Nor Any Other Creature.

By Ina Wright Hanson.

Looking up from a long drawn reverie before the unfinished picture on my easel, I saw Iolanthe beaming at me from the doorway.

"Come on!" she cried. "Put up your work and come with me into the country. I believe you don't even know it is May day. Don't you remember 'the month of May, when the air is so full of sweetness and love that even one shaving begins to feel an affection for another shaving?' Come, let us a Maying go."

"I can't," I answered. "I'm up against it. I'm crowded to the wall. I'm broke."

Iolanthe laughed—the sweetest sound in this wise old world.

"I had an intuition so, but that doesn't matter. This is my treat. You see, Isabel Dory took me to dinner yesterday, so I have enough to take us picnicking today. Come, brave knight, put on thy helmet and hasten."

I hastened. No one could resist Iolanthe. I took her little covered basket, and we went along the hall and down the stairs, with mock-doleful messages following us from our fellow workers, who were not going out into the blosoming May day world.

"What car are we going to take?" I asked as we reached the street.

Iolanthe blushed deliciously.

"We are not going to take a car. You see, I got so interested in buying a 'scrumptious' lunch that I forgot about the car, and"—

"I see," I said gravely. "And you don't know how glad I am that we are to walk. It is so much healthier. Then we won't have to mingle with the plebeians on a common car. When rich aristocrats like us"—

Iolanthe glanced up at me rather sharply, I thought. It couldn't be that she knew—of course she couldn't know. No one knew but my uncle's lawyer and myself, and maybe my uncle. I wondered if my uncle did know in that unknown country he had lately entered. By and by I should tell Iolanthe that, when the preliminaries were over, I should have enough money to buy her everything she wanted, even if on this blithe day I had not a penny, and all due to a never known rich old uncle, now dead. But Iolanthe was proud, so first I would win her promise—win it while she believed me poor as herself.

WE ATE OUR "SCRUMPTIOUS" LUNCH.

Purity and courage and gentleness and beauty—that was my Iolanthe. Mine? Ah, when our May day was over, should I be calling her mine?

"Who are you today?" she asked, stopping to fill her lungs with the buoyant air.

We had a habit of playing we were other folks when we went on these excursions—childish no doubt, but we were never going to grow old, we said, so it was best to be children a long time.

"Why, I am King Cophetua," I answered promptly, with a great inflating of my kingly chest and throwing back of my kingly head as we walked on.

"Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say.
In robe and crown the king stept down
To meet and greet her on her way."

"Who are you today, Iolanthe?"

"It's a pretty story," she mused, not answering my question, "but suppose it were turned around. Suppose that it were Queen Cophetua and the beggar man. Would he be good and let her love him? And would he be willing to sit on the throne with her?"

"Oh, that's different!" I said. "Of course a man could not take favors from a woman. The beggar man would have to go out into the world and win his fortune. He couldn't take it from his queen. You know he couldn't, don't you, Iolanthe?"

"No, I don't know anything about it," she said a bit crossly. But Iolanthe never could stay cross long enough to make it pay, so in a moment she was talking merrily again.

Presently we reached the spot we were bound for, a spot of sun and shade and running water and new spring flowers. We ate our "scrumptious" lunch, and then we sang and talked and had long spells of social silence, and all the while I was wondering how I should make her say "yes" if at first she happened to say "no."

"I am going to tell you a pretty story," she remarked after one of these silences. "It's a true one too. I am invited and so are you, and you'll go, won't you?"

"Oh, sure!" I answered recklessly. "Where?"

"A reception tomorrow evening to meet the richest girl you ever saw. She has so much money she doesn't know what to do with it all, but folks have just found it out. She has pretended to be poor for reasons. We're both going because you said you would."

"I would do anything or go anywhere to please you, little girl," I answered with so much meaning that Iolanthe flushed and her dear eyes wavered before my gaze. I don't know quite how it happened, but suddenly I had my dream in my arms—my unresisting, perfect, red lipped dream—and I was quite mad with delight.

Then presently she cried out that I must never let anything come between us.

"'Nor height nor depth nor any other creature,'" I said reverently.

"'Nor any other creature,'" she repeated after me and made me say it every little while all the rest of that wonderful day, and I did not tell her about my fortune after all, though I had intended to. When you come to think of it, money is a sordid thing to discuss when two folks are quaffing nectar and nibbling ambrosia.

The next evening I went to the reception and was presented to the lady of riches. It seemed to me that all the room hushed its breath and waited while we two went through what was required of us. It seemed to me that I lived an eon before we were free from the great eye of the room and in some place where there were a splash of water and quiet and heavy perfume of flowers. There in the dim light she stood, slender as an English laburnum tree, swaying in her yellow silken robes toward me. Her hands, weighted with jewels, were held out to me. Her mouth that I had kissed was smiling at me—was saying:

"'Nor any other creature!'"

I stood there staring at this wonderful new Iolanthe, and all I could think of and all I said was:

"Barefooted came the beggar maid,
Before the king Cophetua!"

Which, considering the circumstances, could hardly have been more absurd.

Iolanthe's laugh rang out; then she came closer to me, and her eyes grew very grave.

"Dearest," she whispered, "I was too rich to be happy, and so I ran away from everybody and went to work in the studio. I wanted to accomplish something. I wanted folks to say, 'She is a great painter,' not 'She is the richest girl in the country.' Then I found you, and—and—I didn't care any more for fame, because I wanted something greater, love—your love—and—you said 'Nor any other creature,' you know you did!"

"And meant it, too, my angel!" I exclaimed, coming out of my trance and taking her hands in mine. "You shall give me all the money you think I need, and I will sit on the throne with you like a good little man."

"I am so glad you are going to be sensible!" she said fervently.

And then I had to explain to her why I was laughing.

No Use For a Pessimist.

Freddie and his mother were having a thoroughly satisfactory romp when a visitor was announced. As one topic of conversation after another came up it developed that the caller was in an extraordinarily pessimistic frame of mind and expressed her disapproval in no measured terms of everything and everybody under discussion.

This impartial "knocking" disturbed Freddie's amiable soul mightily, and he slowly drew nearer and nearer until he finally stood before the lady, with his small face puckered and the corners of his mouth drawn down.

She stopped in the midst of an "Oh, a dreadful bore, my dear!" to say:

"Why, Freddie, please do unscrew your face. I don't like to see little boys look like that."

Freddie surveyed her for a moment and then said trenchantly, but with an obviously sincere wish for information:

"I guess you don't like most anything, do you?"—New York Times.

A Bad Shot.

A hot headed Irishman accidentally insulted an equally hot headed Frenchman, who insisted on fighting a duel with the Hibernian to wipe out the slight. The Irishman suggested that the two of them should each draw a card from a pack, and the one who drew the lowest was to go into an adjoining room and blow his brains out. The Frenchman demurred at first, but finally fell in with the idea, and the two opponents drew out the cards, one of which was bound to carry death in its wake. The Irishman drew the lowest card, and, with a smile, he charged his revolver and betook himself off to a small anteroom to complete the tragedy. Presently a loud report rang out, and the white faced people ran wildly to the little anteroom, fully expecting to see the Irishman a gory corpse. Instead he came coolly along the passage to meet them, and as they stared wonderingly at him he cried:

"Begorra, OI missed meself!"

A Startling Dish.

Over in Chelsea a schoolteacher was engaged in her task of teaching a class of foreign children the English language. She was trying to make her pupils understand the meaning of the word fright and asked if any one in the class could give a sentence containing the word.

Quick and confident was the reply of one little girl: "I have a sentence, teacher. We had fright eggs for breakfast this morning."—Boston Herald.

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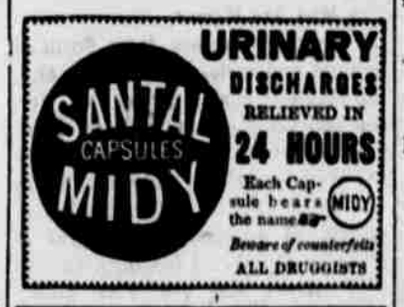

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12.01	8.35	9.35	6.10	.....	12.15	Ar. ..... WARRENTON	Lv	106	7.55	5.35	2.20	10.46	2.10
12.15	8.30	.....	6.11	.....	.....	Lv. ..... WARRENTON†	Ar	.....	7.54	.....	2.10	10.37	2.50
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