

Symes! We must put a stop to this folly! Where is he?"

"I think Mr. Loro has gone to the farm, sir—and oh, sir, there is something else I must tell you—though how to say it I hardly know—Miss Damer, sir, she has gone out after him!"

"What?" John Barnardine fell back white and trembling. "For Heaven's sake take care what you say, man; you try me too far!"

"I saw her, sir—saw her with my own eyes not five minutes ago; she slipped away out of the conservatory door across the garden, and out at the iron gate that leads into the park, all in her ball-dress just as she was, without a blessed thing on her bare neck and arms—"

And then never a word more spoke John Barnardine, but with a white set face he strode forth across the passage, across the conservatory, out by the glass door that stood half-open, and away out into the frosty night alone.

The stars shone forth brightly, the moon had set, but a faint, silvery gleam still lit up the world with her departed splendour. Barnardine looked out eagerly along the path that led across the sloping shoulder of the hill down towards the lodge-gates and the farm in the hollow, and there far, far ahead of him he could see plainly enough a white moving object that sped away swiftly in front of him down the hill.

A low dining room in the farm-house, with three small diamond-paned windows along one side of it, some luggage piled up at one end, and Loro standing by the table hastily covering himself and his evening-dress up in a long rough ulster.

He is very pale, is poor Loro, and his teeth chatter, and his hands shake as he puts a few things together into a small bag, and presently he takes out his silver flask and drinks something out of it as though to give himself strength, then he seems better.

Then comes a sudden little confusion outside. Loro goes to the window, flings back the casement and looks out, but he can see nothing; and suddenly the door of the room opens, and a voice that is very dear to him cries out:

"But I must and will see him, I tell you!" and then Loro springs forward to the door, leaving the little window wide open behind him.

"Loro! Loro! You cannot mean it—Oh! you cannot mean it!" she cries, brokenly, and falls at his feet a tumbled mass of white net and laces with the diamonds glittering about her lovely neck.

And he rises her, oh! so tenderly and gently, and places her in a chair and wraps one of his own coats about her bare shoulders.

"Oh! Winnie, how could you come out like this after me, and with nothing over your shoulders? You will catch your death of cold. You will kill yourself! How imprudent and wild you are to do such a thing!"

"You shall not scold me, Loro!" she cries impatiently. "Do you think I came here for nothing but to be scolded in that silly way?"

"My dear, John would be so unhappy if he saw you—he would be frightened to death. How are we to get you back? I will send up to the house for a carriage to come down to fetch you."

And then Winnie stamps her foot in downright anger.

"I am not going back, I tell you, Loro, never! I have come here because I cannot let you go away; because when I read what you had written to me, my heart felt suddenly as if it would break—because I love you, Loro."

At this very moment there came a pale face outside in the shadow, and a man's bent figure that stood still and listened at the casement.

"I love you, Loro! Do you hear me, I love you!" cried Winnie aloud.

But Loro said nothing, only he sank back against the wall and covered his face with his hands.

"It's dreadful, isn't it, that I should say this to you?" she went on wildly. "And I don't think I knew it quite till I found you were really living in the thought, you know, that as long as you lived in the same house with me I should be quite happy."

same house with me I should be quite happy, you know, because I had never thought of marrying you, you know, because you had no money, and I had often thought about marrying John, because I liked the big house and the idea of being rich, and John is always kind and nice to me, so I thought it would always be like that, and I thought I should be nice to live always at Quarter Court with you and John. But now when it comes to me that you you? How could I exist there at all, without your eyes to smile at me, your voice to soothe me, your presence to bring a daily joy into my life? Oh! Loro, I cannot live without you. Don't go, I entreat you!"

And Winnie sank forward across the table, burying her face in her arms.

And then at last Loro spoke—he did not touch her white arms that lay stretched out upon the table so near to him, nor put forth one finger upon her low-browed, golden head; but he spoke softly, gently, as one reasons with a turbulent child.

"Winnie, my dear, I want to tell you something. Long, long ago, a little beggar child lay in the gutter; he was all in rags, he owned neither father nor mother, no one ever spoke a kind word to him, no one ever taught him anything; he knew not how to read or how to turn his hand to one honest thing, he could only steal, and pick pockets, and quarrel with his fellows like the dogs about his native streets. Then there came by a rich man who took him out of that wretched gutter of his misery, and the rich man took him home, and fed and clothed him, and loved him like his own son, and had him taught as though he had been the best in the land. You have heard

the story, Winnie? Well, when that boy came to be a man there was nothing that he could do to repay his benefactor; he had no means of proving to him that he was not a base, ungrateful cur, unworthy of his love. And yet because the great God is ever good, He put before the young man one single good action whereby he might reward the faithful benefactor of a whole lifetime that had been outpoured upon him. Winnie, do you not understand? John Barnardine loves you—yes, and I love you too—and yet do you suppose that I would not sooner lose my very life itself than take one iota of your love away from him. Marry him to-morrow, Winnie, for he is good, and great, and clever, and is worthy of your love; but as for me, I am ignorant and dull, and I will go away, lest I trouble his happiness and yours. Ah, Winnie, we may be a little unhappy for a space, you and I, but we will at least not be base, will we, dear?"

And then he ceased speaking, and the little room was very still and quiet, only a smothered sobbing from the girl whose head lay upon the table.

Then softly someone stepped away from behind the open window in the darkness without, and came round slowly and lingeringly to the house-door. And the cold stars shone down chillily and clearly. John Barnardine raised his eyes and looked at them, but there was neither warmth nor radiance in their glitter, only a hard, still, pitiless stare, that seemed to say to him "perish, then, dreams of love and youth—all is vain, all is hopeless—nothing is real save us!"

"Ah, yes!" said John aloud to himself, suddenly, as though in answer to this fancied voice from above, "Truth is ever truth, and to give up is better than to retain, to seek the good of others finer than to strive to be happy oneself!"

And then he strode into the narrow porch of the dark little farmhouse.

As for Winnie, she wept on still unreservedly. Perhaps she was not worth it all—not worthy of all the sacrifice and the self-devotion that these two men were ready to lay at her feet, for she was only, as someone had said, "a little human woman full of sin," but, then, who of us is it that is wholly without all the love which is shed upon us in this world? and if we none of us are more than our deserts, why, then, what beggars indeed we should be!

Be this as it may, she was very unhappy, and then all at once, she, weeping still, and Loro standing apart looking down upon her with all the misery of a great despair in his face, and yet with some-thing, too, that was god-like and divine in his self-renunciation: then the door opened softly, and John Barnardine stood before them both.

There was nothing fine or heroic in this man's face or figure; he was only an ordinary middle-aged Englishman, and no one, perhaps, would have given him credit for anything very magnificent, only he was just what, thank Heaven, so many of our middle-aged English gentlemen are—a manly man, with clean hands and an upright heart."

"My dear children!" said John Barnardine, softly, when he came into that long, low farm parlor, and Loro awoke out of his abstraction, and Winnie lifted her tear-stained face from between her hands, looking at him with a startled face of terror. "My dear children, I have heard enough to be sure we are all three making a great mistake. "Oh, no, Loro, it was not bitter hearing at all," for Loro had not out his hands with a gesture of distress. "Is it ever bitter to one, do you think, to meet with gratitude and faithful love—more, ah! far more than one deserves? And won't Winnie, is it not natural that my boy should find greater favor in your bright eyes than his old father? Oh, it is not wonderful at all! Is he not handsome, and good, and noble-hearted, and ah! best gift of all, is he not like your self, young, too? There will be no wedding to-morrow betwixt you and me, Winnie; only some other day when I have quite settled things so that Loro shall be my heir and take my name, then we will have a wedding that shall be a better, truer marriage than this other foolish one we have talked about. So I shall keep both my dear children with me always, and be happy in the sight of their happiness. Now get to bed, Loro, for it is late, and I will take Winnie back to her mother, who must be waiting for her to escort her home."

And so that second winter night came to an end, and the stars shone down coldly still, but bright, and clear, and pure, as the stars shine ever on those who live not for themselves, but for others.

## Winnie May's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES,—It is sweet to think of the many kind greetings this season brings, and of the thousands of busy hands engaged already in preparations for the pleasure of others. We must acknowledge that Christmas is the most cheerful time of the whole year. Not even frozen Nature, or the low degrees of the thermometer can induce human hearts to withhold the love and sympathy which will burst forth like the tender bud from its hiding place, at this the rarest flowering time of all the year, making December more tolerable, and teaching us that "he who does most for others does most for himself." Dickens said that "Christmas is the only holiday in the year that brings the whole human family into common communion," and it certainly does much towards keeping loving kindness alive in the world.

How different the Christmas of the present day, with its real hospitality and good cheer, compared with that of a few centuries ago when the time was given up to revels and jollity, of which eating and drinking formed a very important part, the tables being perpetually spread with all the good things the country afforded.

Although many of the old-time customs, have been dropped, a few still remain; one being the decoration of our churches, homes, etc., with evergreen boughs, holly and mistletoe, and ringing of the church bells at midnight to usher in the great day of celebration; then again, *mince pies*, which have been one of the favorite Christmas dishes for upwards of three hundred years, are, we feel sure, as highly appreciated by the girls and boys, both great and small, as ever before.

At Christmas time people of the present age manifest their love for their fellows by gifts of some kind; the amount expended need not be large, but, oh! let us practice the art of giving, which is far more blessed than to receive. Some think, or make themselves believe that they cannot afford to give presents. Now, my dear girls, that idea should be discouraged. The smaller our purse the greater should be our efforts to see what can be done with that little; it is not the cost of your gift that is appreciated, but the loving thoughtfulness that prompted the heart.

"What blessings can I wish you, O, my friends, Save that the joyful calm of Christmastide Should wrap your hearts so close that never jar Of the world's care or grief can enter in— But only love to keep you pitiful, And faith, and hope, to keep you strong and true—

"A Happy Christmas" and "A Glad New Year" I wish you, and may God's exceeding love Enfold you all, until His tender hand Shall lead you safely Home, to Love's own land! MINNIE MAY.

## Work Basket.

Fig. 1 represents a very pretty music portfolio or school bag. The foundation is a common school bag. The sides are ornamented with a valance of olive-colored felt with crimson plush cut out in figures and appliqued. Fine vines worked in feather, satin, and point russe stitches. The edges of vandyke are corded and finished with olive, blue, old gold, and red worsted and silk tassels. Twist the handles heavily with the cord, and loop some to hang down, fastening it so that it will keep in place,

## The Farmer.

Let the wealthy and the great  
Roll in splendor and in state;  
I envy them not, I declare it;  
I eat my own lamb,  
My chicken and ham,  
I shear my own fleece, and I wear it;  
I have lawns, I have bowers,  
I have fruits, I have flowers,  
The lark is my morning alarmer;  
So, jolly boys, now  
Here's Godspeed the plow,  
Long life and success to the farmer.

An inmate of the Union home for Old Ladies in Philadelphia has distinguished herself by making a bedquilt of 55,552 pieces. Though blind she threaded every needle herself. The task took three years, and one hundred spools of thread.