

HEALTH AND LUXURY COMBINED.

CEYLON NATURAL GREEN TEA is so pure it can be drunk with impunity by confirmed dyspeptics, and to their benefit. It will displace Japan Tea just as "SALADA" black is displacing all other black teas. Lead packets only. By all grocers.

Sweet as a Rose.

"My sole aim and object; of course this little confession of his has taken me by surprise, though," waxes eloquent, and pressing Alice's arm, "when I saw the dear child, with her bewitching face, and that glory of hair which—when the sister and—ahem—the poet, alike would combine to laud, I say that when I saw her my surprise was considerably lessened. Ah, my dear Miss Alice, how all-powerful is love, what an exquisite picture two fondly beating hearts present to this—er—view of humanity."

"Yes, indeed yes," murmurs Alice, wondering what the astute and fox-like old gentleman is leading up to.

"I say," says the major, letting his eyes wander over the scene in an absent, contemplative manner, but nevertheless managing to keep Alice's face in sight—"I say that nothing is more touching and more beautiful, one's heart instinctively melts at such a spectacle, and one is deaf to the promptings of world's pride."

"There is silence for a moment, while the major heaves a sentimental sigh, and dries an imaginary tear from the extreme corner of his eye; then he says, still softly, but with a dangerous suddenness:

"Of course you are aware that my dear Rick is, to speak bluntly, next door to a pauper."

"Alice starts, and looks up at the impassive face with a side glance out of her innocent blue eyes.

"I don't think my brother—"

"The major smiles, so delicately conveyed, is greatly deserved. I am aware that Rick is a pauper, but I am over with your excellent brother! But—nay, I do not flatter—I feel that it is under your watchful care that our dear Miss Paula has—er—budded and blossomed, so to speak, and it is to you I thank myself in this most confidential little chat."

"Dear Paula," murmurs Alice, "of course I have had much to do with her, but I am not so young myself."

"The major pats her hand, and says, "My dear," he says, dryly, "you are a young and a beautiful girl—pause—and a clever one."

"Alice starts, and a swift gleam comes into her eyes.

"What is it you wish to say to me, Alice starts, and says, in quite a different tone.

"Just simply the plain, straightforward truth, my dear," retorts the major.

"Then—then you have withheld your consent to my sister's engagement with Sir Herbert Bates?" says Alice.

"Not at all—not at all!" murmurs the major, always, he remembered, speaking in the softest most musical of voices. "Not at all."

"I don't understand," says Alice, her brow knitting and her eyes fixed on the major's smiling down at her.

"Withhold my consent, my dear? Where would he have used of that? No, I gave it after a time."

"Then—then you consent to their marriage?" says Alice, murmurs the major.

"My no means," she says, with a catch in her breath. "And you think your brother will come true?"

"I am sure of it if you will help me," he says, nodding. "At any cost, Rick must be safe from the marriage; the like a sensible young fellow and not like an inspired idiot."

"From any other lips this language would be blunt to my ears, but from the major's gentle, curved ones, and accompanied by his most insinuating smile, they fall upon Alice's ears and cause nothing but a feeling of intense curiosity as to what is coming next."

"And he would be an idiot if he married my sister, I suppose?" she says, smiling up at him.

"Did I not say you were a clever girl?" he says, "My dear," patting her arm, and looking down at her admiringly. "I adore you, my dear, you are a genius. I was not mistaken in my estimate of your intellectual superiority to the run of young beauties, I said, there is a little clever girl, I will place myself in her hands, unreservedly and completely. And I intend to do so."

"The last of an old and impoverished race, with a duty before him—the not say that of restoring the fortunes of his fallen family. Here he is, and here am I, ready and anxious to help him, when, to my surprise, he falls in love with—just the most charming little piece of rusticity that I ever saw; she is indeed charming, the dear Miss Paula. Would to heaven that, in addition to her youth and beauty, Fortune had dowered her with that better gift which, alas, the world would have above even youth and beauty!"

"You mean that if Paula had been an heiress—"

"My dear child," murmurs the major, admiringly, "you put it in a nutshell."

"Then—then, why did you consent?" says Alice.

"The major looks at her, and could have made no difference, yes, indeed it would; my poor, infatuated Rick would have gone off and got married, and no how have been any the wiser, until it was too late!"

"It is Alice's time to score now, and she does so. With the sweetest smile, she raises her eyes.

"Oh, no," she murmurs, "Some one would, I should, dear Major Vericourt, you forget that I am dear Paula's watchful guardian, and—shouldn't let her marry a pauper, even though he were a baronet and as handsome as Sir Herbert."

"The major raises her hand to his lips in an ecstasy of admiration.

"My dear young lady," he exclaims, "most admirably put, that is exactly what I feel, indeed that we know each other, but all the same, you don't know Rick as well as I do. Ever since he was a boy in knickerbockers, opposition always had the effect of driving him to desperation. Opposition to his case would lead to the most disastrous result and certainly would not stop the marriage."

"Which must be prevented," says Alice, simply.

"Yes, yes," he murmurs, "Alice, with a smiling sigh.

"Hut, hut," mutters the major, patting her head, "A mere nothing! A boy-and-girl affair which she will forget long before she is engaged to the right man. There—the cat is out of the bag. I am a stupid old fellow who must speak his mind."

"Pray speak it," says Alice, rather

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"Well, I will," says the major, turning to her. "Look at me, my dear! You see only an ugly old man. Yes, yes," for Alice smiles and shakes her head. "But I tell you I am quite a prophet, and, unlike most prophets, a very lucky one. My prophecies generally come true, for the simple reason that I make them. Now, shall I prophesy—"

"Do," said Alice, leaning back, but still watching him.

"Well, then," he says, patting the old top of his stick, and keeping time to his soft voice, "I prophesy that before very long, and the very midst of their foolish little billing and cooing, something will come to pass that will put an end to it. You must ask me what the something is, because I could not tell you. But mind, I rely upon you to help me when it does come."

"Please go on."

"Well, then, our dear little child will be very sorry—no, knows how a child will cry over a lost toy, does not one? It is very sad, very touching. I declare I could cry myself at the sight of their little woe; but they soon forget it. One's heart instinctively melts at such a spectacle, and one is deaf to the promptings of world's pride."

"And the toy?" asks Alice, coolly.

"The toy," says the major, "is the major, in his most charmingly frank manner. 'Oh, he will cut up very rough under the time, very rough,' indeed; and then—then he will come to his senses and come back and do what his good sense means. I mean myself, my dear—wishes him."

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"My dear, I'll tell you at once!" murmurs the major, opening out his arms as if he would reveal the innermost secrets of his heart to her. "I will come back myself! In a word, he will come back and marry the daughter of his genial and worthy friend the sugar-baker."

"Alice stares and then she leans back and laughs softly.

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"Alice inclines her head.

"I ought to be either very angry or very flattered," she says.

"My dear, be neither! I give you my word, I don't flatter you. I am, if you will allow me to say so—also clever, at any rate, too clever to flatter between us."

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