

# 'Tis All the Same in a Hundred Years.

I.  
Whether we smile, or sigh, or weep,  
Whether we plow, or sow, or reap;  
Or idly scold, or wisely pray,  
Or mourn a dirge, or sing a lay;  
Whether the sunshine fills our home,  
Or shadows and misfortune come;  
One certain truth alone appears:  
'Tis all the same in a hundred years.

II.  
What if our arms can reach no goal,  
Or discontent disturbs the soul;  
What if our friendships falsely prove,  
And hate puts on a mask of love;  
Or fickle hope with mocking air,  
Allures us only to despair,  
One certain truth may chide our fears:  
'Tis all the same in a hundred years.

III.  
So let us fill the cup of life  
With pleasant thoughts instead of strife,  
Of every day let's make the best,  
And do our duty with a zest;  
And so in spite of sun or rain,  
Of woe or pleasure, health or pain,  
This certain truth may calm our fears:  
'Tis all the same in a hundred years.

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INDORE.

## THE GOLD OF CHICKAREE.

BY

SUSAN and ANNA WARNER.

AUTHORS OF

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

### CHAPTER IV.

"I want you," he began at length, with that same grave gentleness: he had himself well in hand now;—"I want you to give me, as a friend, some explanation of that which you told me the other day."

"As a friend"—he had not then forgotten the day of the month. That was one passing thought. And then, if Mr. Rollo had interest in new displays of character, he had a chance to prosecute the study, and see Wych Hazel as other people sometimes saw her; so far off she seemed in her reserve. This was not the sprite who had disputed his authority and pelted him with short speeches; nor the shy girl who had blushed if he but came near her; there was not even the faintest tinging of the cheeks, nor the least gleam from out the deep shadows of the eyes. Only in one way did the slightest agitation betray itself: but twice she began to speak, and twice could not command her lips; the third time she conquered them and went on. With down-looking eyes, and head a little bent, and hands quietly folded, as if they were too tired to hold each other in the old way, and that pathetic quiver still every now and then sweeping round her mouth and chin, Wych Hazel went straight to the midst of things, as if not daring to waste strength on preliminaries.

"Sir Henry Crofton had laid a wager—or vowed a vow—that he would not go back to England until he had waltzed with me. I saw him once or twice in the fall, and in town he came often to the house, and after that I met him everywhere. And he very often asked me to waltz. And I always refuse."

"One night"—she drew her breath as if the words stifled her—then went on swiftly, as before, preventing all questions: "One night, at Newport, we were both at an out-door party. There was music, of course; everybody was dancing. Except me. Sir Henry made his usual request, and then asked me to walk instead."

"Do you really never waltz?" he said, as we passed up and down. "I told him no."

"But why not?" "I said, one of my guardians disapproved of it."

"Is he here to-night?"—"No."

"Then, he will never know what you do." "I said then, that I had promised."

"Then it was not for my own pleasure I had given it up?" "I said no."

"Didn't I sometimes wish for the pleasure again? Sometimes, I confessed, when I heard the music."

"Had I promised for always?" "No."

"O well!—it was very easy to forget the precise date." "I said (here for an instant a flush came) that I had not forgotten it."

"We were standing just then by the open lawn and the circle of dancers; and—I think—my foot stirred a little, answering the measure of a new waltz which the band struck up. In an instant, before I had time to think or speak, he had whirled me off among the crowd. So much taller than I, so much stronger, so skilled a dancer, that at first I could only go where I was taken, obliged to keep the step, in my own self-defence. One hand of course he held; but the other—did not—touch him. And, presently, I made him let me go. But (we had gone so fast) not till we had taken rather more than one round, I think, I am not quite sure. And I always meant to tell you."—The voice fell a little, breaking off short.

She had not looked at him once since he came in; she did not look now, to see how her story was received, but sat still, feeling as if her very life were at a stand. His face had changed notably as she went on; its burden of grave care

cleared away; his brow grew full of light; the eyebrows came into their wonted line; but Rollo's eyes were the eyes of a man whose soul is on fire. He stood breathlessly at first, then sitting down beside the girl got possession of one of her hands, but only so speaking his sympathy or eagerness; till as she finished he brought it to his lips, or rather bowed his lips to it and kissed the little hand over and over. He made no other answer; he said no word at all, till the dark flush which had kindled in his face at her story a little faded away. Then, still holding her hand perhaps unconsciously close, he said, low enough:

"And what about the guardianship, Hazel?"

The girl was in that state when to withstand or to bear seems equally difficult: there is no strength for either; and the colour which flitted over her face at his demonstrations was less of shyness than of intense feeling. It all went now, at his words.

"I thought," she said (the words came too quick, but she could not help it) "that you had resigned, Mr. Rollo."

Rollo got the other hand into his keeping, and merely inquired in the same tone "what she wanted him to do?"

"I used to want you to trust me. But I would not be any use now."

Rollo's lips touched her hand again, both hands. "What about the guardianship, Hazel?" he repeated, with a glow and sparkle of the grey eyes, which yet had an odd veil of softness over them. But a man will be a man. I am afraid Rollo was smiling at the same time.

If anything could be called clear in Hazel's mind, at that minute of supreme and universal confusion, it was, that belonging to somebody was getting to be much more than an idea. And that Mr. Rollo should merely pay her the compliment of requesting to have the fact put in words, might be highly characteristic on his part, but was not exactly composing on hers. How could she think, or speak, without even one hand free? And droop her head as she might, what could the soft falling hair do, but touch up the beautiful flushes which Hazel felt, if she did not see? Her words, when they came, went to a very self-evident point.

"But—if you wanted it—why did you give it up?"

"Give up—what?" came with undoubted astonishment from Rollo's lips.

"You escaped away—" said the girl, under her breath.

"I have come back. And I want my sentence."

In a sort of desperation, Hazel gathered up her courage, as if realizing that she was face to face with the one question of her life, where she must risk anything but mistakes.

"But," she said,—"but, Mr. Rollo, you did not mean to wait it, when you stayed away."

He laughed. "Look here!" said he, "I want it now, Hazel. I'll stand all your questions, after you have answered mine."

"I think mine come first," she said softly,—"and something of the sorrow which had hung about the questions crept into her voice. "Because there might be—at least, there might have been—things which I could not explain. And then—as you could doubt me once, you would again. And I could not bear that twice!" said Hazel, with a sudden quickness which told more than it meant. "Nerve herself as she would, her hands were trembling now."

Rollo was not a man of more than average patience, sometimes. Nevertheless, though sorely tempted, he controlled the desire to give her kisses instead of rebukes, and answered quietly and gravely:

"I took your own word once against yourself. I will never do it again, Hazel! So take care what you say to me. Have you nothing to say to me now?"

If she had, it was not forthcoming.

"About the guardianship, Hazel?"

She hesitated a little—not much; thinking of the face she dared not look at, and which she had scarcely seen for a year; answering then with a grave quietness which again was very like herself, where deep feeling was at work; the girlish voice falling and trembling just a little:

"If you want it—you can have it, Mr. Rollo."

He took her in his arms then, very tenderly and gravely, kissing her on lips and cheeks with kisses which seemed to tell of a wish to indemnify himself—and her too—for the last three weeks; but then, having got what he wanted, for several minutes thereafter spoke not; partly for his own sake perhaps, partly for hers. A stillness more mighty than words, and quite beyond their sphere. When he did speak again, it was in a different key.

"How comes your hair to be wet?"

"Mine? O—?" said Hazel, starting,— "it is nothing but a little water."

"No," said Rollo laughing, "nothing else. The question is, how came a little water on your hair?"

"What a question! It was put there. And if you want to know why, I will tell you. On purpose."

"Who did it?"

But that answer was slow to come. "Gyda," she said at last.

"Gyda!" echoed Rollo, starting up a little, and removing Wych Hazel to a little distance from him, that he might look in her face better. "For what purpose has Gyda been putting cold water on your hair?"

"O—! I was tired when I got here," Hazel said, trying to look up and laugh, and some-

how failing. "And—and—and it does not signify the least in the world now."

Rollo looked at her a minute silently, and then demanded imperiously to know "what didn't signify?"

"Being faint is nothing," she said. "At least after you have got over it."

"What made you faint?" in the same tone.

Now Hazel had no mind to go into that; partly for the intrinsic merits of the case, but also with a growing consciousness that with those waves of trouble which had ebbed away so fast her strength was going too. That false strength of tension and self-control, by means of which she had lived and held her head up, through all these last weeks. Even excitement was giving way to reaction; and Hazel dreaded lest, before she knew it, she should break down; lest, before she could hinder it, that wilful fountain of unshed tears might insist on having its way. She knew from old experience what that meant; but (except for the slight specimen before Prim's eyes) nobody had ever seen her in one of her tear-storms, and she did not mean that any one should. And at the same time, belonging to somebody puts hindrances in the way of unseen escape; and the next thing would be, that some tender word or touch would find its way to the very depths which had been so lonely and sweep away all her defences. Then there was the walk! She answered, studying her case,—

"I think, two or three things. But let me go now, please, Mr. Rollo. I must go home,—it is late."

"Let you go?" said he, in a curious, considerate way, as if studying several things.

"Yes," she said, trying to get ready to get up from her chair. He sat looking at her, then touched the wet hair. What was he thinking about?

"It seems to me," he said slowly, "you must have some of Gyda's porridge before you go."

"Oh, no!" she said with some eagerness. "I could not! Just let me go—" and she rose up, steadying herself with one hand upon the chair-back. Rollo rose too, but it was to take her in his arms.

"The carriage is not here," he said, looking at her and noting how well she needed the support he gave.

"Not just here—Reo is waiting," Hazel answered, flushing and drooping her head, and feeling as if every minute took her more and more out of her own reach.

"Where is he waiting?"

"Never mind—Where I left him. O Mr. Rollo! let me go!"

"But you see I must know, if I am to fetch him. Where is he, Wych?"

"At the foot of the hill."—"No use! She could not debate matters, but her head bent lower."

"Reo was not at the foot of the hill when I came."

"I mean—the other hill."

"What other hill?"

"O—!" she said deprecatingly; then went straight through. "I came the other way."

"I don't know but one way," he answered half laughing.

"Well—I do."

"You will have to teach me. But something else must be done first. Come here and sit down again. You can hardly stand. You must rest and have a cup of coffee before I let you go anywhere. What sort of guardianship do you think you have come into?" he said very gently.

He put Wych Hazel in her chair, and then stooped down upon the hearth to lay brands together and coax up the decayed fire. Having made it burn, he turned and took an observation of her face. She had given one eager look after him as he turned away, but now was not looking, apparently, at anything unless at some hidden point where she was trying to master; for her breath came a little quick, and her hands held each other tight; she was not even leaning back in her chair. And as to resting her head on her hands, Hazel would as soon have dared do anything. Well she knew, that with even that slight veil between her and the outer world, the last remnant of self-command would go. No, she must face it out, somehow, and drink the coffee, and wait. If only Gyda would not come in! And what would she say when she did?—"and I could not stop her now," thought Hazel to herself.

"If I say three words about anything!"—She passed her hands over her eyes with a quick gesture, then put them down and held them tight. Could she run away? No, she was not strong enough, if she had the chance. And to be overtaken and brought back!—she had tried that once. And all the while, as she sat thinking, these surges of repressed sorrow and joy and everything else that had filled her heart for the last month and the last hour, seemed to be just rolling nearer and nearer, gathering up their force as she lost hers; and how she was to stop them Hazel did not know. Only—she must not break down there. Not before him. But the colour left her face again in the struggle.

Rollo needed very small observation to move him to action. The first point was to bring up to the hearth a large wooden chair, half settee, with arms of very ample proportions; looking as if anybody less than a burly old ship-captain or fat landlady would be quite lost and cast away in it. This chair Rollo proceeded to line and partially fill with cushions—from whence obtained, was best known to himself; making

sundry journeys into an inner room; from which finally he brought a great soft shawl, looking suspiciously like a travelling plaid, and laid it over the chair, cushions and all. Taking Wych Hazel's hands then, he softly transferred her from her own chair to this, and placed a cushion under her feet. Then considered her with a grave face and eyes from which no one of average self-confidence would have hoped to conceal anything.

"Where is the carriage?" said he, taking one of the little hands in his own.

"Just—in the cross-road."

"What cross-road? Didn't you come through the Hollow?"

"No."—"The word just audible."

He was silent half a minute, considering this statement.

"How did you get here?"

The girl struggled hard with herself to bear it. She had ventured that one look as he went to the fire, but had known instantly that she must not risk another; and then, somehow, she had controlled her voice to answer his questions and had nerved her face when he placed her in the cushioned chair. But if he had turned her defences!—and, with that, Hazel gave way. She caught her hand from him, and turning half round laid head and hands upon the chair, and let the flood come she had kept back so bravely. Sobbing as it never entered her mind that anybody could sob; her head bent as if one wave after another was going right over it. A spring fresher after the winter frost, telling a little what the ice had been.

Rollo's life had been a good deal of himself alone. Prim was all the sister he had ever known, and nearly all the mother too; unless Gyda might have the better claim to that title. All the reader, perhaps, was able to deal with his burst of thoroughly natural passion, thoroughly womanish as it also was. His point of view had not been spoiled by feminine pettiness. He took this paroxysm for what it was, something that must in the first instance have its way and work its own relief. He did not speak to Hazel at first, nor attempt to check the out-flow of feeling which he contemplated with a very grave brow. Indeed for a minute or two he left the room and went out to speak to Gyda. Coming back, he remained quite silent and still until the first violence of tears had spent itself; then he sat down by Wych Hazel's side and began a series of mute testimonials that he was there, and that he had entered upon his life-long right to share and soothe whatever troubles concerned her. His hand upon her hand, or upon her hair, or on her cheek; and then her name half-whispered in her ear in a pained tone of voice.

"I did not mean"—she said at last trying for words. "O you should have let me go—I knew, I knew!"

"Did you?" said Rollo. "Well, I know now."

Precisely what, Hazel dared not think; but perhaps, the idea that he was learning anything about her, was as good a tonic as she could have had just then. She came back to her quiet bearing very fast, pushing her other self and setting her little foot upon it with extraordinary vehemence of purpose. Rollo did nothing to hinder this operation. Indeed he rather left her to herself, while he as usual made himself busy in helping Gyda, who came in to get her table ready. Rollo drew the table up into Wych Hazel's neighborhood, and when it was set, took upon himself the oversight of Gyda's pot of coffee, which was on the coals before the fire. He seemed to be quite at home in the business; and smiling up at Wych Hazel as he stooped to his cookery, asked her "if she liked the smell of coffee?"

"Yes, I think so," she answered, not too sure of anything in the world just then.

"Never smelt it before, perhaps?"

The lips gave way, but the smile so nearly turned into trembling, that Hazel checked them both together.

"I don't believe you know how to make it."

"Well—" said Hazel somewhat vaguely, from under her shadowing hands.

"That's a gentle confession of ignorance. Here comes Gyda, and porridge. What else is to bring, Gyda?"

He went off, and came back in another minute with his hands full. Porridge and flad-brod and cheese and broiled fish were set on the table; the coffee was at the fire. Rollo stood a moment surveying things, the old woman by the table, the little woman in the chair.

"You may kiss her hand, Gyda," he said in a tone that implied everything.

Hazel received this announcement and its consequences with a great flush. Only, with the way she had of putting some pretty grace into the most disturbing things, the little fingers locked themselves round Gyda's furtively for a second, so giving the recognition which she could not speak. And Gyda was too gently wise to say a word. After that, both combined to wait on Hazel, though Gyda did not get a chance to do much. And Hazel tried hard to obey injunctions and eat porridge, principally because it gave her something to do; but her performance was unsatisfactory, except in the matter of coffee, which she drank rather eagerly.

"Now," said Rollo, "tell me where to find Reo."

"Where?"—with a swift up-look, almost too swift to see,— "why?"—And then Hazel remembered to her confusion, that she did not know. "I—I suppose—he would have brought me to the nearest point. Of course."