

The Way of the World.

I can't see why you were ever born, Said the lily with wondrous scorn, Turning her graceful head away To where the ugly acorn lay.

The violets laughed at his hard brown head, The clover jeered from its lowly bed; Even the roses, proud and bright, Wished the creature out of sight.

Let's take him off, said an active breeze, To some of his fellows under the trees; He worries our sweethearts all the day; We ought to carry him quite away.

Done said the breezes, one and all, We'll blow him over the garden wall. What right has he with that form and face, To make his bed in that pretty place?

They lifted then the ugly cone, And blew him over the wall of stone; Then laughed at the figure, grave, and brown, Which the acorn cut as he tumbled down.

But he freed himself from his second bed; Rose and lifted his graceful head Up to the sun, the sky, the shower, The truest friends of his hidden power.

He grew at last to a mighty tree, Strong and leafy and proud was he; And breezes gathered from east and west, Glad to play in his giant breast.

Just in the shade of the wall of stone, Weeds and grasses and bresh have grown; Trace of the lily is nowhere seen; No shrub is left of the rosebud green.

The violets' purple head lies low, Dead and buried years ago; And the clover, last of the old, old race, Peeps shyly out of the littered place.

The wall is crumbling day by day, And the oak looks down in his stately way On wall and rubbish, and clover staid, Then gathers them all in his giant shade.

SELECT STORY.

The Rival Sisters.

(CONCLUDED.)

But, puss, how do you like my appearance? Am I not looking superb this morning?

Superb? I gazed upon her in amazement.

She was looking grandly, royally beautiful, the dazzling fairness of her complexion enhanced, this evening, by the costly robe of dark blue silk which shrouded her matchless Juno like form, and fell in graceful folds about her, sweeping the floor in its rich luxuriance.

Her queenly head was adorned only with its heavy bands of fair, sunshiny hair, and fastened in that careless, unexplained way by a single arroyo ornament, diamond-tipped, which gleamed with her every movement.

I turned away fairly dazzled, to make a slight change in my own plain appearance, remarking, as I did so,—

You and Miss Ray, Diana, had better descend to the parlor immediately, and not wait for me. I will join you presently.

When they were gone, I began to look over my wardrobe selecting therefrom one of my costliest dresses, a curious blending of gold and scarlet, which became me well.

Then, smoothing my abundant brown hair, I was ready to go down.

There was an unwonted brilliancy in my eyes, and a vivid color in my cheeks, which was not wholly unbecoming; and for me, I was looking unusually well, although, alas! I could never be anything but plain.

But smothering the pangs of envy that arose within me, and flooded my soul as I thought of Diana, I prepared to descend, murmuring, as I went,—

That if I were not handsome, I would at least make Walter Clayton acquainted with the fact that I was a lady and not a servant, as he had the audacity to think me.

My face was now burning with anger; so, instead of going directly to the parlor, as was my wont, I went out upon the piazza and leaned over the railing breathing the fresh air, and watching curiously the myriads of silvery stars that followed each other in speedy procession until the heavens were completely filled.

Footsteps near me caused me to look around, and I had barely time to conceal myself behind a green, tangled vine full of clustering red and yellow berries—for I did not care to be seen then, in my present rebellious mood—when Walter Clayton, with my stately sister leaning on his arm, swept by me and seated themselves a few rods off.

I could distinctly catch every word uttered by them.

I would willingly have effected my escape, but I was powerless to do so.

A strange feeling, the nature of which I was incapable of analyzing, came over me, and rooted me to the spot; and I grew hot and cold alternately, as I heard

Walter Clayton giving a graphic and ludicrous description of my adventure that afternoon to Diana, who was looking wonderously lovely, with the moonlight glimmering softly down upon her fair face, and nestling tenderly in her yellow hair.

I must confess, Miss Lee, he wound up with, I was not a little startled when she discovered my egregious mistake in reference to her. How her eyes did flash and scintillate, and her strange, piquant face light up! For the moment she was magnificent in her anger, and I could not help admiring her, although I cannot devist myself of the impression that she is a regular termagant. But come—let us return to the parlor.

And offering Diana his arm, they entered the hall, and were lost to view. Later, as I was standing alone, terribly 'ennuied,' watching the gay, motley crowd of people that thronged the room, I observed Miss Ray leading Walter Clayton up to me, and immediately there followed an introduction, after which we were left alone.

He began conversing in a gay easy manner, I joining in once in a while, until, finally becoming interested in what he was saying, I listened with the deepest attention, but not one word relating to our adventure did he say.

I saw Diana glancing over to where we were sitting, and then, wondering what Walter Clayton could see in her plain, unpretending little sister to thus rivit him to her side; indeed it seemed exceedingly mysterious to me that I could even for a moment interest him, but thinking that I would make him aware that I had received the education of a lady, if I did not look like one, I talked on and on in my gayest, wittiest strain, and that he was amused I could see by the way his handsome face lighted up, until it seemed transformed.

That evening, as Diana and I were ascending the stairs to our room, my sister said, sarcastically,—

Allow me, puss, to congratulate you on your admirable success this evening. If you play your cards as skillfully in the future as you have done this evening, you will certainly become the envied Mrs Clayton. Your adventure was uncommonly well managed.

I turned upon her angrily. If I do become Walter Clayton's wife, it will not be by your willing consent! Of that I am assured.

And with this taunt, somewhat sharply given, I left her, and was soon in the land of dreams.

Days and weeks glided by, and mysterious as it seemed to me, Walter Clayton was ever at my side, notwithstanding the fact that Diana arrayed herself continually in her most enchanting dresses, and favoured him with her brightest, most bewitching smiles; and on one bright, glorious September morning—the day before we were to take our departure from L—, Walter Clayton astonished me greatly by asking me to become his wife.

It is perfectly superfluous to say what my reply was, for I loved him passionately, although I asked him playfully— How he came to choose me instead of my gifted sister, Diana?—And if he, who worshipped beauty, would not be ashamed to own as his wife one so plain and awkward as myself—one, too, who resembled a servant, and was in fact a regular termagant?

He looked at me curiously as I concluded.

You suit me exactly, Hester, he said, with your impulsive ways, and weird uncanny, Jane Byre countenance. To me you are the dearest girl in existence, and would not change you for a thousand Dianas. How you ever contrived to make yourself appear so hideous at our first meeting, is a mystery beyond my solution.

When I informed Diana of my engagement, she took it very coolly indeed, and appeared very much pleased at my good luck, as she termed it, in getting so wealthy a husband; but I am sure that I heard her murmur, as she turned and left the room,—

Outwitted by a mere schoolgirl!

But what cared I? I was very happy then, and very happy now, although five summers have passed into oblivion since I became Walter Clayton's wife; and looking back upon that memorable day, when in wind and rain I first met him who is now all the world to me, I say,—

Blessed be the first last and only adventur' I ever had!

Which wish is devoutly sanctioned by my husband—my kind, handsome Walter.

HAPPY new year, full of blessings! A happy new year and plenty of them! A happy new year that will bring your heart's best wishes! All these greetings sounded in the ears of Doctor Allan Carlton, and yet did not bring one smile to his lips.

A happy new year to you, Doctor, said every friend he met on that eve of

the coming day, but the doctor sighed, and said to himself, that his chances of happiness were almost over. Hope, that had lived so long in his heart, was well-nigh dead. The new year was coming, but it seemed to be bringing nothing save sorrow and disappointment to him.

So he walked down the snow-covered streets of Stratton, wondering why his lot should be a sad one, when others looked bright and gay. It was bitterly cold. The Christmas snow still lay frozen upon the ground—frozen so hard that walking was a dangerous exercise. The winter wind howled and moaned as though mourning the sorrows, the dead hopes, the lost joys and wasted hours of the dying year—wailed and sobbed until the tall trees bent their head in sympathy, and their branches swayed to and fro as though to pacify its wild lamentations. Across the dull gray sky sailed heavy laden clouds, and people said as they met each other and exchanged greetings we shall have snow to-night.

But this young doctor heeded neither the gray sky nor the wintry wind. He had a picture before his mind: it was of a fair-haired girl, with a sweet face and wistful eyes raised to his own; one who had clung to his arm only a few hours ago, saying with a voice that had pierced his heart:

Oh, Allan! can nothing be done? Will no one help us?

He had caressed the fair head, and clasped the pale, white hands in his own, while he whispered of hope and comfort; but he knew as he did so, that the future held nothing for him and for her but blank, dreary sadness and separation. He knew the time was coming when he should not be allowed to look on that sweet face, and think its smiles were all for him. He knew the fair head must soon droop with sorrow, and the trusting wistful eyes grow dim with tears.

Therefore the young doctor felt sad at heart as he listened to the joyous greetings of his friends and neighbors, and said to himself that there was no happy new year for him.

A few words will tell why:

Stratton is a pretty little market town in Shropshire, clean and picturesque, built in the midst of a beautiful country, and surrounded by purple hills and ash woods. The number of its inhabitants is not great. They have no manufacturing, the poor live by agricultural labor, the higher classes have most of them productive farms, or even still better live on their incomes—simple, kindly people, satisfied to live and die, as their parents before them, without making any sensation in the world.

To this quiet little town there came, three or four years before, our story opens a stranger—a young doctor, who hoped, by dint of patient industry, to make a good practice. Why he had selected quiet, out-of-the-way Stratton no one knew, for he was indisputably clever and talented. One could tell from his manner that he had been accustomed to good society, even something beyond the best to be had in the little town.

The fact was that Dr. Allan Carlton was the youngest son of a large and expensive family. His father had given him an excellent education—a first-class medical training, and there his advantages ended; for there was no ready money, and he knew that his future depended entirely upon his own exertions.

He had no money to buy a practice, none to go into partnership with, therefore he determined to begin life in some little town where his expenses would be moderate, and his chances of making a practice somewhat above the average.

These two advantages, he thought, he had secured in Stratton. There was but one doctor in the place, and he was growing old. The people round about were wealthy, and altogether Allen Carlton felt satisfied with his prospects. He took a pretty little house in the High Street—a house that was always resplendent by means of bright windows, dazzling, white blinds, and a glittering door-plate, on which was engraved the name of Dr. Carlton.

The townspeople liked and esteemed him; he was a general favorite, and considered everywhere as a great acquisition to society. But, as in the words of the song, money comes slowly in, the practice was long in growing. Everyone liked the young doctor, praised him, considered him clever, amiable and talented; but his rival, Dr. Black, had been for so many years amongst them, that he understood, it was thoroughly believed, every separate constitution in Stratton. For long years he had been the confidential medical adviser and intimate friend of everyone whose patronage was worth having. People did not like dismissing an old acquaintance without some definite reason, and there was none in this case. However, popular and agreeable the young doctor may be, he found but little employment. If any stranger came to dwell at Stratton, Dr. Carlton was chosen; and the elder man was not unkind to his younger rival. Several times he had confided cases to him, had summoned him for consultations, and always spoke of him in a way calculated to win the esteem of others for him.

Work and save Allan did. The reply was so much more favorable than either he or Laura had expected, that in the first glamour of love and hope they saw no difficulties.

One year passed, a beautiful golden year of love, hope, bliss, and happiness. When the end came, Allan's heart sank; he had not saved more than one hundred pounds; and yet he had deprived himself of everything, save the bare necessities of life. His income was far

from reaching the stipulated sum, and yet he had worked hard.

Laura smiled when he told her, and whispered sweet words of comfort and love that renewed his hopes. After all, they said, something might happen that year. The something, however, did not come; the time expired, and the young doctor waited upon Mr. Fulton, praying for an extension of his probation.

I will give you until Christmas, was the short reply, no longer. And for the next six months Allan Carlton toiled rather than worked. He saw the justice of Dr. Fulton's intentions. No man should ask for a wife until he can support her. He would have grieved at the thought of bringing his beautiful Laura to a home of privation and penury. But in proportion as he pursued it, fortune seemed to fly from him. He had fewer patients during these last six months than ever, and all his riches calculated to the utmost farthing, did not exceed three hundred pounds. It was useless, he knew, to ask Mr. Fulton to give him longer time, or to expect him to go back from his word. So in silence and sadness the young lovers watched the coming of the New Year.

I will see you some time about New Year's Day, Mr. Fulton had said to Allan. I am busily engaged until then, and we must have some kind of settlement.

The doctor knew what that meant; his time was ended. He had tried and failed. He had worked, saved, deprived himself even of comforts, but all in vain. Happiness and love had been within his grasp, yet he must see them escape him. The only treasure in life he had ever coveted or longed for had been placed, as it were, in his hand, and he must renounce it. All this without any fault of his own.

As the time drew near, he had been obliged to tell Laura; and, to his other troubles were added the bitter one of seeing that sweet face grow pale and sad, the bright smile vanish, and the deep blue eyes lose their light. He knew how much she loved him; but he knew, too, how thoroughly good and high-principled she was. If her father forbade their engagement and marriage, she would obey him at any price, even though her heart broke in the effort. There would be no clandestine love affair—no elopement with Laura Fulton.

Two days before the new year, he had gone as usual to spend an hour in the evening with her. Then he told her what he feared was coming on them, and she had clung to him, saying: Oh! Allan, can nothing be done? can no one help us?

He saw no hope, although he had tried to give her some. To increase their distress, Laura had had the misfortune some few months back to attract the attention of John Elton, the Banker reported the richest man in all the country side. He admired her very much and knowing nothing of the young doctor's love, or, if he knew, ignoring it, he went to her father, and asked for his daughter's hand. It went to Mr. Fulton's heart to refuse, even for a time, such a munificent offer as the banker made, such settlements and jewels, but he told him that if at the new year he still cared about the matter and renewed his offer, so would undertake to give him a more favorable reply.

From that moment Mr. Fulton never ceased to impress upon his daughter the folly of preferring a penniless doctor to wealthy a banker.

There might have been some little hope of her father's relenting, Laura thought, but for this.

[CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

Every man is a missionary, now and forever, for good or for evil, whether he intends it or not.

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