

A PAINFUL RECTOR

She took a great fancy to me, and no doubt I was very useful whenever she wanted to raise a breeze. On these occasions I would spread myself out on my back to make her very cool, and though she often said, "no, no, no," I was always ready to screen her still.

But I never liked him. He cast a star on my bright reputation the first time we met by saying I was a fraud. On average I was determined, even if I had to create a cyclone.

They were passing Vanita's window, when my colors caught her artistic eye, she immediately entered the store, determined to buy me. At first she declined to remove me from my show place, as she would be satisfied with nothing else, they finally handed me out, and then it was that her companion—began his unseemly jests in regard to my gaudiness.

She took me home—and such a home! It was one of those palatial houses on the avenue, and though I missed my Japanese surroundings, still it was a great relief to be free from the incognito crowd with whom I had recently associated in the store.

An opportunity soon came for me to retaliate for his reflections on my character. I had been left on one of the sofas one evening when he called, and not seeing me in the dim light of the modern drawing-room, he innocently attempted to sit down on my lap.

My anger on me when she swept into the room, clothed in a blue, modernized Directors costume and a conventional smile. During this call I continued to vent my spite upon him by continually sliding out of her hand on to the floor, thus affording him most unwelcome exercises.

However, notwithstanding my prejudice, his calls at the house were frequent and it was a relief when she asked me to the wall in her own charming chamber—a room, furnished with graceful and artistic ornaments, glowing colors and Japanese bric-a-brac.

Months passed. Spring, with its flowers and sunshine, its house-cleaning and millinery bills, was upon us. One morning she roused me in the room with a look of childish glee on her face, and a hoarse cry from her slender form, stretched me from the wall, and we were soon on our way to St. George, in his company. I renewed hostilities with him at once by pretending to have overheard him. Of course he was obliged to chase me, and I made it warm for him.

and smoke-stained, with their long poles sticking out of the black opening up into the sky. And their political domestic life, it was charming to observe; the noble Hiawathas doing the work of pipe smoking, while the aged Minnehahas amused themselves toying with the hose among the waving corn, spreading with the firewood.

Our rides were generally confined to the Indian reservation, as this included the only attractive scenery, the land in the other direction being simply level, monotonous prairie; and Vitis had no fear of the half-civilized Sioux, she being a good shot, a bold rider, and a liberal dispenser of tobacco and candy.

One day as we approached the home of "The Seven Brothers" there seemed to be somewhat unusual excitement. Signs of Indian gentlemen, artistically dressed, in fine muslin frocks, all seemed interested over something. We soon learned that a young traveler, a white man, while trying to ride a pony which he was leading, for had been thrown and kicked by the unbroken colt, and was lying in a state of unconsciousness.

Weeks passed. These weeks were the busiest ever experienced in my checkered career. From morning till night, and in fact often through the night, I was in constant motion. Some one had to watch the sick man continually, and I was generally required to fan his fevered brow, and usually I was in Vitis's hand; but of all this he was unconscious, not having been in his right mind one moment since his accident.

One morning he quietly opened his eyes, and it almost made me rattle to see the change it made in his face, and in that second there was a mutual recognition. Without a word he grasped my hand, and a flood of tender recollections I brought back to him—and great was Vitis's satisfaction as he pressed me to his lips, and his first words were to ask how I came there.

Then she, in amazement at his demonstration, explained that I had been sent to her by a cousin in New York. He with that characteristic thoughtfulness so prominent in mankind, without stopping to express a word of gratitude to the patient, whom face that for weeks had tended him so faithfully—be, weak as he was, attempted to clutch a letter—and such a letter, fairly glowing with love and undying affection—be, my former owner; and poor Vitis had to write it all while he was clapping me to his chest. Well, I, too, returned.

It is so delightful to meet an old acquaintance who has been so unfortunate as one's self. By his distention I learned that the note from him which I had concealed for forty-eight hours was of such a tender character that he, receiving no reply, took occasion for a dismission, and suddenly, as we had learned, buried himself in the whirlpool of frontier excitement.

After this letter was mailed he began counting the days that must pass before he could hope for a reply, and as he grew stronger, he would sit up in bed and talk for hours of her to poor Vitis. Finally, as his health returned, they took long rides together through the romantic paths on the reservation; they attended Indian dances, collected beads, work and carved pipes; at other times whole days were passed on the lake, under the impression that they were fishing.

And thus weeks flew by and the letter never came. Yes, they talked of it; it was impossible to drop the subject entirely, he had said so much the first few days, but to me it was almost amusing to notice that whenever the expected letter was now mentioned, what a far-away sound their voices had, and then their voices would fall upon them with a great, heavy thud.

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