FAIR OPHELIA.

CHAPTER I.

"Come, Basil; are you ready?" Hazel Glandore spoke impatiently, regarding her brother's slow movements with growing disfavor.

Bazil said nothing, and tying the big bouquet he had been gathering with a dainty satin bow, followed his sister down the avenue.

"Where are Rita and Lilly?" he asked, as they entered the broad shady road. " thought they were coming?"

"Rita went on before, having promised to call for Lilly on her way. I do hope we sha'n't be late!"

"No fear of that. How impatient you are, Hazel!" Basil exclaimed merrily.

The girl smiled, then glanced down at the pale blue muslin robe she had put on so carefully an hour ago.

"As we promised Peggy faithfully we would be there, I do not see why you should make me break my word. Won't she be pleased, though, when she sees you ?"

"She ough, to be; anyhow I wouldn't have missed the wedding for all the world. I never shall forget how bravely the dear girl nursed me through that terrible fever when no one else dared come near me. I owe her a debt of gratitude."

Hazel gently squeezed her brother's arm, but there were tears in the tender eyes she fixed upon him.

How well she remembered those dreadful days, and the grief it had been to them all to be forbidden Basil's room.

They had not gone far before they were met by two young girls, one bearing an unmistakable likeness to Hazel; the other a tall stately maiden, with an almost colorless beautiful face, and masses of fair flaxen hair.

Her clear blue eyes brightened wonderfully when they fell upon Hazel's companion, and she held out both hands in eager welcome.

"I am so glad to see you home once more?" she exclaimed in a low musical voice. "How well you look; I scarcely knew you."

"Please don't say that, or I shall regret having left Dalyville. Are you also bound for Peggy's wedding?"

"Yes; it is the least we can do after all she has done for us."

· Lilly's voice dropped as she said those last words, and Basil almost thought he detected a slight tremor in the low tones.

With an expression of suppressed eagerness on his handsome sun-browned face, he bent towards her, trying to look into her downcast eyes.

"Then you were not quite indifferent? You did want me to get well?" he muttered earnestly.

She did not lift her eyes, but a delicate rose-flush suddenly tinged the clear pallor of her skin.

There was a sweet smile on her lips when she answered him:

"I cared so much, that had Peggy failed in the task she so nobly undertook, I

should have died." Basil listened rapturously to those fervent words; he had always loved sweetfaced Lilly, but had feared lest her heart remained untouched by the passion in his

Now all doubts were cast aside, and he knew that the love he courted was indeed his own. Hazel and Rita walked innocently on

before, never guessing the pretty scene that was being enacted almost under their eves; their soft laughter and half-whispered sentences were the only sounds that broke the silence which followed Lilly's avowal.

The little rustic church was soon reached and already groups of lads and lassies, all dressed in holiday attire, were gatnered about the porch.

Many meaning looks and bright smiles greeted the squire's only son as he took his place, with his sisters and Lilly, near the gate.

"We are only just in time," Hazel whispered, giving Basil's arm a playful pinch. Almost before she had finished speaking

the crowd divided into two uneven lines, making way for the bride and bridegroom. Such a sweet pretty bride, looking like

a rosebud in her soft snowy robes, and wreaths of dainty white flowers. Her dark eyes shone like jewels from

beneath her veil, and as she shyly bent her head, quietly acknowledging the nods and smiles of her old companions, her fluffy brown hair fell round her face, making a fitting frame for so fair a picture.

an amused smile on his lips as he advanced however, for Hazel kept them steadily

Before she had quite realised who was so in her hand, and she felt something heavy fall round her neck.

Peggy started and released her young Hazel?" husband's arm; the color deepened in her cheeks, and gladness made her eyes darker little confusedly. He had to clasp her when she saw who it was.

"Oh, Master Basil! is it you?" she cried joyously. "When did you arrive?"

"Only this morning, Peggy, just in time to wish you every happiness in your new life. But there, I need not doubt that: Simon's a good fellow and deserves

band's face relaxed into a broad grin.

He appreciated flattery quite as much as | lot.

spoken just as eloquently as his voice.

"Thank you, Master Basil; it is like good turn in the old days. Peggy prouder still of her having done so."

"Bravely spoken! Come Simon, give

Simon grasped Basil's hand in his own hard palm, and watched jealously as the squire's young son pressed an affectionate kiss on Peggy's rosy cheek.

The next instant the bridal train had continued on its road, and Basil turned to find another addition to their own small

Standing beside Lilly, with his cold dark eyes fixed amusedly upon Basil, was a singular-looking man, whose face wore she said gently. but one expression now-that of silent

As young Glandore met his regard, however, he quickly averted his eyes, and bent them admiringly upon the tall fair haired lawn. girl beside him.

"I wonder Simon is not jealous of Master Basil!" he whispered mockingly. "

should be were I in his place !" Lilly glanced swiftly up, and a faint tinge of color dyed her cheeks.

"You forget. Peggy has known Basil nearly all her life, besides saving his life by her unselfish devotion. Simon would not be the true-hearted fellow he is if he saw harm in that kiss."

There was a sneer on Ralph Rosslyn's face, and for one moment he savagely ground his teeth.

Lilly's haughty voice had stung him bitterly, making him feel how little she really cared for him.

"All I can say is, Glandore's a lucky man, and I only wish I had two such devoted admirers."

"I do not know what you mean," Lilly answered, her eyes flashing with sudden

As Basil neared her side she placed her hand on his arm, and an expression of relief crossed her fair face; without so much as a parting glance she left Ralph standing there-alone.

He bit his moustache fiercely, and mastering his rage with an effort, hastened after Hazel and Rita.

"Where are you going now?" he asked

Hazel smiled, and lifted her soft brown

eyes to his moony face. "Did not Gipsy tell? We are to have a tennis fight this morning, and she is coming. I wonder you did not bring her with you."

"I did not see her. But who else will

be there ?" The pretty color deepened in Hazel's cheeks, and even Rita averted her face that he might not see the conscious look so

plainly visible. "Only the Belmont -. "

Ralphiglanced at bo h girls keenly, noticing with faint scorn their tell-tale ex-

"Miss Audley is very beautiful!

have rarely seen anyone so fair." "No; that is why we always call her 'Fair Ophelia.' Her name is really Ophelia, though she is better known as

Lilly." "You have known her a long time?" "Nearly ten years. Indeed, we are just like sisters."

Rosslyn ceased his questions, and let his eyes wander towards Basil and Lilly Aud-

The sight of those two together did not please him, and he would have given the world to have interrupted their tête-a-tête.

They had reached Glen Innes by now, and Lilly was being eagerly welcomed by the squire.

Two young men and a tiny dark-eyed girl were standing near the tennis-lawn. "At last! I thought you were never

coming !" Gilbert Belmont exclaimed, advancing towards Hazel. "If Miss Gipsy hadn't been here to take compassion on us we should have died of impatience."

"Then why didn't you go with us to the church? I am sure Peggy would have been delighted at your presence," Hazel said sweetly, bending over a large assortment of rackets to select her own from

"No, thank you!" Gilbert muttered, shrugging his shoulders carelessly; "I hate weddings!"

"Do you? How will you ever make up your mind to get married, if the idea of a wedding is so distasteful to you?"

Gilbert let his eyes rest tenderly on the girl's winsome face, trying hard to meet She did not perceive Basil. There was her down-bent eyes. He failed in this, fixed before her.

"I have already made up my mind to close to her, a fragrant bouquet was placed | that; and as I shall be chief actor in the scene I sha'n't feel so bored! Besides, will it not be to gain my heart's desire,

The girlablushed, and laughed just a soft hand tightly in his, so she could not move away, even had she wished to do

"When may I speak to your father, darling? You keep telling me to wait until I am growing quite distracted. I must know whether he is willing to give me his daughter!" Gilbert went ton Peggy's cheeks grew rosier, and her hus- bravely, feeling he had an opportunity to plead to her which did not often fall to his Usually Hazel shunned him, re-

his pretty bride, and Basil's eyes had maining near her sister or Lilly when he was there.

"Ask him to-day if you like-I don't you not to forget those who did you a care," Hazel whispered shyly; then, as he is would have murmured some words of proud of having saved your life, and I am thanks in her tiny ear, she broke from his clasp, and crossed the lawn.

"How is it, Mr. Rosslyn, you have not me your hand; once more I wish you a partner yet?" she said, as she passed the spot where Ralph stood alone.

> "I have been waiting for you," he ans-"Thank you. But where is Gipsy?"

"Talking to your father." Hazel hurried off, and soon found Ralph's young sister chatting gaily with

"Come, Gipsy; Mr. Belmont is waiting for you; we want to begin our game."

There was a frown on Gilbert's brow he tried in vain to banish. Hazel's arrangement did not quite suit him; but he was forced to be content and lead Gipsy to the The game was soon ended; and the

young people dispersed into several couples wandering happily about the garden. Later, meeting Squire Glandore in the hall, Rosslyn paused to speak to him.

"You look delighted. I expect Basil's return was as pleasant as unexpected?" he

"Yes; but that is not the only good thing which has happened this morning. Gilbert Belmont has just been asking me for little Hazel; and only a moment before my boy told me of his engagement to Lilly Audley !"

The squire was not looking at his companion, or he might have remarked the singularly pallid hue that overspread Ralph's face. His eyes grew black and glittering; his mouth was drawn into a cruel straight line.

Before he answered those bright words, the brief spasm had passed, and his face had regained its old indifferent expres-

"I congratulate you!" he said icily, as soon as he had regained his composure. "The match is a good one, and your son has chosen well."

A few more sentences passed between them, then Ralph Rosslyn left Glen Innes shutting the gates behind him with a loud

Now no one was near to see him, he let the fury burning in his soul rise to the

His face looked like a demon's, full of hideous rage; his eyes expressed all the hate and bitter vengeance which he felt for Basil Glandore.

"He shall not wed her. My sweet Lilly; the only flower I ever coveted in my life, to be culled by him! Come what will, in the fight that has now commenced, I shall win-he shall fail!"

Ralph hissed these words from between his clenched teeth, and struck his hands with sudden force one against the other.

The sense of his own power-an iron will united with almost callous recklessness-gave him a little relief after all. What was Basil's strength compared to

Some impulse made him enter Audley Towers as he passed, and finding Lord Audley at home, he forced a smile to his lips, and a gentle softness to his tones he was far from feeling.

Their interview lasted long; but when he left Lilly's father there was a deep triumphant look in his eyes, which showed that he was not wholly dissatisfied.

The first cloud had commenced its steady course across the fair brightness of Basil's

If he had only known, how passionately he would have taken Lilly in his arms, and borne her far away, where no envious hate could step between them.

CAHPTER II.

"Lilly !" Lord Audley spoke suddenly, abruptly breaking the silence which had lasted all through the long tedious dinner.

The girl had wondered at the curious thoughtfulness on her father's brow, but as he rarely entered into any trivial conversation with her, she had not dared ask him why he seemed so dull.

"Yes, papa," she answered presently, after one swift glance at his careworn

"Mr. Rosslyn called upon me this morning. I suppose you can guess what he wanted?"

Lilly looked surprised, but there was no consciousness of her father's meaning in her eyes; no tinge of rose-pink entered her vale cheeks; she merely gazed questioningly at Lord Audley, waiting for him to explain.

"He has asked me for your hand," her father went on calmly, little guessing the troublous disgust his words roused in the girl's breast. "I expect he has already won your heart, though you never let me know you had a lover." "Mr. Rosslyn is not that-not lever will

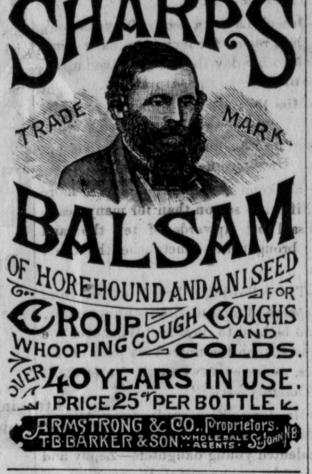
be," Lilly said quickly, feeling the indignant color rush to her brow. "I never

Lilly's fair head was baughtily raised. How could she listen to such words, with

wered, speaking the untruth with calm This Space belongs to

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Three Notes of Hand Lost

even dreamt that he aspired to that honor!"

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