

her talk. "Our old Anna was never tired of telling how lively and sociable her young lady had been in early years, she was the only one, too, of all the children, who occasionally ventured to speak a word to the father. From the time I knew her, she was quiet and reserved; especially when her father was present, she spoke no more than necessary, or only when she was addressed. What her story may have been, your grandfather never spoke about it; now they are all buried long ago.

The young man looked at the picture of his great-grandfather, and his eyes rested on the hard lines round the mouth. "He must have been a stern man," he said.

The grandmother nodded. "He exacted obedience from his sons till past their thirtieth year," she said. "That is how, up to the last, not one of them had ever really a will of his own; your grandfather often enough lamented it. He was anxious to study, as you have done, but the firm required a successor. Ay, it was very different in those days."

Martin took his grandfather's portrait from the wall. "These are kind eyes," said he.

The grandmother stretched forth her hands as if she would rise from the arm-chair, then folded them gently together. "Ah, sure, my child!" she said, "these were kind eyes! He never had an enemy,—excepting one at times—and that was himself."

The old housekeeper entered. "One of the ma-sons is without, he wants to speak to the master."

"Go to him, Martin!" said the grand-mother.

"What is it Anna?"

"They have found something in the vault; a coin or something of that kind. The old coffins won't hold together any longer."

The grandmother sat with bowed head; then she looked all round the room and said: "Close the window, Anna! the scent is too strong; the sun is shining on the box-borders outside."

"The mistress has her strange fancies again!" muttered the old servant; for the box-borders had been removed more than twenty years before, and at the time, the boys had played at horses with the strings of beads. She made no remark, however, but shut the window as desired. Then she stood and gazed awhile through the branches of the great oak tree over to the old summer-house, whither in by-gone days she had been wont to carry the after-dinner coffee to the young people, and where her young lady had spent many an afternoon during her last illness.

The door opened and Martin entered with a hasty step. "You were right," he said, as he took Aunt Francisca's miniature from the wall, and held it, by the little silver ring, before his grandmother's eyes. "The artist was able to paint only the outer case of the locket; the transparent crystal rested upon her heart. I have asked often enough what it concealed. Now, I know; for I have power to look on the other side." And he laid a dusty ornament upon the table, which, in spite of its coating of green rust, was unmistakably the original of that in Aunt Francisca's portrait. The sunlight pierced the dim crystal and shone upon a lock of dark hair within.

The grandmother put on her spectacles in silence; then seized the locket with tremulous hands, and bowed down her head over it. At length, after some time, during which, the unquiet breathing of the old lady was the only sound audible in the still chamber, she laid it gently down, and said: "Put it back again, Martin, where they found it; it is out of place in the sunshine. And"—she added, as she carefully folded up the handkerchief on her lap, "bring your bride to me this evening! There should be a little gold chain about some of my old places, that she could wear at the wedding—we shall see how it looks with the brown eyes."