

UNDER THE HAREM'S WALL.

How calm the moonlight played upon the sea?
Unlocked, the lattice wooed the breeze of night,
While the Sultana watched the waters free
Fringe the black islets with a wave of light.

Quick from her fingers drops the gay guitar—
Hark! a dull sound the drowsy echo wakes:
Some Turkish bark, perchance, from isles afar
O'er the Greek seas its sluggish voyage makes.

Is it the plunge of sea-birds, that delight
To dash the spray like pearl-drops from their wings,
Or some hoarse-murmuring spirit who by night
Huge toppling stones from yonder rampart flings?

What stirs the waves beneath the Harem's wall?
Not the black sea-bird, cradled on the deep—
Nor massive stones hurled downward—nor the fall
Of labouring oars with slowly-measured sweep.

No! Those are sneaks, whence another's sobs are heard,
And through the waters clear their mightiest have
seen
Something that like a writhing body stirs.
Upon the waves the moonlight played serene!
From *Les Orientales* of V. Hugo.

Montreal G. G. MERRAY

THE GOLD OF CHICKAREE.

SUSAN and ANNA WARNER.

AUTHORS OF

"WIDE, WIDE WORLD," and "DOLLARS AND CENTS," "WYCH HAZEL," etc.

CHAPTER XXX. (Continued.)

"He might live to me—just a little bit—so they say. That is what I shall do to him, under God, always."—Then tramp, tramp, came the words.

"The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man," and if ever in her life Wych Hazel felt rebellious, she did so then. The old grievance of man's right of way, the fact that it was right, but with it a softer feeling, hurt and sore, that he could even wish for anybody else but her on such a journey; that her right should not have come in there.

The moon looks down on many brooks—
The brook can see no moon but one!

He might at least have consulted her. Suppose she had asked somebody—Wych Hazel drew half of a very long sigh, choked the rest back, then raised her grave brown eyes, and answered, "No."

Did he see what was beneath them? For a peculiar fire leapt into the grey eyes. He spoke in the same tone he had used before.

"Suppose, Hazel, we lose twenty-five per cent of our pleasure? And suppose Primrose gains a hundred?" He was holding her close and tenderly, looking down into her eyes with all the power of his.

"Well," said Hazel,—"I suppose she would."

"And I suppose we should. I ask nobody for my pleasure to be a third with us. I suppose it will be a trial to me when we go home, to have Hemert at the dinner table and talking to me in the evening. And yet, Hazel, just because you are so much to me, I dare not but pour pleasure into every cup I see standing empty; even though I let a few drops of my own go."

She answered softly "Yes,"—yet was very near adding, "But you are spilling mine!"

It was rather hard. Would he be always doing such things, over the head of her pleasure? But in the new life and purpose awake in her, Wych Hazel had found a new set of answers to troublesome questions. If the answers were also sometimes difficult, they were at least conclusive. And now, as she stood there, these words came:

"For even Christ pleased not himself."

"Even,"—what was she, to set up her pleasure against anybody's good? A quiver crept round her lips for a minute—but then she looked up and laughed.

"I am just as perverse as I can be, to-night," she said. "Stroked all the wrong way. That disposes of everything."

Rollo bent and pressed his lips to those soft trembling ones, and still holding her fast, caressed face and hair with the free hand; his face showing more delight in her than Hazel was in a condition to observe; though the tenderness of tone and touch spoke their own language.

"Hazel," he said softly.

She looked up, listening.

"I am curious about something."

"I cannot say I shall be happy to gratify your curiosity, until I know what it is about."

"It concerns the question, how you are going to ask my pardon for the thought that has been in your head?"

"I am not going to do it."

"You ought. And you know that what you ought, you always, sooner or later,—do."

CHAPTER XXXI.

NOVICE WORK.

Mrs. Coles did not improve her position next day. "What nights does Sacchi-sussi sing?" she asked, when Rollo had left the three ladies alone. Hazel answered that she had not noticed.

"They say she is wonderful; and beautiful, and everything. Do you suppose Dane will take us, if we ask him nicely?"

"I do not go."

"To the opera? My dear! Not at all?"

"Not at all."

"But why?"

Wych Hazel stood thinking. She was very shy of declaring herself—yet sometimes it must be done.

"A few years ago," she said slowly, "when the war was going on, two gentlemen came one night to see Mr. Falkirk. They told war stories; and I with my book of some study in my hand, sat still and listened. One story was this. A mutual friend of all the parties had laid the United States flag down in her drawing-room as a floor-cloth, to be trodden under foot. Then the other gentleman spoke out and said his wife should not enter that house again while the war lasted! Mrs. Coles—at the opera and the theatre my flag is under foot."

"Your flag!" said the lady in astonishment.

"Yes," Hazel answered with her colour stirring. "You know what service I have sworn into."

"I don't see where the flag comes in," said Mrs. Coles.

Hazel answered softly, gazing into the fire,—
"Thou hast given a banner to thy chosen, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

"Then you mean to say," broke out Mrs. Coles with a rising colour of her own tinging the pale face, "that no Christians ever go to the theatre?"

"Do they carry their flag about there?" said Wych Hazel. "Are they marching to victory under its folds? I could not carry mine. It would be trailing, drooping, union-down!"

"True, true," said Primrose, "you know what papa always says."

"Papa does not know the world," said Mrs. Coles, waving that down. "And how about your favourite German?" she said, returning to the charge against Wych Hazel with equal ire and curiosity.

Wych Hazel answered again, still looking into the fire,—
"No man that warreth entanglith himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

The girl spoke so "at liberty,"—there was such freedom in the loyalty, the folds of the banner waved so gladly above her head,—Mrs. Coles looked and hesitated. Then, spying as she thought a joint in the armour, so to speak, she sent out an arrow.

"And you call that a good marching uniform, I suppose," she said derisively, with a comprehensive glance that went from head to foot.

Wych Hazel faced round upon her with eyes wide open at first in displeased astonishment. But in a moment another look came, startled, wondering, as when one finds a sudden unlooked-for clue. Was that it? Wych Hazel said to herself. Had it been left to Mrs. Coles to tell her "A good marching uniform?"

Wych Hazel thought she knew better now than before "what to do about dress."

The ladies were going out, and the subject dropped. The morning was filled with out-of-door business. At luncheon Mrs. Coles declared herself fatigued and disposed to rest at home. She fondly hoped the afternoon would be made lively by visitors; and to her wish, so it was.

Among others came Miss Annabella Powder. This young lady had not been wont to seem so fond of Hazel's society as the other members of her family; indeed she rarely made her appearance at Chickaree more frequently than civility demanded. To-day, however, she made a long visit. It was not that she seemed to be enjoying herself; she went languidly through a prolonged conversation with Mrs. Coles, who had an endless number of questions to ask about the winter, and especially about her pretty sister Mrs. Charteris; with a latent view to supplemental information also about Rollo and his wife, if such were to be had. Annabella answered at random, made Mrs. Coles desperate, was bored; and yet did not go away. At last she seized a chance and moved to a seat beside Hazel. It was at a time when several other people were present and just then engaged more or less with each other on a common subject. Annabella had never been intimate with Hazel. Therefore it was the more noticeable when with depressed voice and somewhat hurried emphasis she said,

"I want to speak to you—I want to say a word.—How can I?"

"In this window," said Wych Hazel lead-the-way. "They are miles deep in Miss Burr's engagement."

In the window was a most beautiful hyacinth. The two ladies stood, one on this side and one on the other side, and spoke,—not about floriculture.

"I have no time here," Annabella began breathlessly, bending down to put her nose to the beautiful buff bells, which were sweet enough at a greater distance. "I want to see you alone, Mrs. Rollo. You were always so kind.—When can I have a great deal to say. Could you go and drive with me by and by? I don't know what other way—"

"It must be to-morrow, then," said Hazel, straightening the stick which supported the heavy head of flowers. "To-day I am promised to Mrs. Coles."

"To-morrow, then? You are so kind, Mrs. Rollo!—and you are the only person—At three o'clock, then; and I will come in mamma's carriage. You won't speak of it?"

"I never give such promises," said Wych Hazel.

"But"—Annabella's eyes went anxiously to Mrs. Coles.

"Discretion is stronger than bonds."

"And you are very discreet?" said the girl trying to laugh. "Well, I must trust you. But don't let any one know you are going out with me!"

The next day Mrs. Coles was engaged to luncheon with a friend and took Primrose with her. They had not returned when Miss Powder came for Wych Hazel, and the two ladies drove off in security. It was not a day for a pleasure drive. Clouds hung low and grey; the rain had been keen and raw, with snow in its course somewhere. Now it had become suspiciously milder. But neither lady was thinking of pleasure.

"You are very good, Mrs. Rollo!" said Annabella, who evidently had some difficulty in commanding herself, and was very unlike her usual stately manner. For she was a handsome girl, of the Madama type, and either by temperament or for policy had long adopted a calm style to match. To-day it was broken up.

"I am very much obliged to you!" she went on. "I did not know whom to speak to, and I must get somebody to help me. And Josephine used to think so much of you; I thought she would mind you if anybody. I couldn't ask mamma—mamma don't know. O what shall I do?"—And with this most honest cry of despair, poor Annabella broke down.

Hazel asked what was the matter? under the wild idea for a moment that Miss Powder had found her heart and then rashly broken it.

"Nobody knows"—the girl began again, trying to get the better of her agitation; "it has not come out yet; nobody suspects; and I thought—if you could hinder it! If you cannot, there is no one that can. Mamma has no idea. And it would just kill her to know. She thinks it is all right. Poor mamma!"

"But what am I to hinder?" said Wych Hazel.

"Have you seen Josephine lately?"

"Yes."

"Didn't she seem like herself?"

"Extremely like herself."

"So she did when I saw her. And her house, did you see her house?—it was so nicely arranged and so pretty; and I thought she was so happy."

"I never thought that," said Wych Hazel.

"I did. I thought she had got what she wanted; we all thought so. Nobody married this year had a better establishment than Josephine; not one."

"She got what she married for," said Hazel; "but Josephine's 'wants' were larger than that."

"Were they?" said Annabella drearily. "I didn't know it. I don't see how they could be."

Tropical words rose to Wych Hazel's lips; but she sent them back. Somehow her own height of happiness made her strangely tender and humble even towards such fallacy as this.

"Then you are troubled about her?" she said enquiringly.

"Troubled?" Annabella echoed. "Why she left it all."

"Left it?"—Wych Hazel sat straight in her place, facing round.

"Nobody knows yet; but she has left it. Mamma don't know. If I can keep it from mamma?"

"Keep it from Mrs. Powder?" Hazel repeated. "Keep what? Where has she gone? What can you be talking of, Miss Powder?"

"She has not gone far yet, but she means never to come back. I know where she is; she is hiding. You see, Mr. Charteris is at Albany; he has some business about some bill he wants to get through the Legislature, and it will keep him there a while; and Josey took the opportunity. She ran away; and I should never have known where to, only that the person she went to came and told me. It is a woman who used to be housekeeper for mamma; a very respectable woman; and Josey went to her. Think of it! And she won't come back. Not for me. And then I thought, if anybody living could have any influence over her, it might be you. She always thought all the world of you. Is it very bold in me to ask you? But Mrs. Rollo, I was desperate!"

Poor Annabella's looks and tones did not belie her. Wych Hazel sat back again, thinking.

"Marry a man," she said slowly, "and you may be able to live long without an establishment. But if you marry an establishment, the small appendage that goes along with it— But she must come back, of course! at once," Hazel exclaimed, retaking her impetuous tones.

"Won't come?—she must."

"If you can only make her!" said Annabella.

"Nobody knows anything yet—and Charteris will not be home for days. But I have not told you quite the whole. There is another person concerned. I am afraid,"—Annabella spoke with bated breath—"she means to go to Europe."

"Stuart Nightingale?"

"Oh, do you know that! Annabella burst forth with a cry that was almost pitiful. "Do you know that? Is there no hope! Can we do nothing?"

Usually so calm and impassive, Miss Powder's manner to-day was in a sort of shattered condition. Hazel's mention of Stuart's name had startled her into an access of fear. And the difficulty of managing a volcano from the outside came strongly into Wych Hazel's mind. She answered slowly,

"I do not know. We will try."

"And may I take you to her now? There is no time to lose."

Hazel assented, thinking busily. "This is her resource," she said to herself. "The pocket pistol would have been mine."

The carriage rolled on now for a time without any more words passing between its inmates. Both ladies were meditating, ways and means and hindrances. The grey sky under which they had begun their drive, seemed to be letting itself down closer and closer upon the earth; and this low grey canopy was becoming suspiciously smooth and uniform. The air was quite still, and had, as I said, suddenly grown mild. But neither of the two busy thinkers noticed the signs abroad.

"Mrs. Rollo," Annabella began after a long pause,—
"I am afraid you can do nothing with Phinny. She always has had her own way, and she is obstinate. Suppose you cannot make her listen to you; do you think you could have any power with Mr. Nightingale?"

Hazel hesitated to answer, and Annabella went on.—
"I don't know whether you know—Mme. Lasalle has got one of her friends to give him an office; and he is going out next month as Consul to Lisbon. If only he could be got off without her, then, you see, we should be safe."

"She would follow."

"No, I don't think she would; she would not dare. Phinny is not bold, in that way. Could you do anything with him, do you think?" The accent of forlorn anxiety was touching from the usually so imperturbable sister. She watched Wych Hazel's face and words now.

It was a very mixed question. Could she?—truth to say, she felt uncertain. Yet perhaps.—But might she? Would the attempt be permitted, if Rollo knew? Was it breaking faith to try without his knowledge? Or were there cases when she might lawfully and secretly follow her own judgment against his? and was this one? Hazel folded her hands over her "yes."

"Don't talk to me please," she said. "I must think."

Again the carriage rolled on with stillness inside. The gray air outside grew almost tangible, it seemed so thick. Very fine snow crystals were beginning to flicker down, but I think neither of the ladies remarked it. Meanwhile the wheels of the carriage were no longer rattling over paving stones; the streets and houses of the city were left behind; a grey country, with houses scattered over it and trees here and there standing, desolate and drear enough, was to be seen from the carriage windows; but Wych Hazel hardly saw it. At last the houses began again to stand apparently in some regular order and took a more comfortable air; gardens and trees and shrubbery lay between the houses and around them; then suddenly the carriage turned round a corner and presently stopped. Wych Hazel saw a small dwelling house of very humble pretensions, but neat-looking, and with a small courtyard in front; and now perceived by the signs that she was in a village. "Where have you brought me?" she said.

"O. Fort Washington—didn't I tell you? Mrs. Rhodes lives here. She is quite respectable."

The snow was not yet falling, except in those fine isolated crystals. But the branches of the trees that overshadowed the house were beginning to sway hither and thither as if the wind were raising, and a warning moan of the breeze came through the tree-tops. The ladies went in at a little gate in the paling fence, and were admitted immediately into the house by a neat elderly woman. A little entry-way received them, having a door on each hand. Wych Hazel was ushered into the room on the right, while Annabella disappeared with the woman into the other opposite.

It looked dreary enough, for Josephine Charteris's hiding-place. Respectable it was, to be sure. There was a gay ingrain carpet, a little table set out with photographs of Mrs. Rhodes's friends and relations, living and dead; around the walls hung a great number of other pictures in cut walnut frames and resting on brackets of the same. A large one of Abraham Lincoln held the first place among these, and another engraving of a racehorse challenged attention, with a large map of North America and the portrait of Jenny Lind. Hazel felt as if she could not have borne the whole together for one half hour, if she had been there on her own account. In a few minutes Josephine came in. She was not different from what Hazel had been accustomed to see her; not excited, not disturbed. Her dress was rich, and a little careless; in both respects not unlike Josephine. She received her visitor cordially enough.

"You are the only person I would see," she said. "How did you know where I was? I have come here for rest. You know there is no rest as long as people know you are in town; it is nothing but go, go, night and day. And here one has really a breath of country air. I have brought a carriage load of books with me—all the new novels I could find; and I just lie abed and read all day. Dreadfully useless, isn't it?" she went on with a laugh; "but you know I never pretended to be anything else."