

than all the rest; but this one had an air of comfort and refinement that the others did not possess.

This was a very small yellow cottage. There were hop vines trained over the little verandah, forming an archway in the centre, and a long narrow flower bed on either side of the steps full of sweet old-fashioned flowers. Tall China asters brushed their many-coloured faces against the dark green of the luxurious vine. These flowers were Agnes Power's favourites. She stopped to admire them fully, and as she stood there a young woman stepped out of the cottage door. Then Agnes forgot all about the China asters in astonishment at the singular beauty of the woman before her.

Her eyes were what struck you first—long, narrow black eyes—the whites so brilliant as to attract your attention at first seeing, and the eyebrows lying closely above them were jet black, and in almost straight lines. The forehead was broad and low, and masses of heavy black hair waved loosely back from the forehead; the nose rather long, with large delicate dilating nostrils, nostrils that quivered with every breath she took, and gave you the idea of a restive horse restrained; the mouth was somewhat large and full and red, but well shaped. As she stood looking in silence at Agnes Power, for that first moment, the colour came and went under her skin of ivory tint and smoothness, as is the habit with highly impulsive people. The gown she wore was of some soft pale yellow stuff, well suited to show off her dark beauty. It was full in the waist, but not too full to show the lines of her perfect figure; the skirt was very long and clung closely to her, and the yellow kerchief about her neck was loose enough to show a throat that might have caused the envy of a Grecian goddess. One arm was passed through the handle of a small basket, her hand caught her gown, raising it slightly—this gave sight of a long and well-shaped foot. As she stood there as Agnes thought "what a subject for an artist's brush," and she thought this, the girl moved down the steps towards her.

"Were you coming in?"
"I was passing and stopped to admire your China asters."
"Oh! Do you like China asters? I love them. They are so stiff and stately and bright, and they have no feeling. That is the best thing about them."

As the girl spoke, she turned aside and hastily broke off two or three of the brightest flowers. How her eyes flashed and her face lighted when she spoke! There was evidently no want of feeling about her! Agnes wondered who she could be. She was beautiful, refined. But she lacked that nameless something which the blood of centuries alone bestows or the custom of society gives.

"Are they for me?" said Agnes. The graceful, spontaneous act touched her. "You are very good."
The thin black brows came together ominously. There was a tightening, almost to thinness, of the full red lips.

"No! I am not good. No one calls me that."
All her impulsiveness had vanished. The waning colour crept away and did not return. Agnes thought she was even handsomer without it; the dead contrast between the ivory skin and black hair.

"I am very fond of flowers, very," Agnes went on. She felt the girl had fallen into unpleasant thoughts and wished to bring her back to the moment. There was a certain impulsiveness also about Agnes Power by nature. She had taken to the girl; she was attracted, interested, and she wished at once to learn more about her.

"I have a great many at the back; would you come round; would you care to come?"

The colour rushed back again into the girl's face. There was a little tremor of excitement about her, a wonderful brilliancy in her smile, as Agnes unhesitatingly pushed open the little gate and entered.

"I know who you are," said the girl, as she led the way round the house. "You are the young lady who has come to live with Mrs. Mat Melville."

"My name is Power. I am Mrs. Melville's companion."

"I see you passing to church every Sunday. I saw you the first Sunday. After that I went to the corner and watched for you. I never go to church; I couldn't keep still enough when I was a child, and afterwards it worried me worse. Do you really believe in church, Miss Power? It always seems to me that the altar is the stage, the clergyman the performing actor, and that he is showing off, and the congregation showing off—it all seems unnatural."

"It doesn't do to invest a community with the colour of your own mind. You are unused to church, therefore it is unnatural to you; when the spirit is not in a thing it always appears farcical."

"I never thought of it in that way before," said the girl, softly. Perhaps, then, if I went often I should grow to love it."

"What a sweet garden," cried Agnes.

It was very small, but everything in it looked fresh and fair and flourishing. Flowers of all sorts were here; many coloured portulaccas, mignonette, heartsease, heliotrope, sweet peas, a few late roses and more China asters.

"Everything is so beautifully kept."

"I do it all myself—I live alone; I belong to no one. My mother died when I was a wee thing; my father brought me up. He died five years ago; he was French, my mother was a Spaniard." All this in quick, hurried sentences.

That accounted for it, then; the girl's strange, dark beauty, her refinement, spirit, impulsiveness.

"And you live all alone?"

"Yes; father left me a little money, and I add to it by doing fancy work and plain sewing. Father was very particular about my learning sewing; he said it kept a woman

out of mischief. It keeps me very busy: I couldn't live if I wasn't."

"And you are happy?"

The straight black brows came together again. Agnes was sorry the moment she had spoken. With quick tact she turned the subject.

"What a dear old tree—a regular 'elliot oak,' and there is a bench beneath it. I suppose you work there."

"Yes, and read."

"What do you read?"

"Poetry mostly."

"Poetry!" reiterated Agnes in surprise and pleasure.

"What poetry do you read?"

"Byron." Then with fervour: "Doesn't he touch you? Stir you? He makes the blood beat in my veins until I forget who I am."

Then she calmed suddenly.

"He was a bad man of course. But then he suffered. If he had married Miss Chaworth he might have been so different."

"It is only a weak or bad man, though, who allows one circumstance to alter his whole life, at least in line of conduct."

"He suffered," said the girl quietly. "I am always sorry for those who suffer."

"And for people who do wicked things," said Agnes thoughtfully, "so am I."

"Are you like that?" The girl's eyes flashed with sudden light. "I thought it was only people who had done real wrong who felt like that."

"Every one does wrong. Every one suffers for doing wrong," said Agnes. "Each one of us has done something of which we repent in pain and prayer. It may be a thing of small magnitude in the eyes of many. Yet, if it is the greatest wrong we have committed, it is the greatest crime in the world to us. We feel it as such, suffer for it as such."

The girl caught Agnes's hand in a hot grasp.

"No one ever talked like that before; you make things seem easier."

She turned away hurriedly. There was a slight convulsive movement of her frame, and though she stooped and plucked a flower, she was wondrously pale when she again turned to Agnes Power.

"You must be tired, Miss Power; won't you come in and sit down and rest?"

"My name is Alminere La Jeunesse," the girl said as she walked by Agnes's side to the house. "It sounds incongruous, doesn't it? You see, my father was a Frenchman; Alminere was the name chosen for me by my mother."

"Alminere," said Agnes. "It is peculiar."

They had entered the house, passed through a small dark passage, emerged into a tiny but bright, home like room.

Agnes took up the book lying open on the table, and saw it was a volume of Byron. Where it was open a passage was strongly marked in pencil:

"I saw him stand
Before the altar with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The starlight of his boyhood."

"That is very beautiful," said Agnes. "Byron is intoxicating, but he is not healthy."

"Is cake healthy?" Alminere responded, quickly; "yet we all eat it."

Agnes could not restrain a laugh.

"What made you first fancy Byron?"

"Someone gave me a copy."

Alminere coloured vividly. She seemed to keep an uneasy eye on the book in Agnes's hand. As Agnes went to lay it down it slipped and fell to the floor, where it lay open, with the fly-leaf in full view.

Alminere moved hurriedly forward and caught it up; but Agnes's quick eye had seen a name in a clear, bold, masculine hand—"Hugo Melville"; and underneath, "Alminere," and then a date.

The discovery chilled Agnes. Why should Hugo Melville have given a book like this to the girl? Why should she be ashamed of the fact? Or, rather, why should she have appeared anxious to conceal it?

"I really must go now," said Agnes. "I am quite rested—she had not sat down!—and thank you again for the flowers and the glimpse of your pretty garden."

Even as she spoke she was conscious her manner was colder than she had meant it should be.

Alminere felt the change. Her eyes were saddened and pained.

"Won't I see you again? If you have any sewing to be done I—"

Agnes suddenly melted. She spoke with her old warmth.

"I will come and see you without any 'sewing.' I have a volume of Tennyson. I will bring it. He is safer than Byron."

"I hate Tennyson," said Alminere emphatically. "He writes of the life I know nothing about." Then, "but I will read anything you want me to." This very humbly.

"Perhaps Emerson would be better—and Longfellow is best of all," Agnes smiled. The girl's submission had touched her.

"Now, good-bye Alminere." She held out her hand, Alminere stooped impulsively and laid her lips upon it.

"What a very peculiar girl," said Agnes to herself as she hurried back to "The Grey House." "A girl with a nature like that needs a lot of training, and how lovely she is!"

(To be continued.)

LALEET.

I.

How beautiful she was, the little maiden,
Twelve summers old,
Who faded like a fading star, love-laden,
Her love untold.

II.

I knew not, I who far out-ran her days,
How much I erred
In paying court to her endearing ways,
How much I stirred
The fount of her affection with my praise.

III.

No sunrise fairer is than was her face,
No moonlit skies
More lovely than the tenderness and grace
That filled her eyes.

IV.

Her presence harmonized all dissonance,
And ever wore
A charm akin to music and romance
And fairy lore.

V.

Poor child! among her hidden notes one said
She dreamed of me,
And fancied that she saw me lying dead,
Drowned in the sea,
But that no dream it was the tears she shed.

VI.

When life's white rose its latest leaf was shedding,
And o'er her broke
The sobs of mourners in her chamber treading,
Vaguely she spoke:
He knew not of my weeping at his wedding!

VII.

Those simple words, in whispered cadence spoken,
All winds repeat;
I shudder at the tale which they betoken,
My lost Laleet!

VIII.

I hear them in the surging of the billow,
Through storm and gloom;
They pierce me from the rustle of the willow
That shades her tomb
And drops a denser shadow on my pillow.

IX.

Ye softest harmonies of air and ocean,
Of mount and vale,
Rehearse the passion of her heart's devotion
Till suns shall fail
And orphaned planets lose the joy of motion.

GEORGE MARTIN.

WHAT THE BALLOON HAS DONE.

The proportion of balloon accidents to the successful descents has, on the whole, however, been probably smaller than should have been anticipated. Blanchard, the first to take up ballooning as a vocation, died in his bed, in 1809, after having made 66 ascents without accident. Many ascents have been made in the cause of science; and the names of Green, who made over 1,209 ascents; of John Wise, who made the distance from St. Louis, Mo., to Jefferson County, N.Y., 1,200 miles, in 20 hours; of Gay-Lussac and Biot, who in 1804 made a most valuable series of meteorological and physical observations at the height of 19,000 feet; of Glaisher, who rose to 37,000 feet with the aeronaut Coxwell; and especially, recently, of the brothers Tissandier,—all these are familiar to every one.

In 1794, the balloon was used for military purposes by Gen. Jourdan, who secured continual observation of the Austrian movements, and thus gained the battle of Fleurus. The French are also reported to have used the same method in the battle of Solferino. A balloon corps was organized by Gen. McClellan at the outbreak of our own Civil War, 1861; and the use of balloons was one of the regular and daily means of obtaining information of the movements of the enemy. During the siege of Paris, the balloon became the only means of sending despatches out of the beleaguered city, and proved to be very reliable. Of all the balloons sent out from Paris, over 60 in number, but three were lost; and they, probably, simply because they were despatched at night to avoid the risk from the fire of the enemy, which, as the event proved, was far less dangerous than darkness. Every government probably now has a balloon corps.—*Prof. R. H. Thurston, in the Forum.*

A little fellow found that the older pupils in school were going off for a long tramp in the woods. He asked to be allowed to go, and was told he was too small; but he begged so earnestly, and was so sure he would not be tired, that he was finally allowed to go. He held out bravely, though the last two miles were almost too much for him. "I am not tired," he said; "but if I could take off my legs and carry them under my arms a little while, I should be glad!"