

## "I WOULD NOT, IF I COULD."

I would not dig my past  
Up from its grave of weakness and regret;  
Up from its hopes—which glimmered but to set—  
Its dreams, that could not last!

Yet I can look before,  
And profit by the lessons sadly learned;  
As children, playing with the fire, are burned,  
And tempt its glow no more.

I would not, if I could,  
Live o'er again this dark, uncertain life—  
This slipping backward in the daily strife  
Of reaching after good.

Yet I can know how weak  
Are all below, and so sweet Charity  
Will cling and grow about each form I see,  
And thus to me will speak:

I would not open out  
The half-healed wounds of other years, long fled:  
'Twere better they were numbered with the dead,  
Better than fear or doubt.

Yet I can truly say,  
Let the dead past bury its dead. We go  
So swiftly onward to life's sunset glow—  
And then, there is no day!

Life is too short to waste  
In vain repinings or in weak regrets;  
The strongest heart endures, and never frets  
O'er joys it may not taste;

And he who can go on  
Bravely and firmly in the allotted way,  
Gaining new strength with every darkened ray,  
Shall surely reach the dawn.

And so I would not lift  
Up from the grave the shadows of the past;  
The clouds that all my sky once overcast  
Into the night may drift.

For there's enough to fill  
Each hour and moment of the days to come;  
Then wherefore woo the shadows to our home?  
The valleys to our hill!

THE  
GOLD OF CHICKAREE.

BY  
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AUTHORS OF

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

## CHAPTER VI.

A MAN AND HIS MONEY.

It is a pity somebody had not come to see; and somebody would, only that Rollo had a good many things to attend to just now besides his own pleasure. Instead, when the morning was half over, came Miss Phinney Powder, and the sleep and the attitude were broken up. Hazel went to her in the drawing-room.

Miss Josephine was in an unsettled state of mind; for she first placed herself on an ottoman by the fire-place, then got up and went to the window and stood looking out; all the while rattling on of indifferent things, in a rather languid way; then at last came and sank down in a very low position at Wych Hazel's feet on the carpet. She was a pretty girl; might have been extremely pretty, if her very pronounced style of manners had not drawn lines of boldness, almost of coarseness, where the lip should have been soft and the eyebrow modest. The whole expression was dissatisfied and jaded to-day, over and above those lines, which even low spirits could not obliterate.

"It must be awfully nice to have such a place as this all to yourself—house and all;—just to yourself! You needn't be married till you've a mind to. Don't you think it's a great bore to be married?"

"People can always wait," said Wych Hazel. "Wait?" said Phinney. "For what?"

"For such a great bore," said Hazel, stroking the cat.

"How can you wait?" said Phinney.

"What hinders?"

"Why! you must be married, you know, some time; and it don't do to stay till you can't get a good chance. It's such a bore!" said the poor girl helplessly.

Somehow, Hazel's own happiness made her rather tender towards these notes of complaint.

"What do you mean?" she said, leaning down by Phinney. "I would not take even a good chance to be miserable."

"I'm just in a fix," said Josephine, "and I can't get out of it. And I came to see you on purpose to talk. I thought maybe you would have some sympathy for me. Nobody has at home."

"Sympathy! What about?"

"Papa wants me to marry somebody—who comes pestering me every other day."

Josephine looked disconsolately out of the window. The weary face was eloquent of the system under which she declared herself suffering.

"Somebody you do not like?" said Hazel.

"O I like him—I like him pretty well; he's rather jolly on the whole; but—that's another thing from being married, you know. I like very well to have him round,—bringing me flowers and doing everything I bid him; I have made rather a slave of him, that's a fact; it's awfully ridiculous! He doesn't dare say his soul's his own, if I say it's mine, and I snub him in every other thing. But then—it's an-

other thing to go and marry him. Maybe he wouldn't like me to snub him, if I was his wife. Mamma don't dare do it to papa, I know; unless she does it on the sly."

Hazel drew back rather coldly.

"I think it is extremely probable he would not like it," she said. "He is not much of a man, to stand it now."

"Not?" cried Josephine. "Why what is the good of a man if you can't snub him? And if a man pretends to like you, of course he'll stand anything you give him. I like the bride figure in the German—that suits me;—when I'm the driver; but the Germans are all over for this season. Aren't you awfully sorry?"

"No. And a girl ought to be ashamed to talk as you do, Josephine!"

"Now hush! You shan't snub me. I came to you for comfort. Why ought I to be ashamed to talk so? Don't you like to have your own way?"

"My own way does not trend in that direction," said Miss Kennedy. "And I should scorn to have it over such a weak thing as a man who would let a girl fool him to his face."

"Men like such fooling. I know they do. I can do just what I like with them. But then if I was married,—I don't suppose I could fool so many at once. Why, Hazel, if you don't have your own way with men who let you, who will you have it with? Not the men who won't let; such a bluebeard of a man as your guardian, for instance. O do tell me! don't you sometimes get tired of living?"

"We are talking about your affairs this morning," said Hazel. "I should get tired of living, very soon, I think, at your rate."

"I am," said Josephine. And she looked so. "Sometimes I am ready to wish I had never been born. What's the good of living, anyhow, Hazel, when the fun's over?"

"Fun?" Hazel repeated,—how was she to tell this girl what seemed to her just now the good of living?

"Yes. You know all the summer there have been the garden parties and the riding parties, and the Germans, and the four-in-hand parties, and all sorts of delightful things; and now they're all over; and it makes me so blue! To be sure, by and by, there will be the season in town; but that won't be much till after the holidays, anyhow; and I feel horridly. And now comes Charteris bothering me. What would you do, Hazel?"

"What would I do?" Hazel repeated again, with a curious feeling that there was but one man in the world, and so of course what could anybody do! A little shy of the subject too, and feeling her cheeks grow warm in the discussion. "Do you like him very much, Josephine?"

"Very much?"—deliberately. "No. I don't think I like him very much. But papa says that will come fast enough when I am married. He says,—you know Charteris is awfully rich,—he says, papa says, this marriage will give me such a 'position.' Mamma don't conceive that one of her daughters can want position. But then, papa is a little lower down than mamma, you know. Well, I should have 'position,' and everything else I want—carriages and jewels, you know; diamonds; don't you like diamonds? I could have all I want. If I could only have them without the man!"

"You could live with him all your life, you think? by the help of the diamonds?"

"Papa says so. And mamma says so. I don't get any feeling at home. Annabella is wholly engaged in getting up parties to go to Dane Rollo's readings in Morton Hollow; that's all she thinks about. Isn't he too ridiculous?"

"I asked about Mr. Charteris," said Wych Hazel, knitting her brows a little. "And it is you who must live with him—not your father and mother. Could you do it, Josephine? with him alone?"

"One must live with somebody, I suppose," said Josephine, idly pulling threads from a foot mat near her.

"Well could you live without him?" said her questioner, taking a short cut to her point of view.

"Charteris? He ain't the jolliest man I know."

"Answer!" said Hazel, knitting her brows again.

"Live without Charteris? I should say I could. From my present point of view. Easy! But it comes back to that awful bore, Hazel; a girl has got to be married. I wish I was a man."

"Then I would," said Wych Hazel quietly.

"What?"

"Live without Mr. Charteris. And as you cannot be a man, suppose you talk like a woman."

"What do you mean?" said Phinney, looking doubtfully at her. "I haven't come here to be snubbed, I know. Aren't you sorry for me?"

"No,—not when you talk so. A girl has not 'got to get married.' And if you marry some one you can live without, you deserve what you will get."

"What will I get?" said Josephine.

"John Charteris—without the bouquet and the fooling."

"I don't know but he's very good," said Josephine meditatively. "And Hazel, a girl can't live without getting married. What should I do, for instance?"

"Wait till the right person comes," said Hazel. "And if he never comes, be thankful that you escaped the wrong one."

"But suppose the right person, as you call him, is poor?" said the young lady with a peculiar subdued inflexion of voice.

"O, is that it?" said Wych Hazel. "Then if he thinks you can make him rich, I would keep up the delusion."

"But I can't, Hazel. Papa hasn't much to give any of us. He has just enough to get along with comfortably."

"There are other things in the world, besides money, I suppose?" said Hazel. "And I know there could be no starvation wages for me, like diamonds from a hard I did not love."

"I like diamonds though," said Josephine.

"And it's dreadful to be poor. You don't know anything about it, Hazel. You're of no consequence, you have no power, nobody cares about you, even you've got to ask leave to speak; and then nobody listens to you! I mean, after you are too old to flirt. I don't want to be poor. And Mr. Charteris would put me beyond all that. He has plenty. And they say I would love him by and by. It's such a bore!"

The young lady leaned her head upon her hand with a really disconsolate face.

"I thought you just said somebody does care about you?"

"Did I? I don't recollect."

"You said 'the right person' was poor. Which would seem to imply that he is in existence."

"Well, he might just as well as not," said Josephine in the same tone. "They would never hear of my marrying him. It's all very nice to drive four-in-hand with somebody, and dance the German with him; and have good times at pic-nics and such things; but when it came to settling down in a little bit of a house, without a room in it big enough for a German; and ingrain carpets on the floors—I couldn't, Hazel!" said the girl with a shudder. "And there it is, you see."

Wych Hazel looked at her—and then she laughed.

"There is nothing much more fearful than 'the right person' on ingrain carpets," she said mockingly. "Except, perhaps, the wrong one on Turkey."

"Turkey carpets are jolly under your feet," said Josephine. "And after all, I wonder if it matters so much about the man? At least, when you can't have the right one. Well, you don't help me much. Annabella wanted to know if you wouldn't join a party to hear Dane Rollo read, Saturday night? She is crazy about those readings. I believe she's touched about him. Will you go?"

"No. Josephine, it matters *everything* about the man," said Hazel earnestly. "What sort of a life do you expect, if you begin with a false oath?"

"A false oath?"

"Yes. Think what you have to promise."

"What do I have to promise?"

"You know," said Hazel impatiently. "You have seen people married often enough to remember what they must say."

"I never thought about what they said. It's just a form; that's all."

"You would like to have Mr. Charteris consider *his* part just a form?"

"I never thought anything else about it. It is a form that would give me a right to the diamonds, you know, or anything else his money could buy. O dear! if one could have the things without the man! Will you go to hear Rollo read?"

"Well you had better think about it," said Hazel. "If it is *only* a form, it will give you a clear right to be miserable. I advise you to go straight home and study the words, and try them with different names. And do not really say them to any one they do not fit. Do you hear me, Josephine?"

The girl was looking up in her face with a look strange for her; a look studious of Wych Hazel herself; searching, somewhat wondering, secretly admiring. The look went off to the window with a half sigh.

"*Fais que dois, adienne que pourra,*" Hazel added softly.

"I don't know what I ought to do!" said Josephine. "How can I? If Stuart Nightingale had anything but what he spends—O what's the use talking about it, Hazel? Suppose I hadn't money to dress myself decently?"

"A man who has nothing but what he spends, spends too much," said Wych Hazel, with a smile to herself over the duration of Mr. Nightingale's "life-long" heartbreak of the fall before.

"Do you mean that he would not spare a little for you?"

"He hasn't enough for both," said Josephine, looking very dismal. "The other one has enough for a dozen."

"Did you never hear," said her hostess laughing, "that—in certain circumstances—"

"Half enough for one, is always more than just enough for two?"

"No," said Josephine abstractedly. "Who comes here that rides a light bay horse?"

"Everybody comes here. But I seldom look at their horses. Why?"

"One went by just now. I was looking at the horse, and I hadn't time to see the rider. He'll come in, I suppose. If Annabella knew all, she wouldn't care so much about this match; for just as soon as I marry John Charteris, papa'll sell Paul Charteris his piece of land; and that's a job Dane Rollo wouldn't like."

"Why not?" said Hazel, with a desperate calmness, and her heart beginning to beat so that it half took her breath away. "Is it land Mr. Rollo wants for himself?"

"You bet!" replied Miss Powder, at last getting up from the floor and shaking herself into order.

"I must go."

"But I said, why not?" Wych Hazel repeated. "There—you have ripped off your flounce."

"I did that getting out of the phaeton. O well!—it'll have to go so till I get home. Everybody will know I didn't dress myself so on purpose; and besides, nobody will see it. Not till I get there. You haven't a needle and silk, have you, Hazel?"

"Yes, if you will come up to my room for it," said Hazel, glad enough of an excuse to get her away. But Miss Powder had no mind to be spirited off. She had her own views, and excused herself.

"O thank you! but it's not worth while; and I can't wait, either. Well, I must go and meet my fate, I suppose."

"What does Mr. Charteris want with more land?" said Hazel, arranging the torn flounce.

"O, to serve Rollo out, you know, for being so mean."

"Is that it?" said Wych Hazel. "How? I do not understand."

"Why," said Josephine, watching the door, which she expected would open to admit the rider of the bay horse whoever he might be, "papa has a bit of land not worth much to him, just above Mr. Morton's ground that that pirate has bought; just above the mills. If Paul Charteris can get that, he will know what use to put it to. That will do, my dear, I dare say. I am awfully obliged for your care of my respectability."

"What use?" said Hazel seriously. "Here is one more tear—"

"O I don't understand those things. Do you know what *vouter power* means?"

"Yes."

"Well—if Paul Charteris gets that land,—and if I marry John Charteris he will—he'll cut off the water power. I don't know what it means, nor how he'll do it; but Mr. Rollo's mills will stop. And in that case, somebody at home will hate Paul Charteris! Well, she'd better have stood by me then."

The young lady detached herself at last, with a kiss to Wych Hazel, and bowled away in her little basket-wagon.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE EMERALD.

Hazel let her see herself out from the door of the drawing room, and then stood still in the middle of the floor with a hand on each side of her face. Not, however, considering the land question just then. She had seen Mr. Rollo but three times for a whole year,—so ran the first thought. And she had not seen him at all, since the other night,—so chimed in the second. And these three days of sleep and unconsciousness had confused the universe to that degree, that whether the world was round or triangular or square might be called a nicely balanced question. Had the bay horse stopped?—then where was his rider?

Hazel darted out of a side door, and stood still to consider. Walked slowly along for a step or two, (flying about did not just agree with her to-day) then took her way to the red room, entering noiselessly; also by a side door. Blushing as if she had not done her duty in that respect the other day, and so had large arrears to make up; but not losing the delicate look even so.

"How do you do, Mr. Rollo?" she said softly, and holding out her hand,—rather, it must be confessed, across a great easy chair which stood in the way. He had been making up the fire when she came in, and had looked up and let the tongs drop just before she spoke. Rollo was cool enough, however, to see the easy chair and come round it; but his greeting was grave and wordless. Perhaps he too remembered that she had not seen him since the other night. At any rate, anxiety and sympathy and infinite tenderness had more to express than could be put into words, for the power of words is limited. When he did speak, it was a simple demand to know how she did? "Very well," she said, softly as before.

"Is it very well?" he said earnestly. "And how has it been these three days?"

"O—I have been sleepy. As perhaps you heard," she said, with the pretty curl of her lips.

He looked at her a minute, then suddenly releasing her, turned away to the fire and picked up his tongs again. "I wish you would do something to comfort me!" he exclaimed. And the strong grey eyes were full of tears.

Hazel gave him an extremely astonished look, which went away, and came again, and once more came back, growing very wistful. She moved a step nearer to him, then stood still.

"What is it, Mr. Rollo?" she said with one of her sweet intonations, which was certainly 'comfort' so far as it went. "What am I to do? I mean"—she added timidly, "what have I done?"—for it was greatly Hazel's habit to somehow charge things back upon herself. But Rollo mended the fire with scrupulous exactness, put it in perfect order, set up his tongs; and then stood by the mantel-piece, leaning his elbows there and looking down at his work. Hazel watched him, at first with shy swift glances, then, as he did not look up, her look became more steady. What was he thinking of? It must be something she had done,—something which he had just heard of, perhaps,—some wild piece of mischief or thoughtlessness executed last summer or in the spring. Was he wonder-