AN HEIR TO MILLIONS

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SYNOPSIS.

Andy Meleen, aged millionaire miner, is dying and orders a will drawn up leaving all his property to the son of a sister of whom he has heard nothing for years, and whose married name he does not know. Meleen was married years before but left his wife after a quarrel in which he struck her. He learned later that she and their daughter were dead. The scene shifts to New York, introducing Wilfrid Stennis, who is telling his fiancee, Eunice Trevecca, what he would do if he were the possessor of wealth. In the law office of Carboy, Passavant & Cozine, attorneys for the estate of Meleen, Roger Hews reports the result of his search for heirs of Meleen. He conceals the fact that he has discovered that Meleen's daughter is living. Wilfrid Stennis replies to an advertisement for information concerning his dead mother, Martha Meleen, and is told that he is the heir to Andy Meleen's millions. He wants to marry Eunice at once, but she resolutely demurs. He meets Clara Passavant, frivolous daughter of his attorney. Eunice becomes jealous of Wilfrid's attentions to Clara. He builds a yacht and starts on a trip abroad, the Passavants being included in the party. Roger Hews, having discovered that Eunice Trevecca is the daughter of Andy Meleen, plans to use the information to his own advantage. He proposes to Eunice and is rejected. Jaded after two years of society in Europe Wilfrid returns and immediately calls on Eunice. His attempts to renew his former relations with her meet with no encouragement.

CHAPTER VIII.

One morning in the early fall, a few weeks after the return of Stennis from abroad, Roger Hews called at his rooms bearing a letter of introduction from Horatio Passavant. It ran:

My Dear Mr. Stennis: This will commend to your consideration Mr. Roger Hews, who prefers to do his own explaining as to the object of his waiting upon you. I am requested to say, however—and it gives me great pleasure to do so—that Mr. Hews has upon more than one occasion acquitted himself intelligently and faithfully in matters of moment entrusted to him by this firm, and I believe him to merit the utmost confidence.

Most truly yours,
HORATIO PASSAVANT.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Hews?" inquired Stennis genially, dragging a chair forward.

"I understand that your secretary is about to leave you, Mr. Stennis, and I venture to make application for the post. It occurred to me that a personal call would be more satisfactory all around. I hope I'm not too late?"

"On the contrary, you are the first in the field. How did you know that there was to be a vacancy?"

"From Mr. Passavant."

"I see," said Wilfrid. "It was through him that Mr. Jocelyn came to me three years ago; if he sends me as good a man this time, I shall not complain."

Hews bowed. In dress and deportment—the former severely businesslike, the latter quiet and sedate—he seemed outwardly all that could be desired.

Stennis turned to the letter of recommendation, slightly at a loss what to say next. This man was evidently some years older than himself, and no doubt eminently respectable.

Despite his experience of the respect and deference everywhere elicited by his wealth and social standing, Stennis had never quite gotten over a slight feeling of embarrassment and shamefacedness when dealing with those of his fellowmen who might in any sense be considered as dependents. An acute observer would have said that this hang-dog trait was convincing proof that he had not been born to the purple. Your titled Englishman, for instance, has no compunction or hesitation in ordering his servants around; they are to him, and always have been, simply so much furniture.

"I suppose I ought to ask you some questions, Mr. Hews," said Stennis, with a whimsical but engaging little smile, "but for the life of me I don't know where to begin."

"I am entirely at your service," murmured the irreproachable Hews, who was on his good behavior.

"Well—er—what experience have you had? I presume that's a fair inquiry?" said Winfrid tentatively.

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Stennis. To be frank with you, I have never occupied exactly the position of a private secretary, but I have been employed at various times in a confidential capacity by several men of affairs, and the firm of Carboy, Passavant & Cozine has also used me in some delicate matters. I may say without hesitation that I am thoroughly familiar with the duties of such a place."

Wilfrid nodded. "Mr. Passavant transacts all my weightier business, you know; you would look after my private correspondence, keep me posted as to social engagements, go through the begging letters—there's a devil of a lot of them, I can assure you—purchase supplies, and pay the bills.

"I understand," said Hews confidently.

"Then there's the new house; there's a confounded amount of petty detail connected with that which will fall to you."

Hews waved his hand with a gesture of complete assurance. "Give yourself no uneasiness, Mr. Stennis. I believe I can do all these things to your satisfaction."

"Well," said Wilfrid impulsively, "I rather like you, Mr. Hews, and I don't see why we shouldn't suit each other. I'll talk it over with Passavant and let you know."

"Very good, sir," said Roger, rising to go, hat in hand. "There is one thing I should prefer you to hear from me direct—Mr. Passavant will probably mention it: Although a stranger to you personally, I know something about your affairs, for I was the man sent to Pennsylvania by Mr. Carboy to verify certain facts connected with your late uncle's early life."

"The devil you were!" exclaimed Stennis, looking at Hews with accrued interest. Then, after a moment's reflection, he continued:

"I don't see why that should make any difference, do you?"

"Not at all," was the reply: "I should serve you none the less faithfully, Mr. Stennis."

"All right," assented the latter. "I'll let your hear from me one way or the other, Mr. Hews."

Hews bowed, and had his hand on the doorknob when Wilfrid said:

"By the way, it just occurs to me: Mr. Jocelyn is leaving because he is going to get married. I hate these changes, anyway. Pardon me—but have you—er—er—any similar intentions, Mr. Hews? It's none of my business, perhaps?"

She Dashed Off the Address.

For an instant the astute Roger half suspected some hidden or covert meaning in this sudden question; but a glance at Wilfrid's quite tranquil countenance quickly dispelled the idea. It was merely a chance shot. With a grave smile he answered:

"Not the slightest!"

As he descended in the elevator he reflected that Stennis was not likely to hear any tell-tale contradictions of this statement from Eunice Trevecca, and even a better man than Roger Hews could have justified the misleading answer by appealing to the reply made by Sir Philip Francis when asked point-blank if he had penned certain notorious letters: "If I had, you know, I should certainly say I had not!"

A variety of motives impelled the schemer to take this plunge into the enemy's country.

First and foremost was the feeling that by being on the spot he would be able to keep in touch with the property he had almost come to regard as his own.

Then, too, he fancied that the coveted position would enable him to detect any signs of renewed tenderness between Wilfrid and Eunice; while equally, of course, if Stennis were contemplating any other union matrimonial he would know of that.

In fact, by this move, should it prove successful, his position would be like that of a man in the center of a seesaw plank; he could depress or elevate either end at will.

Roger Hews was one of those men to whom power, or the knowledge of power, is inexpressibly sweet. The assurance that he held his unsuspecting adversary in the hollow of his hand, that if he chose he could at any time oust him from his high estate in half a dozen words, was to him meat and drink.

In less than a week he received a note from Stennis definitely engaging him, and requesting that he begin his new duties forthwith. So Roger Hews took up his residence at "The Albany" and speedily became adept in his work, as well as possessed of most of his employer's little secrets.

The winter came and went without bringing much change in the outward relations of the chief personages of this tale. The walls of the new mansion on Riverside were steadily rising, and the envious heart of Roger Hews was made sick at the thought of the enormous sums that were being lavished thereon.

"Confound him!" he growled in his gizzard a dozen times a day. "He little thinks whose money is being squandered! I'll give him a little more rope, and then—"

For Hews had come to hate Wilfrid with a blind, unreasoning hatred which, in a less cold-blooded man, would have endangered by precipitancy his ultimate plans and plots. Strange to say, the unconscious Wilfrid rather liked his taciturn and methodical secretary.

"He's a perfect gourmand for work," said the young Croesus one day to Mr. Passavant; "I can't find him enough to do."

But Roger was busy in his own ferret-like way. That Eunice Trevecca was secretly pining her heart away for Wilfrid Stennis became perfectly clear to Hews the unsuccessful. Since the former's return the girl had grown perceptibly thinner and paler, her step had lost its pretty quickness, her manner lacked its old-time buoyancy and sprightliness.

The certainty that his diagnosis was right fairly infuriated the rival suitor. Originally he had approached the girl in a spirit of sordid speculation, with only the counterfeit pretence of love upon his lips. But as the womanly sweetness and the unattainable nature of the prize became apparent, so did his feelings change, and he who came to barter with a woman's heart remained to beg for a kindly glance, to yearn for a word that might give him hope. For Hews was deeply, passionately smitten with Eunice Trevecca. To such a pass had it come with him that to win her he would have been willing to forego the golden fruit of all his plottings and schemings.

Again and again did he try to approach the forbidden topic of his love, but always with the same quiet avoidance of it on her part. He had promised to respect her wishes, but the floodgates of passion were at length overflowed, and he resolved to know his fate once and for all.

To help his cause somewhat he sent Eunice anonymously a marked copy of a society paper which authoritatively announced the engagement of Clara Passavant and Wilfrid Stennis, with the added intelligence that the wedding would take place at Easter. This time there was no mistake—the gossips were right.

On various occasions throughout the winter Wilfrid had tried to see Eunice—sometimes successfully, but more often failing—in a sincere endeavor and desire to renew their old footing. But the girl met his advances with such coldness and palpable indifference that at length he came to the sorrowful conclusion that she was hopelessly offended with him.

Then, and then only, did he put the momentous question to the daughter of the house of Passavant, and was at once accepted. She had been ready to yield months ago; in her inmost heart she wondered why the man had hesitated so long.

When Eunice received the paper which Hews so thoughtfully sent she happened to be alone. She could not help seeing the paragraph, encircled as it was with broad blue pencil marks. As she took in the sense of the printed lines her lip curled scornfully, as she said, half-aloud:

"I hope she is satisfied now!"

Quite on the impulse of the moment she ran to her little desk—one of Will's keepsakes — and rapidly penned this note:

Dear Mr. Stennis: Some kind friend has just sent me a copy of the Home Journal containing the announcement of your engagement and forthcoming marriage. As one of your oldest friends I want to be among the first to congratulate you and to offer my sincerest wishes for your future happiness.

Cordially yours,
EUNICE TREVECCA.

She dashed off the address, and with her own hands posted it forthwith at the box on the corner. Then she ascended slowly to her room, locked the door, and had what women call "a good cry." But when old John came home that night she was able to tell him the news with complete composure, save for a tiny dash of red in either cheek.

"Eh, lass," he said, getting up from his chair, going to her side at the other end of the table, and taking her face between his horny hands, "thou'st gotten tha' dose, but doan't 'ee fret; tna' ither 'ooman has na' landed 'im yet, an' she will na'." He sealed the words with a hearty, compassionate kiss, and went heavily back to his seat, chuckling to himself. But Eunice shook her head hopelessly.

"It's all the fault of that horrid money, father," she said.

"There's nowt ta matter wi' th' lad, girlie; niver forget that. He'll win oot!" affirmed the old man, emphasizing his opinion with his knife and fork in the air.

"I wish I could think so," sighed Eunice, smiling wanly, "but it's no use; he will never come back to us now—it has gone too far!" And so it seemed, for with his engagement to Miss Passavant openly announced it looked as if Will were indeed irrevocably lost. Then her pride came to her rescue, and with some attempt at abandon Eunice exclaimed:

"I don't care! I sent him my congratulations today!"

"Did 'ee, now! That was plucky of 'ee," was her father's sententious answer.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Extravagant Princess.

So much has been said and written about the debts of Princess Louise, eldest daughter of the late king of the Belgians, that any story illustrating her carelessness in money matters is of interest. Princess Louise literally does not know what money means, says the London Globe. Some time ago, during a stay she made in Paris, a dress which she had ordered was brought to her hotel, says a Brussels paper. The girl who brought it was pretty and charmingly dressed, with that simplicity and grace peculiar to the little work girl of the Rue de la Paix. Princess Louise admired the child and told her so, and admired, too, a little silver medal which the girl wore around her neck. "Perhaps your highness will accept it," said the work girl. "It is a medal of the Virgin of Prague." "That is too sweet of you," said Princess Louise, "and you must let me give you something in exchange to put around your neck." She gave a necklace of pearls, with which the girl went off in high glee. She thought they were imitation, and, even so, they were fine ones. But one day, being short of money, she took the necklace to a jeweler's to be valued. It is worth $55,000.

The Latest Air.

"I'm looking for a breezy march," said the bandmaster in a Chestnut street music store the other day.

"How about this one dedicated to the Aero club?" the facetious clerk asked.

"I suppose it is written for wind instruments," the bandmaster countered.

"Well, the air is easy," the clerk shot back, and the interchange stopped.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Sin and the Conscience.

To say that we have a clear conscience is a solecism; had we never sinned, we should have no conscience. —Carlyle.

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Mrs. Pinkham, at Lynn, Mass., invites all sick women to write her for advice. Her advice is free, confidential, and always helpful.

Originality.

People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. And after all, what can we call our own, except energy, strength and will. If I could give an account of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries there would be but small balance in my favor.—Goethe.

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