

for you. Mr. Falkirk, if you knew how long Gov. Powder has been impatient for you, you would be grieved to have left him so long with me!"—And Miss Kennedy flitted off, with eyes in a sparkle that was dangerous to come near. I think Gov. Powder's eyes sparkled a little too, poor man; they had grown a little dull with looking so long into ways and means.

And after this little bit of business, the pleasure of the day set in with a flood tide. You have all seen such days. Nature had laid out a wonderful entertainment to begin with; and put no hindrances in the way; and it appeared that every creature came with spirits and hopes on tiptoe. Dresses were something captivating, so much attention and invention had been exercised upon them. And the facilities for flirtation which the scene and the sport afforded, were most picturesque. The parties in the trees could display their agility; the parties on the ground could show their costumes in charming attitudes. For a time the care of the hostess was needed in assigning the people to their proper posts of usefulness or pleasure; but when all were come and all was in train, the thing would run itself, and Wych Hazel became as free as anybody else.

"Look here," cried Josephine Powder, "I've been waiting all day to speak to you. Nobody wants you now, Hazel; come here and sit down. I'm in awful trouble."

Wych Hazel sat down and pulled off her gloves, and then the glittering fingers went diving into her pocket after chestnuts.

"Well?" she said,—"what now? There is a big one—try that."

"I used to like chestnuts once," said Josephine looking at it. "I wonder if there'll be fun in anything ever any more for me?"

"Depends a good deal upon where you look for it," said Miss Kennedy, biting her nut. "Are you playing pendulum still, for pity's sake?"

"Pendulum? No. I'm fixed. I've accepted John Charteris."

"Have you?" said Hazel, thinking that her business interview had been just in time.

"How much down, Josephine? and how much on bond and mortgage?"

"What do you mean?"

"The trouble is, you can never foreclose," said Hazel. "Are the diamonds satisfactory?"

"You are not," said Josephine energetically.

"Now, be good, Hazel! I came to you, because I thought you were the only creature that would have a little feeling for me. Everybody else says it's such a grand thing."

"Well, I have some feeling for you, and so I don't say it. Much more feeling than patience. Why do you sell yourself, if you do not like the price, Josephine Powder?"

"What can one do?" said the girl disconsolately.

"Let me see the first instalment," said Hazel. "Is it paid in?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Josephine. "I tell you, they were all at me, and said I should be such a fool if I let it slip; and that I should be very happy—but I don't feel so."

"Not when everybody says you are?" Hazel enquired with slight scorn.

"Of course one likes to have other people think one is happy," said Josephine; "you don't want to have them pitying you. I thought I should feel better when I was engaged and the whole thing settled. I wish people could live without getting married!"

"Well," said Wych Hazel, "there is one thing I could not do without,—if I had to marry John Charteris."

"What is that?"

"A pocket pistol."

"A pocket pistol, Hazel! He isn't as bad as that. What's the matter with him?"

"Just a trifle. You do not love him."

"They said that would come," said Josephine dolefully.

"By express, from the land of nowhere," said Miss Wych nibbling her nuts. "Marked 'Very perishable'!"

"But I don't find that it comes."

"No," said Hazel coolly, "that land is a good way off. Isn't it cold work waiting all alone with the diamonds?"

Josephine displayed a magnificent finger. But she looked at it with no reflection of its light in her eyes. "You speak very coolly," she said, then letting her hand drop. "I thought you would feel for me somehow."

"I tell you I do, or I should not take the trouble of pinching you to see if you have any feeling left for yourself. Does not that ring make you shiver?"

"Sometimes. But what can I do, Hazel?"

It may as well be John Charteris as anybody else, as long as one can't please oneself. One must marry somebody. You know one must!"

"Look at them," said Hazel. "As cold and hard as he is. Flashing up nothing deeper than the pocket they came from."

"There is no fault in the diamonds," said Josephine sulkily. "They ought to be hard. And these are beauties. And Charteris isn't harder than other people, that I know of. It is only that—I don't want to marry him. And he is in an awful hurry. If it was only a long way off, I wouldn't mind so much."

Wych Hazel dropped her chestnuts.

"Josephine," she said gravely, "do you see these rings on my hands?"

"Yes. I have seen them and admired them often enough. There's a splendid emerald though. I never saw that before. O Hazel!" the girl cried suddenly. "It's on that finger!"

The hands were something to look at, in their glitter of strange old-fashioned rings, with many-coloured stones and various settings. Only a close observer would have noticed that the emerald alone was a fit.

"Every one of all the eight is a betrothal ring," Hazel went on, not heeding; "every one has been a token between people who chose each other from all the world. They are not all rich, you see,—here is a poor little silver hoop among the diamonds. And they were not all happy; for this ruby has seen a death-parting, and the pearls are no whiter than the face that had waited for twenty years. But not one ring has the stain of a broken troth, nor the soil of a purchase. The people suffered, they waited, they died,—but they never so much as thought of any one but each other, in all the world!" Wych Hazel folded her hands in her lap again, looking at Josephine with eyes that were all alight.

"But that's yours," Josephine went on impatiently. "Who put it on?" The girl's accent was of more than curiosity.

"There are several of them you have never seen before," said Hazel. "Josephine, do you understand what I say to you? People starve to death upon diamonds."

"Ah well, but do tell me!" said the girl, with a curious mixture of coaxing and distressful in her tone, "do tell me who it was, Hazel. I just want to know."

"You just want shaking, I think," said Wych Hazel. "I did not see anybody put it there. And I thought you wanted to talk of your own affairs? If not, I will go and attend to my guests."

"You are very cruel," said Josephine, quite subdued. "Just tell me if it was—Stuart Nightingale?"

"No, I shall not. You have nothing to do with Mr. Nightingale. You belong to Mr. Charteris."

"You put me off!" cried Josephine, laying her face in her hands for a moment. "It don't matter. I can find out some other way; there are ways enough."

She looked towards the opening where gleams of colour could now and then be seen flitting among the trees. Wych Hazel laid one little hand on her shoulder.

"Josephine," she said, "I wish you would break this off!"

"What?"

"Any sort of engagement with John Charteris."

"I can't," said the girl drearily. "They all want me to marry him. There'd be an awful row if I broke it off now. And what difference does it make? If you can't have what you would like, all the rest is pretty much one thing. It's a bore; but one may as well get all out of it if one can."

"See!" said Hazel in her sweet persuasive tones,—"you never know what you can have. And you can always have yourself. I would break it—feeling as you do—if I were half way through the last yes."

"Yes, it will do for you to talk," said Josephine; "but everybody is not rich like you. And even you, I suppose, don't choose to live as you are for ever. You'll marry too; your finger says so. And I must, I suppose. But I can't tell you how horrid it is. I tell you what, Hazel; one must like a man very much to be willing to give up one's liberty!"

Hazel was not fond of that way of stating the case, even yet. She went back to the former words.

"Horrid?" she said,—"there is no English strong enough. And 'must' is absurd, so long as your liberty is in your own power. If ever I 'don't choose,' as you say, it will be because I don't choose."

Poor Josephine rose up, straightened herself, with a bearing half proud, half defiant, and looked away. Then in another minute, seeing her chance, she darted or glided from her covert, and before Hazel's indignant and pitying gaze, plunged into a gay bit of badinage with her lover who was passing near. No trace of regret or of unwillingness apparent; Josephine was playing off her usual airs with her usual reckless freedom; she and Charteris were presently out of sight.

"And she presumed to bring him here without my leave, and then came down upon me for pity! Well—the supply is unlimited,—she can have all she wants." And Hazel looked down at her own ring, which meant so much; thinking of the diamonds which meant so little; and went off among her guests, to keep them in more respectful attitudes than even before. For Miss Kennedy was extremely remote this day, placing herself at such a dainty distance as was about equally fascinating and hard to bear. Somehow she evaded all the special little devotions with which she was beset; contriving that they should fall through so naturally, that the poor devotee blamed nothing but his own fingers, and followed the brown eyes about more helplessly than ever. Only one or two lookers-on saw deeper. Mr. Kingsland smiled, pursuing his studies.

"This ethereal power which one cannot get hold of," he remarked to himself, "becomes truly terrific in such hands. Now there is young Bradford,—he picked out those chestnuts solely and exclusively for the heiress of Chickaree,—and in some inexplicable way she has made him hand them to Molly Seaton. Not a cent but what her brothers may give her. And how Tom Porter comes to be walking off with Miss May, nobody will ever know but the sorceress herself. She will none of him,—nor of anybody else. Who has won?"

"You are expecting more guests, I see, even at this late hour," he remarked aloud to Mr. Falkirk.

"Why do you judge so?"

"I notice a certain absence," said Mr. Kingsland. "Also a vacant place which no one here is allowed to fill. 'Trifles light as air,' perhaps,—and yet—"

"Where is your associate counsel to-day, Mr. Falkirk?" said Kitty Fisher, interposing her pretty figure. "Do you and he take it 'off and on'?"

Now this young lady being Mr. Falkirk's special aversion, he deigned no reply to her impertinence; confronting her instead with an undeclarative face and manner of calm repression.

"What is on the carpet?" said a new comer. "Now whatever possessed you to come on it?" said Miss Fisher with a pout. "We were just going to scare up a German!"

"Perhaps I can be of some slight assistance." Kitty Fisher clapped him affectionately on the shoulder.

"Thanks—my dear fellow," she said. "We all know what your 'slight assistance' amounts to in such cases. Too mean of you to come! And Hazel has not had one bit of fun yet this whole day."

"What have you been doing to her?"

"It's a wicked shame," Kitty went on. "And Sir Henry coming and everybody. I was going to take out Mr. Falkirk—it's leap year, you know; and he might be short of partners," said Miss Fisher, prudently dropping her voice at this point.

"What is a shame, if you please?"

"For you to walk in and play marplot."

"Let me walk you off instead, and be useful. You can explain to me your plans as we go."

"I can help you find the brown eyes, poor things!" said Kitty. "Well, they do lots of mischief when you're not by,—that's one comfort."

Through the bright woodland, from group to group of chestnutters, the gentleman and the young lady went. The scene was pretty and lively, but Wych Hazel was not with any of the groups; having in fact escaped from her admirers into the deeper shadow of trees that did not bear chestnuts. At last Miss Fisher's curiosity waked up. Bidding her companion keep watch where he was, in a shadowy corner of red oaks and purple ashes, she ran off, "to beat the bush," as she said; and hardly were her footsteps out of hearing, before lighter ones came through the wood, and Hazel's white dress gleamed out among the colours. She was walking slowly, quite alone, the brilliant fingers twisted together in some knot of a puzzle; but even as Rollo looked from his corner still other steps were heard, and another lady and another gentleman came on the scene.

"O here she is!" cried Miss Burr. "Et toute seule—by all that's lucky. Here fair lady, I've brought you an escort. I knew Sir Henry Crofton might come without being invited." And Miss Burr, conscious that she had done a bright thing, walked off to find an escort for herself. Then ensued a peculiar little scene.

The gentleman advanced eagerly, holding out his hand. And Wych Hazel, taking not the least seeming notice, stopped short in her walk, and leaning back against one of the red oaks began to fit on her gloves with the utmost deliberation.

"Sir Henry Crofton knew," she remarked, "that it was the only possible way in which he could come."

"You have not forgiven me!" said the young man with much mortification.

"No," said Wych Hazel. "I think I have not."

Sir Henry was silent, watching the hands and the sparkling fingers, and the gloves that went on so ruthlessly. Then burst forth with words, low spoken and impetuous, which Rollo did not hear. Hazel interrupted him.

"I said I had not forgiven you," she said. "I will forget you—if you will give me a chance. That may answer as well."

"Forget!" the young man said bitterly,—"I shall never forget you!"—but he turned off abruptly and left her; and Hazel came slowly forward, with a troubled face.

"Are you 'due' anywhere?" said Rollo, suddenly standing, or walking, at her side.

"You!—yes, I am due everywhere, at this precise moment."

"Except—to me, that means."

"Your notes are not payable till afternoon. And if I do not go and end the morning comfortably with luncheon, afternoon will never come. See what it is to have a logical head."

"I am content!" exclaimed Rollo. "What can I do to hurry up the luncheon?"

Hazel paused and took her former position against a tree stem, leaning back as if she was tired.

"I should like to leave the whole thing on your hands," she said,—"and then I could lose myself comfortably in the woods, and when everybody was gone you could come and find me. No, that would not do, either."—She roused herself and walked on. "There is nothing for it to-day but to go straight through. I think people are all bewitched and beside themselves!"

He laughed at her a little, and let her go with a consoling assurance that they "would soon end all that." And as the day was wearing on, and the pleasure of such pleasure-seekers as then filled Wych Hazel's woods was especially variety, they were very ready to quit the chestnuts and saunter up to the house; in hope of the luncheon which there awaited them. Mrs.

Bywank knew her business; and the guests knew, not that, but the fact that somebody knew it and that the luncheons at Chickaree were pleasant times and very desirable. So there was soon a universal drawing towards the hill top, from all the forsaken chestnut trees, which were left by no means despoiled of their harvest. They had served their turn; now came the turn of patties and cold meats and jellies and ices and fruits. The gathering was rather large; larger than it had shewn for in the woods. The Chickaree house was full and running over; and chestnutters were found to have fearful appetites; and flirtations took new life and vivacity in the new atmosphere; and the whole of it was, people would not go away. Not only Wych Hazel, but both her guardians had sharp work for hour after hour attending to the wants and the pleasure of the guests; who at last, when the day was waning, and not till then, slowly made up their minds to take their departure, and one by one took leave of their hostess with thanks and flatteries expressive of highest gratification and admiring delight. Party after party Dane saw to their carriages and bowed off; the house was emptied at last; Mr. Falkirk had betaken himself to the seclusion of his cottage already some time before; and when the afternoon was really darkening, enough to make the glow of the fires within tell in ruddy cheer upon walls and curtains, Dane left the hall door and the latest departure and went into the house to find Wych Hazel and get his "notes" paid.

(To be continued.)

**ARTISTIC.**

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, the poet and artist, has sold his picture, "Venus Astarte," to a member of the House of Commons, for two thousand guineas.

MR. HOLMAN HUNT, the artist, will shortly take the painting which he has been engaged upon at Jerusalem for some time to England. It is about completed.

THE statue of King Alfred the Great has been unveiled at Wantage, the king's birthplace. It is executed by Count Gleichen, the Queen's cousin, at a cost of £2,000. It is sculptured in marble, and stands on the site formerly occupied by the Wantage Town Hall.

AN original Albrecht Dürer has been discovered in Hamburg. The picture represents "Christ on the Cross." It is said to have been painted in the year 1500. The painting was in the possession of an old patrician family in Hamburg, and was there discovered by Dr. Ernst.

D. B. SIEFMAN, the Brooklyn sculptor, has finished a model for an equestrian statue of General Lee. It is to be submitted to a committee of citizens at Richmond before September 1st, with other competitors. The appropriation for the statue is \$75,000. Two years will be required to complete the work.

**HUMOROUS.**

DOM PEDRO thinks of taking a run through Brazil.

HOOD called the slamming of a door by a person in a passion "a wooden oath."

A SNOB is a person who does not want to know you, and a cad a person you do not want to know.

THE painter, when he first sees a baby eat whortleberry pie, begins to comprehend how limited is the power of his art.

THE reason for a day laborer dropping his tools with such accuracy when the clock strikes twelve, and his rapid speed toward dinner, is that he may make up the time that he will lose in getting back to work.

A MAN may be a graduate of the best college in the land, and be capable of ruling nations, and yet not know enough to refrain from breaking out into a wild and exasperating whistle as soon as he enters an editor's office.

"So," observed a friend to the father of a pupil who had carried off a prize at the Paris Conservatoire, "your son has earned his spurs?"—"Yes," replied the practical sire, "and now he has to earn his boots."

THE characteristic of the umbrella is its power of changing shape. You can leave a brain new silk with an ivory or rosewood handle at any public gathering; within three hours it will turn into a light blue or faded brown cotton, somewhat less in size than a circus tent, with a handle like a telegraph pole, and five fractional ribs.

"PATENT Keyholes" are advertised. The idea suggested itself to the inventor on a certain occasion when he went home at midnight and found a circle of twenty-five or thirty holes in his front door, and not one of them would hold still long enough to permit him to insert his penknife, which he mistook for a key.

**DEAFNESS RELIEVED.** No medicine. Book free. G. J. WOOD, Madison, Ind.

"No need of having a gray hair in your head," as those who use *Luby's Parisian Hair Renewer* say, for it is without doubt the most appropriate hair dressing that can be used, and an indispensable article for the toilet table.

When using this preparation you require neither oil nor pomatum, and from the balsamic properties it contains, it strengthens the growth of the hair, removes all dandruff and leaves the scalp clean and healthy. It can be had at the Medical Hall and from all chemists in large bottles 50 cents each. DEVINS & BOLTON, Druggists, Montreal, have been appointed sole agents for Canada.

**NOTICE TO LADIES.**

The undersigned begs respectfully to inform the Ladies of the city and country that they will find at his retail Store, 196 St. Lawrence Main Street, the choicest assortment of Ostrich and Vulture Feathers, of all shades; also, Feathers of all descriptions repaired with the greatest care. Feathers dyed as per sample on shortest delay. Gloves cleaned and dyed black only.

J. H. LEBLANC. Works: 547 Craig St.