

INSURED AGAINST DECAY



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self familiar with every acre. From her window Mrs. Tremaine watched him crossing the fields to the barn in the early morning, and throughout the day she could see his figure moving hither and thither over the meadows, and noted his unflagging energy. Mammy told her:

"De Niggers have to step up, Mis' Molly; dey'se terrible 'fraid of Marse John. He cuts out at 'em like a sarpint." And she laughed with delight. "Reckin dey's gwine to be some craps nex' year. He-all suttinly will tear up de berry earth an' get gole out ob it."

The three weeks between John's arrival and her going north passed quickly. She saw her son master of Riverside, and he was a charming host to his mother. In the short twenty-one days his personality had become felt everywhere. He had been but twice to the town, but every one was talking of him. Every morning he was up at 5 o'clock like a farmer, and he went to bed in the small hours, passing his mother's room softly; but she was a light sleeper and wondered how he could work as he did on the few hours' rest that he gave himself. He intended to repaint the house and reroof it. Already the colors of the paints were there to choose from. He also spoke of completely refurnishing. Everything suggested to him improvement, renovation. She was bewildered, and, in spite of herself, became interested. Since she had refused to accept the place from him for her own, she had no right to suggest to him that she would like to leave it untouched, but some of the changes were an anguish to her, for she would rather have seen Riverside fall into ruin than become a modernized, comfortable house. She was full of sentiment and as deep in her nature as was John.

He asked her no questions, he consulted her about nothing, and yet he laid his plans before her, and she listened, set and reserved, non-committal, suffering, and cold.

Mrs. Tremaine was far too clever a woman not to understand that he had a purpose in what he did and that even his apparent indifference was in reality only frankness. She was too much of a woman not to know that though he was a strong man and the master, and that, although nothing could stay his progress, she had only to speak, to move her hand, to suggest, and everything would be hers.

In the short space of time they were together each day, she found that she grew to understand him better and that she no longer found him incomprehensible. She found, too, that she was learning about other countries, and although in his narratives John only appeared in some vague personality as "a chap I knew" she began to hear of his life. She learned of the East, saw places whose very names had always charmed her, and she listened entranced as she sat with her work.

He looked at his property through the eyes of a practical man of affairs. He saw a fortune in the land, and he was determined to realize it. One day Mrs. Tremaine at luncheon entertained two strange men who talked with John about coal. She listened, realizing that the run-down property was beginning to assume brilliant possibilities.

That evening, when they found themselves once more alone, she waited with great curiosity to hear his news, but he told her nothing. He was not cruel, but was fighting a battle demanding tact as well as strength.

(To be continued)

AT THE FOOD SHOW

To cook the cheapest cuts of meat is well to learn, I own, Still, I'd prefer to know the street Where cheaper cuts are shown. —Cartoons Magazine.

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