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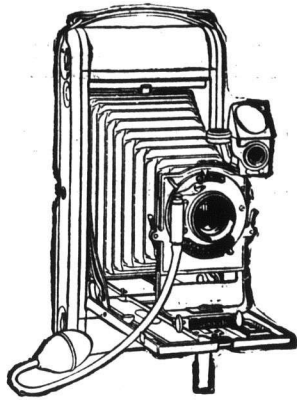
The Fused Joints These joints are absolutely gas and dust-proof and are guaranteed to always remain so. No unhealthy gas or annoying dust gets up into the house.

The Saving Grate The independent grate-bars of the Hecla save coal by cleaning out all the ashes without wasting any of the good coal.

Ask the Furnace Man About It The Hecla dealer in your town will be glad to tell you more about Hecla Furnaces. See him. The

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tism kept him pretty well in the house!" She ran out and assisted the old man up the path and by the aid of her strong arm and his stout cane, he negotiated the three steps and sank puffing into a large rocker. "This is Mr. Holbrook," called Miss Matty into his ear trumpet, for the newcomer was shortsighted as well as deaf. "Eh? Oh, yes, so I see. What's he doin' here?" peering malevolently at the station master.

Mr. Holbrook shifted uncomfortably and after a moment or two rose and took his departure, saying he would call again. "Well," began the newcomer, a gruff old chap long past the three score and ten mile-post, "I see riches haven't turned your head Matilda Percival."

Miss Matty smiled and inquired after his health.

"Health!" grunted the old fellow, "why I'm as spry as a cricket. Never felt better!"

"That's good. I'm real glad to hear it."

"As I was saying," he continued, still in the loud tone used by deaf folk, "you're a sensible woman. No frills and furbelows! No fixin' of yourself up! Still in your working clothes, an' goin' on same as ever!"

"Why not?" smiled Miss Matty.

"'Twas only yesterday—"

"I say why not? I've not had a moment to myself since the news arrived. Haven't had time to digest it yet."

"Digestion what!" he shrieked. "There ain't a thing wrong with my digestion. I tell you I'm as sound as you are if I am a little hard of hearing. An' I come here a purpose to ask—to ask—"

"I can hear you," interposed the spinster, soothingly.

"To ask you to marry me!" he finished triumphantly.

Miss Percival's mouth twitched, and she bit her lip.

"No, thank you," she said to the ear-trumpet.

"Eh? What? No, did you say? Why—why I thought you'd kinder jump at the ideal! Me the ex-sheff!" He paused open-mouthed and then went on:

"Mebbe you think I'm too old. Is that it? An' me not a day over fifty-nine!"

"Oh! what a difference a few hours make!" mused the spinster in the seclusion of her bedroom that evening. "Yesterday I was a humdrum old maid, half forgotten, almost friendless, slowly sinking into age and uselessness. Today I am the belle of Springvale!"

She turned suddenly to her big trunk and commenced lifting out a number of dresses of a bygone era. Gay and girlish were they once, at the time her heart was gay and girlish and her hopes were high. The scent of lavender permeated the room as she unfolded them and shook them out, one by one.

"Old, old, hopelessly old—like my heart!" she murmured.

Long she sat by the open trunk and pondered. Then an idea which had been haunting her sub-conscious mind suddenly resolved itself into a decision. Miss Matty was no dallier. As quickly as she made up her mind, she set her plans moving. She would go to Europe! She would be recklessly extravagant for once—seek to regain a fractional part of her lost youth and then—well, time enough to plan for the future afterward.

"None of these clothes will do, and my jewelry must be cleaned and repaired," she decided at length.

One small jewel case contained it all. When she had examined it she pressed the spring of the lower compartment, expecting to find it empty. There lay her lost youth-heart, her dear hopes, strangled at birth, her renounced title-to-happiness—there in that chamber of memories.

She smiled the smile of an indulgent parent for a wayward child, smiled in commiseration for herself—that other self—as she fingered the dead rosebud gray and crumbling, and looked again upon the pictured face of a youth in the early twenties. Her eyes softened as she gazed. It had been the old story, a youth with his way to make in the world with nothing to offer her except his love, too proud to offer that alone—and a devoted daughter, the only child of her parents, remaining with them in their old age. She had heard no word of him since he had gone west to seek his fortune and the slow years had passed, bringing

to her only her duty, her two bereavements and her loneliness. Perhaps—nay, certainly he was married; he might even be an old widower with six children, like Jõe Holbrook, and, hearing of her good fortune might return one of these days and—

"And I would say no!" she cried aloud, "just as I did to the other fortune hunters."

Then she remembered that Bob was not like that. He was not mercenary.

"He was the handsomest boy in Springvale—and the best," she murmured.

Then she hastily returned the picture and closed the jewel case.

It was the evening before Miss Matty's departure, and on the small verandah of Lilac Cottage two steamer trunks, new and glistening, stood ready, packed and roped, for the expressman in the morning. Withindoors, everything had been put to rights, and the tenant herself, after a somewhat exhausting day, in which fully three-quarters of the population of Springvale had been to bid her farewell, was resting in a low seat, among her flowers. The soft pink glow of sunset was fading; in the eastern sky shone forth the first bright star while over the hilltops beyond Springvale Creek the full moon was rising. The frog-chorus, a few sleepy twitterings in the maple trees at the gate, a distant cow-bell and the faint, but ceaseless gurgling of the little creek as it babbled over its stones, beyond in the meadow—these were the only sounds. From the garden arose all the faint sweet fragrance of June flowers. Miss Matty felt indescribably lonely when she reflected that it would be late autumn ere she was back among the old scenes. Heretofore, the excitement of preparation and the anticipation of new experiences, alone, had engrossed her. The shriek of the train-whistle echoing up the valley roused her from her reveries. It must be nine o'clock now. She would gather a few sweet peas before it became too dark, to give to Betty Roland in the morning, for Betty was to take charge of the canary.

The sound of approaching footsteps fell upon her ear, in the midst of this pleasant task, and she halted instinctively to listen. Another Springvalian came at the last moment to bid her farewell? Who could it be now? Firm decided steps they were, steps of almost military precision. They stopped at her little gate. The moonlight streamed down on the small gravel path making a broad band of gold at the end of which stood a man, a tall man in a grey suit with hat raised. Miss Matty advanced wonderingly.

"Good evening. Is this where Miss Percival lives—Miss Matty Percival?" asked the stranger.

"It is. I am Miss Percival."

There was a slight pause, during which the stranger appeared to be searching her face. Then he said:

"You don't remember me—Matty? You don't remember Bob Carveth—Red-head Bob?"

A sharp intake of breath on Miss Matty's part.

"Is—is this Bob Carveth?" she faltered.

"The same. Not a whit changed. Same shock of red hair—with a little gray in it now, though; same as ever, otherwise! How are you, Matty?"

A tumult of emotions had swept over Miss Matty, but she found herself at length and, laughing lightly—a laugh which sounded strange in her own ears—gave him a welcome.

"Come right in—Bob. It's dark out here. I'll light one of the—"

"Pray don't go to the trouble, Matty, let us sit out-of-doors."

She pulled a chair forward on the verandah and as the stranger—for such he still seemed to be—was seated he noticed the trunks. She followed his glance and smiled.

"I am leaving for Europe in the morning."

"For—for Europe?" he echoed.

"I have always wanted to go, always longed to see Europe," she replied, "but have never had the opportunity until—until now."

"Then I just got here in time!" he breathed.

"You are not changed in the least, Matty," he went on, "at least as far as outward appearances go."

"The moonlight is kind, Bob. I, too, have a few gray hairs."

"I have never married, Matty, and you, I take it, are single yet?"

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