

vent her speaking to him again. She had all the afternoon to herself, the children going out to take tea with friends; but she did not follow Strongarm to the picture gallery. It was not till she knew that Miss Fairfax had left it that she went to her lover, whom she found standing moodily before the picture. Nelly stood by his side looking at it. She did not slip her hand within his arm, as she would have done two days before; nor did he notice the absence of the loving caress.

"I must succeed!" he exclaimed, with impatient eagerness and disappointment in his eyes. "I am to exhibit it at the Academy; it will make my name! Isn't she glorious?"

"I don't see that your name depends on Miss Fairfax's portrait," Nelly returned a little sharply. "Your last picture made your name."

"It is forgotten by this time, apparently,"—bitterly. "But it shall not be, if I can do her justice! What a charming girl she is! And to think how rudely I have always behaved to her—never accepting a single invitation to her house! She told me she always wanted to see me. It's awfully good of her to forgive me and let me paint her portrait!"

Nelly moved farther away into the gathering shadows of the winter dusk. The last rays of daylight fell on the picture as it faced the window and lingered on the lovely face. It seemed to Nelly, looking at it with dark pain-filled eyes, that it was gathering to itself all the light left in the world, while she was driven into the shadows. Her heart filled with hot, bitter anger. This girl had so much already—surely she might have been content to leave her this one love!

"Are you ready, Mr. Strongarm?" said a sweet voice at the door; and Miss Fairfax, wrapped in costly furs, and with her hat on, came forward. "Still in despair over my portrait?" "Don't worry! You shall have as many sittings as you like when we are back in London. Oh!"—as she caught sight of Nelly—"is that you, Miss Curzon?" all the softness gone from her voice. She was evidently discomfited at seeing the governess there. "I am going to take Mr. Strongarm to the Red Lion to show him the effect it has against a winter sunset. We must make haste, for it will be dark soon. Will you come, too?"

"No, thank you," said Nelly; "it is too cold," and she shivered slightly as she moved away farther into the shadows, leaving those two side by side.

It was New Year's eve. The snow had been falling all day. There was an old tradition at Ellerslea about the snow falling on the last day of the old year. Miss Fairfax was talking of it as she sat in the school-room drinking tea with Nelly. The children had gone out with their mother, Strongarm had left the house after luncheon and had not yet returned, and Nelly had told the schoolroom maid to bring her some tea there. She had no wish to sit in the drawing room with Miss Fairfax; but, as she sat enjoying her solitary cup in the firelight, Miss Fairfax appeared with hers, complaining of the dullness of the drawing room and reproaching Nelly for her unsociability.

Nelly drew back from the firelight. She did not wish Miss Fairfax to see certain red marks about her eyes. Pride also forced Nelly to speak to Miss Fairfax as if she had known nothing of what she had inadvertently witnessed that morning. Before she allowed Miss Fairfax to know that she had seen it, she must speak to Richard, who by the kiss he had impressed on another woman's lips had broken the truth between them; it was for her to give him back his freedom. So she forced herself to act and speak as if the memory of that treacherous kiss had not been burning into her heart and brain.

Of course you have heard of the tradition, Miss Curzon, how an ancestress of my guardian," said Miss Fairfax, "fell in love with a poor poet, and how her family opposed the match? She was young and very beautiful, and they wished her to marry a man who was her equal by birth. But she would not give up this Ronald Taylor, who was the son of one of her father's poorest tenants. He was very handsome, and had been educated by a rich man. He lived generally in London; but once, when he was on a visit to his sister here, he saw Grace Lowndes and fell in love with her. There was a bitter quarrel, for Grace would not give him up, and her family treated her very unkindly and drove Ronald away from the place. At last they let him hear that she was going to marry some one else, and he was in such despair that he hurried down from London to see her and ask her for herself if it were true. He arrived on New Year's eve. It was snowing heavily, and was a wild and dreadful night; but he cared nothing for it, and came straight to this house. It had been Grace's custom to keep a light burning in her room until late in the evening, as a signal to her lover, who came to the house every night when it was

dark; when Ronald saw the light burning, he knew that she was still true to him, and that if she could she would slip out of the house and meet him down by the old beech tree at the end of the lawn. As he came near the house on this New Year's eve, he saw a light suddenly shine out, and, in spite of his trouble and fear and pain, a great peace came to him, for he was certain that Grace still loved him, and had put that light there as usual, in case he should come back. It was such a wild night that Ronald knew she could not come down to the beech tree; but he went and stood there all the same; and, while he was standing, in a sudden lull of the raging wind he heard the tolling of a bell, the sound coming from the direction of the chapel. The next day he found out that the bell had tolled for Grace, she having died just an hour before he reached the house—an hour before the light had shone in her window. She had noddied in that room, but in another wing of the house, and no one had entered her room that night. It was locked up, and her mother had the key. But Ronald had seen the light, and to the day of his death he believed that Grace's faithful heart had returned to earth for one brief moment to tell him that light that, whatever might be said, she had died still loving him. And now, whenever the wind rages and the snow falls on New Year's eve, they say that the light can still be seen by lovers if they be true to each other, and that, if they see the light, their love will be happy. I wonder if it will shine to-night?"

Miss Fairfax spoke in a low dreamy tone, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. Nelly looked at her from across the rug, her eyes, burning, her face pale.

"Why have you told me this story?" she asked, her voice quivering slightly. Her indignation and scorn were almost too great to control. "I know the story; you need not have repeated it."

Miss Fairfax looked at her: it was a strange, searching, critical look, which made Nelly shiver in spite of herself.

"I don't know," said Miss Fairfax, looking away again, "except that it is a lovely story and takes my fancy. But I don't think that is the most beautiful part of it. There was something else—a love greater, grander than that of the girl who died for hers. Ronald had a sister; she was a poor, ignorant woman who had taken charge of him as a child, who had loved him as she loved her life. When the Lowndeses found out about Ronald's daring to love Grace, they taunted her with his sister's ignorance, her poverty, her low origin. And this poor sister thought that she was standing in the way of her brother's happiness—that perhaps she might relent. He would then have no reason to drag him down and be a disgrace, and he might marry this girl, become rich and famous, and have advantages for travel and study that he could never get except by this marriage. So one day she went away and entered a convent, and there lived a hard toiling, self-sacrificing life, hiding herself from her brother, so that she might never more be an obstacle between him and that which was to make him happy, great and rich."

There was a deep silence. Miss Fairfax looked down at her hands, which were loosely clasped in her lap. But the fingers trembled slightly, and betrayed her affection of dreamy self-possession; she was waiting with intense eagerness for Nelly's answer. Nelly sat rigid, silent, looking straight at Miss Fairfax; then she rose to her feet.

"I know what you mean. I am like that sister. At present I stand between Richard and wealth and opportunities to follow the art he loves so well. I came into the picture gallery this morning, and saw you as you were standing together by the picture. I heard Richard say that it was not half beautiful enough. I saw him—" She paused, and then went on again in a hoarser voice. "I know what you want me to say now; but I will say nothing till I have seen Richard. Till he and I have arranged our future lives, you must stand aside." She waved her hand in a gesture of unutterable contempt and loathing.

The next moment Nelly had left the room, and Miss Fairfax who had risen too, stood looking after her, the scarlet flush the gesture had brought to her cheeks fading slowly. For a moment her eyes were full of pity, remorse and shame; then suddenly they hardened.

"I have succeeded—she will give him up! He would never have done it. He is so chivalrously generous, so foolishly honorable, he would have clung to his promise to that poor little girl though it would have been ruin for him to marry her."

Strongarm did not return to dinner that evening, and Nelly was absent also, on the plea of a headache. Mrs. Lowndes suspected mischief, but Miss Fairfax, languid and lovely and gracefully self-possessed, met the searching glances and half-veiled questions

of her guardian's wife with complete unresponsiveness. Mrs. Lowndes was no match for her.

About 10 o'clock Miss Fairfax, muffled in furs, slipped out of the house. It was snowing heavily; the wind that had been moaning round the house all the evening was growing more boisterous. As Miss Fairfax stepped out by a side door on to the gravel path, it swept round the shrubbery with such force that she was almost taken off her feet. She was not daunted, however; she hurried on again down the path, drawing her fur mantle closer over her dinner dress, and wondering with throbbing heart whether Richard Strongarm would keep the tryst they had arranged that morning.

At last she reached the pathway from which could be seen the room said to be haunted by the ghostly light. It was a long narrow alley, between hedges of laurel and bay. The night was very dark, but the snow, which was beginning to lie thickly on the pathway and on the shrubs, reflected enough light to enable Miss Fairfax to find her way. At the end of the path was a summer house, to which Miss Fairfax and Richard had that morning, at her suggestion, half laughingly agreed to come to see if the ghostly light was visible.

It was in this summer house that Miss Fairfax meant to draw Strongarm into a confession of love that would make it almost impossible for him to go back. Till now he had resisted all temptation; he was an honorable man, and she knew that he felt his truth to Nelly as binding.

She hurried down the path, her feet treading lightly on the snow, her eyes shining with the love in her heart—for Miss Fairfax loved at last, with her whole heart and soul. The flirtation began in amusement, weariness, mere wanton mischief, had ended for her in an overwhelming love that made her long to lay her wealth at this man's feet, to give him her beauty, her life, her all. She reached the summer house. Yes; he was there!

Miss Fairfax stood outside in the snow, hesitating for a moment; then she moved closer. With the snow flakes drifting against her face, with the wind moaning through the trees about her, with the color fading from her cheeks and lips, with her heart growing colder and colder, she listened and found that Strongarm was not alone. He was speaking in a hoarse, wistful voice.

"And so you really thought, Nelly, that I loved her—that I had forgotten you; you really mean that you were going to tell me that, Nelly? Darling, the very thought fills me with fear!" He must have caught her hands in his, for Miss Fairfax, leaning against the summer house, heard a faint, inarticulate cry. "I was moved by her beauty—heaven forgive me!—but there was never one thought disloyal to you in my mind. It was only her beauty. Do you think I did not know what she was like—that she was a vain, heartless coquette? Oh, Nelly, my darling, I can't bear to mention her in the same breath with you! I was a weak, base coward, if you like—her lovely face moved the weakest part in me—but not one beat of my heart. I came here to-night to meet her—Nelly, don't take your hands away!—because this morning, when we stood side by side, some spirit of evil moved me, and—"

"I know?" Nelly, can you forgive me? I don't think I shall ever forgive myself. But I felt that I had insulted her, done her a cowardly wrong and I came here to-night to throw myself upon her generosity. I have been full of shame and misery since. I walked all about this afternoon and evening, not daring to come back and face you till I had her consent to tell you of my disloyalty to you."

Miss Fairfax, clinging to the wall, felt that Richard was generous. She knew that it was she who by raising her face seductively to his that morning, had tempted him to his one act of treachery. She had seen by his eyes a moment after how he despised and hated himself for giving way. But now he took all the blame to himself.

"I will go away, Nelly," he went on, "if you wish it. It is only because I can say, as truly as there is a heaven above us, that I have never once wavered in my love for you that I dare ask for forgiveness."

"She is rich, and—""Nelly, Nelly!" Nelly could not resist the low cry of shame, of humbled pride, of pain, reproach, entreaty. There was a sound like a sob, and then a quick-drawn breath, and Nelly lay clasped in her lover's arms.

Miss Fairfax could not withstand that cry either. She had turned, and was now running up the pathway. She felt neither the cold nor the wind—nothing but a dreadful pain at her heart. She reached the house, and, entering it, hurried up the stairs, unseen by any one, till she reached a distant room where there was no chance of any one coming to disturb her. There was a lamp

in the passage outside. Some strange impulse seized her. She was scarcely conscious of what she was doing, being half-distracted by her dreadful pain, by the mortification, shame, and remorseful misery that possessed her. She caught up the lamp and carried it into the room, setting it down with a queer little laugh on the wind-sill. Then she sank down beside it, crouching low on the floor, sobbing as if her heart would break. The lovers outside saw the light, for the room was the one in which Grace used to set a light for her lover!

"I have played with edge, cruelty and have been cut to the quick," exclaimed Miss Fairfax, overwhelmed by her misery and humiliation.

She had used her beauty unscrupulously to tempt Richard Strongarm to dishonor, and her beauty had stirred in him only a passing emotion.

Fortunes in Candy.

Violets and rose leaves, delicately candied, are for sale at 25 a pound.

Gold dragées, a plain round candy dipped in gold, cost \$10 a pound. Silver dragées cost \$1.50 per pound.

Fruit candies cost 30 cents.

Chocolates and bonbons of the finest description are 80 cents.

Caramels, cups and drops are 50 cents.

Line tablets, frequently used on steamers to prevent sea sickness, cost 60 cents a pound and come in bottles.

Cream peppermints are also used for steamer purposes by young women and children. These are the same price.

Taffy and molasses drops, besides old-fashioned molasses candy, are for sale at 40 cents a pound.

Salted almonds are \$1 a pound. Cherry cherries are 80 cents a pound.

Chocolate for eating and cooking purposes can be bought from 40 cents to 65 cents a cake.

Cocoa is 25 cents a cake. Chocolate creams, jellies and nuts are 30 cents a pound.

Satin bags for candies are, when filled, worth 27 each.

Kests for chairs, in lovely designs in lace and painting, are filled with bags of candy and cost \$14.

Cap mottoes, for dinners and Germans, cost from 25 cents to \$34 a dozen.

Dinner favors, in dainty designs of guitars, bags, bouquets and everything beautiful, are to be ordered at from 50c. to \$2 each.

Satin boxes cost from 75 to \$60; these are hand-painted and embroidered, and filled with choice candies they are fit presents for a queen.

Royal Worcester, Crown Derby, Havering, Minton, Coalbrook and Moore, for holding candies, are very dainty and elegant. These cost from \$8 to \$25 each, and are painted frequently in special designs to order.

Twined baskets cost from \$3 to \$15 each. Sterling silver bonbonnières, for holding candies, are of the most charming designs. These range in price from \$5 to \$15.

The choicest of these sterling silver bonbonnières contain Italian mints, a rare delicacy.

Bonbonnières for holding dragées are made of handsome enamel. These cost from \$5 to \$20 each.

Sterling silver dishes for table use, for holding choice candies, cost from \$3 to \$8 each, and are very elegant.

Boxes of dragées cost 25 cents each and boxes of pastils cost the same price.

The Scandinavian Hades.

According to the Scandinavian mythology all who die bravely in battle are snatched away to Valhalla. Odin's magnificent banquet hall in the sky. Those who, after lives of ignoble labor or inglorious ease, die of sickness, descend to a cold and dismal cavern beneath the ground, called Nifheim—i. e., the mist world. This abode is ruled by the goddess of death, whose name is Hel. The place of torment for reprobates is Nastrond, deeper underground than Nifheim, and far toward the frozen north. This grim prison is described in the following passage from the Prose Edda, written in Iceland in the thirteenth century: "In Nastrond there is a vast and dreadful structure with doors that face the north. It is formed entirely of the backs of serpents, wattled together like wicker work. But the serpents' heads are turned toward the inside of the hall, and continue to vomit forth floods of venom, in which wade all those who commit murder or who forswear themselves." According to the Voluspá, a poem of earlier date, the evil-doers in Nastrond are also gnawed by the dragon Nidhogg.