

A REVERIE.

Break forth in rapturous songs of love.
Inspiring warblers of the grove;
Exhale your sweetest fragrance flowers.
To cheer my dreary lonely hours.

Roll, Erie, on thy surging waves.
Like freedom's sons—immortal braves—
In shouts of triumph o'er their foes,
My sorrows drown—dispel my woes!

Niagara's thund'ring cataract pour
Thy floods in one stupendous roar;
And thou, resplendent, glorious bow,
In gorgeous hues displayed below!

My song inspire with thoughts sublime.
And lend thy beauty to my rhyme.
That I may soar on fancy's wing,
And of thy matchless grandeur sing.

While wand'ring on Lake Erie's shore.
As in those blissful days of yore,
I sighed to see that "lovely form
Evanishing amidst the storm."

No transient are the joys of earth
That sadness follows all our mirth.
As shadow chases sunshine bright,
Till all our days are closed in night!

But when the sun of righteousness
Appears the dark'ning scenes to bless.
With radiant floods of light divine,
Then all is heaven and heaven is mine.

E. MCCALL.

Eagle, Ont.

THE
GOLD OF CHICKAREE.

BY

SUSAN and ANNA WARNER.

AUTHORS OF

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

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORTH OF A FEATHER.

The door of the red room stood open now, and the room was filled with firelight which came streaming out into the hall to usher him in. Hazel was down below the fire, sending persuasive puffs from her bellows into the very depths of the coals.

"What is left of you?" said Dane coming and taking the bellows from her hand.

"Much more than you are aware of. Have some chestnuts?—just for variety,"—and Hazel took from her pocket and poured into his hand her collection of extra specimens. Then quietly slipping from her fingers all the disguising rings she dropped them one by one into the empty pocket, until the emerald was left alone.

"Good fruit,"—said Dane viewing the big chestnuts.

"I have been saving them up for you all day. You know I could not always help taking them."

"Do you mean that people have been paying tribute to you in your own chestnuts?"

"Having nothing of their own that I would touch."

"In the meanwhile, what besides have you touched? I want to know."

"Never mind—we will have tea by and by. Dr. Maryland said you were to wait here for him—or for a message. Whichever came first, I suppose."

"I am not going to wait here for him,"—said Dane ringing the bell. "Will this bring Dingee?"

"No," said Hazel laughing; "that will bring Phoebe. Dingee acknowledges nothing but my whistle."

"Where is that?"

"Here,"—touching the little gold toy at her belt. "But you do not know how to blow it, Mr. Rollo."

Dane lifted the trinket and examined it, and then remarking that "a whistle is a whistle," put his lips to it and made the call sound loud and clear through the house.

"What do you want?" said Hazel laughing at him. "Dingee will know better than to hold me responsible for that. Tell me what you want, and I will obey orders—as usual."

"Dingee will know better than to think anybody else has blown your whistle. Dingee!"—as the boy appeared,—"go and say to Mrs. Bywank, with my compliments, that your mistress has had nothing to eat all day, except chestnuts. I think she will know what to do."

Dingee took in the situation and went off in a flourish.

"Did you see John Charteris here to-day?" Hazel said suddenly.

"I think he crossed my line of vision," said Dane carelessly.

"Well I did not ask him."

"What then?" said Rollo looking amused at her.

"I did not want you should think that I would." And Hazel, full of her own successful schemes in the mill business, smiled down upon the fire a whole sweet flood of triumph and delight, to which not only lips but eyes bore witness. Still looking amused, but with a great tenderness coming upon that, Rollo considered her.

"It is beyond the power of John Charteris to give me any uneasiness," he said. "And you are forgetting my emerald, Hazel."

"I? What? Forgetting?"

"Forgetting what it means. Hazel—what is your ideal of a wedding?"

Rollo was drawing one of Hazel's brown curls through his fingers and spoke in the coolest manner of abstract speculation. But the question came too close upon emeralds not to call up a vivid start of colour. As soon as she could, Hazel answered that "as she had none, it was impossible to tell."

"Let me state mine," said Rollo. "It may be useful to find out whether we think alike. In the first place, then, as to the scene of action.—The main thing is, to be where a large number of people can see us, and where we shall make part of an imposing picture. I can think of nothing better, in this country, than the Capitol at Washington. That would be showy, and central. I have no doubt it could be obtained for the occasion. I cannot think of any place more public or more demonstrative; can you?"

"Well?" said Hazel, stifling a laugh, for Dane's face was perfectly grave.

"We should of course in that case invite the Senate and House of Representatives, and give a cold collation to the city of Washington. With your money and mine, we could not do less."

"We' is rather superfluous."

"How so?" very innocently.

"Never mind now; go on."

"You approve, so far?" enquired Rollo, with dangerous demureness in the wise gray eyes.

"O I have nothing to do with the matter," said Hazel. "It is your imagination that has slipped its bridle, and I am simply curious to see where it will bring up."

"I don't know myself," said Rollo. "I am trying to fancy what the presents will be. Of course, since we ask the Senate and House of Representatives to the wedding, every man of them will send you a piece of plate; probably the majority of them will be teakettles. As I do not drink tea, it hardly concerns me much; but they will be very convenient for you. The arrangement of them for inspection is a matter of some difficulty;—I would suggest a pyramidal scaffolding on which they might be all disposed with very striking effect; indeed if it were done cleverly I conceive it might be possible to give the impression of a solid pyramid of teakettles; which would be imposing. The Hall of Representatives would be a good place, I should think; allowing of an effective display of the bronze statuettes which will probably accompany the teakettles. Every giver's name, of course, is to be appended to his own piece of plate; so that it can be seen at once who has given most; and then with the income tax reports in your hand, you can see who ought to have given most. I think all New York would be there. Be a good thing for the railway companies!"

Wych Hazel laughed a little bit, but she was too shy of the subject and too conscious of hot cheeks, to enter upon it very freely.

"There is one thing you have forgotten," she said. "Your 'ideal' is not complete, Mr. Rollo."

"What do you suggest?"

"An ideal woman. I am waiting for that."

"Did you think I was going to have a wedding without a bride?"

"Well—can you match the colours? You have put in the teakettles rather strong."

"I hope they'll be strong," said Dane, "if they are anything. If there is anything I don't like, it is weak ware."

Hazel was silent, looking rather intently into the fire.

"I think I have mentioned everything except the bride's dress and the wedding journey. And the first subject I feel myself incompetent to approach. In general, the main thing is that it should gratify curiosity and be somehow in advance of anything of the kind ever worn before. Is not that the great point?"

"Did you ever set Prim to talk to me about my dress?" said Hazel, facing round upon him with a wild change of subject in her own mind.

Dane, with his own still before him, laughed and said no; and then asked with some curiosity why she enquired?

"I was afraid you had,—that is all."

"That is a little too much. I never set other people to do my work."

He could see a gleam of pleasure cross her face, but she only said quietly, "I am glad."

"What did Prim say to you?"

"O it was some time ago—the night we were in Norway together. Prim asked me what I was going to 'do' about dress. And to this day I do not know what she meant."

"Your wedding dress?"

"Ah be quiet!" said Hazel. "I am talking sense. Is your imagination too exhausted to bring you back to the land of reality?"

"I am speaking the most common-sense sense I possess. If Prim was not referring to your wedding dress, what did she mean?"

"That is just what I do not quite know. Prim asked that all of a sudden, and I said, I did not know what she meant by 'do'; and she said 'manage'; and I said I never managed. And then she said—at least asked—"

"What?" said Dane, a trifle impatiently.

"Whether I thought you would like to have me dress as I do,"—said Hazel in a low voice.

The gray eyes took quick account of several items in the little lady's attire, then turned away; and Dane remarked quietly that "Prim had meant no harm."

"No, not a bit. But it puzzled me,—and I looked down at my dress, just—as you did now. And Prim said, of course she did not mean what

I wore then, but that I always dressed so beautifully. And then I thought," said Hazel with the laugh in her voice, "that maybe she thought it was wrong to have one's dress hang right. And next morning I was naughty enough to pull out her loopings and do them over. Then I asked her if she felt demoralized, or something. And Prim wanted to know if I thought she meant that? and bade me look at your dress. Which I have, very often," Hazel added with a shy glance, "but I do not find that it gives me any help about my own."

Dane rewarded this speech with a look of grave deliberation, which ended with the corners of his mouth breaking into all manner of lines of fun. Hazel smiled too, partly at him, partly at herself.

"You see what always happens when I talk out," she said. "I am sure to be laughed at for my 'confidence,' as you call it. But Mr. Rollo, I did not much mind what Prim said. Not a bit, only for two little things."

"What little things, Hazel?" and there was the force of a dozen "dears" and "my loves" in the quiet intonation.

"I thought for a while that you had told her to talk to me. As you did once before."

A quick look denied all knowledge of such an occasion.

"At Greenbush—that night," said Hazel.

"That night," said Dane smiling again.

"But I did not set her to talk to you then. I only sent her to do what I supposed at the moment she might do more acceptably."

"I know," said Hazel, "but I never could take second-hand orders. That was one of the times when you made a mistake in your dealings with me."

"Well? You know I shall not make such mistakes any more. And yet, Hazel," said he growing grave, "that is too much for me to say even lightly. Perhaps I shall make mistakes. Till we have lived long enough together to know each other thoroughly, I might. What will you do then?"

She laughed a little, half raised her eyes, and let them fall. "No," she said, "you will not repeat those two or three great ones; and others do not matter."

"Two or three?" said Dane; but then he began again.—"What was the other 'little thing' that annoyed you in Prim's words the other night?"

"About as wise as the first! I never supposed you noticed my dress,—or would,—while I kept out of yellow feathers and sky blue gloves. But Prim left a sort of impression, that if ever you should, it would be to dislike it. And that troubled me a little bit at the time, and has troubled me—just a little bit ever since."

Probably Dane's first thoughts were not put into words. What he did, was to get hold of Wych Hazel's hand, and between the kisses he gave it, remarked,

"I never noticed your dress without feeling a certain delight in its perfect harmonies; and—I never saw you without noticing your dress."

"You?" Hazel said with a quick, timid intonation. And then there came a great flush of pleasure, and she looked away and was silent; thinking to herself what she herself would have called "all sorts of things."

"Don't you think," said Dane coolly, "that as we have evidently so much respectively to learn about each other, we had better begin as soon as possible?"

"Are you expecting such new developments?—But then," she said, the doubtful look waking up again, "what did Primrose mean? She meant something,—and you know what it was."

"Do I? I suppose Primrose felt that I had changed from my once views of that, as of other subjects."

"What were your 'once' views?" said Hazel. "I hardly knew that people had what you call 'views' about dress."

Rollo smiled.

"I suppose mine were what yours are now."

"Then yours never had existence."

"And your dress happens. Do you mean that?"

"No, no!—but if I had worn two or three necklaces to the woods this morning, it would have been want of sense and taste, not of views."

"Certainly. Your 'views' of dress are sense and taste. Or rather, your instinct, I should say."

"But," said Hazel,—no, that is not what I mean. Sense and taste have to do directly with the subject,—they grow out of it, or are mixed up with it,—I wish anybody had ever taught me to talk, among other things!—I mean, they are intrinsic. And 'views' always seemed to take an outside stand irrespective of everything. I think I do not like 'views.'"

"You cannot help having them," said Dane laughing at her. "Views are merely the simplest word for *how you see a thing*; under what light, and proportions, and relations."

Hazel shook her head.

"I never was famous for seeing things," she said. "I think I go more by instinct. What do you compliment me by supposing my views of dress to be, Mr. Rollo?"

"That is something from which you are to get, and give, the sense of beauty, in infinite variety."

"Well, leaving that statement for the present, what are yours, please?"

"That it is a usable thing, which I am to use, like everything else,—for my Master."

Hazel glanced at him, and looked away.

"Up to a certain point," she said, "our views go side by side; we both call it a power."

Dane was silent, with a certain sweet, grave silence, that evidently was not in want of thoughts. Hazel sat still too for a few minutes knotting her little fingers together. She glanced at him again before she went on.

"But further than that, I do not understand. I think, generally, I have dressed to please myself,—not often for a purpose: though I could do that, I suppose, upon occasion. That is, in my sort of way. But in *yours*, Mr. Rollo,—I should get in such a labyrinth of black merino and green silk and blue velvet and white muslin, no line that ever was twisted would be long enough to guide me out."

"There's a short way out," said Rollo. "I will not let you get into a labyrinth."

"That may alter the case," said Hazel with a half laugh. "But just Prim's words, and the thought of your criticising my dress, put me in such confusion to-day that I was very near not getting dressed at all; and was ever so much ashamed of myself." The fluttering white dress by the way, had given place to one of the soft leaf-brown silks in which she delighted. Perhaps Rollo's eyes liked it too; for they took a complacent view and came back to her face with a smile.

"It is a problem, to be worked out," he said.

"In my way, to your ends?" queried Hazel. "The difference lying in the use or disposal of the power when in hand. Is that what you mean?"

"That will do. But sometimes it happens, that beauty of effect must give way before more important uses."

"Why? And how?" she said looking at him.

"Do you want me to go into it?"

"Yes, of course. And get me out."

"I don't know about that. Well,—I have seen you,—to come to personalities,—I have seen you, for instance, wearing a hat and feather. I have good reason to remember it; for the play of that feather used to gratify and irritate me, both at once, beyond what was on the whole easy to bear. The hat suited the feather, and the feather became the hat; and hat and feather were precisely suited to you. Your purpose, or 'views,' in dressing, were perfectly attained. Suppose that I could shew you that the pretty brown plume represented what would keep a certain poor family from suffering through the winter months?"

If Hazel was ready to laugh at one point of this speech, she grew grave enough over the remainder; the sensitive colour stirring and deepening in her cheeks. Anything that ever came near direct personal criticism was so new to her.

"But Mr. Rollo—" she began.

"Yes," he said gently and taking her hand, "I am waiting for that. Say just what is in your mind."

"The poor family did not come forward, or they could have had what they wanted. I did not know where they were. You do not think I invest everything in feathers,—feelings and all?"

"Hazel, I am putting a case. It is a constant case certainly; but brought forward just now to illustrate a principle—nothing else. Suppose the poor family did come forward and get its supply; than I could tell you of a case of sickness, and shew you that your feather represented the professional attendance and skill which poverty could not command."

"But, but," said Hazel earnestly,—"I mean. Suppose,—I have enough for them and myself too?"

"Then I could tell you of a poor invalid to whom a few weeks in the country would be life and health; but she cannot stop work. Or I could tell you of a family just turned out of house and home because illness has made them behindhand with the rent. I could show you friendless children to one of whom your feather would give safety and food for a year. Or feeble and ailing people, to whom it would supply the delicacies they cannot get nor do without. Or poor ministers, to whom it could go in an invaluable parcel of books. Or ignorant, poor, seeking instruction, to whom it would be months of schooling. And then, I should but have given you samples, Hazel, which you might multiply by the hundred and the thousand, and still keep far within the literal fact."

She listened with a grave face, trying to follow; but it is hard for eighteen to realize at all what even fourscore takes in but dimly.

"You think I am extravagant," she said. "That would be a very harsh word in this connection. I do not mean it. I was trying to answer you. You said, 'Suppose I have enough for them and myself too.'"

"I wonder if I am?" she said with a half laugh and part soberly.—"I wish I could stand off and look at myself. Mr. Rollo, will you give me another instance? I shall have to forgive that feather because it had the honour of 'irritating' you, and so enlists my sympathies; but what else have you seen me wear, that could do so much more than itself?"

"The red squirrel has no business to preach to the shrew mouse," said he lightly, but looking at her as if doubtful how far it were best to go.

"I am not a shrew," said Hazel with somewhat prompt decision. "Nor a mouse. Nor spun glass. So all those little preliminaries are disposed of. And I do not see why you should preach to everybody else and not to me."