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# The Mystery of "The Lilies."

LY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

Why, that year. Henry Gayhart chose to occupy himself with teaching, I cannot say. Perhaps it was a mere fancy; perhaps because he decidedly preferred occupation to idleness. Then he had a decided telept for it which he had a decided talent for it, which had no scope until he went to The

Fate had ever been kind to him. From boyhood legacies had showered upon him. He had a charming personal presence, agreeable manners.

He chose to present himself at The Lilies unauthorized save by his talents. Having come, it was no wonder, we think, that he stayed, such a paradise of fragrance and color as he encountered when he emerged from the winding avenue upon the mansion to which he had been directed.

His ring at the wide portals brought a mulatto servant, who showed him into an exquisite little ante-room and took up his card. In a very few minutes a lady entered the room.

She was dressed from head to foot in white. She was young, she was graceful. That she was mistress of herself, her tone and the first penetrating glance of her blue eyes confirmed.
"I am pleased to see you, Mr. Gay-hart. I am Mrs. Lorne. Will you be seated?"

"I have presented myself in person, Mrs. Lorne, as an applicant for the position of teacher to your son,' he said, and as briefly as possible he set forth his claims and qualifications.

"And you think you will like teaching?" she said, at last.
"I am quite sure of that," he answered.

"Your personal appearance, Mr. Gayhart, and the references you offer, make it impossible that I can have any hesitation in wishing to come to terms," said Mrs. Lorne, "but I must warn you that life here is most secluded and uneventful. I never entertain company. Yours is the first face outside the family that I have seen for many a year. In view of this you will, perhaps, wish to reconsider the matter. Not that I dislike social life or shall be indifferent how the time passes with you, but circumstances, over which I have no control, compel me to live a life of retirement. To me it is not unpleasant; and perhaps you may come to think that there are some advantages here. The climate is fine, my garden blooms nearly all the year through. I am very fond of music, and my library is quite a good one. There is some very nice boating on the lake, and you will find a good horse always at you disposal at the stables."

Her evident earnest wish that he should accept the situation surprised him. Certain that it was a most exceptional one, and peculiarly fitted to his taste, he hastened to assure the lady that he was not only willing but decidedly wished to remain at The Lilies.

"In that case," she said, with a daz-zling smile, "I will show you your pupil.

She rang a bell. "Send Arthur down," she said.

A moment after a manly little fellow of seven years, showing exquisite training, was in the room. The child manifested a grace and dignity which surprised and charmed

Gayhart.
"You may go, Arthur," said his mother, after a few moments. have taught and disciplined him almost alone so far," she said, turning to Gayhart, when the boy had passed out of the long French window into the garden. "But he has been without father's influence, and I have feared that I have been at fault in training him, and decided to put him in a man's care as soon as I should meet with a suitable person." In a few moments she rose. "Come up to the music-room, if you please; it is the hour for Arthur's lesson. I would like your judgment on his receptive

singularly apt; but perhaps I am too

Gayhart obeyed. Mrs. Lorne gave the lesson herself. It was evident that the boy was unusually intelligent, and, also, that he was his mother's idol. When not referring to Arthur, her manner betrayed a slight weariness and sadness. Gayhart could not but look at her critically. She was exquisitely feminine, almost beautiful. In age she could not have been more than twentythree. Her delicacy and fairness of complexion gave her a look of being much younger.

It was evident to him that she thought him poor, but he said to himself that he could scarcely be so while in Mrs. Lorne's service. His salary was princely. The circumstances combined to make him a wonderfully good teacher. Arthur learned rapidly, admired, loved him, and in two months Henry Gayhart found himself a very

happy man at The Lilies.

The habits of the house were very regular; the attendance, it seemed to him, large for the size and character of the family. There was Mrs. Dorothy, the housekeeper; two housemaids, butler, Arthur's nurse, a lad who waited on table, coachman and hostler; and, besides these, two large powerfully-built, civil-spoken men, whose office Gayhart could not determine. He often puzzled over this, because he frequently observed Mrs. Lorne in close conversation with them. and her manner at these times betrayed an unusual seriousness. But she never spoke of them to Gayhart, and he never thought of questioning the other servants.

Whatever her perplexities, she never spoke of any grievances or trouble. With Gayhart and Arthur she was ever gracious, affable; ready to join in conversation, or to play or sing for them. Usually she went to drive with them; often upon the lake. Arthur being unusually well-grown for his years, Gayhart taught him to row, drive and ride. Mrs. Lorne never rode, but it pleased her extreme-ly to be rowed across the water by Arthur.

It was a little cushioned, canopied boat, gay with flags and pennons. The surface of the lake was usually smooth as glass. No influence could be sweeter or more peaceful than that which surrounded them one summer evening as they floated on the limpid

Mrs. Lorne reclined among the blue cushions; Arthur was gently rowing, carefully observed by his tutor. On on they floated, as the sunset faded and the twilight gathered, until the terraced walls, bowery trees and twinkling lights of The Lilies were

far in the distance.
"See, mamma," said Arthur,—"see

how far we are from home."
"Yes," she answered, lifting her eyes and looking shoreward. happy I should be to float on and on like this, and never go back again!" Gayhart was too surprised to attempt an answer. Evidently she

expected or wished none, and scarcely realized what she had said. She shivered soon, drew a fleecy white shawl about her shoulders and requested Arthur to row ashore.

As Gayhart took the oars to bring the boat safely to the steps, he took advantage of the half light to look critically at this woman's slight figure

and half-averted face.

"She is very lonesome," he said to himself. "May I not love her?"

Suddenly she leaned forward and

grasped Arthur's arm. "There is some one waiting on the

bank. Do you see who it is "It is Dave. No, it is Jake," answered Arthur. The men were evidently brothers, and looked much alike. Mrs. Lorne rose hastily as the boat touched the bank. In the halfdarkness she stumbled, and Gayhart, catching her in his arms, thrilled with faculties. It seems to me that he is the contact with her sweet person

and magnetism that she had fa caught her, she the mysterious a came quickly to ing closely to s had to make, sh of sight.

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