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ORIGINAL STORY.

Grace Hazlehurst.

BY CHARLES SOUTH.

CHAPTER II.

The seaside retreat of Mr. Hazlehurst at Fort Johnson, was a simple white cottage, standing just where the street terminated. Beyond it were three others, less pretensions architecturally: they being carried off by the sea every few years from their narrow and insecure footing. It differed from those in having very strong foundations, having nearly followed the faded frieze south of it, in a peculiarly violent storm about three years previous to the period when this history opens. It had besides, a certain air of artistic grace extremely difficult of attainment in this barren waste of sand and hunting-ground of the east winds. Raised beds of loam, made on the sand after the manner of the prepared cotton fields of the sea islands, were covered with verbenas, moss and various gorgeous annuals and hot house shrubbery; relieved by curious Indian shells washed in by the Atlantic. The autumnal gales would send the surf dashing over this out door beauty, but it would then have served its purpose of grace for a summer and so been well worth cultivating. A few pride of India trees, and palmettos were permanent landmarks and defied the angry assaults of the sea. These filled the little square courtyard girdling the house, which from its peculiar situation had more space than its fellows; most of them being in such close vicinity that the inmates might sit in their verandas and converse familiarly with three families.

The cottage fronted Fort Sumter. On three sides, it was enclosed with green lattice work, whose interstices admitted the breezes, but excluded the southern sun. The veranda and balcony in front were free, and were supported by slender columns, set ten feet above the basement. A stable and buggy house in the rear of the yard were the only other structures. The large windows of the parlors opened to the veranda floor, and in front of the window seats were pots of geranium and heliotrope. At the base of the columns were earthen vases out of which rose creepers and jasmines which reaching upward and across from pillar to pillar, made in some places a green curtain of nature's weaving, yielding grateful exclusion from the heat and drifting sand.

In doors, the rooms were large, cool and fragrant; with India matting under foot, and with hanging baskets of flowers, hanging shelves of books, pictures of lake and mountain scenery, and the bric-a-brac that cultivated and curious minds will naturally collect in travel.

The family thus characterized by the inevitable and unmistakable testimony of their surroundings, were five in number, father, daughter and three sons. The mother had left the circle, three years previous, to sleep under the marble in the church yard. Mr. Hazlehurst was a genial large hearted man, who enjoyed life and daily thanked the Giver for the many springs of happiness open to him; but most of all for the hand of the gentle and gracious woman who had been faultless in his eyes, and who had shed such sweet influences on his own and his children's paths. The oldest son, Loyal, the pride of the family, and peculiarly gifted in all the walks of art, and of polite literature, had immediately on graduation, the December previous, gone on a tour with his friend Elliott Girardeau, and afterward without returning home, had entered a school in New York to study medicine. The second son, John, who was by himself and others unconsciously measured with his brilliant elder brother, and suffered in the comparison, had grown into a modest earnest gentleman, on whose quiet strength of purpose and character, all rested, almost without recognition of it. Grace, moulded by

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her brother Loyal to whom she was passionately attached, was an enthusiast and dreamer; but, like a marble column covered with blooming roses, carried a delicate but firm power of pure and unyielding principle under her poetic feeling. Marion, the boy brother, fair haired and blue-eyed like his father; lithe, snawy and well knit in form; had all the enterprise, fire and faith in himself of his age, and all its blunders and inconsequence. On the veranda, three hours after their meeting on the beach, the party with Mr. Hazlehurst gathered from the venison supper. Lights were proposed and voted down; and in the soft southern moonlight they were to discuss the days sport, and mammoth water melon brought by the father from the plantation.

'A fine specimen,' he said, with the air of a connoisseur, as the colored servant deposited it in front of him. 'I'll wager, Elliott, you haven't seen its superior in the Charleston market this summer. I weighed it to day, and it reached just seventy-two pounds. About as much as our Miss Polly there.'

He playfully indicated a very small old lady, the companion of his daughter, who smiled demurely in answer, but said nothing.

'Now lads and ladies,' he added, bowing to the latter, as to a dark green lives fell apart, and disclosed the crimson sugar heart, 'let us see if we duly appreciate the duty of home consumption. Tony, dispense knives and plates. Yours are the spoils when the battle's over. Be on the alert.'

They showed no want of appreciation; but not one fourth was consumed, and Tony disappeared with the remainder in triumph.

They then settled quietly for conversation and principles; the young men scattering for their enjoyment about the steps and balustrades, over whose whiteness they cast long shadows in the moonlight. Grace sat in shadow on a low seat by her father's chair, because she liked the odor of the cigar, and the caressing touch of his hand on her head. Presently, after an exquisite interval of silence and night-during which Willie Lorr had so disposed himself as to exchange glances with Miss Hazlehurst; her father said, leisurely breathing forth a curling wreath of fragrant mist.

'Now that the political news is exhausted, let us have to day's story. I didn't understand that deer was the game in view, this morning, John?'

'It was not father; we were snipe hunting. But it was still quite early, not later than nine, I think, when we had bagged a godly number on the marsh beyond Seasideville, and were riding on a few miles further, in search of summer duck; thinking too, an early teal may have appeared. At Gimball's, Major Hibbard hailed us. You know a short creek, or rather estuary, runs up there from the river channel, and he had come on his way up Stono, to see if he could find company. He was in his sail boat, with Mr. Macey, and had about twenty beagles yelping and yelling in chorus. They were going over to John's Island for venison; he wanted a Pompey's Head for the dog dinner to-morrow; and insisted on our joining them, as their force was small for sport. He met the difficulty regarding horses by saying that we should land at the plantation of Mr. Le Gare, who had given him general permission to use his marsh, tackeys whenever he pleased. So, leaving our horses in Mr. Grimball's stable, we took the saddles over and in a little while were at Le Gare's, and had caught a tackey apiece from the herd we found near the landing. Did you ever hunt deer with Major Hibbard's dog driver, Plato?'

'Better say Plato,' remarked Marion, sotto voce; 'he is the ebony king of d-rkness.'

'He has the beagles under perfect control,' continued John; 'and has the rare power of anticipating the deer and not maneuvering him; yet he is not bright in anything else. As for Major Hibbard, I believe he knows every possible stand and chapparal on every island around Stono Inlet. He selected a drive and posted us all, and the driver started a deer. He was old and wise, ran well, and seemed to have an intuitive perception of our stands, or else he knew Maj Hibbard of old. We didn't get a fair shot at him. Just as we hoped to tire him out, he flushed up another sleeping somewhere off the run, and getting the scent on him disappeared to finish his own nap in peace. We had no better fortune with his substitute, for after some pretty close work, Plato wound his horn, the dogs drew off, the deer had left the drive. We found another drive and started afresh; this time with some success. Willie wounded the first one started, and Maj Hibbard finished him. We stopped then for rest and lunch. After two, we took stands again, and by four had two deer. Marion and Elliott claim these, and must tell their own stories. There is something a little remarkable in each. I didn't leave my stand and so saw nothing. In conclusion, I may say I did nothing to distinguish myself, either good or bad.'

'Well Elliott,' said Mr. Hazlehurst, 'will you occupy the box thus vacated?'

'Certainly sir, if called thither by the court,' he answered, 'but Marion's adventure was first in order of time and I think of interest.'

'Then Marion, tell us your story,' said his father.

This he was not loth to do; having with difficulty repressed a running commentary, a sort of verbal marginal notation on his brother's relation. He had, with a creditable regard for parliamentary rules, succeeded in limiting himself to certain parenthetic ejaculations and explanatory asides.

'You see,' he began, 'I hadn't had quite enough of snipe hunting; I had laid a wager with Peronneau Rivers to bag a certain number, and I knew we should find flocks of them on the marsh. So I filled one barrel with small shot, of course not intending to mix it in with deer-hunting, but thinking I might flush some when nothing else was up. Maj Hibbard posted me at a fine stand, but I hadn't heard a word from the dogs or deer, and was getting tired of listening for Plato's horn. I felt sure the deer had left the drive or plunged into a cassena thicket or done something of that sort; when I saw a teal duck, the first I've heard of, in a little pool on the side of the run not far off. I crept along quietly and was just in good position, had my hand on the trigger, when I heard the dogs away off and saw the deer coming for me as straight as an arrow. There was nothing but a sapling between us, but I drew up as small as possible, and hid my breath. He came on with long sweeping bounds to within ten feet of me. Then I rose and cocked my gun. The click of the hammer was the first warning he had had, and he stopped perfectly still for five seconds, looking with his head up and his nostrils wide. Oh! he was so grand and so close it made the blood tingle to my finger ends. I touched the trigger and it snapped. Wasn't it provoking? He turned off short shy to the left, and had taken fully ten leaps when I thought what to do and gave him the small shot. I was sorry too the next minute, for I felt sure they would have no other effect than to worry him. The teal was gone. I went back to my stand and recamped, falling into the dogs, who were tearing along in full cry, and who swept on after him. Suddenly at the distance of one hundred yards they stopped and began to yelp like mad. That puzzled me, for no gun had fired; and I went to see what was the matter. They had him at bay. The small shot had broken his back and he was on the ground fighting manfully with his fore feet. He had already gashed three with his sharp hoofs. I thought I could manage him and drawing my hunting knife sprang on his back. I drew his head up and lifted the knife when—I declare, gentlemen, I was never

so surprised in my life! he threw me off twenty feet as easily as I throw this flower, and started again. I was so stunned, I couldn't move, but the dogs didn't let him off. They soon had him down again, and Maj Hibbard came and killed him.'

All laughed at Marion's surprise, but his sister had shrunk and shuddered at some parts of the story, drawing down a quiet caress from her father, who alone observed the movement, and whispered,

'What! a coward little one! What would you do in a battle?'

'Now Elliott, it is your turn,' he said when the various comments had ceased.

The young gentleman threw away his cigar (the ladies had insisted on all smoking)—changed his position, slightly and said:

'I was stationed at the last stand in the edge of a cump of oaks and, like Marion, had been listening some time for dogs or horns; when the deer, a fine fellow with magnificent antlers came out from a pine barren on my right loping with a stately motion, and occasionally stopping a moment to gaze around him. The dogs were barely audible in the far distance and seemed to have confused the scent or lost the trail. The nearest point at which he would pass me was seventy five yards distant; and the chance of success, as you see, was a slight one. However it was the only one. As he was passing it with a self poised easy bound I fired. The only perceptible effect was to change his loping to a run. I followed; and the dogs, guided by the shot, came on deep mouthed and eager. They chased him to a large circular pond, into which he plunged, concealing all but his antlers, and only putting forth his nostrils for air. The beagles swam to and around him, but he fought them at advantage, throwing them off bravely with his powerful horns. He was sagacious enough to know himself safe there, and might remain all day. Seeing all efforts to force him out useless, we called off the dogs and Plato summoned to another drive. My hat was struck from my head as I dashed under the oak in pursuit, and I returned for it. I was mounting again when I saw the deer coming. I appear that some half dozen beagles had remained behind in the rushes about the water, and when he came out they started him again. I reloaded. He was running back gallantly over his former track and just as he reached the point nearest my stand, and while my piece was levelled at him a second time, he fell dead. We found one buck shot, his only wound, in his brain; undoubtedly the one he had received in that very spot.'

'A splendid shot it was,' said Mr. Hazlehurst, 'I never did anything like that; though I have been accounted a pretty good hunter, and relish a little sport even now. You and I shall eat Pompey Head venison to-morrow, at the Club House, while these other young gentlemen are packing Grek and Latin for South Carolina College. No more hunting grounds and game now, till next summer, save Helicon and Ida, eh Marion?'

'I don't know father,' replied that candidate for College honors, 'I hear there is other game, not in the catalogue, but not less tempting for that. Now Willie Lorr.'

Willie turned suddenly with an appealing look. 'Honor bright, Marion! Honor bright, Honor bright. We are not to tell on each other. Well, then, Peronneau Rivers, who entered last night on the old Steward's poultry yard at midnight; risking not only being shot, but suspension. He said a party of them made a haul of forty chickens at once, laid winter, and kept them in an attic; opening above the third story of their tenement, by a trap-door. Of course it was reported, and of course the faculty were as sharp as police for a while, but they found out nothing, and the boys of that tenement had night suppers after last bell for a week.'

Here Miss Polly, who as housekeeper was fully alive to the embarrassment of finding the poultry-coop unexpectedly empty, made a low remark, aside, the drift of which was, 'fitting to the moral of the parv. To which Marion answered indignantly, and somewhat dackly.

'It is, stealing. Gentlemen don't steal. The chickens are bought for the boys; and if they choose to cook and eat them after midnight, what's the difference? except that the old cook is saved the trouble.'

It must be confessed that, in Marion's mind, these exploits shared an appetizing side dishes in those anticipations of college life; supposed, by unsophisticated people, to be favored only by ancient dressers of Greek tragedy and Latin wit. As yet his spirit of enterprise had no greater play than the fishing up of an ancient rooster with hook and line past the open window of his boarding school mistress, who in vain tried to grasp him as he mounted slowly aloft with much 'pomp and circumstance' of waving plumes and beating feet. So he defended his party against Miss Polly's in-uations, and she offering nothing further against his defence, which won much applause; he continued: 'Peronneau told me of a boy who had captured a fine large turkey from a professor. I won't say who—'

'But not me,' said Willie.

'Not you, of course,' readily assented his friend. 'After the laugh that followed,' John said.

'Marion, let me make the general statement that I never heard of Willie's joining any such escapade. We all know his fondness for adventure; but it doesn't take that direction.'

'Thank you, John. Marion's introduction was so well peculiar, I didn't know what intences would be drawn. Go on, Marion, I shall not cry out again unless I am hit.'

'Well, sir, this boy had his wine party and forgot it. The professor made a feast, a fortnight after, and invited him and some other boys. He was introduced to the prettiest girl in the city, and was in high feather. When they went to supper, the professor called to him to carve the turkey as it was well known that he was gifted in that art. This flattered him still more, and he was cutting off the wings with quite an air, when the host called him from the other end of the table, if that turkey was as well conditioned as one he had carved the fortnight before; under peculiar circumstances.'

'Peronneau says that,' at first, the fellow blushed very red; but as everybody enjoyed his conversation without knowing the secret of it, he joined in the laugh and said boldly,

'No, sir, that was the finest turkey I ever saw.' Now I say, concluded the speaker triumphantly, 'that professor was a trump!'

'But Marion, your former logic will not apply here,' said his father. 'This turkey was private property.'

'But, father, you know when a gentleman wants anything of another, he is welcome to it. When you heard that old Mr. Mooreland had been looking for a pacer like Preston, you sent it over to him as a present; you do such things often. I know anybody may have anything I've got; that is, if I shouldn't have taken the turkey, because I don't like to receive gifts from everybody.'

'Oh lame and impotent conclusion,' said Grace, 'was this a gift?'

To cover Marion's discomfiture, Elliott Girardeau said goodnaturedly,

'These boys have as decided principles in other things as we. They engage in this from sheer love of adventure with no thought of the moral view of it. That they on the poultry yard would have possessed no interest if the premises had not been well guarded, the risk great, and skill in the capture and keeping absolutely necessary. Sometimes too, the hair bread h-scapes and ridiculous situations including detection cause much amusement.'

I remember a modern instance; said Willie Lorr, a most ludicrous scene that occurred in my tenement. I learned the history from the chief actors 'afterward,' he added innocently.

'Haskins and Jones walking in the city at dusk, met a fine young pig in an obscure lane. The temptation, to an impromptu supper was too strong to be resisted, and a well got blow quieted the creature. After some skillful maneuvering, they finally got him over the college wall, some two hundred yards distant and into their room.'

By the time the second bell rang—evading in the meanwhile the professor in charge of the tenement, and later, the tutor, whose o'stories were evidently out of repair, as he didn't detect anything in putting in his head to see if all were in—the pig was ready for the large pot that Haskins had had the address to procure. By eleven he was cooking merrily, diffusing

through the whole building a most appetizing odor; and preparations for punch were going on rapidly. When suddenly, the alarm is given. 'Bugs about, boys? and the professor is at the door! With one mighty effort Haskins gathers the pig by the hind feet into the bed, and the moment after is by his side, pale convulsed with agony, and his anxious chums gathered around are preparing him a bath in the large vessel, evidently the only one procurable for the emergency. The professor's sympathies are aroused by the affecting tableau presented on opening the door, and he proposes that a physician be called. Here is a parser! Sykes, readily witted and accommodating hastily goes for him to the nearest tree; and there awaits the departure of the professor, when he returns to the feast.

And now, to give you an example of the inconscience of human nature, Miss Grace, he added turning to her though she had not spoken, I will relate another, with your permission, that happened shortly after with a very different termination.

There was to be a grand illumination, a huge burning of tar-barrels, the city was getting stagnant and something must be done to stir the sleeping wret. A dozen boys were dispatched to Cotton Town—North Columbia,—for tar. Three barrels were rolled down the intervening mile and a half, and by midnight all things were ready in the college campus; the match applied, and the cry of fire, fire, ringing through the streets and byways of the sleeping city. Skillfully posted sentinels kept up the cry, and by the time the fierce conflagration was accomplished the firemen, engines, and police appear on the scene, to find curious professors there, but never a boy. In default of the boy, they find an overcoat on the grass. Leaving further developments for the Faculty to-morrow, the city force retire from their fruitless expedition in high wrath vowing vengeance. Next morning the suspected boys were summoned singly before the Faculty, and answered y-a or no, to the query, 'were you in the melee last night?' I being innocent this time was in John and Elliott's room, when Waters came in. He was in high glee at having thrown dust into the eyes of the inquisitors; he said,

Last night as we were getting ready to start for town Johnson came into my room and said he had mislaid his overcoat and couldn't go without one. I had two, and gave him one. He came to me, this morning to say the sleeves were too long, and in working, he had thrown it off and lost it. Now that coat was noted; Judge Longstreet had remarked on the cut and color; and so, this morning, when I was called up in turn, and tried to assume an air of virtuous indignation at the unworthy suspicion, asking why I had been accused of such behavior, he answered that an overcoat had been found in the campus which was recognized as mine. I knew Johnson had already confessed, so I said carelessly, 'Yes, sir, I lent it to Johnson last night.' 'Ah! that explains all,' said the Judge, 'we beg your pardon for the injurious thought, and are happy to clear you of it. The circumstantial evidence was very strong, though your course here-of-re has been marked by such fine courtesy and high breeding, nothing less would have fixed it on you, and he bowed me out very politely.

But John, you are all looking grave what is it? I was thinking of a definition of falsehood, that is purpose to mislead.' 'You think me guilty of falsehood?' said Waters haughtily, but coloring. As John was silent he turned and left the room. I heard him appeal to several against John, and the unanimous answer was, 'It is right. That sort of thing won't do.' In two hours he was in Judge Longstreet's room, asking for his dismission, honorable or otherwise, saying he had lied and could not again meet his fellow students in the ward's hall, or lecture room. The President tried to dissuade him, said he and all the others knew his past record of honor, and that this was the fruit of thoughtlessness rather than faulty integrity, but Waters was firm. He said he had lost it, and he could not brook the contempt of his fellows, and he left the college that night. All knew how strong was the temptation to elude, for he would have taken first honor in his class. Haskins, the hero of the stole story, was one whom I heard most heartily endorse John's position in the affair.'

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'But after all,' said Grace, 'the principle in both was the same.'

'Yes,' said Elliott Girardeau, 'but college boys don't always reason on the principle. In one case they saw only the ludicrous and adventurous phase; in the other the duplicity was presented lastly, with nothing to disguise it. The勇者 of the mass of boys would sustain this position; would laugh with Haskins and Brown on Waters. They revolt at any meanness or dishonor, seen as such, as readily as yourself. I know them well. But there is sometimes needed an Ithuriel's spear, to make an act show its true colors.'

Mr. Hazlehurst seemed to wake from deep reverie at the last words.

'And if Ithuriel should now revisit earth,' he said catching the figure, he would find work enough to do, raising crocheting and disguised evils into the light and their true proportions. The land groans for the loathsome reptiles that squat in her bosom and trouble her while she sleeps. Trust and injustice are styled protection malice, and prudence philanthropy. Where is the Ithuriel who should come, to the rescue?'

'Some say, sir,' responded Willie, 'that they already see the shining of his wings and the gleam of his spear, nearing in the distance.'

When Mr. Girardeau, a few minutes later, bade the party good night and turned homeward, he carried with him a promise from all, save Mr. Hazlehurst and Miss Polly, to spend the next evening on the water with his mother and sell, yachting.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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