

"Why foolishly, Drusilla? Surely your heart dictated the step."

"Ah Sir! Rome—my Rome was gone! I wandered about in search of my old home. Fool that I was, I forgot the lapse of time. I only longed for the past glories of the city I remembered. Then one came to me. Her face, half-hidden by a black mantle, was old and wrinkled; her garments, ragged and moth-eaten, scarce covered her meagre frame. 'I am the past,' she said 'together you, and I will seek the lost glory of Rome.' She led me to the forum, to the coliseum, to the baths where all the maidens and youths once congregated to lave themselves in sweet steamy odors, and listen to dulcet music. All—all was ruin! I wept; I asked her for my father's house—my home. She shook her head and hid her face. It is as these are. Question me not. Marble steps we passed. I saw the bust of Tullus, I knew his features well. 'That man,' I said to my companion, 'loved me unto death; he kept his vows of fidelity to me, though I was false to him.' With a bony finger the Past pointed to the bust beside that of Tullus. I read the inscription—'The wife of Tullus.' Was it for that simpering face he forgot his Drusilla? Angrily I pushed my guide away from me. "Be-gone!" I cried, and turning my back on her, fled.

At last I came to a dear old Roman wall, and saw before me our prince. I laid my cheek against the mossy stones and begged him with tears to take me back to Alcor."

"Unfaithful Tullus!" exclaimed Harvey. "But Drusilla, my Blanche will never forget me."

"Listen friend. Even now she has forgotten you. You left her when the poppies bloomed. Before they cast their seed she will be comforted for your loss."

"You do not know her Drusilla," said Harvey.

"All mortals forget the dead. Time is a merciful master."

"She will never forget me;" insisted Harvey.

"Poor boy!" sighed the Roman, "your faith still clings to you, the year 2,400 will prove my words."

The golden days sped by in the kingdom of Alcor. Word was carried to the Prince, that his government was not without reproach—the modern youth dared to love as mortals love, and the Roman maiden returned his passion. The very birds made the love of the two the theme of their songs. Then, Prince Alcor came. Sternly he regarded the culprits, as with visor pushed back from his beautiful pale face he stood before them, his eyes flashing fire, his voice trembling with passion.

"At last thou hast fallen, O maid of ancient Rome! Thou hast withstood centuries of temptation, to cast thyself away for a mortal from a land that was not known when thy Rome was queen of the world! I have no words for *you*;" turning to Harvey, "a few short months, nay, weeks, have proved thy weakness. Thy fate like hers, is sealed. I pronounce you both null and void, formless, soulless, condemned to fall through space, a flash on the horizon, a streak of downward light—then, the end!"

Harvey drew the Roman to him in a passionate embrace. One long kiss sealed their everlasting parting.

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The poppies had lost their gay, flaunting petals, only seed-pods rustled in the evening breeze. Blanche Ascot stood on the verandah, the man to whom she had just plighted her troth beside her. "See!" she exclaimed, "two falling stars. Wish quickly dear!"

"I have wished—that you will always love me dearest."

"But you should not tell your wish; besides, you know I will always love you." Blanche laid her head on her lover's breast, and looked up into his eyes. The poppy seeds rustled angrily. Drusilla's words had come true, Harvey Mallow was forgotten. Blanche Ascot, like Tullus, had found a new love. Although ages had passed over the world, human nature was unchanged.