

# PHINEAS HARDEN'S INHERITANCE

THEY stood about the farmhouse in awkward, constrained groups, waiting, as they might have expressed it, "for the funeral to start." The dead woman was lying in the best room. It had been the passing away of a hard life.

Phineas Harden leaned his head against the shutter which had been closed to keep out the glaring light, and as he sat there, half-hearing the sounds which came to him through the open window, he heard quite distinctly these words:

"Died peaceful at the last, they say. Well, there'd ought to be some peace in the course of a natural life, an' if there was going to be any in old Mis' Harden's life, guess it had ter get its linings in at pretty nigh the last lick, an' a close shave at that. My didn't she lead Dick Harden a life. Rec'lect when there wasn't a sprucer man in town, but she took the spirit out of him, an' it wasn't much of a job for consumption ter finish him up."

Phineas never forgot that. It had been the putting into words what he had never quite admitted even to himself.

The days that followed his mother's death passed peacefully after the other. A while he became used to the quiet of the house. It didn't seem lonely to him; he had never felt lonely, not even at the first. It was only as though some discordant note had dropped out of his life.

People sometimes looked curiously at him and wondered if he ever thought of Lorinda North. But no one could read the thoughts that were hidden back of his eyes. They were eyes that rather baffled you; they had always annoyed his mother. When he was a child she had said one day, "Where he gets that look beats me. He minds well, an' he'd oughter see the trouble I've been to, bringing him up. His hands an' feet are quick enough to do as I say, but I can't feel but what



"HE LONGED FOR QUIET AND PEACE."

there's somethin' back of his eyes that I ain't never touched."

Lorinda North kept a little shop, which was the local exponent of metropolitan styles. She was a woman who took life hard. It was not come easy to any of those hard-worked, narrow-lived women, and she had fought against each hard knock until all the softness, which may once have been hers, had been rubbed off. There had been an old love affair between these two, but how far it had progressed no one ever quite knew. Some one had once ventured to ask Lorinda about it. "She wasn't going to be an old woman's nurse," she had said. "She'd always made out to make a living for herself, and she guessed she could still. She wasn't going to live in any man's house and have another woman boss it."

Perhaps in these years in which there had been plenty of time for quiet thought she had sometimes regretted her lost chance of happiness. Surely they had been lonely years, hard years, too, and they had borne their fruit in Lorinda North. There wasn't a woman in the town who did not feel a little uneasy when under the battery of her sharp eyes. Phineas Harden had been the only one who had ever pushed open, even ever so slightly, the door of her heart; and after she had closed this little chink, love had gone to easier pathways, and left the door of Lorinda's heart closed hard and fast.

People had speculated somewhat as to how she would take the news of Mrs. Harden's death. Perhaps it had stired, more deeply than she knew, the undercurrent of her life. Surely, Phineas was often in her mind in these days. Not with any tenderness of feeling did she think of the lonely man; but perhaps because his solitary life bore so closely on her own did her thoughts so often turn to him. As she looked forward, as she did sometimes of late, to the years and years stretching out their weary length before her, she thought, which was at first vague and undefined, gradually took definite shape in her mind.

They had both always been regular church attendants. Through the summer Lorinda had sat just back of Phineas Harden's pew, and the time seemed very long ago when the pew in front had been empty at the evening meeting and he had sat back with her.

His mother had been dead just six months. The cold and dreariness of the winter was gone, and it was a soft night in early June. The windows in the old church were open, and perhaps Phineas listened more to the monotonous voice of the minister. When he was a little boy he had often wished that they would have church outdoors. God seemed nearer there. The woman sat and watched his face during the long sermon. She looked at it more carefully, perhaps, than she had ever done before. But Lorinda North was not capable of seeing the real Phineas Harden. All she saw was a slight, bent figure with a face with eyes that were apt to fall a little before the hard look in her own. She could not know that he did not meet her eyes only because it pained him to see the expression which time had printed on her face.

The long service was over, and there was a sigh of relief as the congregation stood and received the benedic-

tion. Phineas had never passed out of his pew without stopping and speaking to Lorinda. To-night he looked up with his usual smile; she was just beside him, her hand resting on the railing of the old pew that stood between them. Something in her face arrested him; he stopped and took her hand.

"What is it, Lorinda? Is anything the matter?"

"She looked for a full minute into his kind, inquiring eyes before she spoke. "No, nothing's the matter. I only thought that, perhaps—perhaps, we might walk home together."

He dropped her hand, and the color flashed to his face. But the blood moved more slowly at forty than at twenty, and he only said:

"Why, yes, Lorinda, of course."

The night was clear and beautiful. It was strange how the man noted each sound, and how his thoughts went back to another June night long ago, when he had walked over in the same road with the woman beside him. He looked at her face; even in this soft half-light, it was hard and cold. There was something pathetic in the silent walk of these two old lovers. They were almost at her door now, and she turned her face toward him. If he could have known it, there were two bright spots on her cheeks; as it was, he felt a pity for the lonely woman. He did not know that they were two players in "the tragedy of what might have been," but he dimly felt that she was trying to bridge over the lapse of time that had come between them. He remembered something of the feeling he had once had when she was beside him, and a wave of longing, not for her, but for the love that had gone, came over him. He almost forgot the woman in his remembrance of the love which she had once awakened.

As the memory of the old emotions came over his heart softened and he turned toward her with ready words on his lips. But they had reached her door, and she was holding out her hand.

"Good-night, Phineas. I haven't any idea but that you think strange of what I've done to-night, but whatever you think I know I can trust you to keep still. Perhaps there's things we feel, but I don't know how you feel, but—"

She had opened the door now, and had stepped just within the shop; and I won't be busy Saturday night, and if you want to come I'll be at home." And before he had time to answer, the door had been shut and he was alone.

It had been a hot week for so early in the season. Phineas felt tired and spent as he drove home from town on Saturday afternoon. As he neared his house its loneliness struck him as something new. The heat of the day, and his struggles with the question which he had been evading, and which kept him calling for an answer, depressed him. He longed for quiet and peace; whether the old quiet life or the possible peace of a new one, he did not know. But his house was not so lonely, after all; for, as he came nearer, he saw the old doctor's sulky beside the gate. He had always liked the cheerful, sensible old man, and he hailed him now with even a note of relief in his voice.

"Hello, Phineas; thought you'd be along if I waited a minute."

Phineas got out and stood by the side of the doctor's sulky.

"It's about the bill, I s'pose," he said.

"I meant to see about it before, but—"

## CONTROLLED BY AN IDEA

Body and Mind May Be Dominated by Preconceived Notions.

"Nothing is stranger than the way in which the body and mind may become dominated by what is called a 'fixed idea,'" said a physician of this city who makes a specialty of diseases of the nerves. "What reminded me of the subject," he went on, "was a very curious case that came to my attention not a great while ago. A 12-year-old boy, the son of a very respectable family in moderate circumstances, who lives on the lower side of Canal street, had a slight attack of influenza and rheumatism last winter and upon recovery some months later found himself unable to straighten his right arm. It was bent in such a position that the back of the hand almost touched the shoulder, and, while there was no particular soreness about it, the boy simply insisted that he could not move the elbow and hold the limb straight. I saw no reason why there should be any such result from his slight rheumatic attack and was persuaded from the outset that the boy, while no doubt perfectly honest, was simply a victim of self-deception."

"During his illness he had probably found the arm more comfortable when bent and gradually his mind had become dominated by the fixed idea that it was impossible for him to extend it. In such cases it is useless to argue with the patient, but frequently some lucky accident will dissipate the illusion. One day last fall I dropped in to see the boy and while I was in the house an old negro auntie remarked in his hearing that 'somebody done put a charm on dat arm' and that she knew how to 'take it off.' 'How would you do it?' I asked. 'I'd use a red charm stone I have at home,' she said. 'I rub it on his shoulder an' dat arm straighten out shore.' I could see the boy was deeply impressed and I gave the old woman a quarter and told her to be around with the charm stone next afternoon. I was on hand myself before the appointed hour and told the child, with a great show of telling him in confidence, that I rather expected the charm was going to cure him. The magic stone turned out to be a piece of common red flint, but after the old auntie had mumbled several incantations, rubbed his shoulder vigorously and worked him into a state of high excitement I took his wrist and suddenly pulled the limb straight."

"Why, she's done it, sure enough!" I shouted, working the elbow vigorously before he had time to object; try it yourself! Your arm is as good as ever!" He moved it, cautiously at first and then more freely, and finally declared he was all right. The last time I saw him he was perfectly sound. It was merely a case of mind cure—that was all. As the trouble was imaginary in the first place, a little imagination was needed to remove it. The old darky, by the way, got all the credit, and she built up a considerable clientele on the strength of the episode."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

ITS USE BECOMING MORE COMMON AMONG CELESTIALS.

They Find It More Economical than Their Own Food Products—They Consume It Mostly in the Shape of Baked or Steamed Dishes.

The Chinese are learning to use flour. With them it is largely an acquired habit, and it is very likely that as China grows more prosperous the consumption will greatly increase. That will give American flour merchants a very big field for business.

In the two years ending with 1899 the imports of flour into China more than tripled. In 1897 the value of flour taken there was \$309,192.88. In 1899 it had grown to \$2,054,891.94.

Henry B. Miller, United States consul at Chum-King, reports to the government that wherever flour has been introduced into China there has been such rapid increase in the demand and in the consumption as to give an assurance of a continued and growing market for it in all sections where the cost of transportation does not bar its use. With the development of China will come improved conditions with the Chinese and a demand for better and more diversified food.

In all Chinese cities a very large percentage of the population lives in a sort of hand-to-mouth fashion. The great necessity for economy in fuel seems to be the primary cause of this mode of living. Throughout central and southern China very little baked bread is used. The flour is consumed in the form of dough or dumplings, filled with chopped meat or meat and vegetables and fruit.

The flour is made into dough and then beaten into a leathery substance. It is then pressed into thin sheets and cut into strings, boiled and then eaten, or else made into dumplings and steamed. In nearly every case it is eaten while hot. Foreign flour is also used quite extensively in cakes and Chinese confections. The Chinese appetite seems to demand either baked or steamed food, rather than boiled or steamed. Foreign flour does not come into actual competition with rice, and, of course, cannot altogether take its place with the great rice-eating population of China, but it furnishes a cheap variety of food. The merchants, mechanics and coolies in all the treaty ports of China get better incomes than those of the interior, and are able to add a little variety to their food, and are becoming consumers of foreign flour.

What is grown to some extent in nearly every section of China, but more extensively throughout the northern and western than in the central and southern portions. In the north and west it is used very generally for food. The grain is ground in small stone mills, operated by hand or animal power.

The Chinese use vegetable growths for fuel, among them tall millet. If they take to using coal a great area of country now given up to tall millet will no doubt be used for wheat growing. It is not a fact that the limit of agricultural and horticultural resources of China have been reached. On account of the primitive methods of milling modern flour mills have been constructed there by Caucasians. One at Tien-Tsin was destroyed by the "boxers." There are two at Shanghai.

The consumption of flour in China, says Consul Miller, indicates a good future market for American flour and flouring mill machinery, as well as employment for skilled Americans in the construction and operation of flour mills. The conservative character of the people when it comes to a change in methods is such that it seems perfectly safe to predict that the demand for flour for many years to come will be far ahead of the local production. The ability of the United States to place flour cheaply in all the great coast cities and assure an extensive and permanent trade between our country and the Orient.

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## LET US ALL LAUGH.

Information.

The citizen looked helplessly at the piles of drifted snow that lay on the sidewalk in front of his house.

"What would you take to clean this walk?" he said, addressing the first man who came along.

"A shovel, sir," responded Mr. Rufon Wratts, Walking Delegate of Jewellers' Union, No. 247, passing on.—Chicago Tribune.

Cross Tobias.

"But, my dear Tobias, remember that you may die at any time."

"Die, did you say? Die? That's the last thing I'll do."—Sondags Nisse.

The Destroyer.

"I'm afraid poor old Hiltard is done for. His locomotor ataxia is too good for him at last."

"What make of automobile is that?"—Smart Set.

Rural Art Criticism.

Impressionist Artist—I paint things as I see them.

Farmer Wayback (kindly)—Do ye, now! Don't ye think that nebber some liver medicine would do ye good?—Sommerville Journal.

An Easy Matter.

"The reason some men don't get along happily," said Mr. Meekton, "is that they don't know how to manage a wife."

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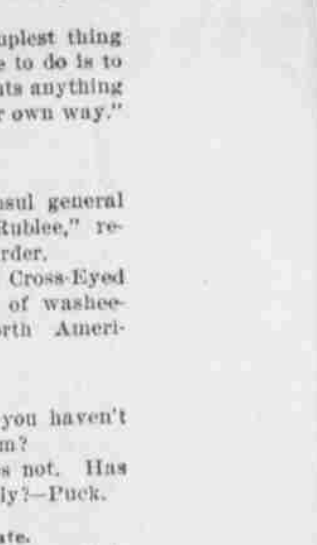
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STAGE MANAGER—Now, Mr. Stormer, listen to me a moment.

Barnes Stormer (the villain)—Well, sir?

Stage Manager—When the heroine doesn't mean to act that way.

A New Commandment.

Teacher—How many commandments are there?

Small Boy—Leven.

Teacher—Eleven? What is the eleventh?

Small Boy—Keep off the grass.

His Last Words.

Spokesman—Madam, we are a committee from the volunteer fire department.

Widow—Oh, it's so kind and good of you.

Spokesman—I know Henry was thinking of you when he passed away, for just before the end came he rose up in bed, with a far-off look in his eyes, and shouted: "Turn in a second alarm! We can't handle this fire without help!"—Baltimore American.

Covers Too Much Ground.

Binks—Jinks is continually telling me what a lucky fellow you are.

Kinks—Yes, but I don't like the way he expresses it. Every time he meets me he says: "Kinks, you're a lucky man. You don't seem to have anything on your mind at all."—Indianapolis Sun.

The First Baby.

A woman's first baby is a heavenly visitant to her, a toy to her husband, a nuisance to the neighbors, and a living to the doctor.—New York Press.

Out of the Mouths of Babies.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed little Edith on her return from the show. "I saw an elephant, and he walks backward and eats with his tail!"

Passing Fare.

Street car conductors are never beautiful. In fact, they are not even passing fare.—Philadelphia Record.

He Would Know.

She—Papa has an absurd notion that you have money.

He—I suppose we would better let him think so.

She—Yes, but we've got to get married some time.

Cause and Effect.

Teacher—Little boys will be punished if they tell lies.

Small Boy—No! if they don't get ketchup.

A Domestic Orphan.

"Are you glad your pa is in politics, Jimmy?"

"Oh, I don't mind pa goin' in—but ma—she's gone in, too."

Statin Quo.

Mrs. Pettit—Whenever I express a desire for anything my husband never objects.

Mrs. Ig Nord—Same with me. I can express the desire as often as I please. It never disturbs him.—Philadelphia Press.

Organ Chieftly Concerned.

"You won't touch that cake!" his wife tearfully exclaimed. "And I made it on purpose to please you. You have no heart!"

"Perhaps not, Maria," replied the dyspeptic husband, with a weary sigh. "But I am painfully conscious of my liver."—Chicago Tribune.

Income and Outgo.

"Gramma, pa costs me a'n' awful lot."

"How, sonny?"

"Why, gramma, when I'm good all day he gives me a penny, an' when I'm bad I have to give him a penny."

Art Limitations.

"What kind of pictures would you hang in a dining room?"

"Well, I'd draw the line on paintings of beef on the hoof and on still life studies in canned tuck."

The Attraction.

Nell—Why did Miss Barganasses reject Mr. B Jones when he was rich and then marry him after he had lost all his money?

Belle—I suppose because he was so terribly reduced.—Philadelphia Record.

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