

HAWTHORNE DALE,

AND

MISCELLANEOUS SKETCHES,

CHIEFLY MASONIC;

BY

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(CORINNE,)

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"THE PORTRAIT," ETC.

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To that Organization whose meaning is

Fraternity,

This volume is affectionately dedicated by the WIDOW of

A Master and a Companion.

HAWTHORNE DALE.

CHAPTER I.

LADY MAUD.

HAWTHORNE DALE, the beautiful and romantic home of the Countess Melgrave and her daughter, was one of the most charming country residences to be found in the whole of England. It had originally been a summer resort for a nobleman in the service of her majesty, and where she often passed many weeks during the hunting season, accompanied by her retinue.

The magnificence of Kenilworth and the elegance of Hawthorne Dale, were the themes of the most distinguished poets of the age. Since that time, the nobles who inherited this estate, transmitting it from father to son, had spared no pains to keep it in a perfect state of preservation. The most exquisite taste had been displayed in all of its appointments, and all that wealth could command had been lavished upon it. It was a bower of love and enchantment. The long, winding avenues and the spacious walks were shaded on either side by linden trees and horse-chestnuts, which waved in the soft evening breeze like the undulating waters of the ocean. Cool

fountains played among the orange trees, and flung their jets of spray and foam in marble basins beneath.

There were miniature groves of lime and acacia, with birds of gaudy plumage fluttering through their branches and warbling their choral chants the live-long day; bright-eyed gazelles and tiny fawns bounded through the tangled honeysuckle, or hid on the *arbor vitæ* hedges; snow white swans floated on the silvery lakes, and bathed in the crystal waters. There were flowers from every clime, filling the air with their delicious fragrance. Here the sweet English rose and the delicate geranium blended their odors with the jessamine and violet. Then the grand old park in the back ground, and the gentle winding river skirting its borders, were beautiful indeed.

The building was an ancient structure, half Gothic and half Grecian, with marble columns; but so perfect was each part that one would have been in doubt which might have the precedence. The tower was surmounted by a Grecian cross of the purest marble.

Grand as was this noble edifice, spacious as was its grounds, ancient as it was, it was pervaded by an air of profound gloom. It was the shadow of death, a presence of ill, a something we cannot describe; a something which infinitely depressed and saddened the beholder.

Yes, a darkened pall rested upon the beautiful and poetic Hawthorne Dale.

It was Christmas eve, and all day long the wind and snow had swept in fearful gusts through the linden boughs, and rocked the tall pines, whose feathery cones were covered with ice-crystals. The fierce

winds, in swaying them to and fro, had torn off these sparkling pendants, and they were scattered like dew-drops on the frozen ground. The wild birds flew screaming to their eyries among the cliffs, and the deer sought their coverts in the tangled wild wood. It was one of those violent storms that sometimes sweep over the northern part of Scotland and England, and break away in the German Ocean. But, securely sheltered in this formidable battlement of stone, the inmates heeded not the storm. No warring of the elements pained their eyes; all was joy and peace.

Beautiful looked the Lady Clare Melgrave as she entered her mother's private boudoir on this wild Christmas eve. The room was octagonal, and a perfect gem of art. The ceiling seemed a pavilion of azure, studded with glittering stars. A delicate fresco of an elegant design ran around it. The floor was covered with a rich Turkey carpet; curtains from the finest looms of Persia, purple and gold, shaded the windows, their rich lace falling in graceful festoons on the floor. The air was heavy with the perfumes of a thousand flowers, arranged in the most exquisite bouquets, and placed in golden vases around the room. A beautiful harp filled the alcove; in another a cheerful fire burned in a transparent grate, and a soft perfumed light gleamed from an alabaster lamp on the mantle. Velvet ottomans and low divans of satin wood were scattered around in elegant confusion.

At the extremity of this abode of enchantment was a canopy, or pavilion, of azure silk, supported by four beautiful cherubs, robed in silver gauze, and

clasping golden harps. The opening of the door threw a jet of wind through the delicate strings, and sent forth a low, wild but beautiful harmony. The statuettes were a present from the Moorish Dey. The ceiling of this alcove was light fleecy clouds, with an occasional star, which gleamed through the dim hazy mist; a soft couch of gold and crimson velvet, with white satin pillows, completed the picture.

Seated at an elegant side-table of mosaic and amber wood was the goddess of the temple—a perfect Cleopatra, only wanting a Mark Antony to render this tableaux complete—robed in a dark-green, velvet morning dress. She looked almost a Madonna. As she sat leaning her left elbow on the table, and her brow on her hand, angel sleeves with crimson linings, falling loosely from the shoulder, revealed a more perfect hand and arm than sculptor ever modeled or painter transferred to canvas. She was devoid of any ornaments; everything, even her wedding ring, had been removed.

Her complexion was a bright, clear brunette; her face was Grecian and classic in its fine proportions; her large black eyes were fringed with soft drooping lashes. Her hair was a shining wave of blue black; a world of it was twisted and braided in serpent-like coils around her head and fastened in drooping bows behind. Bright scarlet blossoms gleamed here and there through the braids; her whole expression was one which would have defied the skill of the immortal Raphael. It was an inspiration—a dream; but the mouth and lips were the crowning beauty of

that face so winning, so tender, so full of love and sentiment. The cherry lips were wreathed in smiles, and yet there was a thoughtful, pensive look on the beautiful face; a soft hazy mist in her jet-black eye that tamed its hidden fire.

Listlessly she toyed with a fine gold chain that hung from the girdle of her faultless morning dress, as if scarce knowing what she was doing; perchance dreaming of love, that refined and noble sentiment that bathes the soul with purity and peace, that crowns the warrior's brow with a halo of victory, and leads the poet to that far-off clime made beautiful by the glory of God himself. A radiance stole over her features, and a sweet, childish smile was on her face.

Noiselessly, Lady Clare glided up behind her mother, pulled back her head and kissed those rosy lips until the hot blood crimsoned her cheek and bosom. What was it that caused that angry tide to rise over that beautiful face? Did the proud and haughty woman dislike being caressed by her beautiful daughter? No persons could be more unlike than these two peerless women; and yet both possessed the highest order of female loveliness; one a brunette, the other a blonde.

Lady Clare was a snow-flake, a dewdrop, a creature of such transcendent loveliness as is seen but once in a lifetime. Her face, neck and arms were like sculptured marble and white as wax, through which ran delicate tracery of blue veins. Her hair fell in a shower of soft brown curls to her waist, and shone in the clear lamplight like sheens of golden spray.

Her eyes were a luminous, liquid blue, soft, melting, tender, full of love, sympathy and reverence; so clear, so deep, they seemed wells of azure, into which you could look down forever and never tire of so beautiful a picture. The delicate rose-tint of her soft cheek, changed and varied with every emotion of her pure and guiltless soul. She was dressed in an elegant evening costume of pale blue *glacé*. Her movements were light, graceful and airy; and she glided through the room like a pleasant, happy dream.

"My lady countess, *en déshabillé*, this holy Christmas eve? Why, *I* am so happy. I must dress. I thought, too, you looked for a friend to aid you to keep your Christmas vigils."

A dark cloud gathered upon the face of the countess.

"Clare, I did not wish you to come down this evening; if I had I would certainly have sent for you. I expect Lord Clifford; and have expressed the wish several times that you would not meet him at present; still you seem inclined to have your own way."

"Oh, no, my dear mother, don't say so, please. I never thought of Lord Clifford until I saw you; but this is Christmas eve, and I have looked forward to it with so much pleasure. I have thought of its coming with a holy reverence, blended with such great joy. I have dreamed of it, and I want to have every one I love, or that loves me, with me, and I am happy then. Oh, my mother! but few can know how much I love it. The brightest, sunniest dreams

of my life are connected with Christmas day; the holy vigils of the shepherds of Galilee. Before the Star of Bethlehem I bow in reverential awe and in silent adoration of its sacred and divine remembrances. Darling mother, forgive me if I have offended;" and dropping on her knees, the beautiful penitent craved pardon for her offense; her golden ringlets covering her like a veil. Just at that moment Lord Clifford was announced and ushered into the room by a smart little page who had been standing with the door half open during the whole of Lady Clare's appeal to her mother. At a glance the visitor took in the scene before him; but as he had not heard the words of the countess, could hardly judge correctly of the picture.

Lady Clare arose and glided from the room.

The countess, with one of her sweetest smiles, welcomed her guest—putting out both hands in a *naïve*, fascinating way she had when very gracious to those she esteemed highly. Gracefully he bowed until his lips touched the snow-white fingers she extended, murmuring as he clasped them, in the gentlest tones of a finished cavalier, "My darling is beautiful to-night."

A faint blush mantled her cheek. She listened for something more, nor was she disappointed.

"But tell me, my peerless one, who was that ethereal little snow-flake that drifted out of the room as I came in? I half imagined I had been wafted to Paradise, and breathed the air of angels, as I caught the music from these golden harps."

"She surely seemed not of earth, enthusiast," muttered the countess.

It had come at last, the hour she so much dreaded, when Lord Clifford should meet and see the heavenly beauty of Clare. The struggle was intense; like molten lava surged the hot blood through her heart, and yet so perfectly she controlled her thoughts that not one feature changed color, not one flush passed over her face.

"Oh! you too think she is pretty? Well, I am glad; her intended thinks her incomparable. She is passing fair and very amiable; it is my daughter, the Lady Clare Melgrave. Lord Clifford, I certainly thought you had met, or I should have introduced you. She is betrothed to an Italian count, and will be married in May."

"*Your* daughter! Surely your ladyship must be jesting; she seems quite your equal in years."

She bowed in acknowledgment of this delicate compliment, and said: "I was but fifteen when I married the late earl, and Clare is only sixteen now." Then came a look of pain and remorse at the mention of a name her own hand had consigned to oblivion.

But Lord Clifford, in his blind passion for this beautiful woman, whose unrivaled loveliness had bewildered him, mistook the expression for a cherished remembrance of the dead, which only enhanced the virtues of this modern Cleopatra. Every art possessed by this skillful *intriguante* was brought to play upon the infatuated lord, who fell a willing captive to her charms, and bowed before the shrine

of his divinity with all the fervor of a heathen devotee before his idol.

Three hours later, when he left this bower of roses, a ring glittered on the finger of Lady Maud that would have ransomed a duke. She was the betrothed wife of Lord Clifford, Earl of Ashkirk, who traced his direct lineage to the Conqueror, and who was one of the highest peers in her Majesty's realm. A gentleman by nature; a talented, high-souled being, his honesty of heart could see no deception in another, particularly in the woman he loved. His many sterling virtues, together with his fine commanding person, rendered him one of the most fascinating men of the age. He was good without knowing it, generous without feeling it, happy and obliging without being at all egotistical.

Deeply grieved at the unwelcome reception her mother had extended to her, the sensitive Clare returned to her own room, wondering if all mothers were like hers. Her kind, affectionate nurse, Vignet, looked a little surprised to see her young lady returning so soon.

Clare threw herself languidly on a lounge, and dropped her head in Vignet's lap, saying—"Oh! Vignet, I am weary to-night; I like better to stay with you, and we will keep our Christmas vigils together. Bring me a morning wrapper, please, and you shall sing to me of your own dear sunny land." Removing her ornaments, soon a soft blue morning dress had replaced the evening costume. She sat down on a low stool at the feet of her faithful friend, and buried her long ringlets in her arms. Vignet

raised her up, gathered back all the curls from her white face, and soothed her as though she had been a child, singing in a low, sweet strain a soft, plaintive dirge, one of the tender lyrics of her native land; then, ceasing, she gazed at her young mistress. A strange expression passed over her face, as if half in doubt of her duty.

"Lady Clare, would you like to hear a story to-night — one of those sad, wild tales you read of sometimes, but which is nevertheless true?"

"Oh, yes, dear, good Vignet; I will be so glad! Is it something of your own life?"

"Yes, Clare, and of *your* father!" A tear glistened in the eye of Clare at the mention of the name of her dear father, whose memory was so sacred to her.

CHAPTER II.

VIGNET'S STORY — THE SHIPWRECK.

THE anxiety of Lady Clare to hear the story brooked no delay. Vignet thus began:

"My early life was passed in that most delightful of all lands, Italy, amid sunshine, music and flowers. The cool waters of the blue Mediterranean laved the shore, and the tall peaks of the Apennines shot their snow-capped towers heavenward. Oh! it was such a dear, happy home to me; my heart was blithe and joyous as the singing birds all the day long. I never knew a care or pain. My mother's cottage was situated on the Gulf of Salerno, one of the most enchanting spots of the whole peninsula. The creeping vines and roses covered the arbors and loaded the air with their delicious perfume. We seldom ever had a storm; and yet, once in a great many years, there came one so violent that the remembrance of it was never forgotten.

"It was Christmas eve, just fifteen years ago to-night. A fearful wind arose, and increased in violence until it became a perfect tornado, lashing the waves into ten thousand furies, driving the sheets of foam and spray half over our beautiful garden, tearing the flowers from their beds and deluging even the fruit trees to their very tops. The lightning darted through the heavens like chain meteors,

and the reverberation of the thunder echoed far up the mountains, leaping from crag to crag, and sinking away in the distant horizon. Oh! I remember it so well that, long before night we barred the doors and sought our beds for safety. All night long the heavy booming of a minute-gun pealed far over the waters, above the fierce howling of the elements. It was heart-rending to listen, hour after hour, to this wild appeal for help, and to know it was all in vain. A life-boat would not have lived a moment, and there was no person who would dare venture out in the storm. How much I suffered none can ever know. The long, dark night passed away. Fainter and fainter grew the minute-gun, until at last that, too, died away. The wind lulled, the waters had receded from the shore, and the sun struggled through the dense clouds, which had broken away, before the early dawn. But the holy Christmas-day was ushered in with a funeral solemnity. Oh! but such a fearful sight! The coast near our dwelling was strewn with fragments of the wreck, that the ebbing tide had left behind, and many dead bodies were floating here and there in the surf. I went out to the shore, when a sight met my eye which drove the color from my cheek. With his arms tightly clasped around an infant lay apparently the lifeless body of a man. His dress was rich, and by its various ornaments I knew he must be a nobleman. I pushed back the beautiful dark locks that fell in tangled mats over his white face, to see if life was extinct, when lo! he opened his eyes and looked up with wonder and astonishment. His heavy, dark

whiskers were covered with foam, and his countenance was distorted with pain. He glanced toward the sea as he raised on one elbow, and uttered a cry so wild, so mournful, it rings in my ear to this day.

" 'My darling wife! Oh, my wife!' I pointed to the floating fragments of the wreck, and with the best English I could command, said: 'I fear, sir, she has perished!' Then, for the first time, he seemed to think of the helpless little being he had clung to so tenaciously. He hugged it to his breast in a paroxysm of despair, groaning as if his heart would break. Poor gentleman! I shall never forget his despair or the exclamations of woe that fell from his lips. His vehement caresses aroused the babe, and she opened her large blue eyes and cried — 'Mamma! mamma!' which only increased the agony of the father. He wept like a child. I could not, and dared not, try to comfort so great a grief as his; but I said, 'Come to me, pretty babe; I will try to find mamma, and you shall have some nice, warm milk.' She put out her little dimpled hands and nestled her golden curls on my shoulder, as though, infant that she was, she felt she had found a friend.

" 'Come, monsieur,' I added, 'you must be in need of rest. Will you accept the hospitalities of our humble cot?' He seemed bewildered and half unconscious, yet he arose and followed me like a tired child, but he did not speak.

"My mother was soon made acquainted with the disaster. She gave the stranger a cup of wine, which he drank mechanically. We prepared a couch

and he lay down, completely exhausted. We gave him some fruit and cake which my mother insisted he must take. All at once he remembered his lost wife, and he rushed from the house like a madman, crying, 'I must find her!'

"I followed him, and, sure enough, we did find her! The people from the town had by this time discovered the wreck, and were gathering together the dead bodies for interment. Among them were the remains of his poor wife. He recognized her long before we reached the beach. Oh, Lady Clare! the sight of that poor man, as he clasped the form of his girl-wife to his bosom, would melt the stoniest heart. He lifted the beautiful little creature in his powerful arms and carried her to a mound, and, seating himself, he kissed and caressed her marble face, calling her by every endearing name that love suggests, to speak to him—to open her eyes once more; and when he found she had gone forever, he sank back in a dead swoon.

"The fishermen constructed a litter, and carried them to the cottage, one scarcely more dead than the other.

"With proper restoratives he revived, but knew nothing. How sweet she looked when we folded her soft little hands over that throbbless heart, and twined rose buds through the golden curls, that clustered about her fair young face. We wrapped her in a snow-white shroud and encircled her brow with beautiful flowers; then put her away to sleep—a last long sleep—a stranger in a foreign land! no loving eye to drop a farewell tear over her sweet

face or follow her to the tomb, for her poor husband was raving in delirium!

"For four long weeks he continued wholly unconscious. Even the innocent prattle of his dear little babe failed to call him back to life or reason. Incessantly he called upon the gentle wife to come to him; then again, he was strolling with her through the wild wood of his own dear home. He would pet and caress her in fancy, calling her by the sweetest expressions of endearment. He would talk to her in low love-tones; then passionately mourn her loss. All this time we neither knew his name nor former home. At length he ceased his raving, and the physician said the crisis was near. For a week he hovered between life and death; but youth and a good constitution, together with skillful treatment and the best of care, gained the victory.

"He was restored to reason, and gradually his health returned; but he was a shadow of his former self—his eyes burned and his cheek looked so wan and woe-begone. Many weeks passed before he could walk around the room and out in the garden.

"His darling babe seemed his only joy. For hours he would sit by the sacred mound containing the remains of his lost treasure. He was munificent in his rewards to us, and could never cease thanking my mother for all she had done for him. Poor little babe! she soon forgot her mother, and clung to me as fondly as though I had been her nurse all her life. He was one of nature's noblemen. I do not believe he ever did or could do one mean or low act. He told us it was his own yacht that had been

wrecked. Some of his friends, together with all of his own family and servants, were on a pleasure excursion. They came from England, and were cruising in the Mediterranean, designing to visit Constantinople and the Holy Land before their return. Every soul had perished save this infant and himself.

"That nobleman, Lady Clare, was Lord Melgrave; your own dear father; that infant — yourself!"

Tears were streaming down her cheeks during the recital; but when she found the story was her own, her sobs were loud and deep. It was the first time she had ever heard that Lady Maud was not her own mother, and she could hardly credit the thought that she was a lone orphan.

"In pity tell me of my dear father, Vignet; the suspense is dreadful."

"Yes, yes," cried Vignet; "give me time. I am overpowered by the remembrance of this sad theme, the saddest part of which is yet to come."

"For two long years I nursed you, as though you had been my own flesh and blood. After a little your father rallied his shattered senses, and, leaving you in my care, traveled. He spent some time in Rome, then went to Constantinople; indeed, for two years he traveled over Europe, hoping to bring comfort to his great grief, from which, however, he had no desire to be wholly divorced. He had changed so much I hardly think his own mother would have recognized him. During these two years of wandering from place to place, without aim or object, save to kill time, he never thought of taking you

from me — you, who had grown so dear to me; it would have been like severing my body to have parted from you.

"After many months he would return, much delighted to be once more with his baby. He never wearied of fondling and caressing, or amusing you by a thousand little ingenious ways. But even this joy was soon to be denied him. About a mile from our cot was an old castle, built more than a century before, and owned at this time by an officer's widow, who resided there with her only child, a daughter of extreme beauty, but of a violent and imperious disposition. Her grounds were elegantly laid out; there were beautiful terraces and walks; statues of the costliest marble were scattered through the trees, and flowers in profusion grew in wild luxuriance. It was a grand old place. I had known the head gardener for a long time, and often strolled through these delightful walks with my little babe, and not unfrequently met the ladies of the castle, who admired you much and asked a host of questions, which, in my extreme ignorance of the world, never thinking harm would come of it, I answered as truthfully as I was able.

"Lord Melgrave came home very unexpectedly one day and found us absent. I had taken you to walk in the grounds of the old chateau. My mother begged him to come up and surprise us, telling him how delighted the ladies were with you. Very reluctantly he consented to go, after waiting some time for us.

"Oh, fatal day! He found his Clare in the arms of one of the most beautiful women he had ever gazed upon. She wept with him, she mourned with him; she deluged his baby's face with tears, for its own lost mother. Poor man! he was but human! Every female art was used to bind up his lacerated heart. 'Pity,' you know, 'is akin to love.' Day after day found him strolling toward the old chateau, and so well did the Lady Maud play the *role* marked out for her, that in less than a year she became the wife of Lord Melgrave, and assumed the care of his child, as its lawful mother.

"About this time my aged mother died, and I was left alone in the world. You clung to me so fondly, it seemed cruel to take you away, and so I was retained as nurse. Now, for the first time since the shipwreck, did Lord Melgrave think of returning to England. I do not think he was quite satisfied with what he had done; but a blind fate led him on. The night before the wedding he took you in his arms and visited the grave of his wife. He staid so long, I wearied for you and followed him. Bitter tears he shed, such as only could be by a noble soul like his. I felt then that no happiness would ever come of his marriage.

" 'Vignet,' he said, 'swear to me here, above the sacred shade of my angel-wife, that you will never leave or forsake my child.' I did pledge him there, and you well know, Lady Clare, how faithfully I have kept my trust.

"The next day they were married, and arrangements were made at once to return to England.

"One evening, shortly before their departure, he found me at the grave. I had come to say good-by to the remains of the dear lady. He was deeply moved. 'She will soon be left all alone here, Vignet! You think it heartless to leave her, don't you?'

" 'Oh, sir, I don't know; but it makes me sad to go without her.'

" 'Vignet,' he replied, 'I don't know why I feel so; but something tells me I shall come here to live some day. I have ordered an elegant marble tomb to be constructed, which will not be completed in two years. I shall return then, perhaps to remain.'

"It was a strange marriage. Lady Maud had no heart, and Lord Melgrave's was buried; and so it was a heartless affair on both sides. Still, he seemed quite fond of her, and would have been very happy with her, if she had cared anything for him. His wealth and position were all that her mother had sought for, and Lady Maud was a dutiful daughter, and obeyed most willingly.

"Hawthorne Dale was charming, and the scenery delightful. Lady Melgrave was well pleased with its beauty, but she forgot to whom she was indebted for all these comforts; and his lordship found, when too late, that he had made a life-long mistake in marrying a heartless, extravagant woman, who lived only for herself and vain, frivolous amusement; who never passed one moment in consulting his comfort or happiness, or bestowed one fond caress on his motherless child. He tried by every art to win the love and confidence of his young wife. He was

indulgent to a fault; his means were unlimited, and he lavished the most expensive jewels, with all their accompaniments, upon her. He was very affectionate; he could not live without love; his heart craved sympathy and confidence, and was actually starving, dying of a hunger which no food could satisfy, save the true and faithful love of a wife. He never forgot all the delicate, little attentions a fond wife would be so proud of rendering. His kind and affable manner, his gentlemanly deportment, and his extreme solicitude for her comfort, reproached her more than cool indifference. For three whole years he tried in vain to win her affections, but she had nothing in common with him.

"If he manifested a wish to go out, she was sure to stay at home; if he wished to accompany her, she had an engagement with some one else; the only real enjoyment he knew was the hours he passed with you. Weary of the monotonous life, he announced his intention of visiting Italy to superintend the erection of the tomb which was now completed. I think he despaired of ever knowing any happiness with his wife, and pined for the grave of one whose memory filled his soul with tender yearnings. He did not say when he should return; he might be gone an indefinite period. The evening previous to his departure, he came to take leave of you, as he always did every night. It was a part of his devotions to imprint a good night kiss upon your brow ere retiring. I knew by his manner he was bidding you an adieu forever. He gave me a large sealed package, to be given you when you should come of

age, in case any thing happened him, saying it contained a record of his life; also a few words of advice, which might prove valuable to you in after years. 'I have appointed,' said he, 'my valued friend, Lord Douglass, of Perth, her guardian during my absence. He is a most excellent man, and has an exemplary family. It is my wish she should be sent to St. Germain, to be educated with the Lady Helen Douglass, and pass a good portion of her time with them.'

"Then he begged me to guard and care for you with my life. 'I have,' he continued, 'provided amply for you, Vignet, who have been the only mother my poor baby ever knew since the waves closed over her own. I cannot tell when I shall look upon her pure, sweet face again; it may be for years. Should Lady Melgrave ever think of marrying again, please write to this address at Rome. She might hear of my death, you know; such awkward mistakes occur sometimes.'

"Then he smiled one of his sad, quiet smiles, such as I used to see him wear in our dear old home when he played with you in the summer-house, and covered you with flowers.

"Surely, my lord, I said, 'we shall hear from you; you cannot forget this sweet babe?'

"Forget her! Can the sun forget to shine? Well, perhaps, you will hear from me sometimes. There are two who will think of the wanderer. Do not let her forget me, Vignet. You are one of the faithful few. May God bless and protect you long to watch over the welfare of my child! I wept as

though my heart would break. I was truly grieved for my young master, who was so gentle, kind and good to every living creature.

"Oh! it seemed so sad that such a splendid man, as he was, in every sense, should have his life so thrown away. Such a generous, high souled being, to be bound for life to a woman who possessed not one attribute in her nature qualified to render his existence even tolerable. Her outward beauty increased every day; but the living embodiment of true beauty, the soul, was a vacuum. I felt glad to know my poor master knew and understood my sympathy for him; and through my blinding tears I said, 'Oh, sir! can you ever forgive me? It was all my fault; if I had not gone to the old chauteau with my Lady Clare, you would never have met with this misfortune.'

"'Never mind, Vignet; it was my fate.'

"He held you long in his arms. If you remember, it was like severing his soul from his body to part with you; he kissed and caressed you; fondled you as he did years ago, calling you the sweetest pet names, and twining your long curls through his fingers, and pressing them to his lips. 'Vignet, cut this ringlet for me;' and he selected the longest one on your head. I severed it, and he carefully put it in an ivory picture he had of you. One more hurried kiss, and your father was gone.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWELLED DAGGER.

"How dull and weary seemed the days after your father had gone! The long rambles by the river, the pleasant drives through the park, in the little pony carriage, were missed. Lady Maud came every day to inquire for you for a short time after he left. Beyond this, she never knew of your existence. Now, she launched out into a new life. She possessed unlimited means to gratify her every wish; and any items, from an hundred-guinea shawl to a five hundred-guinea pony-pheaton, were among the few and frequent expenses she indulged in.

"Hawthorne Dale, since the days when Queen Elizabeth and her court graced its halls, had never witnessed such gay amusements. There were mock tournaments and masque balls, private theatricals, moonlight excursions and hunting parties. The old woods rang with music and mirth the live-long day, and half the night. Lady Maud was the reigning queen; her beauty and elegance were the envy of the royal court, and the theme of the popular bards of the day, who wrote sonnets and poems extolling her virtue and charms. Such was the life she led for three years after the departure of Lord Melgrave.

"He had become a wanderer; his letters came once in a while, but contained no allusion to his re-

turn. A tender remembrance to Lady Clare was never forgotten. At length came tidings of his death; he had died while traveling in the Holy Land. Lady Maud closed her house, went into deep mourning, and concluded to pass the two years of her widowhood in Italy, with her mother. She was too politic not to do otherwise than to make a great display of grief for the man she never loved, but had driven from home and country, to die a stranger in a foreign land, unwept and unmourned. You were sent to a convent at St. Germain's to be educated; of course I accompanied you.

"When the two years of mourning had expired, Hawthorne Dale again rang with music and revelry. Then began a series of entertainments which would have done honor to a queen.

"If you remember, Lady Clare, a short time after we returned from St. Germain's, you received a very pressing invitation from your guardian, Lord Douglass, to spend the summer months with his daughter, at their Highland home in Perth. I think the Lady Hellen exacted a promise from you, while at school, that you would accompany them north in June, and view the delightful scenery among the bonnie blue hills of Scotland. Indeed, a trip to Lochleven Castle, and the many other castles of history and romance with which the whole country is invested, had long been your fondest desire.

"How strange are the ways of Divine Providence! How strange that I should have met with such an accident on the eve of your departure, that I had to forego the journey which we both looked forward to

with so much pleasure. If Lord Douglass could have waited only two days, my ankle would have been sufficiently well to have accompanied you; but, thank heaven, he could not. It was the first time since you were two years old that I had been separated from you, even for one night; and you can hardly tell how I grieved and wearied for you. For a week I could not shake off the languid, listless sensation that oppressed me. The weather was delightful, the air soft and balmy and laden with the perfumes of a thousand choice and rare exotics with which the grounds and conservatories of Hawthorne Dale are so beautifully supplied.

"Lady Maud was full of romance, and delighted in getting up magnificent entertainments. She had just been reading of Queen Anne of Scotland's reception in England, after King James received the crown from Queen Elizabeth, and Ben Johnson's Masque of the Fairies. She determined to have it enacted again on a grander scale than the author ever conceived. The garden and avenues were illuminated with stained glass lamps in prisms hung in letters to form the name "Maud," and which swayed to and fro in the tall branches of the linden trees. Twenty-four young ladies, robed in floating tinselry to resemble angels, their hair streaming over their white shoulders, and with wings of silvery gauze, danced in a fairy ring. They had tiny silvery bells on their ankles; and small golden harps in their hands, with which they kept time to a low, sweet chant. They sang as they danced before Queen Maud, who was robed in a fleecy cloud of

gassamer, sprinkled with silver stars; a thin veil shadowed her silvery wings like a mist. Her crown was dewdrops of frosted pearls, with emerald leaves. You would hardly imagine, as she moved in the merry dance with her golden slippers, gliding over the mosaic pavement, that she belonged to earth. Æolian harps were hidden among the dense foliage of the trees, and, as the gentle zephyrs of evening touched their golden strings, the sweetest music imaginable floated out on the still, night air. Tables, in beautiful mosaic, were scattered farther down the avenue, and laden with delicacies fit for Queen Maud and her angels, which the guests partook of at pleasure. It was truly the most magnificent entertainment one could imagine. Joy reigned supreme.

"I stole out the back passage and through the west avenue to take a look at Queen Maud. I felt ill at ease; a strange feeling came over me; a something indescribable. I could not tell what; but I thought I longed for my baby, from whom I had never been separated before; and I feared some accident might befall her, away among those wild crags and blue hills. The music and dancing neither pleased nor satisfied me, and so I strolled away down in the park. The moon shone out clear and bright, smiling majestically through a sea of blue. She looked so grandly beautiful, I thought of my own dear land of sunshine and flowers; of its magnificent moonlights on the Mediterranean, such as one never sees save there. Seating myself on a terraced mound, I fell to thinking. I remembered my poor master, who once owned this splendid

estate, but died in a foreign land, unwept and unmourned; his blighted life and early death. Then came the thought of his sorrowing widow and her mourning train at the castle to-night. Vain mockery! that one of the noblest souls God ever created should pass away and be forgotten like a flower of yesterday! I can not tell how long I had been there, when the rustle of a dry branch aroused me from my reverie. I heard a footfall, and a stranger's form emerged from a dense copse of alder brush near me. Imagining some of the guests from the castle had sought retirement, I arose so as not to disturb his meditations. A small cloud which had passed over the moon a moment before, floated away and revealed the face of no stranger, but my own dear master, whom I had just been grieving for as dead. I would have shrieked with surprise and joy, but he motioned me silent.

"Vignet, your mistress, Lady Maud, thinks me dead. She is very happy, and I have no desire to undeceive her. I came but to see my darling daughter; bring her to me at once."

"Oh, sir! she is not here; but away up in Scotland, with the Earl of Douglass and family."

"His countenance became deathly pale; he reeled with anguish, and would have fallen, but supported himself by a shrub.

"Vignet, this is a death blow! I came to gaze once more upon the face of my beautiful Clare, and now she is not here."

"Oh, my lord!" I cried, in a paroxysm of despair; 'you surely can not, will not, leave before you see

her. She would loose her reason were she to know you had been here, and had gone without seeing her. I pray you, do not, my lord, do so cruel a thing. The love she bears your memory is the brightest dream of her life; you are dearer to her in your far off grave (as she supposes) than all the world beside.'

"He seemed deeply moved. 'Tell me, Vignet,' he said, 'is she as beautiful as her angel mother?'

"I handed him your picture, taken just before you left, which I always carried with me. He pressed it to his lips, and tears came to his eyes, as he murmured, 'Fair as a poet's vision; beautiful as a peri,'

'But I am alone, thou art not here,
And though a breathing world were near,
Without thee earth were bare.'

"He compared the two pictures, and really, Lady Clare, I could not tell which was yours. He smiled to think I could not discern the difference, and said, 'I will keep it, Vignet.' 'You may,' said I, 'if you will but promise me not to leave without seeing Lady Clare.'

"'Well, I must have time to think. Meet me here to-morrow evening, at nine, and I shall have decided by that time. Good night, Vignet. I have been looking at your Queen: she is as brilliant as a shower of falling stars.'

"Saying this he disappeared in the dense winding of the forest. I returned to the castle, but the garden was deserted. The gay revelers had disappeared, and silence once more reigned where music,

mirth and revelry held high carnival but an hour before. The lights were extinguished, and nothing remained but the tables of fruit and flowers. What could it mean? The festivities had just begun when I left them, not more than an hour before. I encountered one of her lady's maids running in great haste. She informed me that her mistress had seen the ghost of her late lord, and fainted in a dead swoon, while in the garden; that her piercing shrieks alarmed the whole assembly, and that she was very ill, and that the guests had all departed before refreshments had been served.

"I, too, had seen his ghost; but I did not faint! I went to my room, and threw myself on a lounge near the window. The strange events of the evening came up before me, and I was half in doubt whether or not I had dreamed it all. I put my hand to my belt, and found your picture was not attached to the chain; that convinced me I had seen no sleeping vision. But I was tired, restless, ill at ease. I wished I had asked more questions; I felt dissatisfied with myself that I let him go at all; I wondered if he had spoken to his wife; and a thousand other things rushed through my brain. A weariness oppressed me; the moon streamed through my open casement, and fell on my face until I felt nervous, and I must have dropped asleep. How long I had been sleeping I know not, but I was awakened by a voice in my ear and a soft hand on my mouth:

"'Vignet! Vignet! get up! I want you at once!' It was the still, stern voice of Lady Maud.

" 'What is the matter?' I asked, a dread chill creeping over me, for I thought in a moment of Lord Melgrave. She was very pale and trembled violently; it was with difficulty she could speak.

" 'Your master,' she said, 'whom we all mourned as dead, has returned, and met with an *accident* Vignet, do you know he is insane! He must have escaped from a lunatic asylum; you know they are so cunning at times! Is it not a dreadful thing? I do not wish it noised about the house, such things create so much scandal. He came to me in the garden and nearly frightened me to death. I surely thought I had seen his ghost; and after I went to my room, he stole in quietly and tried to kill me. I screamed, and he jumped from me, and pierced his own breast with the dagger intended for mine!'

" 'Merciful heavens!' I exclaimed, 'my poor master! Where is he? Let me go to him!'

" 'Nay, Vignet, stop,' said Lady Maud, 'and listen to me. I have all faith in your skill since you cured old Mark, the forester, whose arm was so cruelly lacerated by the wild stag in the last hunt. We need not send for a surgeon, as it would disgrace us all for life; and my dear Lady Clare, poor child, would die of mortification! For the honor of the Melgraves, this *must* not be known. Vignet, you love your master and his child; the secrets of the house are with you, and you will not betray them!' And she drew from her finger a diamond cluster worth a fortune. 'Take this, Vignet,' she said, 'and promise me you will not breathe of this night's work.'

" 'No, Lady Maud,' I said, 'I can keep my lord's honor without a diamond ring as a pledge. I had rather not take it; I have no use for it.'

"She put the ring in her pocket, and not on her finger, which seemed strange. At her request I followed her to her room. She unlocked the door, which she had carefully locked, and oh, horrible sight! weltering in his life's blood, lay Lord Melgrave, his eyes closed, his face white and colorless, his dark hair and whiskers saturated with the crimson tide that poured from his side. One hand pressed the wound, as if when struck he thought to staunch the flow. A beautiful little dagger, with a jeweled hilt, lay just under his head.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUSION OF VIGNET'S STORY.

"LORD Melgrave still breathed, though his pulse was only a faint tremor, and at times quite gone. I removed his coat, to find where the wound was. It had evidently been intended for the left shoulder, opposite the heart; but the aim had not been well directed, and the blow fell below and penetrated the side. His lips were tightly compressed, and it was with the utmost difficulty I could open them to put a drop of wine in his mouth.

"I would gladly have examined the weapon, which I had concealed in my pocket, to ascertain the depth of the wound, but I dared not do so in her presence. I happened just then to think of some bottles of medicine in my room, and asked her ladyship to go for them.

"The wound was not so bad as I had feared, and with great care he might live; but I could not endure the thought of the sole responsibility resting upon me, of attending such a nobleman as Lord Melgrave. To nurse and cure the arm of an old peasant, and to care for one of the noblest knights in the Queen's realm, were quite different things; yet I think I am a natural physician. I have no remembrance of half I did. Every thing seemed to have just the desired effect. My knowledge of

medicine and of wounds I obtained from an old uncle who was an army surgeon and attended a marine hospital not far from my early home. He soon found my desire for the study of medicine, and took great pains to enlighten me. He gave me several small bottles of a powerful medicine, which he had obtained from some Jews at Jerusalem, and which would stop the most violent hemorrhage almost instantly. He informed me also how many hours the patient would sleep by giving a certain number of drops.

"Lord Melgrave's breath came heavily, and he still remained unconscious. I placed him in an easy position, and removed his heavy clothing by cutting them off. I washed off all traces of blood, combed his tangled hair, and he looked more human.

"Oh! the supreme contempt I felt for her I can not tell; and I fully resolved, if he died, to denounce her as his murderess.

"All now depended on his waking, which would not be before three hours. It was now three o'clock.

"'Lady Maud,' I said, 'if I am to be nurse and doctor, too, you will be obliged to wait upon me; therefore, as every thing that can be done is done for the present, and if we two are to have no help, it is very necessary we should husband our strength. You had better sleep now, until nine o'clock, by which time, if ever, he will awaken. If he should not, what is to be done then?'

"'Never mind, Vignet; leave that to me.'

"She poured out a large wine-glass of wine, and drank it, saying: 'I believe my nerves are a little unstrung to-night. If you discover any change, do not fail to call me. I think I will leave you for a while.'

"If you go, my lady, you must not return under any consideration until nine. I would not have the rustle of a leaf break the stillness of the room.'

"Very well; call me when you wish me to come.'

"As hour after hour wore away, and there was no change, I almost gave up. Oh! the silence and gloom of that death-watch, I shall never forget.

"Lady Clare, (I grew *old*, OLD, that night.) I could feel the lines of suffering drawing around my eyes, and my hair getting white. (I prayed that night as I never prayed before in my life,) that God would permit my poor dear master to speak to me, if only once, to tell me who committed this deed.

"As six o'clock drew near, I could hardly breathe, so great was my anxiety. (None can ever know the misery of that hour.) At half-past five, I fixed my eyes on his closed lids, my finger on his pulse. I wished the moment he opened his eyes that they should meet mine.

"The moments were weeks; the seconds days.

"He moved, became restless, drew his breath slowly; then quick and hurried, frightened-like; uttered a low moan and opened his eyes just as the second-hand of the watch pointed the hour of six.

"Thank God, Vignet! you are here.'

"Don't speak yet,' I whispered, 'only close your eyes to my question,—*Did she do this?*'

"He closed his eyes and faintly murmured, 'Yes, YES!'

"I gave him some cordial, and a delicate flush mantled his cheek. He wanted to talk.

"Not yet,' I said.

"I bathed his face, neck, hands and arms; but did not speak to him for an hour. I then told him my suspicions. He spoke freely now, but low and calmly.

"She has finished me; but may heaven forgive her as freely as I do. My mistake has cost me my life, I fear. Vignet,' he continued, 'I do not wish this to be known, for the sake of my daughter. Pledge me not to reveal this thing, unless I give you permission.'

"I showed him the dagger—a tear glistened in his eye.

"Oh, poor woman! little did I think when I purchased that for you, that it would drink my own life-blood. God keep her happy in her new love, and pardon this great crime.'

"Then, at intervals, he told me the tragic story.

"After I left you,' said he, 'in the park, I felt quite undecided what to do. A tender remembrance of my childhood days came over me. This was the home of my youth, the home of my ancestors for five generations. All the hallowed and tender scenes of my young and happy life arose before me. My dear, dear mother, and proud loving father, both of them sleeping beneath the blue waters of the

Mediterranean; and fonder still, the remembrance of my young and beautiful wife, and the happy, happy hours I had passed with her here. Every tree and shrub had been loved by her; never a shadow had crossed our lives. Why did I exile myself from these cherished scenes and my dear daughter's companionship for this heartless woman?

"Then I resolved to see her privately, and have a talk with her. Perhaps she had changed, and my long absence had softened those hard traits in her character. Accordingly, I sought her in her own room. Instead of being overjoyed to find I still lived, she denounced me as a villain, an imposter; bade me leave her forever, saying she did not love me, and that she never did; but that she had found one she did love, and whom she intended to marry, regardless of me. She raved like a demon. Finding her worse, instead of better, I concluded to leave her to her fate, and turned to go; but a thought seemed to cross her mind. She sprang to her bureau, caught this little toy and flew at me, her eyes blazing, her face like marble! Truly she was a beautiful personation of an enraged fury. Vignet, if she finds I can speak, she will not leave you with me. I will seemingly remain unconscious. My closed eyes will shut out from my gaze the face of a would-be murderess. I pray God I may never look upon her again. Do not let her touch me; the thought would dethrone reason.' I repeated her story of his insanity.

"Very good. I will remain so then, if it will please her ladyship."

"At nine in the morning she returned. I told her I had rested, and felt much refreshed, but would like her to bring me a cup of coffee. I dared not leave her with him one minute after hearing his fearful tale.

"She manifested much anxiety for him; but did not offer to administer one of those little attentions a loving hand can always bestow when with the sick. I could not think of leaving him there, and how to remove him to other rooms, I could not tell, without endangering his wound; besides, to watch her and attend him alone, would be impossible. I consulted Lord Melgrave.

"Send for Mark Wheaton, the old game-keeper. He carried me in his arms when a child. He owes his life to me, and I will trust him with mine. He is as faithful and true as the needle to the pole."

"I mentioned to Lady Maud the impossibility of having him remain there. He must be removed to other rooms, and none so safe as mine. 'Old Mark is very grateful to me; you remember, ever since I dressed and nursed his lacerated arm. We can trust him.'

"She hesitated at first, but finally consented; indeed, she obeyed me in all things. Her fiery spirit had somewhat tamed. She went for old Mark to his cottage, away down in the forest, two miles from the castle, and told him her story. He came at once; and at eleven o'clock that night, when the household was all asleep, we carefully removed Lord Melgrave from her apartments to those of more humble pretensions, but safe from the assassin's knife.

"Mark installed himself as assistant nurse, and together we managed nicely.

"In a week we pronounced him out of danger, and prevailed on her ladyship to run down to London for a few days or weeks. She had never heard her husband speak, and supposed his reason and speech had left him forever; therefore, she consented to go, charging us, on our lives, not to let one of the servants know of it. I wanted to send for you, Lady Clare, but Lord Melgrave thought I had better not. She offered Mark a purse of gold, but he refused her money, saying, 'I can not accept a reward for waiting upon my dear master.'

"In four weeks he was able to walk about the room. He improved faster after she left.

"At his suggestion, I wrote her, asking her advice about taking him to an asylum. She was pleased with the idea, and at once wrote an order on her banker, and placed at my disposal an unlimited amount of money to take him, as soon as he was able to travel, adding that it was too painful for her to see her poor, dear husband in such a state. She would not return until he had been removed; and, as Lord Melgrave was quite anxious to consult an eminent Paris physician, we hastened his departure. Another month, however, glided away before he felt strong enough to undertake the journey. Mark went with him. Yes, he left Hawthorne Dale without seeing his darling baby.

"Oh, cruel, cruel Vignet!" cried Lady Clare, "how could you let poor dear father go and not send for me. But tell me, does he still live?"

"Yes, and has entirely recovered. He dwells near the tomb of your mother.

"It is now nearly two years since that fatal night. He charged me, when Lady Maud contemplated marrying, to inform him, as he wished to make one of the wedding guests. She thinks, however, that she is as securely removed from him as though the grave had closed over him. She loves Lord Clifford with all the fervor of her wild, passionate nature. Indeed, her heart is no longer her own, and in losing him, which she must, she will experience the pangs of a remorse that will end in a broken heart. (Justice must take place.) I can not permit the generous, noble Lord Clifford, your father's dearest friend, to be sacrificed to such an unprincipled woman. Her love for Lord Clifford is the only pure sentiment her stormy soul ever knew; her agony and rage will rend asunder her heart and body—just retribution for her crime. But now, Lady Clare, I can not allow you to spoil your Christmas roses—you must retire."

CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED WEDDING GUEST.

MEANTIME the wedding was announced to take place very soon. The public journals of the day commented on the approaching nuptials of the great Earl of Ashkirk with the beautiful and accomplished widow of the late lamented Lord Melgrave. London was thrilled with the magnificent preparations for the coming marriage. Never had any arrangements been completed on so grand a scale, save at the royal palace. Lord Clifford was one of the most influential members of Parliament, and a court favorite; hence his wedding was looked forward to with unfeigned delight.

Since his first meeting with Lady Clare, on Christmas eve, she had haunted his vision like a beautiful dream, quite to the exclusion at times of his fair *fiancée*. They met occasionally, but Clare's extreme diffidence prevented any intimate acquaintance. Lord Clifford attributed it to her engagement with the Italian count; still, her sweet, amiable disposition, gentle, winning deportment, together with her angelic beauty, rendered her the most charming lady he had ever met.

Her education was thorough; a fair linguist and an accomplished musician, her attainments were of the highest order. Intellectually she had but few

equals. But his beautiful syren bewildered him. Her dark, flashing eye magnetized him; it was the charm of the serpent. At times he would fain throw off the spell; it oppressed him, particularly after he had seen the Lady Clare, who was so quiet, so gentle and natural. The atmosphere around her seemed pure and holy; it was like breathing the air of angels. He felt rested—refreshed; her presence was a soothing cordial to the excitements caused by the brilliant fascinations of Lady Maud, who loved the noble earl with all the strength and devotion of a fierce and impassioned nature, which was as impetuous as Vesuvius and wild as a mountain torrent.

She was not jealous of Lady Clare, whose truthful heart and pure thoughts would not permit her to take any advantage of her beauty and accomplishments. This Lady Maud knew; and had she thought for one moment that Lady Clare would give her cause for jealousy, she would have murdered her without hesitation.

If the heart of Lord Clifford had been open before her, she might have seen a page on which the name of Clare was written with a gentler pen than that of Maud. At times a thought of her husband living in a tomb, among reasonless human beings, would dart through her mind. A fear that some unknown occurrence would prevent her from being married, would torment her. What if he should come back? or what if Lord Clifford should hear of his being alive? Once married, she would defy them all!

About two days after Vignet had revealed to Lady Clare the history of her young life, the sad and mournful death of her mother, and the still clouded life of her unhappy father, Lady Maud summoned Vignet to her presence. Vignet half imagined the cause.

Lady Maud was in one of her happiest moods. She cordially welcomed Vignet—more on the terms of an equal than one beneath her station. She arose, and extending her hand, led her to a sofa, and seating herself beside her, she began:

"Vignet, I have sent for you to converse upon a topic of much interest to me. You are well aware, I suppose, of my approaching marriage with Lord Clifford. Two years have now passed since Lord Melgrave became a lunatic; and the law dissolves all contracts of marriage between parties where one becomes insane; and you well know I really had been a deserted wife for three years before. Now, Vignet, you alone, of all the world, know that Lord Melgrave still lives. You have faithfully kept your trust to me, and I feel, in consideration of your faith, bound to confide to you a secret which your truthfulness deserves.

"When I first became acquainted with Lord Melgrave, I was but a mere child; my mother's wishes were my law—I knew no other. She saw and admired your master, and bade me do the same. I had never loved; I knew not the meaning of the word. Lord Melgrave buried his love in the tomb with his wife. He did not love me—only respected me, and felt the need of sympathy. I knew nothing

of sympathy; I could not feel with him, or for him. There is something superior in him, and wide is the distance between us. His wealth and position alone made me Lady Melgrave. I love Lord Clifford, and the wedding is fixed for the first of May.

"Vignet, to you I leave the task of revealing to Lady Clare the subject of my marriage, and the wish that she may be first bridesmaid; and I also wish you to inform the ladies of the household of the nuptials. I will consult Lady Clare concerning her wardrobe, and I expect you to superintend it, as I consider your taste equal to the task."

Vignet bowed, bade her ladyship good-night, and as she passed out of the room, mused—"I *must* tell Lady Clare."

She immediately communicated all she had been told concerning the approaching wedding, and of the invitation to Lady Clare to officiate as first bridesmaid.

"Vignet, I could not think of such a thing! Please excuse me to Lady Maud. I would scorn to accompany the woman to the altar who once raised her hand against her husband's life, that husband still living, and he my own dear father!"

"I agree with you, my lady, were there to be any wedding, but you know there can be none; so I can see no impropriety in acquiescing in this instance. She will regret it very much, and be displeased, and perhaps censure me."

"My dear Vignet, not for the world would I permit you to be reproached. You may say to her I

would rather be excused, but will make one of the number, if she wishes it particularly."

A letter was accordingly written and dispatched at once to Lord Melgrave, and also printed copies of the announcement of the expected marriage.

April came, with its sunshine and showers. Hawthorne Dale was alive with preparations for the approaching nuptials.

It was on a beautiful afternoon toward the close of the month that Lady Clare strolled down the avenue and wandered away off to the park. The air was soft and balmy for the early spring, and the rippling of the little stream fell lovingly on her ear. She felt inexpressibly happy in anticipation of seeing her dear father. In just three days he would be with her, to always remain. Joy and gladness beamed upon her beautiful face, and reflected its sunshine in the mirror-like surface of the murmuring stream.

She was surprised to find Lord Clifford seated on a grassy mound, and gazing listlessly into the crystal water. He immediately arose and manifested much pleasure at meeting her, and rallied her a little concerning her recreant lover.

"Fair lady," said he, "methinks one *you* could love ought not to remain long from so peerless a shrine."

"Lord Clifford, pray tell me your meaning? I should judge by your language that I, too, had a lover, kind sir. I have never yet been so fortunate as to be loved by any body."

"Lady Clare," and there was now no levity in his

tone, "tell me, are you not the betrothed wife of an Italian count?"

"I the betrothed wife of any one!" she said, with a wild, gay laugh, which rang merrily through the old woods. "Why, Lord Clifford, I never saw an Italian count in my life!—I am only a child; nor did I ever receive the addresses of any gentleman."

"Lady Clare, your frank, open statement and truthful face can not contain aught but truth. I have been misinformed, and I am a little astonished that Lady Maud, too, should be wrong in this matter."

"My lord, she was only jesting."

"Well, my little lady, how do you fancy the idea of having a father?"

"Oh, delightful! In just three days I can"—She stopped suddenly and added: "Few can know what a holy, sacred name it is to me. Come, Sir Knight of the Crystal Brook, let us to the Dale. Lady Maud will be waiting dinner. Know you not, sir, my mother does not like to be kept anxious?"

Bright and beautiful was ushered in the wedding day. Not a cloud tinged the whole heavens. The preparations were complete; the gentry within many miles around had been invited, and the occasion was to be honored by the presence of some member of the royal family.

For some reason Lady Maud declined to have the ceremony performed in church. Long before dark the avenue was filled with carriages and liveried footmen. The drawing-rooms were a blaze of light from a thousand glittering chandeliers. An elegant altar, under a canopy of crimson and gold, had been

erected at the farther end of the grand drawing-room, and the bishop, in his snowy vesture, stood beneath it, awaiting the bridal pair. As the bell from the tower finished striking eight, the doors were thrown open, and a vision of transcendent loveliness burst upon the expectant eye.

Lady Maud was attired in a robe of snow-white velvet with an immense train, an over-skirt of point d'Alençon looped on one side with a spray of seed pearls and diamonds; a veil of the same rich lace swept the floor; a wreath of orange-blossoms, cunningly contrived of precious stones, was twined through her shining waves of hair. The entire costume was faultlessly elegant, from the exquisitely fitting kid glove to the tiny satin slipper.

She was bewilderingly beautiful—too dazzling for the naked eye. She was attended by six bridesmaids, who, by way of contrast, were simply attired in white, puffed tulle over white glaze skirts; veils, confined by wreathes of cape jassamin, and a tasteful bouquet, were their only ornaments.

Lady Maud was much agitated; she trembled violently. Lord Clifford looked the noble peer he was. Lady Clare wore an anxious look; her cheek was pale and her lip quivered. They knelt before the sacred altar, and the worthy bishop asked God's blessing in prayer.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord," came in deep, sepulchral tones from the bishop.

Oh, horror!—He had commenced the burial service!

A death-silence reigned! The awkward mistake was rectified, and he proceeded as far as—"If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

"I can, your reverence; I am her own living husband—Frederick William, Earl of Melgrave!" and a pale form stepped from the crowd and confronted them.

"My father! oh, my father!" and Lady Clare was clasped in the arms of her long-lost sire.

Lord Clifford caught the hand of Melgrave, whom he joyfully recognized as a traveling companion, and the preserver of his life on the banks of the Nile.

But the bride—what of her? She looked for a moment, to satisfy herself she did not dream. Not a sound escaped her lips; she neither shrieked nor screamed, but sank lifeless to the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

FOREVER LOST.

LORD Clifford and her husband carefully lifted Lady Maud from the floor, and conveyed her to her own room, while the bridal attendants called loudly for a physician. Several hastened at once to her ladyship.

Among the invited guests was a distinguished medical attendant of her majesty, the Queen. All made way for the aged Baron Lauraine, whose mild, amiable face, clear, penetrating eye, and firm though sweet voice, had made him a court favorite; and whose great knowledge of medicine had won him a professorship in the most celebrated medical college of Europe.

The wonder, astonishment and consternation depicted on every countenance, can hardly be conceived. The immense throng that filled every drawing-room, hall and pavilion of the spacious house, seemed paralysed. Groups gathered and conversed in low tones, all eager to learn the truth concerning this strange marriage farce.

The worthy and venerable Bishop of London attempted to enlighten the people. A note from Lord Melgrave had informed his reverence what course to pursue in order to relieve the distinguished guests from their anxiety.

Briefly he related the happy return of Lord Melgrave, his long sojourn, arising from a protracted illness in Assyria. Then his reverence extolled the beauty and many virtues of Lady Maud, and thanked heaven that her tender heart was spared the pain and humiliation of being united to another while her own dear husband, whom she had so long mourned as dead, was still living; and he then prayed that this great surprise might not injure her highly sensitive organization. The explanation was satisfactory, not one for a moment doubting the strange occurrence. Many a tender sigh was breathed for the stricken and fascinating Lord Clifford. One by one the guests reluctantly departed, while the more intimate, and consequently more privileged, lingered, vainly hoping to hear something favorable of Lady Maud.

Several hours passed, and still they tarried. Noiselessly a servant glided up behind a group, and invited them out for refreshments, to an elegant collation served in a private dining-room, the grand hall being reserved for the sumptuous wedding supper that was to have taken place after the bridal ceremony.

Never had there been such a disappointment.

The stewards and cooks groaned with anguish. The appointments of the supper had been their study for months; and so bewildering a sight as those tables, laden with gold and silver, together with the rare flowers which hung in festoons all over the room, had not been seen since her majesty graced it with her presence.

The silence of the tomb pervaded every hall, reception-room and court. Hour after hour passed, and yet Lady Maud continued in that dreamless state, so much resembling death that the sorrowing angels, as they bent their sad eyes upon the twin sister of the mighty monarch, could hardly distinguish between them.

The best medical science of London hovered around the couch of this beautiful woman. The purest Parian marble, fresh from the chisel of Canova, never resembled the matchless Madonna more than did the exquisite features of Lady Maud Melgrave, as she reclined upon her elegant couch, robed in her magnificent bridal costume, which her physician had forbidden to be removed. Imagination could hardly paint so faultlessly beautiful a picture. She lay as dead, with drooping fringes veiling those lovely eyes; and her low, gentle breathing alone showing that the vital spark had not fled.

Lord Melgrave never left her bedside, and labored incessantly to call back to life the woman who had so cruelly wronged him, forgetting all, every thing but her suffering.

Six weary hours she remained in that death-like trance. The gentle Clare hovered near her couch, and bestowed upon her all those little endearments which her loving heart was ever ready to afford to suffering. Indeed, to have seen the anxious and agonized watchfulness she manifested in soothing the patient's brow, rubbing her white hands, and wiping the tears from her own eyes, one would have

supposed Lady Maud to have been one of the most devoted and affectionate of mothers.

Again and again Lord Clifford arose to go, but as often was detained by his friends.

"She may ask for you, should she ever awaken. The drama is almost over."

"Pray, help me," said Lord Melgrave, "to go through with it."

He pressed his hand in reply: "Fred, I can not see her again; let me go."

"Wait just a little longer; see, her breathing is more irregular; she seems restless. I think she will soon become conscious."

Baron Lauraine motioned them away.

Adjoining the boudoir was a beautiful conservatory, filled with rare flowers. The fragrant odor of their delicate perfume seemed oppressive; and yet there were only just enough to beautify the pavilion. Near an oval window played a cool fountain, dropping its waters in a marble basin, where tiny gold fish were flashing about in the crystal depths.

Wearied with her attention, Clare softly retired from her mother's room, and entered this little conservatory.

She felt exhausted, and the cool water from the fountain was inviting. She bathed her face and moistened her hair, then languidly threw herself on a sofa. The moon streamed through the open casement, and reflected a thousand silvered rays from among the ever-shifting jets of spray. (Pure and majestically moved the queen of night through a sea of blue, unconscious of the sleeping and sorrow-

ing world beneath.) One by one the stars died out, and the chime from the old cathedral rang the hour of three. The deep solemnity of the night awed, while the trying scene she had endured for the past six hours exhausted Clare. Her face was pale, every rose tint had left lips and cheek, and intense agony was depicted on her tearless countenance. Clasping her hands she groaned:

"How long, oh, how long! My father, my father, come to me!"

This wild appeal fell upon the ears of the watchers in the adjoining apartment. Her father and Lord Clifford rushed to the conservatory to find that Lady Clare had fainted. Lord Melgrave sprinkled her face with water from the fountain, then tenderly taking her head in his arms, he soothed and caressed her:

"Oh! my poor child, in my bewilderment I had forgotten you. This scene has taxed your nerves beyond endurance. My darling, you must go to your own room."

The ever faithful Vignet and her father's loving arm assisted the exhausted girl to her room; and her bridal drapery being removed, wearied nature could do no more, and she sank into a profound slumber.

In the mean time, while this scene was transpiring in the conservatory, Lady Maud had aroused from her death-like trance.

"Where am I? What has happened? Percy, tell me; did I faint?"

These questions came so rapidly, it was a moment before any reply could be given.

"My lady," said the baron, "you have been very sick, drink this; and then I will tell you," saying which, he placed a potion to her lips, bidding her drink. Then, as gently as possible, he broke the strange tidings to her of her husband's return. A swift shudder passed through her frame.

"Tell me of Percy Clifford. Can I see him just one moment?"

Then she groaned from the depths of her heart:

"Lost—lost forever! Lost! O God! is this for me!"

Just at that moment, both gentlemen entered the room from the conservatory, unconscious that she had revived.

Lord Melgrave approached her, and in the most compassionate tones possible, asked:

"Are you better, my poor wife?" and he attempted to take her hand.

She shrank back almost convulsed, murmuring: "No, sir; I dare not! I was mad, mad!"

Then he put his face to hers and whispered: "No one knows it; for the love of heaven do not betray yourself. *He* does not know it."

The hot blood mounted to her cheek, the marble of a moment before was suffused with a delicate blush resembling buoyant health, and she seemed wrung with emotion.

She drew her husband's face down to her own, and whispered:

"Send Percy Clifford to me. I must see him."

Lord Melgrave beckoned his friend to him.

"Lady Maud," said he, "would see you for a moment."

At the sight of his pale face, she covered her own with her hands, and mourned most piteously, "O God, must it be!" Then, in her agony, she raised herself in a sitting position, rocked herself back and forth a moment, while remorse and despair were blended in her beautiful face. The color had faded from her cheek, leaving it of a livid whiteness. Like a marble statue of Pauline Borghese, in the palace of the Cæsars, she looked a perfect goddess.

"Percy Clifford, tell me you do not curse me," and she drew the beautiful circlet of diamonds, her engagement ring, from her finger, and offered it to him. He hesitated a moment, and then took it in his hand.

A blush suffused her cheek; his tongue was powerless to utter a word; he bowed silently, and then, ere he was aware of her intention, she suddenly caught him in her arms and pressed hot kisses upon his cheek and brow; then, pushing him from her, she cried:

"Good-by for ever! Percy Clifford, leave me! Go quick! quick! or I shall die!"

In vain had he struggled to free himself. She seemed endowed with the strength of a Hercules. It was but a moment, and the paroxysm of her despair was exhausted. She sank back on her pillow lifeless, while a crimson tide welled from her lips. She had ruptured a blood-vessel, and her life was fast ebbing away.

Could any thing have been more embarrassing than Lord Clifford's position? But his noble, generous-hearted friend came to his rescue:

"Surely, if I can forgive her, you can. Come away;" and taking his arm, he led him from the room. There were tears in the eyes of both.

"Melgrave, you are a noble man. Let me go; I will come back to-morrow. She is dying. You must not leave her;" and, wringing his hand, Lord Clifford rushed away.

Medical service proved unavailing to staunch the ebbing tide of life of the unfortunate woman. Her violent temperament had signed her own death-warrant. Her passionate nature grew calm as her life waned. A serene resignation to her fate, and a subdued expression, took the place of her former haughty, defiant pride. She gradually sank away, each attack of hemorrhage leaving her so prostrate that they feared she could not survive the night.

One thought alone seemed to have taken possession of her, and was the burden of her prayer:

"Forgive me, my husband! Tell me you can pardon one that would have been a murderess!"

Again and again he assured her that she was forgiven—that he should never think of her in connection with anger or dislike.

"Perhaps," said Lord Melgrave, "you blame me for deceiving you concerning my health; but I had no heart ever to look the world in the face again. Our life-mistake has been a dear lesson to us both."

Tears came to her eyes—the first he ever saw her shed since she dropped them on his baby's cheek for its lost mother. They were such tears as the Peri hoped might open the gates of Paradise: tears of penitence and remorse—dewdrops wrung from

that proud woman's heart—such tears as one seldom sees twice in a lifetime.

She besought him not to leave her, expressing a fear to be alone.

"Where is Clara? Has she deserted me? Oh, send for her! tell her I must have her forgiveness before I go!"

At this final hour there was a strange fascination for her in the presence of Lord Melgrave. (Her woman's nature felt the strong, protecting power of her husband—that beautiful, that most charming trait of woman, her dependence on man.) We love an infant for its perfect helplessness; so we love woman because she is dependent.)

The tender fibres of her loving heart, that cling to the proud, strong soul of man, are the chief virtue of her nature; they are flowers which grow brighter, gathering freshness, expanding in beauty, as her inner soul becomes purified by the intensity of her love. God pity the woman who has never loved, and God help the man who has never been sustained by woman's affection!)

Alas! for Lady Maud; it was too late when she knew the divine power of a pure love. Lord Clifford first awakened the sentiment. Perhaps her Italian soul could not brook the tender remembrance of Lord Melgrave for his first wife—believing, as many do, in one, only love. She never bestowed a thought upon him; but, now she was on the brink of the dark valley, Lord Clifford, with his noble sense of right, loved her no more; she had bidden him leave her, the most generous act of her life.

She could never gaze upon his face again; once almost hers, now lost for ever!

To whom, now, but her husband, whose life she had wasted, could she look for support in this dark hour of trial? Respecting him beyond every thing, feeling always a sort of supreme reverence for him, a being above, beyond her, no wonder she felt his presence, like a benediction, filling her room with sweet incense. She clung to him, forgetting all his cruel wrongs, remembering only his generous, loving nature.

Lord Melgrave felt for her only the compassionate pity he might feel for any beautiful woman meeting so sudden a death, while her suffering awakened a deep feeling of sympathy. Nor did he withhold his forgiveness, but sought, by every expression he could command, to convince her that she was forgiven, and to comfort her in every possible manner.

"Maud," and he held both her hands while he spoke, "if it will bring you one moment of happiness, notwithstanding you have sent Lord Clifford away, I will recall him."

"No, no, no!" she almost shrieked; "let me never be again intoxicated! *I would not see him again to live!* Give me a powerful stimulant; I have a confession to make to you, the noblest of men."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONFESSION.

HAVING swallowed a portion of the stimulant, she essayed to speak, but Lord Melgrave again begged her to think of it no more. "I care not for any thing now save your comfort. Believe me, when I assure you upon my knightly honor, I forgive you any wrong, or fancied wrong, you may have done me."

"Lord Melgrave, you are too generous. Your daughter never knew a mother's affection, save the faithful Vignet's, since the angry waters of the Mediterranean closed over her own mother."

Just at that moment, Clare entered the room. "Clare," said Lady Maud, "I am dying, and oh! could I believe that you forgave me, and that in after years you cherish no resentment towards one who has been so poor a companion,—so faithless in a mother's duty to your comfort! I know it is asking a great deal, *but what will a dying heart not crave?* I am so wretched!"

Tears were running down the cheeks of Clare, while her whole frame was convulsed with emotion.

"Oh! my poor, dear mother," said she; "don't think of it; don't ask my forgiveness! I have nothing to forgive; you have ever been kind and indulgent. I would do any thing in the world to

comfort you. Believe me, darling mother, I shall ever think of you with tender and loving remembrances," and she caressed and kissed the brow of the dying woman.

"Bless you, Clare! Lord Melgrave, when I threw away the generous love of your noble heart, I lost my soul. When the tidings reached me of your death, remorse, for a time, embittered my life; but it soon passed away. If, for an hour, I suffered your pleading face to intrude upon my gaiety, it was thrust aside, and some fashionable amusement obliterated any good thought that, by accident, possessed me. Brought up, as it were, at a profligate court, I knew nothing of the sweet and tender sentiments of home affections.

"My mother was a lady of honor, and my father an officer in his majesty's guards. To win the love of the noblest, to flirt and coquette with the hearts of the truest, (if there might be said to be one true man who bowed before a royal knee,) was the crowning desire of my vain life.

"My father died when I was but thirteen; and I was left at that tender age solely to the care of an unprincipled mother, and at a time when, of all one's life, one needs the tenderest care. The early impressions of youth and innocency cling to us through all our after years. Alas! for the child that knows no infancy!

"Oh, my lord! I have ever deceived you from the first moment I met you, when, having just returned from court, where I had passed three years, amid the gay and soulless frivolities of a

depraved crowd, I led you to believe I had lived in the utmost seclusion with my widowed mother.

"Your wealth, position and title determined her to secure your name for her daughter.

"That you had buried your heart in the tomb of your child-wife, one needed but to look once upon your mournful face to know. That, however, was, with me, a matter of little moment—a small consideration. The homage that chivalry ever pays to beauty, I knew I should have; for, with all your deep grief, you were still susceptible to feminine loveliness.

"An enviable position, with unlimited means to gratify my extravagant fancies, was all my sinful nature craved; and you more than met my wildest dreams, so far as wealth and elegance were concerned.

"But you never loved me, never breathed in my ear one word of that music which thrills through the soul like electricity. I knew not of its existence then. Heaven help me—my life had been so vain, so idle. Oh! yes—

" 'As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.'

"You had no heart for another, and all those refined and courtly compliments you lavished upon my beauty never touched me. I accepted them as my just due, having listened to such honied words all my life. They failed to awaken my own sleeping soul to the true, genuine nobleness of the only faithful heart that had ever paid me homage.

"I say faithful. I mean faithful to your lost wife. It was not for myself you loved me. Indeed, I never remember to have heard you say, 'Maud L'Estrange, I love you,' but Maud's eyes were beautiful—

" 'Sweetest eyes were ever seen ;'

her complexion was of unrivaled loveliness; her hair the most luxuriant, the softest—the richest. In short, there being not *one* attribute of my soul in unison with yours, I could readily see it was only the exterior you admired, and not the bright gem that reflects its transparent luster on every surrounding object—an amiable, gentle and loving woman."

A violent hemorrhage interrupted her for more than an hour. She was so much exhausted that Lord Melgrave besought her to say no more of her bitter heart-struggles. After taking her medicine she revived, and continued:

"Oh, my good friend, this confession is well for my dying soul! I have but little more to tell. (You gave me the highest honor man ever conferred on woman—the proud name of wife!) You brought me to this grand and ancient home—this magnificent Hawthorne Dale, that is more like a palace of the Cæsars than the home of an English peer. You surrounded me with every luxury—enough to have made happy the vain heart of the Maiden Queen, and only asked in return the silent love of my poor, worthless heart! I thought then there was no such thing.

"Wearied and worn with so thankless a task, you left us all, to wander a stranger upon the earth, a grief-stricken man; left your sweet daughter—a tender child—and this princely palace; left the high position which your scholastic fame already had won for your acceptance or command: all, all—because a soulless woman had rendered life intolerable!"

"Abandoned to my own bad passions, my own reckless extravagance, I entered the maelstrom of dissipation, and sped headlong on the downward course to death. For three whole years the 'pale star died out,' leaving the revelers still luxuriating in their mad folly; every new excitement adding fuel to the old, and keeping the blaze in a never-dying glow. Glad to be free, glad to escape a sight of your face, I plunged on toward the abyss of destruction."

"In the midst of this great whirlpool came the tidings of your death. Remorse for a moment overwhelmed me; then the keenest anger I had ever known took possession of me. These gay amusements must for a time cease!"

"Policy forbade me doing otherwise than to leave England. I dared not trust myself here amidst the scenes of my gay excitement, where every tree and shrub reproached me and cried out in indignation at the course I had pursued."

"To seclude myself in Italy, at the old chateau of my widowed mother, I deemed the most politic. Accordingly, a magnificent wardrobe of crape and bombazine was prepared for your widow; Haw-

thorne Dale was closed, with the exception of the old family servants, who occupied the south wing and took care of the home and grounds. Lady Clare was set to St. Germain, to finish her music and painting; and I hastened to my mother's home, accompanied by the one female servant I brought with me, Agatha.

"For one month I kept my room, clad in a dressing gown, having my meals brought to me; yes, I rested for one little month!"

"At the expiration of that time I received a very polite note from a Spanish count, with a pressing invitation to accompany himself and countess to the court of Vienna, the former scenes of my loves and conquests."

"The count was gay and fashionable. 'Doff those sombre, crape robes,' he wrote; 'go *incog.*, if you choose, as an Italian or Spanish countess, instead of an English lady. You need never be known; your natural beauty will set wild the whole royal household.' I did not wait a second invitation, but wrote the Chevalier DeB—and lady to meet me at Naples in ten days."

"Under their care I went to the Austrian court, mingled with the gay and frivolous, the reckless and dissipated, flattered, courted and praised, until I became intoxicated with adulation."

"The ambassador from Vienna was to sail for America. I was invited to make one of his lady's suite. To see the new world, and to add fresh conquests to my list of rejected suitors, would be for me another victory."

"Six months in the gay metropolis at Washington wearied me of this trans-Atlantic visit. I returned to Europe, where I passed the remaining two years of my widowhood in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Naples, the most fashionable capitals of the world. My letters from my agent and banker in London had been forwarded to me at times by my mother, to whose care they had been sent. So careful had I been of my movements that no person in England suspected for a moment but that I was buried in gloom at my mother's old chateau. The reply to letters had been dated from my home, and then sent there to be mailed. I kept a special private courier, to bring and carry my mail.

"At a royal reception of the Empress at the Tuileries I first met Lord Clifford, to whom I was introduced as a French baroness. For the first time in my entire life I felt interested. I can not tell what it was, or why; I only know that my heart throbbed with a strange emotion. The whole assembly, save him, faded before my eyes; there was a profound fascination for me in the first tone of his voice.

"I retired early — so soon as I learned who he was and where he resided. That he, too, was more than pleased, his conduct proved. The next day he called three times at my hotel; I refused him admittance each time. My plans were formed, and with me to plan was to execute. I notified my friends I should leave at once for Italy; nor could all the inducements of the coming festivities deter me from my fixed resolution.

"Lord Clifford had not seen me an hour, and he scarcely could recognize me under other circumstances. From a French baroness, speaking perfect French, to an English countess, was a transformation which, as he did not understand the former language, he would never suspect for a moment.

"Arriving at my mother's home, I immediately wrote to my agent in England to have Hawthorne Dale open for my reception; and I also dispatched my faithful courier to watch Lord Clifford, and inform me of all his movements.

"After I left Paris, he, too, repaired to his estate in England, having but recently come into possession of his title through his father's death. His princely lands almost joined those of Hawthorne Dale. For many years he had traveled on the Continent, but was now returning to his ancestral home, to take his seat in Parliament. He was the youngest member there.

"Oh, how fresh and beautiful it looked! Hawthorne Dale was the most charming spot I had seen for more than two years. My soul thrilled with an untold joy; every object was beautiful — the old park, the sweet-singing birds, and the lovely landscape — all, all seemed a Paradise! And now a new light had revealed itself to my vision; a new impulse to shine preëminently. Lord Clifford had awakened in my stormy soul a sensation hitherto unknown. His face had haunted my waking hours and my sleeping visions.

"My opening reception, soon after my return, gave him an opportunity to call. Believing, with

the rest of my friends, that I had but just returned from the strict seclusion where my widowhood had been passed, he never for one moment imagined he had met me before; my style of dress, hair, and general appearance deceived him completely.

"Now came another trial. What was I to do with Clare, whose angelic beauty would drive wild half the world? My woman's wit did not fail me now. Clare remained long at school, and passed much of her time in Scotland, with her guardian. I kept them apart until last Christmas eve. No matter; Vignet saved you all! I have no desire to live. *I have failed!* I could not exist after so signal a failure.

"Lord Melgrave, I am unworthy to be called your wife. God have mercy upon me! Oh! my noble-hearted lord, can you ever forgive the withering blight I have brought upon your life? I must tell you all; then curse me, and let me die. *I love Lord Clifford with the deepest worship of my soul, and joy to know my love is strong enough to die for him!* but let me never gaze upon him again!"

"Never fear! Poor Maud! Think of heaven—of the great change that must soon come over you."

Her eyes were closed from exhaustion, and again the crimson tide flowed from her lips. For several hours no person spoke; all felt it would soon be over.

Opening her beautiful eyes, she said in a still, clear voice, "Lord Melgrave, speak to me. Curse me, but speak to me!"

"Maud, my poor wife! for so you still are," and he bent his head to touch her cheek, "believe me

when I say from the depths of my heart, I pity you. Do not think I curse you; but why—oh, why did you not tell me something of this before? Both of us might have been spared the humiliation of this scene? Do not believe that I feel a pang of jealousy; I do not, and your own good sense must tell you why. For two long years I have not thought of you as my wife. I only remembered you had my name, and I grieved for your sins. My life I owe to the faithful Vignet, and your own heart will tell you how long it took my love to die.

'Love may die by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away.'

God only can know how ardently I strove for your love—how assiduously I labored to win one expression of endearment. Without food to sustain this life, we soon perish; and thus it is with human love. Neglect, scorn and indifference will quench the fiercest passion. I cherish no resentment for the past. I forgive as freely as I one day hope to rest in the grave, beside the ancient members of our family. Tell me if there is any thing in this life I can do to comfort you?"

"Pray for me, my lord; pray for me! Clare, where are you? Pray for me! Clare, I love you; I always did, but was too proud to let you know it."

Now she became very restless, crying again and again—"Pray for me! Lord have mercy upon me!"

Kneeling by the bed of the poor, unfortunate woman, the sweet, plaintive voice of Clare Melgrave

floated out on the still, quiet air of that dying room for that poor mother. With her hands clasping those of the dying woman, her voice arose to the throne of Heaven, in supplicating, earnest petition for forgiveness, and that God, through his infinite mercy, would wash her sins away and purify her soul of the great sin."

Tears streamed down her marble cheeks, but still she cried, "He can not pardon so great a crime as mine! I do not understand it; I am not satisfied."

"Oh, my poor mother! do you not know how sweetly our Savior talked to the wicked woman of Galilee, who felt her sins were as scarlet? He said, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' *All*, you see; not one, but every body who has faith in His redeeming love. Just believe in His mighty power, and remember how lovingly He talked to His persecutors on the cross. Even Pilate was forgiven—'They who delivered me have the greater sin;' and again, to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. 'Oh, my mother! pray to Him who could look up to Heaven while suffering the dying agonies of crucifixion, while the cruel thorns pressed His brow and the spear pierced His side, could say, 'FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.' Think of His tender, compassionate love for these wicked men! No cloud of anger rested upon that agonized brow; but love—pure and holy love—a Savior's dying love for me—for you. Think of His great suffering—so great that He cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' When,

bowing His head, He said, 'It is finished!' and died. Have no fears, my dear mother; trust in Him."

"I can not! I love Him, but am afraid!"

"Do not say so; there is no fear in love: 'Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.'"

"Clare, you dear angel, have you forgotten my sin is murder?"

"No, no, my darling mother; do not say it! Oh, it makes me shudder!"

Again the palor of death overspread the features of Lady Maud, and the blood trickled down from her pale lips. With deep grief the two physicians beheld the unavailing effects of medicine to staunch the life-tide of this poor lady.

A deep sleep followed this prostration. Clare retired to a sofa in the farther corner of the room, where reclined her father. Putting her arms around his neck, she kissed him again and again, saying:

"It seems like a dream! Can it be real? Oh, my darling father, promise me you will never leave me again!"

"Promise? Yes, my new-found treasure, I will promise you any thing. No, I shall never wander from you again. We will, I trust, part no more. But, my darling, you look so fatigued! This is too much for you; go down to the drawing-room—any where—into the garden. I will watch beside Lady Maud."

"No, my father; I dare not leave her—she may die any moment. I must help her seek the pardon of her God ere her troubled soul takes its flight."

"Where is the bishop, Clare? She is a Romanist. I do not believe she will have a Protestant bishop kneeling beside her dying bed. When she awakens I will ask her."

Agatha, the faithful attendant of Lady Maud, hastened to inform his lordship and daughter her lady had aroused, and wished to see them at once. In a moment they were with her. Lord Melgrave broke the stillness by asking:

"Maud, let me send for the bishop; he will comfort you so much in this sad moment."

"Oh, my dear husband, if you can forgive me—you, whom I have so much wronged—you, whom I would have murdered,"——

"Hush! hush! 'tis all past! I do forgive you, truly and sincerely. In my heart of hearts I cherish not one unkind thought or sentiment. There lingers but one feeling here—that is deep pity for your sad fate—sorrow that your young life must go out so soon! What can I say to convince you I am sincere, that I believe you regret the past, and as such forgive as truly as I hope to be forgiven?"

"Yes," she said, "I trust in you; surely if you can forgive, God can! Send the bishop to me, and all leave me."

The reverend father was summoned from his room, and alone he prayed with the dying penitent. An hour later, when he left her, a radiance of joy shone on her face. She felt the power of the redeeming love of the Savior to purify her soul from its manifold sins.

All that night she seemed very happy. Sleep

had forsaken her eyes, and she lay calmly repeating again and again the beautiful words of the psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," and conversing kindly with all. The morning sun was just rising above the horizon, richly gilding the towers and domes of beautiful Hawthorne Dale, and flooding them with golden hues. It poured through the rich satin curtains upon the dying face of Maud Melgrave. A sweet peace rested upon her still lovely face—a spirit of resignation—a look toward that far-off land. Lord Melgrave on one side supported her head and held her hand; Lady Clare and the physician stood on the other.

"Throw up the curtain and let me see once more the golden glories of the rising sun."

Instantly her request was granted.

"My husband, lift me up gently."

The strong arm of Lord Melgrave raised her to a position in which the full beauties of the morning sun shed its effulgent light upon her pale, wan face. A strange, pleading look came into her eyes, as if a wish for something, and yet as if she feared to ask for it. Turning these wistful eyes full upon her husband, she whispered:

"Oh, if I only dare!"

"Maud, tell me. Any boon on earth!" and his voice was sweet, affectionate, and full of pity.

"*Just once,*" she murmured; "it will be my passport through the gates of Paradise. *Kiss me, Fred!*"

With these three words her life seemed gone, and she sank from his arms. Who could refuse so peni-

tent a wish? Lord Melgrave pressed his lips upon the brow, eyes and lips of his dying wife; then a heavenly smile of wonder, joy and thankfulness came over her face, and then her troubled soul "migrated to the great secret!" She died without one struggle; she fell into a sweet, peaceful sleep, while her soul passed to that higher tribunal, to receive the final judgment. "Oh, the mystery of death!"

During the day Lord Clifford called. He could hardly realize he had not dreamed it all; but the sweeping crape that fell from every door, the silence of death that reigned through every room, soon convinced him that all was a sad reality. Seating himself by Lord Melgrave, he leaned his head upon his hand, and tried to think, to recall the past.

"We did not look for this, Percy," said Lord Melgrave.

Briefly he then related the events of the last few years. Lord Clifford was overwhelmed to hear relations calculated to appal the stoutest heart. He pressed the hand of his friend, and tears came to his eyes as he said:

"My dear Frederick, I owe you a life of gratitude for saving me. I can not attend the funeral; I shall leave for the Continent to-morrow. Make my adieus to your lovely daughter; when I return I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing and becoming acquainted with her. This occurrence has quite unstrung my hitherto strong nerves. Three months' quiet in some shady, sequestered little nook among the Tyrolese will, I trust, restore their wonted tone. Again, good-by, and may Almighty God bless and

comfort you through the tender love of your beautiful daughter," and the two friends separated.

On the fourth day after her death Lady Maud was quietly laid away in the old gray parish church of Melgrave Abbey, robed completely as she stood before the altar, "beautiful even in death!" A small funeral cortege followed her remains; Lady Clare and Lord Melgrave occupying one carriage, the bishop and parish clergyman another.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO THE CONTINENT.

THREE months after the death of his wife, Lord Melgrave and family left England for a lengthened tour of the Continent.

Lady Clare's nervous system seemed much shattered. The fearful scenes she had witnessed, together with the mournful history she had so very recently been made acquainted with, had wrought a wonderful change in the beautiful, light-hearted, joyous creature of six months before. The roses had faded from her cheek and the luster from her eye; and a tender look of melancholy brooded over the countenance of the once charming girl.

The ever-watchful eye of Vignet had noticed the extreme languor that had of late oppressed her darling Clare; and she lost no time in communicating the facts to her father, who had been so exceedingly happy in her charming society that he had failed to notice her appearance until apprised by Vignet.

So many years of his life had been passed as an alien from any lady's society, that to enjoy the constant companionship of his lovely daughter, whose mind and manners daily expanded under his polished and refined culture, was a form of happiness he had never dared promise himself.

For hours they would sit in that grand old library, surrounded by the finest works of every age.

Lord Melgrave was a fine scholar and a profound thinker. He described the manners, customs and religion of the people whom he had met, in so pleasing, graphic and easy a manner, one could never tire of listening to him. Every day a new pleasure awaited the eager and enthusiastic Clare. The vases were dressed every morning with fresh and beautiful flowers, arranged with exquisite taste, and which filled the library with the most delicious perfume. Wreaths of cape jessamine and acanthus were hung in festoons around the stately marble statuettes that adorned the niches of this temple of literature.

The grand entrance was a fresco from Raphael, representing Venus and the Nymphs—one of the most chaste and beautiful creations the soul-painter ever designed. Half a century it graced and ornamented the portico of the Pamfili Doria, one of the most magnificent villas in ancient Rome.

One of Canova's finest works also filled one alcove. Resting upon a marble pedestal of red and gray granite, was a statue of the Princess Pauline Borghese, who was represented as Venus, and was as original in expression, and beautiful as was the royal original.

The richest gems of art, regardless of expense, graced the walls. Michael Angelo, Guido, Canova and Raphael were here in their true glory; and all this had been given up for years. The old mahogany panels had become dusty, the old antique gems from foreign climes were covered with cobwebs.

There was no end to the questions Clare continually asked her father, who, rich in the lore of ancient tongues, could unravel and make plain the most intricate topic she could suggest. In his own pleasing and unassuming way, so happily did he portray and graphically describe Oriental scenes, that Clare said it was the essence of poetry. She hung upon his words as though they were oracles, living, breathing—the quintessence of a joy hitherto unknown, the pleasure of a dear father's love. And can we wonder that in his supreme happiness at the possession of the holy love of so sweet and lovely a daughter, he had failed to notice that “a shadow hung on her soul?”

When the animated voice of her father fell upon her ear, her countenance glowed with enthusiasm; she was all joy and gladness. But in the quiet of her own room, or in a shady little nook, away down in the park, where once she met Lord Clifford, the buoyancy of her spirit was gone—a dreadful languor oppressed her.

Her father found her, one afternoon, seated on a low mound, her hands clasped, and her beautiful hair falling in a shower around her. Listlessly she gazed, with a vacant, half-wondering look, into the pearly stream that murmured at her feet. The color had all faded from her cheek, leaving it a beautiful piece of sculptured marble. She murmured an unintelligent name, and sank back in a swoon.

She was caught in his strong arms, and borne to the mansion. The old family physician was summoned, and he immediately advised a change of

place and scene, as the only method of arousing her mind from the deep and brooding melancholy that she seemed unable to shake off.

Preparations were made at once for a lengthened tour of the Continent. In ten days they bade adieu to Hawthorne Dale and its magnificent scenery, and crossed the channel to France. Two weeks were passed in the gay metropolis of Europe, and again they were on the wing.

At Geneva they were unexpectedly joined by Lord Clifford. The meeting on both sides was of the most cordial kind; all ceremony of nobility and title was waived. Lord Clifford caught Melgrave by the hand and wrung it till the latter cried him mercy.

“My dear Fred, I am more than delighted to meet you,” said Clifford. “Upon my soul you must have bathed in the elixir of youth, and grown young and handsome. You look five years younger this day than I, who ought to be ten years your junior.”

“Ah, Percy,” and Melgrave smiled a half-sad smile, “you know my maxim. If I can not be happy myself, I strive to make those around me so, and I derive much pleasure in seeing smiles on the faces of those I love. It can do no person any good to make a panorama of his grief, if the picture be an unpleasant one. Your own generous soul would tell what kind of a view the painted heart of Fred Melgrave would be!” and again a sombre smile passed over his face.

“But, come; you have not inquired for my daughter. I trust you have not forgotten her?”

"Forgotten her! the thought were almost sacrilege!"

Since his marriage farce, Lord Percy Clifford had secluded himself from all society, hoping to forget the fearful abyss into which he had well-nigh fallen but for the timely assistance of his friend. In driving the horrible picture away, there constantly arose before his vision the beautiful form and face of Clare. She floated around him like a pleasant dream. Her clear, luminously blue eyes, so pure and guiltless, so full of love and reverence, had haunted him since that Christmas eve when he placed the betrothal ring upon the finger of Lady Maud.

Lord Clifford was one of God's noblemen. His soul scorned to do wrong. Open, generous and frank, he would have severed his right hand from his wrist sooner than have paid any attention to Lady Maud had he known any thing of her character. The holy and refining sentiment of love was to him the noblest creation of heaven, while a high moral culture had purified every thing ignoble in his nature.

He might admire, be fascinated with a brilliant flower, gaze upon it in a wrapt adoration, wish to press it to his lips; but when he found it contained a poison whose perfume was death, the gay and beautiful dyes gilding each leaf faded, and their prismatic colors assumed only the dark and gloomy shade of the upas.

The tender feeling he had mistaken for love expired with that knowledge of her deceit. True

love can only be lasting when the object on which it is bestowed is worthy. Those noble attributes of the human heart that defy time, sorrow, grief and death, have for their corner-stone the finest qualities of our inmost being.

Lady Maud by her crimes had nearly crushed the heart of Lord Clifford. He felt for her a supreme scorn and contempt, and rejoiced to think the sweet and tender sentiment he called love had never been given her.

Ah, no! Since the humiliation of coupling his name with hers, and the shock of having to pass through such a fiery ordeal at the wedding, Lord Clifford retained no love for Lady Maud; but the sight of Lord Melgrave brought the dead so forcibly to his mind that for the moment it was painful to endure.

They sought Lady Clare in her private drawing-room. She arose to welcome them. Lord Clifford evinced the warmest emotion at meeting her, and his quick eye did not fail to detect the pensive, sad expression on the face of the beautiful girl before him.

There was a far-off, wondering look in her eye, and a weary, languid motion as she reclined restlessly on the sofa. And yet there was a charm about her he had never seen in another—something so pure and holy that the very atmosphere which surrounded her reminded one of the presence of angels. It was not new; he felt it the first time he ever saw her, and had experienced the same every time he chanced to meet her. He could not define

it. It was a most comforting influence; nameless, but wrapping his soul in a dream of bliss hitherto unknown.

Nor did it in any way interfere with his affection for Lady Maud. The feelings were different. Lady Maud bewildered him; her presence was intoxicating—she charmed like a serpent! But out of sight, away from the influence of her magnetism, all the adoration passed away! it was neither abiding nor lasting. True, she was regal; her beauty transcendent—bewildering. None ever gazed upon her smile but felt—

“And for thee, star-eyed Egyptian,
Glorious sorceress of the Nile,
Light the path to Stygian horrors
With the splendors of thy smile!

“Give his Cæsar crowns and arches
Let his brow the laurels twine;
I can scorn the Senate's triumph,
Triumphing in love like thine!”

But when her real character became exposed—when transformed from an angel of beauty and brightness to an incarnation of deceit, a human fiend—she stood forth an object so revolting, that, strong man as he was, he shuddered to think a word of love had ever passed his lips.

But the memory of the dead was a theme too painful for either to mention. Lord Melgrave loved Percy Clifford too well to open a wound that had but just commenced to heal. They both felt that

“the grave covers every error and buries every defect.” The wild volcano that had hurled forth burning lava for years had ceased its eruptions, and she rested in peace.

CHAPTER IX.

SOJOURN IN FLORENCE.

FROM Geneva our travelers went to Italy, the land of "Corinne," memorable for all that is grand and beautiful, both in ancient and modern history.

It possesses in its wonderful works of art, its beautiful scenery, and the names of poets, painters and scholars, something which will carry its unrivaled glory through all the nations and all ages.

At Florence, the capital of the grand duchy of Tuscany, Lord Melgrave proposed to Lord Clifford to remain for a time. This is one of the most delightful cities in the world. Situated in the rich valley of the Arno, it is surrounded by beauties unsurpassed in nature, and unequalled in art. The air is mild and salubrious, the temperature not varying thirty degrees during the whole year.

This city has been immortalized by the glowing pen of Byron, Rogers, DeStaal, and a host of others; and is the birth-place of Dante, Gallileo, Michael Angelo, and other historic celebrities. To Lady Clare's highly poetic mind, this spot contained the rich gems whose possession she had so long desired. Surpassing all others, it furnished a world of interest to fill the void of the past.

Beautiful gardens, adorned with grottoes and statuettes, fountains and temples, attract the eye, wander where you will in Florence, or its environs.

One of the most charming palaces on the banks of the Arno was selected by Lord Melgrave to be their home during their sojourn in the city. At his earnest solicitation, Lord Clifford consented to make one of the happy household, although his courier had engaged a hotel for him some weeks previous. Nothing which wealth could command, fine taste devise, or nature contribute, were omitted to render this an abode of enchantment. The costliest paintings adorned the walls, and the finest statuary filled every alcove. The ceilings were frescoed by the best masters in the old world. This palace had been the original home of one of the cardinals in the reign of the Gregories; its elegance surpassed anything the imagination could paint. It was designed by Michael Angelo, the most perfect artist and designer the world has ever known.

The gardens were elegantly laid out; drives and walks were skirted with beautiful flowers, whose perfume filled the air with their delicious odors. One large octagonal hall, elegantly frescoed, contained the paintings, and became the picture gallery, containing the best works of two centuries.

Here were to be found the finest works by Canova, Guido, Raphael and Michael Angelo. The greatest work of that soul-painter, Raphael, adorned this hall,—his most glorious masterpiece, the Transfiguration. This was the last of his earthly work; for expressive beauty, it is incomparable.

The figures almost breathe. The divine expression of the Savior is so perfect that we can almost imagine we view, in the distance, the effulgent glory of Heaven. The intense suffering of the demoniac boy, and the hopeful, speaking face of the two apostles, as they point the convulsed child to Mount Tabor, where the blessed Lord and his two prophets are floating through the air, are wonderful. Words fail to convey the language, the expression of this painting. It is an inspiration. But the soul of the inspired painter winged its flight to the unfathomable hereafter, to realize the celestial visions that his immortal brain had transferred to canvass.

While he lay in state, this exquisite painting formed his canopy. In the morn of life this highly gifted child of genius passed away. He gave the last divine expression to the faces before him; gazed upon them in wonder, joy, and rapture, and died. Beautiful thought! he had finished his work. When Raphael went—

"It was on an April day, when nature smiled;
All Rome was there."

Clare never wearied of gazing upon this picture and two others — *The Annunciation* and the *Adoration of the Three Kings*.

In the early morning she would have the curtains looped up, the heavy golden fringe and tassels put away, to let the morning sunlight stream in upon these ancient gems; and in the evening, from the other side, the sinking sun reflected its thousand prismatic beauties from the works of this great master.

There were many places of interest to our youthful friends; and every day, aye every hour, unfolded new scenes and new objects of pleasure to Clare. To her father and Lord Clifford it was not new, as both had been great travelers, having been over half the civilized portion of the earth. But it was an untold joy to them to witness the pleasure of Clare.

On the outskirts of the city there was an ancient ruin, resembling the grand old temple of peace, which we find on leaving the forum in Rome. It had been a magnificent piece of masonry of gray granite and red lime stone. Its temples and columns, now mouldering and falling to decay, presented, by moonlight, a most striking and beautiful appearance. The murmuring of a cascade, the sequestered little brooks among the jutting fragments of stone, with here and there a bunch of violets and blue bells peeping out from their rocky beds, while the air is laden with the perfume of the rich valley below, make these ruins the most picturesque and romantic in all Italy.

The gilded spires reflect back the soft rays of the clear moon, forming fantastic figures on the gray walls. An armed legion, with a whole park of artillery, formed one picture; while, in another, a grand cavalry charge, with torn and mangled horses strewing the ground, burnished sabres, and arms of steel, could also be traced with a faint stretch of the imagination. All this formed a delightful study for the enthusiastic Clare. Indeed, almost any object could be traced in the liquid moonlight. And to render the scene doubly attractive, a gipsy camp

was pitched just in the rear of a huge pile of Egyptian porphyry. These wandering creatures, who roamed over half of Europe, had finally selected this delightful spot as their permanent resting place—that is, they always returned at stated periods, and considered this their home. This roaming encampment was much superior to those of most of the gipsy tribes. Its members traced their lineage to the famous Egyptian queen, and were always governed by a woman.

Their present sovereign was a magnificent-looking creature, with raven-black hair that fell in wavy ringlets to her feet. She had that Jewish cast of features which, in a variety of instances, is very beautiful. But the hidden fire of her passionate race slumbered in her jet-black eye, kindling it into a volcano, or melting it into love and tenderness. She was always robed like a princess of the royal blood, and attended by a retinue of pages and courtiers.

Lady Clare was strolling one afternoon with Percy Clifford through the ruins, when they accidentally came upon her, seated on a throne of flowers, and haranguing her people.

As she caught sight of Clifford her hand dropped listlessly to her side; her whole form swayed like a reed, and she would have fallen but for a page, who caught her in his arms. Confusion was depicted upon all their faces. Clifford hurried Clare away, who, ignorant of the cause of the sudden indisposition of the queen, was glad to avoid the general noise and confusion which followed.

“Take my arm, Lady Clare; you look wearied,” said Clifford, “and we will visit a delightful little cascade. If I remember aright, it can not be far from here.” Her sweet face was radiant with health and happiness. The weeks she had spent in Florence had brought back the roses to her cheek and the purity of health to her eye, which beamed with unwonted splendor. The exhilarating horse-back rides and drives; the boat-excursions and rambles, had made her features the picture of health and jubilant youth. The sparkle of mirth danced in her eye, and supreme joy glowed on her countenance.

The little cascade flowed, in murmuring music, over the jutting fragments of a huge rock of red limestone, and fell in sparkling dewdrops in a marble basin, hewn by nature from a pure, white stone. Hanging vines and roses fell in clusters, dipping their fragrant bows in the water, and shimmering in the softened rays of the sun like gems of precious stones.

Clare clapped her hands in rapture at the beautiful picture; and, seating herself upon the mossy bed, tears ran down her face. Lord Clifford had often seen her deeply moved at scenes they had witnessed since they had been in Italy; but never when she seemed so nervously excited.

“Oh, Lord Clifford, take me away! there is a strange fascination about this place. I don’t know what it is, but it makes me sad;” and the color all faded from her face. He jumped from his seat, caught her in his arms, and supported her away from the cascade.

One moment he had held this beautiful girl in his arms—one moment felt her heart throb against his own. Why did he not tell her then and there she was the dearest object on earth to him? He had been her constant attendant for months, and had pointed out to her every work of beauty and interest in the whole city. They were every way equal in education and birth. Can we wonder they were drawn together by ties the strongest which can be felt by the human heart? Never breathed a braver man than Lord Clifford; and yet, in the presence of the gentle being before him, he was a coward. Like a troubadour of old, he could worship in song the spirit of beauty that held captive his soul by the sweetest chains prisoner was ever bound. But to breathe of his devotion seemed impossible; fear alone prevented. He dared not risk a disappointment.

Clare rallied from her strange emotion, saying, "Come, Lord Clifford, I guess I am nervous; let us go home."

The evenings were passed most delightfully by the three, usually at a musical entertainment, or in reading aloud in the library.

CHAPTER X.

THE GIPSY QUEEN.

A few days after their visit to the cascade, Lord Melgrave and Clifford announced a business engagement at Naples. They were to be absent three days. Clare could scarcely reconcile herself to the thought of being left alone for even a short time. Her father was very dear to her, and to leave her for a day painfully affected her. He kissed her repeatedly, and laughed at her for being so childish, telling her he would soon return. Lord Clifford shook her hands and lifted her white fingers to his lips, bowing profoundly. Clare blushed at this unusual warmth, and waved her handkerchief after them until they were out of sight.

"Oh, Vignet! what shall I do without my father? This is the first time we have been parted since his return."

"My child, there are a thousand kinds of amusement open for your selection. Weave one of those oriental vases, and fill it with flowers, to surprise him on his return."

"Oh, no, Vignet, I can not work; I am too nervous. I wish I had gone with him. How long the day will seem! Let us walk in the garden till luncheon, and then go down to the cascade. Hark! what is that great noise without? There, as I live,

is that wonderful gipsy girl! Is she not a beauty? Will it not be delightful to have her tell our fortunes some day? Do you know since I was a child I have so admired gipsies! You remember we were promised a visit to the old ruins. I shall hold my father and Lord Clifford to their engagement. And yet the presence of that woman comes over me like a shadow of evil!"

"Clare, you are truly nervous to-day. You look ill; come in, and let me give you a Turkish bath, and then try to sleep. You are shivering, as though you had an ague fit."

The delicious perfume of the water had the most happy effect on the disturbed nerves of Lady Clare. She sank into a sweet sleep, and the sun was sinking behind the lofty peaks of the Apennines when she aroused from her delightful slumber. A tempting repast was placed for her in a little breakfast parlor adjoining.

The hangings of this room were of a pale-blue silk damask, and the ceilings were beautifully frescoed and hung with several exquisite paintings by American artists; and in the niches, on fine marble pedestals, were statuettes of celebrated American heroes.

Lady Clare had a great love for the new world, and had had this suit of rooms fitted up just to please her fancy. The furniture came from New York, and every picture was of artists, and by artists from America. Even the library contained only the choice works of American authors. Laughingly she would say, "I am a Yankee girl here!"

But never did the sun shine on a happier face or a lighter heart than those of Lady Clare Melgrave. She was naturally of a cheerful, happy disposition, catching every ray of sunlight floating around her.

Pushing aside the dainty silver tray and its contents, untasted, she arose, saying, "Come, Vignet; let me show you the most beautiful little cascade you ever saw. I am sure you will say it is a perfect gem of beauty."

Throwing a light lace shawl around her shoulders, they set forth. How beautiful she looked, robed in a pale-blue lama dress, with a rich lace *berthe*, and a diamond cross suspended from her neck! Her arms were bare, and devoid of any ornaments; and her hair, that wonderful wealth and crown of beauty, fell in rippling ringlets of *speaking* gold far below her waist. Yes, her hair almost talked! It shimmered and danced in the sunshine. Never was seen such a wealth of beauty as Lady Clare Melgrave's hair. She brushed it all away from her classic brow, passing a ribbon around it and fastening it with a blue tie of silver fringe; over the whole she threw a veil as soft and white as a cloud-mist. Never fairy in a magic ring looked half so beautiful. Slowly they sauntered along, admiring the thousand objects of interest which met their eyes. Vignet had been anticipating a visit to her early home, and together they were all to visit the tomb of the Countess of Melgrave, the thought of which had somewhat saddened her.

"Poor young lady!" said Vignet, "how brief a sojourn on earth was hers! Her memory is a shrine

where the brightest hopes of a life were burned to ashes."

"Ah! Vignet, this is the place to see the cascade to the best advantage. Oh, look! look! how the water sparkles through the foliage!" and seating themselves on a grassy mound hidden by the dense undergrowth, they viewed the water pouring over the ragged rocks, and falling into a snow-white basin below.

So quietly had they approached that two persons, not twenty feet from them, had not seen them; nor did Lady Clare or her companion observe them until the sound of voices arrested their attention.

"*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! n'avez-vous pas d'ame?*" moaned a female, in a tone of the most agonized grief.

The reply came in a rich, base voice, clear, distinct and determined—a voice, the tones of which were commanding, and yet tender.

"Bianca, what would you? Be content with the love I give you, which is, you know, as pure as the water that bubbles from yonder cascade." And Percy Clifford bent his head and kissed the brow of the gipsy queen!

Lady Clare saw it all—heard it all. She pressed her hand upon her heart, leaned her head on her faithful friend's shoulder, and moaned, "Oh, Vignet, let us go home!"

"Hush, child! do not move!" said Vignet: "they are coming!" and they held their breath lest Percy might see them.

There was a sad expression on his face; but one of intense joy radiated the olive cheek of his com-

panion. His arm was round her waist, and her hand clasped in his.

"Poor little darling! my heart aches for you. Be a good girl, and I will try and see you in two or three days—oh, this cruel pain in my ankle!—by moonlight, at the cascade."

He gathered her up in his arms, pressed another kiss upon her brow, and bade her good-night.

"Vignet," said Lady Clare, "I must die! He loves the gipsy!"

"Lady Clare, there is a mystery," said Vignet; "it looks strange—I can not understand it; but if ever human love for another was printed upon any face, Lord Clifford loves you."

"Oh, Vignet, you will drive me mad! Never mention it! Did I not see and hear for myself?"

"Yes, and so did I; and yet I fully believe there is some cause for it all beyond what we have seen. He has not, to my mind, used either the tone or affection of a lover. He only kissed her brow with the same tender feeling he might have kissed a sister or an old friend."

"My good Vignet, you and I can never quarrel; but my eyes and ears can not deceive me. Let us go home—I am sick. If Lord Clifford asks for me, tell him I wish to be excused."

Entering by the side door of the chateau, they passed unobserved to their rooms. Lord Clifford had returned, by reason of a severely sprained ankle. His horse, in leaping a ditch, had fallen and thrown him. Urgent business alone prevented Lord Melgrave from returning to Florence. Of course, the

first inquiry of the nobleman was for Lady Clare, to inform her of his misfortune. Imagine his surprise when informed she wished to be excused, without giving any reason whatever for so doing. Lady Clare was too genuine, too truthful, and by far too artless to affect any thing or act without a strong conviction of right; therefore he thought there must be some mistake. He sent his valet to her room, with a note. She returned the note, penning a few words on the other side: "Clare Melgrave can not see Lord Clifford to-night." He could not believe his senses. Not one word of regret at his misfortune! No excuse was offered, or really any cause for such strange conduct. They had been such good friends! He had not thought of his interview with the gipsy girl since he bade her good-night at the cascade. Ah, Lord Percy! had you dreamed that that visit had an audience, perhaps you could guess why Lady Clare could not see you to-night!

"What can it mean?" he mused. "How have I offended her?" These thoughts, together with his sprained ankle, rendered his sleep any thing but refreshing. A long, weary night dragged slowly away, and was succeeded by a day still more monotonous. Some thing of no small moment had happened, and patiently he awaited the return of his true friend to solve the problem for him. Feeling too ill, both in mind and body, to leave his room, he whiled away the hours in skimming through a late work on "Woman's Caprice" and "Natural Economy," two very entertaining works for a love-lorn swain, whose lady-love had repulsed him.

Lady Clare, notwithstanding her pique, could not forget the claims of hospitality due her father's guest. She sent a delicate but delicious breakfast—just Lord Clifford's favorite morsels—together with a fragrant cup of Mocha, "a drink fit for the gods," to his room, and asked could she do any thing for him. His heart craved only a reconciliation with her own dear self; but his tongue answered, "Not any thing, Lady Melgrave, thank you."

Three days passed. Vignet had waited the time appointed by Lord Clifford to meet the gipsy, with all the patience she could command, feeling assured every thing could be perfectly explained. Every evening Vignet repaired to the cascade—not as a spy or listener, but to understand the strange meeting of two persons so wholly dissimilar, and at the same time with so much seeming affection.

On the evening of the third day Lord Clifford's servant met the gipsy at the appointed tryst, and gave her a note, which she kissed again and again, then bounded like a gazelle into the tangled wild-wood, and was lost to the anxious, waiting eyes of Vignet, who was thus again doomed to disappointment. Still, her faith in Lord Percy's honor and integrity, and his love for her young mistress, never wavered. Although she had seen the tenderest manifestations of love, seemingly, between his lordship and the gipsy, while no word of affection had ever passed between Lord Clifford and Lady Clare, she knew with her woman's keen wit that he loved her—knew that the souls of both beat in harmony. If ever woman loved a man, Lady Clare loved Lord

Percy, and her faith in that divine power which governs all human actions led her to believe every thing would be made plain. This was the day of Lord Melgrave's expected return.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CASCADE.

CLARE had dressed with unusual care in a robe to please her father — a snow-white India muslin. A long, floating, blue scarf, with silver fringe, fell in graceful folds to the floor.

She was the personification of roseate health and beauty; her cheeks aglow, with her eyes twinkling and sparkling like liquid dew on the leaves of a rose, and her beautiful golden hair falling in a shower of curls over her shoulders.

She saw her father's stately form coming up the avenue, and with him two strangers. In a moment she was in her father's arms, half-smothering him with kisses. When her first earnest greeting was over, Lord Melgrave presented to his daughter General Huleiniska, of the Austrian Guards, and Count Barrita, whom he had just found at the hotel, and had insisted upon their company to dinner. They had long been dear friends, and it was a pleasurable surprise to meet them.

Lord Melgrave at once inquired for Lord Percy Clifford.

"I have not seen him since his return," said Lady Clare. "I believe he has not left his room," and a haughty look of indignation passed over her face—such as her father had never seen there before.

"Why, my daughter, I am quite surprised! Did you not know he had sprained his ankle severely? I must go to him at once," and without waiting a reply he excused himself to the gentlemen and left the room.

In the mean time they had passed into the elegant drawing-room. The delicious perfume of Italian flowers filled the room, and the mellowed radiance of the dying day flooded the apartment with a golden mist.

Lord Melgrave sought the chamber of his friend. He was lounging in an easy chair, with his foot lying on a cushion, and a gloomy expression resting on his usually pleasant countenance.

"Ah! mon garçon!" and Melgrave grasped his hand; "Clare tells me she has not seen you since your return. Not quarreled with my baby, have you? Can't think of such a thing! Tell me how it is."

"No, Fred, upon my honor, I am at a loss to imagine, why she refused to see me the first evening I came home, without giving any reason or excuse; and most assuredly you would not have me forget my honor so far as to request a second interview?"

"Bah! Percy; only a girlish freak,—a little fit of jealousy. You looked, perhaps, at some other dame, and she read love therein. Come, cheer up; drive off such a sorrowful look. I should take it that wonderful raven had perched above your chamber door.

"By the way, who do you think I have brought home with me? Ah! I forget you are not a Yankee.

Well, the Count Huleiniska and Signor Brignoli, our heroes of the Nile."

"Ah! indeed," said Clifford; "I shall be happy to meet them again. We may look for a rich treat of music. Brignoli is the finest tenor in the world. His voice will harmonize well with Lady Clare's. Does she know it is he?"

"No! that is the best of it. I did not introduce him as Brignoli. I wish to see if she will know him by his voice. She has been very anxious to hear him sing; and declares her imagination is so vivid, she is quite certain she would recognize his voice. I don't think it possible; but he is generous and amiable, and the idea of a little surprise just pleased him. Remember he is the Count Barrita. Come, they are both anxious to see you."

"Thank you; I shall be very glad to renew an acquaintance begun in so dark and stormy a time," said Lord Clifford. "But what am I to do? A fellow might as well be in 'Chillon's walls;' he could make quite as rapid progress in traveling. Bring Brignoli up; it ought to drive off a chronic fit of the blues to see his pleasing, happy face and mirthful, dancing eye. The general must content himself till I am better."

"Percy Clifford, I will not hear such a thing! You must and shall come down, if we carry you. It will spoil our dinner to see your chair vacant. And then you would not miss the musical feast we anticipate, would you? I am very anxious to hear Clare's voice with Brignoli. Come, come, shake off that woe-begone look. I should think you antici-

pated an attack from Mourad Bey, with ten thousand Mamelukes."

The picture he ventured to present awakened pleasurable as well as painful remembrances; and yet Lord Clifford forced a smile.

"Well, Fred, as you are irresistible, I suppose I must go down. However, I think I can dispense with your kind services; and, with Dalton's assistance, can reach the dining-room. He is very clever, you know, in caring for broken or maimed limbs."

In an hour they all met at dinner. Clare was a trifle pale and very nervous, something quite unusual for her. She extended her hand to Lord Percy, and bowed in rather a stately manner. He merely touched the tips of her cold fingers, which trembled violently, despite her determination to avoid the appearance of being at all disconcerted. She did not lift her eyes to his. She could not look in the face of the man who, while manifesting by a thousand acts, his love for her, had vowed it to another, and that other a gipsy girl.

After wine and coffee, they repaired to the drawing-room, which opened to a conservatory, filled with the rarest flowers the peninsula could boast.

Brignoli monopolized Lady Clare's society, who seemed exceedingly pleased with the fascinating Italian, music and the fine arts being the theme of conversation, while the general, Lord Melgrave and Clifford wandered back to the Nile and the scenes of other days. Both gentlemen felt that, to the dauntless courage and daring of Gen. Huleiniska,

united with his familiarity with the Arab tongue, they owed their lives.

Brignoli was making himself too agreeable to Lady Clare, and she seemed altogether too happy to have him do so, to suit the equilibrium of Lord Clifford. Pushing aside a chess-board that had remained untouched for the last half hour, he said to Lord Melgrave:

"Did you not promise us some music if we would make ourself ridiculous by hobbling from our den?"

"Yes, yes; I lost myself in remembrances of the past. I see Clare is anticipating your wishes. I told her the general was a fine singer, and Barrita the best tenor I had ever heard."

"Some music, gentlemen," said Lord Melgrave. "Count Barrita, will you lead Lady Clare to the piano, and favor us with a song?"

Clare was an accomplished performer—her voice a rich mezza-soprano. She sung without effort, pouring forth a flood of melody, charming her listeners into an enthusiasm rarely equaled. Clare arose and accepted his proffered arm, and seated herself at the piano. Taking up the music book, she opened the leaves, asking Barrita if he had any choice. He selected the final aria from *Favorita*; which they sang with exquisite taste and expression. As the song closed, Clare turned suddenly to Brignoli, exclaiming: "I can not be deceived; you are Brignoli." He laughingly assented. Lord Melgrave shouted, "Bravo, my Lady Clare; you are a true prophet."

"General Huleiniska, will you not join us in a trio?" said Brignoli; and they sang a spirited trio, which elicited the warmest applause from their two listeners. Lady Clare being called upon for a solo, sang, with sarcastic emphasis, for Lord Clifford's benefit, the words from Longfellow's *Hyperion*, "Beware, she is fooling thee." Brignoli was in ecstasy, and exclaimed, "Signora, your voice belongs to the world," while General Huleiniska declared that the mantle of La Grange had fallen upon her shoulders. "Lady Clare," he added, "your voice is marvellous!" To cover her confusion, she began playing Beethoven's moonlight sonata, after which she arose, and remarked, "The music suggests a moonlight promenade on the piazza."

Lord Clifford, both surprised and grieved at her manner, and yet unable to account for it, begged to be excused, making his lame ankle an excuse for leaving so entertaining a party. "No, Clifford," said Lord Melgrave; "we can not spare you; but as we have no wheeled chair at hand, the general and myself will assist you to the piazza." After having seen him comfortably seated, the conversation became general. It was a beautiful scene; the moon, resting upon the parterres of flowers, making silver lines on the white limestone walks, while beyond this fair Tuscan garden, dimly defined against the sky, arose the old, magnificent ruins.

"Ah!" exclaimed Clare, "how solemn and gloomy are these hoary remnants of the dead past! The sight of them by daylight makes me shudder;

the only redeeming feature about them is a gipsy camp beyond, with a real Granadian queen. I have seen her, and she is truly a magnificent creature."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MARCHIONESS.

"GENERAL Huleiniska, did you ever have your fortune told?" said Clare. "Oh, won't it be nice! I am half-dying to cross the palm of that wonderful queen, and have her predict my future. Pa! pa! let us go to-morrow;" and, in her artless enthusiasm, she clasped his neck, regardless of the gentlemen present.

"You forget Lord Percy's lame foot."

"Pardon me, Lord Clifford."

"Never mind; go without me. I am sure you would have a delightful time; but I should like to accompany you, as I have met her royal highness, and would be sure of an audience."

Clare dropped her eyes, and then raised them, hoping to catch the eye of Lord Clifford.

"No, indeed, sir knight! we could not think of going without you; and will give you just three days to get well; of course, if you have met the queen of fortune-tellers, you must have had your fortune told. Come, tell us what she predicted."

This gayety, on the part of Clare, was very unnatural; her cheeks were crimson, and her eyes on fire. She never removed them from Percy Clifford, but not one muscle quivered, or one feature changed color under her steady gaze. There was

no guilt in that quiet, dignified countenance; but the same noble, steadfast and truthful light shone in his clear, mild eye, that had ever rendered him one of the most fascinating gentlemen of the age. Clare was bewildered. If ever she saw a truthful, sincere face, it was the one before her; and yet she thought, "I saw it with my own eyes."

Thus it was arranged, that in three days they were all to visit the gipsy camp, and hear fortunes. Good nights were exchanged, and the party separated.

Under care of the general was a lady friend, who had just arrived from Versailles, and who was awaiting her husband, the Marquis Du Combe, who was then the bearer of dispatches to the Ottoman Porte. The general gave Lord Melgrave and daughter an invitation to call upon her with him the following day at her hotel. Clare had made very few acquaintances during her brief sojourn in the city, as her retiring disposition required but few friends. Her father's wish was ever her pleasure; and the next evening they accompanied the general to call upon his friend. They found the marchioness a gay, vivacious, little French woman, dressed in the extreme of Paris fashion; her hair most elaborately puffed and frizzed, decorated with diamond ornaments, while a little dwarf page sat on a magnificent hassack at her feet, nursing a snow-white poodle. Two noble waiting women were at the further end of the room, conversing in a low tone, and looking anxiously toward her ladyship. But the marchioness was too much taken with Lord

Melgrave to think of her ladies, one of whom was very beautiful and accomplished—the young and charming widow of M. Devereux, equerry to his majesty, the Emperor of the French, who met with a fearful death in saving the life of his sovereign. She was very lovely; and her deep mourning robes but enhanced the beauty of her sweet, *spirituelle* face. Her large, dark eyes were seldom free from tears; but her grief was of so refined a character that no one presumed to question it. Her friends had obtained leave from court for her, hoping this little visit to Italy might arouse her from the debilitating sorrow which was consuming her young life. She found the gay little marchioness any thing but companionable, as she could never, for one moment, afford to spoil the dark beauty of her eyes weeping. No, even were it for a husband.

The general, who was also acquainted with the ladies, left Lord Melgrave with the marchioness, and, taking Clare across the immense reception room, to where they were sitting, introduced them. In a moment, Clare's heart went out to the sweet, sad face of Isabella Devereux. Madame LaGrange, the second lady, was a sinister, intriguing woman; and cared for nothing in the world but dress and establishment. Her husband was an officer of the Guards; a generous, noble fellow, who never committed but one foolish act in his life, and that was when he fell in love with Agatha De Vere, and married her. Oh! but such a life as she led him! Extravagant and a flirt, she entered into all the gayeties of a French court, which had not improved

in moral culture since the worst days of the Bourbons. The general mentioned the anticipated visit to the ruins. Madame LaGrange, of course, was in raptures, particularly as there seemed a prospect of a new flirtation, while the gentle Isabella would go if it would please her ladyship, the marchioness. Presently coffee was brought in tiny Sevres cups; and they joined Lord Melgrave and their hostess. The party was arranged; they were all to go to the ruins the third day after; and then they separated.

Clare was glad to get home, although her call had been, in a manner, pleasant. She was much pleased with the young widow, but the marchioness hardly met her expectations. Indeed, she was rather disappointed. The marchioness seemed too gay; but from the limited opportunity Clare had to judge, she did not like to decide. After dinner, Clare stole away from the gentlemen, who still lingered over their wine, and sought a little bower at the farthest extremity of the garden. It was a most lovely night; the air was burdened with the fragrance of those rare flowers that blossom only in Italy. She still felt piqued at Lord Clifford, although her heart was bleeding for him. There came over her a listless feeling of apathy—a depressing sensation. For the first time in her life, the world seemed very dark, she knew not why. Never had a suspicion of her own heart come up before her until she had seen Lord Clifford kiss the gipsy. How long she had been in this revery she knew not, or how long she had been observed by another. She

arose to return to the house, when a soft hand was laid very gently on her arm, and Lord Clifford stood before her.

"Pardon me, Lady Clare," said he, "but I have sought you for a moment's conversation," and he gently detained her and implored her to hear him. "Tell me—oh, tell me, for the love of angels!" he continued, "the cause of this coldness? My darling, my precious darling, you know, you must have known for months, that I adore you! Oh, I beseech you in pity, my own darling, to give me even one word of hope! You are mine!—you can love none other!"

In his passionate frenzy he had clasped both her hands, and was pouring burning kisses on her fingers, while the most intense emotion was depicted on his face, as if his very life depended upon her reply.

Her first impulse was to fold him to her heart, murmur her soul's thoughts and emotions, and forget she had ever seen him kiss another; but her proud spirit could not brook the belief that another shared his heart. She scorned to think a tawny gipsy had been kissed by the man who knelt at her feet. She arose and tried to go; but he caught her to his heart, and held her with the grip of a madman.

She was overcome, and could only articulate, "Percy Clifford, you are mad! How dare you breathe such words to me, when the smile of your love has but just shone upon, and the incense of your breath has but just fallen upon, *another*! Let

me go! Release me, sir! It is beneath the dignity of a nobleman like yourself to utter a word of love to me! I heard it all, and my eyes confirmed what my ears could hardly credit. Surely you have not forgotten"—

"I *only* know," he interrupted, "*I love you—I love you* with the entire strength of my soul! My sweet darling, hear me!"

"Lord Clifford," she broke in, "unloose your arms! I will not endure your caresses!"

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, "am I sane? Help me to bear this!"

He withdrew his arms from her form, and sank upon the ground. For a moment she scanned his agonized face, and a second time essayed to leave him.

"Lord Clifford," said she, "perhaps the gipsy queen might soothe your anguish!" and she moved away.

With the energy of despair he caught her robe. "Ah! I have it now!" he said, exultingly. "Bless you, bless you, my angel, for giving me a key to the mystery! Lady Clare," and there was no lover in his tone now, but the dignified lord—"may I trespass upon your time, to hear the secret of the meeting you must have witnessed?"

"Oh, Lord Clifford, do not make me your mother-confessor! Few gentlemen can love two persons at once. I presume it may pain you to feel called upon to explain these things to me."

"Lady Clare, your father is knowing to all my acquaintance with that poor, unhappy girl. You

are too generous not to pity her. Have I your permission?"

"Pray, be seated, sir. If I am to listen to a love tale, I would at least have you comfortably seated."

CHAPTER XIII.

EXPLANATION OF LORD CLIFFORD.

"FOUR years since your father and myself were traveling together on the plains of Syria, when we came upon one of those wandering tribes of gipsies. The most fearful shrieks and screams I ever listened to fell upon our ears. Presently a whole multitude of men, women and children came tearing over the plains. Before them ran, or rather flew on the wings of the wind, a young girl, robed as a queen of their race, for execution. Her cheeks were scarlet, from the excitement of running, and her dark eye blazing. Headlong she rushed toward our encampment; like a frightened fawn she bounded over every obstacle. One powerful gipsy almost grasped her. She gave one leap into my arms, crying in good French, 'Oh, monsieur, save me, save me! They are going to stone me to death!' and her form quivered like an aspen leaf as she clung to me with all the strength and energy she possessed. Drawing my sword, I beat him back, and a warm time we had. Lord Melgrave shouted 'To arms!' and in a minute every servant was a soldier. We placed her within the tent, for protection during the *mêlée*. Most savagely did they contend; but we were too much for them, and sullenly they retreated.

"Poor thing! if you could have seen her fairly

embrace our feet in tears of thankfulness! Her story was told very briefly. A house-dweller had sought and won her love. Her tribe would not permit her to marry any one but of her race; she was their queen, and had long been loved by the athletic gipsy, who would have murdered her but for my sword.

"Bianca, although a gipsy, possessed a soul of honor; she would not give her hand to one while another owned her heart. The law of the tribe was, if a female loved a house-dweller, and he would not renounce his faith and become one of them, she was considered forsaken, and her doom was to be stoned to death."

At this point Lady Clare covered her face with her hands and shuddered.

"What were we to do with her? She could not return to her people, to be murdered; nor could we leave her alone on the plains, which would be worse than murder; so, for the present we concluded to take her with us, until we could come across some other wandering tribe who would be willing to take and protect her.

"Weeks passed, but no opportunity occurred to dispose of her. She was completely crushed in spirit, but never mentioned her grief. She tried to make herself useful, and was never troublesome by repining or wishing for any thing. It was with alarm I noticed the extravagant demonstrations of affection she manifested for me by every act of her life, anticipating all my wants before they were expressed. I verily believe she would have died

for me, so deeply did she feel the debt of gratitude she believed she owed; and yet I had only saved a poor, friendless maiden from a cruel and barbarous death.

"Two months glided away, and still no chance occurred to give her to any of her people. After the first shock of her position wore off, we found her very interesting. She was reserved, but intelligent if we at any time engaged her in conversation. She beguiled many a tedious hour by her wild tales of Granada, her early home. I think she sincerely hoped we would not deliver her up to any of the gipsy race. Whether she feared to trust herself with them or not I never knew, but attributed it to her growing fancy for myself. She ever considered me as the preserver of her life, when in reality I only did that which your father or General Huleiniska would have done had they been two feet nearer.

"One day late in autumn, while journeying along, we were happily surprised in espying a camp of Spanish gipsies. 'Bianca,' I said, 'here are people of your class and nation; you must go with them. Do not tell them your story; by doing so the wrath we have saved you from might be meted out to you again.'

"Tears gathered in her eyes, but I heeded them not, as for weeks past her demonstrations of affection had not only been embarrassing but extremely annoying. Your father and myself went with her to the chief of the tribe, and prevailed upon him to take her and care for her well. An ample purse

had the desired effect. We told him we found her on the plains, a lonely wanderer, being lost from her tribe.

"Her youth and beauty won his heart at once. They adopted her with the usual ceremonies. Their present queen was very aged, and grieving over the loss of her only child, a daughter about Bianca's age, who, in consequence of this death, became a great favorite, and afterwards their queen. I bade her adieu, I most sincerely hoped for the last time, but the 'fates' decreed otherwise.

"About a year after she left us, and we were more than a thousand miles away, one bright moonlight night we had encamped at the base of Mount Tiltson, a spur of the Atlas Mountains, in Morocco. We were surprised by a band of 'Bedouins,' and taken prisoners. Of course we only looked for death, or a fate far worse than death—to be sold into perpetual slavery. The thought of traveling thousands of miles over a burning waste of sand, was any thing but pleasant. While we were together it was some comfort; we could try and encourage each other; there was a satisfaction in the sound of our voices; even this joy was soon denied us. The Arabs quarreled among themselves, and concluded to divide their prisoners. One party to be the general and your father; the other, the few servants who had escaped with their lives in the first attack and myself.

"Lady Clare, few can ever know the horrors of having your dear friends and companions taken from you—to feel yourself a slave to an Arab.

Four long months I endured it and lived, bearing their burdens through the burning sands like their camels. I had given up all hope, and resigned myself to my fate. Worn out with constant privations and suffering I fell ill; for many weeks I languished in misery too great to tell. Being only a source of trouble to them, as I was no longer able to walk, they determined to put me to death. This is an amusement among some Arab tribes, and is celebrated with great rejoicing. Accordingly they halted at a little oasis of about three acres, and prepared for the festivity.

"Toward midnight preceding the day appointed for my execution, I lay in my tent thinking of my far away home—of the beautiful English landscape and the comforts I had foolishly thrown away, merely to gratify the insatiable longing to travel. Then I thought of my friends; were they, too, enduring the misery I suffered since we had parted? None would ever know my fate. Oh, the bitter thoughts that crowded through my mind! Must it be? I could not realize that all my ambitious dreams of fame were to find a tomb in the great desert of Sahara. While all these thoughts were flitting through my troubled brain, I saw a slight girlish figure glide into my tent, and approach the rough mat on which I lay! I felt a soft kiss upon my forehead. I fancied the execution had taken place, and that an angel had come to welcome me to realms of bliss. She put her finger on my lips and whispered in the lowest tone possible, 'Don't speak; I will save you; we must fly!' Then I

knew my good angel was none other than Bianca; but how she came there was a mystery; and being too much overcome by the transition from death to life, I had no power to ask. Just behind her stood a tall gipsy, who carefully lifted me in his arms, folded a curiously-wrought mantle of camels' hair around me, and passed swiftly from the tent. Strange, it seemed to me, he halted at every sentinel, and put out his hand. Ah! the mystery was soon solved. The never-failing symbol of recognition among Masons had gained him egress. Bianca had, when with us, very much admired a Masonic jewel I wore, expressing a great reverence for the order, and asked me so many learned questions concerning the origin of the Knights Templar that, in parting, I gave it to her, never thinking that with it she would afterwards save my life. The gipsy, as well as the Arabs, had been admitted to the holy order; and Bianca, like 'Martha and Mary,' had scattered 'palm leaves before the gates of Jerusalem.'

"Once in the open air I lost all consciousness. Where they took me, or how far, I never knew. The mid-day sun was pouring his flaming fire over the desert before I awoke from the deep sleep into which I had fallen. I found myself in a low cave, and heard the trickling of water in the distance. A soft mat was spread for me, and the faithful Bianca was my nurse. I was completely prostrated, and had scarcely strength to thank her for what she had done. However, she needed none; her joy to hear me speak again, after my stupor of fourteen hours,

which she thought must be death, was more than any expression of thanks I could frame into words. The best science in the camp was called into requisition, but I was so debilitated that weeks elapsed before I was able to walk, or scarcely sit up. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, they carried me to the sea-coast; and I departed for England, fully satisfied with my wanderings.

"Oh, how the good Bianca begged me to take her with me! She pleaded with all the fervor of her impassioned soul, in tones whose eloquence would move the stoutest heart; but I could not love her or make her my wife. To me there is something inexpressibly disgusting in the gipsy race; and yet she scarcely seemed to be one of them, nor could I ever account for her fine feelings, her gentle, affectionate manner, and her possession of gipsy blood. She was modest, unassuming, and lady-like. I never once saw her boisterous, rude, or uncivil. Her language, too, was good, and her voice very musical.

"There was no capacity in which I could take her with me to England, save in that of my wife. Perhaps I owed her even that; but would it not have been more cruel still to have married her without reciprocating her love? I gave her drafts on my banker at Cairo for an amount which she pronounced a fortune. I begged her to let me place her in a convent, to be educated, and to think of me only as a brother, assuring her she might command my purse so long as she lived; that I would often see her, if she would only cease to love me; yes, I promised in one year to take her to England and

introduce her to my friends, and to find Lord Melgrave, if he still lived. But no; nothing on earth could satisfy her but my love, which I could not give to one of her race. Think of her in any and every light that I could, she was only one of that detested blood. My heart was overflowing with gratitude and thankfulness for the great service she had rendered me.

"Her sorrow at the thought of parting from me was so acute, I almost wished she had left me to my fate, rather than think me ungrateful. Again, it grieved me to give her money for a recompense, as though the entire wealth of the universe could ever repay her for saving my life. She objected strongly at first to taking any thing; but when I told her that as I had saved her life the debt was canceled, and I would loan her this money to come and see me some time, she caught the idea and joyfully accepted it as a loan.

"We parted—not in anger, but in sorrow; and, upon the honor of a gentleman, Lady Clare, I have never either seen or heard of her since, until we met by accident, so far as I am concerned, at the cascade; but it was not accident on hers, as she never lost sight of me during the years of our separation. Having met with the accident, I was coming home, and was resting for a minute at the cascade, after sending my valet for a physician. Imagine my grief and surprise to meet again—Bianca!

"Her passionate love was again repeated, while her faded cheek and sunken, burning eye told of the

canker-worm at her heart. Her dress and general appearance were much improved. She had adopted the European costume, which became her exceedingly. However, I did not dare notice this improvement, fearing she might misinterpret my meaning. She was so grief-stricken that I pitied her from my very heart. I had ever felt for her the tender and careful love of a brother for a helpless young sister, and willingly would I have placed her where my protecting care might have been around her, and given her a life of ease and comfort. What had she not done for me? Was not the very life and love I then enjoyed a boon from her untiring devotion? The tears were streaming down her wasted cheeks; she never threatened, only prayed! Lady Clare, it affects me most powerfully to see a woman in tears.

"I did try to comfort her by kissing her and assuring her she had the purest love a brother could bestow. I can not remember my exact words; I only know I tried to make them express all I felt. She seemed hardly able to walk, and for a moment I feared she would fall. I have never seen human suffering so strongly depicted as upon her face. I put my arm around her, and again kissed her, bidding her good-night, promising I would see her again in three days. I could not go, and sent my servant with a note, telling her I could not walk, as under no circumstances would I pain her unnecessarily. I knew by that time your father would have returned, and he would help me out of this most unpleasant difficulty.

"Lady Clare, I have done. Are you satisfied? and do you not grieve for her misfortune?"

Lady Clare held out both hands. There was a moist light in her eyes as she gently whispered, "Thine forever!"

He folded her to his heart in one fond embrace. Her cheek was fanned by his warm breath, and her sweet voice whispered, "Forgive me, Percy!"

He pushed back her hair from her white brow, and taking her face in both his hands, gazed into her heavenly blue eye, as if to read a confirmation of words whose sweet meaning his heart could scarcely credit, his soul the while overflowing with tender love and devotion.

"My precious flower! my darling—*my* darling! Forgive you, my angel! what have I to forgive? It is not I—I, who but live on the music of your voice! Oh, breathe in my ear the sweet words my soul has been longing to hear from your lips! Tell me—tell me you love me!"

Lady Clare pressed her sweet cherry lips upon his eyelids, and her flute-like voice floated out in the clear moonlight like the music of an Æolian harp: "Percy Clifford, you *know* I love you!" and again and again she kissed his eyes—the holiest token of love and sentiment ever expressed by woman for man.

If a human feature can reveal the living soul enshrined in its earthly casket, its true revelation is found in the eye, whence gleams its pure light, and which interprets its hidden and deeper mysteries. It is to the silent power of the eye the soul does

homage. There is a tender, pure and holy sentiment in a kiss upon the eye—more precious, more beautiful than all other kisses in the world. The lips may do for the passionate, the gay, and the earthly; but the heavenly, the ethereal and the true can only express itself by a kiss upon the trembling eye. At such a moment the sensitive soul droops its lashes and refuses to talk, because the language of love and supreme rapture is the revealing utterances of the angels, and the eyes alone can understand them. Beautiful beyond all thought is the pure and trusting love of two youthful friends. It is a love that will defy time to obliterate it—a love that absence will not conquer—circumstances, position nor poverty lessen; and when the roses have faded from her cheek and the lustre from her eye, and these soft brown tresses no longer float around her maiden brow, and the manly vigor has forsaken his form, this love will aid them to descend the vale of life peacefully and happily, as they have "braved life's ills together."

And here in this bower the Earl of Ashkirk plighted his troth to his soul's idol. Falling on his knees beside her, with her hands clasped in his, Percy Clifford offered up to Almighty God a most devout prayer of thanksgiving for the royal treasure that had been given him. He also prayed for the poor girl of Granada, who had permitted her heart to go out to one who could not return it; and fervently implored that God would comfort her, and dispel this illusion.

"Amen!" said Clare.

Then he arose, bowed his head and kissed her brow, saying, "Come, darling, let us go in and tell our noble father."

"I would prefer not to do so to-night, beloved. Let us dream of it for one day. I am so happy, I must think."

"My sweet girl, your wish is law," said Clifford; "but let me place upon your finger a token, which will remind you of this hour," and he drew from his little finger an exquisite ring, a single stone of matchless lustre, and put it on her finger, pressed his lips upon her hand, and they started for the chateau.

"Ah, truants, I have been seeking you this hour!" and Lord Melgrave stood before them. He needed no explanations to know a reconciliation had taken place. They were both too happy. The thought was exceedingly pleasing to him, for he loved Lord Clifford as he would an only son. Clare, soon after, kissed her father good-night, shook hands with her lover, bade them both adieu, and ran up to her own room, where she found Vignet anxiously awaiting her.

How beautiful the pictures looked on the wall; every object breathed of love, and smiled back the rapture of her own radiant face. To her faithful Vignet she told all, nestling her head in her arms and kissing her repeatedly, again and again, saying, "I am so happy, so happy!"

"What is it?" said Vignet; "tell me."

"Don't you know, who knows every thing? What will my father say?"

Tears were streaming down Clare's cheeks, which Vignet kissed away, at the same time wiping the blinding drops from her own eyes.

"Vignet, Vignet!" said Clare, "why don't you talk to me? Tell me what is the matter with me? I am afraid!" and she clasped Vignet's neck, hid her face in her bosom, and wept convulsively. Vignet knew such violent excitement would best be soothed by tears; therefore, she let her weep unrestrainedly, caressing her hair and murmuring, "Hush, hush thee! there, my baby, my own pet darling! Percy Clifford is a noble man, your father's bosom friend. Do not be afraid to trust your soul with him. Yes, my lamb, so dearly does he love you, you might trust him to carry your soul to Paradise," and she covered Clare's beautiful face with holy kisses.

"But, Vignet, my father will think I don't love him any more now, but I do more and better—I love every thing and every body a thousand times more! And you, Vignet; you look to me like an angel; your face is radiant with my happiness?"

Thus she rambled until Vignet kissed her eyes to sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORTUNE-TELLING.

"There is a cave beneath the steep
Where living rills of crystal weep
O'er herbage of the loveliest hue
That ever spring be gemmed with dew."

GAY was the party gathered in the court-yard the third day after the events of the last chapter. The anticipated visit to the old ruins, and from thence to the gipsy camp, was to-day about to be realized.

They were all mounted. The general rode a coal-black horse, and the marchioness its mate. She was an accomplished *équestrienne*, and sat her horse with the most admirable grace and dignity. Lord Melgrave and Clifford were mounted on a pair of spirited, iron-gray Arabians. They were a present to Lord Melgrave from an Arab chief, for some signal service his lordship had rendered the tribe while their prisoner. Two more beautiful, finer-blooded animals could not be found in all Europe.

Lady Clare and the gentle Madame Devereux rode two snow-white, Andalusian ponies. Lady Clare's riding habit was of an exquisite shade of Marie Louise blue, that set off her pearly complexion to the most admirable advantage, while her velvet hat, a shade darker, was ornamented with drooping,

white plumes, fastened in front by a diamond star.

Madame Devereux was robed in heavy folds of jet black, relieved at the throat only by her white neck; her black plumes waved around her slender, girlish form like banners of woe.

How beautiful she looked! A patient, silent monument of grief, she appeared to lend her presence only to contribute to the pleasure of others. The tender violet of her eye grew moist with the effort she made to appear cheerful. They were to have luncheon served near the cascade; consequently a carriage, with Vignet and the steward, brought up the rear.

How happy they all were! The marchioness was jubilant; her black eyes sparkled and danced over the coming day's pleasure. The fortune-telling at the gipsy camp was an important feature to her ladyship, who supported two or three sibyls in her own household. They were quite as much a necessity as her three dressing-maids and her three hair-dressers. She never thought of taking any important step without consulting an astrologist; and yet, with all these foibles, she was really a good-hearted woman, generous to a fault, tender and sympathetic.

It was for these last qualities Madame Devereux cared for the marchioness; aside from them, there was nothing in common between them. She was vain of her beauty; nothing could have induced her to weep or grieve to spoil it. One can hardly accurately represent such inconsistent traits of character as were possessed by the marchioness.

Few persons really loved her for herself. She made friends, but never succeeded in retaining them. She was unselfish, a quality which will redeem a hundred faults; and the friends she had were those who estimated that virtue for its true value.

The merry voice of Lady Clare rang far over the ruins as she challenged her father and Lord Clifford for a race.

Lord Melgrave, the fun-loving, and once light-hearted gentleman, had grown, it is true, an older and a sadder man; but his heart, buoyant and elastic, burned with the fire of youth. The noble, generous impulses of his soul shone in his handsome eye. Ah, yes! time had dealt gently with him; his suffering heart did not appear in his youthful face. As if to compensate for the years of blight and woe that had fallen upon his young life, his countenance still retained its cheerful, pleasing expression. Indeed, in appearance, manners and romantic excitement, Lord Melgrave was the youngest of the party. Turning to Madame Devereux, he politely asked if she would join them in the race. She shook her head, and Lord Melgrave announced to his daughter and Clifford his intention to not accept the challenge.

Then away flew Lady Clare and Lord Clifford over the rich, green sward into the woodland beyond. The day was delightful; the air cool, bracing and invigorating. With the speed of the wind the spirited riders flew from the rest of the party. Clifford questioned the propriety of going to the gipsy camp with Clare. He feared the sweetly

beautiful face of Clare might arouse the demon jealousy in the heart of the wild and passionate Bianca.

But in her generous, loving heart, Clare could not understand how any creature could feel resentment toward her, who never intentionally harmed a human being. Lord Clifford proposed that they should wait the arrival of the rest of the party, and all go in together.

Just on the outskirts of the camp, and completely hidden by the dense growth of shrubbery, they drew rein. Lord Clifford assisted Clare from her horse, and they seated themselves on an embankment until the others should come up.

Loud, angry voices arrested their attention. Two persons were deeply engaged in an angry discussion, one evidently presuming upon rights the other would not acknowledge. Then Lord Clifford heard his own name spoken, and he knew the speaker was Bianca. Not wishing to be the unwilling listener to a conversation not calculated to awaken any pleasurable emotions, he blew a shrill blast on his bugle to warn them that strangers were near. Moreover, he did not like to hear his name in the mouths of these people; it annoyed him exceedingly, and he felt life was no great boon when obliged to owe it to so vile a race. Stepping forward he confronted the queen and one of her subjects, looking any thing but amiable.

Cheerfully Lord Clifford put out his hand to greet Bianca, whose face brightened at seeing him; but her color faded, leaving her olive cheek almost

livid, when she noticed his companion. Lord Clifford drew her toward him with all his usual tenderness, saying, "How is my dear, little sister to-day? Let me introduce you to another sister."

Clare's generous soul read the agony depicted on the poor girl's face, and she grieved for her bleeding heart. She took Bianca's hand and kissed her with warmth, talking the while in a sweetly animated tone, telling her there was a party of them come to have their fortunes told.

She shook her head mournfully, saying, "Oh, lady, I can't to-day!"

"You surely won't disappoint us?" said Clare; "will you? Since I was a child I have so much admired gipsies. The marchioness will be deeply grieved if you do not predict her future. Come, Queen of Sheba, you will tell mine, I know," and her glance fell lovingly on Lord Clifford.

Bianca saw it all, and knew that the Lady Clare loved the nobleman.

"Lady," said Bianca, "you do not need either gipsy, seer, or prophet, to tell you who loves you. But moons will wax and wane; oceans will roll between you and whom you love; and a duke's coronet will be laid at your feet ere he will call you bride. A fearful calamity awaits you, but you will triumph."

"Oh, thank you! I shall remember all you have told me. I shall triumph;" and Clare smiled.

"Death will claim *one* who loves you, Lord Clifford," said the gipsy, as she turned toward the nobleman.

"A spirit there is whose fragrant sigh
Is burning now through earth and air:
When cheeks are blushing, the spirit is nigh;
When lips are meeting, the spirit is there!"

And the blue lotus of Cashmere will tremble in the soft moonlight above her head; and the sorrowful nycanthus, spreading its rich colors just after the setting sun, will drop its blossoms upon her tomb."

"No, no!" cried Lady Clare, as she placed her hand on the girl's mouth; for well they both knew whom she meant.

Nor did the gipsy care to dissemble before them. Her quick, keen eye had discerned they were one in thought, and she believed Lord Clifford had related to his companion the story of her wild love for himself; she also felt it would be her last opportunity to tell him her own fate.

Lady Clare saw the mournful look on Bianca's face, and extended her hand to the gipsy, saying, "Come, let us be friends;" and she drew from her finger an antique ring with a diamond setting, which she presented to Bianca as a token of love and respect, and likewise as a memento of the good fortune Bianca predicted.

But no persuasion on the part of Clare could induce Bianca to accept the ring. "Lady," said she, "I have no use for rings; but as a token of your kindly feelings, I most sincerely thank you. I need no souvenir to bring your face to mind, nor to assure you we are friends. I will accept your left-hand glove and wear it next my heart, if it please you."

"Ah, my dear little girl, you shall have both my gloves, with the dearest wish of my heart for your happiness," and she presented her the gloves.

Bianca bowed her thanks, folded the gloves and put them away in a beautiful oriental purse, wrought from the plumage of the bird of Paradise, and highly perfumed with the odor of cinnamon trees, in which these birds build their nests. The remainder of the party came up just then, and the queen assumed her royal dignity.

The marchioness was in ecstasy at the sight of the oriental queen. Her enthusiasm knew no bounds; her only desire to have her fortune told. Having all her life existed in an atmosphere where her will and wish were law, she could not realize that any person's pleasure was to be consulted in preference to her own; but she had never before met Bianca, or she might not have been so sanguine of her personal attractions.

Bianca glanced at the merry group before her, and her eye fell upon Lord Melgrave. She forgot her throne — every thing, bounded to his side in a transport of joy, and clasped his hands, covering them with kisses. It was a happy surprise to both. Bianca knew not that he still lived. Of course she knew nothing of the relationship existing between Clare and the nobleman. Imagine her surprise when Lord Melgrave took her hand, kissed her affectionately, and drew her toward his daughter, saying:

"This is my little daughter, Clare. Come, shake hands."

She gazed at him, bewildered, then at the wonderfully beautiful Lady Clare, as if to trace a family resemblance. Having satisfied herself he was in earnest, she grew deadly pale, and was extremely agitated. However, her self-possession never forsook her. Her amiable disposition amidst the most trying vicissitudes afforded an instance of what a truly noble heart can achieve, and what a refined nature may accomplish.

They were all very eager to hear what this famous queen would tell them. She plead to be excused, but Lord Melgrave succeeded in persuading her to gratify them. The pale face of Madame Devereux alone tempted her. Having waved the others back, she motioned the lady to a seat on a low cushion at her feet.

Almost reverently she took the white hands of Madame Devereux, while her auditors almost held their breath, so profoundly were they impressed by this gipsy's manner and appearance. Bianca fixed her keen eye upon the palm of the soft, white hand she held within her own. A tender smile, half mournful, and yet very pleasing, rested upon her hitherto pale face as she said:

"A smile, a tear, a vision bright,
A look of holy love
From the noble lord who came with thee,
Will waft thy soul above
This prison-house of woe,
Which shrouds thy soul in gloom
For thy slain but loving lord
Who is sleeping in his tomb."

"Splendid!" shouted Clare, and she caught her father's hand, who joined in the applause, much to the confusion of Madame Devereux, who blushed and smilingly said:

"Lady Clare, this is your work!"

"Oh, my gipsy queen, you are glorious!" said Lady Clare. "Will all the others be as good? Here is this dignified general," continued the enthusiastic girl: "I am half dying to hear his fortune. Remember, you must tell him something marvelous; nothing tame will suit these warlike heroes! He must rout a legion of Sepoys!"

"Hush! hush! you little mocking-bird!" said the general.

"Queen of Egypt, let me tell you what his fortune must be," said Lady Clare, still bent upon mischief:

"Live, said the conqueror, live to share
The trophies and the crowns I bear!"

The general laughed, caught Lady Clare's hand, and, bowing, said, "Here, priestess of beauty, accept your fee," and he placed a golden sovereign in her hand.

"No indeed, Count of Austria, you have not yet heard your fortune. Here is the divine oracle," and Clare gave the coin to Bianca, who took it from her hand, kissed it *twice*, and returned it to Lady Clare, saying:

"Lady, keep this for me, and remember in after years that Bianca, the Queen of Suristan, the land of roses, kissed it *twice*! you will then understand my meaning."

"Oh, you little mystery! you will make us believe you are Allah himself, if you keep on! But the general,"——

A serious expression came over the face of the gipsy, as she took the extended hand presented for her inspection. She gazed for a minute on the lines running through his palm, and said, with her charmingly sweet voice: "A deep love, a lasting fame, a name without reproach! *You will never marry!* The gem you would wear in your bosom belongs to another! But the bridal day will be ushered in amid untold rejoicing. The clarion tones of your victories will resound through the vast cathedral. Ascending the steps of the altar, another will claim your intended bride."

"Enough! enough! if he have a better right," said the general, with solemn emphasis, "he shall have her, and I will remain a Castle Forte the rest of my days."

"Lady Clare," he continued, "I think she is partial to you ladies; I should advise the gentlemen not to consult so capricious an oracle. Oh, but here is Lord Melgrave!"

"No, no!" shouted his lordship; "your fortune frightens me! But the marchioness is all impatience, and she ought to be half vexed that you are all before her."

Bianca glanced a moment at the marchioness, and absolutely refused to tell her any thing. A dark frown gathered on the face of Bianca as she slowly raised her eyes to the group, of which the marchioness was the bright particular star, and she

whispered in a voice so low none heard it save Lady Clare and her father :

"Lady, you may know why I will not tell her. A Turkish cimeter in the hands of a midnight assassin, and a dark river, will make her a widow ere two moons shall have shadowed the earth."

A shudder passed over the face of Lady Clare, and she placed her hands over her eyes, to shut out the picture.

"Oh, no, no! do not tell her!" said Bianca; and before any one could guess her movements she sprang from her seat and disappeared in the thick wild-wood.

The rage of the marchioness was terrible. She stamped the ground in anger, and pronounced all kinds of anathemas against the whole gipsy race. Lady Clare, ever a pacificator, soothed her fury by telling her Vignet should take her to a celebrated astrologist on the outskirts of the city, who knew every thing, and would not draw a horoscope for less than twenty guineas. This brought back her good humor, and she declared she would go that very evening.

The cloud occasioned by the disappointment of the marchioness having passed away, they all left the place—a spot destined to become memorable to them in after years.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ACCIDENT.

THE table was spread on the soft, green mossy grass, and loaded with all the delicate luxuries of this delightful clime, arranged in the most inviting manner before the hungry party. Nor were the more substantial things forgotten. Fowls, dressed in various ways, served with condiments; pickles and preserves, in short every thing to tempt the appetite of the most fastidious. An early breakfast and sharp riding had made them all eager for the lunch. Baskets of the choicest wines graced the feast. Then came that most delicious of all drinks, a dish of Mocha, served in the tiniest little Sevres cups. Clare never drank wine; but coffee she was fond of, and upon this occasion she made it herself. Lord Clifford and the count gathered the faggots to make the fire. How happy they all were, singing, laughing and talking.

Long they lingered around the festal board, as if loth to leave a scene of so much pleasure. The count, who could furnish amusement for a legion, beckoned his valet to him, and whispered a word in his ear. A moment later the valet brought from the carriage a small, oriental instrument of music, made of sandle wood, ebony and ivory, inlaid with precious stones. The strings were a kind of gold

wire; and it is used only in Persia among the higher classes as a serenading instrument. Its rare beauty, together with its quaintness, attracted the admiration of the party, and drew forth the most enthusiastic praise. It was crowned with a wreath of turquoise, to imitate the blue campæ flower, which the Persians believe blooms only in Paradise.

Breathlessly they all listened as he ran his fingers over the trembling wires; and as his clear and magnificent voice floated out to the accompaniment of this sweet instrument—

“Go wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world, as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall,
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One moment of *this* is worth them all.”

The cadence of his rich voice had hardly faded away in the still air when, as if by magic, there arose, not twenty feet from the astonished group, a ring of fairies, with floating garments of silver gauze, tiny silver bells on their ankles, and golden bracelets on their arms; crowns of glittering dew-drops wreathed their brows, and their long hair streamed down their shoulders. Each one held some kind of an instrument of music, to which they kept time as they danced. The whole costume was unique and oriental, reminding one of the Turkish maidens in a harem. It is impossible to describe the exquisite beauty of these little creatures, or the gracefulness of their figures, as they floated around

in the mazy dance. They came as though they had dropped from the stars, and disappeared as suddenly. Of course, Bianca had planned this pleasant, happy surprise. They were the young children of the gipsies, who were trained to these beautiful and fanciful amusements.

The day's pleasure had been complete; and now preparations were made to return by passing the other side of the ruins. When all were mounted, they sped with animation over the rich, green sward, and with the wings of the wind their spirited horses measured the earth. As they neared the ruins, which covered an immense tract of land, they slackened their speed, knowing that a dark, deep chasm, completely hidden by the dense undergrowth of shrubs, lay some where in that vicinity. Clare and Lord Clifford rode ahead, Lord Melgrave and Madame Devereux following them, while the general and the marchioness, who cared not to hurry, brought up the rear.

“Percy, be careful! It is not far from this rock!” shouted Lord Melgrave. Just at that moment Clifford's horse reared, stumbled and plunged down, down into a yawning abyss below. A wild shriek burst from the lips of Lady Clare as she saw the noble earl sink, as it were, into the very bowels of the earth. She reeled in her saddle, and fell into the arms of her father, who barely caught her lifeless form as she was falling from her horse. The intelligent little creature stopped the moment she felt the slackened hand on her bridal rein. The carriage being not far distant, Clare was conveyed,

more dead than alive, to her faithful Vignet. Her swoon seemed so death-like that Lord Melgrave really thought her dead,—lost to him forever. When consciousness returned, her first breath was a moan. "My father, oh my father! is he gone, gone? Did he die? Tell me; this suspense is intolerable."

"God love you, my darling, my precious lamb; I pray he is not dead; be calm, my child, and remain quietly here, while I join the count, who has gone to seek him! God help us; this happy day has a sorrowful ending!"

In passing that portion of the ruins, where the cavern opened into the earth, it was necessary to pass the gipsy camp. Lord Melgrave knew Bianca had been deeply attached to Lord Clifford, and concluded her people would be of invaluable service in helping to find him. Accordingly he hastened forward to impart the news to her, and solicit her aid. She was almost frantic when informed of the sad calamity that had befallen her former friend. It was painful to note the wan, sad face of the fair girl, as she clasped her hand over her heart to stifle the keen pain. Instantly she summoned four of her most skillful men, those who she believed were keen, true and faithful, and bade them hasten with the nobleman, and spare neither life nor limb until they brought Lord Clifford safely out of the cavern.

They were expert at climbing, and, of course, could descend any steep with skill. Rope ladders were made fast to the rocks above, and dark lanterns

employed to light the abyss. Five times did they go down and return, but in vain. Not even the horse could be discovered; but pieces of Clifford's clothing, soiled with blood, were found attached to fragments of the rocks. Night did not end their search. The ladies were sent home under the escort of the count, who returned with a fresh supply of help, and refreshments for the party who were searching for their lost friend.

A long night passed, and a damp, drizzling rain ushered in the morning. By this time the neighboring gentry had heard of the fearful disaster, and came in crowds to assist. The cavern had never been explored to any great extent, and but little was really known of its character. But now the work of centuries bade fair to be made known. Some civil engineers were sent for, and a thorough examination took place.

Day after day passed, and still the yawning chasm refused to yield up its noble treasure. It was infinitely strange and incomprehensible. If a subterranean lake, hidden from mortal eye, was at the bottom of this gulf, they could easily have known what became of the horse and its gallant rider. But no such thing, or even a quick-sand, could be found. Nearly one hundred feet they sounded the depths of the cavern, over an immense area, which was the work doubtless of an earthquake.

Despair filled the hearts of Lord Melgrave and his daughter. Day after day she sat breathless, awaiting the messenger from the ruins. As the hour of his arrival drew near, her anxiety became

so great that she would pace the room and wring her hands until the jewels on her fingers crushed the soft flesh, crying, "Oh, Madame Devereux, tell me; it can not be that he is gone—lost forever! Will I never, never again hear the music of his loved voice? never again drink the precious, precious elixir of joy he presented to my lips? Why is it? Why don't my father come and tell me? How can they keep me in this dying suspense? Oh, I am punished because I pained him once so cruelly! But I loved him—I loved him! Lord Clifford come to me, and awaken my agonized soul from this horrid dream!" Thus she raved until her friends feared her reason would be dethroned.

When the messenger came with "No tidings, Lady Melgrave," she would fall back on her pillows, the victim of such a grief as only Lady Clare Melgrave could feel. The fearful "To Come" darkened her heart like a funeral pall.

Nothing unconnected with Lord Clifford could affect poor Lady Clare more. What was life to her? Her peerless idol had been engulfed in the bosom of the earth, the most aggravated death one could die had been his. For days he may have lain crushed and bleeding before death came to his relief, with no loving hand to wipe the death-damp from his brow, no sweet voice to go with him to the brink of the dark river, or breathe a long, a last farewell.

"Oh, God," she prayed, "give me strength to bear this great affliction! Help me to feel 'Thy will, not mine, be done.'" And then, tear-drops,

precious to a burning brain, would come to her relief, and for an hour she would weep like a grieved child.

Then again would commence a dreadful agony, painful to witness. Her wild and tearful eyes, disheveled hair and unearthly face, frightened Madame Devereux. She never cried until perfectly exhausted, but continued bemoaning the loss of her lover in the most touchingly painful manner.

Sometimes, for an hour, she would call him. "My darling, precious love! my star, my beauty, come to me once again! Those matchless eyes, let me see their divine radiance—fold your loving arms around me; and let me breathe my life away on your noble heart! Why would you die, Percy Clifford, when I loved you so? How can any body die who is so deeply loved? Oh, Percy, Percy, call me to you in a voice so far-reaching that it will resound through the vast cathedral of space! My father, oh my father, must it be!"

No person attempted to quiet her. The family physician bade them leave her to herself. "Better is this wild raving than silent anguish," said he, "which consumes the heart in its never dying flame."

A month passed away. The engineers gave up; the workmen wearied of so fruitless a search, and the mystery began to pass into a superstition. At midnight the ghost of the noble earl, on a coal-black steed, was rumored to be seen galloping over the ruins, with hair and beard snow-white, in consequence of the fright attending the fall.

The calamity had cast a profound gloom over the whole country. In the midst of this deep affliction came tidings of the death of the Marquis Du Combe, who was murdered by a Turkish assassin, in crossing the river Volga. The blow fell upon the heart of the marchioness with the crushing force of an Alpine avalanche.

General Huleiniska accompanied her ladyship to her country seat, in France. Lady Isabella, through the urgent solicitations of Lord Melgrave, remained with his daughter, to whom Lady Clare had become so much attached that she felt uncomfortable if separated from her, even for an hour.

Her own deep grief the better enabled her to feel for others. She remembered her anguish when the shadow of death fell across her home. The ghastly face, crushed and bleeding, the beautiful eyes closed forever, and the lifeless form, but an hour before in perfect health, passed before her, and thus again and again she passed through the heart-rending scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

A RETROSPECT.

THEY had all been very happy during their brief sojourn in Italy, if we may except Madame Devereux. Time had hardly completed the allotted cycle in which to expect she could be happy. There was a spiritual resignation in her face — charming, yet painful. One could not look at those beautiful, veiled eyes and not experience a tender, compassionate emotion for the patient sufferer.

Lady Clare was a brave girl under ordinary circumstances; she had never before known a real sorrow. Her father left her when she was a mere child, too young to understand her loss. The death of her step-mother could hardly be called a deep sorrow; she knew but little of her, and had never felt any real affection for her. Her life had been one of comparative seclusion; the most she had ever mingled in society was during her visit to Douglass Hall, the home of her guardian.

Lady Hellen was naturally very gay, jovial, and exceedingly fond of amusement; she was the pride of her father, a dignified, courtly old earl, who was a perfect type of a Scottish nobleman. Yes, the pet and joy of the household was Lady Hellen, mounted on her Highland pony and dressed in complete Highland costume, with a pack of hounds,

scaling the blue hills. She was the delight of the old earl's soul.

Lady Clare was quite the reverse of Lady Hellen, so far as amusements were concerned. She rarely, if ever, accompanied Hellen to the mountains; but the scenery surrounding the ancient hall possessed so many picturesque views that she never wearied during the absence of the former. The excessive exuberance of the one was modified in the other, consequently each derived a pleasure and a benefit from the other's society. Clare felt more at ease there than at any other place. The sweet light of home influences shone in its purest, holiest radiance in this dignified Scotch family. The dearest woman that ever fostered a child was the mother of Lady Hellen; amiable, gentle and good—one of those quiet, old-school ladies whose Christian character shone preëminently in every walk of life. She loved Lady Clare very dearly; the more, perhaps, as she looked upon her as an orphan, bereft of every tie of home and love, with neither father, mother, sister nor brother; yes, she stood alone, save her faithful Vignet, there was none to love her. Her father's wife loved nothing but herself. Lord Clifford was the only gentleman she had ever found agreeable, and she had looked on him as the lover of Lady Maud. Indeed she censured herself because once she found her thoughts revert to him. The retirement of her former life just fitted her to love such a nobleman as Lord Clifford with all the wealth of her peerless heart. She had never known another love.

She could not believe but he would be found, until the engineers pronounced it entirely useless to labor longer, nor could they by any possible means explain why they failed to find his remains.

Lord Melgrave felt it his duty to inform his child of the fruitlessness of the search, and that they must indeed mourn the lost one as dead.

Lady Clare had been really ill for some time; but hope, that sweet comforter, had buoyed her up, whispering in her willing ear its dear words of consolation.

Lord Melgrave was completely crushed. Italy had been to him a charnal house—a sepulchre! Here had he been bereft of beloved objects by the most cruel calamities. He sought his daughter's room, to tell her to hope no more; but the sight of her sad face, so wan, so woe-begone, and her mournful, wondering eyes, trying to read his very soul, were painful beyond expression.

She was reclining against pillows, in a half-sitting posture; she seldom left her bed now, but welcomed her father by a sweet, sad smile, as the only and dearest object of her life.

The gentle Isabella had been to both a ministering angel, hovering around the sick bed of Clare, silently anticipating her every wish, and manifesting her deep sympathy by a thousand considerate acts. It seemed to her meaningless and heartless to frame a thought into a sentence of condolence. For hours she would sit beside Clare, pillowing her head on her breast, soothing and caressing her as she would an infant.

Lord Melgrave blessed the noble woman for thus comforting his child. Whenever he entered the room she usually made some excuse to leave it, from an intuitive refinement which made it seem almost sacrilege to remain in the presence of so deep a grief as theirs. They had freely conversed of Lord Clifford; indeed, since the misfortune they had talked of little else; they could not be reconciled to the terrible calamity.

Lady Clare looked so pleadingly toward her father that he imagined she had something to ask, and anticipated her wish by saying, "What would you have, my child?"

"It would comfort me," she replied, "to see Bianca, the gipsy girl."

"Certainly, if there is any thing in the world that will extract one drop of anguish from your poor, bleeding heart, it shall be obtained," and saying this Lord Melgrave touched the bell, to summon a servant.

Immediately his valet answered it. "George," said he, "here is a card; hasten at once to the gipsy camp, and give this to the queen. Mind and put it into her hand yourself; her people are extremely jealous of house-dwellers."

In an hour he returned with the tidings that the whole tribe had disappeared. Again disappointment cast its shadow over the sinking heart of Clare. She had hoped to derive some consolation from the gipsy — what she could not tell; but knowing the girl's love for Lord Clifford, she half hoped that the spirit of prophecy which these gipsy creatures

profess might suggest something, whether true or imaginary.

Strange as it may appear, she almost believed Bianca could tell them something of Lord Clifford; and when the tidings came that she, too, had disappeared, none knew whither, the last lingering ray of departing hope faded from her heart, and she sank back lifeless on her pillow. Brain fever set in, and for two weeks she raved in delirium, calling upon Perry Clifford and Bianca to come and take her from the horrible place. Her father, Lady Isabella and the faithful Vignet were her unwearied attendants. The best medical science in Florence had been consulted. She never slept, nor were her eyes closed for days and nights together. Her beautiful hair troubled her; her fingers were twisting it into curls and pulling it out; nor could she yet endure to have one hair touch her face, so the physicians decided it must be cut off. The hair dresser was accordingly sent for, but he entreated them to spare these beautiful ringlets. "Cruel! cruel!" he cried; "I never will do so barbarous a deed!" and he flung down the scissors and left the room.

Two days after, Vignet gathered up the long, golden ringlets, pressed them to her lips sadly, then taking the scissors, she cut each separately, almost groaning with pain, as though every hair that fell from the reluctant blade was a human life, that in her wild wantonness she had deprived of reason.

Poor Vignet! The deep love she bore her young lady made this task her sacred duty. It was pitiful

to see her grief after the fair locks were shorn off, laid away, and arranged as carefully—nay, as reverently as one would fold the hands of a dead infant on its lifeless heart.

Lord Melgrave and Madame Devereux gazed at Vignet's heroic fortitude with wonder and admiration. After all was finished she fell on her knees beside the bed and wept bitter tears.

The physicians gave them but little hope of Lady Clare's recovery; and with an aching heart Lord Melgrave patiently waited God's summons. Hour after hour the devoted Vignet lingered by her couch. When her father, worn out and exhausted, sought his own room, to rest for half an hour, and the patient and affectionate Isabella lounged for a few minutes on the sofa, there was one who never tired, who never wearied of bending over the sick girl, and whose quick eye detected any and every change. Vignet's hand administered the medicine; Vignet's keen perception noticed the crisis was near.

Madame Devereux's extremely delicate constitution rapidly wasted under such an exciting ordeal. Her grief for the sufferings of the beautiful girl had completely unstrung her sensitive nerves. Although a comparative stranger, her heart went out to Clare in the most compassionate manner. She, too, suffered with the father, and her suffering made the pallor of her face painful.

Lord Melgrave felt alarmed for Madame Devereux's health, and insisted she must have rest; but there was no rest for poor Isabella—she could not drive from her mind the fearful question: "Will

this lovely girl die?—this precious jewel of the temple? If so, what a desolate world this will be to this poor father!" She did not dare to think of it—the picture was too dreadful!

She could only pray, and in her wild abandonment of grief she threw herself on her knees before her couch, and, in the deepest pathos of a soul overwhelmed with anguish, she prayed for the life of this sweet girl. Only "He who fashioned this grand design," could know how devoutly she prayed. An hour passed, and still she bowed in anguish.

Lord Melgrave had left Clare to seek the worn-out nurse. He found her in this drooping position of anguish. Gently he raised her from the floor, and seated her on the sofa. "My dear Lady Devereux, God's holy will be done! She is about to wake to reason, or helpless idiocy. Come with me, and give me strength, by your strong faith in God, to pass this fearful ordeal."

Lady Devereux was very pale, and trembled from exhaustion, while her black robes contrasted vividly with her white face and hands. Mechanically she arose, and Lord Melgrave insisted she should lean upon his arm; and together they went to the bedside of the suffering Clare. His surmise was about to be realized. The restless, uneasy motion of her arms, her quick and hurried breathing, together with the opening and closing of her eyes, proved that the physician was right. Faintly she murmured the name of Percy Clifford.

"Alas, alas!" said Lord Melgrave, "must that name be forever uppermost in her thoughts!"

The physician put a cordial to her lips, and having swallowed a mouthful, she awoke to consciousness. Reason still sat proudly enthroned in its resplendent casket. So frail the delicate thread that bound her to life, that it seemed as if the weight of a falling rose leaf might have broken it. Now, perfectly restored, she did not mention Lord Clifford; his name was not alluded to in her presence.

When she found her luxuriant hair had been cut off, she covered her face with both her hands, to shut out from those around her the picture of her suffering face. It was but for a minute; when she removed them, every trace of emotion had disappeared. A settled look of quiet resignation had partly taken the place of the despair which sat upon her beautiful face.

Slowly she rallied. Youth and a good constitution, together with careful nursing, gained the victory, and soon after, Lady Clare Melgrave took her accustomed place in the drawing-room, but frail and fair as a broken lily—a shadow of her former self. Her short curls shading her face, and shedding a golden glory around her pure white brow, reminding one of Raphael's Transfiguration. She seemed too beautiful, too ethereal, for an inhabitant of earth.

One morning, in early autumn, they were taking breakfast in a little terraced arbor that opened from Clare's boudoir. It was a lovely spot, a sort of pavillion, shaded by tall geraniums. She enjoyed her morning meal here, and her desire for any thing was gratified as soon as expressed.

A servant came in with their letters. Madame Devereux's cheek paled as she noted the contents of hers, and she said: "I am summoned peremptorily to court. The marchioness is very ill. A courier awaits me at the hotel to escort me to her grace. I must leave you within an hour."

"No, no, my dearest friend!" interrupted Clare, "I can not part with you. Papa, don't let her go! I can't live without her!"

Lord Melgrave was equally disturbed at the news, but controled his emotion, and with his usual quiet dignity, replied: "Madame Devereux knows we would keep her with us always were it possible, and her pleasure to remain. But here is an order that comes from royalty; and, my darling, neither you nor I dare question it. The sudden illness of her grace, I trust, is only caused by her recent misfortune; and that soon, again, she may have so far recovered as to permit the return of Madame Devereux. I truly regret, kind lady, that you must travel only with servants.

"Clare," continued he, "my darling, are you able to journey a little?"

"Yes, oh yes, I guess so! Can we go with her?"

"No, no, Lord Melgrave!" replied Madame Devereux; "Clare is not able to undertake the fatigue of traveling, even by easy stages, while I, you know, must take the most expeditious route. Even then I may be too late. My dear, dear friend! Oh, if I should never see her in life again, I can not tell you how deeply I should regret it! I must not fail to reach her before she dies.

"Lord Melgrave," she added, "give yourself no uneasiness on my account. The courier is a gentleman, Lord Hertford. I have known him personally since I have been in the service of her grace. I shall be kindly cared for during my short journey, however painful its import is; my deepest regret lies in leaving Lady Clare, ere she is quite restored to health. And now, with your permission, I must be excused, and hasten my departure."

In an hour, Madame Devereux came to bid Clare an affectionate farewell. Her maids were already seated in the carriage, and the driver only waited for Madame Devereux to take leave of her friends. She embraced the weeping Clare, who clung to her neck until her father gently removed her arms and seated her softly on a sofa. Then he approached Madame Devereux, and taking both her hands he said, almost reverently: "I am unable to express my thanks for your kindness to my child—for the heartfelt sympathy you have manifested for us during these dreadful days of misery through which we have passed. You have been to us both a ministering angel; promise me, if the marchioness should need your companionship no more, that you will come to us for a while, at least, until Clare shall have learned to bear this great affliction with composure and patience."

During this lengthy speech her white hands rested in his, and tears ran down her cheeks. She shook her head sorrowfully and said: "You overestimate my poor services. I am truly glad if I have been of any comfort to you in your great

sorrow. But,"—and her voice trembled, and her tone was sad,—"I dare not promise—I guess—I can't come again—that is, I don't see now. I shall hope to hear from Clare, however. Adieu, my lord!" Lord Melgrave offered her his arm, and thoughtfully walked with her through the hall to the carriage. Before opening the door he raised her hand to his lips, and pressed upon her fingers a mute farewell. He spoke not one word as he handed her in, but his eloquent silence touched her heart. What was it? She felt half frightened at the delirious joy that coursed through her veins. She breathed an adieu, and the carriage rolled away.

Lord Melgrave returned to Clare, wondering what and where these relations with Madame Devereux would all end. When her father joined her, Clare had scarcely recovered from the unpleasant emotions experienced at the departure of Madame Devereux. Both felt very lonely. The absence of this lady made a void they could not hope to fill. She left them just at a time when she was very necessary to their happiness. Lord Melgrave possessed one of those cheerful, hopeful natures that are never at a loss for expedients to relieve any trivial embarrassment.

He never thought of himself; but Clare, his dear child, who had suffered so cruelly, he could not permit to become sad and gloomy, if possible to prevent it, knowing her restoration to health depended on interesting her. They had contemplated visiting Rome before the loss of Lord Clifford;

but now every thing was changed. Clare manifested no desire for any thing. She accepted every proposition offered her without expressing a wish that it might be otherwise. She was more passive than a child. Lord Melgrave proposed a game of chess, hoping it would relieve the monotony of the hour, but Clare declined, saying she felt too weary; and soon after retired to her dressing room.

Lord Melgrave went to the library to read his letters; also to arrange plans for the future. An hour passed and still his letters remained unopened, while his elbow leaned on his easy chair and his head rested in his hand. It was the first time since the dreadful accident that he had given himself up to thought. He had never before fully realized that his dear friend, the companion of his wanderings for so long a time, the lover of his beautiful daughter, and the life of both, had left them forever, having been, as it were, engulfed in a living tomb. An assassin's knife had pierced the heart of the noble Marquis of Du Combe, the marchioness was dying, and his own household was crushed and broken, in heart and spirit. These were the changes a few weeks had wrought among the happy group who had gathered around the gipsy girl, eager to hear their fortunes.

A low tap at the door aroused Lord Melgrave from his revery, and Vignet, who was a privileged person, entered the room. "Ah, Vignet, you are ever a welcome visitor! Come in; here, take this easy chair," and the courteous Lord Melgrave arose and wheeled a Turkish sedan for this favorite nurse

to sit in. "I am glad to see you," he continued; "perhaps you can help me decide a matter."

Lord Melgrave never forgot the debt of gratitude he owed Vignet. The care she had given his child; the preservation of his life by her untiring devotion; the many years of faithful service she had bestowed upon his house, had rendered her an especial favorite. Vignet was no ordinary woman. Her natural ability was of a superior order; and her companionship with Lady Clare had refined her manners. Her judgment was good, and had often aided Lord Melgrave to decide upon matters where a woman's intuitive wisdom is often superior to man's.

Lord Melgrave always consulted her, and listened with deep interest to her views or suggestions. Her quiet, dignified deportment, ensured her a ready welcome all over the house; and her education being superior to most Italians, one hardly felt she was a servant. Clare loved her like a mother. Vignet was learned in the lore of Italian story, and could relate thrillingly the legends and traditions of the ancient celebrities who figured on life's stage in the earliest days of Rome. She never took advantage of her position, understanding fully her exact worth to Lord Melgrave's family. As Clare loved her, she, too, felt for Clare an earnest, affectionate solicitude, and in every respect she had been to her a second mother. Yet she never thrust her opinion upon Lord Melgrave unsolicited, or ventured to request a favor, except where her judgment told her prompt action was necessary. Thus it was at

this particular time. She knew some thing must be done at once for Clare; now that Madame Devereux had left her, she would relapse into her former gloom and despondency.

It was for this she invaded the retirement of Lord Melgrave's private study. When seated comfortably she made known her errand. "Lord Melgrave," she began, "Lady Clare's physician just informed me he would advise you to leave Florence as soon as practicable. Every object here reminds her forcibly of her affliction. She will not get better until she is removed from this vicinity. A change may interest her for a time at least, until the great Comforter can heal this wound; and as Rome is a city of everlasting interest, useful and instructive, would it not be well to make immediate arrangements to go thither?"

"Vignet, your good sense has saved us more times than we could name. Clare is already very much depressed over the departure of her friend, and I think it decidedly advisable to go as soon as it is possible to make the necessary arrangements. I think she will not be fatigued to travel by easy stages, and I have no doubt she will be much improved.

"Vignet, I will order the steward to close the house immediately, and we will depart at once."

Clare's objections were overcome; and the next week the invalid, attended by her friends, reached the Eternal City.

CHAPTER XVII.

ROME.

ROME, the Eternal City, and once mistress of the world, is situated on both sides of the river Tiber, about sixteen miles from its mouth, and connected by those ponderous bridges of which the ancients were so justly proud. It is the capital of the Roman States, and from its locality may be termed the "Garden of Italy." The exact year of the foundation of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, one of the most ancient of Roman writers, was in the year of the world 3256, of the flood 1600, or 753 before the Christian era. Tradition says that on the 23d day of April, Romulus founded the city near Mount Palatine, one of the seven hills of Rome, this being the largest, covering an area of forty acres. Capitoline, the next in importance, comprises sixteen acres; the others are merely eminences. Most of the great gates have been walled up. Of the sixteen, but five or six are in use; the Porto del Populo and Maggiore are considered the finest. The masonry comprises solid arches of stone, surmounted with capitals of marble.

Rome is the most celebrated of all the cities in Europe, both in modern and ancient history, in its works of art, its classical associations, and its antiquities. It is protected from the rough winds of

the north by the continued chain of the Alps, that divides Italy from Austria, and the Apennines, that form the dividing ridge between the eastern and western portions of the peninsula. The climate of Italy is delightful; the cool sea breeze from the Mediterranean renders the air mild and salubrious, extreme heat or cold being unknown.

The other portions of Italy are more attractive than Rome, geographically. The olive, lime, fig and orange grow abundantly on the southern border, while flowers of rare and tasteful hues blossom all the year long, and the traveler, as he crosses the great bridge, and the ponderous gates swing open, can hardly realize the antique world that he is about to enter.

Rome! the great mausoleum of the universe, the theatre of the world, the actors being the mighty masters, warriors and bards of memory, whose names gild the bright escutcheon of Roman nomenclature. Every object breathes of art; every tower, dome, temple and obelisk here speaks the names of Michael Angelo, Canova, Guido and Raphael. The immense stone walls, which originally surrounded ancient Rome, and served as fortifications against the invasion of the Gallic hordes from the north and the Carthaginians from the south, are mouldering and falling to decay.

For years the Gauls, a warlike and barbarous race, kept the Romans in perfect terror, until a brave young Roman commander completely routed them, driving them southward, when history seems to have lost sight of them altogether. This deliverance

occurred about the year 350 before the Christian era. Numerous legends and historic traditions are handed down, commemorating the signal defeat of the Gauls. The flight of the latter through the streets of Rome is thus pictured and engraved on a temple erected to the memory of the Roman General Camillas, who freed the city from their cruel invasion:

"Thou'rt in Rome, the city where the Gauls
Entered at sunrise through the open gates,
And through her streets, silent and desolate,
Marching to slay, though they saw gods, not men."

At the foot of the Capitoline and Palatine Hills is an irregular space of ground, which was once called the Roman Forum. The most interesting specimen of Roman masonry now existing is the wall which forms the understructure of the modern capitol, being two hundred and forty-one feet in length and thirty-eight feet in breadth. This Forum is filled with temples, arches and statues, commemorating the historic and tragic events with which the Roman history is so richly filled. In the center of the Forum stands a magnificent temple of Julius Cæsar; to the left is the temple of Concord, where the Roman Senate, the glory and pride of the earth, assembled and made those laws, the standard of civil and military jurisprudence; to the right, or nearly opposite, are three Corinthian columns of the purest marble, supposed to belong to the temple of Minerva, and another of Cleopatra, of granite and marble. The entire Forum is filled with these

interesting relics. But little authentic history can be obtained of these temples; we only know they are before us, as living representatives of the mighty minds who lived in that far-off era.

On leaving the Forum, the most interesting object that presents itself is an immense ruin, anciently called the Temple of Peace, but of modern date, the Basilica of Constantine. This is a delightful spot, and will be doubly so to the classic traveler, when he remembers the great Horace once promenaded these grounds. The murmuring of a little cascade, the sequestered little nooks among the jutting fragments of the stone, and here and there a bunch of violets or blue-bells peeping out from their rocky beds, while the air is laden with the perfumes of the rich valley below, make these ruins the most picturesque and romantic of all in Rome.

The churches next claim our attention. St. Peter's, the great pride and glory of modern Rome, is one of the most magnificent structures. The cornerstone was laid by Pope Julius II., on the 18th of April. Bramante was the principal architect. He died, however, before it was half completed, and other artists of equal or superior merit finished it, among whom was Michael Angelo. After beholding the imposing exterior, we look for and expect the interior to be commensurate with it; but the splendor of this modern temple of worship very far exceeds any description ever given of it. Its grandeur overwhelms us. The colonnades are fifty feet wide, with columns forty-eight feet high. Its façade, from the design of the great Maderno, is three hun-

dred and seventy-eight feet long and one hundred and forty-eight feet high. The whole is beautifully ornamented with statues, vestibules and altars. The high altar is a wonder of beauty and grandeur. The canopy covering it is elegant; the gilding alone is said to have cost one hundred thousand dollars! The columns, piers and pavements are of the most expensive marble, red and white. Many of the Popes are interred in St. Peter's, and have costly monuments. Canova's finest works are here to be found; also Michael Angelo's—one of the most beautiful by the latter representing the Virgin, with the dead body of the Savior on her knees. The name of Michael Angelo is engraved on the girdle, the only instance among all his works where we find his name cut by his own hand. The Gregories are well represented in life-like marble; but the crowning monument of St. Peter's is the magnificent tomb of Clement XIII., by Canova, who was eight years in completing it, and which is considered his masterpiece. It is one of the great beauties of Rome.

To witness an illumination of St. Peter's on the 29th of June were worth a voyage across the ocean. Sixty-eight thousand lamps are lighted at the same instant, seemingly, and the ceremonies are grand and imposing.

The Vatican! This palace and museum of art is by far superior to any in the world, being the most ancient in history of all the papal palaces built by different Popes, containing over four thousand apartments, and covering an area of twelve hundred feet

in length and one thousand feet in breadth. During the winter months it is the residence of the Pope, being near St. Peter's, and contains one of the most extensive libraries in the world — over one hundred thousand volumes of the choicest collection, both ancient and modern. This is a world of itself, teeming with knowledge and wisdom; the past, present and future are united, and blend time and space in one grand union. We are completely lost in wonder and admiration. The museum is filled with every specimen of rare and costly paintings by the masters of endless fame. In one cabinet we find Laocoon, which, according to Pliny, is a work far exceeding all that the arts of painting and sculpture have ever produced. It is in this museum we find the celebrated sarcophagus of Scipio, a relic of republican Rome. Two thousand years after the interment of this Roman general the sarcophagus was opened. The skeleton was found perfect, with a ring on one finger. The ring is now in England, in possession of the Earl of Beverly. There are galleries of statues in circular halls. The hall of the Greek Cross is ornamented with colossal Egyptian porphyry. The gems of Raphael are here in all their glory. In another room we find his "Madonna," "the Coronation of the Virgin," and many other works of superior excellence.

Weeks — nay, months — might be profitably consumed in this palace of wonders. The air is laden with the mighty genius of this classic clime. The Pantheon, a temple dedicated to all the gods, now completely in ruins, is one of the most splendid

remains of the ancients. It was erected B. C. 25, by Agrippa. The columns are granite, with capitals and bases of white marble, which glitter in the moonlight like liquid silver. The doors are bronze, and have been for ages the pride of the Romans. For eighteen centuries has this noble edifice stood, exposed to the warring elements, both fire and water; yet it is the best preserved monument of ancient Rome. The portico is one hundred feet in length and forty-four feet in breadth, and is said by able writers to be beyond criticism.

"Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rod
Shiver upon thee, sanctuary and home
Of art and piety, Pantheon, pride of Rome!"

In the interior of this temple is a rotunda one hundred and forty-three feet in diameter. The walls are twenty feet thick. The center contains a circular opening, which furnishes the only light of this temple. In this chapel we find the tomb containing the remains of the great soul-painter, Raphael.

There is a temple of Vesta, and a double temple of Venus and Rome; another of Juno, and a third of Bacchus, formerly called the Temple of Honor and Virtue, and a beautiful one of Vespasian, in granite—all of historic interest.

But the Coliseum is the largest amphitheater in the world, and the most august ruin. Historians differ as to the exact dimensions, but all authentic writers make it a gigantic structure. It would seat eighty-seven thousand spectators, and leave standing room for twenty thousand more. These ruins, by

moonlight, are magnificent. The remembrance of its former glory throws a charm around it one feels no where else. "Grand, gloomy and peculiar, it arises a sculptured hermit, wrapped in the solitude of its own originality."

The palace of the Cæsars was once a number of extensive buildings, but now only a mass of ruins. History invests it with a thousand charms, the influence of which we can and must feel, when we remember the triumvir, his wonderful rule and conquests, together with his mournful and tragic death.

Specimens of fresco by the great Guido are to be seen in this palace. His memorable painting of the Crucifixion, and the manner of obtaining dying agonies, is a theme the Romans never cease to dwell upon. His work was finished, but wanted the writhing death agony to render his picture complete. In a moment of frenzy he plunged a dagger into the heart of a person bound to a cross to represent the Savior. He caught the expression, and transferred it to the face of our blessed Lord. The feelings of agony he so much desired were obtained, but at what a fearful cost—the life of a fellow-being! When reason returned, and he saw what he had done, he fled from Rome in despair; but his wonderful work remained—a living witness of his crime. Years after, he returned, however, and resumed his art. So much talent could not be lost. At his death, Canova said, "Heaven gained at the expense of earth."

The villas of Rome are the next attraction. The house of Rienzi, the last of the tribunes, is one of

great interest to the traveler. The gardens are elegantly laid out, with grottoes and fountains; drives and walks, skirted with beautiful flowers, present themselves. There are also statues, obelisks, temples to the Graces, the Muses, and the Gods, of the purest marble, both red and white, and also of gray granite. These villas are located both inside and outside of the walls. Many are erected by the wealthy magnates of the church of Rome, who have lavished untold sums in their erection and adornments. Indeed, most of them are owned by the bishops and cardinals, and are perfectly magnificent in finish and luxuriant in furniture. One of the most elegant in construction, and chaste in design, is the Villa Borghese. This is a favorite resort during the summer months for the refined and cultivated Romans. When and where can we cease to wonder and admire the great and magnificent city of Rome? Another villa of equal note is the Pamfili Doria. The grounds exceed four miles, and are open to visitors every day in the year. The lofty pines fill the avenues, and the beautifully terraced walks are lined with flowers, breathing their fragrant odors, filling the air with their delicious perfumes. In the portico are frescoes by Raphael, representing Venus and the Nymphs.

But why linger over these delightful scenes? Months could be consumed, and yet "half hath been left untold us." Every spot in the city and environs seems classic, holy ground. There is no other, on either continent, that justly claims the same celebrity and renown. Nothing is wanting to

render it one of the most wonderful cities, in every respect, on the entire globe. Others may be larger, more beautiful and more desirable as a place of residence, but a thousand such can never compete with the great, the Eternal City of Rome.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOJOURN IN ROME.

LORD Melgrave had purchased one of those magnificent Roman villas many years before, and had resided there most of the time since he had met with the accident at the hands of Lady Maud.

It was a pleasant surprise to Lady Clare, who really enjoyed the prospect of sojourning for a short time in this antique Roman structure. She had improved very much since they left Florence, and Lord Melgrave's heart gladdened as he noted the perceptible change. The past was buried; the name of the loved and lost was a theme too sacred to be breathed by either. Clare had religiously put away every treasured remembrance of her idol. She had never asked for her ring, which had fallen from her finger during her illness. Lord Clifford had placed it there, but as he had never formally asked her father's permission, his high sense of honor would not permit him to call it an engagement ring; but Clare felt it as such, and desired very much to have it again. Her faith in Vignet was so perfect she never doubted but the moment she thought best Vignet would bring her the ring.

They were beginning to feel very much at home in the delightful villa. The baggage had been unpacked, and the little comforts of a lady's dress-

ing-room been arranged to make her feel it was her own room. Every thing spoke refined taste and luxury. It was the coziest little boudoir that one could imagine. Nothing had been omitted. Lord Melgrave was prodigal in furnishing this room with the most expensive articles of vertu. Clare had been used to elegance all her life; she was born and reared under its golden canopy, but this villa surpassed any thing she had ever seen; it was fitted up in oriental splendor.

One morning, after they had been there about a week, and Clare was busy examining a writing desk of wonderful design, she was interrupted by Vignet, who brought her a letter from Madame Devereux. It was the first she had received; and eagerly she devoured its contents. As her eye ran over the pages, Vignet took her left hand and gently placed the diamond ring, the gift of Lord Clifford, upon it. Her face paled for a moment, tears came to her eyes, but not one murmur escaped her lips—no word of complaint. She dropped her letter, pressed Vignet's hand between her soft, jeweled fingers, and said: "Oh, my precious friend! how could I live without you who understand me, and anticipate my every wish?" and then she kissed her with the deepest fervor.

"There, there, my darling," said Vignet, "finish reading your letter telling us, I hope, that Madame Devereux will soon be with us again. She will bring back the roses to my baby's face, and a smile to your father's eye. Oh, Clare, can't we keep her always with us? My dear child, shall I whisper a

secret in your ear?" and a smile flitted over Vignet's face,—a face that if goodness, gentleness and affection could make beautiful, was indeed so.

"Ah, you silly, good Vignet, will it be a secret if two women know it?" and she smiled a sweet, childish smile, the first that had animated her face for many long weeks. "I am afraid, Vignet," she continued, "I should tell my father if you were to tell me. You know I tell him all my secrets. If you object, don't tell me, please. My darling father, he is dearer to me every day I live. I can not tell how I ever existed without him."

"Clare," replied Vignet, "I don't know as it is a secret to you, and yet I hardly think you have noticed the fact;—your father loves Madame Devereux! Would you like to tell him?"

"Oh, how delighted I am, Vignet; you are an angel of glad tidings. But"—and a shadow clouded Clare's face—"what of her! Does she return the affection, think you? Vignet, my dear father has been so unfortunate. How brief has been his joys! Madame Devereux is a woman of deep feeling; her grief for her husband is almost a religion."

"But time will soften it," said Vignet; "and her loving heart will pine for affection. She can not have been insensible to Lord Melgrave's attention, and although no word escaped his lips, his devotion was none the less marked.

"The true beauty of her character shone in too vivid a light to be hidden. Her very devotion to you endeared her to him. She is all alone in the world;—a talented, noble and beautiful woman.

Her very sadness invests her with a thousand charms which gayety might never produce.

"Accident threw them together. A combination of circumstances wove a net-work around both. Madame Devereux dared not trust herself here longer. She felt her heart going out to Lord Melgrave; and was convinced, in her cherished love for the dead, that a love of the living would be sacrilege. I saw it day by day. She almost sank under the conflicting emotion; indeed, but for powerful stimulants during your illness, she would never have kept up. I found her in a fainting fit many times; but she begged me not to mention it, as it would distress you, and Lord Melgrave would not permit her to wait upon you if he knew it.

"But, Clare, I have been detaining you from reading your letter;" and Clare took from an envelope a beautifully written note, edged with deep mourning, and with the Du Combe crest. Two lines served to confirm their worst fears. The marchioness expired in Madame Devereux's arms three days after her arrival at Paris. Every thing was in a state of great confusion at court. Madame Devereux knew nothing of her majesty's plans regarding herself. "You know," she wrote, "we belong to the queen, and must be governed entirely by her wishes!" The whole tenor of the letter was very sad, and Clare forgot her own sorrow in sympathy for her friend.

"Let me hear from you often, my precious girl," the letter said: "I can not tell when we may meet again; but, believe me, there is, and ever will be,

a tender feeling in my heart for Clare. Remember me in much love to Vignet; my regards to your father. Tell me of your visits in Rome; I have never been there, you know;" and Lady Clare musingly folded up the letter.

Just at that moment her father joined her, and she placed the letter in his hand. When he had finished reading it he said: "What are your wishes, Clare, concerning your friend? I think we may possibly make some satisfactory arrangements. I have an esteemed friend at court, the queen's chamberlain. I think we can obtain a few months' respite for Madame Devereux; she must be sadly in need of rest. I wonder she is not ill, having been so many weeks confined in your sick room, and leaving yours but to enter one of death, and that one her dear friend and patron. I feel deeply for her, and can never forget her care and devotion to you. Clare, think the matter over; consult with Vignet, if you think best, and let me know your decision in the morning."

"I am very grateful to Madame Devereux," he continued, "and would like, above all things, to see her happy. I do not really mean happy, because that she can never be; her nature and disposition will not permit her to forget, consequently she could not hope for happiness; she may, however, forget a portion of her sorrows for others."

Lady Clare communicated to Vignet her father's requests, and asked her opinion on the subject. Vignet was much pleased with the idea, but questioned whether they could prevail on her to come.

Vignet knew Lady Clare too well to believe that all they might do to interest her would ever heal the wound made by the loss of Lord Clifford; and she believed the best means to render her at all cheerful was to keep her mind constantly interested with new objects. When she wearied of sight-seeing in Rome, she should be taken elsewhere; and as she loved Madame Devereux very dearly, she advised by all means that a letter be written, inviting her to come and pass the winter with the family.

Lord Melgrave proposed to take Lady Clare to drive, and Vignet saw her young lady seated beside her father, a pleasing expression animating her face as they whirled away toward St. Peter's.

Vignet strolled into the garden, to think of the future. She did not like the quiet resignation of Lady Clare; she would have preferred to hear her speak of Lord Clifford's memory, or to offer any demonstration of grief, rather than to behold that fixed, settled gloom which now shadowed her once bright face.

As Vignet entered the bower to the right of a beautiful grotto, she saw a swarthy-faced gipsy leaving it; but looking behind him as he ran, she had a full front view of his face. A sudden impulse impelled her to follow him, and in doing so she passed through the arbor. Imagine her surprise to find just at the entrance a large package, carefully tied with a blue silk cord, wound around several times, and fastened with a peculiar knot. It was directed in French, with a clear, bold hand—"Lady Clare Melgrave."

Vignet's good sense made her hesitate a moment before she touched it, knowing the vile treachery of the gipsy race, their skill and cunning in the use of the most deadly drugs, and the utter abandonment of any principle connected with their plans of revenge.

Vignet's cool judgment under trying scenes formed a most praiseworthy trait in her character. She knew this package, contain what it might, came from the famous gipsy queen; and she resolved, if mischief was intended, Lady Clare should not be the victim of her machinations. Being an Italian, Vignet was well versed in the use of many drugs known to Egyptians, having acquired her knowledge from an uncle who passed many years in Egypt and Abyssinia, and who became quite familiar with different kinds of poisons and their antidotes. One peculiar kind used by these heathens was a dust which, sprinkled on paper or any article of clothing, might be inhaled, and its effects were deadly. Her uncle had given her the only known antidote for this poison.

Leaving the package where the gipsy placed it, she ran to her room and brought a small vial, containing a rose-colored liquid, a few drops of which she poured upon the package, and awaited the result. In ten minutes she lifted it from the ground and proceeded to untie the cord which fastened it. Carefully written in a neat and delicate hand were many sheets of paper. The style was feminine and the writing close. Vignet unfolded page after page, dropping the liquid on each one, in order to make

sure it would be safe for Lady Clare. The signature was a name she had never heard before. The whole affair was enveloped in a mystery which must be left for Lord Melgrave to unravel. Vignet safely deposited the parcel in the private study of Lord Melgrave, and patiently awaited his return.

CHAPTER XIX.

ST. PETER'S AND THE CEMETERY.

LORD Melgrave being familiar with every object of interest in Rome, wished to select only those at first to present to Clare which he thought would please and interest her, without describing in detail. Nor did he wish to weary her by crowding too much into one day's visit. The seven hills were each a separate pleasure; that is, the historic associations connected therewith. The day was delightful, and Lord Melgrave wished Clare to see St. Peter's, with the full rays of the mid-day sun; therefore he first drove to the outskirts of ancient Rome. Among the ruins of its massive walls, now mouldered and fallen to decay, in an open space, is a lonely Protestant cemetery. The tombs of foreigners gleam in the soft moonlight, and the beautiful little forget-me-nots and violets blossom over them all the winter—a touching memento of the dreamless sleep of those who fill these silent mounds.

Clare was deeply impressed with these stranger graves; and she enjoyed a stroll through the grounds exceedingly. What would depress another cheered her. Under the shadow of a pyramid, in this Roman cemetery, they read the name of "John Keats," who died of consumption in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

"He came like a dream in the dawn of life;
He fled like a shadow before its noon,
And his epitaph was writ in water."

"A talented youth," said Lord Melgrave. "Like a luminous meteor, he darted athwart the poetical heavens. But a profligate, though 'savage critic,' hurled his bolts with such unerring aim at this flaming ærolite, that the particles flew asunder, and fled to the immensity of space, to be seen no more forever. His gentle, sensitive nature could not withstand the savage vituperation of the world; a violent hemorrhage of the lungs ensued, and his young and beautiful spirit passed away to that happy dream-land where the soul of the persecuted poet finds rest."

"The soul of Adam, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the eternal are."

Tears filled Clare's eyes; but she was not unhappy as she said: "Father, did I not hear somewhere that there is a beautiful legend among the ancient Greek sages, that the immortal spirit of every true poetical genius is wafted to a separate heaven, and there, in the grand conceptions of their earthly minds, they realize their own poetry, and converse in music of their individual creations?"

"Is it not a beautiful tradition," she continued, her countenance animated with a beam of sunshine and joy, "when purified from earthly dross, they revel in dreams which they alone could appreciate, and chaunt their own glad songs on golden lyres, ever and eternal?"

"Are yonder stars which shine so bright and beautiful but the souls of poets irradiating and making the poetry of heaven?"

"If this be true, where is Dante, the great immortal Dante? Whither wanders his star? An exile and a wanderer, proscribed and banished, deprived of every tie in life, with nothing but his own transcendent genius to drive these maddening thoughts away, he, nevertheless, rendered the classic name of Beatrice Portinari a theme for painters and poets for six centuries—a theme which was intimately interwoven with his own in his great divine comedy."

"Yes," said Lord Melgrave, "I never think of this wonderful poet without an emotion of pity. Tracing his career through all its intricate mazes, his flight from Florence, his asylum with the aged Di Ramini, the wonderful and tragic fate of Francesca, which he wove in his own graphic poem, throw a thousand charms around his wonderful history."

"The great Michael Angelo studied the immortal Dante, and transferred to canvas his memorable poem, 'Divina Comedia.'"

"Where is he buried?" asked Clare.

"At Ravenna. Poor Dante was indebted to his faithful friend and patron, Guido Novella, at whose palace he died, for the sumptuousness of his funeral obsequies."

"If you remember," continued he, "it was while resting by his tomb that great cynical poet of the world, Lord Byron, wrote the 'Lament, or Prophecy

of Dante,' which touches the heart to its deepest recesses.

"The wondrous power of the author as he enters into the feelings of poor Dante, who had slept beneath this tomb for more than five centuries, is commensurate with his profound poetic judgment."

"Oh, my father!" said Clare, "were all poets exiles—all lovers—all strangers from home and kindred?"

"I am hardly competent to answer that question," said Lord Melgrave. "I doubt not they were 'all lovers,' as the beautiful creations emanating from their refined souls breathe love in almost every line.

"Clare, shall we leave this consecrated spot for to-day?" asked her father, "and visit St. Peter's? I see the hour of noon is almost here," and giving his arm to Clare, slowly wended their way from this lonely "City of the Dead."

In going to St. Peter's, they crossed the bridge of St. Angelo, and paused a moment to admire the old castle of Angelo, just across the stone archway. The pillars in front of St. Peter's were designed by Michael Angelo to extend to this arch; but his followers, who completed this vast edifice, failed to fulfill his grand plan.

"Clare," resumed her father, "you will be greatly deceived in the appearance of St. Peter's at first view. While almost all other immensely large edifices appear grander than they are in reality, St. Peter's does not seem so large as it really is."

Presently this magnificent structure appeared before them; the greatest temple ever erected by man to the worship of the living God. It is the only building on earth which reminds us more of nature than art.

Clare was overwhelmed with wonder at the grandeur of this edifice. Its spire is lost in the clouds. Well might Michael Angelo exclaim, "I built it in air."

The colossal Westminster Abbey called forth the most delighted expressions of admiration, but St. Peter's awed her; she could command no language in which to express her admiration and astonishment at the majesty of this work of art. They entered the portico, and slowly ascended the aisle. If the external view bewildered Clare, what sensation might not the internal create?

The profound silence which filled the vast arches awed her at first into silence. The echo of her voice repeated her words after she had forgotten them. She clung to her father's arm, as though they had entered the abode of the great Eternal. She was fascinated with its magnitude and grandeur. Here it is one feels his utter and hopeless insignificance. The past, present and future are blended in one thought. Time and space are forgotten. This grand cathedral is a living monument of genius, a watch-tower pointing pilgrims to a shrine "not made by hands, eternal in the heavens."

Clare's silence warned her father she was affected profoundly by what she saw, and that another day must complete the visit. Accordingly he retraced

his steps to the grand entrance, and once more stepped into the sunlight.

Carefully Lord Melgrave assisted his daughter into the carriage, and they set out for their home. Clare was aroused from her reverie, and the first word she said alarmed her father seriously. "Oh, my father, I don't know why, but I could think of nothing but Lord Clifford while in St. Peter's. It seemed to me I could feel him all around me. I almost fancied I could hear his voice in the echo. Strange as it may seem to you, it did not make me unhappy. I think I am much better than when we sat out this morning.

"Will you bring me again some day when Madame Devereux comes?" she asked

Lord Melgrave was too deeply absorbed to reply, but the name of Madame Devereux awakened him, and he answered: "Perhaps so, if you wish it, and you are not ill after this. I ought not," he continued, "to have brought you to the most wonderful creation in all Rome first. Every thing will appear insipid and tame when compared to St. Peter."

"Oh, yes, I am delighted to have viewed St. Peter's first, because its grandeur and glory reflect its radiance upon every object in Rome. Nothing hereafter could appear insignificant within the shadow of that cupola, whose presence eternally suggests to the soul the stars, whither it seems going. I am lost in contemplating its magnificence. I thank you, my dear father, for giving me so happy a surprise."

Lord Melgrave continued ill at ease. He feared that the most terrible of all calamities was about to befall his lovely daughter. That incomprehensible gladness which was manifested on her countenance was quite unnatural; however, he secretly resolved some days should elapse before he would again take her to St. Peter's.

The sun was sinking behind the Capitoline Hill as they alighted in the paved court-yard of the Villa de Medici, Lord Melgrave's princely home. Vignet welcomed them with her usual pleasant smile. Suspense mingled with alarm shadowed her face as she noted the wonderful change in Lady Clare's countenance and general appearance.

Approaching Clare with affectionate solicitude, she inquired if her ride had been pleasant.

"Oh, delightful!" exclaimed Lady Clare, quite excitedly. "Vignet, St. Peter's is a perfect marvel—a wonder—a semblance of Paradise! You shall go with me some day; it is glorious, I tell you!—it is heaven itself!"

Vignet removed her wrappings, saying, "Come, my darling, to your room, and prepare for dinner. I see you are quite fatigued; I fear the excitement has been too much for you."

"No, no, Vignet, not too much; but the strange sensation that came over me as I stood before the holy altar in St. Peter's, I think wearied me from excessive joy. Vignet," she continued, "I almost felt the presence of Lord Clifford! It breathed around me in the incense from the censor. There came over me a calm, holy joy, such as I never felt

except once, and that was when his loving arms were around me, and his precious words of love fell upon my ear, and I could feel his sweet breath like the fragrance of roses. Oh, Vignet! he can not be dead! He knew I loved him!"

Tears were running down Vignet's face; but a sweet smile of love beamed like a sun-ray upon the lovely features of the angelic Clare. Her love for Lord Clifford was so sentimental, tender, pure and holy, and so refined from all earthly thoughts that angels might weep over her cruel bereavement.

Seeing the tears upon Vignet's face, Clare kissed them away, saying, "Do not weep, Vignet; I am not shedding tears!"

Vignet silently caressed her, murmuring, "Poor blighted lamb! God will comfort you in His own good time, and until then we must patiently wait."

Soon after Lady Clare joined her father at dinner, and the subject of St. Peter's was laid aside for other items of interest.

Nothing can so far enhance the beauty of an object as to view it with those we love—with those who can fully appreciate the emotions which are awakened by beauty and sublimity.

Lord Melgrave was an enthusiast. He entered into a theme with his whole soul. His fine feelings and keenly-strong organization made him susceptible to the most refined emotions of love and sentiment. His cultivated manners, together with his superior education, study and travels, made him one of the most accomplished gentlemen of the day. Sixteen years of his life had been passed in a living

tomb. A beautiful being unlocked the door of this sepulchre, and led him out into Heaven's sunshine. Can we wonder that the smothered flame which had burned with a true and radiant light years gone by should again ignite and rekindle with a deep and holy fervor?

This dignified and noble-hearted man, "whose heart had grown rich by suffering," felt no school-boy fancy for Madame Devereux, but that sterling affection which is strong in its majesty, glorious to contemplate, beautiful by its very faith, truth and sincerity. He beheld in Madame Devereux an unselfish, untiring and faithful woman; her deep love and reverence for her lost husband were but calculated to awaken the tenderest feeling of love and pity in the hearts of all who saw her. Her sweet and amiable disposition, affectionate, confiding and gentle manners, drew around her many ardent admirers. Beautiful and accomplished, possessing all those feminine qualities which shine preeminently in woman, "to know her was to love her."

Lord Melgrave had been trying for some days to analyze his heart-thoughts, to ascertain if Madame Devereux occupied a prominent corner.

After dinner Lady Clare went to her room and Lord Melgrave to his study. Lying upon the table was the package.

CHAPTER XX.

STORY OF THE GIPSY QUEEN.

AFTER seeing Lady Clare to the door of her room, Lord Melgrave passed to the other side of the hall, and entered his study. The first object that met his eye was the package placed there by Vignet. He was greatly surprised; and was at a loss to conjecture how it came there; but Vignet entering just then, relieved his anxiety by informing him of all the circumstances connected with finding it; she then left him to peruse its contents. Making himself comfortable, he opened the package. It commenced in the form of a letter, and ran thus:

"TO THE LADY CLARE MELGRAVE:

"Will your ladyship pardon the presumption of a Zingari maiden for intruding upon your notice the brief history of one who will be, ere this reaches you, journeying toward the rising sun? She hopes, as you note the peculiar position of her former life, the strange and trying circumstances which fate threw around her, your tender, loving heart will be softened toward her weakness, and have charity for her misfortune. And now to her story:

"Your sweet face and loving voice disarmed me of any resentment I might have felt toward one who possessed the love of Lord Clifford.

"Oh, hear me, gentle lady, for these are the last broken-heart throbs that will ever be heard from the lips of Zoemara, the gipsy. The remembrance of her will only be as a summer cloud, that passes away with the morning sun! Sweet lady, the heaven you enjoy can never be darkened by an unhappy thought of one you knew as Bianca.

"In giving you a brief outline of my parentage you will understand why two distinct characters are so prominently developed in my nature.

"My mother was a pure Zingari, born in the island of Sumatra, or Zoemara, as it is called by the ancients. My father was an Italian captain, whose ship touched the island during a festival of roses, which is celebrated, or rather kept as a holiday or pastime on this island. My mother was very beautiful, with dark, dazzling, oriental eyes. She was queen of roses, and her beauty bewildered the susceptible Italian, who forgot home, friends, position, and every thing in this world, for this gipsy queen. She ran off with him, and they were married on shipboard.

"My father was a noble-hearted man, very refined and poetic. All the finer feelings I possess, and all that is good in my nature, I inherited from him. If he had been spared to me, how different might have been my fate! My mother's wild nature, her love for astrology, her wandering and tent life, were a source of deep regret to my father, who foolishly believed when he married her she would forget her former life, if surrounded with home comforts and associations.

"When I was ten years old my father was lost overboard in the bay of Bengal. Then commenced my gipsy wanderings. My mother still retained her oriental beauty, and returned at once to her former home, when she was chosen queen; I say *home*, but what or where is a gipsy's home? I grew in stature much like my mother, and at the early age of thirteen was promised for a wife to a tall, heathenish gipsy, who half-frightened me to death when he looked at me. My mother was inexorable; she would listen to nothing but that I must become his wife.

"About this time we were encamped in the suburbs of Cairo, in Egypt, and there came to our camp a company of young French travelers, to have their fortunes told. I was then the oracle of Suristan. I need not enter into detail. One of these visitors fell in love with, as he said, the 'gentle Zoemara,' and, as I then thought, I returned it with my whole heart. I learned his language, in order to understand the sweet words of love which he murmured in my ever-willing ear; in short, I was perfectly infatuated with this young Frenchman.

"Days and weeks he hovered around our camp. At last, honorable in word and deed, he offered me his hand in marriage. My mother would not consent, unless he would forsake his home, friends and kindred, be initiated into the tribe with all the usual ceremonies of tattooing and shaving the head. This he would not consent to, and I only loved him the more because he would not permit or suffer such a barbarous custom.

"He wished to take me to his own home. Oh, how I longed to go—to free myself forever from a people who had no part in common with me! He taught me to read and write, and gave me many books of useful and instructive knowledge.

"But the day came when we must part. I can not forget his tender, affectionate 'good-by,' as he said, 'My gentle little Zoemara, I must leave you forever! Your people and mine can never unite; think of me only as a dear friend, not as a lover.' One hurried kiss and he was gone, and we never met again.

"Then began the return of former demonstrations on the part of my gipsy lover. With all the power of heathen eloquence he besought me to marry him, He then demanded me of my mother, and then he threatened. His anger and indignation knew no bounds; he instigated a system of persecutions that were intolerable. At length, finding every effort unavailing, and that I would not marry him, he called a council of the elders of the tribe, and they decided that as I had been forsaken by a house-dweller, who had won my love, I must die, by being stoned to death!

"The day came for the consummation of this fiendish sacrifice. I was robed as a queen for the execution. Every pulsation of my heart revolted against this dreadful murder. The books I had read revealed to me a new life, in which my Italian blood predominated.

"Every preparation was complete, and I was led forth to die. Upon the impulse of the moment I

started, and ran like a swift-footed gazelle; it seemed to me my feet were wings, so very great grew the distance between me and my pursuers. On, on we ran;—it was a trial for life or death! When nearly exhausted, with scarcely one breath left in my body, I espied in the distance a camp of some kind—what I knew not. An Arab would have spared my life, if only for the privilege of taking it himself by a slow torture. I did not then know any thing of the God you worship, or I should have cried to Him for aid.

“The sight of these white tents gleaming away off in the distance, almost where the horizon met the wilderness of white sand, gave me hope. I renewed my exertions. I almost flew over the trackless waste of burning desert; I drew in my breath, and closed my eyes to shut out the murderous club that I felt was lifted over my head. On they came, tearing after me, shouting, shrieking and screaming. A group of gentlemen was before me; I gave an unearthly scream, and bounded into Lord Clifford’s arms. I grasped him by the neck, and clung to him for protection, begging him to save my life.

“Lady Clare Melgrave, you can never know the rapture of living at a moment when the tomb seems about to open for your reception!

“I cursed my race—they were not human. Lord Melgrave, your father, was of the party, and he sought to divert my mind from the fearful ordeal through which I had just passed. His kind and considerate manner endeared him to me. I can

never, never forget your noble father, Lady Clare. But what can I say of Lord Clifford? I forgot I had ever lived before with another race. Lord Clifford had saved my life; his strong arm had clasped me in a protecting embrace; he seemed to me a god! My whole being changed; every pulsation of my wild, passionate heart went out to him. I loved him with perfect idolatry. To sit in the same tent with him for half an hour would gladden my heart for a whole day—even if he never looked at me or spoke to me; just to breathe the same air with him was a delicious enjoyment. My love grew deeper and more intense day by day; it was my religion—my hope of heaven. He was my endless day or midnight gloom. I lived only in his presence; the rest of the time was a dim vagary.

“But as well might I have hoped to call the stars to earth, and think to keep them here, as to call forth one expression of love or affection from Lord Clifford. Thrown together as we were for two months, he could not have avoided noticing my intense love for himself—I could not conceal it; and yet, with his great goodness of heart, he never once wounded my feelings by appearing to notice it.

Blended with this love came a feeling of timidity. I could not look directly toward him, or even converse with him without infinite embarrassment. If I succeeded in addressing five words to him during the day, and he replied even with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no,’ my rapture was so great I could not sleep for a whole night! I would have waded through kindred blood to call from his heart one expression of such

an endearment as I well knew a heart like Lord Clifford's could feel for one he loved.

"At length the time came when we must part. Oh, I may not tell, and God only can know, how my poor heart bled—how it dropped, and dropped my life away. My love for Lord Clifford was no every-day affair, but the wildest and most intense affection that ever found a resting-place within the human heart; it burned through my Italian veins like the fires of Vesuvius! I would have lived a thousand lives like those of Prometheus just to have heard one breath of love from his lips, or even one manifestation of interest.

"But it was not to be. He was too noble to take any advantage of a love like mine, by expressing what he never felt, simply to please me for a time, and when it might perhaps reproach him in after-life.

"You, having never felt the misery of unrequited love, can not know how my keen, sensitive spirit withered, faded and died—how each drop of anguish extorted from this poor heart of mine was more than a whole life of wretchedness to others who feel less keenly! Oh, the lone and dreary night-watches, the faint-glimmering ray of hope that would at times dart athwart my soul, lifting the vapor like a sun-beam struggling through a dense cloud! At times hope would whisper in low, dulcet tones, while it waved its tiny hand, 'despair not—he may love you yet!' Perhaps the next hour the delusion would be dispelled. He named me Bianca, because it was easier to speak than my own name.

"I believed I should die the day Lord Melgrave and Clifford gave me up to a tribe of Spanish gipsies whom we met on the plains. I could not go without some token of remembrance from him. Attached to his chain he wore a beautiful Masonic jewel, for which I asked him. I was going to leave him forever, and I conquered my timidity so far as to ask him for this jewel.

"We parted; my soul was severed in twain, never again to be reunited.

"With my new-found protectors I soon became a great favorite, and through my influence I prevailed upon them to follow Lord Melgrave's party, although we were, at times, hundreds of miles behind them.

"When Lord Clifford fell into the hands of the Arabs I was very ill; indeed, the thought of his suffering, and my inability to aid him, retarded my own restoration to health, and nearly five months passed before I was able, through the means of the little Masonic jewel, to effect his release.

"Pardon me, lady; to save Lord Clifford I would have bartered my hopes of happiness hereafter. The chief of the gipsy tribe, to whom I then belonged, had professed much love for me, and wanted to make me his wife. I promised him I would marry him, and give him the emblem, if he would visit the tent at midnight with me, and bring Lord Clifford away.

"The Arab sentinels, as well as the gipsy, were Masons. I impressed upon him, with all the eloquence love lends the voice, his duty to a Masonic

knight. I told him his brother was dying, and that unless he would save his life I would take my own. He knew me too well to doubt it, and accordingly he visited the Arab tent for many days, under various pretexts, and learned just where Lord Clifford was, and their plans respecting him. The night before his execution we went together to his tent, and brought him safely away. Mounted on a powerful camel, we soon left the camp miles behind us.

"Oh! the joy to hold that loved face in my arms, to pillow his sinking head on my warm heart, to press burning kisses upon his face during the many hours he lay in a death-like stupor! How delicious the joy! My heart throbbed with a rapture words can never, never tell. He was mine—mine only! I sent every creature from the tent after the gipsy had made him comfortable, that I might gaze upon him alone. 'Oh, God,' I prayed, 'give him back to life! He shall—he must love me now!' I could kiss and caress him for hours. I lived an age of rapture, and I almost hoped it might last for weeks. My vehement manifestations of affection aroused him to consciousness. He was too much exhausted by long suffering to care for any thing then, and accepted my care as a necessity.

"Weeks passed before he was entirely able to walk. I could not longer conceal my love, nor did I try to; but poured it forth in strains of the most passionate eloquence. Lord Clifford was deeply moved. He told me in all frankness he did not love me, nor could he ever feel for me what one

should feel for the woman whom he would make his wife. He should return to England as soon as able to travel; nor could he take me there under any circumstances, except as his wife.

"'Bianca, you know I am grateful,' he continued, 'to you beyond words for the service you have rendered me. I place at your disposal a sum of money sufficient to make you independent the rest of your life. Abandon a mode of living wholly uncongenial to your nature, and I myself will place you in a convent to be educated, and will cherish your memory as an object near and dear, and as one to whom I owe my life.'

"My wicked gipsy blood arose in my heart. I thought the life I had saved belonged to me—he ought to love me, because he owed me his existence. It was but for a moment that I felt this; I accepted his money, secretly resolving in my heart to leave the tribe and follow him to Europe. We parted not in anger, but animated by tender emotions of friendship.

"My plans were all laid. I visited Lord Clifford's banker in Cairo, and found the amount he had given me was a fortune. My father's family lived in Italy, and were of noble blood. He often mentioned a brother, Victor L'Estrange, who was an officer of some note. I believed I could find them; and, with the money I possessed, I well knew I could find plenty of friends.

"I went direct to Italy, and ascertained that my uncle was dead, and his widow and her only daughter, Maud, resided in an old chateau, situated

on the gulf of Salerno. Her daughter had married an English nobleman, and resided in England. The countess was an ambitious woman, possessing little principle or love for any thing. She readily gave me a home, while I applied myself to study; for two years I never rested.

"Still determined to win the heart of Lord Clifford, imagine my surprise to learn he was the betrothed lover of my own cousin, Maud; and, later, of the return of her former husband and her death.

"All this time I never knew that your father, Lady Clare, was once the husband of my cousin, or the noble-hearted gentleman who had passed many hours in conversing with me on the plains of Syria.

"When the gipsy chief I had promised to marry, found I had absconded, his wrath was fearful; he determined to find me, and at last, after two years of patient search succeeded.

"I had almost despaired of ever seeing Lord Clifford again, as a rumor reached my aunt, after the tragic fate of his betrothed, that he had left England, none knew whither.

"The gipsy longing to roam came over me. In that guise I could find him better than in any other way. I left my aunt's house and joined the gipsies again, promising the chief if he would wait one year I would be his wife, and place untold sums of gold at his command.

"By accident I learned Lord Clifford was in this neighborhood; and I patiently waited for weeks to meet him. We met at the cascade; you know the

rest. Your beautiful face is an excuse for any one to love you, even had other ties bound him.

"The fearful calamity which has deprived you of a brave, noble and generous lover, has also planted an arrow in my heart, which time can not extract. Your comfort in remembering him will be that he loved you—he worshiped you.

"Mine only can be that I loved him. He was my idol, and now he is gone. A dark and impenetrable cloud hath shrouded my soul. Where is there rest? Can a soul sleep and suffer no more? Oh, God! pity me; let me never feel love again! never let its fires be kindled in the smouldering ruins of this sepulchre. Let my heart remain in darkness and gloom, until the resurrection morn, rather than feel the tiniest zephyr of affection for any animate creature!

"Sweet lady, if my story has awakened a sorrow which is sacred to you, forgive me. I am going far away—I care not whither; but my heart will wander to you where'er you sojourn, with a prayer for your sorrow, and a tender remembrance of your angelic beauty and goodness. For oh, lady! I worship the beautiful in spirit and in truth. I can not feel unpleasant to any thing so divinely beautiful as Lady Clare Melgrave.

"Why do I linger over these thoughts with a tender yet mournful memory, as a joy and a sorrow from which I would not be divorced; or buy forgetfulness? They are past forever; but their treasured memories are hidden from every eye save God's.

" 'You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang around it still.' "

" 'Make not to thyself an idol; I am a jealous God.' This tells my sad fate; I had made an idol of Lord Clifford, and God punished me in depriving me of his love.

" 'I am weary, ah how weary, and a load is on my breast
I long to fall asleep, and be forever more at rest;
There is a world where cloudless realms enfranchised souls
traverse—
Where pleasure hath no bitterness; where love is not a curse.
And I am sad and weary, so weary, I would fain
Close up my eyes in sleep and never wake to earth again.' "

CHAPTER XXI.

ZŒMARA L'ESTRANGE.

LORD Melgrave folded the last sheet of the manuscript, and a deep and audible sigh escaped him. His warm, loving heart felt keenly for the poor heart-broken maiden, and his surprise was great to learn that Lady Maud and Zœmara were own cousins. And now he readily traced a resemblance; the fierce impassioned nature of Lady Maud was but reproduced in Bianca, as he still called her.

"Well," he mused, "Clare must never see this. It would be just like her to institute a search for Bianca, and bring her into our own household, which her relationship to Lady Maud would render impossible.

"The very air of Italy has become intolerable to me," he continued, thinking half aloud. "I will take Clare to visit her mother's tomb, and then bid adieu forever to this land of woe."

Lord Melgrave sat buried in thought long after he closed the paper. He had been unmindful of the hour, and the moon flooded the city with a silvered radiance. He then threw himself on a sofa, too weary and gloomy to care even for life. Every treasured anticipation of his entire life had failed, and his unhappy fate seemed to have descended to his daughter.

"I am determined," he continued, "to leave Europe. I will go to the new world—to America, and live for a time where my misfortunes will not taunt me constantly. I will make a flying trip to Greece, and sail for America within the month, providing Clare is willing."

Comforted with these thoughts, Lord Melgrave fell asleep, and the morning sun was streaming through the stained glass windows full in his face when he awakened. Much refreshed, he joined Clare at the little breakfast parlor. She readily acquiesced in her father's plans. A week was passed in rambling over the city, visiting the most important places of interest; and then they left Rome to visit the tomb of the Countess of Melgrave. Madame Devereux could not join them.

Clare felt very much disappointed to learn that her friend, Madame Devereux, could not join them, and pass the winter at Rome. Lord Melgrave, who had become familiar with disappointments, met it as though such things were to be expected, and did not murmur.

"It is better so, perhaps," he thought; "I could not longer be thrown in the charming society of Madame Devereux without expressing for her the feelings of my heart, which would probably drive away even her friendship. Yes, I will continue my journey alone through this life; the best of it is already gone, and the few remaining years left me shall be devoted to my precious Clare. No other love shall come between us. Thank you, noble-hearted Madame Devereux, for sparing me the

humiliation of an act of folly which, at any time of life, is quite out of the line of romance writers. Years hence we may meet, when my gratitude to you may be expressed without displeasing you by a demonstration of love. Generous woman. Bright be your path through life! May you, at some future day, find one upon whom to bestow the priceless wealth of even your broken heart,—a heart which is more beautiful in its ruins than a heart never made great by sorrow!"

The anticipated visit to the tomb of her mother awakened in the heart of Clare powerful emotions; yet, with it, came the sacred remembrance of the duty she owed even the dust of that dear mother. It was but a short journey from Rome, and needed no preparations.

For the first time she stood beside the tomb containing the treasured remains of her mother. The grounds surrounding it were delightful. They were shaded by lofty trees, which waved their majestic branches too and fro, as if bowing to the silent mourners who approached the consecrated spot.

A costly marble monument, surmounted by a Grecian cross, arrested their attention. It was a magnificent piece of workmanship. The design on one side of the tomb was a ship in a storm, the waves breaking over it in wild, tumultuous disorder. On another side a wreck, with floating bodies on the water. A third represented Lord Melgrave, with the lifeless remains of his wife in his arms. So perfect were the features that no person who had ever seen either of them could fail to recognize

the semblance. The fourth was Hawthorne Dale. Imagination could hardly conceive so perfect a picture. The anguish and despair of Lord Melgrave, sitting on the mound with the lifeless body of his wife in his arms, was an exquisite work of art. The figure of Lord Melgrave almost breathed. The immortal Canova could hardly have improved it. The bronzed door of the vault swung open at a slight touch, and they entered the sacred precincts of the tomb.

"Here," said Lord Melgrave, "is the grave of your mother."

Flowers, arranged in beautiful Parian marble vases, were scattered around, and the grass grew in wild luxuriance on the grave. It was a sacred hour for both. The soft, golden sunset had faded into the dim twilight, and the moon came out, flooding the silent sepulchre with a silvery radiance. Clare was the first to speak.

"Come, my father; this precious dust has been religiously mourned. Good-by, my darling mother."

No tears dimmed her eyes. She was thinking of one equally dear, who lay in a deep abyss, without a memento to mark his tomb, away in Tuscany.

The next day they all returned to Rome. Lord Melgrave determined to leave Italy as soon as practicable. He became so uneasy that, were it not then so near winter, he would have sailed at once for America, without visiting Greece, although there were many things in Athens he very much wished Clare to see.

There was a strange fascination in St. Peter's for Lady Clare, and she would rather have remained in Rome than to go elsewhere. It pleased her, however, in contemplating a trip to America.

In about three weeks Lord Melgrave and family were at Athens—that land where the three sisters, Art, Science and Literature, were first rocked in the cradle of Liberty. There is no city in the world, perhaps, so rich in traditions as Athens. Here Socrates, the greatest of heathen philosophers, was tried and condemned to drink the hemlock. His dungeon is an object of special interest to every traveler. It was here Demosthenes stood upon the great tribune, and electrified, by his eloquence, the assembled thousands concerning questions on which hung the fate of empires.

How changed are its people since those days when the states of Greece were first and foremost in all the arts and sciences which distinguished nations as well as individuals! Its temples erected to Athenian heroes are among the finest in the world. One of special interest is that of Theseus, the celebrated Athenian hero. In the centre of the city is a rocky eminence of about one hundred feet high and five hundred feet across, to the summit of which a broad marble staircase leads. Here is the temple of Minerva, on the most magnificent site in the world. This temple contains the shrine of Minerva, an unrivaled piece of sculpture by Phidias. Mars Hill is another of those antique temples, once the glory of Athens. A whole week was passed very agreeably in this renowned city. Its decaying

glory forms a picture suggestive of many pleasurable as well as painful remembrances, and mighty monuments which recall the past greatness of that once renowned nation.

As Lord Melgrave designed to make a lengthened tour of the American continent, it was necessary to prepare accordingly; so they returned to Rome, whence they designed in a short time to embark for New York.

Lord Melgrave found important letters awaiting his arrival in Rome. Lady Clare was also made glad in being the recipient of a kind letter from Madame Devereux. If Clare loved her before she left them, how much deeper interest she felt in her since she had learned her father's feelings concerning her!

Madame Devereux's letters were beautifully written, carefully worded, graceful in style, and entirely free from any appearance of studied elegance. Like herself, there was a charm about her letters. She treated every subject she discussed learnedly, without being pedantic. One became interested in her graphic descriptions, though the same subject might have previously met the eye; and yet throughout her entire letter a strain of sadness might be noticed which the reader scarcely would dispel if he could, because it was a part of her being. Her quiet goodness, without any ostentation, rendered her one of the most remarkable women at court. Her natural independence made her entirely free from jealousy. She never courted the friendship of any person, but was affable and polite to every body, so much so

that every servant courted the privilege of ministering to her slightest wishes.

Her criticisms on works she had read were very intelligent and instructive, and in commending them to Clare she took the happiest method possible to interest her without alluding to her great misfortune.

Madame Devereux's amiable disposition won for her the highest encomiums. Her letter was as a star shining in a darkened sky, or a strong, commanding voice guiding a ship through a dangerous sea by words to the pilot.

Lady Clare read and re-read her letters, deriving comfort and strength from their deep earnestness. She exercised the same magic influence over all who knew her. No gentleman, old or young, passed half an hour in conversation with this noble woman but left her society benefited; or, if he was not materially benefited, he heard nothing from her either frivolous or slanderous. One prominent trait in Madame Devereux's character was that she never by word, thought or deed traduced any body; she spoke well of a person, or the name found no place in her conversation. Her angelic charities for every unfortunate creature made her idolized by all classes. The moisture would gather in her beautiful violet eye whenever she was obliged to listen to court gossip. "No, no," she would say, "do not repeat it; perhaps it is not so."

Lady Clare replied to Madame Devereux's letter, and in the most glowing terms painted the beauties of America, and begged the lady to make one of their party.

"You dear, good, naughty girl," she wrote, "I will not love you all the while I am there, if you do not go with us. We will go to Paris for you. Imagine my dignified father promenading the deck of a steamship with two daughters on his arms! I shall be quite uncomfortable without a companion. You know, darling, during my illness you all spoiled me, I am so dependent. Again, I shall meet only strangers, and a lady is sadly in need of a female friend to—well, I guess—to gossip with! My dear, good father is worth all the rest of the world; he thinks of every thing, even to my bouquet; but then, you know, girls can not tell their fathers a thousand little occurrences that make the sum total of a pleasure trip. Remember, sweet girl, you are expected to sail for America with us on the first day of May."

Clare called to her father, asking if he would not append a postscript to her letter, inviting Madame Devereux to accompany them to New York.

Reluctantly he took the pen, looked mischievously at Clare, and said, "How do you address a letter to a charming lady when you are about to solicit a favor?"

"Were it to any person but Madame Devereux," said Clare, "I should commence by saying all the sweet things I could think of—nonsense! My father, you know how to invite a lady to take a pleasure trip—do you not?"

"Yes," replied Lord Melgrave, "but not Madame Devereux; besides, I think it quite useless to ask her. She very politely declined an invitation to

pass the winter with us, although she has never been in Rome, and is a lover of the fine arts. However, if it will please you," he continued, "I will add a postscript to your letter, giving her an invitation." He accordingly wrote:

"Lady Devereux, Clare and myself are about to visit America, and we would be exceedingly pleased to have you make one of our party. You will have ample time to make all necessary arrangements, as we shall not sail before the first of May. We will meet you at any place you may designate, and it will afford us great pleasure to do so.

"Your most obedient servant,

"F. W. MELGRAVE."

Ten days after this letter was sent there came an answer—a most beautiful note, expressing the deepest gratitude for their consideration in remembering her, but declining the invitation. "My darling Clare," she wrote, "I have a good reason for not accepting your magnanimous invitation, though my heart is crying to go with you. I love you, Clare, dearly, tenderly and devotedly, and the sweetest thoughts which burden my heart are for you. I would love to live with you always, ever to hear the music of your voice—ever to wait for your coming, darling; for you are beautiful as day, when day was very beautiful to me. You know, my precious one, you are *my lover now*, and I may whisper a few tender expressions in your ear. The affections you have shown me have been a pearl-drop of joy, and your unbounded love has proved almost too great

for my weak head. I may not tell you, darling, why I refuse you, when every feeling of my heart rebels against my refusal. Love me, Clare, love me, and help me to go on my weary path through life by leaving me without one fond regret or tender remembrance of the past. Do not ever ask me to visit you again; the delirious joy I experienced while with you nearly broke my sacred vow. It must not be, so do not tempt me, my precious flower; think of me only as a weary pilgrim, journeying through life, watching the beacon light of that rest to which soon, soon I hope to go. The sun went down nearly two years ago, and I can not breathe well in this darkness.

"I never designed to burden you, darling, with a sad letter, but somehow my pen would trace my soul's thoughts, whether I wished it or not. But it is passed now, and I am cheerful. Peep over my shoulder, and see if my face retains one single, lingering ray of sadness.

"I shall expect a lengthy description of your sea voyage, and also a minute detail of your feelings when first you visit Niagara Falls. You will not disappoint me? Imagine I am smothering you with kisses. Good-by, my pet."

Clare flung down the letter, half wounded by Madame Devereux's refusal, yet pleased with her manifestations of affection for herself. But this satisfaction was momentary. It becomes so much a necessity for women to be loved, that it is comforting to hear such words, particularly from a true-hearted woman like Madame Devereux.

"Poor lady!" sighed Lady Clare; "you are right. The sun has gone out, and left you and me only a wilderness of darkness! May God love you, my dear Madame Devereux! I suppose we must forego the pleasure of your charming society. Yes, Vignet," she continued, "you were right; Madame Devereux will not place herself where she fears that her heart will for a moment lose its allegiance to the dead!"

Lady Clare then sought her father, to inform him of the lady's decision.

Lord Melgrave expressed no surprise; he simply remarked:

"Well, my dear one, we must endeavor to enjoy the journey without her. Doubtless she thinks she has a sufficient reason for refusing a good opportunity for a pleasure trip, of visiting a country replete with interest and enjoyment. Come, cheer up, my child; it is not right to yield to undue grief. We are never called upon to bear crosses beyond our strength; nor can we know why these misfortunes are sent us. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.'"

"To-morrow, if you like, I will take you to ride on the celebrated road leading to the Appian Way, and we will have an opportunity of seeing many beautiful, ruined temples. Worth has not been forgotten; almost every space of ground in and around this city of the gods contains a sculptured memento of their illustrious dead."

The remaining few weeks passed by Lord Melgrave and family in Rome were devoted to visiting

the celebrated studios of Canova, Guido and Raphael. Lord Melgrave wished to remain a few days in Venice, before leaving for America, which they did after bidding adieu to Rome.

CHAPTER XXII.

AMERICA.

ONE beautiful afternoon, about the first of June, a group of ladies and gentlemen was gathered on the deck of one of those magnificent steamers that floats the ocean between Havre and New York, and among them were Lord Melgrave and Clare.

The *distingué* appearance of the latter in her deep mourning, together with her wonderful beauty, attracted universal admiration and interest. The voyage had been delightful, there having been no storms or unpleasant occurrence to mar the pleasure of the passengers. Once Lord Melgrave induced Clare to sit down to the piano, but her music was like the wail of a broken lute, sweet, touching and mournful. The last time she played before the ocean voyage, was the accompaniment to the song, "Beware." How vividly the scene came back to her again! Too much overcome by the painful remembrance, she arose hastily, and, taking her father's arm, she left the room. A murmur of admiration passed through the party who had noticed that she was very much agitated. "Beautiful!" said one; "Queenly!" said another; "Some fearful convulsion of nature has crushed her heart, that is evident," remarked a gentle-

man, annoyed that so beautiful a girl should exclude herself beyond the possibility of an acquaintance.

The day following, the passengers were to have a little dance, and unusual merriment prevailed. Clare felt little or no interest in any thing, and Lord Melgrave feared very much for her health. During the hour of dancing, on the next day, Lord Melgrave observed that an invalid was being brought upon deck. The couch she was reclining upon passed very near where Clare and her father stood. The sick person was a young girl of exceeding beauty; her eyes were black, and her hair of the hue of a raven, so very black that it almost glittered. The extreme pallor of her face made the contrast the more complete. An invalid on ship-board is ever an object of special interest. Lord Melgrave inquired of one of her attendants who she was. The old gentleman replied: "The young lady has consumption; her case is a very peculiar one." Lord Melgrave became very much interested. With Clare leaning on his arm, they walked across the deck, and stood beside the couch of the dying girl. Clare, whose noble and tender heart was ever alive to sympathy for others, approached the invalid, and in her kind, solicitous way, inquired for her health.

It might seem intruding, under ordinary circumstances, to thrust oneself upon the sick. But they were on a ship, far from land. The invalid had no female companion, except an aged, black woman for a nurse. The lady replied to Clare's inquiry, "I think I am better to-day, thank you." But the

voice was ringing, clear and sweet; a voice which, heard once, would never be forgotten. It thrilled one like an electric current. Clare started; never before had a voice so moved her very soul, and the thought flashed over her, "When the lady dies, heaven will gain music at the expense of earth; for surely I never listened to any thing half so exquisite as the melody of that voice."

Clare whispered her father to bring up Vignet. Vignet was one of that easy sort of persons who can readily engage in conversation with another, without seeming presumptuous, if the ceremony of introduction have been omitted; and Clare desired very much to hear the invalid talk, just to catch the music of her voice.

Vignet soon joined them, and with her motherly manner she was soon engaged, seemingly, in conversation with the nurse; but it was always the lady who replied. The character of her hands was in keeping with her voice. When she moved them, one felt as though they expected a reply. They were beautiful as a poet's dream.

Clare hovered around her couch until the sinking sun warned her nurse that the invalid ought to be taken to her room. 'Twas a beautiful night; the moon fell upon the ocean with its fullest glory. Clare said it reminded her of moonlight on the bay of Naples. The gay dancers still were answering to the music in happy measure.

Lord Melgrave and Clare were enjoying the lovely night when, by accident, they noticed the aged stranger who had been the attendant of the

invalid, or rather assisted in bringing her upon deck. Drawing a sofa from an awning, he invited Lord Melgrave and his daughter to a seat; and opened a conversation about the invalid.

"I have taken a peculiar interest in the beautiful girl," said Lord Melgrave, "and would be very grateful for any thing you may choose to tell me concerning her. Do not, I pray you, think me inquisitive. The lady herself wards off all inquiries; still there is something about a consumptive that awakens the deepest commiseration."

The old gentleman thus invited, very readily began: "I am but slightly acquainted with the lady herself; but to one very dear to her, whose death is really the cause of her illness, I was deeply attached. Although many years the senior of this other person, we were like brothers. It was in the army that I first met him; but I fear the story may weary you, or sadden this young lady."

"Oh, no sir!" interposed Clare; "my sympathies are awakened for the sweet girl; let me hear the tale."

The old soldier settled himself more comfortably to relate an incident of army life.

"It was at Gettysburg, and General Meade had just come in command of the Army of the Potomac. Proudly he flung our national emblem, the glorious Stars and Stripes, to the breeze. The long-roll beat; it was the tocsin sounding for the fray. The old Iron Brigade was moving to the scene of strife, to earn again the laurels of victory. The air was hot and stifling, and the very earth trembled beneath

the tread of this legion. The soul of the nation vibrated to an expected victory. To conquer or to die was legibly imprinted on every feature.

"Conspicuous for his fine form and princely bearing, was Colonel Egliston, of Minnesota; but in command of a Wisconsin regiment at the time. The artillery of the first division opened a heavy and raking fire. We were thrown out as skirmishers, and advanced about a quarter of a mile. We drove the rebels back, when they closed upon their main line, and we halted. The enemy threw a column in front of us, led by one of his bravest generals. A little to our right, yet almost in front of us, was the Second Mississippi, whose colonel won his spurs at famous Buena Vista. Powerful, athletic looking fellows were his command—clad in fine uniforms, with admirable discipline, and arms shining like burnished gold.

"Floating in the soft summer breeze above them, were several very elaborate and elegantly wrought banners, heavy with medallions.

"The federal colonel was mounted on a dark-bay, spirited animal. He was a thorough disciplinarian, and one of the most splendid-looking officers in the service—tall—over six feet—broad, with muscular frame, heavy, dark whiskers, fine moustache, a soft, brown eye, keen, penetrating, yet tender, and which awoke to the deepest sympathy with every recital of woe—dark, chestnut hair, sweeping away from his intellectual brow. A nobler, braver or warmer heart beat not beneath a uniform. True as steel, the pride of the regiment, a soldier and a gentleman.

"We were so near together that he touched my arm, and, pointing to a most beautiful banner, said, while a deep flush mantled his cheek, 'I shall take that flag!' The design on the flag was one of the most chaste and elegant the soul of a true patriot could conceive—Washington's Dream of Liberty. Imagine that emblem, the guiding star of our nation, become the watchword of traitors! The very thought was impious. Could he survive the scathing fire from those batteries? To attempt it seemed more than madness. But his was a heart of fire, and an arm of steel. He lifted his sword to his lips, kissed a ribbon tied on the hilt, murmured 'Celeste,' and galloped to the front.

"With the energy of despair he fought his way to the banner, struck down the arm that bore it so proudly, and brought it back in triumph. But it was done at a fearful cost. A sharp-shooter, who saw the pride of the regiment wrested from them, sent a fatal ball with unerring aim, and shattered the colonel's right arm. He caught the fatal banner in his left hand, as it was falling to the ground, and, holding his bridle in his teeth, he waved his trophy defiantly, scornfully, at the foe.

"An expression of intense anguish passed over his face, but not an audible murmur escaped his lips. Faint from the loss of blood, I assisted him to the rear. Turning to his brave soldiers, as he passed, he said, 'Boys, do your duty; I can't help you any more to-day.'

"'Major,' he continued, looking to me, 'take care of that banner; it cost me my good, right arm.'

"Two of the surgeons decided that amputation was unnecessary, but the third who saw it, being a keen practitioner, besought the others, if they would save his life, to amputate the arm immediately, but they overruled his opinion, and the arm was spared for the present.

"He suffered every thing for eleven days, and then his poor shattered arm was taken off. That heavenly messenger, hope, buoyed him up until now; but a vague dread of something unknown to himself seemed to oppress him, and yet after the operation had been performed he appeared to be doing nicely. The surgeon considered him out of danger; but still a premonition of death oppressed him.

"We had been very intimate—almost brothers—since the regiment was first formed. Together we stood during those dreadful days of carnage, in which our brigade received its baptism of fire; when, almost singly and alone, it withstood an onslaught of Stonewall Jackson, losing six hundred men! Again, at South Mountain it was assigned the honorable position of attacking the enemy's center, which it performed nobly. At Antietam it won imperishable honors by its firmness and bravery. We had shared the same tent, had sat by the same bivouac fire, talking, thinking and dreaming of loved ones far away.

"What high and noble thoughts filled the soul of poor Lewis can be known only to those who enjoyed his confidence. Naturally of a cheerful disposition, I had observed of late that he seemed

sadly depressed. I was with him all that my own wound would permit, and it was with a foreboding of evil that I noticed his sadness.

"I went to his bed on the morning of the seventh day after the amputation, and saw a marked change. He had been having one of those terrible chills which are almost always the forerunners of death in cases of wounds, where there has been a delay in amputation.

"He welcomed me with a sad smile: 'It is no use, Tommy,' said he; 'a shadow has hung over my soul all day; I shall not get well. Oh! who will break this news to my poor Celeste?'

"'Do you think so, Lew?' said I; 'cheer up! I have a letter for you.'

"He took it from me, gazed at it reverently, then pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears. Were they marks of weakness? Ah, no! but the dew-drops from a mighty soul—the humid interpreter, that speaks for the warrior, the statesman or the poet,—the finest feelings of the human heart. They are a tribute which one pays the sweet and tender recollections of home and country. Tears are the quintessence of bravery, goodness and love.

"The letter he received was from home, and came to poor Lewis like a benediction, or rather like sweet incense that shed around his dying couch a holy mist, like a white rose yielding its sweet perfume, and breathing warm odors to his sinking heart.

"'My dear and cherished friend,' said he, 'upon you devolves the task of announcing my early death. The thoughts of the tomb warn me I must

hasten my earthly matters, and whisper in your ear thoughts which it were sacrilege to betray under any other circumstance. Were it not for the deep and perfect faith I entertain in your honesty of heart to deliver this message, it should go with me to my grave.'

"He was so much exhausted he found it difficult to speak; but love lent animation to his eye and strength to his voice. At intervals he continued: 'When all is over, take my letters—her precious letters—and all these little tokens of her fond remembrance, together with this ring and my journal, and send them to my dear Celeste with my dying love. Tell her I did hope—ah, so fondly hope!—to one day gaze upon her pure, sweet face—to whisper in her ear the brightest dreams of my life. Tell her that while this poor brain clung to reason, the very noblest and best pulsations of this fond heart were for her. For Celeste I could face death unflinchingly; I could steel my heart to deeds of daring in any form, had I but the proud assurance that her lip would smile approval and her sweet eyes kindle with love. My soul grew strong in the thought of mounting the ladder of Fame, to earn for myself, by my will and exertion, a name which she might not blush to own. Was I too ambitious? Perhaps so; but I wished to place my name so high on the scroll, that the modern historian would not overlook it when he writes about the great rebellion. The honor of my country was assailed; a dangerous rebellion threatened to destroy it. Now was my time, and I grasped the opportunity with a joy

hitherto unknown. Duty prompted me, but ambition led me on.

"Will her beautiful eye beam on me with its pure and holy light? Will she prize my effort and give me in exchange her priceless love? Just the hope, however remote, the bare thought, were worth the trial."

"A sweet vision of joy seemed to irradiate his countenance, and he closed his eyes from exhaustion. Soon he revived. 'I will write for Celeste to come to you,' I said; 'that she may comfort and cheer you.'"

"Ah, no, it is too late, too late!" he replied; "I can never, never hear that voice again in this life; but by the never-dying law of love, the soul that once loves another, and has felt in her inner nature a reciprocity of that sentiment, *loves on forever*. Neither death nor life, nor any possible change can separate them, for they are the soul-growth, and partake of the undying and ever-conscious properties of that spark of God. This is the reason I am not afraid to die. Celeste will never love another! But I am leaving so much! Heaven is full of glory, but my darling is not there. But it robs death of all its victory to feel and to know that

"When I am sleeping low in the ground,
One faithful heart will there be keeping
Watch all night around;
As if some gem lay shrined beneath
The earth's cold gloom.
Oh, I will ask of memory
No other boon!"

Good-by, my precious darling! May will come, decked in her festal robes, but I shall not be there! Tommy,' and his mind began to wander, 'when do you go? I am almost ready?'

"Poor Colonel Egliston! his reason had fled for ever! For eight days he raved in delirium, calling again and again upon the gentle Celeste, who had been his guiding star, to come to him. Death soon released him, but I can never forget that death-bed scene. His memory will ever form an amaranthine wreath around the grave of departed worth."

Lord Melgrave and Lady Clare were deeply moved while listening to this touching recital, and the narrator wiped away his tears as he continued:

"I placed his effects in the hands of the lady, together with the fatal banner.

"She never recovered from the terrible blow, being extremely delicate. That dreadful disease, consumption, seated upon her lungs, brought poor Celeste to where you see her.

"Her physician advised a winter in the south of France, but nothing can save her life. This aged negress is her only nurse or friend, being an orphan. Wearied of a foreign land, Celeste is coming home to die, to sleep beside her warrior lover."

Lady Clare fain would have made a remark of some kind, but her heart was too full of woe. There were no tears in her eyes, but a subdued moisture, a hidden joy for the lovely Celeste, whose affection was strong enough to die for her lover.

Lord Melgrave expressed deep sympathy for the beautiful sufferer, and thanked the gentleman for

the narrative, remarking, "Her circumstances demand our attention. Clare will see the young lady every day, and comfort her all it is possible."

He arose, offered Clare his arm, bade the gentleman good night, and sought the cabin. During the remainder of the voyage, Clare was constantly beside the beautiful Celeste. To this lovely girl she was an angel of joy. Celeste had given up all earthly thoughts; but when she became acquainted with the mournful tragedy attending Lady Clare's bereavement, she grieved anew. Clare lingered beside her at morning, at noon, and at night. Celeste's voice intoxicated the highly sensitive Clare; it affected her beyond any thing she had ever heard. It gave her strength, it comforted her, and she sorely grieved when they were separated.

In another week the ship reached New York, and the new friends parted. Clare, however, promised to visit Celeste during the summer.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT NIAGARA.

LORD Melgrave and family passed a month in New York, well pleased with their visit, and then left for Niagara Falls.

The sea-voyage had improved Clare's health but very little, her cheek had never worn its former roseate glow; the buoyancy of her spirit had passed away. There was a charming expression about her now that her most dazzling beauty failed to elicit. Securing fine rooms at the International Hotel, Clare seemed very much pleased with the prospect of remaining for a few weeks in this delightful place. The wonderful beauty of Clare, the devotion of Lord Melgrave to her, and her deep grief, attracted universal admiration.

Their rooms were the best in the house; their carriage and horses the finest at the falls. The very dignified Lord Melgrave won the esteem of all the guests by his frank, open manners, and his profuse generosity. It formed a rare picture, this devoted father and daughter. He never left her side for an hour, but entertained her with the most consummate tact and ingenuity. Every morning, orders were left for an exquisite bouquet and two vases of fresh flowers for her room. The gentlemen would fain have relieved him for an hour of his precious

charge, but Lord Melgrave gave them no opportunity. Every evening the parlors were filled with gay dancers and entrancing music. The costumes of the ladies were perfectly elegant. Lord Melgrave could never induce Clare even to look in upon them. How queenly she looked in those sweeping robes of black crape! Faultlessly elegant was Lady Clare's mourning. The ladies of the International concluded that some Paris miliner had realized a sufficiency to retire from business, as they noted the exquisite texture of her robes and the beauty of their construction.

Her hair—that embodiment of all that is grand and glorious in a woman's beauty—clustered in soft, silken curls around her serene, white brow. It mattered not how Lady Clare wore her hair—it was always just the style for her face, and inimitable. She was always certain of being queen of fashion, especially in the arrangement of her *coiffure*.

Lord Melgrave must have been something more than mortal not to have been proud of Lady Clare's beauty, both of form and feature. She was graceful beyond comparison, and never entered any assembly without eliciting admiration. In the evening, Clare usually wore a *unique* robe of black crape, occasionally with a foamy puffing of the same at the throat, confined by a simple onyx brooch, while a sprig of cypress leaves, devoid of the crimson berries, gleamed here and there through her glossy curls, producing a chaste and beautiful effect. There was a peculiar fascination about Clare's dress which rendered her an object of special

interest. And every evening a new surprise awaited them. Clare never joined any company or party; and if by chance any person saw her, it was in repassing in the halls, promenading, or driving, her father being her only cavalier.

Lady Clare's emotions, on first seeing Niagara Falls, will be best understood by glancing at a letter she wrote her much-esteemed friend, Madame Devereux, soon after her visit to the grand cataract. The letter ran thus:

"My precious darling, how could you exact a promise of me to tell you of Niagara Falls, knowing my inability in description. Lend me your glowing pen, your teeming brain-castle and magic art, to paint for others what you alone can see, and I will attempt to depict a fairy scene of bewildering beauty connected with this grandest of earth's phenomena.

"Oh! my dear Lady Devereux, I regret exceedingly you could not have overcome your peculiar feelings sufficiently to have visited this wonder of the western hemisphere. I am amply paid for my journey; nor can I remember any thing I ever saw in Europe which satisfied me like Niagara Falls. Perhaps, however, I might except St. Peter's, in Rome; the sensations in the case of each are very similar. I never gaze upon the falls without thinking of the holy altar of that magnificent cathedral.

"Darling, how can your gifted mind become interested in a letter from a simple child like me? With your appreciative eye, you may be able to take the skeleton of which I shall send you, and write me

a more perfect description than I can give you while gazing upon the boiling flood.

"Well, my lady—quite a preface to a letter. When you answer it, tell me you are sorry you did not come. Then I shall be satisfied. I am so much pleased with this new country that I do not know as I ever shall have a desire to return, unless it be to see you.

"You know, darling, we have graphic, glowing and poetic descriptions of Niagara Falls by the most perfect artists and learned authors, both in this country and in Europe; yet all fail, so far as I have ever heard or seen, to command language giving an adequate idea of their wondrous beauty. Not that they lack either power or ability; but the cataract is invested with a thousand charms, the influence of which one can and must feel to appreciate, and can never be expressed. The eye alone can drink in its sublime beauties. 'It is not only a creation of wonder, but one of perfect enchantment. Nature has been truly prodigal of her gifts on this portion of her works.

"Immediately on our arrival here, I was somewhat impatient to see the falls; and the next morning, quite early, my father and I sat out. It was raining, and we were informed by our guide that unless the storm should break away, half its beauties would be lost. We proceeded to the new suspension bridge, which well might electrify the whole world with its wonderful mechanism. It is a stupendous construction, and will perpetuate through all time the genius who first invented it.

"It is below the falls, and from it can be seen, rather indistinctly, the mist and spray foaming down the awful heights. But the river and its banks—who can describe them! Can thoughts convey a semblance of the torrents' strange beauties? I could never weary of gazing down its sides into the foaming waters below. A human being looks like a tiny bird, scrambling along the broken fragments of the rocks. From the giddy and immense height of the bridge, the dark waters seem scarcely to move, while the current is actually more than ten miles an hour.

"The little boats glide along, regardless of the romance and beauty they add to the scene, dancing and skimming almost under the sheet of foam, like messenger-birds, a thing of joy and life. Still the deep boiling flood rushes on, in low, mournful music, resembling the martial tread of a mighty and powerful army, which, with glittering helmets and burnished sabres, dares the enemy to mortal combat. On, on it rushes, chanting or murmuring a wild requiem, perhaps holding communion with the spirits of departed souls—never ceasing, never heeding either time or seasons!

"This bridge is truly wonderful—connecting, as it were, across this river, two powerful nations. It is a fitting companion for the falls, and one almost feels, as its wires vibrate to and fro, that it must have been called into existence when God awoke the continent from chaos. Ah, willingly would I have remained for days on that cradle-work of art, the construction of which seems almost beyond the

power or ingenuity of mortal man. A last fond, lingering look, a hasty adieu, and we recrossed, to view the falls from the American side.

"Almost every trace of the storm had disappeared before the mild rays of a beautiful morning sun; and the earth, clad in its rich robes of living green, seemed alternately half smiling at the still-lingering beauties of the departing rain-drops, and half mourning over the anticipation of some indefinite gloom in the future.

"The dark foliage of the trees, waving their majestic branches and keeping time to the music of this wilderness of waters, reminds one of patient sentinels who have guarded this lovely spot since the creation, and without the prospect of any relief. They have done their duty well.

"Now the full and radiant splendor of Niagara burst upon us. A low, suppressed murmur of admiration arose upon my father's lips, while I, with my usually demonstrative enthusiasm, clapped my hands and shouted, 'Grand!—beautiful!—sublime!' I felt the power, majesty and supreme greatness of a Being capable of creating and sustaining so vast a work!

"One writer says it has no rival. Its multitudinous waves have a glory and a grandeur in themselves to which nothing can be added or taken therefrom.

"There can not be, nor is there a scene of sublimity on earth compared to this. Above, around, beneath, presents a world of waters madly rushing onward.

"It is music—rich, pure music! The soul gazes on the scene in wrapt admiration, never thinking for one moment of framing thoughts into words, or of communicating its emotions—sweeping the march of God; and every where it is a thing of life and beauty. Its splendor shines in the ice-gems, till the trees on its border seem turned to living jewels, flings a golden mist over the setting sun, or a white gauze around the midnight moon—sports in the cataract, or folds its bright snow curtain softly about the wintry world; still always is the scene beautiful.

"In the tower we found many interesting mementoes. Our guide gave us a sad but mournful legend connected with the tower, and which I am going to relate, because I know you, like myself, like to hear any wild Indian tale, whether there may be even the semblance of truth in it or not. I give it as we heard it:

"An Indian chief often visited the tower in an early day. He had been partly civilized, and was highly educated. His tribe had all passed to the happy hunting ground; he alone remained, the last of his race.

"For many days a brooding melancholy had settled upon his hitherto stoical soul. Leaning against the tower, he took from his pouch a knife, and cut in small italic letters, gazing the while wistfully into the flood, the commencement, I should judge, of a ballad or poem, said to be his own. With little or no trouble we traced the following lines, as pointed out by our guide:

'The mist was sleeping on the hill,
The dew was on the brake,
And the wild birds' scream went forth o'er rill
Along the quiet lake.'

He stopped; a sudden frenzy seized him; he gave one bound, and plunged into the foaming waters, where, amid those fearful rocks, he gave up his soul, which went forth to join his kindred in the spirit world!

"You must notice the authenticity of the legend, when you will remember the former tower fell some years since, and this was comparatively new! The interesting tradition deserved a remuneration, which was given, and we left the place of the red man's wonderful mania, and descended the steps to pass under the falls. This requires strong nerves, the slippery steps are so giddy; but when once under, it is most glorious to see the world of snow-white foam that is pouring and boiling like a thousand seething cauldrons above your head.

"I am not surprised that Niagara Falls is the wonder and admiration of both continents. Ten thousand charms seem blended in one, each of itself a marvel. Let the eye wander where it may, some unforeseen beauty presents itself. Every nook and corner is admirably calculated to fill the eye with delight and the soul with the Infinite. Every where does this occur, in the minutest as well as in the grandest.

"At a slight distance from the falls, as the sound of the rushing waters first greets the ear, it is mournful, low and melancholy; but as you near the cata-

ract, it is wild, fierce and threatening. It scorns — nay, bids defiance to a rival! The beautiful, arching bow in the heavens smiles complacently on the scene below, and the mighty and sublime cataract of Niagara continues, as it has since the morning dawn of creation, boiling and foaming in wild and tumultuous disaster.

"Well, *ma chère amie*, how do you like the picture of Niagara? Why do you not clap your hands and shout 'Glorious!—both the falls and the description!' You must never expect another word, as all the ideas in my head, together with my brains, have gone into this letter. My darling, you will prize the gift, I know.

"We are going to make a trip across the lakes, and then visit the 'Father of Waters,' the renowned Mississippi. I wish every letter you receive from me would make you cry—just to punish you for compelling me to write, when you might just as well have seen these charming beauties yourself.

"If I could prevail upon my father to have a fairy bring Hawthorne Dale over here, and place it, together with its spacious grounds, just in view of Niagara Falls, I would say farewell forever to old England! Then, my charmer, you would be compelled to cross the Atlantic, because I know you can not live without me, and I have become so thoroughly selfish that, loving you as deeply as I do, I never could make the sacrifice to leave my Paradise to go to you.

"My darling, do not imagine I learned this selfishness in this country. The people here are so

amiable you can not avoid liking them. Their independence alone commands respect. All are noblemen here. They welcome you because it is a pleasure to you, not them.

"There is an activity and life about the American people which are both pleasing and commendable, and which one never sees in Europe; indeed, to compare the Americans with Italians, the contrast would be amusing!

"Your loving and devoted friend,

"CLARE MELGRAVE."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ACROSS THE LAKES.

THE day following, Vignet gave Lady Clare a letter from the old negress, who was nurse to Celeste, announcing the death of the poor girl. Within the week, came by express two beautiful oil paintings by Healy: one of Colonel Egliston, taken in uniform, just after he entered the army; the other of his intended bride. Carefully wrapped around these two perfect, life-like pictures, was the death-warrant of the originals—the Confederate banner of blue and gold. It was not dimmed by dirt or powder. The golden fringe and tassels were not stained with even exposure to the air.

A brief note from Celeste, her last earthly work, accompanied these touching mementoes, begging Lady Clare to accept them, with her dying love; and concluding: "Precious lady! may God bless you for comforting me, if only for an hour!"

Clare fully appreciated the honor of being the recipient of these highly prized pictures; and she dropped a tear for the sweet girl whose young life went out so soon.

A fine party, who were visitors to the falls, proposed making a trip across the lakes, and induced Lord Melgrave to accompany them. Accordingly,

Clare bid a reluctant adieu to this magnificent cataract for other scenes of interest.

Some little time was spent on Lake Superior and in the west. Longfellow's poems had been a favorite with Lady Clare, and she was extremely impatient to see Minnehaha, the laughing water of Hiawatha. Lord Melgrave stood, with Clare leaning on his arm, gazing in deep admiration at this exquisite little gem of nature, when he felt a hand laid gently on his shoulder, while a familiar voice accosted him. He started to see who, in that far off wilderness, knew his name, and turning he saw his former friend—General Huleiniska!

The greeting was cordial on both sides. Lord Melgrave was delighted to meet a face he knew from the old world, and the general was equally as well pleased to meet one in the new. He was a day too late to find them at Niagara Falls. Clare was very much pleased to see him, as he came direct from Paris and Madame Devereux. She had a world of questions to ask concerning her dear friend. "Oh, general!" said Clare, "why did you not bring her with you?"

"I could not," he replied; "nothing I could urge would induce her to come. She is the most perfect enigma I ever met. I could never understand her. Among ten thousand, Madame Devereux lives alone. While inviting your confidence and friendship by her graceful, charming and easy manners—frankness being a most prominent trait in her character—she never, even for a moment, thinks you expect a return."

In the evening the conversation, after a while, again turned on Madame Devereux. The general, who seemed fascinated with her, continued in the strain which was broken off in the morning at the falls. In reply to a remark of Clare, he said:

"I believe Madame Devereux loves every person, yet she does not wish any creature to love her. Her heart is overflowing with tender affection. She has hosts of admirers, but will not allow one lover. Her very peculiarities enhance the admiration felt for her. Yes, Madame Devereux is privileged. She does what she pleases, says what she pleases, is an enthusiast; the most demonstrative person I ever met, and around her whole character she buckles an armor that is impregnable. Amidst the recklessness of a gay court, she is free from its contamination. I never remember to have heard an uncharitable remark pass her lips, or a word detrimental to any person. It would be the height of folly to repeat gossip to her, hoping to keep it alive. The atmosphere of her heart kills it instantly.

"To a lady who is so sensitively alive to any impropriety as Madame Devereux, it must be extremely unpleasant to be in the companionship of heartless coquettes. How can so rare a flower bloom in so uncongenial a clime?"

"The love and memory Madame Devereux bears her husband are beautiful beyond expression. The anniversary day of his death she passes in fasting and prayer. While I admire her exceedingly, and think her peerless, there is one subject we can never agree upon."

"What is it, general?" said Lord Melgrave, "is she inexorable to your tender pleadings for her peerless self?"

"Well, perhaps so," replied the general, laughing; "I am perfectly willing you all should understand I adore Madame Devereux. But you must remember he who marries the lady must also marry her entombed lord."

"General Huleiniska," said Clare, "you have pictured an angel in our dear friend, and I like you for it ever so much. I never think of her without feeling enthusiastic. I often close my eyes and imagine her sweet face is smiling upon me."

"Come, dignified Lord Melgrave," continued Clare, in her pleasing way, "have you nothing to say of our favorite?"

"No, no!" said Lord Melgrave; "because the general and Lady Clare have said all that could be said. I could not imagine any thing better than an angel. I sincerely pray she appreciates your love."

"Indeed she does," replied the general; "but her love is only friendship and courtesy."

It was truly a pleasurable surprise to meet the general. Gathered in their parlor that evening they talked of the past. Memory again wafted them back to the pleasant little picnic, and its fearful termination. Reverently they mentioned the noble lord who departed from them on that fearful journey; also the poor marchioness and the gipsy's prophecy. A strange light gleamed in the general's eye as he remembered her warning to him; it had rung in his ears for weeks.

"She said another will claim your bride; for the gem you would wear in your bosom belongs to him. How true were her words!"

Since the first hour that General Huleiniska had met Clare he loved her; and it had become deeper and more intense the more hopeless it seemed. His was an iron will; every other obstacle he could and did overcome, but this new emotion, this love for Clare, he could not drive from his soul. While Lord Clifford was on earth, he stifled his love—strove to forget; but when the fates left the object of his adoration free, then the smothered flame burst forth in all its force. And he came to America to learn from Clare the words upon which hung the fate of his soul's happiness.

General Huleiniska never wished or thought Lady Clare would forget Lord Clifford, or love him as she had once loved the nobleman, who was her first, youthful passion. But with her goodness of heart, he hoped she would give him the ruins of that temple before whose shrine Lord Clifford had knelt and worshiped.

Day after day found the general hovering around the beautiful Clare. He invited her to drive, and accompanied her to every place of interest in the city of St. Paul and its environs.

The winter was passed by the party in the delightful climate of Louisiana. General Huleiniska had waited patiently to note any expression in the manner of Lady Clare, which his vanity might construe into a partiality for himself. He had induced her to sing with him several times; but her acqui-

escence came rather reluctantly. The bitter past came back more vividly at the piano than under any other circumstances.

It was Christmas eve, and Clare had been exceedingly sad all the day long. It was an hour fraught with tender memories. General Huleiniska came to bring Lady Clare a choice bouquet. Lord Melgrave had been absent some hours with a friend, and Clare really felt pleased to see her visitor, whose manner bore traces of excitement.

"Lady Clare," he began, "I come this evening to bid you adieu forever."

"Oh, do not say so, my good friend!" said the warm-hearted girl. "My father, as well as myself, will regret your absence very much."

"You regret my absence? Oh, Lady Clare, if I could believe that I should cause an emotion of regret in your heart, I would be the happiest of mortals." And then, in the wildest pathos of love, he poured forth the tenderest expressions of his soul's thoughts, its wishes, its hopes and desires, all burning with the deepest enthusiasm. In a tone of melting tenderness, he prayed for the priceless boon of her heart—broken and crushed as it was.

"Let me," he prayed, "but gather up the scattered rose-leaves! Oh, lady, bid me but live in your presence!"

Clare seemed petrified, as he continued his passionate prayer: "Lady Clare, I love you, I love you; I love the very air you breathe! I love the flowers you drop from your bouquet! I worship, I adore you! Give me one word of hope; bid me

wait ten years, and the hours on the dial will be numbered by the blessings I will bestow upon you! Peerless one, hear me!"

Clare arose to speak, but in his frenzy he clasped her hands, crying in the most mournful accents:

"Tell me my fate, and let me die! Lady Clare, I lay a ducal coronet at your feet, together with all its princely accompaniments; take all—every thing in life—but grant me one word of hope."

With the grace of an empress and the goodness of an angel, she led him to the sofa, and seating herself beside him, with a voice full of tender pity she said:

"General Huleiniska," and she took both his hands and caressed them affectionately, "I thank you profoundly for the honor you would confer on me. The proudest dignity man ever conferred on woman is that of wife; but,"—and the tears were streaming down her face—"you know my heart is buried in a deep, deep abyss, far away in Tuscany. I would not offer the broken fragments of such a heart as mine to so noble and generous a soul as yours. Believe me, if I could ever marry any person, your faithful love would be rewarded. But I can never love another, nor can I ever forget Lord Clifford."

"Lady Clare Melgrave, that one point of issue between us is the same argument used by Madame Devereux with reference to her cherished memory for the dead. I believe every love has its separate and distinct place. The sacred love you bear the memory of Lord Clifford is his, and ever will be; I

would not have you yield a single sentiment of it to me. But let me sit beside your idol; let me catch the rays of sunshine from those heavenly eyes that are reflected from his image. Your heart, crushed into the minutest particles, would be more to me than all the rest of the world together. Nor do I hope you could ever feel for me a moiety of the love you once felt for Lord Clifford; that feeling comes to one but once in a life. You have awakened that grand sentiment — that holy of holies in my heart. Can you, Lady Clare, for one moment believe that I am urging an idle and indifferent request? Then I ask you to give me your own peerless self; not because without you I should ever forget you. Ah, no! love has moulded your image, bright and beautiful, in my heart, there to remain while I have life. It sits there, proudly enshrined in its resplendent beauty, smiling upon and cheering the desolation which surrounds it. Your image lives in my soul, and is constantly reflected in my thoughts. No, no, Lady Clare, I can never forget you — never lack a fond imagination to paint faithfully your portrait, or a passionate and glowing fancy to sketch accurately every lineament of the beauty of its idol."

Again and again Lady Clare begged him to cease his sorrowful profession, but he heard nothing.

"Oh, my darling one, I love you with a burning intensity which knows no abatement; your smile is my happiness — your frowns my misery. Without you earth will be a dreary, desolate waste; with you it will become a beautiful, blooming Paradise. With your sweet smiles to cheer me on, I would

feel myself fully adequate to the task of purchasing fame at the expense of a life of unremitting toil. I could encounter every difficulty successfully, and triumph over every misfortune; I could labor long and cheerfully, for the bright hopes of ambition and love would promise me a rich harvest of glory."

Lady Clare was pained at his earnestness, and grieved that she could not comfort him. She was a noble girl, and when she saw the tears on that proud, strong face, she knew they were wrung from a bleeding heart. Clare arose from her seat and stood before him. He seemed unconscious of the movement. She then gently touched his moist eyelids with her lips, and whispered, "Good-by, my noble brother!" and before he realized her intent she glided from the room.

So powerfully was he affected, that hours passed, and yet he sat in that hopeless state, more dead than alive. He dreamed in that death-like trance that an angel had whispered, "Peace, peace!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SURPRISE.

UPON this same Christmas eve alluded to in the last chapter, the dial plate of years pointed to the second anniversary since Clare first saw Lord Clifford. What had not occurred within these two short years? The retrospect was very painful. Clare, after leaving the general, went to her own room, overcome with excitement. She threw herself on the sofa and wept bitter tears. She was truly grieved that the noble heart she left sorrowing in the parlor should be doomed to experience such pain on her account. That brave soldier, who had faced death unflinchingly amid the wild jungles of India, whose eye never quivered or whose cheek never blanched with fear—that he, this noble man, should be crushed in spirit, prostrate to helplessness by her words, was bitter beyond endurance.

She arose from the sofa, dried her tears, and mused a moment: "Was it right for me to leave him? Ought I not to comfort him? My father says he is one of the noblest men he ever knew." Feeling the liveliest compassion for his disappointment, she returned to the parlor. Imagine her surprise to find the general sitting in the same position in which she had left him, except that one hand supported his bowed head.

Approaching him, she kindly laid her hand upon his head, and said in the most soothing voice possible, "Come, general, this is Christmas eve; let us go out into the soft moonlight, and inhale the delicious atmosphere. How bright and beautiful are the nights in this southern clime!"

He arose mechanically, and she took his arm. A convulsive shudder passed over him as he felt the touch of her soft hand on his arm, and he gazed at her as though in a dream.

"Lady Clare," said he, "I thank you for arousing me from that dreadful dream!"

Clare was almost frightened at the deep solemnity of his voice. Its sepulchral tones sounded like an anthem reverberating through a cavern. Passing under the chandelier, the gas fell full upon his face, and Lady Clare started back in alarm. She had never seen misery more plainly depicted, or the heart's anguish mirrored so visibly on any countenance.

"Lady Clare, you ought not to go out in the evening without a wrapper, although the climate is delightful. Shall I summon a maid to bring one?"

"Thank you, general," said Lady Clare, "I will get one myself," and, child-like, she ran for one.

With the desired addition to her clothing she rejoined her friend. His look of anguish spoke volumes; but the apparent serenity of her countenance left no trace of the bitter tears she had shed an hour before.

The parlor opened into a conservatory on one side and a piazza on the other. It was a charming spot.

The flowers in the conservatory filled the air with a delicious perfume. Clare felt the holy influence of these flowers. Few persons loved them as she did; they whispered to her words of love, and raised her heart from gloom and despondency. They consoled her when sad, and refreshed her when weary; and whenever she was but slightly indisposed a bouquet would usually restore her to cheerfulness.

Lady Clare very soon succeeded in engaging the general in conversation. His politeness could not permit undue regard to the topics she introduced, but it evidently required great exertion on his part to do so.

Lord Melgrave returned from his visit and joined them, which relieved both.

At this moment a rapid step was heard on the graveled walk. The next instant Clare turned, and was clasped in the arms of—Lord Clifford.

Clare took one frightened glance at his face, and swooned lifeless in his arms.

* * * * *

It was two hours later. Clare, her father, and Lord Clifford, sat in the same room in which General Huleiniska had so fervently implored the love of the daughter of his old friend.

And then, with a smile of ineffable love, which was reflected from the pale but joyful face of Clare, Lord Clifford began a narration of his adventures since they had parted.

"I can never forget my thoughts when first I plunged into that abyss. I must have lost consciousness even before I struck a projecting rock, which was

about twelve feet in width, and the same in breadth, and as near as I can judge, thirty feet below the surface. Where this rock jutted out from the main body, there was a cave, some half a mile long, which was caused, I suppose, by some earthquake convulsion. When I became conscious, as I opened my eyes, the face of a miserable gipsy bent over me—the most repulsive countenance I ever remembered to have seen. There was a demoniac expression in his face; a combination of every thing revolting. Notwithstanding many years had passed since last I met him, I almost instantly recognized the lover of Bianca, whose murderous club I warded off on the plains of Syria. His tangled hair was mixed with gray, and was coarse and wiry. His eyes were fierce, and gleamed with a joy of gratified revenge. When I opened my eyes I was conscious of racking pain, and in trying to move my arms, I found my shoulder had been severely injured, while my limbs were dreadfully swollen. The first word the gipsy addressed to me, confirmed the impression that I had when my eyes opened to reason. 'Well,' said he, 'Lord Clifford, my hour of revenge has at last arrived. You wrested from me the object of my heart's desire, and that hour I swore eternal vengeance. I cursed you with a gipsy's curse, which never fails of consummation; and I cursed the order which prevented me from dashing your hateful body down into the yawning chasm. My lady-queen little thought that, when disguised, I came to her tent with the mournful tale of grief for the loss of my would-be bride, she was the one

for whom I mourned, and my only object was revenge.' To interrupt this savage," continued Lord Clifford, "would be folly; therefore I closed my eyes, to shut out his miserable, wicked face.

"Seeming to enjoy the agony which was too plainly visible on my countenance, he finished his interesting tale:

"Through the mystery of the order I soon found out that the chief who had received Zoemara from your hand, loved her truly and devotedly, and hoped one day to win her love. I did not tell him that for years that girl had banished me; that I was nothing—cared for nothing, but one glance from those dazzling eyes. Just before I found her, she had succeeded in rescuing you from the Arabs. I cursed my unlucky star that you had left before I came. Ah! Lord Clifford, revenge is sweet, and it is mine—now!

"And when she played false to Zaslek, whom she promised faithfully to marry if he would rescue you from the Arabs, two of us vowed to spend the remainder of our lives in pursuit of you. Imagine our joy when the lovely Zoemara sent us down into the abyss to find, as she supposed, your mangled remains.

"But a keen gratification awaited us. You still lived, and it remained but to drag you into this cave, together with your horse, whose life I took just for the pleasure it afforded me, if killing any thing whose life was not protected by Masonic vows.

"How carefully I have watched you, your life and reason will tell. For days you hovered between

life and death. Night after night I sat by your bed, thinking death would cheat me of my revenge. To care for you, and still avoid suspicion from the rest of the tribe, was no small work, though your diamonds, together with your full purse, helped me exceedingly.'

"Then," said Lord Clifford, "I noticed my ring, pin, shirt-buttons and watch were gone. I would not please my tormentor so much as to venture a search for them, and he went on:

"Zoemara would not countenance stealing if she knew it; consequently, whenever we brought valuables of any kind, we either found them or received them as a present for fortune-telling. She was so keen that I did not trust the jewels with her, but disposed of them to a Jew in the city. In giving money they all excused my absence. Oh, it is worth it all to see the misery of our beautiful queen! She has done every thing in the way of grief, but to die; to be cheated of her death I think I shall not.'

"I could no longer endure to listen to his tormenting remarks, and besought him to cease; and then, in as calm a voice as my excitement would permit, I asked him how much gold would purchase my ransom.

"He answered, 'If you would give me as many shiploads as would bridge the Adriatic, I would not release you. The diamonds and money I have of yours, now, will be all I ever shall need, and I will never grant you your liberty; no, not for all the gold you could count during the remainder of your

life, which will be passed in this cave, so sure as you and I are talking now!

"'Lord Clifford,' continued he, 'I would not release you for Zoemara's love; not if I could change characters and places with you. Once I would have descended into the crater of Vesuvius for one smile from her lovely lips. I could live happily for a week, if she but gave me an order, as she would the lowest menial in her tribe. Her mother gave her to me—I watched her from a child; my love grew with my growth, and became a part of the air I breathed. When the Frenchman came to our camp, then began my sorrow. She loved him, and all I could do I could not win one word of love from her. You know the rest.

"'Lord Clifford, make yourself comfortable for the rest of your life,' said he, 'as this is your future home.'

"Too much shocked to care for any thing, I did not reply, but glanced around my abode. It seemed to be composed of rocks on every side, rough and jagged. A lamp shed a glimmering ray of light, sufficient to enable me to notice that I was in a living tomb. Some mats and blankets served me for a bed, and which, with a stove and several pieces of crockery, seemed to be my only furniture. The light was so dim, and the cavern appeared to me so vast, of course I could not tell what might be in it.

"'I shall care for you until you get well,' said the gipsy, 'and then leave you for good. Your food will be placed here for you, and your time can be passed in thinking of La'—

"'Hold!' I shrieked; 'dare to breathe that name and God will give me power to annihilate you, soul and body!'

"I believe, Lady Clare," said Lord Clifford, "my life must have gone out had your name but passed his lips. Slowly I continued to improve. His skill in the use of drugs was wonderful. A month passed, however, before I could walk sufficiently to explore my prison.

"The gipsy returned after an absence of three days, and threw toward me a newspaper. Well I knew before I looked at it that it was but a new instrument of torture. The first paragraph I read announced the fruitlessness of the search made for me, and the unwillingness on the part of engineers and laborers to continue a work which promised nothing but disappointment; and farther down the page I read of the heart-broken despair of you, Lady Clare, and of the brain fever which followed your intense suffering.

"Ah, my friends, you can never know anything of the hopeless despair that took possession of my soul when I found myself doomed to remain incarcerated in that dungeon, shut out forever from the light of day, with my dearest friends suffering unto death because of my loss!

"The gipsy's most careful study seemed to be to prolong my life. He nursed me with extreme care, brought me the choicest delicacies, including wine, wherewith to tempt my appetite and to give me strength. I verily believe it would have afforded a keener joy to his revengeful spirit to have seen me

restored to perfect health, to witness my chaffing against my prison bars, than it would have been to see me languish upon a sick couch. Strange as it may appear, I could never ascertain the method by which he entered or left the cave. One day he accidentally let drop a word from which I knew that all the tribe had departed. Hope forsook me then, for I had indulged the belief that by some unforeseen occurrence Zoemara would again save me; but when I learned that she, too, who had been my good angel on the desert, was gone, I gave up to despair. For many weeks I endured that hopeless apathy which so often precedes dethronement of reason. I loathed food, and to sustain life this cruel and barbarous savage fed me on soup with a spoon marked 'Melgrave.'

"The most refined mental torture that a human being could invent he inflicted upon me. I could hardly realize that so coarse a nature could possess sufficient discernment to know just where the point lay which I would feel most keenly. How or where did he get that spoon? Think of the artifice, theft and cunning he must have employed to bring constantly to my mind a face whose memory awakened the deepest commiseration for her suffering; and when I closed my eyes to hide the letters, he would say, 'Take your Melgrave spoon!'

"This gipsy invented a thousand modes of torture that were not bodily, but my heart wept tears of anguish. Sometimes he would leave me for days together, and alone I paced those prison walls. I begged him almost on my knees to get me some

books or papers, but he was inexorable. I passed ten days of his absence at one time in trying to remove the stone which gave him egress, but without success. The cave was over eighty feet in length, but the dim lamp lighted but a small portion of the dense darkness. I passed a large portion of my time in endeavoring to discover by what mode the gipsy entered. I thought if I could only be sure of a way to get out, I would have battled with him to the death; but otherwise to have killed him would only have been my own death-warrant. After he had absented himself about the usual time, a dreadful fear would creep over me. Suppose something should happen to him! Oh, you can never know the joy I experienced when his tawny face became visible in the dying light of the lamp!

"One day I thought he appeared to be sick, and a new fear came over me that he might die without making known my fate. I questioned him respecting his intentions. He listened more attentively than usual, and I continued to impress upon him his Masonic obligations, of which he boasted holding as sacred, by sparing my life, for example.

" 'Is life a boon when incarcerated in the earth,' I asked, 'with only the gloomy rocks on every side, no sunlight, no voice of love to comfort me, but dying a thousand deaths? Oh, be humane, if you would claim the sacred fellowship of the brotherhood! You must remember that Masonry has higher aims and objects than those which actuate men in the ordinary routine of life. Suffering must be alleviated and sorrows averted; and no true

Mason ought to feel comfortable, cheerful or happy while he knows a brother is suffering for the comforts which his charity, however limited his means, can supply. It is his province to cast the mantle of forgiveness over the many faults and errors of his brother, ever remembering that to err is human—to forgive, divine. Why do you profess to be governed by laws which you dare not violate in part, and yet do not adhere to the very principles which underlie these laws? In the name of the Masonic order, which is enveloped in mystery, how dare you keep me here?’

“‘Tell me its origin,’ said the gipsy. It was the first time he had ever asked me a question.

“I replied in amazement: ‘It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or the Roman Eagle, and around it cluster more of interest than can be found in the historic details of unnumbered centuries. You see,’ I added, ‘no clime or country has been a stranger to its virtues, while only the craft has been the recipient of its secrets and doctrines. In all ages its influence has been felt and its benefits distributed with an unseen influence as powerful as it was universal. How can you hesitate? It is a common brotherhood of every nation and every country. Even barbarism has known and appreciated its benefits. How could the faithful Zoemara have penetrated an Arab camp, unlocked the hearts of these cruel heathen, had it not been for the all-powerful key of Masonry?’

“The gipsy seemed greatly moved, and I still urged my petition: ‘And now, by the mystery of

our holy order, by the sacred obligations you took upon yourself, which are equally binding in the Sanscrit, Gipsy, French or English tongue, you must release me! You could not die and leave me here. I will give you untold sums of gold, lands, houses—every thing the heart of man could crave!—aye, far more than all this: Zoemara will love you for releasing me.’

“‘No! never! never! never!’ he shrieked, and bounded from me like a madman.

“Ten days passed before he came again, when he brought me food and light. I had given up all hope of his return, and had almost resigned myself to my fate. For two days I had been in total darkness, and I felt I could not much longer endure the torture. When he came I noticed his left arm was bound up, and a look of bodily suffering was on his grim countenance. I manifested much concern for his wound, and suggested some remedy.

“‘What for?’ he asked. ‘Why should you care for my arm?’

“‘Because,’ I replied, ‘I am a true brother; my knightly vows demand I should be solicitous for your bodily comfort. Because you are false to your solemn obligations, shall I be? Never!’

“While I was speaking he almost fainted. I caught him in my arms and assisted him to my bed. I then determined to see what was the matter with his arm. He was a powerful man, and I knew it must be a serious wound which could cause him to yield his stoicism or even to appear to be moved. During his half-unconscious state I removed the

cloth that bound his arm, and found a fearful wound. It was torn as though the teeth of some wild animal had lacerated it. Taking my handkerchief, I tore it into strips and made a bandage, with which I bound up the injured parts. I could hardly imagine that this laceration could cause as much mental agony as was depicted in his face. It was livid—blanched to the hue of death; his gray hair and his black, sunken eyes, made him a most pitiful object. He trembled violently, and it was with the utmost exertion I could pacify him. There seemed a fear of seeing something; he shuddered, and covered his face with the blankets. I felt greatly alarmed lest he should die before we could leave the cave.

“‘Come, come,’ said I, as though it was the most natural thing in the world for me to go out of this den, ‘let us go.’

“Mechanically he took hold of me for support, and then, taking the lamp in my other hand, we walked not more than ten steps when he sank lifeless to the ground. The fearful consequences which would attend his death, should such an event occur, were terrible to contemplate. In a short time he revived, but did not, however, attempt to walk. I succeeded in getting him on a mat in one corner, where he lay for two days. All this time not one word passed his lips. He had some wine in a small flask in his pocket, and after drinking a small quantity of it he seemed to revive.

“Oh, I can not express to you how ardently I prayed him to forego all further revenge. Then I

told him how foolish he was to be vexed at me, that I had never done any thing to cause it. ‘Why not wreak your vengeance,’ said I, ‘on the object of your wrath—the Frenchman who won her love and would have made her his bride?’

“He made no reply to my entreaties, but arose from the mat and walked slowly toward the entrance. I followed him, clasped my arms tightly around him, imploring, praying and beseeching him for my liberty. The wretch whom Helen McGregor, the wife of Rob Roy, doomed to be thrown from the cliff, never prayed for life more fervently than I to die above ground.

“I felt determined to follow him, or rather walk beside him, until the last moment of his stay.

“‘Man, man!’ I cried, ‘if there yet remains in your soul one spark of humanity, do not leave me again! You are sick yourself—very sick, and may not live to tell any person where I am!’

“He started, and trembled violently. I saw I had touched a sensitive chord in the very mention of death, which vibrated through his darkened soul, awakening memories that affrighted him, I continued, with all the vehemence and solemnity I could command:

“‘Yes, gipsy; you are sick unto death! Soon, very soon, you will knock at the outer door of the Grand Lodge above, and when the Great Grand Master shall ask of you if you have kept holy your vows—if you have aided, by every possible means, a brother in distress, what answer can you give him, companion of the Royal Arch?’

"The conflict raging in that benighted mind was the most powerful exhibition of a struggle between duty and vengeance that I ever witnessed. The faint ray of light which gleamed in the darkness, in the form of hope, suggested new words of entreaty. I saw there was one relenting thought, one sentiment of pity in his miserable soul, and I would not lose my influence over it.

" 'Promise me you will not let me die here from starvation, and that, should you sicken unto death, you will inform some person where I am. Are the rest of your tribe here?' I added.

"He hesitated a moment, and then said, 'SHE came yesterday.'

"I well knew to whom he referred, as there was but one woman in the world to him. I also wished very much to know the cause of his wound, but could hardly think in what way to ask him. I concluded finally to venture a remark:

" 'Did you kill the animal that so lacerated your arm?'

"He almost shrieked in reply, 'Who said it was an animal? SHE did not tell you. How can you know any thing about it?' With that he gave one leap, and was lost in the darkness. I never saw his gipsy face again!

"I shouted until the very rocks resounded. It seemed to me if there was a human being on earth who loved me, my cry of despair and hopelessness must have penetrated into the depths of his soul. I felt as though neither distance nor time could shut out my dying cry. I felt that he would never come

back again; that all was over, and I must die. A few more days, and my suffering would end in death. Why should I eat sparingly of my food? Why but sip a drop of wine? The end might as well come to-day as ten days hence. I never looked for him again. I knew some dreadful accident had befallen him, and that his mind was suffering more than his body. Whatever the cause might be, I felt that in his case it was mortal.

"Five days passed; they seemed ages! Never before had hope faded entirely from my heart. The fearful excitement under which I had been laboring for days nearly drove me wild. I think I must have been crazed. But as death drew near, the reality quieted me, and I ate my last morsel, drank the remaining drop of water, and calmly laid me down to die. I felt a strange dizziness in my temples, and my eyes burned. I thought my lamp had gone out, and that never again should I behold a gleam of light!

"My friends, it is not possible for you to understand the intense misery I endured. A day and a night passed, and there came a reaction. I cried like a child; indeed, I think I had become childish—perhaps I wept myself to sleep. I know not how long I remained in that condition; but the first thing I remembered was a hand on my forehead, smoothing back my hair. I knew that gentle touch could only come from a woman's hand, and concluded, at once, I had passed to the better land, and that the first one to welcome me was my darling Clare. Then I felt a cordial to my lips, and I knew

my angel dwelt on earth. I opened my eyes, and lo! Bianca stood beside me! I caught her in my arms in a transport of joy. 'I am delivered from death!' I cried. I was wild, and with rapture. I fell upon my knees, and worshiped the angel who, a second time, had come to save me. Yes—if any demonstration of appreciation had been unsatisfactory heretofore—I now made ample amends. I kissed and kissed her, until the poor girl, who knew I was crazy, bade me cease my ravings, and come back to earth. The most thoughtful person could never have done more than she. All this time she had remained nearly speechless, while I had been dancing, singing, laughing and crying like an insane person. At length, I suppose, she grew weary of such manifestations toward herself—the same she knew I would have bestowed upon an Arab, if he had ransomed me from a living tomb.

"'Bianca,' I cried, 'tell me how you found me?' 'Very easily,' she answered. Her voice was so changed that I hardly knew it. 'This morning, one of my people came to my tent, saying one of our tribe was dying, and wanted me to go to him at once. I hastened to the outskirts of our camp, and, in a little hovel, I found a man in the last agonies of death. He put a paper in my hand, giving me a full account of your captivity, and the manner of reaching you. Before looking at the paper, however, I approached him, and asked him how long he had been ill, and why he did not let me know of your sickness? "Zoemara," he cried, "didn't you know who has loved you since you

were ten years old? He stole your heart from me, and I attempted a revenge which has cost me my life. I could not kill him; he has conquered my desire for vengeance. I hate him no more; go to him quick, if you would save him. It is ten days since I left him; he has been without food for four days. Go, go! why do you linger? Leave me; I will curse you if you let him die! He is a royal brother!" and he sank back perfectly exhausted. "You will find a large stone, covered with moss, at the entrance of the cavern; take a light and hasten, for life is at stake!"

"'Lord Clifford, here I am,' said she. 'God be praised, you still live. Come, let us leave this place. You must come while the excitement lasts; because, when it leaves you, you will be too much exhausted to walk. I have a carriage in waiting. Where will you be driven to?' 'Angel of goodness,' I said, 'do with me what you please; take me wherever your judgment decides. I do not think I am quite competent to dictate.' 'Lord Clifford,' said she, 'put a handkerchief over your eyes as we go out in the bright sunlight, for you will hardly bear the dazzling rays of the sun after so long a confinement. You are weak; lean upon my arm.' Then I remembered she had never kissed me once, or manifested any of the wild love she used to lavish upon me so profusely. 'Bianca,' I said, 'you are the dearest sister in the world. I will never be parted from you any more. You shall go to England, and live with Lady Clare Melgrave, if she still lives, the rest of your days.'

"Then she kissed my hand, and replied: 'Thank you, Lord Clifford, it may not be. I left Italy just after your accident, never to return; but a something sent me back. I came from the Isle of Ceylon to save you—to gaze once more upon your face. I heard you call me! Thus I knew you still lived, and needed aid which I alone could give!' 'Sweet spirit,' I cried, 'are you mortal?' Then a smile flitted over her wan face, and she answered: 'You will realize, in a moment, that I am.' She tied a handkerchief over my eyes, and just touching a stone, it slid from its place, and once more I felt the glorious air of day. I fell upon my knees in a prayer of thankfulness, such as never burthened the ear of mortal.

"Bianca's sweet voice awakened me. Assisting me into the carriage, she removed the bandage from my eyes; and then, for the first time in months, I lived in the beautiful sunlight. In a few minutes we were before her tent, and Bianca had again to assist me. The pavilion was superbly fitted up in two or three compartments, separated by silken cushions. Drawing one aside, she motioned me in, saying:

"'Lord Clifford, you will find conveniences in there for your comfort, and a boy to wait upon you. Write an order for whatever clothing you wish, and I will send for it at once. You will be obliged to let me become your banker for a few days, as I strongly suspect you have no purse.'

"Lord Melgrave, you, with your experience in desert life, can understand the luxuries of a bath

and a comfortable couch to rest upon. I was frightened when I looked in the mirror.

"Bianca's pale, wan face and sunken eye told but too well she had little time to stay. In a week I was able to start for Paris, where I felt assured I should be able to learn from Madame Devereux your whereabouts.

"Bianca half promised me she would not leave the country until I found you and heard from your lips the blessings she deserved. Lord Melgrave, I trust you may be able to win her from the purpose of again retiring to Ceylon."

Lord Clifford concluded his narration and received the congratulations of his auditory. Those of Lady Clare were not the less fervid that they were mostly expressed in tears, athwart which joy threw a brightness like the beautiful Iris which announces the passage of the storm.

Lord Clifford begged his friends to excuse him for a short time; he then retired. Soon there came a quiet knock at the door, and before Lord Melgrave could answer it, the door opened, and in walked General Huleiniska, and with him Madame Devereux! Lady Clare gave one scream of delight, and clasped her in a fond embrace. Lord Melgrave welcomed her joyfully. The only sad heart in the room was the general's; but his love for Lady Clare was so noble, pure and unselfish, that, in witnessing her rapturous joy in again being united to Lord Clifford, whom she had for so many months mourned as dead, his own heart was made glad, and he placed the sacrifice of his love upon the altar, where

it was consumed with a pure and holy flame. "Generous, noble-hearted man, you deserve a happier fate!" thought Clare.

Lady Clare was the first to speak: "Oh, darling, how could you remain from me so long! How did it happen?"

"Lord Clifford came with me," replied Madame Devereux. "I did not think it right to give you too much pleasure at once."

"Yes, I know," replied Lady Clare, excitedly; "but did my father know that you came with Lord Clifford?"

"Certainly not, my dear; I wished to surprise you both."

Lady Clare was too much overjoyed to continue the conversation. Presently the cathedral bell rung the hour of twelve, when she exclaimed, "A merry Christmas!" Then commenced such congratulations and greetings as the little parlor in New Orleans seldom witnessed. Good nights were then exchanged, and the party separated—the gentlemen to their rooms, to sleep, and Madame Devereux and Lady Clare to find Vignet and talk.

"Come to my room and I will ring for Vignet," said Lady Clare, "and we will wheel the sofa by the bed, and then you shall tell me about your surprise."

Madame Devereux kissed her sweet mouth, telling her to be quiet and not get crazy over her happiness. Then Lady Clare pillowed her head in her dear friend's arms, and clasped her neck, for fear something might spirit her away. Madame De-

reux then briefly told her of the meeting between Lord Clifford and herself:

"I should have come over with General Huleiska, but there was no party to whom I could attach myself, and without any lady companion it would not have been agreeable. I did want to come very much; indeed every letter I received from you but awakened a greater desire to visit America, and to be with you.

"The day Lord Clifford came to Paris I had just received a dear, good letter from you, which only increased my desire to see you, and I could not but feel half-vexed with myself that I should let a foolish whim prevent the pleasure of your society. While I was grieving over my sad and lonely life, the past, with its train of joys and sorrows, came up before me. Then I thought of your dear father and the darling of his heart; and, sweet one, for another there came a great, great cry — poor Lord Clifford! His name was scarcely cold upon my lips ere I heard my name called by the usher. I hastened to my private reception room. Leaning one arm on the piano, and his face half hidden in the shadow, I could form no conception who the stranger might be. He turned as I entered, and walked toward me. I neither shrieked nor fainted; but as I looked at his white face and silvered hair, and knew it was all that was left of Lord Clifford, I fell powerless to the floor. I did not lose my consciousness, but my limbs refused to support my body. In an instant he raised me from the floor and assisted me to a sofa. You can well measure my surprise

by your own. He was deeply pained to learn that you were so far away. I handed him your letter, and as he perused it he almost wept. Then he said, 'Madame Devereux, I shall insist that you accompany me to America within the week. The wife of an attaché of the American embassy is about to return home with her daughter, and I will immediately ascertain when they sail, that we may join her party. I can very easily obtain letters from the English consul to introduce you.'

"I found the lady very agreeable. She cheerfully invited me to make one of her party. Lord Clifford reserved the narrative of his adventures until we were on shipboard, when he related the full particulars of his fearful captivity.

"Clare, my darling, is not Bianca a noble-hearted girl?" said Madame Devereux; "her character is truly wonderful! But now you must kiss me and say good-night, or your eyes will not shine quite so brilliantly in the morning."

"Oh, my sweet friend," said Lady Clare, "I fear to go to sleep, lest I may awake and find all this a dream, and that when the morning comes I shall find you are in Paris, and my darling Percy is—I know not where."

Madame Devereux smiled. She caught Clare to her bosom and gave her a loving kiss, saying, "I know that is not a dream! Good-night, my pet—good-night!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN CHICAGO.

Two weeks after the arrival of Madame Devereux were occupied in recalling the past, in visiting the Crescent City, and in the development of a substantial enjoyment that more than repaid many of their greater sufferings.

Lord Clifford and Lady Clare spent much time together, when the former related many hitherto unmentioned incidents of his confinement, during which these two young souls were as happy as a short time before they had been wretched and hopeless.

But what of Lord Melgrave and Madame Devereux? A change had come over the spirit of the latter. She had not forgotten her grief, but time was mellowing it; and that which seemed once terrible and unendurable now became softened, till its contemplation was a melancholy pleasure. She mingled more with society, and gave herself less to the task of shutting herself up with her sorrows.

One evening Lord Clifford and Lady Clare were promenading on the corridors of their hotel, while Madame Devereux sat in the parlor connected with the suite of rooms occupied by Lady Clare and herself. Lord Melgrave was with her, and they had been conversing of Italy, England, America—every

thing. Madame Devereux made some allusion to the tomb of her husband, whereupon her companion said, "Madame Devereux, I have something to say to you."

She quietly lifted her eyes, but there was something in Lord Melgrave's glance that caused her to look down again, while a slight flush passed over her usually pale face. She made no reply, so he continued:

"Madame Devereux, your allusion to the tomb of your dead love reminds me that I, too, have a similar memento. In view of that, and in view of my years of discretion, it would be senseless for me to attempt to enact a younger and a heroic part; I shall therefore say in as few words as possible what I feel I must say; they are these: You know that I love you—that I love you most dearly; will you be my wife?"

As he said this he moved to the sofa on which she was seated, and placed himself beside her.

She sat with her bowed head hiding her face. He took her hand. Suddenly she raised her tear-stained and crimson face, and replied:

"Lord Melgrave, I, too, am too old to essay what befits only a younger soul, and therefore I shall answer you as briefly as you have questioned me—I WILL!"

And that was all!

Lord Clifford and Lady Clare joined them soon after this occurrence, and Lord Melgrave asked, "When shall we return to Europe—to Hawthorne Dale?"

To this Lady Clare replied that she was happy here.

Madame Devereux looked up, and then Lord Clifford and Lady Clare noticed, for the first time, that a seraphic light glowed on her lovely face—the light of reciprocated love, which makes beautiful even the plainest features, and lends a charm to the eye never before seen. Then, in her softened voice, Madame Devereux said, "I, too, am very happy in this bright land."

"Ladies," inquired Lord Clifford, "might we not all enjoy quite as much happiness at Hawthorne Dale? True, America will be remembered as the oasis of our lives. What say you, Lord Melgrave, to a trip to Niagara for the benefit of Madame Devereux and myself, a glance at Chicago, New York and Washington, then bid a loving good-by to this favored land of sunshine, and away to our dear old homes?"

"But," said Lady Clare, naively, "we can not ask Madame Devereux to go with us, because she made a special request to me once never to invite her again to visit us at our home!" and Clare looked toward her father and laughed.

But Madame Devereux, with her usual frankness, promptly replied, "My darling, your father has just now invited me to accompany him to Hawthorne Dale, and to remain there for life, and I told him I would!"

Lady Clare gave a joyous scream, clasped her loving friend around the neck with both arms, and half-smothered her with kisses.

Lord Clifford passed over to where Lord Melgrave sat, with a pleasant smile lighting up his dignified face, and taking his hand, wrung it with a cordiality which spoke volumes; he then pointed to Clare who was still caressing Madame Devereux, and said "Lord Melgrave, I would not permit that!"

"But his was a joy no tongue could tell,
And words were meaningless there."

The following week the happy party left for the north. General Huleiniska would not mar their pleasure by refusing to accompany them, and Clare never exerted herself more to please him and to make him forget that she had ever wounded him. She preserved toward him the familiarity of a sister, and upon every occasion avoided any demonstration of affection for Lord Clifford in his presence. She promenaded for hours together with the general on the steamboat, during their trip from New Orleans to St. Louis. Never did she once permit him to go to the table alone. Madame Devereux or herself always leaned upon his arm. If he loved Clare before, he worshiped her now; but his was a love so true he could not pain the object of it, even to give peace to his soul.

General Huleiniska knew it would grieve Clare should he refuse to return to England with them, and her wish was his law. Clare never forgot one little act of politeness, or failed in one instance to make him know she almost revered him for the love he bore her, and that while she could not reciprocate his feelings, she would give him the next best love

a man ever possessed—the pure and holy love of a sister. A mother's love is a different sentiment; it is herself she loves—her child is her own soul and body. If she sees no faults and blemishes in her child, who may censure her? A mother is pardonable for any act of weakness she may display for the child she loves.

Lord Melgrave and Clifford perfectly understood Clare's motive for her partiality to the general. Nor was it affected; she respected him so deeply, had such an exalted opinion of his sterling qualities, that it would have cost her the keenest sorrow to have lost that respect, which she might have done had he pursued any other course. Never, by word or act, did he allude to the painful interview of Christmas eve. He entertained her chiefly by recalling interesting incidents of travel. The general's conversational powers were very superior. He treated his subjects graphically, without a labored description, condensing his thoughts so that his auditors were never wearied with an overburdened tale. There was a charming quaintness and vivacity in his oriental scenes, spiced with just enough humor to give a piquancy to his stories.

He was a severe student, being quite familiar with seven or eight languages. His memory was so remarkably retentive that he never forgot what he wished to remember. Surely three more learned gentlemen could hardly be found. With such company Clare and Madame Devereux must have been excessively stupid not to have become educated by catching the rich gems of thought which they daily

scattered. Neither lady thought, as thousands of others have, that there is no great use for a woman to be wise, as their companions, even if gentlemen, knew enough for all.

Two months were passed by the party in visiting various places of interest, before they sailed for England. Ten days they remained in Chicago, and left it well pleased with the magnitude of its projects, the magnificence of its palaces, and the liberality of its public institutions.

The general remarked one evening in the Sherman House parlor, "I heard a Swedish noble once say there were but two cities in America—Chicago and New York!"

Two weeks later the now happily reunited party embarked on an ocean steamer, and bade farewell to America.

Of their arrival in England and what followed the reader need not be told. Suffice it that the close of the drama at Hawthorne Dale was as happy as its beginning was sorrowful.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION — HAWTHORNE DALE.

ONCE more it is Christmas eve, and we meet the happy faces of a year ago. Lady Clifford wears the same sweet, pleasing expression, and the quiet and dignified Lady Melgrave has become cheerful and happy.

They were all then celebrating Christmas. The Duke of Mondelbert came over from Paris, to pass the Christmas week with his warm-hearted friends at Hawthorne Dale.

It was the same little boudoir in which Lord Clifford and Clare first met, three years ago. Joy and happiness beamed in every eye; pleasant remembrances came up, and Lady Clifford often mischievously told Madame Devereux, as she still sometimes playfully called her, "Once you disliked my father so much that you would not come, even to pass the winter at Rome with us!"

While on this evening the happy little exchange of pleasantries was occurring, Vignet softly entered the room and handed Lord Melgrave a package, or rather a large envelop. He glanced at it, then ran his eye through the manuscript and said, "I think this is something which concerns all, therefore I may with your permission read it aloud." Thereupon Lord Melgrave read the following:

"And now from over the sea come tidings of a broken, half-told story of lonely wanderings in foreign lands, a full recital of a never-dying love, with a pitiful and sorrowful death in a far-away island of the Indian Ocean. The poor gipsy girl sleeps in the groves of Ceylon!

"It was evening in that tropical isle of the ocean whose fragrant air and balmy breath come laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers; where soft-sighing zephyrs from laurel and cypress boughs, and the low murmur of the ocean surf, blend their music in rich harmony, and the gorgeous sunset is of itself a picture of unrivaled beauty, making Ceylon one of the most delightful spots the earth contains.

"Nestling amid a grove of orange trees and geraniums gleamed a snow-white cottage, surmounted in the most tasteful style by latticed porches, which were covered by creeping vines and roses.

"Wrapped in an elegant Cashmere shawl, and reclining in a light bamboo easy chair or couch, sat a lady, beautiful even in death. The burning light of consumption gleamed in her dazzling eye; her clear, brunette complexion was pale, almost ghastly, save a bright scarlet flush on her left cheek; her black hair hung in long braids around her shoulders; her thin, emaciated hands were clasped convulsively, and her soul-speaking eye uttered volumes of silent grief. On a low ottoman at her feet sat an old lady clad in an oriental garb, rocking herself back and forth, and chanting a sad, wild strain, half musical and half wailing, while just behind them, and shielded from their view by a tall geranium, stood

a gentleman. One elbow leaned on a branch of this sweet-scented tree, and his face was bowed on his hands.

"'Poor little Zoemara! can nothing save you?'—and a look of despair came over his features.

"Cold, mute and motionless had he become, as he gazed upon the face of the dying girl before him. The gentleman was tall and dark; his hair and beard were sprinkled with gray. Noiselessly he stepped from behind the shade, and sank at her feet. The aged woman, still moaning her mournful chant, arose and gave her place to the gentleman, who was none other than the French traveler who first met and loved Zoemara in Egypt. Their meeting was a singular fatality.

"After Zoemara had rescued Lord Clifford from the cave, notwithstanding that she half promised him she might possibly remain until the return of Lord Melgrave's party, she did not feel her promise was given but to please for the moment the grateful nobleman, who could entertain for her only gratitude for saving his life; and she wished to leave her tribe forever and return to the island of Ceylon, where she had a sweet little cottage. She accordingly left, taking with her only one old woman, to nurse her the little remaining time she had to live.

"Zoemara was dying—not of consumption, but of a broken heart—dying of unrequited love! She suffered no bodily pain, never coughed, or possessed one symptom of any ailment; she only faded day by day, and as her life waned, her beauty increased until it became transcendent.

"About a month previous a large French ship of war touched at the island. The officers were strolling through the beautiful spice groves, and saw this little cottage. The captain knew it must belong to some European, and feeling a lively interest in the charming invalid he had often seen in the garden, he framed an excuse to call. The moment they met they knew each other. He was the first to speak:

" 'My poor little Zoemara, do I find you here?' This was the way the old friends met—not old in the general acceptation of the term, for friendship is ever young; being an attribute of the soul, it ever retains its primitive freshness and vigor. Though the mantle and scars of time and life-experience were recognizable in both, the intuitive perceptions of the soul could see no great change in any of the marked characteristics that make up the real man and woman.

"True, when last he saw Zoemara she was but a child in years; yet, through all the vicissitudes of his eventful life, he never forgot his first love—the gentle Zoemara; nor had he ever put that love aside for another. Her rare qualities endowed her with a faculty for inspiring a love which could never die. His generosity traced her early death to his former desertion, and his grief and remorse were intense. As he sat with his bowed head upon the cushion at her feet, there came a great cry from his heart—a groan so full of anguish that it seemed like the wail of a lost soul.

" 'Oh, God!' came from his tightly compressed lips; 'is this, too, for me? It must be the last drop!

For long years this pleading face and these crying eyes have haunted me. Will she die? Can she? and I her murderer! Yes, worse than that!' and then his voice changed from a muttered moan to a low, soft, questioning tone. His deeply burdened heart found relief in tears—tears of remorse and penitence—such tears as might have opened the gate to the Peri.

" 'Oh, my poor Zoemara! tell me you forgive me! Let not the silence of the tomb shut out from me these words! Can you—will you ever forgive the unpardonable crime of leaving you because of your people? Oh, Zoemara, I ought never to have left you, after winning your love! I could easily have taken you away with me, regardless of their threats.'

" 'Claude, my kind friend,' said Zoemara, 'I have nothing to forgive, nor can you consistently attribute my death to yourself; other causes have brought me here, so do not mourn for me.'

"As she concluded she placed an exquisite little poena cloth handkerchief (a fabric used mainly in that Indian clime, and made from the fibres of the pineapple) to her lips, and when she removed it, it was stained with crimson. A shudder convulsed her for a moment; then the sweet voice of Zoemara floated out on the still evening air, calm and clear:

" 'Again, I say, my kind friend, you must not censure yourself for my illness—no, not illness—because I am not ill, only dying for want of any incentive to live; and yet, there are times when my heart's tears gush wildly forth at the thought of

death, and that, in the fresh young morning of my life, I must resign my breath. To me this earth was once very beautiful; when my young spirit first met yours—when the glad carol of your voice awakened all the song in my soul, you opened to my woman's vision a vista of infinite depth and loveliness. It was you who taught me to read, to understand the grand beauties of a world where art, science and literature create new kingdoms, and place upon their thrones sovereigns whose power is intellect. For all this I thank you; but, after lifting my benighted soul from heathenish gloom, and walking beside me in a paradise of love, when every fiber of my loving nature clung to yours, with all its young strength; when the infamy of my surroundings became intolerable—after having drunk at the fountain of pure water, you left me, and bade me love you no more—to think of you as a friend, not lover.

“ ‘You told me to forget you,
And your cheek it wore a smile
That was like a fettered captive
At the shrine it graced the while;
Though you spoke the sternest sentence
In your fullest, manly tone,
Such as e'er before was burthened
With the words of love alone—
I could see the false heart tremble
Through its deep and dark disguise,
For my wronged, deserted bosom
Lent its sorrow to my eyes.’

“ ‘Do not curse me!’ came in a sepulchral voice at her feet.

“ ‘Ah, no!’ said Zoemara, ‘I only wish to remind you of the agony of my poor heart when you left me. Your cruel words burned within my heart until it was consumed. I have tried—God only knows how hard—to pray for forgiveness and peace. While my poor brain was crazed, my own mother said, “Stone her to death, because the house-dweller has forsaken her!” I fled across the desert. A strong, manly arm saved me, and beat back the murderous weapon which would have drunk the life blood of your Zoemara. Then I bade the gipsy take back to the camp my love for you. I had no longer use for either.

“ ‘And inasmuch as my heart had grown great by my suffering and despair, just so much deeper became its sensibilities. I loved the stranger who had rescued me; and as my wrongs crowded upon my mind, the deeper and more entirely I loved him, until my life became but one burning thought of the beloved object.’

“ ‘Hush, hush!’ said her companion.

“ ‘I cannot endure this!’ interrupted the stricken listener. ‘Oh, God! it will drive me mad! I can not bear Zoemara's heart anguish! If it would restore your wasted form to buoyant health, and waft you far over the sea to him you love, and place you in his arms again, I would willingly suffer annihilation! My ship lies in yonder bay. Come, Zoemara! I will weigh anchor within the hour, and as soon as the winds and the waves can carry you to these loved ones, it shall be done, I pledge you, as sacredly as I one day hope to rest in a grave!’

"Then the gentle girl, who sorrowed over the grief of her early love, gathered the anguished face in her arms. Pushing back the hair disheveled by despair, she saw the tender look of pity in those beautiful, soft brown eyes, and her loving voice answered his questioning glance by saying: 'Ah! no, no, Claude; it cannot be! He never loved me. He, too, told me to forget him. Do not talk so wildly; you pain me. I thank you so much! I knew you would take me back; but I could never reach him. You would have to make me a grave in the coral forests of the sea were you to attempt it.'

"'You will come to this lovely spot some time. You only are with me now; I will stay with you. Lay me away just beneath the cypress bough yonder. You will come and sit by me some time while I sleep, and perchance drop a tear as you recall our early love. Plant your favorite violet above my head, and it will remain a patient watcher to mark my quiet resting place. He may not know when this troubled soul took its flight. I love flowers; fill my grave with them; make me a pillow of white roses, and cover my wasted face with the crushed blossoms and half-opened buds; weave them through my hair, and place them on my heart and in my hands. Let me, in my death, luxuriate in one thing which on earth I loved, save which every object has been wrested from me by fate!

"'Let the flowers kiss me to sleep; they only love me. They are heaven-born types of the soul's purity, and emblematic of the purity of this life; and when the cool sea breeze sweeps their tender

petals to and fro to kiss my grave, methinks they will whisper—HEART CEASE TO LOVE.

"'Then in the midnight moon, or "eternal beauty and eloquent silence of the undying stars," a voice will tell me I am not alone or forgotten.

"'I shall hear it, and when ten thousand myriads of years shall have faded into the past, my soul will breathe a tender thought for him.

"'Far away in the illimitable space gleams a bright star. It shines with a clear and steady light. I have loved it since a child, and often fancied, when this troubled soul took its flight, it would rest in that distant star. My soul is glad—a dear voice whispers me to come. My friend—Clare—Clifford—good by!' She waved her hands, and her head sank upon her breast. Her companion caught her in his arms, but her spirit had gone to the beloved star in the unfathomable depths of infinitude.

"Crushed in mind and body, her lover put her to rest under the cypress bough, and covered her with the white roses she loved so well. Many months he watched beside her tomb, vainly trying to forget the part he had enacted in this tragedy. Among her effects he found a letter to himself, begging him to inform Lord Melgrave of her death. And this sad duty he has now performed."

MASONIC ADDRESS.

[The subjoined address was delivered on the occasion of the dedication of a Masonic temple at Sparta, Wisconsin, on the 22d of February, 1857, by the late Hon. WILLIAM H. TUCKER, husband of the authoress.]

WORSHIPFUL MASTER AND BRETHREN:

Sincerely do I regret my inability to perform well the labor which on this occasion your kind partiality has invited me to undertake; however, apologies and regrets are alike useless, and can never add to the value of an effort, whether good or bad, and I feel assured that the same brotherly kindness which has dictated your choice will judge leniently of my faults.

The occasion on which we have convened is one of no ordinary importance: a Masonic festival on the anniversary of the birth of our immortal Washington—a subject which fills the heart with unutterable emotions, and excites the memory with historic recollections of scenes never to be forgotten. In the contemplation of the scenes and events which have marked the history of the hero of his country's battles, and the world's great model of patriotism

and virtue, admiration is struggling with emotion, and we hardly know whether to weep or to worship, to admire or to mourn. But, amidst all the conflict of feeling which memory excites, we forget our admiration only when we mourn the dire fatality which has robbed the world of the great author of such glorious examples; still, extraordinary as was the character of the man, it perhaps possesses no more of interest than does the history of the institution of which he was so bright an ornament.

The origin of the Masonic institution is enveloped in mystery, and the world knows as little of its history and utility as do its votaries of its origin and ancestry.

In all ages of the world its influence has been felt and its benefits distributed with an unseen hand, as powerful as it was universal. No clime or country has been a stranger to its virtues, while only the CRAFT have been the recipients of its secrets and its doctrines. Its labors have not been confined to civilization, but distributed over the habitable globe; they have formed a common brotherhood of the representatives of every nation and of every country. Barbarism has known and appreciated its benefits, while civilization has grown brighter in the light of its virtues. An object of suspicion and aversion to many in all ages, and often the subject of abuse and violence, it has, age upon age, pursued the even tenor of its way, until it has grown great in universality and power, and through merit alone has come to be cherished in the estimation of mankind.

An institution peculiarly adapted to the wants of society and the necessities of our being, it has struggled on in triumph over all opposition, and has ever exerted its benign influence for the relief of sick, suffering and fallen humanity.

If we view it in its true character, what an inspiring theme does it become? Who can contemplate it in a calm and unimpassioned spirit? While the modesty of its pretensions presents an insuperable objection to the public development of its principles, a brother still feels that he is dwelling upon a hallowed theme which presents to him all the beauties and adornments of Masonic character. When we contemplate the present condition of society throughout the civilized world, in connection with a retrospect of the past history of mankind, we are astonished at the vast supremacy of evil which is, and ever has been, every where apparent. We have seen and now behold men striving for position and power, without any regard for consequences or rights. Men have become intellectually powerful, and have exercised that power only for the purpose of preying upon society, and accomplishing their own selfish ends, at whatever cost to the rights of others. Look over the ancient battle-fields of Europe, and remember the heart-rending scenes of rapine and murder, and carnage and desolation, that for long centuries has marked every era of human existence. Why was this? and why, in more modern times, has the same cruel policy of government, and the same inordinate ambition of individuals which has carried sorrow and suffering

to the thrones and palaces of the great, and to the humble cottages of the poor, been still adhered to? The question is easy of solution, if we study aright the character of men. In his constitution are combined the social, moral and intellectual qualities with which the Creator has been pleased to endow him. But these are not all: he has passion and desire, which give force and effect to these qualities. Without energy and will to give force of character, the brightest intellectual or moral qualities would be powerless and worthless.

It is a loose and unbridled exercise of these last powers which makes man forgetful of every thing but himself, and create so much human misery in the world. Man was not created for himself alone, but for the society and the world in which he lives. To forget that his destiny is more comprehensive than the mere interests of self, is to forget the chief aims and objects of his whole life. Man can not exist alone and independent of his fellow man. The great diversity in the wants of man, and the endless variety of labor in all the avenues of trade and commerce, prove conclusively that societies should be formed by men for the common interest and protection of each other.

The formation of such societies creates the necessity for civil rights and civil remedies, and these in turn give rise to those doctrines, rules and maxims which are known as law.

These rules and maxims are as various as the forms, conditions and circumstances of society; and hence their administration becomes a science, in the

study of which man often forgets the right and pursues the wrong, only as a means of personal success, without regard to the benefit or injury of society. Hence, also, the long catalogue of evils, in whose desolating train has followed suffering and sorrow since the earliest existence of man.

The cultivation of conscience and the moral forces is the only antidote for this great and growing disease. The supremacy of moral feeling creates an instructive belief that goodness is much greater than greatness. Who does not feel this? We admire the brilliancy, display and power of greatness; but we invariably love the character of goodness, and justly consider that man the most worthy who has been—not the greatest genius, but the greatest benefactor of the human race. Well has it been observed that

“Goodness is beauty in its best estate.”

And again the poet says—

“Angels are round the good man, to catch the incense of his prayers

And they fly to minister kindness to those for whom he pleadeth.”

The doctrines of Masonry are addressed to those moral and social qualities of the head and heart, in the culture of which goodness is attained. While political and religious fanaticism has visited every portion of the earth with the direst calamities, Masonry has followed in its sorrowful and gloomy train, to heal the wounds and allay the suffering its

unbridled madness has created. The institution need not resort to the sword or to violence to compel an observance of its practices or to enforce its decrees; without that the fraternity cheerfully obey its humane commands with alacrity and zeal. The cultivation of its principles—brotherly love, relief and truth—are the death-warrant of political hostility and embittered feeling. Within its sacred temple feuds can not exist. Brethren forget there the cold and sordid policies of the world outside, remembering that Masonry has higher aims and objects than those which actuate men in the ordinary routine of life. Sufferings must be alleviated and sorrows averted; and no one can feel cheerful and happy while he knows that a brother is suffering for the comforts which his charity, however limited his means, can supply. It is his province to cast the mantle of forgiveness over the faults and errors of mankind, remembering always that “to err is human—to forgive, divine,” and thus by his kindness and brotherly affection to soothe the unhappy and to re-awaken long-forgotten hopes.

In this way society is benefited, and man, to some extent, restored to that peace and happiness which is of right the inheritance of all. We have already seen that virtue and goodness are inherent qualities in men, but they are too often neglected and lost in the business relations of life. As man mingles with society and the world he becomes sordid and selfish, forgetful of the rights and claims of others, and careful only of his own personal interests. Intellectual culture may polish the man-

ners and improve the head, but if the voice of conscience be stifled, and the virtues of charity forgotten, in the pursuit of worldly ambition, it corrupts the heart, blunts all the finer sensibilities, and destroys the noblest impulses of our nature. With all the great and good qualities with which nature has endowed men, they are by the rules and regulations of society constantly too much prone to evil. Well has a distinguished poet exclaimed:

"Vain things! As lust or vanity inspires,
The Heaven of each is but what each desires
And soul or sense, whate'er the object be,
Man would be man to all eternity."

To counteract that evil tendency, and prevent wholesale suffering in the world, it becomes necessary to cultivate brotherly affection and friendship. It is the exercise of that feeling which leads us to regard the whole human species as one common family, created by the same Almighty Parent, and entitled to the aid, comfort and support of each other. It is upon this principle that Masonry unites the representatives of every country, and creates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained perpetual strangers. It is upon the basis of mutual rights, mutual benefits and mutual sympathies, that it forms a union for the accomplishment of the noblest purposes and objects of human life. The maintenance of such societies can not fail to be productive of good, for it has been well said that—

"In companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There needs must be a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirits."

But the object of that brotherhood is not social enjoyment merely. It has higher ends. It is based upon the doctrine that to relieve from sorrow and suffering brethren who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection is the most imperative duty of man to his fellow man and to his God. It is our duty to soothe the unhappy, and sympathize with them in all their misfortunes. On this virtue are established nearly all the connections and relations of Masonry.

"Friendship above all ties doth bind the heart,
And faith in friendship is the noblest part."

* * * * *

"Who knows the joy of friendship?
The trust, sincerity, and mutual tenderness?
The double joys where each is glad for both?
Friendship, our only wealth, our last resort and strength,
Secure against ill fortune and the world."

What holier impulse or nobler principle than that of brotherly love and friendship could swell the human heart?

Who could doubt that in the exercise of this virtue there is more real enjoyment and happiness than in all the display of wealth and power? If the world does not acknowledge it, the brotherhood must still feel it to be true, and will ever regard brotherly love and friendship as the noblest attri-

butes of the soul. The practice of these virtues, coupled with a love of truth, would in any of the walks of life be deemed most praiseworthy indeed. To be truthful and good is one of the first lessons we are taught in Masonry. To be influenced by these principles is to banish hypocrisy and deceit from amongst us, and to be governed by a desire to promote each other's welfare and happiness. It has been a Masonic combination of these principles and virtues which, in all ages of the world, has exerted an extraordinary influence for the good of society. A recollection of the obligations which its doctrines have imposed, has often stemmed the tide of human affliction. Even among the barbarians it has arrested the evils of hostility, and averted the hand of destruction. It has palliated the sufferings of war, and healed the wounds of bitter, uncompromising feuds. Among the savages of the wilderness it has arrested the death-dealing tomahawk, and it has often turned aside the bullet from the unerring rifles of our western hunters. It has brought peace, and comfort, and happiness, to the desolate homes of the widows and orphans of every country, and has every where flourished amidst the smiles and tears of gratified affection.

The constitution of man is a problem which will yet require the labors of centuries in its solution. Philosophy and the arts and sciences have made man familiar with almost every thing but himself. The genius of modern invention has scarcely ever failed to make every thing in nature subservient to its purpose. It has chained the elements to the car

of human progress, and bid them perform the labors which the feeble arm of man could not accomplish. It has penetrated into the secrets of earth and brought to light much which has added to the power of man—a power which may be, and often has been, exercised to the injury of the human family.

But has it had a regard for the welfare of mankind, or added any thing to the condition and enjoyment of society? Often the reverse. Man cares to know but little of his nature and organization if he but understand the world sufficiently to insure his safe passage through it to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

He is too apt to forget that he is threading the mazes of existence with thousands of others, whose rights and claims upon society and the world are commensurate with his own. He never should regard the world as created for his own especial benefit. He is only a sharer of its beauties and its bounties. We should invariably ignore that sect which would seek to establish the doctrine that all mankind were not equally dear to their Creator, and that they were not intended to make self-sacrifices for the benefit of each other. Masonry, unlike most other institutions, has seized upon a practical knowledge of human character and addressed itself to the noblest impulses and feelings of the heart. It taught, and still teaches, that the practice of its cardinal principles, temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice develop the noblest traits of man's

character: Temperance, in the regulation of all the conduct of life, and as a safe-guard against the allurements of vice; fortitude, as a noble purpose of the mind, fitting us to sustain misfortune and suffering and peril and danger in whatever form we may meet it; prudence, to regulate our lives according to the dictates of reason, and enable us to judge wisely of the things which concern our present as well as future condition and happiness; justice, as the only standard of right between man and man, without regard to position, distinction or place. It is this last heaven-born principle that constitutes the only safe-guard and support of civil society. It is the exercise of this quality that makes the character of man almost divine.

"Justice, like lightning, ever should appear
To few men's ruin, but to all men's fear."

* * * * *

"If but one virtue did adorn a king,
It would be justice; many great defects
Are veiled thereby, whereas each virtuous thing
In one who is not just, the world suspects."

Without a sense of justice, what would man be, and what the condition of society? The world would soon become one vast theater of strife, and scenes of carnage, and death, and desolation become every where familiar. These things, altogether noble and worthy as they are, constitute but an imperfect synopsis of the principles and virtues of our cherished institutions. What brother does not look back with pride and admiration upon the vast amount of good which has marked its existence in

every age of the world? Unpretending as Masonry is, the greatest men of earth have been humble advocates of its doctrines, and faithful and worthy members of the order. The records of Masonry present a long list of illustrious names, of men whose lives have furnished distinguished examples of the practice of its virtues. And, brethren, you can testify with what pride we, as Masons, regard the connection of that great man, whose birth-day we now celebrate, with our favorite institution. I might more appropriately say the greatest of great men, for if he had less of intellectual power and brilliancy than some others who have flashed like a meteor through the world, he possessed more of goodness and virtue than ever fell to the common lot of mortals. It may well be said that the world has never produced another man, in all respects, so great and good as our immortal Washington. The doctrines of Masonry were congenial to his noble spirit, and in the practice of its virtues, he found sufficient to gratify his strict sense of duty to himself and society. Exalted, as he was, in position and power, he cheerfully humbled himself to the duties of Masonry, and in that respect, as in all others, became the world's great model of a well ordered and well regulated character. What a splendid exemplification of the cardinal principles and virtues of Masonry does his whole life afford. His history furnishes us, as Masons, with an example most worthy of imitation. Though lost to society, his character still lives in memory and in history, and his example will continue the subject of emula-

tion to the remotest ages of the world. Time, that lays a heavy and a blighting hand upon all the things of this earth, will ever pass lightly over the history of the immortal Washington. The grave can not hide the virtues and character of the man from the present or future generations. He will still live in the hearts of the fraternity, and in the memory of a grateful and free people. Whether we gaze upon the tattered and decaying habiliments of the departed soldier, preserved in the national repository at the capital of our glorious confederacy, which had its origin in the genius and patriotism of the greatest of the world's great men, or view the blood-stained battle-fields, which were the theaters of his brilliant military achievements; or contemplate, through the medium of history, the distinguished virtues and extraordinary character of the patriot, hero and statesman, we are compelled to feel, and involuntarily confess, that nature, in her great partiality for the man, combined in him all the elements of physical, moral, and intellectual perfection. It is true that his was not the genius that dazzled, or the power that, like a tornado, sweeps every thing from its path! The world was never electrified by the suddenness of his splendor, or astonished at the rapidity of his military triumphs. Calm, cool, dignified and majestic, conscious of the rectitude of his own motives and conduct, and confident of the justness of colonial resistance to the exorbitant demands of British tyranny, he faced danger without fear, encountered perils and sufferings without parallel, and through-

out a long and doubtful struggle, maintained the purity of his character, and developed the transcendent power of his genius. His were no hireling services. He fought without the hope of pecuniary reward; his labors were not sustained by the hope of gratified ambition, but by the love of liberty and the hatred of oppression. In the darkest hour of defeat and suffering, when the strongest minds and the boldest hearts faltered in the struggle for freedom, and when, in the event of total defeat and disaster, the cruel examples and policy of Great Britain held out to him nothing but the prospect of the rack and the gibbet, he faltered not, but pressed forward, with faith undiminished and hope undimmed by the gloom and desolation which was gathering around him.

If he was ambitious of military honors and power, he was not at any time a fanatic, burning with impatience to become a hero in the crusade of religion, or ambitious of ruling, a monarch on a throne, established upon the downfall of freedom and the ruin of his country. He was never dazzled with the brilliancy and splendor of thrones, or bewildered with the prospect of position and power. His modest ambition was easily satisfied with the establishment of peace upon the basis of equality and right. His desire was not to become great by the greatness of misdeeds—his policy not to destroy for personal emoluments and power, for in peace or in war he was ever distinguished for his kindness and humanity. He deplored the necessities which drove armed hosts against each other in the shock

of battle. The thunder of cannon and the clash of arms made no music for his ear, and he even gazed upon the carnage of the battle-field with saddened feelings and a sickening heart. Yet, when duty called, he was insensible to fear, regardless of danger, and was ever the bravest of the brave.

With all these qualities which distinguished him as a soldier in the defence of human rights, he presided over the lodge with the same calm dignity and ability that he did over the oft-convened councils of war. Such, my brethren, is a brief outline of the extraordinary character of the man who became one of the brightest ornaments of our order.

In view of these things, it is not strange that around his history should cluster so many recollections, which, for the Masonic brethren, possess a deep and abiding interest. And hereafter, those upon whom will be cast the mantle of the virtues, which, as good Masons, we endeavor to practice, will continue to feel and cherish the same deep interest in his illustrious character. And, brethren, the lesson which these things has taught us is not without a moral to our minds. It may be well for us always to remember that—

‘The lives of great men all remind us
That we may make our lives sublime!
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time:
Footprints which perhaps another,
Sailing o’er life’s dreary main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.”

Finally, brethren, let us imitate the noble examples of our departed brother, and by the cultivation of those virtues for which he was so justly distinguished, prepare ourselves to enter the grand lodge above, where we may expect to enjoy eternal paradise at the right hand of the Grand Master of the universe.

A ROMANCE OF CHICAGO.

CHAPTER I.

THE gas was all lighted in the street, and one by one the stores and shops were closed; throngs of employés wended their way homeward; the walks were crowded to suffocation. There were regiments of girls with lunch-baskets, and they all seemed weary; hundreds had been sewing steadily for ten hours. And then came a troop of stylish young ladies, who had been waiting on the Michigan avenue belles in Palmer's vast store, on Lake street. Side by side they jostled past each other, all going to that spot called home.

How brilliant Washington street looked! The thousand variegated hues glimmering and dancing through the windows, awakened a train of by-gone memories. In a moment I was lost in a revery, from which I was aroused by a low, plaintive moan, and looking up I saw a young girl but a step from me, gazing wistfully at a stand of oranges that stood on the corner of Washington and State streets. Her face was very pale, and a fierce, wild look gleamed in her determined and reckless eye. Just at that

moment the old man, who had charge of the oranges turned to wait upon some boys.

Quick as thought the girl caught an orange, threw something on the remaining ones, and ran with the rapidity of the wind, or rather like a frightened fawn. So quickly had this been accomplished that no person but myself had noticed it.

I approached the stand, asked for some oranges, and in doing so picked up the article she had thrown down. It was a cobweb of a handkerchief, a trifle worn, but so fine the texture that a thimble would almost have contained it. In one corner, in the most exquisite chirography, I read the name of "Martica Gomez." Spanish! thought I. I then told the old man what I had seen, and buying the handkerchief of him, I hastened to follow the girl. Up State street she flew, until she came to Fourteenth street, when she stopped, and leaned against a lamp-post for a minute, to recover her breath.

Entering an alley in the rear of a large brick building, occupied partly as a machine shop and partly as lodging rooms by very poor people, she ascended a long flight of stairs from the outside and entered a dark hall. It seemed cruel to follow her, but I felt some great secret of woe was enveloped in this costly fabric of a handkerchief. So intent was she on her mission, that she heeded nothing. Entering a long, dark hall, I followed. Presently I heard a low, gentle rap on a door, and a sweet voice called out, "Lullu, Lullu, let Marta in!" She waited until I could hear her heart throb in her impatience. Again she called, "Martica has come,

baby; let her in. Open the door and see what I have got for you."

"Taint fastened, Netta. Push!"

She turned the knob, placed her shoulder to the door, and forced it open, groaning in agony. "Oh, my God! can she be dead? Why—oh, why is she here?"

The room was dark. She took a match, I judged, from her pocket. Igniting it, she proceeded to light a small lamp; and oh! such a sight as met my gaze! A sweet little girl of four or five years sat beside the form of a dead or dying woman, who lay on the bare floor, where she had fallen while attempting to walk. A pool of blood was around her; her hair fell about her face, and was saturated with the life-current of this poor woman, the crimson tide still dropping from her mouth.

I could restrain myself no longer, so I boldly entered.

"Young lady, pardon me if I have intruded upon the sanctity of your home; but the lady is very ill. Can I be of any service to you?"

She was kneeling beside the fainting woman, and wiping with a moistened towel the blood from her face, weeping and talking in the most vehement manner: "Oh, my poor mother!—to die all alone! Oh, speak to me—just one word!" and she raised her head, soothing and caressing her in the most affectionate manner.

A faint moan came from the lips of the dying woman: "Darling, you were gone so long! Did you get the orange?"

"Yes, mother," she replied; "let me give you some."

Breaking the rind, she pressed the rich juice to her mother's lips, saying, "Is it not delicious? But, poor mamma, how did you faint, or why did you get up?"

"Oh, Martica, I grew so anxious for you to come! I tried to go to look for you. Did they pay you for your work to-day?"

"No, they pay but once a week; but never mind, mother—I borrowed it for you. But here is dear little Lullu; she thinks sister has forgotten her!" and she caught the child in her arms, kissed her and gave her some of the orange.

Again I endeavored to make her hear me. Consternation filled her countenance on beholding a stranger gazing upon her misery. In the most dignified manner possible she asked, "What do you wish, sir? and why are you here?"

"Only to aid you," I replied. "The lady is very ill; allow me to call a physician. Is this her first attack of hemorrhage of the lungs?"

She was so bewildered she could hardly articulate a sentence. Mastering her emotion, she replied: "My poor mother is beyond all earthly help, and very soon must be relieved from suffering. It is quite useless to call a physician. Thank you, sir, we want nothing." And she bowed, as though she expected me to leave.

What else could I do? But to leave that frail girl and little child alone with a dying woman seemed cruel. Then how could I intrude longer,

when all proffered kindness was so politely declined? However, I determined to send her a physician. Accordingly, I went directly to the office of an esteemed friend, stating the case and asking him to go at once. I gave him the number, and he started on his mission of mercy.

The streets were a blaze of light. The opera-goers were enjoying a rich, musical feast. Grau's troupe called out crowded houses every night. The events of the evening had made me thoughtful, and I strolled along unconsciously until I found myself in front of the opera house, wondering what else I should see by gas-light.

For a whole square the streets were blocked with carriages, from which the gay occupants alighted, attired in the most gorgeous style and reveling in happiness. A strange and uncomfortable feeling came over me. I thought of the room I had just left; of the sweet face of that gentle girl bending over that dying mother, and her heroic pride amid such heart-rending affliction. I still possessed her handkerchief, not finding it in my heart to humiliate her by alluding to the manner I came by it. Knowing that my friend, the doctor, would do every thing for their comfort in such a delicate a manner, I felt satisfied they would be entirely unconscious of being the recipients of his bounty. In the morning I determined to serve them, whether they were willing or not.

This train of thoughts was interrupted by a carriage whirling past me, the driver evidently in great haste or unconscious of his business, and almost

upsetting another in his anxiety to get as near as possible to the opera house.

A footman sprang from the vehicle and opened the door, when a middle-aged gentleman alighted. He wore his beard close, and also his hair, which was sprinkled with gray. A brilliant diamond pin glittered in his shirt, and lavender-colored kids covered his hands. Then came a lady past the noon of life—perhaps thirty-five; but time had gently touched her features. She was magnificently dressed in garnet-color velvet and point lace. Her face was very sad; there was a subdued, mournful look, and a wistful, longing expression in her dark eye, which said, "I have no part in this pageantry." Her hair was black, and beautifully dressed with crushed roses and bay leaves—a strange combination. A delicate perfume of violet floated around her. She formed a pleasing picture, and a murmur of admiration could hardly fail to greet her appearance in any assembly.

Next came a little fairy in blue and white, with long golden curls, ornamented with a dainty little blue velvet cap. She was rather tall, but her age could not have been more than fifteen. Her complexion was a clear, transparent blonde—sparkling, vivacious and charming.

Just as she was handed out a gentleman presented her with a exquisite bouquet of the rarest flowers—moss-rose buds of white and crimson, together with fragrant geraniums.

The party occupied a private box. The opera was the "Sicilian Vespers." Mazzolini never sang

sweeter, or Miss Kellogg with more charming expression; and yet neither the music nor personation pleased the gentleman. The finest aria, which called forth the wildest enthusiasm, and was encored with the most deafening applause, fell upon his ear without effect.

The young lady could endure such unappreciation no longer, and exclaimed, "Why don't you shout, papa? It is glorious! Miss Kellogg is an angel."

To this he simply remarked, "I thought we were to hear 'Trovatore' this evening."

Their conversation was interrupted by a light tap on the door, which was no sooner opened than an usher handed him a slip of paper. He glanced at it a moment, turned deadly pale, and it was with the utmost effort he controlled himself. He then arose, saying, "Agatha, my dear, you will have to excuse me for an hour. I have just received a notice. An old friend is dying; the call is peremptory, and I must hasten at once. Should any thing prevent me from returning before the opera is over, Jones will see you safely home. The carriage is in waiting; I shall not take it. Do not be uneasy." And he bowed himself out.

Rushing through the crowded aisles, and down the State street entrance, he called for a hack, whispered a word in the driver's ear, and jumped in. In another second he was whirling like the wind toward Fourteenth street. When nearly there he got out, gave the driver a bill, and dismissed him.

He went up to a lamp-post, took the slip of paper from his pocket, scrutinized it carefully, then hurried

on through a dark alley, to the rear of a large brick building, the same I had left but two hours before. Up the stairs he carefully threaded his way. It was dark and gloomy. Slowly he touched the third door on the right hand. It opened at his touch, but the scene was changed. My friend, the doctor, had made them a little more comfortable. A cheerful lamp burned on a stand, and the blood-stains had been removed from the floor. The sick woman was lying on a mattress, in one corner of the room, and a clean, white pillow was under her head. Claspings and chaffing her hands sat the poor daughter; no tear dimmed her eye, but a haughty look of proud defiance swept over her face, as she looked up and saw the face of her visitor. Her very expression, in its withering scorn, could have annihilated him in its majesty. He felt it all, and knew it was just. At the sight before him he covered his face with his hands, and groaned with remorse and anguish.

At death one is honest, if ever; and a true and faithful love defies even its power. The dying woman forgot that the man before her was her murderer. She only remembered he was her lawful husband, and she loved him. His presence came to her like a benediction, or rather like sweet incense. She put out her white, emaciated hand, and murmured in the sweetest voice imaginable: "Oh, my husband, my Charley! you did come. I knew you would be glad to see me die. No, no! I did not mean that; but to look once again upon the face you loved so well, and hear me say I forgive you all—yes, every

thing. I could not die without seeing you." A violent coughing spell prevented her from finishing the sentence.

In a moment he fell on his knees beside her, supported her head, and wiped the crimson tide from her lips. He groaned: "Oh, Martica, Martica! why did you not let me know you were here?"

Then, with the dignity of an outraged queen, arose this trembling girl, forgetting that the angel of death hovered over this couch, and already touched with his icy breath her mother.

"Sir, in granting my poor mother's dying request to send for you, I can not forget that you are my father, and her murderer. You will please respect my grief by profound silence. I would not have you pollute the sanctity of death by a sound of your voice."

He seemed petrified, so motionless had he become while listening to the voice of the wronged girl before him.

"Where are you, Charley; it is so dark," and her eye rested on his in fond devotion, but the film of death was fast gathering there. Again she murmured: "Oh, how sweet it is to die, resting in your arms. Charley, my dear Charley, I have prayed for this one boon. God is good to comfort me thus. Tell me you love, and—dearie, does she know she is not your——"

"Hush, hush, for God's sake!" and he bent to kiss the lips and shut out the fearful word, "wife," which he knew she was going to say.

"Martica," he groaned, "don't curse me—my own bitter thoughts are driving me mad. God

knows it is a just retribution. I deserve a thousand times more."

"No, no! don't go and leave me," and she grasped his neck convulsively. "I never cursed you. I only loved you, and cried for you. My darling husband, I do love you." I wan—ted—to—see—you—be—" Her voice failed, a rattle came in her throat, and she sank back in his arms, and the mortal spirit of Martica Gomez passed to its final Judge.

He gazed for a moment at the face of his wife, beautiful through all the sorrow he had caused her—the same serene look she had worn when she won his youthful love. Then he glanced at his two children—the one a noble, proud-spirited woman, battling with want and woe; the other a fair, little flower, gentle as a zephyr and sweet as an angel, her eyes bathed in tears, while the drooping lashes fell upon her moist cheek. Not a murmur escaped their lips. No tear dimmed the eye of the elder child, but a satisfied, quiet joy beamed in the face of the agonized girl. He caught the form of his lifeless wife in his arms, pressed passionate kisses upon her face, her eyes, and her hair—carefully laid her down, and rushed from the room.

Scarcely knowing which way he ran, he rushed headlong against a policeman.

"Ha, what is this!" said the officer, grasping him by the arm. Mr. Conrad Grove cried, "Put me in a hack, and drive me to No. — Michigan Avenue; I am very ill."

CHAPTER II.

IN one of those palatial residences, on Michigan avenue, we find the ladies of the opera. Seated in a luxuriant easy chair of brocatelle was the lady in garnet-color velvet. Her maid was removing her diamonds and loosing the rich braids of her wavy, black hair. The same sad expression lingered on her face, and with it a weary, heartless feeling, painful to behold.

The charming daughter was humming an air from "Norma," her face radiant with happiness. "Strange papa don't come."

The mother looked up, saying, "Nettie, call James, and let me inquire for him." An obsequious waiter answered the summons, and responded to the inquiry, "that his master had been in his dressing-room half an hour, suffering with a fearful headache." Instantly the lady arose, and passed out of the room. She found her husband in his room, buried in profound grief. He did not notice her approach until her soft hand touched his forehead, and then he jumped as though pierced by a ball. She pushed back his hair, and kissed his brow, saying, in the sweetest voice in the world, "Charley, what troubles you?"

"Oh, Agatha! for the love of God leave me, if you ever loved me."

Bewildered at his strange agitation, and grieved beyond expression at her husband's affliction, like a true wife she left him, believing he was suffering only for the death of a dear friend, and when the first shock was over, he would calmly tell her about it, and until then she would not urge the matter.

Affectionately she bade him be comforted, and retired. When the door closed upon her retreating form, he arose from the chair and paced the room in a state of mind bordering on frenzy; the magnitude of his crimes arose before him. He saw the abyss of destruction into which he was about to be engulfed. Could he save himself and the innocent woman who believed herself his wife? Would the proud girl who had watched by her angel mother, and who had forbade him to speak in her presence, have any mercy upon him? He knew she was alone with that dead mother in that comfortless garret.

"Oh, help me! God have mercy upon me!" he prayed, for the first time in years. Never before had he felt his inability to master the combination of circumstances which threatened his ruin. His wealth was unlimited—would it serve him now? He went to his writing desk, took out his bank book, and wrote a check on the First National Bank for a thousand dollars. Then he penned the following note to an undertaker:

"DEAR SIR:—At No. —, Fourteenth street, you will find the remains of a lady—this night deceased. Give her a burial befitting a lady of

rank—the best casket, hearse and carriage in the city; choice flowers, with a cross of immortelles and cypress. Let nothing be wanted—a silver plate, with this inscription, ‘Martica Gomez.’ Select a quiet spot in Graceland, and send for the Bishop of Illinois to conduct the service. Inclosed you will find a draft, from which pay yourself, and the remainder—should any thing remain—give the orphan children of the poor lady.

“Sincerely,

“CONRAD GROVE.

“No. — Michigan avenue.”

Placing them in an envelop, he directed it, rang the bell, and delivered it to his faithful servant, with orders to proceed at once to the house of the undertaker.

It was then past midnight, and James concluded he would wait until morning before he took the note, thinking it could make no possible difference. Next morning, when he delivered his message, it was too late. At noon that day the undertaker called, returning the draft to Mr. Conrad Grove, Michigan avenue, with his regrets “that he had been unable to serve him. The lady was prepared for interment when he arrived—the hearse and carriage engaged. Every thing had been arranged in the most elegant manner—even to a cross of immortelles.”

At early dawn, the day following the events of last evening, I went to my friend, Dr. G——, to inquire for the sick lady. In answer, he replied:

“She died about eleven o’clock. Poor thing, she is at rest. The daughter is disconsolate.” “That is just my mission, doctor,” said I. “I consider this an object of my especial care, and I wish to defray the entire expenses of the funeral; but you must assume to do so yourself. She would never accept it from a stranger, and your calling makes you a friend to every person in distress.”

The doctor smiled: “Caught at last, my boy!” said he; “a genuine case of love at first sight. Let me feel your pulse.”

“Never mind my pulse. Draw on my banker for what you want; but let it be no pauper funeral. Remember, I have a jewel in my possession belonging to the young lady, which is equivalent to one thousand dollars!” and I displayed the gossamer handkerchief. “I will call to-morrow, at ten o’clock, and accompany you to the funeral.”

But my good angel deserted me here. A telegram came from Philadelphia, demanding my presence immediately. I had therefore to leave by the first train going east, and consequently could not meet my appointment. I dropped a hasty note to the doctor, expressing my regret, and desiring him to take care of the orphans, at any expense, until my return, which would be within a week.

“Man proposes, but God disposes.” Instead of a week, a month glided away ere my business was arranged so that I could return to Chicago. On my arrival, imagine my grief and surprise to learn that the young lady had left the city, no one knowing whither she had gone. Her gratitude to the doctor

was boundless; she would accept his aid as a loan until she could go to her friends, when she would return it.

For a week I abandoned myself to the most reckless despair. The only object of my life was now wrested from me. I censured the doctor severely for not finding out something definite concerning her whereabouts, forgetting that he could not feel or know the interest I entertained for this poor, helpless girl.

My next thought was to call upon Mr. Conrad Grove, thinking he must know something of the young lady, as he had called upon her the same evening her mother died. Again the fates were against me. The more I tried to unravel the mystery, the deeper I became entangled in its intricate mazes.

Then came the questions — "What is this girl to me? What interest can I possibly have in her? In providing for her mother a decent funeral, I but obeyed the prompting of my nature. I never felt the loss of the money; it was, therefore, no praiseworthy act, in as much as it was no sacrifice on my part to give it."

On inquiry I learned that Mr. Conrad Grove's entire family had left for Europe some four weeks previously. Must I give up — never again to hear from my *protégée*? My only joy was in the possession of her handkerchief. She had promised the doctor he should hear from her.

"Since I had waited all my life,
I could wait a little longer."

Two years have been numbered with the past, and still no trace could I ever find of my lost one. The most diligent search proved unavailing, and to-morrow I bid adieu to my native land, for a lengthened tour of the Continent. The one only dream of my life is to meet again the owner of this little handkerchief. I do not even know her name, and would I know her were we to meet?

STEAMER MORNING STAR, June 25.

The weather is delightful. The general hilarity of the passengers was somewhat interrupted by a request of the captain to restrain their merriment, as there was an aged lady very sick on board.

June 27.—The life of the steamer is a little girl about six years old. She reminds me of Morilla's pictures. Her black hair curls in ringlets around her beautiful face. She is fascinating beyond any thing I ever saw; she warbles like a bird, reminding me of an uncaged canary. She makes every one her friend, and is a privileged being. Her nurse is careful of her almost to a fault, and yet she climbed half way out on one of the yards, in the arms of an old sailor.

I have been strongly attached to the child. From the first time I saw her my heart went out to her, and I felt as though I had found something I had lost. Some fascination drew me to her. Imagine my grief to hear the piercing cry of "a child overboard!"

I rushed with the crowd to the rail, just in time to see my little sprite sink beneath the waves.

Quicker than I can write it, I threw off my coat and jumped overboard, just in time to catch her as she rose above the surface of the water. A small boat came to our rescue, and we were taken on board.

At the same time a cry of agony that will live in my memory forever rent the air. It came from her friends, who had just learned the accident. The first object that arrested my attention was a young girl, wild with agony, flying like the wind toward me, and crying "Lulu, Lulu!" she caught the child from me, and fell in a swoon at my feet. Merciful heavens! am I dreaming, or do I behold the object of my long and faithful search?"

Proper restoratives soon brought her to consciousness, and in the most heart-felt manner she blessed and thanked me for saving her sister's life. My first impulse was to call her by the name so dear to me; but good sense came for once to my rescue, and I refrained. It would have recalled unpleasant memories—opened a wound which the soothing influences of time had partially healed. I could hardly realize that it was not all the hallucination of a disordered brain. I left my native land almost despairing of ever again seeing her, still determined never to cease my search.

Surely all the joys of life are accidental. I said to her, "I am at a loss for a name to address you."

"You may call me Miss Garcia, which is mine by adoption only."

She then informed me that her aunt, Mrs. Garcia, was an invalid. Their home was in Florida, and they were going to Baden, to try the mineral baths,

hoping she would be benefited thereby. The sea voyage, instead of helping her, had made her much worse; consequently, she had been confined with her to their state-rooms since the first morning out. But she could not bear to see her darling little sister deprived of the air and sunshine, and had intrusted her upon deck with her nurse when the fearful accident had occurred.

"But, sir," she added, with the most bewitching grace, "we have you to thank for her life; except for it we might, perhaps, never have met." Then she smiled so sweetly that one might more than half believe her. I know she felt so grateful she took that method to pay the debt.

Her aunt was a little better, and she comes upon deck every day for an hour or more. She is as charming in manners and conversation as she is beautiful. Her education is thorough; she is quite familiar with the best literature of the day, and converses learnedly without being in the slightest degree pedantic.

I remarked, "You will be inconvenienced, except you speak German, to get along in Baden."

"I am quite familiar with it and French. I should hardly have attempted the voyage, but I am so troubled about my poor auntie; I fear she will never be well again."

I was bewildered. "Should I mention Chicago?" I asked myself. "I will blunder toward it."

"You said, I believe, your home is in Florida? You enjoy the beauties of the fairest spot in America. Have you ever been north?"

"Florida," she replied, "is not my native State. I was born in Havana, Cuba, and lived there the greater portion of my life. I did pass two years north, in Illinois."

Then came a look of pain in her face, and there was a break in the conversation. She acted as though she had said too much; really she had said nothing. Herself was the last person she alluded to. There was a very aristocratic and dignified manner about her; and yet she made you very comfortable. Then she excused herself; told Lulu to shake hands with the kind gentleman who rescued her from the water, and tell him good afternoon.

Why am I permitting my heart to become a captive to this girl? What and where will it end? Why do I count the hours from twilight until morning—till I shall hear the merry voice of Lulu, and know her sister is not far away? How much she loves that child; it is a passion—almost idolatry. She will never leave her for a moment again on shipboard; and now the voyage is nearly over, our paths lie apart. I have found the object of my pilgrimage, and whither shall I wander?

June 28.—In vain have I listened for the well-known foot-fall and bird-like voice. Dinner, supper and tea, and yet she comes not. It is a delightful evening; the moon is full, and sailing majestically through a sea of blue. How much she would enjoy it! I may as well accustom myself, however, to not seeing her; in three days I must say good-by. Then came the question, Why not go to Baden? Her aunt is very ill—politeness demands

you should accompany her, providing business does not prevent. Your business to Europe was to try and find this girl. You have found her unexpectedly, now prove your thankfulness by making yourself useful. What pleasing conclusions!

June 29.—Another day almost passed, and no Lulu. How intolerably dull it is, to be sure? I must go to the captain, and inquire for my little pet; the monotony of a sea-voyage is unbearable. Found the captain deeply interested in a game of chess. His reply to my inquiry was: "Mrs. Garcia is failing very rapidly; her physician thinks she will hardly survive the night." What a monster I have been to suffer two whole days to pass without asking for her, when I knew she was ill; and only her illness could have kept Lulu and Miss Garcia from coming upon deck.

Ten minutes after found me at their state-room door, craving admittance. Miss Garcia answered my inquiry very kindly, thanking me for calling. She was very pale; and there was the same agonized look I had seen on her face two years before. "Oh, sir! she is beyond help; Dr. B— thinks she will hardly live through the night." I begged her to permit me to remain with her and the nurse. I saw the poor lady was dying, and knew how cruelly severe it was to leave those two ladies alone with a dying woman. I urged her to rest for an hour, and let me watch; but she refused to leave her, saying, "My dear second mother—death alone shall part us." While we were talking, Mrs. Garcia took a violent coughing spell, which so

alarmed her attendants that Miss Garcia made no further opposition. I felt it my duty to tell her my fears, and yet I could not. An hour later the doctor came, and told us she was dying. Poor girl, her grief was painful from its silence. Claspings her hands, she put her face to her aunt's, and kissed her continually. The love and devotion she felt could only be manifested by those tender expressions of endearment that speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues, and which the angel of death never mistakes. She only spoke once. "My precious darling, God bless and comfort you when I am gone. Bury me in the orange grove, at the foot of the avenue. You have my will, duly drawn and witnessed. Lulu, kiss me."

She never spoke again! She closed her eyes from exhaustion. The silence of death filled that little room—five minutes after her spirit had gone to its God.

When she knew that her aunt was dead, this poor, desolate girl threw herself on the bed beside her, uttering the wildest lamentations of grief that it was ever my lot to hear, crying, "What have I done? Why has the malediction of Heaven fallen upon me so heavily that I am bereft of every thing in life that loves me? Two years ago this day my angel mother left me, and now my friend, my second mother, dear, dear Mrs. Garcia. She was all I had on earth to love but poor little Lulu. Oh, Lulu! God does not want you nor me, or he would have let you stay in the ocean, where I would have gone after you. What can I do without her? Home—

home! where is home, when every thing I love is in the grave?"

Her grief agonized me to the very soul. I feared her reason might be dethroned. There was a wild, delirious look in her eye, and I felt now is my time. She must be aroused, or this anguish will prove fatal. She was barely conscious. Gently I raised her head and breathed in the softest voice possible the name—"Martica Gomez."

She sprang from my arms, saying, "Who dare call me by that name? Who are you?"

"One who loves you better than his soul, and who will care for and protect you with his life, if you will only permit him; one who has spent two entire years in looking for the owner of this handkerchief," saying which I held it up before her. She uttered a wild shriek and fell lifeless on the bed.

For four hours she lay like one dead; we could scarcely perceive her breathe. I thought I had killed her, but under the kind ministrations of the physician she finally revived.

Then came explanations on both sides, and she promised me the history of her eventful life, since she found I had taken an interest in her. Next day I called to hear her story. Mrs. Garcia had been carefully put away in a metallic casket. We were within one day's sail of Liverpool, and then she would decide what to do. With Lulu in her arms she related the following:

"My mother was the only daughter of a Spanish nobleman, named Gomez, who, becoming deeply involved in a political revolution, was banished to

Cuba. My father was an American sea captain, but descended from a proud old family of English nobility. He met my mother first in Madrid. Her beauty and accomplishments were the admiration of the court. Their friendship ripened into love; but her haughty old father would not listen to such a thing. Two years after, when he was banished, and thus humbled in his pride, he did not refuse. They were married in Havana, whither my father had followed on hearing of his banishment. My mother would not consent that he should sail any longer; and as he was very fond of her, and desired to please her in every thing, he bade adieu to the blue ocean, and established himself as an importer of silks. He was well acquainted with the heaviest houses in Canton, and had no trouble in entering into favorable arrangements with them. He was very successful in business, and amassed a large fortune.

"I never knew two happier persons than were my father and mother; he was the devoted lover so long as he lived with us.

"When I was fourteen years old the great commercial crisis which overwhelmed both continents occurred. My father had ever been so fortunate, he feared no risks, and invested all his funds in foreign exports. Two ships valuably laden were lost at sea, the cargoes of which had not been insured. 'Misfortune never comes singly.' An earthquake shock destroyed a large warehouse filled with silks and the most costly laces. Our home was also demolished by this calamity. These disasters ruined my father.

"He was a very fine business man, however, and ought never to have been cast down while health remained. With the devoted love of a faithful wife and children, no man can be really poor; but he sank completely under the blow.

"One morning he announced his intention of going to the United States, and trying to establish himself again in business, and then to send for us.

"Lulu was but four weeks old when he left us. My mother was then in very delicate health. We had a small house, and my father left us all the money he had, save just enough to take him to the States. He promised to write once a week, or oftener. The day he arrived in New Orleans, where he went directly after leaving us, he met his former employer, who was delighted to see him, and offered him the command of a ship just ready to sail for Canton.

"It would have been a very easy matter to have written to us, informing us of his good fortune, if it might be called such. Perhaps he did; indeed I believe he must have done so. Be that as it may, we never received a line from him or heard of him after he had bade us a tearful adieu at our home in Cuba.

"I see you wonder I am so well acquainted with his history. Never mind. The ship arrived safely in Canton, unloaded her cargo, received another, and was soon ready for her return voyage. The day before she was to sail the American minister came on board, to secure a passage for a lady, her daughter and two servants, provided the ship had such

accommodations as befitted so distinguished a passenger; also the requisite convenience for carrying nearly half a million in gold, belonging to her. A few changes, and passage was secured for all. She was the widow of an ambassador, who had been many years in India and amassed a fortune, which she had transferred to gold, and was then returning to America.

"She was very beautiful and accomplished, and as lovely in character as she was graceful and charming, and her daughter was the sweetest creature imaginable, possessing those feminine traits of loveliness which enhance the true beauty of any lady, winning for her legions of friends and adorers.

"My father was elegant, even courtly in his manners, very prepossessing, courteous, genial, and always a favorite, adapting himself to circumstances so easily, and making every body happy around him. Having been a great traveler, his conversation was of the most entertaining kind; and, to render him still more agreeable, he had a splendid tenor voice, which he had cultivated under the best instruction.

"Mrs. Burton sang charmingly, also her daughter. The power of music is truly wonderful; it has an influence both for good and evil. They were thus thrown together. It was a lengthened voyage—one of storms and calms, and they became familiarly acquainted.

"My father had never mentioned his family, and she supposed him to be a bachelor. Oh, it is too sickening to detail! Alas! my father was the only

criminal. Mrs. Burton was an angel in word, thought and deed. He wooed and won her love, and they were married soon after their arrival in New York.

"We might wonder she did not inquire whether or not he was an adventurer; but you know it is woman's weakness to see no blemishes or faults in the man she loves.

"With her vast wealth they went to Chicago, that Eldorado of the western hemisphere, where, with judicious investment, and my father's superior business tact, it more than doubled. He became president of a bank, with a capital of two millions, and with unlimited means was one of the most popular men of the city.

"But where slept his conscience? The only draw-back to their happiness was his remorse, which, like Bancho's ghost, would not down at his bidding. Those spells passed for refined nervous headache, such as ladies have when they are troubled with crushing poverty or remorse. The whole household spoke in whispers, and the door-bell was muffled—no visitors were allowed. A notice comes out in one of those living papers we see no where but in Chicago, 'Mr. G. is ill—can see no visitors.' That was the Torquemanda of his life. He never changed his name. I suppose he thought we were so far off we never would hear of him. Knowing my mother's love for him, he believed her grief must have broken her heart, and then there was no one but Lulu and—Oh! I can't tell—I don't know what he thought. I only know some voice always told me he still lives.

"We had one friend who had clung to us in our misfortune. This was an old sea captain. He was my father's friend, and mourned his loss with us. We had not seen him for many months, when we were joyfully surprised to meet him. He grieved to see my poor mother, crushed in body and spirit, evidently sinking under the weight of this deep affliction. He said he had just returned from a lengthened sea voyage, and had been across that great inland sea, Lake Michigan, to that marvelous city, Chicago. 'And, by the way, here is a Chicago paper, the "Journal;" would you like to see it?' Eagerly I embraced the golden opportunity of seeing any foreign newspaper, as I was always looking for my father.

"The first object which caught my eye, under 'Fashionable Intelligence and Review of the Week,' was the notice of a grand reception given by the Board of Trade to the merchant prince and honorary member, on his return from Europe, and in letters of fire, I read my father's name. My heart stood still—I felt it was he. The name did not convince me—there might be a dozen of the same name; but my good angel—I guess it must have been—told me, IT IS MY FATHER. While I read of the magnificent banquet, the elegance of the costumes worn by the ladies, and the charming music, a lava torrent surged through my heart. I determined to go to Chicago, and see the beautiful lady the papers were so eloquent over—the wife of my father. I immediately arranged with Captain C—to take us to New York, upon the plea of my dear

mother's health, telling him nothing but a change could save her life.

"My arrangements were soon made. I disposed of our little effects, converting to money every thing available. Arriving in New York, I told the captain my thoughts. He could not agree with me, but consented to send us to Chicago if I wished it. 'Save your money, little girl,' he added, in his kind, blunt way, and increased my small stock by a loan of a hundred dollars.

"We went to Chicago. I rented some rooms, and made my mother comfortable. She never knew my plan, or why I came, except for her health. The first thing I did was to get a directory, to look for his residence. It was No. — Michigan avenue. Thither I wended my way, and found the number. It was one of those magnificent marble palaces of which Chicago may be so justly proud. I read his name on the door plate. I did not go in at the basement, or side-door, but up the front entrance, where the couchant lions slumber in majestic repose.

"Ring the door-bell, a polite servant in livery answered it, and asked my wishes. 'To see the lady of the house.' He eyed me, to make sure he would not have to set Mr. Pinkerton on my track, and his conclusions being favorable, he ushered me through the hall, up-stairs, into an elegant dressing-room, or boudoir. It was fitted up in oriental splendor, with soft light from the stained glass windows, shaded by rich lace curtains, the satin-wood and ebony furniture, the velvet carpet, and

costly paintings from the new school, which adorned the wall, the Gothic book-case, filled with choice books—in short, it was a little paradise. Gracefully reclining in a luxuriant easy chair, was the angel of this Eden. She immediately arose on my entrance, and with the courtesy of a lady, asked my wishes. In a trembling voice—for I was frantic with excitement—I said, ‘I am looking for sewing. I have an invalid mother and a little sister to care for.’ What if my father should walk in? How did I know but he was there when I went in? but I did not fear much, as I did not believe he would know me, I had grown so tall, and my hair, which he used to see in ringlets, was now put up.

“She thought a moment, and then said: ‘Do you sew with a machine?’

“‘No, madam; I never learned to use one, and have none.’

“‘Very well, then, I think I can give you some. My daughter is very peculiar—she does not like machine work. I will call her;’ and she called in a sweet voice, ‘Nettie, Nettie, come in here a minute. From an adjoining room came the fairest face I ever gazed upon. She was a shower of golden curls and blue ribbons—a sunbeam—she flooded the room with rainbows. ‘Nettie, here is a young lady who wishes some sewing. She has an invalid mother to support; can you give her anything to do?’

“‘Yes, if she don’t use a sewing-machine.’

“I added, ‘I do not.’

“‘Well, come with me; I guess I have some. You see it takes the work all away from poor girls,

and mamma don’t like that. We want to help poor people all we can. Mamma was poor when she was a little girl, and she always remembers how hard a time they have.’

“She then rolled up a bundle of work for me, and said, ‘Would you like me to pay you for it now? I can do so just as well. Mamma says if a member of a family is ill, money is always needed. Fix your own price.’

“‘Thank you, young lady,’ I said; ‘I will let you pay me when you see my work.’

“She crushed the money back into her pocket, as she exclaimed, ‘Oh, you must excuse me, for my dear papa has returned; I hear his footsteps on the stairs!’

“She bounded past me, out of the door and down stairs. My heart ceased to throb; I hurried out, drew down my veil, and, merciful heavens! there they were—her arms were around his neck, and she was devouring him with kisses—the mother on one side, the daughter on the other, and that man—MY FATHER!

“How I got out I never knew, or why I did not die at his feet. I got down to the lake somehow, and deluged my face in water, asked a policeman to take me home, and then in my bed I lay and thought. I could not tell my mother; it would have killed her instantly.

“I finished my sewing and took it home. The dear creature was in ecstasy over my hemming, and paid me twice the value of it. How I loved her! I could have clasped her in my arms for the kind,

gentle manner in which she spoke to me, making me believe there really was goodness, even in a palatial mansion. But now came the trial. Should I blast the lives of these two noble women, who dispensed their charities in the most munificent manner—who were innocent of the great wrong he had done us?

"Oh! it was a struggle between love and duty. I pressed my hands upon my heart, to still its beating. I prayed for strength and guidance. Had I any right to break the heart of another woman? I could never cure the wound after the arrow pierced the heart. My mother faded day by day. I knew nothing could cure her, for the doctor pronounced her disease incipient consumption.

"I could not earn much by my sewing while this dreadful secret was burning in my brain, and I, too, fell ill, which exhausted my slender means. When I had sufficiently recovered to be able to work I went to my father's house, and the servant told me the family had gone south for the winter. I was apprised of the fact of their return only through the newspapers about a week before my mother died. I had become almost desperate, and had been working in a carpet store down town during the winter, when able to do so. During my illness I had disposed of every thing we had except that handkerchief. I might have gone to the good ladies on the avenue, but I felt somewhat rebellious. They were too kind to be made miserable. He had broken two women's hearts; he never should another, if I could help it.

"The morning before my mother died I told her all, and asked her if she wanted to see him. She was very calm; her Christian resignation was wonderful. She said she did not know what effect the sound of his voice might have on her; she had given him up long ago, but was a little afraid to trust herself. Oh, woman, woman! why let your love for man come between you and God? Why still cling to the memory of him, who broke your heart, with the deepest devotion—such as you owe only to your Maker—a love so profound that you will die rather than yield it up? She grew almost childish, and said, 'Darling, send for him to come at midnight, and let him hold me in his arms while I am dying! I can not help it; but I LOVE HIM—LOVE HIM SO! Never tell her, then she will be his wife. When you come home, bring me an orange.' They did not pay me that day for my work; I had no money and I could not steal. The rest you know. On inquiry I learned from the servants that they had gone to the opera. I left my note, telling them not to deliver it until nine o'clock.

"After my mother's funeral I never could go to see them; I dare not trust myself. I saw an advertisement in a newspaper for a companion. I left at once; and here I am, with the remains of the dearest lady on the earth—*own sister of my father's wife!*

"She knew my story, but the secret died with her. In consideration that I spared her sister, she adopted me. My father still lives, the heavy hand of an avenging God being on him. He is now a

lunatic, an inmate of an insane retreat in Switzerland. His wife and her beautiful daughter spend a portion of their time with him, the remainder in their palatial home in Chicago. Never shall they know of his crime through me."

Would you know the finale? We were married in Liverpool, and shortly after made a pilgrimage to Switzerland, to behold the man whose crime caused so eventful a story.

A HOSPITAL SCENE.

It was the day after the battle, and fearful was the sight. The sun had sunk to rest, as if to hide from his view a scene that would appal the heart of a demon. For miles the ground was strewn with the dead and dying, torn and bleeding, heaped together by shells in every conceivable shape of horrid deformity. "Mercy abandoned the arena of battle." The frantic war-horse, with his iron hoof, trampled upon the mangled face, the throbbing brow and splintered bones, heeding not the shriek of torture. Friend and foe sink side by side—they are enemies no longer. A fond mother, a tender sister and a loving wife are waiting for both; a kindly good-by, and they await the final trumpet—this is called glory!

Yes, the combatants rested. A dull, heavy mist hung low on the mountain. The wild roar of artillery and the deafening echo of shells had ceased. All day long the wounded and dying were being removed and cared for. Thirty ambulances, loaded with their precious freight, had just arrived from the battle-field. Bodies, with legs and arms in every conceivable shape of mutilation, were conveyed on

litters to the reception room of the hospital building. The sight was sufficient to rend the stoutest heart. There were the wounded, athletic in form and bearing, covered with mud, dirt, blood and powder—arms dangling and feet the same—faces half torn away by musket balls—eyes protruding from their sockets—hair in damp and tangled mats around their bloodless cheeks—eyes that once beamed in love and tenderness were glazed in death. The stars, leaves and bars sprinkled over garments that once were coats, told that they were officers, and their mangled forms told how obstinately they had fought and how closely they had been pressed by the enemy.

Five times during the day had the rebel columns pressed their center, and as many times been hurled back on their intrenchments by the herculean efforts of our troops, who contested every inch of ground manfully, and held them in check on the brow of a little knoll. Both wings were contending against fearful odds. By a flank movement the rebel general brought his heaviest artillery to bear directly upon our right. The hill must be held at all hazards. For thirty hours our troops had been harassed, and they were perfectly exhausted. It was only by the almost superhuman example of the brave officers that the men could keep up. Three regiments of infantry, supported by two powerful batteries from the Third Army Corps, commanded by the brave and gallant General Reno, volunteered to hold that hill at all hazards.

The fury of the rebels was terrible. In massed battalions they wheeled their columns into line,

pouring their canister and grape in sheets of fire and flame upon this devoted brigade, who returned the compliment as only our Trojan soldiers could, plowing their ranks with our heavy artillery, making regular roads, paved with their dead and dying, whose life-blood flowed in pools all over the plain. Division after division closed up as fast as one was broken, so determined were they to drive our troops from this important position. General Reno, already wounded twice, oppressed with fatigue, blackened with smoke, and bleeding at every pore, made a last and desperate charge. Grand and sublime he looked, waving his sword above his head, and shouting his troops to victory. His arm fell, his form swayed in the saddle, and he sank back exhausted—dying! The rebels saw "Achilles" fall, rushed headlong with bristling bayonets through the tempest of shot and shell, and swept them from the hill. Nobly did this old guard die! With clenched sabres and arms of steel they fought them to the death; not one line or field officer survived the maddening onslaught of the rebels. Overpowered by numbers, they yielded only to death.

Then came the hero of the hospital, Dr. D. D. Cameron, and his numerous young assistants. He was a second Baron Larey, who scoured the battlefield in every direction, with unceasing devotion, to find if any living creature had been overlooked by those less assiduous than the old surgeon. He was everywhere present, giving orders and superintending with the utmost coolness and precision. His mild and sympathetic eye was to the sufferer a

more soothing cordial than the choicest nectar of the vintage. Oh, but how tenderly he assisted them from the blood-stained ground, cheering and whispering words of comfort! "Poor fellow, you are suffering so much! but we will soon relieve you. Carefully! carefully, John!" This he said as a faithful Irishman lifted a mutilated form to the litter. He was the best friend in the world to the soldiers; to make them comfortable and relieve their agony was his constant aim. Through the long dark night, when the rain fell in floods, he might be seen alone, with his dark-lantern, oil-cloth coat and slouched hat, peering into every tangled copse or dark wild-wood, fearing some poor wounded soldier might have crawled away to die. He was frequently rewarded by saving the life of some unfortunate being, who must have perished but for his tender and unremitting solicitude. Every circumstance must bend to the wishes of the soldier; his nurses must be the most patient and skillful to be found.

No rough, peevish, ugly-looking bungler had a place in his corps; but cheerful, pleasant faces, overflowing with love and pity, blended with heroic devotion, such as made Florence Nightingale the admiration of the world, and crowned her brow with a diadem more spotless and peerless than that of a queen. Her name will live in the temple of Fame until historians shall cease to write or bards to sing of exalted deeds in woman. Her name is "as bright as the sun on a mountain of snow."

These faithful nurses gathered around the couches of these half-dying creatures, and with water, soft

towels and soap, began their ablutions of heroes, who bore further torture as though it belonged to the campaign. Suffering had given them this look of dumb resignation.

A new nurse presented herself: "This way, if you please, madam," said the surgeon; "if you wish to assist us, and have the nerve, there is plenty for you to do."

She was a dainty-looking, little creature, so small, so childlike, one would never dream that this *petite* figure contained nerves strong enough to see a wounded bird and not shiver from head to foot. And yet, with her soft, brown hair, put away from that smooth, classic brow, and those tender violet eyes, she glided around among the wounded and dying, assisting the nurses, as though she were marble. Always ready, like a messenger bird, she flitted from cot to cot, with nectar, cordial, lint and bandages. In her neat calico wrapper, snowy linen collar and black silk apron, she looked the personation of comfort. "You are very kind, thank you, madam," said an aged officer, whose silver hair she brushed back from his pallid brow, with her soft, gentle hand. He had left one arm on Buena Vista's bloody plain, and now his life was ebbing away on Antietam. She placed a cordial to his lips, which revived him.

"I have a dear little daughter, in the old Granite State, that will be left all alone to-night. She will weep in vain for one she never more can see. In the old church-yard—among the pines—take me h-o-m-e. G-o-o-d"—and far beyond the dark river

the bye was echoed, whose silent banks the dying man had just crossed. "And I will strew garlands of fresh, sweet flowers above your head, and bathe them with my tears." She knew not she had been talking to the dead.

"Never mind me, kind lady, help somebody who needs you more," said another. "Nothing can help me now. But tell me, please, have I one or two arms? Oh, but it was a beautiful banner—that fellow from Georgia looked so triumphant. Ten battles and not one scratch. But I am giong now." Tears were running down the cheeks of our little maiden as she bathed his dying face. Both arms had been amputated at his shoulders, and she knew that he, too, must die. She continued her tender and gentle ministrations, soothing his brow and twining her fingers through the tangled mats of dark curls, and brushing them as lovingly as a dear sister might, comforting him in her soft, sweet voice all the time. "Never mind, my dear fellow; you have a great soul, worth all the arms in the world. We all love you for this great and noble sacrifice you have made. You will receive a crown more precious than all the jewels of earth, eternal in the heavens. Your dear friends"—he caught the word, murmured a loved name, and died. She wiped the death-damp from the brow of another, while he breathed and blessed the holy name of "wife, my poor, dear wife. Over the river they beckon me."

"And he launched his bark on a foaming tide,
To float o'er a stormy sea."

By his side lay a fair young rebel, whose face had not been clouded by twenty summers. Both legs were gone, and his left shoulder badly fractured by a shell. But his suffering would soon be over. Far from home and friends—he, too, must die. "Let me bathe your face with this nice cologne-water; and taste one drop of this cordial, it is so refreshing;" and she carefully raised his dying head and placed the cool beverage to his parched lips—looking her soul full of pity for the youthful sufferer. He whispered in the faintest voice possible: "Bless your angel face; I wish my poor mother could know what a beautiful vision closed my eyes. You will find her round my neck. Please let me kiss her good night before I go to sleep." She loosed an exquisite fine gold chain from his neck, with a beautiful face attached, which she placed to his dying lips. He breathed a fond adieu, and closed his eyes in death.

"He crossed in the twilight, gray and cold,
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view."

For a moment she gazed upon the beautiful face of the "sleeping dead," lifted the tangled curls from his pure white brow, and imprinted a holy kiss for those loved ones far away, and left him to seek some other stricken one. They were all cared for in that ward, one cot alone remaining. Getting a bowl of pure fresh water, she poured in it some lavender drops, and started on her mission of mercy and kindness.

Singing in a sepulchre ! Reverently she listened—a low, plaintive, mournful strain, half music, half death wail, she caught these words :

“ When the sad word, adieu, from my lip is nigh falling,
And with it, hope passes away,
Ere the tongue hath half breathed it, my fond heart, recalling
That fatal farewell, bids me stay.”

The next moment she approached the singer, and then threw herself on her knees behind his couch. “ Oh, Charley, Charley ! my poor brother Charley ! do I find you, too, here, and all cared for before you,” and wringing her hands she wept bitterly. His eyes were closed from exhaustion, but the mesmeric touch of her loved hand, and the warm kiss upon his brow, recalled his wandering spirit back to earth. The perfumed water and strengthening cordial she forced between his compressed lips, revived him, but he knew her not. “ Who are you, little fairy ? you look just like my dove-eyed little sister Nannie, that I left away up among the green hills, in my dear old home, can she be dead too ? ”

“ Oh, no, no ! ” she cried, “ my brother Charley, don’t you know me ? I am your own little baby, sister Nannie, that heaven must have sent to you, to care for and make you well again. Do speak to me, Charley ; one word — just one little word. Let me tell you of — ‘ FANNY HOWARD. ’ ” It was a magic sound. His soul, poising on the brink of the dark profound, vibrated at the music of that loved name, treasured in life, worshiped in death. He opened his clear, dark eye, which beamed with a

heavenly light. He smiled, a sweet, sad, intelligent smile, and breathed no more. “ Oh, God ! ” she prayed—

“ The voice, the glance, the heart I sought,
Give answer, where are they ?
If thou would’st save this breaking heart—
Send life through this cold clay.”

But the angel of death had wafted his soul to that far off clime, where the grand army of heroes will be marshaled to meet him, and the avenging God of battles cannot come. “ Then the scaffolding will be removed, the clay and the earthy are laid aside, and lo ! glorious beyond all description, rises in matchless beauty the temple of the soul, bathed in the golden light of eternity’s dawn. The angels and archangels, with loud acclaim, will shout the glad anthems, and sing triumphant over troubled souls at rest.”

MY MOTHER'S GRAVE.

Long, long years have faded in the dim and forgotten past since I stood by the open grave of my mother. I am an old man, and lines of grief and pain are written on my once smooth cheek; yet the remembrance of that hour can never be erased from my memory. Thinking that, perhaps, from the sad story of my life a lesson may be learned, I am disposed to pen it.

I was often wayward and impetuous; but I loved my mother tenderly and devotedly. There was something so persuasive in her quiet rebuke that it never failed to awaken all the good in my nature. She had been an invalid ever since I was ten years old, therefore our rude and boisterous laugh was hushed in her presence.

My father, mother, a brother three years my senior, and myself, composed the household. No real love, however, had ever existed between my brother and myself. The warm, tender affection brothers are wont to feel, brought up under the guardianship of a gentle, loving mother like ours, seems to have been omitted in our case. My heart was full of love, but it was timid, and could only be

won by gentleness. I would not have dared to love my brother, who inherited my father's stern, proud nature. He looked upon me as a feminine sort of a creature, only fit to sit in a lady's bower, or read poetry; not his equal by any means. His was a daring nature; he was strong, muscular, and a perfect athlete in all sorts of manly exercise, a champion for any person who needed one. He loved fatigue, gloried in adventure, like scaling a mountain, where "scarce was footing for a goat." Wherever peril or physical exertion could call forth his dauntless qualities, he would be found. "Like an eagle he flew alone;" seldom, if ever, was I permitted to accompany him in his wild exploits. But I cared naught for it, because it was not my nature. To sit by my mother and read her to sleep, to gather the first flowers of spring and arrange them in her vase, or drive her out in her little pony carriage, was far more preferable. When well, she was as gay and joyous as a bird; her glad carol floated through our home like liquid song. Her voice was sweet, clear and ringing; again flute-like, breathing the tenderest, softest melody.

She performed beautifully upon the harp, and as I would sit and watch her delicate fingers gliding over the wires, while she sang some mournful strain of her once sunny land, or, to please my father, a spirited piece of martial music, I used to wonder if the angels in heaven did not look just like my mother. To me she seemed—nor was it a childish fancy—the most beautiful creature I ever gazed upon. So light and graceful, so fragile, one only

thought of a spirit. Her soft, brown curls floated around her pure, pale brow, and her mournful blue eyes were like wells of ether, into which you could gaze down, down, forever down, and never weary. As her life waned I thought her beauty increased.

To be ever with my mother, was pleasure enough for me. And when my brother, fresh from his outdoor exercise, glowing in health and beauty, came in at evening and saw me at my mother's feet, reading from her favorite author, I could feel his eagle eyes flashing over me in withering scorn. The hot blood would mount to my temples, and only our mother's interference would save us from an open quarrel. Strange as it may seem, she was the only living creature that either of us loved.

My father was a general in the Grand Army of Napoleon. He had followed the fortunes of the emperor through all his brilliant campaigns in Austria, Italy, Egypt and Russia; commanding a division of Marshal Ney at the retreat from Moscow. He was a brave soldier, but a proud, stern father. He loved my mother with a sort of wild, fierce passion and seemed angry at us, and everybody in the world, because nothing would bring her health. As I said, she was beautiful; she had the winning beauty of a child, with the dignified elegance of an empress. She was highly accomplished, and was the pet and pride of the court.

My father was very gay and stylish, and took extreme pleasure in presenting to his brother officers the most charming and beautiful lady, except the empress, at the Tuilleries. And now that her

failing health prevented her attention to these festivities, he grew morose and stern. Although she begged him to go without her, he never would. There was no joy for him, unless she, too, shared it; and to please him, I have seen her robed like a princess, and carried in his arms to a carriage, to attend some reception, under the influence of a powerful stimulus. Then she would seem lively and gay for an hour or two, and he would then bring her home unconscious. Then, for days, he would not leave her bedside—not till urgent duty called him away. Poor, vain man! to gratify his self-love, he would crush the dearest treasure of his heart; I always pitied him.

But this could not last. Every repetition of this excitement hastened her departure. Haughty to all the world, to my mother he was all gentleness and love. At her voice his dark eye would kindle, his countenance melt with tender emotion. I hardly know by what term to express his wild idolatry for her; it was a sentiment so refined, exalted, pure and holy, I think he must have caught the inspiration from a saint. He used to gaze upon her as though he feared something might spirit her away. Alas, he worshiped no deity but her. Hour after hour he lingered near her couch, and saw her failing day by day. "Death lines were written there." A cloud of anguish settled upon his marble cheek, his eye grew cold and hard, his lips quivered, and he would not partake of food for many consecutive days. I can never forget how ethereal she looked in those pale-blue morning wrappers of soft silk, and

the exquisite little cap of point lace, which fell around her face like a soft, hazy mist. She did not seem real. She would twine my father's long black hair over her snowy fingers, saying, "When spring comes I shall feel better," and she smiled so sweetly we half believed her. But now the remembrance of her last hours, and the bitter, bitter thought that I hastened her death, come over me.

There was to be a grand review of the army by the emperor and empress, and father was to receive a cross of honor for some gallant exploit or maneuver at Marengo, and nothing would satisfy him but that mother must witness the grand pageantry. She was very ill that morning, and asked to be excused; but no, he would not forego the gratification of his pride in having her witness the ceremony.

My father was a splendid-looking officer, in his new uniform, trimmed with gold lace, badges, and other trappings and decorations of royal favor. With his jet black hair, which he wore long on his neck, his heavy black whiskers and fine moustache, his keen and penetrating eye, and his large and muscular frame, he was truly the most perfect specimen of manly beauty, both in stature and feature, I had ever seen. But for his haughty pride I could have loved him for his beauty alone.

When he entered my mother's dressing-room that morning, found her reclining on a couch in full court dress, and saw how deathly pale she looked from over-exertion already, I think he more than half repented, but he was too proud to give utterance to his thought. He turned to the waiting maid and

called fiercely, "Jeanne, why complete a lady's toilette in this manner? Have you nothing to give a little color to the pale cheek of your mistress?" She quickly brought the desired cosmetic; and my poor mother, in tears, suffered a delicate pink flush to replace the marble paleness of her cheek of a moment before. He deigned a smile; and lifting her in his powerful arms as though she were an infant, he held her up before a large Venetian mirror, saying, "Evangeline, you are radiant; the empress herself will envy you your beauty. There is not a peer in his majesty's realm who would dare to compare his wife with mine!" I then felt satisfied that he was truly a tyrant in his vain love for her beauty.

I had been sitting quietly all this time, not daring to say, "May I go, sir?" My poor mother had saddened after his courtly compliment, but she read my wish, and half smiled as she said, "My dear, let Claude accompany us." He never refused her any thing in his life; nor do I believe he ever frowned upon her, or caused a shadow to cross her heart since she became his bride. I knew that the moment she asked I could go. "Certainly, if you wish it, he can go," said my father. Fatal, fatal words! they will ring in my ears until my dying day. Would that the waters of forgetfulness could wash them out forever!

The grand review was over. My father, kneeling, had received a badge from royalty. It consisted of a cross of the Legion of Honor, in diamonds, surmounted by the shield of France, above which

the emperor placed his favorite flower in pearls and emeralds. It was truly a royal gift and favor, but gained at a fearful price. His self-love had been gratified, and we returned home. He carried my mother in his arms from the carriage, threw off an elegant white ermined Spanish mantle that the Empress Josephine had wrapped around her, and laid her on her couch. He looked troubled, and ordered her physician. The usual restoratives soon brought the color back to her cheek; then he kissed and caressed her, calling her by every pet name love could suggest, breathing those refined expressions of endearment that can only emanate from a tender and loving heart. I suppose he thought, "Now he will do me no injustice." He worshiped her as the heathens do the stars. I imagined he fancied those fond tokens of love could recompense for his cruelty in taking her out. It was cruel—what else could it be?

At length he said, "My dear, I must leave you for just half an hour—not one minute longer. May I go? Claude will keep you company during my short absence, and you will be rested by that time." He then knelt and kissed her with all the courtly grace so proud a knight could be master of. His countenance spoke all the divine reverence that ever fell "around the lips of a fasting saint." Taking his jeweled hat, he bowed himself out of the room. I could breathe more freely now, for there always seemed to me a sort of suffocation in the air where he was. Unbidden the words came to my lips—"Mother, my poor dear mother, can you really love

that cold, proud man?" I can never forget how she looked. I did not quite understand her at first, but she smiled, and then I did. The expression that came over her face made her radiant; she seemed too beautiful for earth. It was the remembrance of other days—a beautiful vision of when she said, "Thine forever." It was worship—idolatry! The whole world was musical, and the refrain of its minstrelsy was LOVE!—like the fragrance of flowers whose perfume you breathe, yet can not see—the glory of the redeemed. She extended her arms and drew me to her, pushed back my hair and kissed my brow. She then softly breathed the name—"Claude!" It was my name—my father's name! I never loved it before, but now from her lips it floated through my soul like liquid music. I felt that the very intonation of her angelic voice would be my passport through the gates of paradise, and I answered her sweet questioning face: "From this hour I will strive to love him too." It is one of Heaven's mysteries. Whence is it?—what is it?—how can it be?—by what art?—that such a man was the idolatrous love of an angel like my mother. I felt she was divine, and I revered her accordingly. But I must hasten on to the saddest part of my story.

Half an hour after my father left us, my brother Edmond returned from one of his wild and perilous adventures, after an absence of ten days. His valet (who, by the way, like his master, was no friend of mine) told him of the grand review, and that his father was now a marshal of France, and that I had

been permitted to witness the ceremony. On hearing this all the evil passions in Edmond's nature were aroused. He could not bear to think that I, a mere boy, not fifteen years old, his inferior in every respect, should have witnessed this imposing scene while he did not. Almost frantic, he caught an old rapier that hung in the armory, and rushed into my mother's room, where he thought he would be certain to find me, determined, in his insanity, to kill me.

As he flung open the door, his black eye blazing with passion, his face and lips deadly pale, I knew too well his meaning. To avoid him I jumped behind my mother's easy chair, which was beside her bed. He heeded this not, but broke the chair in pieces, and inflicted a serious wound in my arm with the sword. My mother was fearfully frightened. She uttered a piercing scream, and a crimson tide welled from her lips. She had ruptured a blood vessel, and her life was fast ebbing away!

My father had just entered the door of the hall when the wild scream from my mother fell upon his ear, and with a brow dark as wrath he entered the room. What a sight met his gaze! My brother with his dripping sword, my mother deluged in blood, and myself wounded! In a moment his eagle eye took in all, but not just as it was. He thought we had quarreled; but I was not in fault.

"Is Claude dead?" inquired my poor mother, who thought my brother had killed me.

"No, no, my darling mother; only scratched—not hurt much," I said.

"Leave us!" stamped my father; "you have killed her!"

Edmond left the room; he was too much alarmed to remain.

I knew she was dying, and could still brave his anger by falling on my knees at her feet and begging her farewell blessing.

"My dear mother," I cried, "say you do not blame me for this. I would die for you willingly, and you know it."

"No, no, my own darling son; you were not to blame."

I then pressed my lips to her eyes, her brow and hair, took her pale hand in mine, and hastened out of the room.

I never saw her in life again—she died that night. For five days and nights my father watched alone beside her body. After she was prepared for the tomb he allowed none to enter the room where her sacred remains lay. How these five days passed I never knew, and of what transpired I have no recollection.

On the morning of the funeral my father sent a servant to tell us that if we wished to look at our mother we could now do so, as that was her dying request.

My mother—my mother! Oh, the agony it caused me to look on that beautiful, pure and sinless face, and know she must be hid forever! How sweet she looked! A timid, loving smile rested upon her face. There were rosebuds in her hands, and a wreath encircled her alabaster brow. The soft, golden curls

were folded away, and the delicate eye-lashes fell in drooping curves upon her pearly cheeks. Could she be dead?—so young; so gifted, so beautiful, so dearly loved! Where wandered that sweet spirit then? Reverently I kissed those mute lips, and I knew she loved me still!

After the sad inspection was over I chanced to meet my brother. His eyes were swollen and his face haggard. However, no sign of recognition passed between us.

My mother was buried in a beautiful lawn at the foot of the avenue, fronting my father's library. As I stood by her open grave, and knew she was laid away forever, my poor, lone heart longed to sleep beside her—my best, my only friend! After that day the members of our family were strangers. I well knew my stern father would never forgive us. I could not speak to him or Edmond, and I only longed to die. My sun had gone out, and I could not breathe in the darkness; indeed I had no such desire.

My mother had been buried four days, when my father called Edmond and myself into the library. A terrible dread of something, I knew not what, came over me; but I had not imagined half its dreadful import. On an open table lay several piles of bank checks and papers. Before it sat my stern father. Since my mother's death he appeared to have grown twenty years older. Deep lines of pain were drawn around his eyes, which were sunken and frozen. His jet-black hair was now sprinkled with gray and his form was bowed with premature

old age. Poor man! I pitied him from the depth of my heart, and gladly—oh, how gladly!—I would have flung my arms around his neck and embraced him most lovingly, if I had been permitted. My heart yearned toward him, for I remembered he was the being my mother worshiped, and his deep grief for her loss threw a halo of love around him. But there was no sympathy in his rigid countenance; he refused my caress, and I sank back, crushed in spirit.

One package of papers and checks he handed to me, and one to my brother, Edmond, and pointed to the door, saying, "There is your way; let my eyes never be pained by gazing upon either of you again. You robbed me of a precious jewel, that hung upon my neck for twenty long years, and never lost its luster. Henceforth and forever ye are both dead to me."

Cruel, unnatural father! Was not the loss of my dear mother a blow hard enough for me to bear without driving me forth to be a wanderer upon the face of the earth, unloved and uncared for, with a father's curse resting upon me? Edmond, with the haughty disdain of a prince, strode from the room, leaving his untouched package on the table. I lingered, still hoping my father would relent. I had not been to blame, and loved the gentle being who had been taken from us more tenderly than his vain heart could.

"My poor father!" I cried; "oh, do not drive me from you! Forgive me—forgive me! I love you—God knows I do!"

"Never! never!" he groaned, hoarse with suppressed anger, which the sight of Edmond had aroused.

I will do him the justice to say he felt less bitter to me than to my brother.

"God comfort you and help you in your deep grief! Good-by, sir, forever," I said, as I passed from his sight. I could not call him father. We never met again!

My brother's course and mine lay far apart. We knew each other not. He entered the army; I floated on the seas, from clime to clime, seeking forgetfulness on every shore. I traveled from the frozen snows of Siberia to the burning sands of the tropics. I made my home among the savage Indians of North America at one time, and at another time among the Spaniards of South America. There was no spot where the foot of civilized man ever trod, on either continent, where I did not roam. I sought the friendship which had been denied me by my kindred.

At length, one day, while resting under the shade of a lofty cocoa-nut tree on the island of Typee, one of the Sandwich Islands, a strange desire took possession of me to stand once more by the grave of my mother. I was thousands of miles away, on a beautiful little isle of the Pacific Ocean, clothed in rich verdure known only to the tropics. The tall, feathery palms, towering in their majesty; the date, pomegranate, and orange blossoms, filled the air with their delicious perfume, and wooed my troubled soul to rest.

This was truly a delightful spot. The natives showered innumerable fruits and flowers upon me, trying to make me feel at home. Before me lay the ocean, without one ripple to disturb its mirror-like surface. But the wealth of the Indies could not keep me. I was going to the grave of my mother!

The journey passed as all such lengthened ocean voyages do; and once more I stood at the entrance of my childhood home. The long, shady avenue of horse-chestnuts looked mournful to me. The silence of the tomb reigned around. I passed down the walk close to the spot containing the treasured dust of my mother. A costly marble monument arrested my attention. It was a magnificent piece of workmanship. But the design on the side! Oh, merciful heavens! The blood congealed in my veins. There, as large as life, carved on the solid marble, were two brothers engaged in mortal strife! So perfect were the features that no person who ever saw either of us could fail to recognize the resemblance. On the opposite side was represented my mother in the arms of death, while my father knelt beside her, weeping tears of grief. Imagination can scarcely conceive any thing so perfect as the picture of anguish and despair portrayed on my father's face. He almost breathed! The immortal Canova could hardly have improved it. It was the most beautiful work of art I ever gazed upon, and one which must bring lasting honor to the executor. A poor monk of St. Francis had wrought it in his cell, after ten years of the hardest

labor, and at the expense of my father's entire fortune!

The bronzed door of the vault swung open by a slight touch, and I entered this elegant edifice. There was the grave of my mother. Flowers, arranged in beautiful Parian marble vases, were scattered around, and the grass grew in wild luxuriance on the grave. The bitter remembrance of my early life, my poor mother's untimely death, and my father's cruel curse, rushed upon my mind. I fell upon her grave, and bathed the sacred mound with my tears. How long I had lain there I know not. The soft, golden sunset had faded into the dim twilight, and the moon came out, flooding the silent sepulchre in liquid silver. I did not know I had a companion; but I soon saw that by my side knelt an old, white-haired man, his tall form bowed with care or despair. It was my brother Edmond! Weary of life, he, too, sought his mother's grave to die! He was the first to speak.

"Claude, my brother, we were fearfully cursed! As I sinned, God alone can know how much I have suffered. Can you ever forgive me for blighting your entire life?"

Bathing my hand with tears, he uttered the word "father!" Then he pointed to a mound beside that of my mother. Strange I had not noticed it before.

"But who guards this spot?" I asked.

"A pious monk," he answered, "who owes his life to father, since his death has watched it most religiously. Cruel man! he repented at his death

his unnatural curse, which had cast a withering blight upon two lives, sending them homeless, friendless wanderers upon the face of the earth, with the best gifts of God thrown away, and a long life of usefulness destroyed forever."

But a reconciliation with my brother Edmond made the only sunny spot in my weary life. The holy pilgrimage to my mother's grave met its reward. Together the days of life that are left us will be passed, relieving the pious monk of his duty in watching by the grave of my mother.

THE STRICKEN MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

"MOTHER, are you really in earnest? Do you wish me to go to California? and think I had better go? You know I am no coward; but I hate to say good-by to you, my own dear mother," said a bright and beautiful boy of seventeen, as with one hand resting on his mother's shoulder, and the other pushing back the heavy mass of jetty curls that seemed to oppress his finely moulded classic brow, he gazed fondly in that mother's face.

Charley Westfield was a superior young man—a model of beauty, whose fine, clear complexion and sympathetic, yet mournful dark eye, spoke of that hidden fire, consumption. He was generous, noble and high-hearted; had a keen thirst for intellectual knowledge, and a deep passion for all that is sublime and beautiful in poetry and nature.

He was the pride and stay of his widowed mother. His father had been dead some four years. The latter was one of the most prominent lawyers in the west, and had as fine an intellect as ever addressed a jury, or held captive by his thrilling eloquence the hearts of an audience. But that fatal destroyer, consumption, laid its finger upon his active frame.

Although the best medical advice in the United States was consulted, and one winter passed in Cuba, all was in vain. In the morn of life he passed away, leaving this bright and intellectual boy an inheritor of his talent and his disease.

The mother was a very remarkable woman; a companion and helpmate in every sense of the word to her husband; a fine scholar, a tender, truthful and loving woman; but yet with so perfect a judgment of her family's interest that she might, at times, seem severe.

This child was all the world, aye, more than all the world, to her. Since his father's death he had become her day-star—her earthly idol. Again she fondly hoped to see a living counterpart of a dead reality. She only lived and breathed for him, and yet she had others. One, a fair, frail daughter, with marble face and star-eyes, a being created for the other world—too beautiful for this—and two younger boys, of different temperament from Charley and Fannie. They were strong, athletic boys, with no hidden consumption in their frames.

And yet as devotedly as she worshiped this child she could advise him to leave her, when she felt his health would be benefited thereby; but hesitating to let him know it was for his health, she urged his going upon the plea of gold.

"Charley, the climate is delightful, the air pure, invigorating and bracing—the fruit abundant and delicious. There are very many of your dear father's friends there, and a note from me will be all the introduction you will need. The son of

George W. Westfield must command a welcome, and I am not afraid that San Francisco will contaminate my Charley."

"Strong language, mother mine. Your confidence shall not be misplaced," and smiling a happy smile, he bent his head and kissed her brow.

"Come back to me in three years, my son, a man in stature, with the same dear, good heart, and money sufficient to go through college, and I shall be so proud of you; and the time will soon pass. Your letters and mine will connect the oceans. I will guard you from all harm. Go, and God bless your efforts, is the fervent prayer of your loving mother."

Three weeks from that day all preparations were completed, and Charley bade a tearful good-by to that precious mother, whose neck he clung to as if it were severing his soul from his body to part. Nor was the parting less severe or tender from the young brothers and his pet sister, Fannie, whose tears ran down their cheeks when dear, good Charley, who always gave them marbles and dolls, was going away to stay so long. But the steamer was to sail on such a day, and he must be in New York to go on her, bound for San Francisco, the great El Dorado of the American continent.

The whole world was electrified about that time with legends of gold and treasure in California. Its mines were said to contain gold, diamonds, topaz and emeralds, while its soil was the best for agricultural purposes in the world, producing, it was then said, all the delicious fruits of the tropics.

Such were the reports of this "land flowing with milk and honey," that thousands left their peaceful, happy homes to return no more. The overland route was then hardly practicable, owing to marauding bands of Indians who roamed the plains with undisputed sway, often attacking trains, and unless they were well and formidably protected, cutting them in pieces, or taking them prisoners, to linger out a living death—than which the murderous tomahawk and scalping knife were far preferable.

Nor were the steamers which plied between New York and San Francisco the magnificent floating palaces of to-day. They were heavy, staunch ships, much longer in making the voyage, as the isthmus was not often crossed, and to double Cape Horn was the only alternative. The voyage was made without any thing worthy of note occurring. There was the usual succession of storms and calms, sultry heats and cooling breezes. A thankful feeling filled the hearts of all when the pilot came on board to guide them up the bay.

CHAPTER II.

SAN FRANCISCO presented but few attractions at that period. There were low, muddy streets, which teemed with humanity from every part of the globe. Charley's heart flew back to that dear, far-away home, and a sigh, deep and foreboding, escaped his lips. The remembrance of the strong faith and confidence of his mother was a talisman to shield him amid this throng of sin. He had come to labor—not to repine. The business firm, to which he had a note of introduction, welcomed him with a cordiality which made Charley think of him for whose sake he was welcome, and readily gave him a situation as clerk at one hundred dollars per month, promising to increase it if he understood the business, which they cheerfully did the second month, and doubled on the third.

Most of the business men, particularly those who had left their families in the States, or had none, took their meals at restaurants, and roomed at their stores or other places of business.

It was a great saving, as boarding at hotels or private boarding houses was very expensive, and few gentlemen cared to incur or indulge in such luxuries, as they had left all the fond endearments of home to make a fortune. Charley accordingly did as the others did. Before entering business he procured board at a good restaurant near; he lodged

in the store. He had marked out a line of conduct, or rather a method of spending his time when not engaged in business, from which he never deviated. He arose in the morning at half-past five, took a bath, passed half an hour in morning devotions,—a duty he never neglected, as he was a most devoted churchman,—walked a mile on the bay shore, and then back to his breakfast; ten minutes spent in gymnastic exercise, then to his labor; a walk at the close of the day, and the evening was spent in writing down the events of the day in a journal, to be sent to his mother on Monday of every week. Nothing of however trifling an import but was noted down for that dear mother "far over the sea." The almost holy life he had passed under the guardianship of his most excellent mother, and the strictness with which he adhered to those elevated principles of honesty, truth and virtue, rendered him a subject of envy to some, and of admiration to all. The noble light of Christianity gleamed like a beacon star, shining amid the tumult, confusion and din of this great cataract. The holy love of his far-away mother, had been to him a steel-clad armor, more potent than the world can imagine. He lived with her; her image never left his heart, nor did he ever lack a fond imagination to paint accurately the beauties of his idol. She lived in his memory, and was to him what the sun is to the earth, or a star that beams more bright as we contemplate its great distance from us.

Weeks passed into months, and yet he toiled on, and weekly sent those large packages for his mother.

They were always the same cheerful, happy, hopeful letters, descanting upon everything that could interest her. A trip once to the Sandwich Islands enriched his letters with gems of thought rarely found in one so young. Once he wrote, "Mother, I have got to be a firm believer in the use of cold water for consumption. I have studied some able works by a very distinguished German professor, and I verily believe if my poor father had been thus treated he might have been alive to-day. Oh, when I remember his brilliant, transcendent genius, his sterling worth, I can not feel reconciled that so bright a light should so soon die out—no, not die—but pass away to a holier, happier clime, to bloom like a radiant plant forever more. Oh, I should feel death as dreadful if for one moment the thought should come in real earnest that I could not know my dear father in that far-off land."

Again he wrote: "This is really a delightful country in many respects; fruits of all kinds are in abundance, and of a superior quality to any I ever saw before. Do you know I almost live on them. The grapes are perfectly delicious. There are many varieties of fruits I had formerly supposed belonged only to the tropics. The flowers are so bright and beautiful! Oh, I remember our own dear arbor of creeping vines and roses, and those delicious strawberries of yours, mother dear, and then these glowing exotics pale beside those. Love them for me. You must not neglect my trees; I want to see them growing finely when I return. I still pursue my studies. I have had a rare opportunity of acquiring

German and French. Here there is one of the best linguists said to be in America, lately from Europe. He had been for years professor of a celebrated college at Heidelberg, and came here for his health. Shall I tell you? Yes, I will, or you might never—or it will please you, and you know me well enough to feel that I am no egotist. He says your Charley is the best Latin scholar of his age he knows of. There—thanks to your teaching for that. I recite twice a week in each, and in geometry every Saturday evening. Sometimes I fear I do not take exercise enough; I shall increase my walk."

Thus passed the time for nearly three years. He never gave utterance to one word of complaint; never an allusion to ill health, but always seemingly happy and constantly anxious for his dear sister Fannie, who inherited her father's delicate constitution and consumptive habits. There was the same spiritual look, the same intensely bright eye, the keen, quick motion, and the same genius. "Oh, mother!" he plead, "save Fannie—oh, save her from a consumptive's grave! Let her strengthen her lungs by vigorous exercise on horseback. Let her romp and play as she will; do not restrain her in the least."

How thrillingly the words smote her heart in after years! "Dear, dear Charley," she wrote, "oh, why are you so earnest? Fannie is quite well. I used to think you were more like your father; but, thanks to the good climate of California, you have invigorated your delicate constitution, and I expect you are as robust as your uncle, the judge."

Again he wrote: "Mother dear, do send to me for money. You know I have plenty, and it would please me so much. It is all yours." "I have a sufficiency, my son," was her reply.

CHAPTER III.

A BEAUTIFUL farm in a state of high cultivation, near the thriving village of P——, was her home; and it was one of the most charming spots imaginable. A bower of roses, the rarest plants and the finest fruit grew in luxuriant abundance. No pains were spared by this refined lady to make her home almost an earthly paradise. It was the favorite resort of all the young people of the village. There were cool arbors, covered with creeping vines and fragrant roses, where this fond mother would sit on the pleasant afternoons, partaking of the delicious strawberries and rich cream, and reading those love-tokens from her dear Charley, far away.

These were joyous days for that dear mother. It was thence she wrote him that not a tree or plant had changed in beauty or died, but he was apprised of it. Her very soul and life seemed bound up in him; her day dreams and night visions were all for his welfare. There seemed no other calamity than an ill to Charley. Oh, it is a fearful thing to love any creature as that mother loved that son!

At length came joyful tidings: "I start for New York" at such a time. "The firm have decided to send there for a large bill of goods, and I am chosen to make the purchase." Oh, the gladness that filled that home! Darling Fannie was perfectly delighted.

Her jubilant voice rang from room to room like the carol of a spring bird.

The upholsterer and paperhanger had a busy time. Every thing was renovated, from cellar to attic. New Brussels carpet, elegant curtains and costly sofas were arranged in the most tasteful manner. A new china and silver service were considered indispensable articles for the reception of so precious a child.

And, that nothing might look sombre where joy was to reign supreme, the mother laid aside her deep mourning garments, and had a complete wardrobe of dark steel prepared; it was Charley's favorite color. This she never knew until he once sent her a magnificent crape shawl, valued at several hundred dollars, saying this was his favorite color, and adding, "When I get home, mother my own, you shall doff those dark wrappings altogether." This was a year or more before he wrote he was coming.

We shall now return to the great Maelstrom of the American continent—the real Babel of the world—where misery, wretchedness and vice, in their worst forms, find their votaries; where the most revolting crimes that ever darkened the soul of men hold high carnival; where the millionaire of to-day may become a beggar to-morrow, and fortune changes hands with the same ease that figures are moved for the diversion of the players.

And yet God designed it in many respects to be the garden of the world. The climate, soil and productions, both vegetable and mineral, are superior to any other on either continent. Its beautiful

valleys, magnificent forests and grand mountain scenery are the admiration of the world. Nothing can compare with its forest trees; like the giants of tradition, they stand patent sentinels, forever guarding this lovely spot.

A close carriage drew slowly down to one of the wharves in San Francisco, where a steamer bound for New York was receiving passengers and freight. Two gentlemen sprang from the carriage and took on board a youth, seemingly in the last stages of consumption.

"Oh, McCloud, I can walk," said the sick youth; "you will make me believe I am sick, whether I am or not!" and the sweet, clear voice of the speaker floated on the still air like the softened murmur of far-off music.

"No, no," replied the gentleman addressed, "you see there is too great a crowd; they would jostle you over in the confusion, and the excitement of preparing has wearied you. Just keep quiet, and we will take you to your stateroom, where a good rest will make you all right again."

"Will I then have to say good-by?" he inquired with emotion.

"Not by any means—I shall go with you; and while you run up to visit that dear mother of yours, of whom you have told me so much, and that beautiful sister (who, by-the-way, I am half in love with), I shall continue our purchases, in order that we may return the sooner."

"Bless you, my dear friend! I am unable to express my gratitude for your going with me." And

his deep emotion found vent in tears that his sensitive spirit could not control.

Poor Charley had been dying of that insidious disease, consumption, which attacks the talented and the beautiful; and while the eyes still burn in wondrous beauty and luster, and the soft carnation tint flushes the cheek, resembling rosy health, the canker worm of the destroyer eats away the life of its victim. It fans the fires of genius, and the bright gems of thought that emanate from its glow are oft-times luminous as the noon-day sun. There is an intense heat in its smouldering embers. Like meteoric stars, the life of this highly gifted and noble boy was fading from their view. No person could remain in conversation with him one hour and not feel his heart going out to him in very affection—a deep pity that so rare a gem must be thus early removed to ornament another crown.

So firmly did he believe in the cold-water system for the cure of every kind of consumption, that nothing could induce him to submit to any other treatment. He insisted that medicine alone killed his father. His food was of the simplest kind, principally fruit—nothing to strengthen his wasted body. His bathing so many times each day was almost a mania; he never omitted a bath for once, and all this time not one word had he written to his mother concerning his illness. So much attached had the members of the firm become to him, that they would not permit him to go home alone.

He had been admitted as a junior partner since about six months, and Mr. McCloud within a year.

These two had become almost like brothers. Charley's superior judgment never permitted hasty friendship, for one must possess a noble mind to be his confidant.

Tears moistened the eyes of his many friends as they wrung his hand at parting. They felt it was a last, a long farewell.

The ship sailed. The beautiful bay of San Francisco and its charming scenery faded from view, and the broad sweeping Pacific spread away before them. To the dying boy there was but one thought, one idea, one anticipation. It was ever before him. He saw it on the mist; it gleamed in the hues of the rainbow. It was the burden of the sailors' cheering chorus. The sunshine glanced it from out the everlasting blue, and it was mirrored in the mystic depths of the ocean. This one single thing which was every where was—HOME!

All other thoughts melted into dim vagaries; they were as things that had been. The visions of delight that swept his face as the word home crossed his mind can never be painted. The immortal Raphael might have taken the expression to have clothed the features of his saint.

There was an exhilarating excitement on ship-board. To an imaginative mind like Charley's, the wild grandeur of the ocean was food for thought. Every day he walked on deck with the assistance of his friend, and he soon won the friendship and esteem of all on board.

Well versed in the best literature of the day, possessing rare conversational powers, thoroughly

acquainted with European history, he could at all times enchain a group of listeners without using those obtrusive means which egotists employ to render themselves conspicuous. He was too genuine, too modest, to assume any trait he could not claim as his own inherent right.

So familiar was he with the customs, manners, politics and religion of all eastern nations, that when speaking of them, it was done in so quiet and pleasing a way that one would suppose he had spent years in traveling to have acquired so superior a knowledge of those things which can be known only by months of hard and patient study.

Strange as it may appear, there was but one lady passenger on board, and she was the wife of an officer, who, with her servant, was returning from a visit to San Francisco, and whose husband was to meet her at Havana. She was a very accomplished and beautiful woman, of deep feeling and sympathy.

She could not meet that patient sufferer every day, and listen to his beautiful thoughts, his expressions of wild love for his mother, and not become deeply interested and strongly attached to him.

The days dragged heavily along, and as they neared Cape Horn the rough weather confined him to the cabin for nearly two weeks. Then it was Mrs. Dupont became a ministering angel to him. He was much depressed, and for the first time on the voyage he manifested symptoms of uneasiness, fearing he might never reach New York. Oh, how cheerfully did she lead his mind away from these unhappy surmises!

She had been a great traveler, and, possessing a vivid imagination, had returned with a fund of amusing and interesting incidents connected with every country she had visited; and they were useful now to draw poor Charley's mind from unpleasant forebodings.

He would often say, "Oh! what shall I do when you leave me?"

To which she would reply, "You must keep up a good heart; you will soon be clasped in the arms of that fond mother and gentle little sister, and your friend McCloud will more than supply my place here."

At such times he would seldom make any reply, but she knew from the silent anguish of his countenance how keenly he felt and how painful would be the parting.

As they approached Cuba the weather became very pleasant, and again he went upon deck; but all could see that he failed very, very rapidly. The ship touched at Havana, and Mrs. Dupont, after bidding Charley an affectionate adieu, took her departure.

He stood leaning over the rail, his eyes riveted on her receding form, while tears ran down his face. So absorbed was he in his deep grief that he did not notice the approach of his friend until the latter touched his arm, saying as he did so, "What, Charley! weeping for Mrs. Dupont!"

"Ah, no, McCloud, not for her, but that I shall never gaze upon a woman again! The last creature that can ever remind me of my angel mother is

gone from my sight forever! Forgive my weakness, but I am afraid I am getting childish,"—and he leaned his head upon his friend's shoulder, and wept like a grieved child.

McCloud loved him from the depths of his soul, and as he pillowed that dying head upon his breast, he felt that he would willingly have changed places with him. "Take me to my room, please; I am very tired," said Charley.

Next day it was the same. He complained of being weary, but wrote in his journal and took his bath. It was with a sinking heart that McCloud noticed his languor. He talked constantly of his mother, and had not entirely given up the idea of seeing her.

On the second morning, while preparing for his bath, he noticed a small black spot on the top of his foot. He called the attention of McCloud to the fact, and pointing his finger to it said, "McCloud, do you see that? I shall not live to see the setting of to-morrow's sun. My poor father was just so the day before he died. I am not afraid to go, but I did hope—ah, so fondly hope!—to gaze once more on HER pure and holy face—to feel her loving arms folding me in one warm embrace! Oh, when you see her tell her that day and night I prayed for her—prayed that I might one day meet her. But God willed it otherwise. She may never know how hard I struggled to save her poor heart from pain by withholding a knowledge of my long sickness from her. Was it right? Ah, no! I fear this is my punishment for deceiving her!"

During the night he was more restless, and at times flighty, calling frequently on his mother. The captain visited him in the morning, when he told him that he should die that afternoon. Captain Curtis had followed the sea for twenty-five years, but he said afterwards, "Never before did I find such a boy as that."

"We are now," said the captain, "but three days' run from Cuba; I will return, if you wish it."

"Oh no;

'It matters not, I have oft been told,
Where the body rests when the heart is cold.'

My poor mother would only see my wasted body. Let me have the service of my Christian faith, and I shall sleep well. McCloud, sit beside me, and let me lie in your arms;" and the latter folded him in his arms like a sleeping infant.

He grew fainter and fainter, and repeatedly would say, "Kiss me, McCloud. You will not forget to tell my mother that her Charley's last breath was a blessing for her. I am chilly; it is growing dark! My more than brother, a long, a last farewell!" And the holy angels, waiting near, wafted his pure soul to paradise.

They folded his hands and wrapped him in a winding-sheet. The mighty deep might well be proud to give him a tomb. All day long he lay in state in his room with his faithful watcher. They could scarcely bear to put the dead boy in the dark waters. The hushed and silent tread, the funeral

look of all on board, told how deeply he had been loved. The moon came out clear and bright, flooding the ocean with liquid silver. It was a sad and mournful duty they must perform — to commit this precious body to the silent deep.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord," came solemnly from the lips of the chaplain, while the deep and mournful chant echoed his words. The low and suppressed sobs and heartfelt sighs from that sad group spoke more eloquently than ten thousand tongues the intense anguish all experienced as they saw the dark, gloomy waves close over poor Charley.

We buried him where no feet may tread
To break his solemn sleep,
In a snow-white robe, with the ocean's dead,
In her caverns dark and deep;
In the fathomless depths of the blue profound,
Where the poet's soul hath been—
Where the treasures lie in the wrecks around
Which no mortal might may win.

McCloud, faithful to his trust, conveyed his last precious words to his now heart-broken mother.

Pity prompts me to draw the veil before her meeting with that estimable gentleman. It is hardly possible to imagine her feelings or to reconcile oneself to the thought that such a boy should be taken from such a mother. There is something sublimely solemn in her grief, as she moves among her friends. All forbear to touch on so sacred a theme. On her heart is a withered rose. This earth has lost its charms; — she is alone.

A MASONIC FUNERAL.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE HUDSON.

"DEAR brother Will, do not go and leave us. It will break Pauline's heart; she has wept herself sick since you continue to talk of the west," and thus speaking, a beautiful girl of about eighteen summers laid her hand caressingly on her brother's arm, and raised her dark, tearful eyes to the questioning face looking down to hers. Her companion made no reply; but a sad, pensive expression, tender and thoughtful, came over his face.

The two were strolling on the banks of the Hudson. From time to time the brother stooped to pick a pebble, which he carelessly threw in the river at some tame, pet swans, which were sailing along, and dipping their snowy heads in the blue water.

"Will, come, promise me you will not think any more about it," still urged his companion. The gentleman was deeply moved. "Break Pauline's heart!" the sentence smote heavily upon his soul.

Suddenly he seated himself on a mossy stone, and drew his young sister beside him.

"Therese," said he, and his deep bass voice sounded through these forest trees like the rich notes of an organ, "neither of you can know how strong a desire I have to go west. The wish is unaccountable even to myself. The upper Mississippi haunts me day and night; so much so, it has become almost a mania. Why have you two women become possessed with the apprehension that I never will return? I wish to purchase a section of pine land in the west, from which I hope to realize a fortune."

"Oh, Will!" said the girl, "how can you desire more land, or wealth? Look at this grand, old house, where our ancestors have been happy for more than eighty years. You have enough; do not be mercenary."

"Well, then," said her brother, "little sister, let me go and purchase it for you. Imagine your dignified self to be a land-holder!" and he smiled coaxingly, his dark eye beaming with unwonted splendor, as he felt he had almost carried his point.

"No, no, my brother! never sacrifice all the comforts of such a home as this, together with the love of a fond, devoted wife, and two beautiful children, for a wild, adventurous scheme, which brings sorrow to our hearts even to contemplate. You know you are the only living relation I have in the world. You have been father, mother, sister and brother to me; and you are all I have on earth to love. My life has been so closely bound up in

you, that a thought of a separation awakens the keenest sorrow. It may be only a delusion of my nervous organization, but I cannot shake it off. If you go, we shall never see you alive again; that I shall bid you an eternal farewell, it is my firm conviction; and while I do not wish to pain you, I can not let pass unmentioned my belief or presentiment. A Mississippi steamboat haunts me like a specter of death." The tears were running down her pale face, and she clasped his neck with both her arms, crying, "Oh, Will! my precious brother, if you ever loved me, promise me not to start for Minnesota." And she covered his face with kisses and tears. The brother was distressed at her sorrow; he caressed her affectionately by smoothing her disheveled hair, and returning her tearful kisses.

"There, there! you poor, little frightened bird, do you think I could ever go and leave you, if you feel so about it? 'If I ever loved you?' Therese, you are my twin-soul, my other self. I have no thought separate from you and my darling wife. Come," he continued, "let me kiss away the tears from your eyes. I give it up! Never think of a Mississippi steamboat again!" Again she kissed him, to thank the dear, generous, noble brother, who had given up a cherished plan to please her. She pulled his head on her lap, and gazed for a moment in his eyes, to read if he was in earnest. Therese always said she could read his soul in his eyes, which were black and brown; just that exquisite shade—a blending of that soft, velvet hue—which

gives character to a man's whole face. It is a color which indicates truth, sincerity, sympathy and profound affections. You may trust the possessor of such eyes with your soul. Therese looked into their depths, and screamed, "Oh, my brother! for the first time, your tongue has deceived me! your eyes never; you will go west," and she wept almost frantically.

Just at that moment, a childish voice called, "Papa, papa! and auntie, come quick! come quick! A monstrous snake!" Therese shuddered, covered her face with her hands, saying, "Run, brother, to Harry; I will remain here until you return, or join you."

While the father ran to his little son, Therese arose and slowly wended her way to the road leading to the hall. She was joined in a few minutes by her brother and little Harry, who was repeating with childish glee his adventure with the snake. The carriage-way to the hall was skirted on either side by magnificent old chestnuts and elms, trees of gigantic growth and great beauty, with here and there a locust or spreading maple. The shrubbery grew dense, and the wild vines hung in graceful festoons, making natural arbors, which were both picturesque and beautiful.

The house, like most old New York houses of an early day, was built more for use than for architectural display. The main building was a large, square, brown stone edifice, crowned by a circular tower. A wing on either side completed the structure; a beautiful, sloping lawn, in front, extended

down to the river; and massive stone steps were guarded by two powerful leopards of variegated marble. Fronting the library window in the right wing of the building, was a beautiful fountain, which in summer sent up, sparkling and cool, jets of water, that fell musically in a marble basin filled with gold fishes. A beautiful conservatory of rare flowers, carefully attended by an experienced florist, was attached to the other wing. A vine-wreathed portico ran around the latter, and from which a flight of stone steps led to the garden. A more tasteful, romantic, or beautiful spot, could not be found on the Hudson.

This country seat and old homestead were the property of a young man about thirty years of age. For many years, only a brother and sister occupied the spacious mansion. Possessing unlimited means to gratify his cultivated taste, he had lavished upon his home every comfort which refinement could suggest. And the sister, a sweet, amiable girl, highly educated both in useful as well as ornamental knowledge, presided over this home with the most charming dignity. She was a student, and a great botanist; flowers were her idols. The parlors were filled with roses of every variety and shade, as were the library, the halls, the porches, and dining-room. She twined them through the lace curtains and around the chandeliers; a vase was on every mantle, stand and bureau in the house. Were they happy, these two? Ah! yes, and more.

"But there's joy in that proud mansion—another is beside his side ;

He has won to his heart, he has won to his home, a pure and trusting bride ;

There is splendor, there is grandeur, on which the eye may rest—

All glorious and gorgeous is now that heart-home nest.

And there was the life of loveliness, with all its winning wiles,

And the spirit of song and beauty, with its sweetly-soothing smiles ;

And startling strains of music swept on with one wild grace,
And mingled with the murmurings of that fair festal place.

The marriage rite is over, yet the revelry is loud——"

Therese had seen it all, felt it all, and she knew another had stronger claims upon the brother she loved as a demigod ; but no spirit of jealousy mingled with the congratulations of the noble sister, as she folded the childish bride in her arms, and, with her luminous, brown eyes, moist and tearful, murmured, "God love you, my own sister. You have won a jewel of priceless worth in the love of my noble brother."

Pauline was so infantile in her beauty, a fair, frail, little snow-drop, with long, bright, golden curls, and eyes as blue as an Italian sky ; so clear that Therese imagined she could see stars down in their profound depths. Beautiful, curving eyebrows, and long fringed lashes fell on a pearl-like cheek, which flushed and crimsoned like the delicate tints of a carnation rose. Her sweet baby mouth was wreathed in smiles of love. Only a little pet doll was Pauline. Her childish, winning

voice and artless manners were charming, while her graceful, *petite* figure and loving nature fell on every heart like a sunbeam. Whoever loved Pauline worshiped her.

Will Rackcliffe loved this childish little beauty with the capability of his whole heart. She seemed so helpless ; he loved her for her dependence. She engrossed every faculty of his nature, and yet never diminished his affection for Therese. She was a part of himself—his life, his soul, his being ; and this new, little spirit, came to them both like a stray sunbeam, never asking any love, never thinking she was worth more than half a smile a day ; content if Will but glanced toward her with his wonderful, speaking eyes—she drank in the rapturous joy, and was happy. Not a shadow had clouded her young life since first he brought her to Rackcliffe Hall a bride. She had, in the generous love of Therese, found a noble, tender-hearted girl, who truly loved her brother's wife. Therese was different from many sisters who had but one idolized brother. She knew she had gained another heart, and her confiding nature gathered this gentle little girl-wife to her bosom, assisted and comforted her, giving strength and courage to the young wife entering upon new duties and new cares, incidental to housekeeping.

Five years had passed since Pauline came a joy and gladness to Rackcliffe Hall. Two beautiful little children had been added to their home. Harry, a manly little fellow of four years, the living counterpart of his father ; and Lina, a sweet, little

golden-haired baby of two years. The three were babies. If Harry and Lina cried, the baby-mother cried also. But Therese could always comfort the children, and her brother was sure to come in just in time to kiss away the tears from the beautiful, azure eyes of his darling wife. He was the lover still. Time had but enhanced the beauty of her charms. Pauline had no identity apart from her husband. She lived and breathed only for him. She loved her babies, but Therese could love them enough for both; and sometimes the poor little wife feared she did not love the children as much as other mothers did. "Because," she would say, "I don't know how—Will has it all!"

Therese feared idolators would be punished; and when, one bright, May morning, the object of so much worship announced his desire to go west, the thought arose in her mind, "The time has come!"

Will Rackcliffe was the best husband, father and brother in the world. He loved this household with his whole nature; but that nature could not know the depth or strength of the two noble hearts which would be nearly broken if he left them. Pauline could do nothing but cry the moment her husband left her presence; but knowing the aversion men have to woman's tears, she loved him too deeply to wound him by thought or deed. She knew if any thing living could influence her husband it would be Therese, whose love for him was as holy as her own. Therese could communicate her thoughts and her love, while the gentle, little Pauline lived upon its very triumphs. She breathed

but to love. The angels in heaven were not happier, clustering around the golden throne, than was this little seraph when warbling like a bird her sweet carol of love. She floated through the beautiful grounds and flowers like a humming bird, her childish face beaming with joy, catching the hues from the roses.

Despite all that both sister and wife could urge against it, Mr. Rackcliffe was still anxious to go to Minnesota. "One little month," said he, "and I will again be with you."

Therese had almost conquered when he promised her in the park he would give up the idea. Then he really meant what he said. A month passed; June came burthened with its thousand beauties, and with it returned again his desire to go west. The struggle was intense; he could not endure the thought of giving pain to these loved ones. He believed their affection for him would conquer the foolish apprehensions which had grieved his wife and sister respecting his journey. He reasoned with them, as though a woman ever listened to reason; he prayed them to drive away the fancy. Pauline's eyes were faded from weeping; Therese crushed back her tears into silent anguish.

His trunk was passed—the parting hour was near. Therese took both children, and bade them kneel for their father's blessing. No tear stained her eye, as she saw him fold them to his heart, kiss and caress them a thousand times; gently she removed his arms from them, and led them to the nurse, saying, in a voice of gloom, frightful to hear,

"Mary, take the children in the garden." She then ran back to her brother, and throwing up both her arms, she almost shrieked, "Gather me to your heart once again, my brother, oh my brother!" He caught her sinking form in his arms, pushed back her hair, and caressed her, murmuring, "My poor sister, am I human, to thus break your heart?" She clung to him, crying, "No, no! my all—my all! you shall not go to die on that steamboat!"

"Therese, my precious sister, hear me! Do not grieve so; who will care for Pauline and the dear children? There, there, dolly! let me go to her!"

"Kiss me, Will; kiss me for the last time!" and then he pressed loving kisses upon her beautiful brown eyes, wrung her hand, and went to his poor wife, whose crushed heart scarcely beat.

Where was Pauline, the angel-wife, whose heart would cease to beat when her idol could not hear it? In her own little boudoir, bending in silent prayer, breathing God's blessing upon her dear husband, whose voice she would soon hear no more.

Ten minutes after he entered his carriage, and was driven to the steamer, bound for Albany. Many days passed before he could shut out from his mind the agonized face of Therese. There was something fearfully grand in the profound love of this sister for her brother. And the patient, tearful face of his gentle, little wife, haunted him like a specter.

CHAPTER II.

THE BURIAL.

IN June of the same year, a steamer wended its way up the Mississippi. It was in the gray and early morning, and listlessly the curling smoke from the steam-pipes floated away on the still, calm air. The noisy rumble of the water-wheels, plowing through the rapid current, grated harshly on the ear to the sad hearts on board, for the "dark messenger of Death" hovered there. The sunken eye, and hollow cheek, seen here and there among the passengers, told but too well of the presence of that insidious foe, cholera. And the many little mounds scattered along the river bank, pointed to the lone graves of the western travelers who sleep far from home, victims to that fearful scourge. No loving hand was there to wipe the death-damps from their brow, or bear to their loved ones the last sad tokens of a father's undying love.

At this early day comparatively few steamers plied this mighty thoroughfare, and the pioneers of the little towns hailed with joyful pleasure every one that neared the landing. But consternation assumed the place of joy when it became known that four of the passengers were dead, awaiting interment, and another dying. All were to be left on shore. A litter was hastily prepared to convey the dying man, and carefully they removed him to

the only hotel the little village of La Crosse then boasted. He was barely conscious, but a powerful stimulant revived him; and rallying his sinking faculties, he asked if there was a member of the Masonic fraternity present. Fortunately, the two attending gentlemen—Mr. Simeon Kellogg and John M. Levy—and the physician, J. B. Baxter, all belonged to that order. His dark eye flashed with an intelligent and thankful expression, as he faintly murmured, "Thank God, I shall not die alone," and then, in broken accents, he told his mournful story. A mania to visit the great west had taken possession of him, and against the fond remonstrances of his devoted wife and sister, he left a beautiful home on the banks of the Hudson, and two charming children. The tears ran down his wasted cheek as he remembered how long and pleadingly they besought him not to leave them, telling him they had a presentiment that ill would betide him; they could not be reconciled, and clung to his neck until the hour of his departure, almost heartbroken. They bade him adieu, saying, "we shall never, never meet again." Prophetic words!

"Dear friends," he said, "I have ten thousand dollars in gold on my person, which I wish sent to my wife. Oh! my brothers, by the mystery of our holy order, break the news gently to her. Tell her, ah! tell her, while this poor brain clung to reason, and this fond heart continued to beat, its warmest pulsations were for her. The remembrance of her sweet, gentle face will go with me through the 'dark valley,' and light my way to paradise; and

the proudest legacy I can bequeath her, is the honor of once being the wife of a Royal Arch Mason. It robs death of its bitterness to know my brothers are with me in this dark hour, to feel they may go with me to the brink of the 'valley,' and plant the never dying acacia above my sleeping dust."

He closed his eyes from exhaustion, and his mind wandered. Again he stood in his boyhood's home, and received the approving smile from his proud old father. Once again he strolled on the beautiful and romantic banks of the Highlands, and clasped the lovely form of his beautiful girl-wife to his proud, warm breast, breathing in low, gentle tones those fond murmurings of love that floated away in never-dying harmony. Then came from his dying lips the beautiful words of the Psalmist, "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord. Yea, though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

"Pauline, darling, did you put out the gas? it is so dark. My poor, dear wife, Pauline!" and the echo of that fond name was wafted beyond the "dark river," whose silent banks the dying man had just crossed. The angel of death had beckoned his soul to that far-off clime, where he might enter the "grand lodge," the holy of holies, and understand the impenetrable mysteries of the great Eternal.

Rapidly the news spread of the stranger's death, and his desire to have a Masonic funeral, which would be the first that had ever been celebrated in the little hamlet. The little church was filled to

suffocation, and a feeling of awe crept over the assembly as the solemn procession entered, robed in their spotless white badges, emblematic of the pure order to which they belonged, decorated with the beautiful sprigs of living green, bearing the remains of the stranger brother. After the beautiful and impressive service for the burial of the dead had been read, and a brief retrospect of the mournful occasion which had brought them together, the coffin, which was strewn with the early spring flowers, was borne away to its final resting place. There was not one dry eye in the house. Every pulse throbbed with grief for that poor bereaved wife and sister, and those tender infants. Oh! how my heart went out to that little band for them, as with slow, funeral tread, they bore her husband to the tomb. The band played a soft, sweet funeral dirge, and as the notes floated away on the calm, pure air, bearing the sad tidings, methought I could hear the sorrowing wail of anguish from the broken heart of that poor wife, and the cry of agony from the lips of that loved sister. The forest trees, in their fresh robe of green, waved their majestic branches to and fro, as if bowing in silent grief at the mournful procession as it entered the newly made cemetery, and placed the bier beside the fresh dug grave.

Then, in a deep, sonorous voice, solemnly mournful, the Worshipful Master, resumed the services, by saying:

"Here we view a striking instance of the uncertainty of life, and the vanity of all human pursuits.

The last offices paid to the dead are only useful as lectures to the living. From them we are to derive instruction, and consider every solemnity of this kind as a summons to prepare for approaching dissolution.

"Notwithstanding the various mementoes of mortality with which we daily meet; notwithstanding death has established his empire over all the works of nature, yet, through some unaccountable infatuation, we forget that we are born to die. We go on from one design to another, add hope to hope, and lay out plans for the employment of many years, until we are suddenly alarmed with the approach of death, when we least expect him, and an hour which we probably conclude to be the meridian of our existence.

"What are all the externals of majesty, the pride of wealth, or charms of beauty, when nature has paid her just debt? Fix your eyes on the last scene, and view life stripped of her ornaments, and exposed in her natural meanness, you will then be convinced of the futility of those empty delusions. In the grave all fallacies are detected, all ranks are leveled, and all distinctions are done away.

"While we drop the sympathetic tear over the grave of our deceased friend, let charity incline us to throw a veil over his foibles, whatever they may have been, and not withhold from his memory the praise that his virtues may have claimed. Suffer the apologies of human nature to plead in his behalf. Human perfection on earth has never been attained; the wisest, as well as the best of men, have erred.

"Let the present example excite our most serious thoughts, and strengthen our resolutions of amendment. As life is uncertain, and all earthly pursuits are vain, let us no longer postpone the important concern of preparing for eternity, but embrace the happy moment, while time and opportunity offer, to provide against the great change, when all the pleasures shall cease to delight, and the reflections of a virtuous life shall yield the only comfort and consolation. Thus our expectations will not be frustrated, nor will we be hurried unprepared into the presence of an all-wise and omnipotent Judge, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, and from whom nothing is hid.

"Let us, while in this state of existence, support with propriety the character of our profession, advert to the nature of our solemnities, and pursue with assiduity the sacred tenets of our order. Then, with becoming reverence let us supplicate the Divine Grace to secure the favor of that Eternal Being whose goodness and power know no bounds, that when the awful moment comes, be it soon or late, we may be enabled to prosecute our journey, without dread or apprehension, to that far-distant country whence no traveler returns.

"May we be true and faithful! and may we live and die in love!"

And the solemn cadence from the sorrowing brethren responded, "So mote it be."

"May we profess what is good, and always act agreeably to our profession!"

"So mote it be."

"May the Lord bless and prosper us, and may all our institutions be crowned with success!"

"So mote it be."

"Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will toward men."

And then, with the profoundest reverence the brethren replied, "So mote it be, now, henceforth, and forevermore."

And the mournful procession wound slowly around the grave, singing:

"Mournfully lay the dead one here,
And lovingly gather nigh;
Silently yield the tribute tear—
His dirge, a tender sigh!
Our chain is broken, and life can ne'er
This fondest link supply;
Mournfully lay the dead one here,
And lovingly gather nigh.

"Ever his face was set to go
Up toward Jerusalem;
Ever he walked and lived as though
He saw its golden beam:
That place whose emblem was so dear
Is now his home on high;
Mournfully lay the dead one here,
And lovingly gather nigh."

As these final notes floated away, each brother, on passing the head of the grave, dropped therein a sprig of evergreen, as a lasting memento of his affection.

Then came the sacred and holy words from the chaplain, breathing of faith, hope and charity—the triune virtues—rolling the stone from the sepulchre,

presenting the dead one, anointed, renovated and purified. Beautiful faith—the glorious effulgence that can never die!

Then followed such a prayer as I never before heard; it was not a prayer, but the cry of a naked soul for the bread and water of heavenly life, that God would pour his precious balm upon the afflicted wife, comforting her in this, her cruel bereavement. Those strong, proud men bowed their heads and wept. The eloquent sympathy manifested by the chaplain passed with a mesmeric influence to every heart within the compass of his voice.

It was then that the ancient order of Masonry arose before me in all its solemn, silent grandeur. Its profound and classic illustrations, its noble and magnanimous code of laws, grander and more lasting than those of the Roman Senate, which have been for ages the standard of the world—an order that is inapproachable, but in its silent mysteries moves an army of “ministering angels,” whispering hope to the despairing, consolation to the sorrowing and redemption to the lost—awaking in the soul of the poor widow a song thrilling with almost seraphic joy, whose music will chime through her heart forever. When she feels the sombre shades of death’s shadow creeping over her threshold, to steal from her fond embrace all that renders life a charm—all, ALL that makes a sunny spot to her in the wide world, then comes this angelic band of brothers, pouring into her broken heart those sweet words of comfort that can only be felt or expressed by a Masonic brother. They push away, with their gen-

tle hands, all the thorns that intercept her pathway. They think for her—they act for her; they are father, mother, sister and brother.

Oh, the talismanic power of kind words uttered by sympathetic friends in the unfeigned, unmistakable tones of disinterested friendship. It helps the poor, lone wife to push her weary way through all the realms of thought to the house of God, beautiful in poetry, and to breathe in softest numbers those delightful dreams of peace which the mystic brotherhood teach by their noble, generous and sterling virtue.

None may ever know the deep veneration and almost holy awe we entertain for that august and truly wonderful organization, which traces its honored and ancient lineage to the grand temple of Solomon, being a crystalization of worship. It points her weary heart to that beautiful land dressed in living green, and the hosts of the redeemed ones walking therein. In sickness, poverty and death, it throws a mantle of sympathy and love around her, shielding her lone heart from those grim monsters, want and woe, and opening to her woman’s vision an exalted, noble and generous view of life, by stifling the cry of anguish that is wrung from her lacerated heart, bidding her hold sweet communion with her sainted dead. Her children are their especial care, to counsel, advise and befriend.

And thus the stranger brother was put away to sleep, far from the beautiful home he loved so well. No gilded funeral car, with richly caparisoned horses bowing their plumed heads, or a long line of elegant

carriages, filled with mourners, followed his remains to their last resting-place; but a little devoted band of Masonic brothers, whose warm hearts poured a precious libation upon the altar of the sacred principles—more precious, more acceptable because unknown. He fell among them a stranger, and they took him in; naked, and they clothed him in the garments of heaven.

A beautiful and touching letter was received in due time, written to the Honorable S. D. Hastings, who, as one of the committee, forwarded Mr. Rackcliffe's effects to his home. It was from the poor wife, and was fraught with such refined expressions of woe that angels might weep with her in her great affliction—blessing, forever blessing the noble souls who cared for her poor husband and followed him to the silent tomb.

Who can look upon the Masonic fraternity other than as a divine order, implanting those true principles of Christian charity in the hearts of all true brethren? To know one as a worthy brother is sure to endear him to the entire fraternity. He may then command their time, their purse—aye, almost their life!

May the true beauties of Masonry thrive in every heart, and every Mason emulate its beautiful and holy teachings and practices; then shall their days be crowned with blessings, and at the close of a well-spent life their souls shall be "raised" into that higher and better life, where they shall catch a glimpse of the city of sapphire and jasper and gold; and as the light comes streaming through the

open door of the grand temple, revealing the mighty secret, they shall hear the celestial bell peal forth the joyous welcome, "Come, come, come, ye blessed of my Father!"

KELLEY'S ISLAND.

YEARS ago I spent some months on Kelley's Island, and it has ever since seemed to me the most delightful place in my recollection.

Removed from the clamor of the world, it is not yet separated from it. It is sufficiently near to retain a sympathy with the latter, and yet so remote that its roar and harshness come to the island modified and softened by distance. It is just far enough away from the main land to escape its noisy peculiarities, and yet near enough to enable one to feel, as it were, the sympathetic throbbings of the pulse of humanity. There is nothing more agreeable than this middle distance, in which meet and blend, and are softened, the stronger colors of the foreground, and the quiet tints, the shadows, the loneliness of the distant back-ground, where it lies along the desert and lifeless horizon.

Upon the island is a little world which is complete in itself. It is a reduced picture of the great world beyond. It has all the better elements of its counterpart, but none of its less desirable. The little world on the island is a genial, a kindly, a hospitable one. It amuses itself with higher pursuits than its great neighbor. It has none of the

unhealthy excitements of the latter. Its people resemble more those who were embowered in the original Eden. Nature has lavished every possible beauty upon this island home. Always thus surrounded with the beautiful, the soul insensibly catches the prevailing quality, and becomes purified and elevated.

It is impossible to conceive any thing nearer perfection than the combination of the various elements on Kelley's Island. Art and nature have struggled as competitors, and yet worked together as friends, to create the island, to adorn it, to leave it at a point where rivalry is impossible. Massive trees, with grand old trunks, and vast and shapely outlines, contrast harmoniously with residences of princely architecture. The luxuriant and clambering grape vines are every where interspersed with roses, which dot the surface like islands of gorgeous colors in a sea of the richest green.

Around all are the beautiful waters, from across which come humid and cooling breezes, and into whose bosom dip trailing festoons from overhang-tree-tops, and in which there play unceasingly an infinite variety of sportive lights and shadows.

When the night comes, and the stars look out, or the moon, full laden with light, climbs up the sky, then is the island beautiful beyond expression or description. Nothing that I have ever read of the effects of Italian moonlight compares with the *tout ensemble* of Kelley's Island on a summer night, when the full moon silvers the lake, and fills the land with a mosaic of chastened light and shadow.

Such was Kelley's Island, as I recall it, years ago. That there have been changes is, perhaps, alas! too true. There can be none in the thriving industry, the princely hospitality, the Eden-like beauty and simplicity of the island; but there have come such mutations as follow in the track of the great destroyer, Death. Many whom I knew and loved, whose bright faces "haunt me still," have been scattered—

"Some to the bridal and some to the tomb."

Two sleep amid clustering vines and shaded myrtles in the cemetery; the one a brave, noble-hearted boy, who was the personification of health and manly beauty. When entering manhood, the hope and pride of his family, he died.

The other was a frail youth, gifted with genius, talent, and a tender, loving heart, who yielded to consumption and faded away like a tender flower.

Another died where heroes love to die—in the battle van. He went down where the bullets rained a tempest of death, on the banks of Stone River; and his dying groan was caught up and whirled away by the shriek of passing shell and the mighty roar of the combat. He was a noble soul, whose name will never cease to awaken emotions of respect and feelings of tender remembrance on the part of the residents of his island home. He was a faithful son, a loving brother, and a gallant, chivalrous soldier.