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The Interests of Southern Oregon Always Foremost.

The Development of our Mines, the Improvement of our Harbors, and Railroad Communication with the Interior, Specialties.



"Reading Pays."

Oh, yes, it pays in various ways, to store the mind with knowledge. At least that is the lesson says in every school and college: To keep the youthful mind employed While the happy thoughts it brings Prevents the mind from being deceived To studying foolish things. It is the bulwark of the mind, The joy of leisure hours, It is always ready to those who find The influence of its powers; It makes you bright, it gives delight, Its power and might in time, It will show as on you go In reaching heights sublime. But pay take heed of what you read Be such as always tend To guide your actions that no deed Of yours may ever offend; That poison lurks not on the page, Or in any way betrays, And you will find, in your old age, The truth that "reading pays."

Trapped by an Heiress.

A cosier place than the big sitting-room at Hillcrest would have been hard to find, if one had traveled from Land's End to John O'Grady's; and this evening, when the destinies of two worthy people were about taking definite form—two people who had never seen each other, and who had heard of each other so often that both were curiously eager to meet—on this important evening the sitting-room at Hillcrest had never looked pleasanter or cosier.

A huge fire of logs glowed like molten caruncles in the open fireplace; on the table in the center of the floor, whose cover matched the glowing crimson of the carpet, was a silver stand that held a dozen snowy napkins, whose beaming light contrasted exquisitely with the ruddy glow of the fire.

Beside the table, in a big, cushioned chair, with his feet thrust to the genial warmth on the hearth, his gray dressing-gown sitting comfortably on his portly form, his gold-rimmed glasses on his nose, sat the owner and master of Hillcrest, Mr. Abiah Cressington, rich, good-natured, and fond of his own way. Opposite him was the mistress of the place—little, shrewd-faced, sharp-nosed, merry Aunt Cornelia, his sister, who, since her widowhood, had come to Hillcrest to make her bachelor brother's home as pleasant as she could.

That she had succeeded was very evident by the way now in which he looked up from a letter he had been reading—the confidential, kindly way in which he did it.

"Walter writes a curious letter in response to my invitation to come and spend a few weeks at Hillcrest as soon as he gets over his fatigue from his ocean voyage home, after his five years' tour abroad. I'll read it to you." He leaned near the softly glowing lights, and began the short, concise reply that Walter Austin had written from his chamber in the Temple.

"You are very kind, indeed, Uncle Abiah, to ask me down to Hillcrest for as long as I wish to stay, and I can assure you that I have been so long a wanderer that the idea of a home is very pleasant to me. But when I take into consideration the peculiar importance of your proposition to my visit, I am unwilling to accept the invitation. To me, the idea of having my fancies and inclinations put into harness, and to feel that I am on continual duty to win my way into the good graces of my second cousin, Mabel, whom you are good enough to wish me to marry."

Mrs. Cornelia interrupted sharply. "Abiah, you surely ought to have told our grand-nephew, that you had in view his marriage with Mabel!"

Her tone was energetic, almost reproachful.

"Why not? I certainly did. I told him in my letter that it was a chance for him he'd never get again, and that he needn't feel under such terrible obligation to take a fancy to Phil's little Mabel, but to choose a doctor and be content, and if anything should happen, I'd be right all round."

Mrs. Cornelia knitted vigorously, her lavender cap-ribbons quivering in the molten taper glow.

"All I have to say is, you're a fool, Abiah! Walter is right. A young man doesn't like to have his fancies put into harness, and the very fact that he wants him to marry, will make him indisposed to do it. You've made a very great mistake in the beginning."

Mr. Cressington looked aghast at his sister's determined face.

"Why, I didn't really suppose—"

"Of course you didn't. It's only your natural stupidity, you dear old fellow! Men are all alike. Don't I know them like a book? And you've ruined your hopes for Mabel and Walter at the very outset."

Mr. Cressington started discomfitedly.

"I am sure I meant it all right enough, Cornelia. I certainly wanted Walter to know what a little darling our Mabel is, and what a nice little wife she would make for any man."

Very commendable, indeed; only, if you had considered me upon the letter you sent, I should have advised you to say nothing about Mabel, or her charms, or her expectations. I should have simply asked him to come and see us, and have left the rest to Mabel's blue eyes. You see, Abiah?"

His lips compressed slowly.

"I think I see, and my hopes in that direction are all ruined!"

The silver needles clicked rapidly, and the snow-white yarn came rolling merrily off the ball under her arm.

"Not at all. Leave that to me, and I'll see what can be done. Trust a woman's wit to get even a blundering old fellow like yourself out of a scrape."

She smiled and nodded, and looked altogether so mischievous, that Mr. Cressington became quite excited over her little mystery.

"Do explain, Cornelia."

And when she explained he leaned back in his chair, with an expression of positive awe and admiration on his face.

"What a woman you are, Cornelia! I declare I heard anything I ever heard in the whole course of my life!"

After dusk, a glorious winter day, with here and there a star twinkling in the pale gray sky, and the lights and fires in the hillcrest sitting-room making an eloquent welcome to Walter Austin, as he stood in the midst of the home circle, tall, gentlemanly, handsome and self-possessed.

Old Mr. Cressington was in his richest humor as he led forward two young girls.

"Come, don't be shy now, Walter, this is your cousin, Mabel Cressington, and this is her good friend and inseparable companion, Irene Vance, come to help entertain you. My nephew, Mr. Walter Austin, girls. And this is Aunt Cornelia—you remember her well enough, hey?"

And the presentation was merrily gotten over, and Walter found himself at home in the most pleasant family he had ever known.

They were remarkably pretty girls, with blue eyes—although Miss Vance's were decidedly the deeper blue and more bewitching—and lovely, yellow-gold hair. Walter found himself admiring the style of Miss Vance's dress before he had known her an hour; and when he went up to his room that night he felt as if between the roguish Mabel and sweet little Irene, he never would come out heart-whole.

"For Mabel is a good little darling," thought he, "and I will take Great-uncle Abiah's advice and fall in love with her, and thereby secure a generous share of the Cressington estates. Egad! that's a happy thought!"

But the handsome young gentleman went to sleep and dreamed, instead of Mabel's laughing eyes, of Irene's gentle, tender ones; and awoke somewhere in the middle of the night, unable to get to sleep again for thinking of her.

And the after days were not much better. Despite the golden values of Mabel, there was something about Irene Vance that made this headstrong fellow very foolishly indifferent to the advice he had sworn to follow.

"Because, by Jove! a fellow would have to be made out of granite to resist the sweet, shy ways of such a little darling as Irene! And I'll marry her if she'll have me, and the money and property may go to the dogs! I've a head and a pair of hands, and blue eyes I needn't suffer!"

It was not an hour later that he met her in the hall, carrying great bunches of holly, with which to festoon, down the walnut staircase.

"Give me your burden, Irene," said he. "Why did you not tell me you were going to gather it, and let me go with you? It is altogether too heavy a burden for your arms to bear."

He managed to get the lovely sprays from her arms, but it required an immense amount of tardy effort on his part, and shy, sweet blushing on hers.

"Answer me, Irene. Why didn't you let me go with you? Wouldn't you have liked it?"

He demanded her answer in the most captivating, lordly way, and she dropped her eyes in great confusion.

"Then why were you so cruel to me?"

"I am not cruel to anybody. Indeed I must go now."

Walter placed himself squarely in the way, and was looking down at her rose-tinted face.

"No, you can't go yet, Irene, you are cruel, or you would never deprive one of the opportunity to enjoy the closeness of your society. His voice lowered tenderly, and he dropped his head nearer her golden curls. "You know I think it cruel in you to be so distant, and shy, and reserved with me—don't you, Irene?"

She shrank away, her lovely form drooping like a lily, her cheeks hanging out their signals of distress and confusion.

"Oh, please don't talk so to me. Indeed I must go! Mabel is waiting for the holly, and she—she won't like it!"

But she was a prisoner in his tight clasp.

"If what? If they find you and me talking so confidentially together?"

"No! I mean if I don't take the holly at once."

Walter put his arm around her waist before she knew what he was doing.

"Irene, look up. You shall not go until you let me see in your eyes if you love me as well as I love you! Irene, my dear little girl, I do love you very dearly!"

She was silent for one second, and he saw the quiver of her red lips. Then she raised her head slowly, shyly.

"You love me? Oh! Walter, what will they all say? Don't you know it is Mabel you should say that to? I am nobody, Walter, and Mabel is an heiress!"

Walter had both arms around her by this time, and was looking ardently in her glowing face.

"I know Mabel is an heiress, and a nice little girl; and I also know you are a darling—my darling—and the only girl I ever asked to be my wife, or ever shall ask! Say yes, pet."

His tones were low and tender, and he saw the quiver of her red lips. Then she raised her head slowly, shyly.

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