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Beatrice and the Rose

BY HONORE WILLISIE.

PART II.

Beatrice at any other time would have noticed Grandfather Edgren's suppressed excitement; but she was so engrossed with her own work that even her father's scolding voice fell on unhearing ears. Each morning she rose a long hour before breakfast, and was out in the fragrant dewiness of her garden almost as soon as the flowers spread their petals to catch the level rays of the sun. She dug and rooted, slipped and sorted and threw away, now clipping with pruning shears, now wielding her trowel, now walking back and forth with thoughtful eyes.

It was on the fourth morning after Grandfather Edgren had sent his letter that Beatrice came in to breakfast late, her face flushed, her heavy hair tumbled, her eyes wide with a new joy.

"Grandfather!" she cried. "For heaven's sake, Beatrice," interrupted her father, "can't you come to your meals on time? You've been up long enough—I heard you at work in the garden an hour ago!"

Beatrice made no answer, but her lip trembled and the joyful look faded a little. She drank her coffee in silence, then waited for Grandfather Edgren to finish his breakfast. Her father glared at the two in a baffled sort of way, then tramped from the room.

As soon as the sound of his footsteps died away, Beatrice leaned toward the eager-eyed old man.

"It has bloomed, grandfather!" she said. "The new rose has bloomed!"

"What?" cried Grandfather Edgren, "I thought it was not due for another week!"

"So did I at first," replied Beatrice, "but I knew it would be several days early when I looked at it on Sunday, and since that I've been trying to keep you away from it, to surprise you."

The old man rose. "And is it," he said with trembling eagerness, "is it as—"

"Wait!" cried Beatrice. "Wait till you see it! Come Grandfather!" They hastened out in to the glory and tangle of the garden. The air was all aglow with the yellow of the sunshine and the flutter of dragon-fly wings, and all adrone with honeybees. Over in the far corner, near the locust trees, they paused, the old man with a quivering little "Oh, Beatrice!" and the girl with a sigh of great content.

On a slender stalk, a little removed from the other plants, grew the rose, a thing of such fragile perfection that one trembled lest the butterfly which hovered above it might mar its delicacy. It seemed to have all the briar rose's evanescent purity of coloring and the clinging fragrance of all the garden roses of all the gardens since time was.

The two stood so absorbed in the beauty of the lovely thing that they did not hear the click of the garden gate nor the sound of footsteps on the bricked walk. These sounded briskly at first, then hesitated, then moved slowly across the garden toward the locust trees.

Half-way to the trees, the young man stopped. Beatrice was worth a long pause. In the years among her flowers, she seemed to have absorbed much of their sweetness and charm, and it was small wonder that the heart of the young man stopped and then went on with unaccustomed rapidity. The slender girl, with masses of waving dark hair above the long-lashed gray eyes, with a mouth like a curled rose leaf and a chin that held the suspicion of a dimple—truly she was as lovely a thing as the rose over which she bent.

At length the young man moved forward. Grandfather Edgren gave a start, and held out a welcoming hand. He knew that the answer to his letter had come.

"I came," said the young man, after he had been introduced to Beatrice, "to see your flowers and to—"

His eyes fell upon the rose, and with a half-articulated expression of wonder he bent above it. "Tell me," he cried, "what variety of rose is this?"

"Well, I haven't named it yet," answered Beatrice, blushing a little. "I've been working over it for two years, and it only bloomed this morning."

"You don't mean that this is a new variety which you yourself have bred?"

Beatrice nodded. "Grandfather's bees suggested it to me, long ago, and I got books, and—"

"But," the young man interrupted, "this is a wonderful thing! I never saw so exquisite a rose—and you have worked it out by yourself!"

"Well, not really by myself. I've had grandfather's help, and the view from the pasture gate, and the flowers themselves are an inspiration."

The young man looked about the garden. "Why, the place is full of new variety," he exclaimed, and he hurried from one gorgeous bed to another. Then he turned to Grandfather Edgren, who was following in an ecstasy of delight. "Why, this is marvelous! Your daughter is a genius. She has a fortune right here in the garden. This rose alone is worth the price of the entire farm!"

The old man shook his head. "She doesn't care for the money; but I wanted to see if all her work was worth while."

"Worth while!" cried the young man. "Is the work of a painter or a sculptor worth while?"

Grandfather Edgren's eyes filled. "I wish her mother were here," he said. "I'm going to find her father. I've told him again and again that the Edgrens would come to something, some time! He'll see things differently now."

Beatrice was still standing by her rose when the young man returned to her. As she looked slowly up into his brown eyes, something only half hidden in their adoring depths made her own eyes waver, and a strange warmth that she had never known before entered her heart. She turned again to the rose.

"Isn't it wonderful," she said, "when one has dreamed of a thing for years, to have it come to you more perfect than you had dared to hope?"

"Yes," said the young man, but his eyes were still on Beatrice, and not on the rose.

He was holding in bravely, was the young man, considering the tide that was rising.

—AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME



About the House

MIDDY TIES.

All of my friends admire my little daughter's new middy ties, quite unsuspecting of their humble origin. When I decided that fifty cents each was more than I could afford to pay for the ties displayed in the stores, I turned hopefully to my rag bag and unearthed some odds and ends of silk of before-the-war quality which made up beautifully into middy ties. I used an old tie for a pattern and, where piecing was necessary, the seam was made where it would be concealed by the middy collar.

The remnants of long-discarded foulard dress made a lovely tie with large white polka dots on a navy blue background. Another tie cut from an old roman stripe silk scarf adds a gay bit of color to a white middy blouse.

Then there was the old china silk waist, worn in the sleeves and colored from much laundering, which seemed to offer possibilities. This furnished material which, with the aid of

"And it seems stranger still," she hurried on, "when one has gone on so blindly, year after year."

"Yes," repeated the young man. "The tide was rising fast."

"Will you come and see the syriags?" asked Beatrice.

But it was useless for her to parry, for the flood-tide was sweeping in.

"The rose and all are marvelous," he said, "but don't you know that you are the most marvelous flower in the garden? You are—but I must not go on, must I?"

The man and the girl stood looking at each other in the June sunlight, with robins and bluebirds, bees and butterflies, scent of summer air, bloom of summer flowers, all about them. There came the sound of Grandfather Edgren's cane on the bricked walk. His face was flushed and tremulous, and lighted with a joy that was reflected in Beatrice's own glowing eyes.

"Beatrice," he said, "your father is the most surprised man in three counties. He can hardly believe it! He'll be in from the field in a minute."

Something in the two faces before him made him pause. He looked from one to the other, with a tender little smile dawning at the corner of his kind old mouth. "You'll stay and make us a little visit, won't you, my boy? There are enough flowers here to make a week of study."

The young man turned to Beatrice. "Shall I stay?" he asked slowly. Beatrice did not look up.

"Yes," she answered softly, with a rose tint creeping down to her throat. (The End.)

Our New Serial.

The series of short stories that has been running in this column will give place next week to the opening chapter of a novel by the distinguished Old Country writer, Annie S. Swan. "Love Gives Itself" deals with a blood feud of two Scottish families. You will enjoy meeting these splendid people and following their fortunes in the old world and the new.

For Sore Feet—Minard's Liniment.

some bits of "dyeing soap" which I happened to have on hand, were transformed into two beautiful ties, one of brown and one of red.

Altogether I felt my rummage in the rag bag had been well worth while. —R. H. O.

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Railway Disaster.

Smythe—"Were you ever in a railway disaster?"

Browne—"Yes. I once kissed the wrong girl in a tunnel."

Every thought entirely filling our mind becomes true for us and tends to transform itself into an action.—Emile Coue.

Only Bats Live There.

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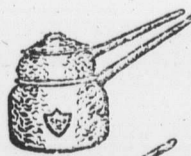
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