



### SYNOPSIS.

Mr. Solomon Pratt began comical narration of his town, and Edward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers seeking rest. Because of latter pair's lavish expenditure of money, Pratt's first impression was connected with lunatics. Van Brunt, it was learned, was the successful suitor for the hand of Miss Agnes Page, who gave Hartley up. Adventure at Fourth of July celebration at Eastwick. Hartley rescued a boy, known as "Reddy," from under a horse's feet and the again proved to be one of Miss Page's charges, whom she had taken to the country for an outing. Out sailing later, Van Brunt, Pratt and Hopper were wrecked in a squall. Pratt landed safely and a search for the other two revealed an island upon which they were found. Van Brunt, sent it from Scudder and called it Ozone Island. In charge of a company of New York poor children, Miss Page visited Ozone Island. Van Brunt and Hartley narrowly escaped being wrecked, having aboard chickens, pigs, etc., with which they were to start a farm. Eureka Sparrow, a country girl, was engaged as a cook and Van Brunt and Hartley paid a visit to her father, who for years had been claiming compensation as an excuse for not working. Upon another island visit by Miss Page, Eureka diagnosed Hartley's case as one of love for Agnes. At a lawn fête, Van Brunt shocked the church community by raffling a quilt for the church's benefit. Hartley invented a plan to make Washington Sparrow work. In putting the plan into effect Hartley incurs wrath of Miss Page, for whom the "sick man" sent. Agnes then appealed to Van Brunt.

### CHAPTER XV. The White Plague.

The fat was all in the fire. Hartley's great scheme that he thought was going to help Eureka, and that I called would be one more big boost for him in the Page girl's eyes, had gone to pot to see the kettle bibe. Instead of getting rid of Papa Sparrow, it had fetched that old hypocrite right over to eat and sleep and groan under our very noses. And, instead of helping Martin's love business, it had knocked the keel right out of it and left him stranded with a bigger reputation than ever for cold-blooded, mercenary money-grabbing. Sweet mess, wasn't it?

"I snum, I did hate to tell Eureka! And yet of course she was bound to find it out for herself. When she went home that night, thinks I: 'I'll catch it to-morrow morning.' And, sure enough, next morning she was laying for me.

She came out to the garden, where I was trying to fool myself into hoping that six inches of green string, with a leaf or two hung along it, might bear a cucumber some day, and down she sets in the heap of dry seaweed by the pig pen.

"Now, then," says she, sharp, "I want to know all about it."

"Oh!" says I, looking innocent at the cucumber string; "I ain't give up hope, by no manner of means. If the loam don't blow off, and I'm able to lug water enough, we'll have as much as one jar of two-inch pickles off this plantation by the time the Heavensies are ready to quit."

"Humph!" she sniffs. "You ought to pickle that understanding of yours. It's too fresh and green to keep long, out in this sun. Now you look me in the eye and tell me all about it."

"About what?" I asks, not looking at her, however.

"About the doings at our house yesterday. Why is pa coming over here to live? And what makes Mr. Hartley so blue and cross? And how come that Agnes Page to be mixed up in our affairs? Out with it. It's my family business, and I want to know."

So I had to tell her. She was pretty mad, and mighty sarcastic.

"I thought so," she snaps. "Didn't you know no better than that? Didn't you know that a girl who's as far gone with charity as Miss Page is would be sure to go and see pa and want to do for him? I've found out that she's been giving him money for medicine and things for over a week. Why, a sentimental city woman is pa's best bolt; he can't be in how knots round his finger. I s'pose you thought you could fetch Hartley and his girl together all by yourself. Well, you've done a good job. Now I've got to begin it all over again."

"It ain't no use now," I says. "She's down on him for good."

"Rubbish! Don't talk so foolish. It'll be my turn next, and my plans won't go backside frontwards, like a crab. And I've got to fix pa, too. I've been working out a notion about him for two or three days. I guess it's time to be starting it a-going."

She wouldn't tell me what the notion was. 'Twas her turn to have secrets. She seemed pleased to have Editha and the children go over to the Fresh Air school, because there they could be studying their lessons with somebody to look after 'em. She liked the idea of Lyceurgus hiring out to Kate Scudder, too, though she did say that she guessed he wouldn't wear out his pants' pockets carting his wages around.

Next day she stayed at home and shut up the house, and that night she and Washy come to the island to stay all the time. They had rooms in the back part of the house, three flights up, and Scudder sold the Twins bedding and truck enough to more than make up for losing the rent of the Sparrow house. Van put the wax wreath and Marcellus' picture and the rest of Nate's "presents" up in the

invalid's room. He said he thought they was kind of appropriate. Washy didn't mind. He said they was lovely and made him think of his "future state." "Cording to my notion the cook stove would have been better for that."

Martin and his chum was pretty cool to each other for a while, but they soon got over it. Hartley was different, though, from what he'd been afore. He was more reckless and his "don't care" manner was back again; only, now that his health was so good, it showed in other ways.

The two of 'em took to raising the very Old Boy. They must be up to something all the time. The island wasn't big enough to hold 'em and they was crowded over into the village, so to speak. They got mixed up with some of the men boarders at the hotel and 'twas "Whoop!" and "Hooray!" all the time.

They and the boarders got horses out of the livery stable and had races right through the main street; going it lickety-out and scandalizing the neighbors and scaring old women into convulsion fits. Deacon Patterson had a new horse and the deacon happened to be setting in his buggy in front of the Boston dry goods and variety store when the racers went by. The racket scared the critter and he bolted, and there was the deacon going down the

was getting heavier and there was half burned telegram envelopes in the stove ashes more'n once. But nobody ever mentioned getting a telegram.

There was so much reading matter 'round the place now that Eureka was in her glory. She read when she got breakfast, with a book propped up on the kitchen table. She read when she dusted, holding the dust cloth in one hand and a magazine in t'other. She read when she ate. She went upstairs at night reading; and I wouldn't wonder if she read in her sleep.

Washy had been pretty decent, for him, for the first week after he landed in his new quarters. But his decency didn't last long. He begun to fuss and find fault and groan and growl. Miss Page sent him nice things to eat—and he always ate 'em every speck himself—and medicine, which 'he took about a spoonful of and then said 'twasn't helping him none and give it up. He yelled for Eureka every few minutes and she'd have to drop her work and run and wait on him. He was a pesky outrage and everybody hated him, including Van, who said that he was a common nuisance and if 'twasn't for his promise to Agnes he'd abate him with a shot-gun.

One day Eureka comes out on the porch where the Heavensies was setting, and says she:

"Mr. Van Brunt, would you and Mr. Hartley be willing for me to cure pa?"

"Cure him?" asks Van, surprised. "Cure him? Yes, indeed. Or kill him, either," he adds, under his breath.

Hartley didn't say nothing. He never spoke to old man Sparrow now nor of him, far's that went.

"All right," Eureka says. "Thank you."

"What's the cook got up her sleeve concerning the afflicted parent?" asks Van of me.

"I don't know," says I. And I didn't. That afternoon Eureka got me to help her lug the haircloth lounge from the front parlor out to the spare shed, the one we didn't use. 'Twas a little

to be too slow. Cure! The doctors give me up long spell ago."

"Doctors? Nobody but Penrose, and you've said more'n a thousand times that he wa'n't no doctor. I've been reading up lately and I know how real doctors cure folks."

"It ain't no use—" begins her dad. She cut him short.

"Your case is kind of mixed-up, pa," says she, "I'm free to say, owing to your consumption being complicated with nervous dyspepsy. But I've made up my mind to start in on your lungs and kind of work 'round to your stomach. You listen to this:"

She come in the dining room and took a magazine out of the chest of drawers. Then she opened to a place where the leaf was turned down, and went back to the kitchen.

"Consumption, pa," she says, "ain't cured by medicine no more. Not by the real doctors, it ain't. You say yourself that all Miss Page's medicine ain't done you no good. Fresh air night and day is what's needed, and you don't get it here by the stove or shut up in your room. You ought to live out door. Yes, and sleep there, too."

"Sleep out door? What kind of talk is that? Be you crazy or—"

"Don't seech so, pa," says Eureka, cold as an ice chest. "Folks over on the main will think this place is on fire. Listen to this. Here's a piece about consumption in this magazine. They call it the 'White Plague.' I'll read some of it."

The Heavensies was in a broad grin by this time. Washy kept yelling that he didn't want to hear no such foolishness, but his daughter spelt out different parts of the magazine piece. It told about how dangerous shut-up rooms and "confined atmospheres" was, and about what it called "open-air sanitariums" and outdoor bedrooms.

"See, pa," says she; "look at this picture. Here's a tent where two consumptive folks lived and slept for over a year. 'Twas 30 below zero there sometimes, but it cured 'em. And see this one. 'Twas 45 below where that shanty was, but—"

The invalid jumped out of his chair and come bolting into the dining room. "Take it away!" he yells, frantic. "If you expect me to believe such lies as them you're—"

"They ain't lies," says Eureka, following him up, and speaking calm and easy. "They're true; ain't they, Mr. Van Brunt?"

Van smothered his grins and nodded.

"True as gospel," he says. "Yes, course they be. And pa, I'm going to cure you or die a-trying. The old toothsome out back of the barn is just the place for you. It's full of holes and cracks, so there'll be plenty of fresh air. And I took the sofa out there this very day. You can sleep there nights and set in the sun day times. You mustn't come in the house at all. I mean to keep you outdoor all winter, and then—"

The Heavensies just howled and so did I. Washy Sparrow howled, too, but not from laughing.

"All winter!" he screams. "The gal's gone loony! She wants to kill me and get me out of the way. I shan't stir one step. You hear me? Not one step!"

"This piece says that many patients act that way first along. In such cases it is often necessary to use force," Mr. Pratt, will you take pa out to the tool shed? I'll carry the lamp."

Would I? I was aching for the chance to get my hands on the little rat. I stood up and squared my shoulders.

"Mr. Van Brunt," yells Washy, dodging into the corner, "be you going to set by and see me murdered? Didn't you swear your Bible oath to treat me kind?"

"There couldn't be nothing kinder than curing you, pa," says Eureka. "It's all right, ain't it, Mr. Van Brunt?"

Van didn't answer for a second. Then he says, like he'd decided: "Yes, it's dead right. Go ahead and cure him, for heaven's sake, if you can! I'll back you up—and take my chances."

"My nerves—" begins Washy. "Nerves," says Eureka, "come from the stomach. I'll tend to them later. We'll cure your lungs first. Mr. Pratt, fetch him along."

I got my fingers on the back of that consumptive's neck. He fought and hung back. Then I grabbed him by the waist-band with t'other hand. He moved then, "walking Spanish," like the boy in the schoolyard.

Eureka opened the door. "Nobody can say," she says, emphatic, "that I let my pa die of consumption without trying to cure him. Come along, Mr. Pratt."

"Remember, Mr. Sparrow," says Van, busting with laugh, "it's all for your good."

We went out and across the yard and round back of the barn. The Twins come to the door to see us off. I could hear 'em laughing even after we was out of sight. Eureka shaded the lamp with her apron. When we got to the shed there was a brand-new padlock on the door of it.

"I put it on this afternoon," says she. "I'm pretty handy at fixing things up."

We went into the shed and she put the lamp on the floor in the corner.

"I guess maybe Mr. Pratt'll stay till you get undressed, pa," she says. "You tell him the rest, Mr. Pratt. Good-night."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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### Argument That Won.

Susie had been promised a pair of new slippers for Sunday. Anxious to have them at once she had tried in every way to persuade her mother to buy them for her and let her wear them to a children's party that was to be given on Wednesday, but without success. Finally when both she and her mother had become tired of the teasing the little girl said: "Well, mamma, you needn't get them now; but maybe I'll be dead by Sunday and if I am you'll be sorry for disappointing me." Susie wore the slippers Wednesday.

Up to Him.

"Do you think you can manage with my salary of \$12 a week, darling?" he asked, after she had said yes. "I'll try, Jack," replied she. "But what will you do?"—Universalist Leader.

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