

## The Heiress of Garden Court.

Bars of sunlight lay across Garden Court, Temple; they glinted in the spouting waters of the old fountain, and fell refracted on brick and coping grey with smoke of ages. Out-at-elbow folk, listening to the drowsy flapping of the leaves overhead, occupied the benches under the plane trees, and stretched forth their legs luxuriously after the fashion of their kind. High on the wall, hard by, a venerable dial told how time tarrieth for no man; but, in consequence perhaps of their liberal allowance of the commodity alluded to, the intimation appeared to be of little account to those below.

I was standing at my window taking a respite after close application to the open volumes which lay spread upon my table, and letting my thoughts stray far from the subjects therein expounded. I felt at peace with all the world. A pleasant lassitude had stolen over me, and the assurance that I was a distinct success ministered soothingly to my mind. Only nine months had passed since I had quitted Queen's College, Oxford, and the alluring—too alluring—charms of its Harmonic Society, for London, and established myself in chambers; and during that time no less than five several briefs had fallen to my lot.

Yet it was not merely the material success in life which was affording me food for pleasant rumination; there was something over and beyond that. For the sake of a dear old uncle—gentlest of men, tenderest-hearted of attorneys; one to whom I owed my five briefs and all else that I possessed—I had been keeping a good resolution. For three whole months my fingers had not touched the strings of the beloved violin, my passion for which had been the cause of many a head-shake; and I had devoted myself assiduously to the acquisition of legal lore. Thus it was that, as I stood at my window, I felt that I had ground for satisfaction.

In a little time the seats under the plane trees became deserted. Feeling that I could enjoy a lounge outside by the fountain, I sauntered downstairs.

I had come to know the faces of most of the occupants of the place, and I rarely neglected the ceremony of reading over their names on the door post. I found that doing so, in deferring, enhanced the pleasure of reading my own. "Third floor," there it was; neat, euphonious, invitational. I gazed at it complacently, approving the omission of any flourish.

There was yet another storey above mine: "Fourth floor, Mr. Demosthenes Coke." But beyond his name I knew nothing of this gentleman.

I recollected that from time to time a child had passed me on the stairs, journeying up to a higher floor than mine; a little creature of some twelve years; a possessor of marvellous dark eyes. Could she have anything to do with the great man?

Early one morning I had been to the flower market to make purchase of sundry bunches of roses to sweeten my chambers, and returning I had met her again on the stairs. The great eyes had fallen on my pony with a look of longing, admiration, instantly suppressed. It was resistless. I held out the bunches, and said, "See, they are for you." The little creature had put out her hand nimbly, and had then half withdrawn it, conflicting

thoughts swaying her. Then she had looked up with a shy smile and said sweetly, "You are very good. I think perhaps I ought not to deprive you of your flowers, sir; and yet I will, for Mr. Coke is coming home this evening, and he loves them." Then a quaint, modest courtesy, and I was left standing at my door, wondering who the fairy was, and how she came there. Well, Mr. Coke was coming home, as she expressed it, that night. Perhaps my curiosity would be satisfied.

"Six—seven—eight!" Thus the clock in the Hall Tower; and for the next minute the time was tolled forth from all corners in jangling rivalry. We have a very plethora of clocks in the Temple.

The last of the idlers had arisen, stretched himself, and sauntered away; and I was left alone in possession of Garden Court. After finishing my cigar, I too arose and strolled in through the doorway.

I mounted the angular staircase, turned into my room, and found my books spread out upon my table as I had left them; but feeling restless, I dropped into my arm-chair by the window. To change the current of my thoughts I arose, went to the table, and recommenced reading. Soon I heard footstems overhead, heavy and light ones. "Ah! Demosthenes and the fairy. I said to myself. My attention was not disturbed; for the case I had before me was an interesting one. After a time I finished it, and feeling tired, crossed the room and threw myself again into my arm-chair. Gloaming was abroad, and lights began to twinkle softly at various windows; it was such a time as induces a dreamy and not unenjoyable melancholy. I must have sat thus for some time, for it was nearly dark when I started up suddenly to my feet, only half believing that I had slept and dreamt; for my dream, if dream it were, had been one of extraordinary vividness. Music had surely fallen on my ears, and yet—"Ah!" I thought, "that settles it! Undoubtedly it was a dream." What I had heard was the last piece played by me ere I had turned the key once and for all, of the shabby old coffin wherein my beloved instrument lay entombed!

I crossed to my table, lighted my lamp, and commenced reading resolutely. No sooner had I done so, however, than I was again upon my feet, leaning forward, every nerve strung tense, and listening breathlessly. Hark! that was no dream! It was a living reality, charged with feeling, quivering with emotion. Exquisite music filled the air—music such as I had never heard before—and in the first flush of my delight I paused in a dreamy abandonment, caring not how or whence it came. Soon my brain returned to its functions; I became sufficiently conscious to recognise the source of my delight. Those soul-thrilling notes could be called into being only by the bow of a violin. They proceeded from the floor above.

Listening there, I stood as one spell-bound. I could bear it no longer. For a moment I stood irresolute, my feelings akin to those of a dram-drinker after a period of enforced abstinence; and then irresistibly attracted, I blundered up the stairs, knocked, and threw open the door.

Before me was a large room, barely furnished and carelessly ordered, lit by the soft light of one shaded lamp, and such lingering rays of the dying day as strayed through the open window. Towards the further end was a table, and beyond it, and lean-