sad as he commended her to God, asking that He would "be with our little Katy wherever she might go, keeping her in all the meandering scenes of life, and bringing her at last to His own heavenly home."

Wilford himself was touched, and though he noticed the deacon's pronunciation, he did not even smile, and his manner was very respectful, when, after the prayer was over and they were alone a moment, the white-haired deacon felt it incumbent upon him to say a few words concerning Katy.

"She's a young, rattle-headed creature, not much like your own kin, I guess; but, young man, she is as dear as the apple of our eyes, and I charge you to treat her well. She has never had a crossways word spoke to her in all her life, and don't let your folks brovbeat her."

As they were alone, it was easier for Wilford to be humble and conciliatory, and he promised all the old man required, and then went back to Katy, who was going into raptures over the beautiful little watch which Morris had sent over as her bridal gift from him. Even Mrs. Mrs. Cameron herself could have found no fault with this, and Wilford praised it as much as Katy could desire, noticing the inscription: "Katy, from Cousin Morris, June 10th, 18—" wishing that after the "Katy" had come the name Cameron, and wondering if Morris had any design in omitting it. Wilford had not yet presented his father's gift, but he did so now, and Katy's tears dropped upon the pale, soft pearls as she whispered: "I shall like your father. I never thought of having things like these."

Nor had she; but she would grow to them very soon, while over the family gathering round and sharing in her joy began to realize how great a lady they had to be to be late that night ere anybody slept, if all sleep at all they did, which was doubted, unless it were the bride, who, with Wilford's kisses warm upon her lips, crept up to bed just as the clock was striking twelve, nor woke until it was again chiming for six and over her Helen bent, a dark

ring about her eyes and her face very white as she whispered: "Wake, Katy, darling, this is your wedding day."

CHAPTER X.

There were more than a few lookers-on to see Katy Lennox married, and the church was literally jammed for full three-quarters of an hour before the appointed time. Back by the door, where she commanded a full view of the middle aisle, Marian Hazelton sat, her face as white as ashes and her eyes gleaming strangely wild from beneath the thickly dotted veil she wore over her hat. Doubts as to her wisdom in coming there were agitating her mind, but something kept her sitting just as others sat waiting for the bride until the sexton, opening wide the doors, and assuming an added air of consequence, told the anxious spectators that the party had arrived—Uncle Ephraim and Katy, Wilford and Mrs. Lennox, Dr. Morris and Helen, Aunt Hannah and Aunt Betsy—that was all, and they came slowly up the aisle, while countless eyes were turned upon them, every woman noticing Katy's dress sweeping the carpet with so long a trail, and knowing by some queer female instinct that it was city-made, and not the handiwork of Marian Hazelton, panting for breath in that pew near the door, and trying to forget herself by watching Dr. Grant. "She could not have told what Katy wore; she would not have sworn that Katy was there, for she saw only two, Wilford and Mrs. Grant. She could have touched the former as he passed her by, and she did breathe the odor of his garments while her hands clasped each other tightly, and then she turned to Morris Grant, growing content with her own pain, so much less than his as he stood before the altar with Wilford Cameron between him and the bride, which should have been his. How pretty she was in her wedding garb, and how like a bird her voice rang out as she responded to the solemn question:

"Will you have this man to be thy wedded husband," etc.

Upon Uncle Ephraim devolved the duty of giving her away, a thing which Aunt Betsy denounced as a "Piscopolit quirk," classing it in the same category with dancing. Still if Ephraim had got it to do she wanted him to do it well, and she had taken some pains to study that part of the ceremony, so as to know when to nudge her brother in case he failed of coming up to time.

"Now, Ephraim," now; they've reached the quirk," she whispered audibly, almost before Katy's "I will" was heard, clear and distinct; but Ephraim did not need her prompting, and his hand rested lovingly upon Katy's shoulder as he signified his consent, and then fell back to his place next to Hannah. But when Wilford's voice said: "I, Wilford, take thee Katy to be my wedded wife," there was a slight confusion near the door, and those sitting by said to those sitting in front that someone had fainted. Looking round, the audience saw the sexton leading Marian Hazelton out into the open air, where at her request, he left her, and went back to see the closing ceremony which made Katy Lennox a wife. Morris's carriage was at the door, and the newly married pair moved slowly out, Katy smiling upon all, kissing her hand to some and whispering a good-bye to others, her diamonds flashing in the light and her rich silk rustling as she walked, while at her side was Wilford, proudly erect, and holding his head so high as not to see one of the crowd around him, until, arrived at the vestibule, he stopped a moment and was seized by a young man with curling hair, saucy eyes, and that air of ease and assurance which betokens high breeding and wealth.

"Mark Ray!" was Wilford's astonished exclamation, while Mark Ray replied:

"You did not expect to see me here, neither did I expect to come until last night, when I found myself in the little village where you know Scranton lives. Then it occurred to me that as Silvertown was only a few miles distant I would drive over and surprise you, but I am too late for the ceremony, I see," and Mark's eyes rested admiringly upon Katy, whose graceful beauty was fully equal to what he had imagined.

Very modestly she received his congratulatory greeting, blushing prettily when he called her by the new name she had not heard of before, and then, at a motion from Wilford, entered the carriage waiting for her. Close behind her came Morris and Helen, the former quite as much astonished at meeting Mark as Wilford had been. There was no time for conversation, and hurriedly introducing Helen as Miss Lennox, Morris followed her into the carriage with the bridal pair, and was driven to the depot, where they were joined by Mark, whose pleasant, good-humored salutation did much towards making the parting more cheerful than it would otherwise have been. It was sad enough at the most, and Katy's eyes were very red, while Wilford was beginning to look chagrined and impatient, when at last the train swept round the corner and the very last good-bye was said. Many of the village people were there to see Katy off, and in the crowd Mark had no means of distinguishing the Barlows from the others, except it were by the fond caresses given to the bride. Aunt Betsy he had observed from all the rest, both from the hanging of her pounce and the general quaintness of her attire, and thinking it just possible that it might be the lady of herrin' bone memory, he touched Wilford's arm as she passed them by, and said:

"Tell me, Will, quick, who is that woman in the poke bonnet and short, slim dress?"

Wilford was just then too much occupied in his effort to rescue Katy from the crowd of plebeians who had seized upon her to hear his friend's query, but Helen heard it, and with a check which crimsoned with anger, she replied:

"That, sir, is my aunt, Miss Betsy Barlow."

"I beg your pardon, I really do-

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