

WILLIE'S INHERITANCE.

Oh, how the years go flitting by! It seems but yesterday That she rode past upon her wheel...

THE MAGIC STONE

BY KATE MASTERSON

WHEN Marjorie was starting from Baltimore for her first summer at Narragansett her Aunt Jane presented her with the fairy stone.

"Nowadays we don't believe in such things, my dear," said Aunt Jane; "but there is a cave in Virginia where these stones used to be found over 100 years ago."

Marjorie had only been graduated the year before, and had traveled in Europe with her mother.

Marjorie had read about summer girls, and she knew that every girl was supposed to get engaged to men that she never intended to marry during a season at the seashore.

Two days after she reached the pier she met Tom Hartley. He was a poetic-looking chap with a rich father.

Hartley proposed to Marjorie the third week. It happened like this. He had taken her out tandem driving.

It was funny how serious things happened. He helped her from the high seat of the trap, and the heel of her white shoe caught in something and she stumbled.

Then they walked down the lane and he told her that he loved her and asked her to be his wife.

so he took quite a while to gather them.

Marjorie did not think she was really in love. But she had the proud consciousness of a girl with her first scalp at her belt.

While the maid did her hair she wondered if it would pique Tom. She had heard of men who took such things seriously.

It was then half after ten, for the girl remembered having looked at the little rhinestone clock on the mantel as she went out.

Marjorie had picked up the fairy stone to drop it in the jewel case on the dressing-table, and smiled at her face in the mirror as she thought of her Aunt Jane's words.

Suddenly she felt a queer sensation of suffocation, as though she were going to faint. The room grew dim around her, and the next thing she knew she had a feeling as though she were on her hands and knees on the floor, and the furniture looked huge.

Feeling oddly accustomed to her new shape, she made her way carefully along the coping until she reached the piazza roof.

"That little red-haired girl isn't so bad," he said; "a smashing dancer!" Marjorie pricked up her ears.

"She doesn't seem to bore you," said Bradford.

"Oh, I don't know! I hate broilers. Girls that have never been kissed are stupid."

Marjorie's fur stood on end. Was this the adoring, delightful Tom of the morning. She leaped lightly into the room.

"Look at that cat!" said Bradford. Tom laughed.

"You'll like Miss Cresswell when you know her better, Brad. She's full of fun. One of the boys."

"I rather fancy the other girl myself," said Bradford. "I'm going to walk her on the piazza to-night and find out what she's made of."

"The devil you are!" said Tom. His collar button had slipped from its moorings.

"I'll trot along, old man," said he; "see you later."

Marjorie could hear Tom humming and whistling nervously as he continued his dressing. Then the door opened and slammed shut, and she heard him step down the hall.

And now to get back to her room. She felt that the charm would pass away if she could but touch the magic amulet once more, and she would find herself back in her tulle gown, ready to go down stairs for the dance.

But the window was closed, and when she raised both her paws to open it she realized the limitations that went with her new form.

The music came up gayly from the hall and she knew that they were dancing. And Miss Cresswell was queening in her absence, no doubt.

The door opened and Marjorie made a rush for it, but it was closed too quickly. She jumped under a chair. Bradford and Tom had come in. They seemed excited.

"I am going to take some men with torches down the cliff. She may have strolled down there and fainted or fallen over the rocks."

"I tell you that Miss Cresswell saw her sneaking up the piazza when everyone went to dress. She has skipped off on a lark some where, or else eloped."

"Tom threw himself heavily into a chair. 'I don't believe it!' he said; 'she isn't that kind of a girl.'"

"It seems to me, if she's such a bore and all, that you're taking it pretty hard."

"Oh, cut it out! Here, get a coat and come along! Her mother is almost frantic. She's not the girl to do anything like this for a joke. Hurry, that's a good fellow."

Bradford went out, and Tom sat looking out across the water with troubled eyes. Marjorie crept to his side, purring to attract attention.

"Tom rubbed his eyes and stared with a white face around the room. 'Don't you know me, Tom?' she purred. 'It's I—Marjorie!'"

"Great Scott!" said Tom, "I must be dreaming."

"No, it's all real," she sobbed. "Aunt Jane's fairy stone has turned me into a cat, and I've heard all you said!"

"It can't be possible!" said Tom, staring with big eyes.

"But it is, and the next thing is to get back to my old shape. You must help me. Open the window, and I'll jump out and get back to my room."

It seemed an odd thing to do, but Tom lifted the cat in his arms and looked searchingly into its eyes.

Marjorie felt her cheeks glow. She lifted her paw to her face and saw her hand. She knew it by the rings. Then she looked down in alarm. She saw her tulle frock. She was herself again.

It was just then Bradford opened the door, whistled, and closed it again. Tom opened it and called down the hall after him. He came in and they told him the story. He listened gravely. He was the only one who knew the truth of the matter until now, for he advised them to keep quiet about it.

The wedding occurred that summer at Narragansett and was quite a society event. Bradford was best man. He wears the fairy stone for a watch charm now, but he says it seems to be out of order.—N. Y. Times.

The Prince's Reason.

A few years hence the little prince who figures in the following story from the London Express will hear of the Nile and Trafalgar and the great victories won by the British merchant seamen, and will know that to be a sailor requires skill and heroism; but just now his view of this noble profession—and of his royal father as well—is refreshingly natural and boyish.

Not long ago the Prince of Wales went unexpectedly into the royal nursery, and found his little son busily engaged in drawing on a bit of scrap paper the picture of a ship.

"Well, laddie," said the prince, quite proud of his son's creditable performance. "I'm very pleased to see that you are fond of ships and sailors. I am a sailor, you know."

"Yes, daddy," cried Prince Edward, excitedly, "and I want to be a sailor too, when I'm grown up!"

"Ah," said the Prince of Wales, smiling, "and you want to be a sailor, do you? Because daddy's a sailor, I suppose?"

"Not because of that, I think," said the young prince, thoughtfully; "because I don't like doing my lessons always, and you needn't be clever to be a sailor, need you, daddy?"

Wisdom from an Old Man.

An Irishman whose face was so plain that his friends used to tell him it was an offense to the landscape, happened also to be as poor as he was homely.

One day a neighbor met him and asked: "How are you, Pat?"

"Mighty bad! Sure 'tis starvation that's starin' me in the face."

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A Trouble with Old Friends.

"It is too bad," said the visitor from home; "but people who acquire wealth are not the same to their old friends."

"Perhaps there is a reason for that," replied Mrs. Cumrox, reminiscently. "People who acquire wealth have feelings the same as any one else, and their old friends sometimes have a very superior way of saying: 'Humph! I knew them when they were as poor as Job's turkey!'"—Washington Star.

Left in the Dark.

A little girl about three years old was not playing when suddenly it became very cloudy. She ran into the house and startled her mamma by saying:

"I'm not going to stay outdoors any more."

"Why?" asked her mother.

"Because God blowed the sun out."—Little Chronicle.

Looking for Excitement.

"You can't tell me," said young Mrs. Torkins, "that poker is as good a game as progressive eucher."

"Why not?" asked her husband. "There isn't enough excitement. I've known men who have played poker for years without getting angry and not speaking to each other. Such a thing doesn't often happen in progressive eucher."—Washington Star.

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Knew from Experience.

Proser—You know Scribbly, don't you? Barder—Yes, the fellow who edits the Cozy Corner Companion, you mean? What about him?

Proser—Oh, he's going to marry one of his lady contributors, that's all! Awfully struck on her he seems, too—told me to-day she was a perfect poem.

Barder—Don't you believe it! He doesn't know good poetry when he sees it. Why, he declined things of mine that would have made the fortune of his wretched little rag.—Ally Sloper.

A Common Sentiment. I grieve to see these millionaires Who glitter on the highway Spend money on these fads of theirs. I wish they'd spend it my way.

Turned Girls' Heads. "Do you see that tall chap, Pedro? Well, he has turned many a girl's head."

"But he is neither handsome nor rich." "I know that." "Then how did he turn girls' heads?"

"With his preparation. He manufactures hair bleach."—Philadelphia Record.

Ornithology. Roderick—Your wife used to say you were a bird before the wedding. Any change now? Van Albert—Well, I guess she thought I was a jay then, but from the quality of cooking she gives me now, she must think I'm an ostrich.

—Chicago Daily News.

Intended as a Compliment. They were dining out. "But, Henry," she protested, "you know you shouldn't drink night. It keeps you awake."

"Oh, well," he replied, "I bow to the hostess, but I won't."—Chicago Post.

Marriage Would Come. Mr. Gumppe—That boy would be good for anything you wish.

Mrs. Gumppe—I suppose you are absolutely prohibited from taking any more of that stuff.

Mr. Gumppe—No. He's over the habit of hanging around the house.—N. Y. Weekly.

There's the Matter. Mrs. Clubb—I tell you that of the servant girl problem.

Mr. Housekeeper—It is well to tell what minute the man'll overhear you.—Chicago and Times.

Quite Natural. "He claims that he's a man, and nobody disputes it."

"Of course not. If he takes the blame, why doesn't he also go out hunting for it?"—Post.