

MAGAZINE

DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE &

VOLUME III. GEO. E. DESBARATS, No. 1, PLACE D'ARMES HILL. MONTREAL, SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 1872. TERMS, \$2.00 PER ANNUM. No. 33.

THROUGH THE CASTLE.

BY MAX.

Through the old castle
Together went we;
Sweet were the odours
That came from the sea.

From the high tower
We peered o'er the park;
In the low caverns
We laughed at the dark.

This is the promise
Made unto me—
"Love, I will ever
Prove faithful to thee."

Through the old castle
I wander again;
Cold are the breezes
That come with the rain.

Dead leaves are falling
All over the park;
Frightened I listen
To sounds in the dark.

This is the message
Received from the sea—
"Dreaded"—and his name
Written under. Ah woe!

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THE DEAD WITNESS; OR, LILLIAN'S PERIL.

BY MRS. LEPROHON.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

Tremaine made no reply, but walked to the window, now closed, and leaning his forehead against it, stared blankly forth at the gloomy blackness outside.

The clock strikes. What hour is it? Midnight. The perspiration stands in drops upon his forehead. Oh! that she would die. He felt at the moment that if his lips could frame any form of prayer he would petition for that consummation, so as to be freed from the torments that now hedged him round. The suspense was terrible. No sound still save the ticking of the clock. Ah! there came a soft, rustling sound from the bed. The patient was stirring—waking. Would it be life or death?

Not long did his uncertainty last. "How do you find yourself, Mrs. Tremaine?" questioned the attentive nurse.

"Better, oh so much better, thank you! The dreadful pain has left my poor head and my brain seems so calm and quiet now."

"Mr. Tremaine, come and congratulate your wife. She is out of danger," said the hard, distinct voice of Miss Radway.

He crossed the room to the bed and looked down slightly upon its occupant. Then he spoke:

"So you really feel much better, Margaret?"

"Yes, beyond doubt, though still very weak."

"Well, let us hope that your restoration is the forerunner of many days of health and strength. In the meantime, dear Margaret, as a token of that good feeling which, I trust, may henceforth reign between us, grant the request I have already urged before, and sign this paper."

There was a pause of astonishment, as if at the strangeness of such a request at such a time, and then the sick woman faintly answered:

"Never, Roger, so help me Heaven! Firm and immovable is my determination of never yielding on that point."

"Do not torment Mrs. Tremaine with such matters now," interrupted the housekeeper, in cold, sardonic tones.

"Listen to me, Margaret; listen to reason!" hurriedly, almost impudently, entreated the husband.

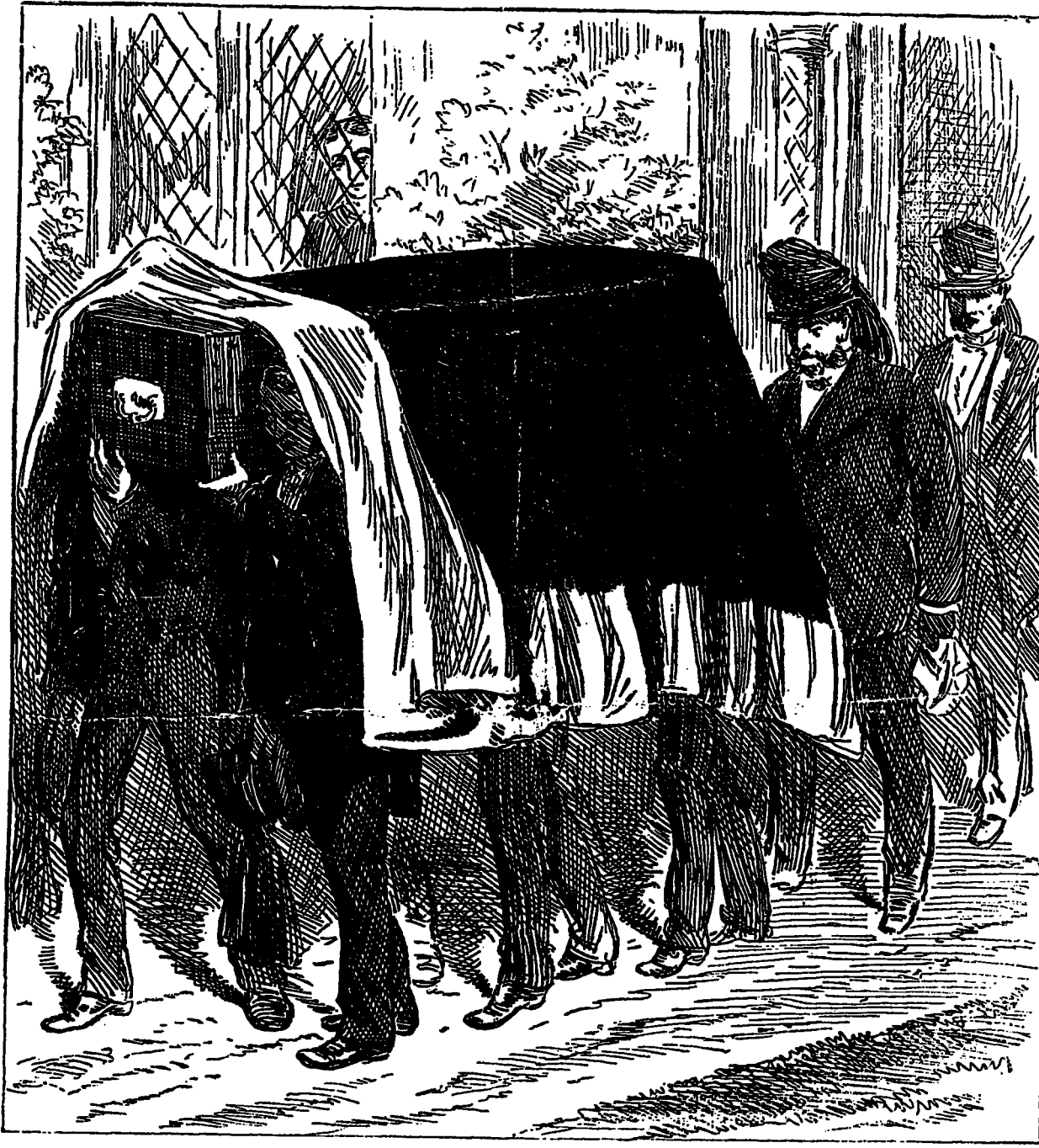
"Say you will do it, and I will be kinder to you and the children than I have ever yet been. For your own sake—the sake of those little ones you hold so dear, consent!"

The sick wife slowly but determinedly shook her head.

"Remember, Margaret, you are entirely in my power—out off from friends, servants, the outside world."

"Shame on you, Mr. Tremaine," again interposed the faithful nurse; "shame on you for troubling your wife with business details when she is still, one may say, at death's door. Besides, has she not clearly told you that she would never sign the paper you are worrying her about? Here, Mrs. Tremaine, is your draft, it is just the time for taking it."

Unsuspectingly the victim obeyed, and after a few minutes her eyelids drooped and closed in sleep—a heavy drugged sleep.



THE HOUSEKEEPER, CONCEALED BEHIND A CURTAIN, LOOKED ON WITH EAGER EYES.

"Her sleep will not be long, for the potion is not strong. Go now for the will and writing desk. It is the last chance of success."

Long enough he lingered on his mission, so long that Miss Radway glanced more than once anxiously towards the door, but a length it opened and he entered.

"She is stirring now. Hand me the smelling salts beside the lamp. There, she is reviving."

For some moments the distended blue eyes wandered curiously, enquiringly round the shadowy vault, resting on the stone floor, then glancing at the chest on which she had been placed in a half sitting, half reclining position, her back against the cold, damp wall.

"My fever fancies have come back on me again," she sighed, "and with what terrible distinctness. Miss Radway, I could almost swear that we are in a dungeon, and that Mr. Tremaine is standing against his barred iron door."

"If you did so you would say the truth, Mrs. Tremaine. We are in the stone vault under Tremaine Court, and out of this you shall not go forth alive, unless you obey your husband's injunctions and sign the will."

"She has spoken truth, wretched woman!" exclaimed the former, in a loud menacing voice. "See to what a pass your obstinate folly has brought you!"

Slowly she gazed all around the narrow, gloomy cell. A slight shudder ran through her frame, her lips moved in silent prayer, and then she spoke calmly and firmly:

"My answer down here, cut off from all human hope or help, is what it was a short while ago, when I supposed myself within the reach of both. Never! I call on Heaven to register my vow. Never will I sign it!"

"Infractured, miserable woman, do you know that your life will pay the penalty of your obstinacy?"

"Oh, Roger Tremaine!" she rejoined in a voice of indolently bitterness. "Has life with you been so happy that I should cling to it? Will its loss not rather be to me a blessed release from sorrow and suffering? All that I could have wished to live for would have been my children, and now that my death will avail them more than my life, how willingly do I yield the latter up for them."

"You speak without due reflection, Mrs. Tremaine," said the housekeeper. "Think how gloomy death will be in this dark vault, without friend or assistant nigh to moisten your lips in your parting moments."

"God will be with me, and His eternal arms will uphold me lovingly in that last awful hour. Ah, it is not death that is to be dreaded; it is the eternity beyond. But even if this were not so, who is to assure me, and she fixed a penetrating glance on Miss Radway, before which the woman's gaze fell, "who is to assure me that even were I weak enough to sign away my children's rights the act would avail me aught?"

"It would, it would, Margaret! I promise, I swear it!" urged her husband, pressing the pen into her hand. "One stroke of this will restore you to sunshine, life, and the children you so dearly love."

"Yes, at the cost of despoiling them of the only inheritance that in future days will lie between them and want. Besides," she added, as a convulsive shiver ran through her frame, "it is no longer in your power to restore me to life and sunshine. The bringing me down from my sick bed into this death-damp place has struck like ice through my veins, and already the grasp of coming dissolution is upon me. I forgive you both as I hope to be forgiven, asking only that you be kind to my children, and now either leave me or stay, as you wish, but speak to me no more. The little time that remains must be spent entirely in communion with that God to whose presence I am hastening."

leaving against a window frame, staring blankly at the floor. Passing into the sick room, she threw open the windows and let down the long curtains so as to admit air but exclude light, then came out, locking the door and putting the key in her pocket. Crossing the hall with the quick, stealthy step peculiar to her, she approached her master, and laying her hand on his arm, whispered:

"Is there nothing to be planned or done, that you stand dreaming here?"

He turned angrily on her and retorted, with bloodshot eyes:

"Have I not done enough, curse you, to sink me to hell without your wanting to drag me still deeper down?"

His listener's lip sarcastically curled. "Such excitement is unnecessary. All I want is that you should give me a few moments' hearing. When either doctor, child or servant makes their appearance, remember we must tell them each the same story. Mrs. Tremaine died at daybreak. She has to be buried without delay and her room door rigidly closed for fear of contagion. You had better shut yourself up in your dressing room, as would be natural to a new made widower overwhelmed with grief; leaving me to answer all questions and give directions. I will send to the porter's lodge for Brooks—that fellow Watts left us yesterday morning, sick or pretending to be so—but Brooks will bring my orders to the undertaker, so that there need not be any measuring of the dead, and he will see to arrangement for interment."

Tremaine inclined his head and precipitately retreated to his dressing-room, first menacingly whispering: "See that you bring her food, drink and light, all that she may require."

"Presently, I have some other duties to attend to first."

dear to her as that of richer people was to them."

"As you will, Ruth," rejoined Miss Radway, soothingly. "I have neither the right nor the intention of asking you to do anything out of the round of your usual duties, you especially, who have so bravely remained with us when the others have taken flight, will render myself no dread whatever of infection, will render myself the last services to poor Mrs. Tremaine, unless, indeed, you could procure me assistance on so short a notice. I suppose it would be difficult."

"Indeed, Miss, you may say so; for the few women that can be got to attend fever patients are all as busy as can be; and as to the others, a hint of silver wouldn't tempt them."

"I feared so. Well, Ruth, do your own part, and you will be doubly paid. Get a cup of tea for poor Mr. Tremaine, who is worn out with grief and watching. Then, when Miss Margaret wakes, break the truth gently to her and bring her to me."

Miss Radway was fuming with great apparent solicitude the rooms adjoining that mysterious closed door, when Ruth appeared at the far end of the corridor leading little Margaret by the hand.

"Oh, take me to poor mamma!" sobbed the little one, as she darted towards the housekeeper, and with a countenance she rarely displayed towards the latter personage, buried her head in the folds of her dress. "Let me see her—kiss her once more!"

"It will be a sad sight, my child, for poor mamma is dreadfully altered in appearance already; still, it seems hard to refuse you a last look," and glancing towards the closed door with an irresolute expression, she took the trembling child by the hand.

"Oh, Miss Radway!" screamed the child, in accents shrill with terror; "to take that innocent child in there would be like short of murder. Why, she'd be down with the fever to-night, that's certain!"

The housekeeper, who had had, of course, my intention of the sort, and who had, moreover counted on Ruth's interference, rejoined with a heavy sigh:

"Perhaps you are right; but it seems a cruel thing to refuse her. Margaret, my child, go out on the verandah there, so that when papa comes you may be with him."

"Yes, indeed," obtained the child, "the fresh air is the safest place. I wish we could all live in it. And now I'll go down and get breakfast; I was at it when Miss Margaret awoke, so I had to bring her up first. You must wait a cup of tea, Miss Radway."

"Well, yes, thank you; but first go to the porter's lodge and send up Brooks to me immediately."

The man Brooks soon arrived with softly stepping foot and blanched face, and glanced timorously in the direction of the late Mrs. Tremaine's room, he said in a broken, unsteady voice:

"Poor lady! I'm awful sorry for her; for she was good to the poor, and had a kind word for all. But this isn't the only house where there's a coffin wanted. Mrs. Payne, the blacksmith's wife, died of the same fever last night, and her oldest son, a likely lad of twenty, is awful bad now. The Symmons family are down with it; and the minister's sister, good old Miss Frost, is took too."

"Yes, Brooks, the hand of God is heavy upon us; but, I suppose, our sins deserve it. Here, take this purse and go to Brompton. Tell the undertaker to send up a coffin at once—he can guess easily the size—and arrange with him for everything regarding the interment, which Doctor Stewart will probably insist on having as soon as possible. Spare nothing for our dear lady was worthy of every mark of affection or respect which could be shown to her."

Well the speaker knew that money liberally or extravagantly spent was singularly efficacious in disarming criticism, even suspicion; and she was determined to leave nothing undone that could tend towards that object.

A moment after the grinding of carriage wheels on the gravel outside announced an arrival. "Probably the doctor," thought the woman, and despite her hardness, a tremor ran through her frame. What if, from curiosity or some other motive, he should ask to look at the dead? Well, she would have to frame some plausible excuse for refusing him. But if he doing so she should excite any suspicions in his mind. Ah! that would be fatal, and must be avoided at any price.

Suddenly Margaret's small pale face appeared at the door opening on the verandah; and a sudden inspiration struck Miss Radway. Calling the still weeping child to her, she was engaged apparently in the kindly task of consoling her, when Doctor Stewart entered.

"Ah, Doctor, it is all over!" lamented Miss Radway, raising her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Poor Mrs. Tremaine awoke about midnight, as you had predicted, dreadfully bad, and sank gradually, till she breathed her last a little before daybreak."

"I am very, very sorry," and the physician thoughtfully stroked his chin. "There's not a patient on my list I was so anxious to save. To be sure, she was very bad last night, but I had a sort of hope that she'd have pulled through. Is she much altered?" and he looked towards the bedroom door as if half meditating an entrance.

"Considerably, sir; and the woman's heart gave a great bound. Ominously though she continued, "Miss Margaret here wanted to go in to see her; but I thought such a thing might be dangerous."

"Quite right! quite prudent!" was the quick spoken reply.

"I want to see my mamma. Oh, let me in to see her!" wailed the child, with a sudden outbreak of passionate grief, the yearning of the morning returning with increased vehemence to that poor little foreign heart.

"Impossible, my child!" said Doctor Stewart, kindly taking the sobbing little one by the