

AN HEIR TO MILLIONS

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SYNOPSIS.

Andy Meelen, aged and eccentric millionaire miser, is dying and orders his attorney to draw up a will leaving all his property to the son of a sister from whom he was separated years before and of whose name even he is ignorant. Andy tells the attorney that he was married in his youth, but left his wife after a quarrel in which he struck her. He learned afterward that she and his daughter were dead.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

"Well, that's only right. The money kem out o' old Nevady; let her have it back ag'in. But mind you, Carboy, not till you've raked all creation with a fine-tooth comb to find Mattie's boy."

"Whom will you name as executors or trustees?"

"Mast you have 'em?" Meelen answered anxiously, as though the functionaries referred to were of a species noxious and undesirable.

"Undoubtedly; they are necessary evils."

Meelen frowned in perplexity. It seemed as though it were costing him far more trouble to leave his money behind him than it had been to amass it and guard it during his eventful life.

"Can't you fellows act?" he inquired dubiously at length—"you fellows"—indicating Mr. Carboy and his partners.

"Certainly, if you wish it. Two will be sufficient. Suppose we say Mr. Passavant and myself?"

With a gesture as of one wearied with the whole subject Meelen signified assent. Then, as the lawyer rose to go indoors, he said:

"Fix it up quick, Carboy, I'm mortal tired!"

By this time the sun had set behind the western wall of mountains, and Evan appeared to wheel his master within. But the tough old fellow demurred. Half his nights had been spent in the open air with only the stary canopy for a tent. Now that the end was near, he dreaded the cribbed and cabined confinement of four walls. So a lantern was brought and hung to the rafters of the porch, where its dim radiance could not interfere with that piercing gaze which to the last roamed lovingly over the mountain prospect.

One, two hours passed, and save for the steady, harshly rhythmic "crunch-crunch" of the "stamps" the town below was strangely quiet. Every soul therein knew that the master-mind in the hillside eyrie was passing away; hushed were the usual sounds of rude revelry and "wide-open" license. It was felt to be a fateful night for the town of Meelen.

At length Mr. Carboy's task was done. A table was carried on to the porch; by lantern-light the will was read to the testator, who turned his eyes to meet those of the lawyer in mute approval when the reading was ended. Then, lifted and supported by old Evan, he affixed his uncouth and sprawling signature, the witnesses followed, and the deed was done which bequeathed a princely fortune and a royal revenue to—whom?

Next morning Andrew Meelen was found lifeless in bed, his gnarled and knotted features composed in a peaceful, almost ecstatic, smile.

"Perhaps he has found Minna!" mused the lawyer, with humid eyes, as he stood by the side of his strange client.

CHAPTER II.

In an old-fashioned sitting room in an antiquated brick house in that unfashionable quarter of "downtown" New York formerly known as Greenwich village there sat, one autumn evening, a young couple, both of whom were exceedingly good to look upon.

To the judicious observer it would have been apparent from their attitude and bearing each towards the other that they were something more than mere friends, yet less than man and wife. In fact, they were contented and happy dwellers in that delectable border-land known as Being Engaged.

The girl was fairly tall of stature, brunette as to complexion, with a wealth of fine and glossy dark hair which rippled and waved around a small but shapely head and above a wifely feminine forehead, white and broad and low. Her eyes were of a very steadfast dark gray, set widely apart, giving one the impression of quiet repose and cool judgment. A firm chin above a strong and supple throat made her look older and more womanly than her years really warranted. She was busied with one of those trifles of needlework which keep the fingers busy without curbing one's tongue, and at the same time serve to display to admiring and even coquettish advantage a very shapely wrist and hand. Yet even the dearest of her feminine friends would never

have insinuated that Eunice Trevecca was the least bit of a coquette. Indeed, it needed but a glance into the depths of those quiet gray eyes to convince you that that here was a nature tender and true as that of the Douglas himself.

So at least thought young Wilfrid Stennis, who sat opposite to her, and who certainly enjoyed the best opportunities in the world for knowing. He was a pleasant, wholesome lad, fair and florid, with light golden-brown hair and mustache, slim and with slightly stooped shoulders. A rather weak face on the whole, one might say, though perhaps this was partly owing to a rather querulous droop of the mustache, which barely veiled the sensitive mouth; a beard would better have hidden a chin which was far too pretty for any mere man.

Had you guessed him to be a clerk or a bookkeeper you would not have been far astray—one of those men who make exceedingly valuable and faithful servants but very poor masters. As to character, he was neither better nor worse than thousands of other youngsters who start out in life in some downtown office or store at \$3 a week, the goal of whose ambition is to earn fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars a year, to marry some pleasant girl, settle down in a Harlem flat or a little one-of-a-row house over in Brooklyn, raise a small family, get along on a couple of new suits of clothes each year, with a semi-oc-

casional visit to the theater in winter and an outing on Saturday afternoons at Coney Island or Rockaway.

Not a wildly hilarious or thrilling existence, it may be granted, yet there are hundreds and thousands of such men—gentlemanly and refined, neither very strong nor very weak, not vicious nor conspicuously virtuous, but who, in a paraphrase of the old Shorter Catechism, are piously or mechanically "doing their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased the Almighty to call them." It is of kindred stuff that the "average citizen" is made.

Even to such men strange dreams may come—fond and foolish visions of wealth and power, hopeless of realization, mayhap, yet nevertheless frequently prompted by certain innate or inherited cravings for the good things of this life which only money can procure, and for the enjoyment of which they feel a yearning and an infinite capacity if only they had the chance.

"Oh, it's a splendid thing to be rich!" Wilfrid was even then saying to Eunice. "Just think of what a man could do if he were really in possession of more money than he knew how to spend! I don't mean a paltry hundred thousand dollars, but—well, say twenty or thirty or even fifty millions!"

"Why, stop there!" put in Eunice with a quizzing little smile. "Why

not say a hundred millions at once and be certain of having enough?"

"Because for practical purposes twenty millions would be ample," said he. "The income from that should be—let me see—doing a rapid sum in mental arithmetic—over half a million a year."

"Well, and what would you do with it, Wilf, if you had it?" questioned Eunice, willing to humor his fancy.

Wilfrid drew a long breath and lay back in his chair. "In the first place, I'd build me a city house right here in New York on the east side of the park or else at Riverside, and a country place somewhere up the sound or on Long Island near the water. I'd want to live in the city not more than three or four months in the year. Then I'd have a yacht—none of your smoky, greasy teakettles, but a sweet-smelling, fast-sailing schooner fit to go around the world—and I'd sail her myself, too. There would be horses for riding and driving, with perhaps a four-in-hand coach. Best of all, I could travel—south in winter, of course, but I'd see the world: London, Paris, Berlin, Italy, the pictures, the statues, and the libraries. Oh, I'd go everywhere and do everything, even to a little gaming at Monte Carlo! nothing wicked or vulgar about it all, you know, but the utmost enjoyment in a refined way, and all the experiences that money could give."

The girl smiled at his boyish enthusiasm, nor did she evince any pique or annoyance because Eunice Trevecca was somehow left out of the picture. It was all mere idle talk, of course. Wilfrid was not really unhappy or discontented; he had a good position with nine hundred a year, and they were to be married in the spring.

"You certainly could give some of our American nabobs a few lessons on how to be happy though rich," she smilingly commented. "It has often seemed to me that our really rich men do not get half as much out of life as they might."

"Of course they don't!" assented

her station, my dear"—was only one remove from being a working woman herself, and had no foolish or unpractical longings. As housekeeper for her stepfather, John Trevecca—her mother she could not remember—she was beyond the necessity of earning her own living; but Trevecca himself was but a foreman in some iron works up on Tenth avenue. So to Eunice the prospect of marrying so presentable a young fellow as Wilfrid Stennis, both of them being very much in love with each other, seemed the acme of good fortune, leaving nothing to be desired of the Fates.

And though Wilf was her senior by some four years—he was twenty-eight—the girl was really the elder in point of steady principle and cool, sober judgment. In fact, Wilf, as she often acknowledged to herself, was rather boyish, sanguine, mercurial, easily led. But she loved him for these very qualities; some women mother their husbands before the children arrive to keep their affections busy.

When old John Trevecca came in, coatless and bringing with him a strong aroma of cut Cavendish, for he had been smoking his pipe with some cronies on the "front porch," as they still call the house entrance up Green- wich way, the light of Wilfrid's rosy visions had not yet died out of his eyes. There was even an atmosphere of suppressed excitement in the home- ly room which caused the old man to look shrewdly at Eunice. If there were anything amiss between the lovers Trevecca knew he would find it in the girl's face. But apparently all was serene.

"Wilf has been telling me what he intends to do with all his money when he gets to be very rich," she said smilingly.

"That's easy spending," said Trevecca, sinking heavily into a chair. "There's more money got rid of that way in a year than'd pave 'York wid dollars! But let's hear about it, lad," he added.

"Oh, it was just foolish talk," said Wilfrid, on whose late enthusiasm the blunt words of his prospective father-in-law were like a bucket of cold water on a bonfire.

Nevertheless, as he walked home to his lodgings on Washington square the exaltation of the earlier evening still clung to him, and as he swung along in the clear, crisp autumn night his step was jaunty, his head held high, and he was potentially as rich as he was actually poor.

To such a man as Wilfrid Stennis, uneducated as the college world counts learning, but eager, receptive, possessing an eye for beauty and for color, with a love for music, an un- formed, omnivorous appetite for books, and an instinctive shrinking from the sordid and the mean, the bonds of even respectable poverty are apt to prove especially galling. Like Bella Wilfer, he realized to the full what it meant to be "beastly poor, miserably poor."

What wonder, then, that his long- ings, his aspirations, his day dreams, were centered about that wealth he so often saw others abusing, or mis- using, or keeping napkin-tied? Not for the miser's greed of possession, but for the gratification of the best that was in him, did he long for money—heaps and heaps of it.

Overnight day dreams, fortunately, come cheap, and they leave no dark- brown taste in the mouth. The next morning, when Wilfrid Stennis went downtown to the Front street store, he was again the prosaic and method- ical young entry clerk. No one would have suspected him of secret yearn- ings for fast horses, a faster yacht, and a little flutter around the tables so hospitably maintained by 'the prince of Monaco."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Twelve Minutes Saved.

"Experience," said Mark Twain in the smoking room of the Bermudian, "makes us wise, but it also makes us hard. Consider the old, experienced man in the busy restaurant. He took a seat, looked round him and, point- ing to a well-dressed gentleman who had not yet been served, he said to the waiter:

"Walter, how long has that gentle- man been here?"

"About 12 minutes, sir," the waiter answered.

"What's his order?"

"Porterhouse and French fried, sir, with mince pie and coffee to come."

"The old man, hardened by experi- ence, slipped a quarter in the waiter's hand.

"Walter, he said, 'I'm in a hurry. Put on another porterhouse and bring me his.'"

Sexes Divided in Church.

The separation of the sexes seems to have been formerly by no means an uncommon practice in the Church of England. In fact, Edward VI.'s prayer book specially mentions that at the communion service "the men shall tarry on one side and the women on the other." The papers of a church in Westmoreland include elaborate di- rections for the division of the sexes at its services.

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