



CHAPTER III.

In the twilight June and her mother were sitting. June was by the window, trying to work in the fading light.

"Come here, my darling," said her mother. "I want to talk to you. It is about Tom."

"Has he been talking to you?" cried June, flushing up. "How unfair of him! He promised me not to say a word to any one for six months."

"Do you want to have any secrets from me?" asked Mrs. Rivers gently.

"But," said June, in a troubled voice, "how can I promise anything when I do not know my own mind? I like him—I am very fond of him—I wish he was my brother; but I am sure, with a little involuntary shudder, "that I do not love him."

It was impossible to approach the subject of Tom any more that evening, but, as Mrs. Rivers had invited him to come and hear the result of her embassy, she felt it absolutely necessary to have something to tell him. She therefore attacked the subject when June came into her room next morning, and the result of the interview was that June promised to weigh and consider the matter seriously for the next few months, and that on Christmas day she would either consent to be engaged to Tom, or would finally tell him that he must abandon all hope.

Tom came to the Rose Cottage in the highest spirits and went away crestfallen; he had expected wonders from the intercession of June's mother; indeed, he had almost dared to hope that June would be waiting with smiles and blushes and her mind prepared to accept him. Now he was absolutely not one step nearer than before. June had already promised that six months hence she would consider the matter; and the thought of that harassing delay, and the uncertainty at the end of it, which had prompted his appeal to Mrs. Rivers. He was dreadfully mortified at what she told him.

Mrs. Rivers felt for him—felt, too, as if she had been to blame in not having been a more successful mediator.

"You must remember, Tom," she urged, gently, "that June is only eighteen, and has seen nothing of life yet."

"I suppose it will never be," he said, at last, turning with a sigh that seemed to rend his broad chest.

"I should be sorry if I thought so," answered Mrs. Rivers, softly. "But, with an encouraging smile, "I cannot share your gloomy views."

"Is there anything in the world I could do to make her like me?" he said.

"You will be rather surprised if I tell you what your best plan would be."

"What?"—eagerly.

"Try not to let her see that you are so devoted to her."

"I could not act a part," he answered, "and surely deceit is not the way to a good woman's heart."

Not long afterward Tom took his leave. He was going to the rectory to ask his aunt to give him some luncheon; he could not keep away from June any more than the moth can help circling round the light.

At first he walked slowly and with downcast eyes, but, as he drew nearer the spot where his love was, his feet involuntarily stepped out faster and hope began to smooth his ruffled brow. Just within the gate he met Agnes, basket and scissors in hand, cutting flowers. She smiled at him very sweetly, for she had two smiles, one when she was really pleased and happy and another when she was spiteful or annoyed and wished to conceal her feelings.

"I am so glad you have come," she said, and pulled off a garden glove to give him her hand. "You won't mind holding this basket for me, will you?"

Tom took the basket. He always felt obliged to do what Agnes asked, because, utterly devoid of vanity though he was, he could not help being aware that she was fond of him in something more than a cousinly way; so he was especially careful not to slight her.

"By the way," he remarked, "I have brought you and Madge a fairing from London. I may as well give you yours now." And he produced a gold bangle wrapped in tissue paper.

"Oh, Tom, how kind you are!" said Agnes. "You never forget any one. How beautiful! It is really too much."

But all the time she was jealously wondering what he had brought June; for, if June's present were handsomer or costlier, it would take all the pleasure out of hers.

"Tom brought me a locket," said June, blushing a little.

It had been decided by her mother that she might keep it, but had better not wear it for the present.

"Then, why haven't you got it on, you ungrateful wretch?" cried Madge. "Or, suspiciously, "perhaps you have, inside your frock."

Tom's heart beat a shade faster. How he would like to think of his offering lying nestling against her fair neck! But June shook her head.

CHAPTER IV.

One morning, about a fortnight later, Madge was careering down the road to the Rose Cottage to meet June. Almost before her cousin came within earshot Madge shouted out, "I have seen him!" and when she arrived within reasonable distance, she continued, still in a high key:

"I have seen the lovely seraph!"

"Well," said June, in her usual voice, "and what is he like?"

"I deeply regret to say," she answered, grudgingly, "that he is good-looking, and that he does not resemble a hair dresser's dummy. But," reflectively, "I have always from the first moment intended to call him La-di-da, and I shall, whether it's appropriate or not."

"Oh!" said June, looking rather disappointed. She had quite made up her mind not to like Mr. Broke, because she considered that he stood in Tom's light and was a sort of treacherous Jacob in diverting Mrs. Ellesmere's affections from their legitimate course.

Later in the morning, when the cousins were engaged on a French exercise, Agnes being also of the party, Madge looked up suddenly and said:

"I say, June, I wish I was going to dine at the Hall to-night. It will be awful fun, I expect."

June rested her chin on her hand reflectively.

"I don't know about fun," she answered, "I think I shall feel dreadfully nervous, as I have never been to a real dinner party before."

"Don't you think you had better go on with your exercises?" said Agnes, acidly.

"Bother exercises!" retorted Madge, plunging both hands into her curly hair.

"There isn't a dinner party at the Hall every night. Juny, I wonder if La-di-da will take you in to dinner? Tom can't, of course."

"I suppose," remarked Agnes, looking at June with what Madge called her crocodile smile, "Tom will be cast off like an old glove now."

"Why?" asked June, looking her cousin full in the face.

"Oh," returned Agnes, "people who are so fond of excitement and fresh faces generally treat old friends like old gloves."

A flash came into June's eyes and a slight tremor to her voice, always a sure sign with her of rising temper.

"I think that is a very poor simile at the best," she said. "People generally discard old gloves when they have done with them. I never heard it was a virtue to go on wearing them after they were torn or dirty."

"Yes," echoed Madge, "and Tom isn't likely to get old, or torn, or dirty."

"And," continued June, now that her blood was up, "I think a person must have a very small heart or mind who can only like or be amused by one friend or one set of friends."

"As this is supposed to be lesson time," said Agnes, coldly, "I think it would be more conscientious to work than to argue."

did not mean to lose it again just yet. He had seen that she wished to avoid him, and, being unaccustomed to such treatment, was piqued.

"What a charming old place this is!" he said, plunging into conversation with the first remark that occurred to him; and June replied by the monosyllable "Yes."

"I had no idea it was so pretty," continued the Guardsman. "You know I have not been here for ages—not since I was quite a little chap. There was a family quarrel or something, and my mother and Aunt Vi didn't speak for years. You are—don't think me inquisitive—but you are a sort of cousin of Tom's, are you not?"

"No," answered June. "His uncle and aunt are mine, and that makes us forget sometimes that we are not actually related."

"What a good chap he is!"

"Yes," she answered, with enthusiasm, "that he is. We missed him so dreadfully when he was away, and we were so delighted when he came back."

Tom, as soon as he entered the drawing room, went straight to June. Duty made no more calls upon him for the present; now he could take his pleasure. So he marched boldly up and sat down beside her, and she welcomed him with her kindest glance, and perhaps was not any more aware than Tom that she was acting.

"How nice you look!" he whispered, with a gaze of devouring admiration—"much nicer than any one else here. I wish you had worn my locket, though. But you will some day," in a happy, confident tone.

"Hush!" said June, smiling, but involuntarily feeling a little shock of coldness.

"You must all come up and play lawn tennis to-morrow afternoon—Madge, too. I have got another court marked out; and when Jack comes home" (the rector's son) "we are going to have a cricket match. Dai was in the Eton eleven, you know."

"What an Admiral Crichton your cousin seems to be!" remarked June, with the nearest approach to a sneer which she had ever accomplished in her life.

"Come, you must not set yourself against him," said Tom. "That would be almost as bad as if you liked him too much."

(To be continued.)

NO WONDER SHE KILLED IT.

A Mischievous Parrot That Doomed a Young Girl to Be an Old Maid.

And so you never heard why Miss Elden killed the parrot? said the kindly old lady to a reporter. Well, I'll tell you.

Miss Elden's father, you know, had been a seafaring man. He was a big man, had a hot temper that he never curbed, and a voice like a fog horn.

He was not choice of his language and seemed to care little for anything in existence except his daughter and a parrot with a temper like his own, which he had brought with him from the East. That bird seemed to have human intelligence. It not only picked up sentences with the ease of most children, but uttered them in the tones of those from whom they had been learned. It could imitate them all.

As a young girl Miss Elden was very pretty, though a little self-willed and haughty. Because of these qualities and because the captain thought no one was good enough for her, none of the young men found things very comfortable for them at her home. The captain thought nothing of making them get out and stay out. At length she rebelled against this way of treating her beaux, for her chances of marrying were dwindling. In the city she had met a very desirable gentleman and they were so congenial that he came out here to spend a few days so as to be near her. He went to the house with some fear, for the captain had a reputation. They were scarcely seated on the veranda when that bird roared: "Get out of here, you scoundrel, or I'll break every bone in your body." The youth never waited for his hat and before morning was out of town. She promptly wrung the bird's neck, but that was her last beau.

Rivals Rip Van Winkle.

Near the city of St. Charles, Minn., resides Herman Harms, a farmer 50 years of age, who for the greater part of the past 18 or 20 years has been sound asleep and although expert medical men have done their best to arouse him all efforts have been in vain.

When Harms left his Eastern home 20 years ago and went West he took up farming. Gradually drowsiness began to grow upon him and ere long he fell into the deep sleep that has held him fast during all these years. Last summer he awoke and was as wide awake as he ever was. His friends were overjoyed at the prospect of the spell being broken, but it was only a few days till it came on again. Frequently he partially awakes and talks rationally. When the sleep came on he was a strong, vigorous man, weighing 180 pounds, but he has so wasted that he now weighs not more than 90 pounds. His skin is drawn tightly over his bones and he is really a living skeleton. It would seem from his appearance that his cheek bones would cut through the skin. Physicians who have examined him have differed widely in their decisions as to the ailment that causes his great affliction.

When Greek Meets Greek.

Hold-Up Man—Your money or your life.

Book Agent—I have no money—but here is a copy of the "Life of a Millionaire" that I am offering at the low price of \$5, payable in weekly installments of 50 cents. May I have the pleasure of adding your name to my list?

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Benjamin Franklin was born in 1706 and died in 1790. His active labors, political, scientific and literary, covered a period of about sixty years.

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