

to do me a favor and save yourself from a life of shame and trouble."

Maud tossed her head with her old proud, imputant grace.

"I do not understand you," she said. "Trouble we must all have in this life—God sends it for our good, if we look at it rightly, and not for our punishment—but only sin brings shame; and, through God's grace helping me, the stain of disgrace shall never rest on my name through any act of mine."

"O lady, beautiful, cold, proud English lady," cried this strange visitor, and Maud fancied her voice and accent had a foreign unfamiliar sound, "have you ever loved? Do you know what it is to have one man enthroned in your heart—his love the sole earthly good you covet, his smile dearer to you than the summer sunlight, the lingering tones of his voice pleasanter to your ear than the most enchanting music? Do you know what it is to dream of him by night and watch for his step by day—to feel, the morning his presence is not with you, blacker and lonelier than the gloom of the wild monsoon? Have you loved like this, lady, and then felt that another eye, brighter perhaps than yours, a smile more sparkling and mirthful, was drawing the heart you loved, the one treasure you craved for, from you? Do you know what it is to suffer thus?"

"Poor thing," Maud answered, tenderly, "it is indeed a fearful fate that you describe. The man who could treat you thus is not worthy of you. Give your love only to the noble and true, it will never be thrown back as a worthless gift into your bosom. A true heart knows always the value of a true love, and even when it can not return it, it sees the worth of the prize and is grateful. If you, poor soul, have been deceived by the tinsel glitter of a mock affection, your fate is indeed sad; but what can I do to help you? For empty pity is worthless, and you must have desired something from me if you came so far to see me."

"But you love him," the woman cried, angrily, "and he is not noble and true, as you fancy. It is he who has loved me who now desires to marry you; he is deceiving you, for I am his wife—his lawful wife, do you hear? He destroyed my certificate, or I would show it to you. O lady, dear lady, for your sake, for mine, have nothing to say to him!"

Maud gazed now who her visitor was, and to whom she alluded, and saw that the poor creature was almost, if not quite, crazed, and she answered gently,

"I know you are his wife, if you refer to Captain Cameron, and I promise you solemnly on my word as a lady to have nothing to do with him. But will you tell me how you came here? I thought you were in India."

"I could not rest in India," she replied. "I knew that he intended coming to England in the year to marry you—he told me so. I thought I would seek you out, and you were kind and wise and good as they say English girls are. I would tell you my story and get you to take pity on me. I sold my land and sold, and raised money in different ways until I had enough to pay my passage over. He had got tired of coming to sea—so he said I died him—so I had heard nothing from or of him for a long time, and without his knowledge. And now I have reached my point, you have heard my story and pitied me, but what am I the better for? He will never love me again, and it would be better I was sleeping quietly beneath that dark water. And so I will!"

She made a step forward; then she stopped. "If I die, your promise will not hold, and he will marry you. No, you must go too, then we shall rest together, and I shall be happy. Come, lady, come! It looks dark and cold; but none can disturb us there, and our sleep will be sweet."

She seized Maud's hand as she spoke, and drew her toward the edge. For one instant her natural impulse was to struggle, and she tried to wrest herself away; but the dangerous fire began to glitter in the maniac's eyes,

on the edge. One spring more, and I grasped her dress as the maniac, pulling her fiercely forward, sprang off the bank into the chasm below. Maud was carried over the edge by that last wild effort, but the dress held firm for an instant, though it seemed to give way in every direction; the next minute I had my arm round her, and drew her on the bank, scarcely looking in my agony at the rings of light floating wide over the spot where the wretched madwoman had sunk.

As soon as I had placed Maud in safety I returned again to the water. A little way down the river I saw for an instant the poor woman's light dress floating, but before I could get to the spot it had sunk again. Hastily I threw off my coat and plunged in, but had scarcely done so when she rose a little way farther down. I followed, but she again wauk out of sight; though I dived again and again, and spent a long time in search of the body, it was in vain, and I was at last compelled to desist until I could send men with drags to continue the search. I then returned to where I had left Maud, and found her quite unconscious. She had borne up bravely while the danger lasted, but the sudden revulsion of feeling on finding herself safe had overpowered her. I carried her to the house, and leaving her in charge of my mother, hurried back with the necessary men and implements to continue the search. After many hours fruitless anxiety and toil darkness forced us to leave off; and though we continued for several days seeking the body it was never found. We supposed the current had carried it down to the Severn, and that in the depths of that river it had been lost beyond all hope of recovery.

This was the fate of the lovely and unfortunate woman who had been so foolishly trustful as to repose confidence in the faith and love of such a man Captain Cameron. I, who had seen her in her beauty and confident affection, felt deep pity for her sad end, and it only added one more motive to the many that actuated me in my hatred to Captain Cameron.

When I returned to the house that evening, Maud was alone in the library. On seeing me she came frankly toward me, saying,

"Major Cairnsford, I can never thank you as I ought for having saved me from that unhappy woman. I owe you my life, and I hope you may not find me ungrateful. How can I show you my gratitude—words are so feeble?"

"If you really feel that I have done you a service, you can do me a great favor by staying longer with us," I answered, feeling, as I took her hand and gazed down on her sweet, earnest face, that the moment was at last come, and that I should never have a better opportunity of pleading my cause than at that minute.

"If you really wish it," she replied, "I will ask mamma to stay; but I am afraid you will have more than enough of us. We have already been here so long, you will repent ever having asked us to the house."

She said this gayly, and turned, laughing, to her work that she had laid on the sofa; but I caught her hands and drew her towards me saying,

"But I want you to live here always as the mistress; then, seeing her face flush as she tried to draw herself away, I continued,

"O Maud, have you not seen that I love you? You will not refuse me. I have waited so patiently; but now I must speak. I have been too near losing you to-day to restrain myself any longer."

"Major Cairnsford," she replied, "I am so sorry, very sorry. I can not, indeed I can not, do this for you, though I feel I owe my life to you." Then she continued, with a burst of passionate feeling, "Can you not feel, can you not understand, why I will not marry you? Esteem and honor you as a true friend I do, and ever shall do, but love I can not, and you ought not, must not, ask it of me."

"Alas!" I answered, "I feel only too keenly that love such as I give you is not yours

as I give you as to give a correct idea of them, without a strong admixture of unavoidable egotism.

She shrank a little from me as I drew her toward me, and said, faintly,

"Only give me a little time. It is so sudden, and I was unprepared. You will give me a year, will you not? Surely you will not ask me to marry you for a year?" She drew back a little from me as she said this, and pressed her trembling hand to her forehead, saying, as if to herself, "His friend! Have you forgotten so soon? I can never forget."

There was intense pain in her tone, reproach to me, who dared utter words of love to her; reproach to herself, if she had in any way, by word or deed, encouraged my infatuation. But I was blind and mad, and cried, bitterly,

"O love, let the dead bury their dead! We are young and strong, and have years of life before us. Shall we pass them in lonely misery because death has carried off the best and noblest? My love is as true and earnest as his was, though I can never be loved as he; yet what I desire, what I pray for, is that the love he won, and might, had he lived, have worn so proudly. No; I crave only what remains, the last faint embers of a fire too sacred to burn afresh on another shrine. The year you ask I should be heartless indeed to refuse; till then I will wait in patient hope, having faith that my love will win yours at last."

And so it was settled. I knew by the tone of her voice that she hoped long ere the year had passed I would have forgotten her; but I felt that, even had my love been less deep than it was, such a woman, once known, could never be forgotten. She was so different from the girls one meets generally in society—so gay, yet so tender, so fearless, yet so gentle, so careless of herself, so true to others. I said nothing of this to her, but urged her to remain with her parents at Cairns till I should again see her; for I had made up my mind at once to return for that weary year to my regiment in India, to try among its wildest scenery to pass away the time that appeared endless to my longing heart.

But here also my persuasions were of little avail. One promise only could I exact from Maud; it was that she and her parents should remain a month longer with my mother and sisters before launching themselves upon the dismal ocean of London.

A day or two after this I left home again, with a sad heart, but a bright hope before me. After all, what was a year? But a short time indeed to those who hope—an eternity to those for whom hope is dead, or in whom fear reigns in its stead. And I had no fear. I knew that, next to the dead, I possessed my darling's esteem, and that none could displace me. What cause had I, then, to be sad? I asked myself, as we bounded merrily over the sparkling wavelets of the summer sea. I was a lucky fellow, after all. Only for this year, this hateful year! But I will go up to the hills, and while it away as best I might, hunting big game there, whose skins would furnish trophies I might proudly lay at my bright love's feet on my return. So I built castles in the air, watching the curling smoke of my cigars through those golden days, while we sped onward toward Alexandria.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE HILLS.

Our passage to Alexandria was stormy a good part of the way, and we were a little behind time. Most of the passengers, I fancy, were glad when they heard the confused Babel of sounds that welcome the arrival of the steamers in that ancient and dirty town. As for me, I cared little. It mattered nothing where I spent my year of probation; discomfort annoyed me very slightly when I could think of my love's fair sweet face and sunny hair, and comfort had

because your face is fair and your hand open, she would tell you a little of what lies behind the veil of the future, that when the hour comes the blow may be less overwhelming."

"Say on, then, good woman," I replied, carelessly, feeling that it was quite hopeless to try and get rid of her while she thought she had anything to communicate. "Not that I believe in the fortune you tell me," I added. "For mine is clear and open, one that those who run may read, but because you seem to wish it, I allow you."

"Yes, yes," she replied; "your future indeed seems to lie before you clear and open—an ancient name, a princely fortune, a fair wife who does not yet love you best of all, but may, and most likely will, do so when love has time to beget love. All that you have before you now, and you think it will only grow brighter with years; but the old Arab woman sees more. She sees a miserable slave toiling in a far-distant country; he has been straight and tall as you, but in face far fairer—such a face as women love to look on. Toil and pain and grief have bent his stalwart form and lined his broad open brow, but yet he shall step between you and happiness, and mar your fortunes. Be wise, be warned in time. Return to your own country and watch over your love."

She turned to go, but I, half amused, half frightened at I knew not what vague danger her words seemed to point to, called on her to stop.

"Tell me, where is he, and who is he, this slave of whom you speak? My race are not wont to fear slaves."

"True," she answered, without looking back, and gliding away more nimbly than I could have believed possible—"true; yet they may fear this one, for he is one who will return from the dead."

As she uttered the last word she disappeared suddenly behind a rocky bowlder, and when I rose to look for her, excited even out of my calm laziness by her mystic and ominous words, she was gone. Nowhere could I find her; only on the sultry desert air the words seemed to hang, pervading every sight and sound, "he will return from the dead."

For a minute I stood stupid; then the ludicrous aspect of the situation struck me, and I laughed as I said to myself, "How all our fellows would laugh if they heard this old hag's prophecy! Thank Heaven, our women are not like these degraded Easterns, and good looks do not always carry the day even among the most ordinary of them." I turned off to rejoin our party; but on the way back, as we cantered along on our little nimble donkeys, I could hardly refrain from a hearty laugh, angry though I really felt, when I thought how wonderfully the old witch had mistaken the nature and manners of our Northern clime. Nothing remarkable occurred during the rest of our way out, and in due course of time I arrived at Alexandria.

Our fellows were astonished to see me back again so soon; but I was glad to see that Cameron had lost ground instead of gaining it during my absence; now hardly any of our best set would speak to him. To make matters worse for him, the colonel, as soon as he heard that all chance of Cameron's marrying the heiress was at an end, began to perceive his mean sneaky ways, to be less liberal of leave and more of hard work, so that altogether the man's life had altered for the worse.

He scowled savagely at me the first time we met, and said:

"I hope you are satisfied with the mischief you have done me with your tales; at any rate, I am glad of one thing—you have not got the reward you hoped. The heiress is no heiress now, and you can not profit by the ill you have done. I dare say, for the matter of that, she would be glad enough to have you, but it would not suit your book now."

"I should advise you, Captain Cameron, to leave Miss Meares' name alone, either in con-

Day by day we penetrated farther into the mountains, and our success in hunting was very fair—one or two splendid bearkins still attest our luck; but our trophies would doubtless have been far more numerous but for the incident I am about to relate.

One evening we found ourselves near a large and populous village—town I suppose I ought to call it—inhabited by a people who seemed hardly to understand any men's dialect, and who evidently had seen few white people before. My men declared that they appeared to have heard very little of our victorious English nation, and did not seem to feel the awe they should have done at beholding representatives of so powerful an empire.

Adams did not think it prudent to remain near them; they looked with such covetous eyes on our arms and implements, of which, however, they did not know the power or the use; so that I felt safe in the pleasant conviction that the discharge of my revolver would put to flight an army of them. As it was not convenient to go farther that night, I camped in a pleasant valley outside the town, and sent a message to their chief or head man that I would pay him a visit next morning. He appeared inclined to be friendly and responded to this by sending me a goat and a bag of rice, which furnished a good supper to my whole party—rather a happy circumstance as we had but little game with us that night, and would otherwise have been on short commons.

Next morning I was astir early, and by way of passing the time till ten o'clock, when the great man held his levee, I determined to stroll through the town, and see what kind of a place it was, and how the inhabitants lived. I found the houses well and strongly built—I suppose on account of the coku at night, which is often very intense—but the streets were no exception to the general rule in Oriental towns, and were chiefly remarkable for the filthy state in which they were kept. The most noteworthy thing about the place seemed to be a large building that was being erected on a small hill just outside town. I went toward it, more from want of something to do than from any particular curiosity as I supposed it to be a palace for their chief or a temple for some god. There were gangs of slaves working at it, chained together by long heavy iron chains. The poor fellows seemed to find it hard work, toiling under the hot sun, weighed down with such ponderous manacles. I stopped and watched them with some pity, they were so bent, so thin, so wretched-looking. I scanned one face after another, and certainly their look was evil enough; but how could it be otherwise, leading such a life, with no whisper of hope or word of encouragement ever falling on the ear? The overseer or task-master, a big brutal-looking fellow, strolled from one gang to another, constantly bringing down his heavy whip with sounding lash on the shoulders of some offender, more, it seemed to me, for his own brutal pleasure than by cause punishment was at all called for. My eye traveled slowly down the gang before me, as they one by one glanced up at the strange figure before them. At length I reached the last man in the line, and a puzzled feeling came over me as to where I had seen a face like that of the slave before me. He was working away steadily, and I looked and wondered for a second or two before I remarked, with a curious sense of bewilderment, that, unlike all the rest of the gang, he was a white man. Yes, there could be no doubt about it, he belonged to my own race; perhaps it was that total difference in character of expression and feature that distinguished our race from others that had made me at first imagine I had seen before that thin sad face, deeply lined by suffering and toil, and half hidden by wild curling locks and long flowing beard.

To be continued.