

THE WINSTALLS

OF

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A TALE OF LOVE AND MONEY

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CHAPTER XV., Continued.

The day passed pleasantly, as the days had usually passed, during Miss Pearce's visit. In the evening soon after dinner Mr. and Mrs. Hart called. Mr. Winstall gladly welcomed them, telling them of the treat that was in store for them. Miss Pearce and Grace would give an account, he said, of their visit last evening to the negro prayer meeting.

Miss Pearce, being called upon, gave such an account of the proceedings as excited great merriment, especially when she described the lanky individual's exposition of the peezaltree. Mrs. Hart of course could see no hint of a joke in the whole matter; she was shocked instead by such levity and profanity. When Miss Pearce had given this part of the programme she appealed to Grace to give the part about Methuselah. Though Grace was not so apt or witty as Miss Pearce she did her part well, appealing to her friend at times to help her out. Together they made such a presentation of Methuselah that he seemed a different man from the one they thought they knew so well.

"But the funniest thing about Methuselah," said Grace, "was his new coined words. I believe Miss Pearce put some of them down in her note book."

Miss Pearce protested that she had been so spell bound by Methuselah's manner that she could not compose herself to write, so that Methuselah's original gems had nearly all escaped her.

"Well, if you give us only a few we shall be grateful," said Mr. Hart. Mrs. Hart regarded her husband with a look of severe disapprobation. He was becoming as light and irreverent as the rest. How true that evil communications corrupt good manners.

Miss Pearce produced her note book, and gave a few of Methuselah's gems.

"In speaking of sinners," she said, "going off in their evil ways he said they were 'conskiperated' from all goodness. He said that sinners were 'subostified' in their own 'erup-tions.' He spoke of the 'ellurishments' of the world, and the 'snickefactions' of the devil. When he wanted to condemn sin in its worst forms he spoke of the 'salamana-tions of wickedness.' The sweet things of sin he said were 'salajucious'—I thought that a fine word. Another good one was 'dombatakans.' He spoke of the 'dombatakans of judgment,' and he said it with such a tremendous roll and rattle that I almost heard it thunder. And there were many more as good as that, but if you tried to fix and retain them you would miss the real Methuselah himself."

In proportion as the rest of the company were amused with the recital, Mrs. Hart was shocked. She voted Miss Pearce a bold and irreverent thing, as she had done before, but she did it with more emphasis now. In the future she would keep away, and keep her husband away, from company so trifling and profane.

"But now," said Miss Pearce, "there is a silver tail to all this fun." Then she told of the money needed for the African mission, and she wanted to make a small contribution to it. If each would help a little she

and Grace would give it to Methuselah tomorrow. And all did subscribe. Mrs. Hart herself made a contribution, for if she could not understand a joke she knew something about a mission. What was even better, she was a little mollified towards Miss Pearce who she thought might have a hidden grain of goodness in her after all.

When the next day Miss Pearce and Grace called on Methuselah in his little office, and put into his hands a tidy little sum for the African mission, his eyes began to roll, and the ladies for the moment feared that the inner Methuselah might be coming out again, as they had seen him two nights ago. But he came no farther. If the inner Methuselah looked out for a moment through the outer Methuselah's eyes he went back again. So when Methuselah spoke, his words were not the hot, phrenic'd words of the prayer meeting, but the calm words wherewith he spoke every day. And the words he spoke provoked no smile, but fell on the hearts of our two friends like a heavenly benediction.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TOUCH OF A VANISHED HAND.

The Monday evening had now arrived when Mr. Stuart was due to dine with the Winstalls. He had not always kept this monthly appointment, and it was doubtful to Mr. Winstall if he would come. But in whatever way it may be explained, it was not doubtful to Miss Winstall. To be sure, there was a private compact between Mr. Stuart and herself as to a certain little scheme that was to be launched this evening; but apart from that, she felt, rather than knew, that he would come. She dressed with more care and taste than usual, and looked very bright and charming.

Mr. Stuart arrived promptly. He too, strange to say, was dressed with unusual taste, for dress was not one of his foibles. There was something in his manner, too, which though a little constrained, suggested an awakening to new buoyancy and hope. Mr. Winstall was in a pleasant humor as usual; Miss Pearce and Grace were almost gay; and Alfred was strong enough to take his place at table.

After dinner the conversation turned to Miss Pearce's intended departure, which was to take place in a few days. It seemed an unwelcome topic to every one of the party. Grace became quite sober at the thought of losing her bright companion; Miss Winstall was really sorry; Mr. Stuart missed her; Mr. Winstall barely spoke, but wore an expression of sadness that was very unusual with him.

"You hav'n't seen much of our big country," said Mr. Stuart, "but I suppose you won't be going home for a while. I wish you and Miss Winstall or Grace could spend a few days with my mother. Then you would see the country as well as the town."

"Oh, thank you very much," said Miss Pearce. "I would like that indeed if I had time. But I have stayed my full time here already. I have to visit a sister in Toronto, and a brother in Montreal; then I return to Belfast."

"Toronto is a fine city," said Mr. Winstall, "and more like an old country city than any city I have visited on this side of the sea. I am sure you will like Toronto."

"Oh, I don't expect to like it any better than New York," said Miss Pearce. "I shall never forget the happy times I have had here." And Miss Pearce heaved an involuntary sigh, which by some strange law fell rather strangely on Mr. Winstall's heart.

"My sister in Toronto," resumed Miss Pearce, "feels happier since she moved to the city. She was very homesick in the country where she lived first. She said the zig-zag wooden fences, instead of the thorn hedges which we have at home, made her homesick more than anything."

"I can well believe it," said Mr. Stuart. "I came out here when I was quite young, but I can recall even now the homesick feeling which those cheerless fences gave me, and would give me yet, if I lived in the country."

"I think, then," said Miss Pearce, "you would appreciate a little song which my sister composed in the time of her home sickness. It has been set to music, and I think it is very expressive."

"Play give it to us, Miss Pearce," said Mr. Winstall. "I have not had the chance of being homesick myself, but I can sympathize with the feeling."

"O yes, pray do, Miss Pearce," said Grace. And all the others joined in the request.

"I wish I could," said Miss Pearce, "but I am not much of a singer. But I think you would like the words. I will do the best I can."

She moved to the piano, struck a chord or two, and commenced. Her voice was in no way remarkable, but she enunciated every syllable with wonderful clearness and expression. Before she had done the hearts of all her auditors were very tender, and some eyes were misty with tears. This was the song:

"I am silent, and pensive, and sad,
For the days that return no more,
When my heart was so happy and glad,
In those joyous times of yore;
When I had not a care nor a fear,
And innocence nought had to mourn—
Oh, I must give a sigh and a tear
For the days that never return.

I am silent, and pensive, and sad,
For the scenes that return no more,
When my heart was so happy and glad,
In the joyous times of yore;
For the bridge, and the brook, and the mill,
The lanes and the sweet budding thorn—
Ah, I cannot withhold a tear still,
For the scenes that never return.

I am silent, and pensive, and sad,
For the friends that return no more,
When my heart was so happy and glad,
In the joyous times of yore;
To the loved and the lost ones so dear,
My memory forever must turn;
Oh, I must give a sigh and a tear,
For the friends that never return.

But when I look up through my tears,
And think of the glory to come,
Of the songs of the jubilant years,
And the joy of the heavenly home;
For the innocence, friendship, and joy,
Which now I so miss and so mourn,
In the bliss of the sweet by and by,
Shall forever and forever return."

When Miss Pearce concluded there was a hush on the company, followed by faint sighs of relief, more expressive of deep and tender appreciation than any burst of applause. Miss Pearce had appeared in a new role, and touched hidden chords of sympathy.

Mr. Stuart was the first to speak, and his voice was not very steady. He was think-