

While my attention was fixed on his cousin, he had wheeled his chair round, so as to face me—with the light of the lamp falling full on him. In mentioning his appearance as a witness at the Trial, I find I have borrowed (without meaning to do so) from my experience of him at this later time. I saw plainly now the bright intelligent face, and the large clear blue eyes; the lustrous waving hair of a light chestnut colour; the long delicate white hands, and the magnificent throat and chest, which I have elsewhere described. The deformity which degraded and destroyed the manly beauty of his head and breast, was hidden from view by an Oriental robe of many colours, thrown over the chair like a coverlid. He was clothed in a jacket of black velvet, fastened loosely across his chest with large malachite buttons; and he wore lace ruffles at the ends of his sleeves, in the fashion of the last century. It may well have been due to want of perception on my part—but I could see nothing mad in him, nothing in any way repelling, as he now looked at me. The one defect that I could discover in his face was at the outer corners of his eyes, just under the temple. Here, when he laughed, and, in a lesser degree, when he smiled, the skin contracted into quaint little wrinkles and folds, which looked strangely out of harmony with the almost youthful appearance of his face. As to his other features, the mouth, so far as his beard and moustache permitted me to see it, was small and delicately formed. The nose—perfectly shaped on the straight Grecian model—was perhaps a little too thin, judged by comparison with the full cheeks and the high massive forehead. Looking at him as a whole (and speaking of him, of course, from a woman's, not a physiognomist's, point of view) I can only describe him as being an unusually handsome man. A painter would have revelled in him as a model for St. John. And a young girl, ignorant of what the Oriental robe hid from view, would have said to herself the instant she looked at him, "Here is the hero of my dreams!"

His blue eyes—large as the eyes of a woman, clear as the eyes of a child—rested on me the moment I turned towards him, with a strangely varying play of expression, which at once interested and perplexed me.

Now, there was doubt, uneasy painful doubt, in the look: and now again it changed brightly to approval, so open and unrestrained that a vain woman might have fancied she had made a conquest of him at first sight. Suddenly, a new emotion seemed to take possession of him. His eyes sank, his head drooped; he lifted his hands with a gesture of regret. He muttered and murmured to himself; pursuing some secret and melancholy train of thought, which seemed to lead him farther and farther away from present objects of interest, and to plunge him deeper and deeper in troubled recollections of the past. Here and there, I caught some of the words. Little by little, I found myself trying to fathom what was darkly passing in this strange man's mind.

"A far more charming face," I heard him say. "But no—not a more beautiful figure. What figure was ever more beautiful than her's? Something—but not all—of her enchanting grace. Where is the resemblance which has brought her back to me? In the pose of the figure, perhaps? In the movement of the figure, perhaps? Poor martyred angel! What a life! And what a death! what a death!"

Was he comparing me with the victim of the poison—with my husband's first wife? His words seemed to justify the conclusion. If I was right, the dead woman had been evidently a favourite with him. There was no misinterpreting the broken tones of his voice when he spoke of her: he had admired her, living; he mourned her, dead. Supposing that I could prevail upon myself to admit this extraordinary person into my confidence, what would be the result? Should I be the gainer or the loser by the resemblance which he fancied he had discovered? Would the sight of me console him or pain him? I waited eagerly to hear more on the subject of the first wife. Not a word more escaped his lips. A new change came over him. He lifted his head with a start, and looked about him, as a weary man might look if he was suddenly disturbed in a deep sleep.

"What have I done?" he said. "Have I been letting my mind drift again?" He shuddered and sighed. "Oh, that house of Gleninch!" he murmured sadly to himself. "Shall I never get away from it in my thoughts? Oh, that house of Gleninch!"

To my infinite disappointment, Mrs. Macallan checked the further revelation of what was passing in his mind.

Something in the tone and manner of his allusion to her son's country house seemed to have offended her. She interposed sharply and decisively.

"Gently, my friend, gently!" she said. "I don't think you quite know what you are talking about."

His great blue eyes flashed at her fiercely. With one turn of his hand, he brought his chair close at her side. The next instant he caught her by the arm, and forced her to bend to him, until he could whisper in her ear. He was violently agitated. His whisper was loud enough to make itself heard where I was sitting at the time.

"I don't know what I am talking about?" he repeated—with his eyes fixed attentively, not on my mother-in-law, but on me. "You short-sighted old woman! where are your spectacles? Look at her! Do you see no resemblance—the figure, not the face!—do you see no resemblance there to Eustace's first wife?"

"Pure fancy!" rejoined Mrs. Macallan. "I see nothing of the sort."

He shook her impatiently.

"Not so loud!" he whispered. "She will hear you."

"I have heard you both," I said. "You need have no fear, Mr. Dexter, of speaking before me. I know that my husband had a first wife;

and I know how miserably she died. I have read the Trial."

"You have read the life and death of a martyr!" cried Miserrimus Dexter. He suddenly wheeled his chair my way; he bent over me; his eyes filled with tears. "Nobody appreciated her at her true value," he said, "but me. Nobody but me! nobody but me!"

Mrs. Macallan walked away impatiently to the end of the room.

"When you are ready, Valeria, I am," she said. "We cannot keep the servants and the horses waiting much longer in this bleak place."

I was too deeply interested in leading Miserrimus Dexter to pursue the subject on which he had touched, to be willing to leave him at that moment. I pretended not to have heard Mrs. Macallan. I laid my hand, as if by accident, on the wheel-chair to keep him near me.

"You showed how highly you esteemed that poor lady in your evidence at the Trial," I said. "I believe, Mr. Dexter, you have ideas of your own about the mystery of her death?"

He had been looking at my hand, resting on the arm of his chair, until I ventured on my question. At that, he suddenly raised his eyes, and fixed them with a frowning and furtive suspicion on my face.

"How do you know I have ideas of my own?" he asked sternly.

"I know it from reading the Trial," I answered. "The lawyer who cross-examined you spoke almost in the very words which I have just used. I had no intention of offending you, Mr. Dexter."

His face cleared as rapidly as it had clouded. He smiled, and laid his hand on mine. His touch struck me cold. I felt every nerve in me shivering under it—I drew my hand away quickly.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "if I have misunderstood you. I have ideas of my own; about that unhappy lady." He paused, and looked at me in silence, very earnestly. "Have you any ideas?" he asked. "Ideas about her life? or about her death?"

I was deeply interested; I was burning to hear more. It might encourage him to speak if I was candid with him. I answered, "Yes."

"Ideas which you have mentioned to any one?" he went on.

"To no living creature," I replied—"as yet."

"This is very strange!" he said, still earnestly reading my face. "What interest can you have in a dead woman whom you never knew? Why did you ask me that question, just now? Have you any motive in coming here to see me?"

I boldly acknowledged the truth. I said, "I have a motive."

"Is it connected with Eustace Macallan's first wife?"

"It is."

"With anything that happened in her lifetime?"

"No."

"With her death?"

"Yes."

He suddenly clasped his hands, with a wild gesture of despair—and then pressed them both on his head, as if he was struck by some sudden pain.

"I can't hear it to-night!" he said, "I would give worlds to hear it—but I daren't; I should lose all hold over myself in the state I am in now. I am not equal to raking up the horror and the mystery of the past; I have not courage enough to open the grave of the martyred dead. Did you hear me, when you came here? I have an immense imagination. It runs riot at times. It makes an actor of me. I play the parts of all the heroes that ever lived. I feel their characters. I merge myself in their individualities. For the time, I am the man I fancy myself to be. I can't help it. I am obliged to do it. If I restrained my imagination, when the fit is on me, I should go mad. I let myself loose. It lasts for hours. It leaves me, with my energies worn out, with my sensibilities frightfully acute. Rouse any melancholy or terrible associations in me, at such times; and I am capable of hysterics. I am capable of screaming. You heard me scream. You shall not see me in hysterics. No, Mrs. Valeria—no, you innocent reflection of the dead and gone—I would not frighten you for the world. With you come here to-morrow in the daytime? I have got a chaise and a pony. Ariel, my delicate Ariel, can drive. She shall call at Mama Macallan's and fetch you. We will talk to-morrow, when I am fit for it. I am dying to hear you. I will be fit for you in the morning. I will be civil, intelligent, communicative in the morning. No more of it now! Away with the subject! The too-exciting, the too-interesting subject! I must compose myself, or my brains will explode in my head. Music is the true narcotic for excitable brains. My harp! my harp!"

He rushed away in his chair to the far end of the room—passing Mrs. Macallan as she returned to me, bent on hastening our departure.

"Come!" said the old lady irritably. "You have seen him, and he has made a good show of himself. More of him might be tiresome. Come away."

The chair returned to us more slowly. Miserrimus Dexter was working it with one hand only. In the other he held a harp, of a pattern which I had hitherto only seen in pictures. The strings were few in number, and the instrument was so small that I could have held it easily on my lap. It was the ancient harp of the pictured Muses and the legendary Welsh Bards.

"Good night, Dexter," said Mrs. Macallan. He held up one hand imperatively.

"Wait!" he said. "Let her hear me sing."

He turned to me. "I decline to be indebted to other people for my poetry and my music," he went on. "I compose my own poetry, and my own music. I improvise. Give me a moment to think. I will improvise for you."

He closed his eyes, and rested his head on the frame of the harp. His fingers gently touched the strings while he was thinking. In a few minutes, he lifted his head, looked at me, and struck the first notes—the prelude to the song. It was wild, barbaric, monotonous music; utterly unlike any modern composition. Sometimes it suggested a slow and undulating Oriental dance. Sometimes it modulated into tones which reminded me of the severer harmonies of the old Gregorian chants. The words, when they followed the prelude, were as wild, as recklessly free from all restraint of critical rules as the music. They were assuredly inspired by the occasion; I was the theme of the strange song. And thus—in one of the finest tenor voices I ever heard—my poet sang of me:

Why does she come?  
She reminds me of the lost;  
She reminds me of the dead;  
In her form like the other,  
In her walk like the other:  
Why does she come?

Does Destiny bring her?  
Shall we range together  
The mazes of the past?  
Shall we search together  
The secrets of the past?  
Shall we interchange thoughts, surmises, suspicions?  
Does Destiny bring her?

The Future will show.  
Let the night pass;  
Let the day come.  
I shall see into Her mind:  
She will look into Mine.  
The Future will show.

His voice sank, his fingers touched the strings more and more feebly as he approached the last lines. The over-wrought brain needed, and took, its re-animating repose. At the final words, his eyes slowly closed. His head lay back on the chair. He slept with his arms round his harp, as a child sleeps, hugging its last new toy.

We stole out of the room on tiptoe, and left Miserrimus Dexter—poet, composer, and madman—in his peaceful sleep.

### THE SOCIETY GIRL.

Many look upon youth as the happiest period of life. When we consider how many worries they have of the kind I have just recorded, and how seriously such matters are viewed, and what a matter of importance it is to know with whom they dance, or whether another receives more favors in the German, and the many things which seem as trifles to older persons but of the first importance to them, I doubt whether youth is really the happiest period of one's life. If one could only read the thoughts of the girls at a German, for instance. They first hear that there is to be one given, and there is anxious expectancy until the invitation comes. Next is the palpitating uncertainty about a partner. Perhaps at the last moment he fails to put in an appearance. There is the beautiful dress, which was ordered for this especial occasion. She had lain awake some hours every night since it was put in the dressmaker's hands, thinking how lovely and becoming it would be. Then there was a dread of disappointment for fear it might not be finished when promised, or might not fit, or might not come up to her ideas of loveliness. So the dress in which she appears and is so admired, has been purchased at a cost of some happiness, and after all she sees another dress worn that is prettier, and if hers had only been made differently it would have been so much handsomer. Arriving at the ball she sees partner after partner come to the dressing-room door to escort the young ladies who are assigned them for the evening. But where is hers? At first she is only anxious, but soon grows indignant when the dressing-room is deserted by all but herself and chaperone. What shall she do? She cannot return home, for the carriage has been dismissed until midnight. So with scarcely repressed tears she and mamma enter the ball-room and sweetly smile at the lady who is receiving. Mamma explains about the missing partner whom they were to meet at the dressing-room door. All the couples are now drawing for seats, and my heroine has to take a back chair among the chaperones. Now, if she did not have an elegant home and was not known to be wealthy, she might stay back there all of the evening, but under the circumstances the young men take her out occasionally, when lo! a stranger enters. He is the only man present who is disengaged and considers himself fortunate in finding one of the loveliest girls present without a partner. His coming was as opportune for that young lady's happiness as the arrival of the hero of romance upon the spot in time to check the fiery steed who was rushing with his lovely burden to the brink of the adjacent precipice. In short, he was the right man in the right place. But the after pleasures of the evening scarcely compensated for the misery of the first part.

### A PAINTER'S ROMANCE.

The Washington National Republican gives the following romance in the life of Walter Ingalls, the painter, who died recently: "Quite early in life he fell, when he was poor, in love with a New Hampshire girl, the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. She was really the belle of Sanborn, and had rather lofty ideas of the kind of man she would like to marry. His attachment was reciprocated, and they were engaged. Still, on the lady's part the affection was not so deep-seated as it might have been, and besides her choice was opposed by her parents. They could not see in the humble painter—a man destined to have kings spiritual and kings temporal

sitting before his easel—a man worthy of their daughter's hand. The result of it was the engagement broken off, and Ingalls married another lady. Her first affianced also married. Each of them had children—she a daughter and he a son. After they had grown up they met—the son and daughter—in the Crescent City. Strangely enough, so intricate, delicate, and beautiful are the avenues of love that they, too, fell into the embrace of the tender passion, and after a short courtship were engaged to be married. Twenty-five years before that their father and mother had been similarly bound, and, like them, they for some cause broke off the engagement as their parents had done before them. In the meantime Mr. Ingalls had buried his wife, and happening to meet this daughter of his first betrothed, a mutual affection sprang up between them, and they were married. There was, perhaps, quite forty years difference in their ages, but there never was a truer marriage. His love and regard were infinite. Her devotion and tender care were beautiful. She was his child, he her father. He was the oak, she the vine. He the keystone of the arch, she its lovely curve. He the power, and she the beauty of a life that was all grace, affection, and piety. He had been dead only three weeks, when she left earth to join him in Heaven. From the day of his loss she refused to be comforted. Her grief was too deep for tears, and words of consolation were unheeded. One evening she retired for the night apparently in good health. She complained neither of pain nor sickness, but in the morning she was stone dead in her bed."

### VARIETIES.

THE Turks have taken to writing opera bouffe, and a native comic opera has met with such success in Constantinople that a second work, *Mekteh-Oustassi*, "The Schoolmaster," is announced.

ISABELLE, the flower girl of the Paris Jockey Club, is said to have more jewellery even than Schneider. Over 500 personages of the highest distinction have given her pieces of jewellery, and yet Isabelle is plain, portly, middle-aged, and virtuous.

THE Germans have always been famed for their reverence of their great poets and composers. Now, however, the Teutons have determined to turn their idols into ridicule, and a theatre is going to bring out a burlesque *Schiller und Goethe*—in which the poets' lives and characters are to be caricatured.

PROBABLY the highest price ever paid for journalistic work was that paid by Mr. Fiske, the old London agent of a New York paper, who was offered \$500 by the *Times* for his report of the ocean yacht race, but gave it to the American paper, receiving a thousand dollars for two columns.

"CRAM" has received a damaging blow. A special committee appointed to inquire into the training of naval cadets on board the "Britannia," have unhesitatingly reported that the cramming system overtaxes their brains, and that the competitive system should be abolished, as having no value in itself, and yet causing worry to boys.

SOME French ladies, friends of the Empress Eugénie, have lately been working for her a splendid carpet. It is composed of a number of squares, each of which contains the armorial bearings of the fair worker's husband or father. The squares, when they are all finished, are to be joined together by bands of gold cloth, embroidered with violets, the symbol of the dynasty of Napoleon.

THE horror of politics felt by moderate minds in France has been comically illustrated by a provincial priest in his sermon. The good curé is descending on the horrors of the lower regions, and finding his congregation unmoved by his eloquence, thus winds up with a crushing argument: "To give you, my brethren, an idea of this awful place I may tell you that politics are discussed there all day long."

CARNIVAL MASKS form a special branch of manufacture in France, and the makers are already hard at work for the coming season. The various kinds of masks are each the *specialité* of some province. The cheap ordinary ones are made in Anjou and Brittany, Lyons manufactures those of velvet and silk, grotesque masks come from the Marais, while false noses belong to another department. Facial imitations of public characters are strictly prohibited.

THE escape of ex-Marshal Bazaine is still a sore subject with the French authorities. Amongst the Parisian toys prepared for the *Jour de l'An* was a clever little model of the Fort Ste. Marguerite. At the top stood a tiny figure dressed as a French Marshal, and holding a rope. By pressing a spring the figure slid down the rope on to the rocks below, washed by the sea, while another figure appeared at the summit of the tower clasping his hands in despair. This represented the governor of the prison. The sale of the toy has been prohibited by the Governor of Paris.

THE *Times* prints a tabulated statement of the number of the employed and unemployed workmen in New York. From these figures we learn that the mechanics and unskilled labourers of the city number about 82,000, of whom 16,000 are idle. This is a more favourable showing than that of last year by thirty per cent. The *Times's* article also informs us that 35,765 of the workmen belong to unions, and over 46,000 do not; and that 5,730 of the unionists are idle against 9,765 of the non-unionists. The unions have during a year lost 11,185 in membership.

AN American lady writer, exhibiting one of the differences between the vernacular of the Americans and English, states that the waist of a dress is by the latter denominated a "body." She relates that a young American lady, on a visit to a country house, was put into a room previously occupied by one of the family, but which had the reputation of being haunted. The young lady had subdued her nervousness sufficiently to fall into a light slumber, when there came a gentle tap at the door, and a sepulchral voice whispered through the key-hole: "I want to come in and get my body."

THE Paris Reds have had an event—a christening of a red baby by civil rights. The table on which stood the font was covered with red cloth and canopied by the *drapeau rouge*. The baby was dressed in red, and the mother wore a red girdle and red ribbons. The father, who was in his shirt sleeves, wore also a red waistband and the Phrygian cap, and held in his hands a glass and a litre of red wine, with which he gave brotherly welcome to his guests. At length, all having assembled, the grandfather, who was as red as the others, advanced slowly, and raising his trembling hands above the baby's head, pronounced these words: "In the name of the Republic, I baptize thee Raoul."