

As no doubt Reo would, if he had known where she was going! That thought confronted her next; and with a dim consciousness of having stopped the carriage at a venture, for fear he should know, Hazel began again: "At least,"— "But there was no going on from that point." "Is it very far along the foot of the hill?" she ventured, without any look this time.

"I should say," returned Rollo gravely, "it might be about some five miles."

Hazel leaned her head on her hand and tried to recollect, and nothing stood out from all that morning's work but the pain and the difficulty and the fatigue.

He sat down and took the little hand again. "Which way did you come over the hill, Wych?"

"I do not know."—If it must come, it must! "I was thinking only of getting up; and you know there are not many landmarks. At least, I do not remember any."

"Did you come through the wood?"

"No. I am sure of that."

"Then did you come east or west of it?"

"I do not remember the wood at all," said Hazel, feeling very much ashamed of herself.

"I was not looking. But there were no houses—I am sure of that."

"What did you see, Hazel?"

"I think, of all people to cross-examine one!" said the girl in her extremity sending a little bit of her old self to the front. "I am certain I can find the way, Mr. Rollo, without the trouble of considering what I did not see, or what I did."

"May I venture to ask, what orders you gave Reo?"

"The usual orders: to wait till I came."

Rollo laughed a little, but if his face did not mean that he understood the whole matter, it did not mean anything. It was very grave, though he laughed.

He went off, and left Wych Hazel again to herself, with only Gyda moving about and keeping up the fire. It was a full mile over the hill to the cross-road where the carriage was standing, and Hazel had a good time of quiet all to herself. As once before that day she had looked up the moment Rollo turned and so watched him out of sight. And now Hazel sat among her cushions, her head down against the side of her chair, looking into the winking embers with very grave wide-open eyes. Mentally, she knew there had come a great hill over all troublous things; a hill which she was not just then strong enough to disturb by handling it in detail. But physically, she felt shattered, and very little able to practice self-defence; and she began to long to get home, and by herself, when keeping up of any sort would be needful. One thing was yet to do, however. So when Gyda had ended her work and sat down at the corner of the hearth, Hazel left her cushions and knelt down beside her.

"My lady," said Gyda, turning her bright eyes upon Hazel with a happy look.

"You will not tell him anything of all this? my coming, and all about it? And what I said?"

"No need," replied Gyda placidly. "My lady will tell it herself."

A very resolved little gesture of the girl's head dismissed that statement. She was silent a minute.

"And then," she began again, more hesitatingly, "at least you will not speak of it. Not—of—a year ago?"

"Last year?" said Gyda. "When my lady came here before? That was not for him to know. That was only me alone. To-day my lady will tell him about, when she pleases. And Gyda smiled over this statement benignly.

Hazel heaved her head against Gyda's arm gazing down into the firelight; it seemed to her to-day as if she had to think over anything a great many times to get used to it. She must be tired. The afternoon light was waning fast when the quick step outside was heard again, and Rollo came in. He surveyed the group quietly, and then went off to his room to change his dress. And when he returned to relieve the guard, it was with a most composed and unexciting manner. He scarcely said three words, till a boy brought the message that the carriage was waiting in the hollow. Then he wrapped the great plaid shawl round Hazel, for the evening had fallen chill and her dress was thin, and they went out into the dusky twilight for the walk down to the carriage.

Dusky, and yet clear; a cloudless depth of sky out of which stars were brightening; a still air with almost a breath of frost in it; outlines of the hollow hills darkly drawn against the soft twilight sky; the silence of evening, when mill-work was done, over all and everything. Rollo did not speak, and they heard—if they heard—only the sound of their own steps down the path. When they were in the carriage Rollo presently with a gentle word untied Wych Hazel's hat and took it off; drew a corner of the shawl over her head, and putting his arm round her made her lay down her head upon his shoulder and lean upon him.

"But Mr. Rollo—" said Hazel timidly, finding that her acted remonstrance had no effect.

"What?"

"I am quite able to sit up."

"I have no faith whatever in that statement."

"If you will let me try—the other,"—Hazel began.

"The other shoulder?"

But the answer to that tarried. Hazel knew

perfectly well that if she spoke in the first minute she would laugh; which was not at all according to her present system of tactics. And in the second, her words were not ready, and by the time the third came it was rather too late. So silence reigned, while Rollo sent the horses along, over the level smooth road, and the evening air came in crisp and fresh at the open window, and stars looked down winking in their quiet way of saying things. They always do, when one is happy; sometimes in other states of mind they seem high above sympathy. But to-night they looked down at Hazel confidentially, and crickets and nameless insects chirruped along by the roadside; and on and on the carriage rolled, mile after mile. Rollo was as still as the stars, almost. And so was Wych Hazel, for a long time; still as anything could be that lived. Suddenly a question broke from her.

"What was it you were going to say to me?"

"When?" The word came with a ring of many thoughts, through which a grave tenderness most vibrated.

"You said that was the best time. And you did not take it," said Hazel.

"Hush," said he softly and gravely. "All has been said, except that I shall never forgive myself, Hazel."

CHAPTER V.

ASLEEP AND AWAKE.

Wych Hazel went to her room so utterly spent, so completely prostrate, that even Phoebe could not talk during her ministrations; nor dared Mrs. Bywank find fault. *Wych* Miss Wych must needs tire herself to death, over nobody knows what, was a trial to the good house-keeper's patience as well as her curiosity; but for that night the only thing was to let her sleep. It was the only thing next day. The reaction, once fairly set in, was strong in proportion to the causes which had prepared it and brought it about; and Wych Hazel lay in a motionless stupor of sleep, from which nothing could rouse her up. She would open her eyes perhaps, and answer a question, but anything more than that was plainly beyond her strength; and for three days and three nights she lay as helpless as a little child. "Sleeping her life out," Phoebe said, and certainly frightening Mrs. Bywank half to death; but in reality passing safely out from under the mortal illness that had hung over her by a thread.

And so, on the fourth morning after the day of events, Hazel did fairly wake up, and dress herself, and go down stairs; devoutly hoping that nobody but Mr. Falkirk might come to breakfast, and extremely ready to dispense with him.

Wrapping herself in the soft folds of a crimson morning dress, which at least would keep her in countenance; her face more delicate than pale; her step rather hesitating than slow; her thoughts in a maze of dreamland as misty and bright and shy as the morning sunbeams that went everywhere and just kept out of reach. What had happened *before* these three days, that Hazel knew well enough. But what had happened since that? Had Jeannie Deans been here, with her master?—and not finding the lady of the house on hand, had they then gone straight to Mr. Falkirk?—did he know? or guess? And how many more times had her other guardian come to Chickaree! and what had he thought of the tidings about her?—and at what unexpected point of the day or the minute was she to meet him, on a sudden? Her step lingered on the last stair—went noiselessly along the hall; and then the next thing Mr. Falkirk knew, was a light hand on his shoulder and a soft

"Good-morning, sir."

"My dear!" said Mr. Falkirk, suddenly rising. "I am very glad to see you." And he took her hand, which was not common, and looked at her as if to convince himself that all was right.

"Are you, sir?" she said with a laugh. "You are sure it is not a hallucination, Mr. Falkirk?"

"I am sure of nothing, Miss Hazel, except that I see you. At my time of life, confidence in any conclusions is somewhat shaken. What has been the matter with you?"

"I have been having my own way, sir,—which has agreed with me admirably," returned Miss Hazel with an arch of her eyebrows. "There is nothing like it, I find. Will you come to breakfast, Mr. Falkirk?"

Her guardian cast two or three rather inquiring looks at her; but seeing that she was undoubtedly well, and probably had not been ill, he contentedly and unsuspectingly, man-like, dismissed the subject and came to breakfast as she bade him.

"It is so long since I had my own way," he remarked dryly, "I have forgotten how it feels. Your taste of serene satisfaction is unknown to me. How long do you intend to keep it up, Miss Hazel?"

"Until some restless person puts it to flight, sir, I suppose. That is the usual fate of my serene states, as you call them."

"It occurs to me," Mr. Falkirk went on, "that in our recent search after fortune and in the general hallucination which in such a search prevails, I am a good honest big Newfoundland dog—transformed into the present shape for the more efficient performance of the duty of barking round his mistress. I feel that to be about

my present status and dignity, plainly expressed."

"The way gentlemen make statements!" said Wych Hazel. "Perhaps you are aware, sir, who brought me home, here, a month ago, when I did not want to come?"

"I don't remember it," said Mr. Falkirk. "I only remember who took me to all the watering-places on the continent—where I didn't want to go. I should like to be informed, Miss Hazel, when the search after fortune is to end—when I may reasonably hope to resume my own shape again? You may not suppose it; but barking tries a man's powers."

"I had not perceived it, sir. On the contrary, your voice has been particularly sonorous of late."

"Are you aware it is the first of October, Miss Hazel?"

"Time for chestnuts, isn't it?" said the girl.

"I had forgotten all about them."

"There are other nuts to crack besides chestnuts. The owner of the house you had last winter has written to ask if you want it again this year."

"Talk of the restlessness of women!" said Hazel. "Here are we but just settled in the country, and Mr. Falkirk already proposing to return to town."

"I don't know what you are," said Mr. Falkirk, "but I am not settled. Of course, coming home at the end of the season, I have no cook; and Gotham informs me that the kitchen chimney smokes. I should think it did, to judge by the condition of my beef-steaks."

"I am very sorry, sir! Suppose you condescend to my beef-steaks—until the cook and the smoke change places! The blue room is in perfect order—and would suit your taste of mind," said Miss Wych, eyeing Mr. Falkirk with an air of deep gravity. "Then there is always Europe—"

"Is that the next thing?" exclaimed Mr. Falkirk, with a positively alarmed air. "I have been expecting it."

"I wanted to go last year, you know, sir,—and (if nobody said anything against it) I think I should write at once and secure my passage."

"To what quarter of the world, Miss Hazel?"

"We might go round, sir; and stop where things promised latest."

"We might. Then I am to understand you do not like the promise of things at Chickaree?"

"What do you take to be the promise of things here, at present, Mr. Falkirk?"

"Quite beside the question, Miss Hazel. Am I to tell this man you don't want the house in Fifth street?"

"I should prefer another house, I think," said Hazel gravely. "Mr. Falkirk, I had a letter from Kitty Fisher this morning, and she sends you her love."

Mr. Falkirk gave an inarticulate grumble.

"You may throw it back to her, my dear; her own love is all she cares about; and as I don't care about it, we are suited. Do I understand that you wish me to look for another house, then?"

"I did hint at Europe,"—said Wych Hazel. "But if it amuses you to look for houses, sir, I have no sort of objection."

Mr. Falkirk laid down his knife and fork, and looked across the table.

"It don't amuse me to look for anything in a fog, my dear. Do you want to go to Europe?"

"O well, we need not go this week, sir? Shall I invite all the neighbourhood to a grand chestnutting, when Kitty Fisher comes?"

"Miss Hazel, that girl is not proper company for you. I hope you will not ask her to help you in your merry-makings; she understands nothing but a romp. And, my dear, if you know your own mind I wish you would be so kind as to let me know it. To go to Europe this fall, you must be off in three weeks at latest. Have you spoken to Rollo about it?"

"Truly, I have not!" said Wych Hazel, with a glow which however Mr. Falkirk charged to displeasure. "Did you ever know me speak to him about anything connected with my own affairs, sir?"

"I don't know, my dear. He has a word to say concerning them. Do you wish me to sound him on the subject, then?"

"Did you ever succeed in 'sounding' him, sir? on any subject?" said the young lady, consulting her watch, and with all her senses on the alert for interruptions. What were "business" hours at Morton Hollow, she wondered? Then she rose up, and passing round to Mr. Falkirk, gave him a smile that was very sweet and not a bit teasing.

"I must go and rest, sir. I find sitting up tires me to-day. But you will come to dinner?"

She went off with that quick step, betaking herself to the crimson room; for to-day Hazel seemed to prefer high-coloured surroundings. There she sat for a while before the great picture, thinking of many things; and there, still down on her foot cushion, laid her head in one of the easy chairs and went to sleep; with the gray cat dozing and purring in the same chair, close by her head. Only the cat's eyelashes were not wet, and Wych Hazel's were.

(To be continued.)

"I try to preach the milk of the word," replied a city clergyman to a parishioner who remonstrated that his sermons were too long. "Yes," remarked the other, "but around here what we want is condensed milk."

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

Most men love little women, and little women love most men.

A TUNE that young ladies try to catch: a million-airs.

JEAN PAUL says: love truly but not excessively. That is to say, never fan a girl so hard as to spoil her crimps.

THEY can stay at home and darn, if they can't stand on the street corners and swear. This refers to women.

WHY is a young lady of seventeen brief summers like the Sultan's Asiatic possessions? Because she is a she minor.

ALL the women of the villages on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico are in the habit of swimming. The young ladies are all diving-belles.

YOU may wish to get a wife without a failing; but what if the lady, after you find her, happens to be in want of a husband of the same character?

THE misery of the young man who courts a sparkling fashionable belle, and loses her, is only excelled by the misery of the man who courts her and wins her.

IF there were a Miss Robinson Crusoe on a desolate island, with no one to please her but her own reflection in the water, she would yet every day make and wear the newest fashion.

A STRONG-MINDED woman was heard to remark, the other day, that she would marry a man who had plenty of money, though he was so ugly she had to scream every time she looked at him.

AN old lady sleeping during divine services in a church, let fall a Bible, with clasps to it, and, the noise partly awakening her, she exclaimed aloud: "What! you've broke another jug, have you?"

"ALGERNON," she whispered, "will you always love me?"—"Evangeline, I swear it," he responded in a passionate murmur. Then there was a sound as of a clam falling into the mud, and all was still.

AN ingenious girl on Long Island, who has never had a "feller" in the world, goods the other girls in the neighbourhood to madness by lighting up the parlor brilliantly, and then setting her father's hat where the shadow will be boldly marked against the curtain.

AN aged man said, "If husbands only had any sense, they'd never have any trouble with disobedient wives. I never did, an' I've been married nigh on fifty years."—"What is your secret?" asked a friend.—"Why, I always tell my wife to do just as she pleases, an' she never fails to do it."

"You see, you young folks," said old Uncle Jeff, "just you hearken to me attentively. Marriage begins with courting, and sometimes ends with courting; the first being proceedings in courtship and ending with the parson, and the second being proceedings in the court-house and ending with the sheriff."

A WOMAN once called her little boy "a jewel" for doing something that pleased her, but a little while after she chased him out of the house for doing something bad, when the little fellow put his head in at the window, and cried out, "You'll never get rich, ma, if you throw away jewels like that!"

HE had just remarked, "Thou art my morning star," when the firecracker went off under the seat. She fainted dead away, and he took a flying leap to clear the fountain, and came down in the basin. There were eight little boys in the park, and they all laughed, but he believes the red-headed one fired that cracker.

"LOVE caught the brush," he wrote to her, "and painted your glowing picture upon the living canvas of my soul." This was a young man on a six-dollar salary, and if he had had seventy-five dollars a week and a rich aunt he couldn't have nixed her more completely. Now they are married, and he only wears a boiled shirt upon Sundays.

JULIA WARD HOWE rebuked a fellow who interrupted her in a speech at a woman's meeting at London recently, by saying: "There is one thing I may add before I sit down. In my country when a woman rises to speak you may hear a pin drop." Then she sat down. Her "hit back" was received with loud and long applause.

A COMMERCIAL traveller, by mistake, handed a merchant, upon whom he had called, a portrait of his betrothed instead of his business card, saying that he represented that establishment. The merchant examined it carefully, remarked that it was a fine establishment, and returned it to the astonished and blushing traveller, saying, "I hope that you will soon be admitted into partnership."

JONES agreed to do some slight service for the lady he intends to make Mrs. Jones, and, as a consideration thereof, she agreed to pay him in kisses. At the time the service was concluded, there being company present, so that she could not pay him, as one might say, the cash down, he naturally inquired when he could receive his pay. "Oh," said she, with downcast eyes, "not until you present your bill!" Perhaps it is needless to say that at the proper time and place he presented it.