

Children's Department.

Granny's Love Story.

"I shall never be happy again," said May Shirley; "all the light has gone out of my life."

She was sitting in the porch of an old-fashioned house; roses and honeysuckle clustered around, and sunbeams danced upon the girl's golden head, as though proving that nature's glory, at all events, was not banished from her young life. A letter, that had been read and re-read during many weeks, lay on her knees, and now and again a hot tear would fall on the crumpled page.

"I ventured my all in one ship, and it has gone down," said May, with a heavy sigh.

"May, May," cried a gentle voice from the house. "I should enjoy a breath of air if you would help me into the garden."

May sprang up, and, thrusting the letter into her pocket, hurried indoors.

"Lean on me, Granny," she said, tenderly. "Where shall we go?"

"Under the old lime-tree," said Granny. "My favorite spot when the blossom is out. It reminds me of so many things of my youth, of pleasure and pain. Why, May, it was under that tree I battled with my first real sorrow; and, years afterwards, when I could see clearer and recognize the love that had guided me in darkness, I used to go there and thank God that He had saved me from what I once had most desired."

May was silent. She knew that Granny spoke with intention, and that she wished to impress her granddaughter with the fact that our destinies are in a wiser keeping than our own. They walked on slowly. At the end of the garden was a gate opening into a meadow, where, beneath the overhanging branches of a lime-tree, was Granny's chair, set on a carpet of daisies and flowering grasses.

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"I want to see the smile that gladdened all our hearts a few months ago," said Granny, holding the slim young fingers in her wrinkled ones. "It is very hard at first to learn that our idol was but a thing of clay, and our worship a mockery."

"I can't realize it," said May faintly. "He seemed good, true, and endowed with every quality I most admired."

"A being of your own creation," said Granny, "clothed with a beauty not his own. Child, believe me, when respect and trust have gone, our affection has been snapped at the root and become a dead thing. Dearest, I would strive to make you see that the world is still bright and beautiful, although just now you see it through a mist of tears. Listen a moment. Many years ago, so long that it must seem to you like a page of ancient history, I parted beneath this tree from one I deemed a king among men. He had come to our village bearing letters of introduction to my father, and soon became on intimate terms with most of the county families. He was one of those gifted with every accomplishment. He dazzled both young and old by his conversation and varied talent, and ere long was sole arbiter of my existence. I forgot the love of years that had grown up at my side. This dear old home of my ancestors, halloved by a thousand memories, seemed shut away from the noise and bustle of the world, about which I had heard such glowing descriptions, and for which I longed with a feverish anxiety. Everything was merged in the fascination of the new-comer. I lived a charmed life, and the day he quitted here he had obtained my promise to be his wife. Ah! well do I remember. This tree was in flower, and its scent always recalls that moment when I deemed the world held no bliss to equal mine."

"Months passed. From time to time my lover wrote letters teeming with affection and promises of a speedy return, which, he protested, some unforeseen circumstances had alone delayed. "Once more it was summer. I sat here dreaming about the future, where one brilliant picture succeeded another in my youthful imagination, when I saw my mother approaching. Tears were in her eyes, and her whole attitude betokened sorrow."

"My child," she said, gently laying her hand on my head, "you have need of all your courage. You have a heavy trial to bear; but God, in His mercy, has saved you from a far heavier one, the life-long regret of an irrevocable mistake."

"As she spoke, she laid in my trembling hands a short note, in which my faithless lover abruptly informed my parents that, by the time the news reached them, he would have been married abroad to a lady of high rank and great wealth."

"I will not dwell upon the sorrow, the hopeless darkness of despair that ensued. You have, you are experiencing the same. Pain and sorrow had hitherto been but empty names to me. I now learnt their fullest meaning, and drank their bitter cup to the dregs. But by and by, little by little, gleams of light shed their soft rays upon me; the voices of every-day duties, to which I had turned a deaf ear, made themselves heard; hope awoke once more, at first so subdued as to be unrecognizable, but afterwards lighting up every dark corner, and, lifting the scales that had blinded my eyes, showed

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me life and its meaning in true colors, until a glow of thankfulness welled up within me, and I was grateful for the pain. Hush! don't start. It taught me so much that I needed to learn; it widened my sympathies; it opened my understanding to distinguish between the false and the true. Yes, May; notwithstanding all its agony, I look upon that time of probation as a period of priceless value, in which a loving Father, in His own way, was preparing me for the crowning happiness of my life.

"The next few years brought innumerable changes. Sickness, death, and my weighty responsibilities as mistress in the old home, where I now stood alone. In the village much had happened to prevent me dwelling morbidly upon my own troubles. Calls from rich and poor alike had filled up my days, and brought back all the old interest which for a time lay dormant."

"Your grandfather had left England shortly after my engagement to his rival was announced, and no tidings of his welfare had reached the village. One evening I had brought my book to this spot, when the opening of the gate caused me to look up, and there stood my old friend, bronzed, changed somewhat in outward appearance, but with the same true heart and faithful love."

"I scarcely know if I welcomed him. All the passion and misery of the years that had intervened, all the changes that had come and gone since we parted, seemed to rise up between us as our hands met once more. Did he know what his coming meant to me, as he sat there quietly in the twilight talking over old friends, old hopes?"

"It was late when he rose to go. I remember the moon shone full upon the meadow, turning these leaves to silver; each flower, each blade of grass was distinctly visible."

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