

old home. It seemed to him that no palace could be more welcome. It was furnished comfortably, it was near the town academy, where he was one of the professors. There was a vegetable garden and fruit and chickens. He settled down to practical housekeeping, a happy and contented man.

Willis had accepted the house in the city with some grand plans in view. He grumbled because, with the exception of a few hundred dollars at bank, his aunt had left no liquid funds. By the end of a year he was established as a doctor with a fashionable clientele and had married a lady more renowned for her social elegance than either her intelligence or means.

For Hector life went on evenly, enjoyably. He was able to live and save, and books were his hobby. Winter evenings the little room he called his library was a nest of rare comfort. In summer time he sat on the screened porch, which he had furnished with a table, a swinging lamp, chairs and a hammock. Screened in, it was a favorite precinct of peace and enjoyment.

And then, abruptly, delightfully, romance came into his life. It was like a chapter in some old-fashioned story book, the circumstances under which he met Eunice Graydon.

Who but a visionary writer would ever have imagined that the daughter of the richest man in the village would come to the modest humble home as a guest, remain there two whole hours and take in the odd enjoyment plainly evidenced in her bright, winsome face!

"Halloa!"

The call, echoing and somewhat mandatory, took Hector to the front door one cold snowy night in March. He strained his vision to make out a man well muffled up, holding the reins that guided a steaming team of horses. Near to him was a graceful feminine figure, shivering with the cold.

"Won't you come here for a minute?" called out the man to Hector, and the latter hurried on overcoat and cap. "I am Mr. Graydon," continued the other in an aristocratic way. "My daughter, Miss Graydon," he introduced informally. "The sleigh tipped over, smashing a runner and wrecking it. I've got to get these horses home. Won't you give my daughter shelter with your womenfolk till I get home and send another conveyance for her?"

"Surely, Mr. Graydon," bowed Hector courteously, and he assisted the young lady through the snow-drifts and into the house.

"There are no womenfolk," he remarked, as Eunice Graydon ran to the cozy fireplace and held out her chilled hands with a little cry of delight.

"You surprise me," she flashed out, and he felt the warmth and sincerity of the compliment as her bright eyes took in the neat furnishings.

And then they chatted. There was no restraint. In her innocent girlish way she told how she had attended two of his lectures at the town hall, and Hector inquired after the health of her mother, a confirmed invalid in whom the whole village felt it had a right to be interested.

It was all too brief, that lovely visit, and when Miss Graydon left Hector he insisted on providing her with a warm wrap. From its place in the old wardrobe the shawl his aunt had so laboriously knitted was brought forth. He thrilled as he placed it about her shoulders. Then the carriage that had come for her took her away, and, returning to the lonely room, for an hour Hector stood gazing upon the chair where she had sat as though in some wonderful vision.

What was his surprise the next day, when the shawl was returned, not by a servant, but by Miss Graydon, accompanied by a friend.

"I have made a strange discovery.