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The Enameled Bracelet

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"It is a charm, madame," smiled Count Sorlio as he bent above Mrs. Raymond's pretty hand. "To wear it will avert the evil eye and a host of other ills." He smiled charmingly down at her.

"You are very kind, count," protested Mrs. Raymond, withdrawing her hand and picking up a silk covered jewel box. "but, really, I cannot accept this bracelet."

"Not as a souvenir of those delightful days in Florence?" reproached the handsome Italian. "I am sure your husband will join me in the wish that you may accept it as a token of my warm friendship for my good friends, the Raymonds!" He laid his shapely hand on Dick Raymond's broad shoulder and smiled the smile of good fellowship into the young American's honest eyes.

Dick Raymond smiled rather doubtfully, for when he had last met Count Enrico Sorlio it had been a most unpleasant occasion; he had detected the impoverished nobleman cheating at cards, and, although Dick had allowed the matter to pass until the game was concluded, he had privately informed Sorlio of what he had seen and warned him. There had been one moment when things hung in the balance. The Italian had looked at Dick with murderous hate in his black eyes, but he had not offered to avenge the insult in blood; he had merely turned on his heel and walked away, and the Raymonds had not seen or heard of him for many weeks until this sunny afternoon, when the repentant nobleman had called upon them, apologized handsomely to Dick and tendered an exquisite enameled bracelet as a peace offering to Mrs. Raymond.

"You will not permit the acceptance?" flared the count. "You perhaps have suspicions that I come by it not honestly? Alas, what a sad reputation I have gained through one small slip!" He turned away to hide his emotion.

Ethel Raymond, touched by the grief of the temperamental Italian, smiled and nodded at her husband. Dick flashed a smile back, and his big hand went out to grasp the long, yellow fingers of the nobleman.

"Very well, count. We will consider the matter closed. As for the bracelet, I am sure Mrs. Raymond will be charmed to add it to her collection of Florentine enamels. Come, my friend," he smiled as the count turned a transformed countenance toward him—"come, let us walk on the terrace and smoke a cigarette before lunch. You will, of course, stay?"

"With pleasure," beamed Sorlio. And, with a deep bow to Mrs. Raymond and a significant smile as he watched her fingering the enameled bracelet, he followed his host on to the terrace, where there was a delightful view of the lovely Arno flowing toward the distant sea and the hills that encircle the city of Florence.

To the men walking on the terrace the view was a familiar one, but never tiresome. Sorlio had been born in Tuscany, and he loved it. Dick Raymond was a landscape painter, and he loved it because of its unchanging beauty.

As they passed the drawing room windows it was Sorlio's dark eyes that flashed an inquiring glance through the open casement. Always he smiled furtively as he noticed that Ethel Raymond was holding the bracelet in her fingers and admiring its beauty.

He did not love Ethel. He hated her with deep intensity born of her husband's deadly insult to him many weeks ago. Her husband was devoted to her. Through the wife Sorlio might be revenged upon the husband. Revenge was sweet, and it was very near just now.

"Come down and look at our roses," urged Dick. And, quite confident that he could leave the enameled bracelet to do its duty, Enrico Sorlio followed his friend down the steps, and they disappeared in the garden.

In the meantime Ethel Raymond sat there dreaming over the enameled bracelet.

The door opened, and Carlo announced a visitor.

"Mme. Testino!"

A tall, graceful woman, clad in white, came forward, and Ethel laid aside the bracelet and went to meet her with outstretched hands.

"Ah, Lisetta, I am so glad to see you," she cried warmly. "Sit here. Margot shall carry away your wraps. You must remain for luncheon. Count Sorlio is here."

Lisetta Testino flushed beautifully and involuntarily glanced around the room.

"They are walking in the garden," explained Ethel demurely, for she knew that the fair Italian lady and the count were deeply in love with each other. She suspected a romance here, and she was prepared to watch it with interest, for, like most women, she thoroughly enjoyed a love affair.

"I am surprised," hesitated the beautiful widow as she gave her hat and parasol to the waiting servant. "I thought that Sorlio and your husband were—not friends—that they had a difference of opinion."

"It was so, and I was sorry," confessed Ethel, "but they have made it up, and as a peace offering the count has brought us this lovely bracelet to add to our collection of enamels. Is it not exquisite?"

"Beautiful!" breathed Lisetta, a jealous light gleaming in her dark eyes. "Ah, madame," she added playfully, "if I had glimpsed this wonderful bracelet first Sorlio would never have brought it as a peace offering to you!" She laughed with sudden merriment, all her ill humor gone in a second. "Am I not a bear to look so cross about your bracelet?"

"I am sure Count Sorlio would rather place it on your arm than on mine," laughed the American.

"If it did not seem ungrateful to Count Sorlio, I would like to have you wear it away as your own," added Ethel. "Ah, Cesare, we will come at once," as the servant announced luncheon. "The gentlemen are coming now."

When Count Sorlio saw Lisetta Testino standing in the library facing with the enameled bracelet his face went suddenly pale and his greeting to her was shortened to utter a whispered word of protest.

"Such gaudy trinkets do not become your pale dignity, my queen," he whispered hurriedly. "Put it aside, Lisetta. It is ill luck. It attracts the evil eye. It is accursed." He shuddered as he caught himself up sharply.

Ethel's clear voice was speaking as they moved toward the dining room.

"Count Sorlio says that the bracelet is a charm, that it will avert the evil eye and that it will bring me good luck!"

Dick Raymond laughed genially, but the dark eyes of Lisetta met the black glance of Sorlio. There was a puzzled questioning in her glance and a mingling of fear and annoyance in his.

Lisetta went back to the drawing room after her handkerchief and when she returned there was a look of amusement in her cool glance as it crossed that of her lover.

The meal progressed slowly. The Raymonds had a good cook in the person of Margarita, the grandmother of Cesare, and the wine of the country was excellent.

Lisetta was sparkling with gaiety, and the count's dark eyes often sought hers across the low arrangement of flowers on the table, and the Raymonds realized that very soon would the fiery Italian declare his love for the widow.

Suddenly Lisetta lifted one white hand to adjust the rose Ethel had tucked in her jet black hair. As she did so her three companions saw for the first time that she was wearing the enameled bracelet.

Lisetta tossed her head and smiled impudently at Ethel.

"See, carissima, I am wearing your bauble while I may!"

"It becomes you rarely, madame," laughed her hostess.

Sorlio's face was ghastly pale. Twice his lips parted as if to give utterance to some protest, but they closed, as if secrecy demanded silence at any price. At last he could contain himself no longer.

"Madonna!" he gasped, rising and reaching across the table at Lisetta's arm. "Take it off, cara mia. It—means—death!" He half whispered the last words and sank back in his seat as Dick Raymond jumped up and held a glass of wine to Lisetta's pale lips.

Mme. Testino had uttered a sudden cry of anguish and her head drooped slowly down until it rested on one shoulder.

"The pain, the pain!" she muttered before she lost consciousness.

Dick Raymond dashed around the table and caught the shrinking Sorlio by the shoulder. "What has happened, you coward?" he demanded. "What is there about that bracelet that causes Mme. Testino to swoon, and the very sight of her wearing it upon her arm causes you alarm? Eh? Tell me, or, by thunder, I'll shake you into eternity!"

Cesare had darted in and out of the room like lightning flashes. He had dispatched a page for a physician, and while Dick was still trying to get an explanation from Sorlio the doctor arrived and went into the salon where Lisetta was lying on a sofa, pale and lifeless.

That was an eventful night in the Villa Rosario. The doctor remained until morning and administered antidotes for the deadly poison which had been injected into Lisetta's veins through the medium of the poisoned bracelet. A tiny needle had darted into her flesh as she clasped the bracelet about her shapely wrist, but the prick had been so slight that she had scarcely noticed it.

By morning the danger was over. The poison, which had remained in the bracelet for perhaps a hundred years, so ancient was its history, had lost its potency, and the quick action of the physician, combined with Lisetta's splendid physique, resulted in complete recovery for Mme. Testino. As for Enrico Sorlio, who had intended the poisoned bracelet for Ethel Raymond, the wife of the man upon whom he wished to be revenged, Dick permitted him to disappear from Florence.

It was perhaps punishment enough for his murderous heart that he forever lost the regard of Lisetta Testino, and, as for the Raymonds, they left Florence at once and went back to America, and before they went they disposed of their interesting collection of enamels.

"I never want to see a Florentine enamel again," shuddered Ethel.

But the enameled bracelet remained in the possession of Lisetta Testino. She had it cleansed of its poisonous properties, and it remains on her dressing table in a crystal box.

"To remember, carissima," she explained to Ethel Raymond one day, "lest I forget the treachery of one I loved!" she added sadly.

Haha, an Indian Maiden

By F. A. MITCHEL

Haha was the name given by white settlers of Kentucky to an Indian girl who lived more than a hundred years ago because her real name was to them difficult to pronounce. It was something meaning laughing girl, the latter part of it being "haha." This appellation was given her on account of her musical laugh—not that she laughed a great deal, for the Indians, both men and women, are a stolid race, and a smile is seldom seen on the face of any of them. Haha laughed only when especially moved by some happy condition, and then there was something catching in her laughter. Even the chief of the tribe was known to chuckle on hearing it.

One day the tribe to which Haha belonged pitched its tepees in the neighborhood of a family of white settlers named MacDermott, who were of Scotch-Irish extraction, as most of the early emigrants to that region were, a hardy race, especially fitted to endure the hardships of a pioneer life. A son, Donald, was a fine, handsome fellow twenty years of age and as much admired by the Indians as by his fellow whites.

One spring morning Donald, who was fond of wandering, struck a stream on the other side of which was a bluff extending perpendicularly from the edge of the water from which it was reflected. The bank on which he stood was a wooded plain, where grew the wild rye, pea vine and other herbage, interspersed with various flowers. The birds were singing, the air was fragrant—indeed, nature was that morning in its virgin condition, undespelled by man.

Suddenly there rang out a peal of melody, a laugh. It had scarcely died away before its echo came back from the cliff opposite. A mocking bird on the branch of a tree over Donald's head heard it and was mightily astonished. Indeed, he looked indignant that any creature should dare to make more beautiful sounds than he. His throat swelled, and out came a very good imitation of what he had heard and, like its predecessor, came back in reduced volume from the cliff.

At that moment the Indian girl, Haha, came pushing aside the underbrush, and Donald saw her stop, parting it, and look straight at him. She was evidently pleased with the stalwart white man, and he was delighted with the attractive picture before him.

Now, Donald knew nothing of her language, and she knew but little of his. He contrived by words and signs to ask her why she was so happy, and she pointed to the cliff reflected in the water, the wild flowers peeping through the long grass, the grapes, persimmons, blackberries, cherries, mulberries and nuts that were beginning to swell on the trees. He repeated his own name several times, putting his finger on his breast. She understood and gave her own name, adding, "White man, Haha."

There could be no better place than among this profusion of nature's bounties and beauties for the birth of love. The white and the dusky mingled as day and night meet in the gloaming. Thereafter their meetings were frequent and always at the same place. Now and again through sheer happiness Haha's laughter would ring out to the envy of some mocking bird, which would try to imitate it. As the season advanced the lovers had no need to bring a luncheon with them, for it was at hand in the ripening fruits of the earth.

Haha had many suitors among the young warriors of her tribe, but from the moment she met Donald McDermott she would listen to none of them. This, as well as her frequent absences, attracted the attention of her people, and they were at a loss to divine the cause. When the hunting season came the lovers were in danger, for the Indians spread themselves in every direction to hunt the deer, bear and wild turkey with which the country abounded. Aware that if they were caught together by Haha's people one or both would suffer, they changed their trysting place to a point under the bank of the Ohio river, near which they lived. Between the bank and the stream were shallow lagoons frequented by flocks of birds of all sizes, from the snipe to the sandhill crane.

But it was now autumn, the season when the wild geese visited the lagoons, and the Indians came there to procure them for food. One day an Indian crouched upon the bank above where the lovers were together, watching for a shot at the geese. He heard Haha's laugh. Crawling forward to a point where he could see the white man and the Indian girl, he raised his rifle, fired, and Haha's laugh was turned into a shriek. Donald fell dead.

That was the last of Haha's laughter. She lived but a few months after her lover's death, ending her life by jumping from the cliff near which they had so often met. There was a belief among the tribe that occasionally her "haha" was heard as an echo from the cliff. At any rate, the spot was treated with great reverence by them and was a favorite trysting place for lovers. The legend was handed down through the Indians, and their belief is now turned to a matter of mere interest among their white successors. Maidens are accustomed to laugh before the cliff to hear the echo. It may be that what the red men heard was similar laughter from their own girls.

DWIGHT NOTES

Peter Jensen was a business caller in Streator Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Nelson and family will spend Saturday and Sunday at Marseilles, making the trip in their auto.

Mrs. Arthur Day, of Plattville, spent part of Thursday and Friday with her uncle, Mr. Jens J. Knudsen and family.

The S. of V. Auxiliary will meet Friday night at Odd Fellows Hall. A full attendance is required. Meet at 7:30 sharp.

Mr. Clarence Clover, of Bloomington, is visiting Dwight relatives. He expects to leave Sunday night for Milwaukee, where he intends to locate.

The families of F. A. Haise, T. J. Hayes, G. B. Hagar, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Martin, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hagar, Mrs. Naffziger and Mr. Oliver Naffziger expect to go to Pine Bluff Saturday morning by automobile and camp out there over Sunday.

WITH OUR CHURCHES.

Congregational Church—Rev. F. F. Farrington, pastor. Services for Sunday, July 5: Sunday School, 9:30 a. m. Morning service, 10:45 a. m. A welcome for all. The pulpit of the Congregational Church will be supplied by Rev. A. E. Richards, of Chicago, next Sunday.

Zion Evangelical Church—C. A. Koten, pastor. Morning worship at 11 a. m. Sunday School at 10 a. m. Young Peoples meeting, 7:30 p. m. Salem Evangelical Church—Morning worship at 9 a. m. Sunday School at 10 a. m. Evening worship 8 p. m. Young Peoples meeting, 7:30 p. m.

M. E. Church—Rev. Geo. H. McClung, pastor. Dr. R. B. Williams, District Superintendent, will occupy the pulpit next Sunday morning at the usual hour, 10:45. There will be no preaching services Sunday evening during July and August. 30,000 Club number last Sunday came to 29,729. Be present next Sunday when we pass the 30,000 mark.

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