

a thought occurred to him which, with feverish eagerness, he carried to an extraordinary perfection, aided by the mechanical skill of the faithful Thomas Jenkins. Tristram made a model of what Thomas either bought or executed, and afterwards placed in the cornice and ornamental groining of the ceiling of the room, which cornice, owing to some change in the destination of the room, perhaps from an humble lumber-room to a decorated tribune, had been an after-thought, and was, therefore, made easily to accommodate the musical apparatus of the unfortunate young nobleman; for young he might still be deemed, although he lingered to the age of forty one, solaced in his last hours by strains which he associated with those of the heavenly choir.

Whatever faults poor Tristram had left unchecked—for natural faults we all possess—they were not those of malice. He received the last consolations of the Church, and was laid in his coffin in the room which latterly had been his sole retreat. His overwrought feelings, which continued even to last, on the subject of the occupation of his home by strangers, contributed to excite the already indignant antagonism of his two humble friends against all new-comers, and they determined, as Miss Sanderson had suspected, to bring in the aid of nocturnal mysteries to drive them away. The superstitious terrors of the neighborhood assisted their project. It was believed that Tristram had drowned himself in the lake; and his appearance occasionally, either in the grounds at night, or passing an open window, had never undeceived the terrified spectators. The tubes of the scattered organ or panspipes had been originally supplied by bellows, and when access to the room threatened to become difficult, if not impossible, Jenkins, the carpenter, continued, by means of a rope attached to the candle, and conveyed outside the chapel, concealed by trees, to enable Turner, the gardener, to supply the tubes with air. No melody was produced, but a succession of wild and plaintive sounds, which, connected, as they were, with a melancholy and terrific fiction, had rendered Woolton Court an unenviable and transitory possession. Its hereditary lord, however, as times drew on, frequently permitted the trusty Turner and Jenkins to wake the echoes of his uncle Tristram's wail.

The harp was now attuned to satisfy the delicately correct ear of the young Violet, and as if she were—as doubtless she was—awaiting the moment when her niece might expect her nearer presence, Lady Olara quitted the writing that had occupied her, and took a chair close to the harp. A plaintive air with brilliant variations was the first choice of the young harpist, and the surprise and pleasure of those who had not yet heard her were duly expressed. She then whispered, "Let us sing together: something I have often sung with you; never mind its not being new. Let us sing 'Go where glory awaits thee!'"

"Yes, Violet," said her father, "you have made a good choice; sing that with your aunt."

The two voices blended and thrilled as family voices best do, and Lord Charleton said to his grandson, "What angelic voices! Heaven is doing much for you, my boy!"

"Ab, my lord," replied Arthur, in a low tone, "I have no secrets from you. My heart is, alas! with the elder angel, in spite of the double barrier between us. My mind requires such a mind as Lady Clara's. I prefer a woman of my own age or more. She piques me beyond measure, without knowing it for she is no coquette. "She—" but here Arthur caught the fixed and fiery eye of the marquis, for the singing had recommenced, and he gave the same devoted attention that he had bestowed on the first song, feeling as then that each word uttered by the "elder

angel" was united in thought with his absent rival. The duo was this time in Italian, and sung with the same perfect taste and feeling. Both Lord Charleton and Arthur, with Lord Seaham, were attracted to the fair vocalists, and while the aged nobleman assured Lady Olara, whom he purposely engaged, that he had rarely heard such expressive notes, the younger auditor was pouring forth a volley of well-deserved compliments to Lady Violet, in unconscious French, of which he became aware only on her saying in the same language.

"If you prefer speaking to me in French, pray do so; I like that language very much, and have known it since I have known anything."

The conversation continued. Violet consented to the open ball, although her extreme youth had prevented her from being present at anything of the kind beyond children's dances and fetes champetres.

The marquis heard the arrangement, as he passed to and fro, and the party dispersed in the most harmonious dispositions.

"Do you not intend to add some ornaments to your dinner dress?" said the duchess to Lady Clara, as they retired from the dining-room.

"Ah! no," replied she, "I am saved, by your grace's presence, the necessity of appearing as chaperon to Violet, at the ball. From the time of my engagement, which was that of the departure of Sir Henry for scenes of danger, I could dance no more. Since his return, under the boreavement of sight, I feel the same reluctance to any amusement no longer in sympathy with his feelings. I go willingly to concerts, for music he can still—nay, more than ever—enjoy. I am sure, duchess, you are one to fully understand my feelings."

"Perfectly, my dear. The betrothed of a blind hero to be skipping about, or exposing herself to the importunities of rejected partners, would evince bad taste, if not bad feeling. Sir Henry deserves that delicate perception of the most perfect, which is peculiarly yours."

"These beautiful scenes always make me think of heaven," said Lady Violet to the duchess, as they entered the brilliant saloon, formerly the banquet hall, and were conducted by Lord Charleton to their seats at the head of the room. The venerable earl then left them to make the tour of the room, in polite welcome to his guests, and Violet continued—"Do you not feel this, duchess, you who have seen such magnificent and beautiful entertainments?"

"God bless you, my sweet girl! Well, I suppose heaven will appear, to those who are so happy as to enter it, just according to the tastes and feelings they have received from Nature; and also, perhaps, according to their age. It is very natural that you should associate with heaven the lights and flowers, and brilliant dresses, and cheerful movement, not to mention the soul-stirring music, which imparts positive happiness. To you, in your innocent girlhood, this ball room may fitly convey an emblem of heaven, for all seems joy, and peace, and love."

"And is it not so, duchess? Where are the thorns in this rosy bower? How happy every one looks, even before the dancing begins! Can all this be deceit?"

"Oh, no; I do not say this. I believe that every one, or almost every one, here to-night is prepared to cast off care, and do honor to the occasion by happy looks, and even happy hearts. But, my dear child, life cannot continue one brilliant festive scene. We will talk this over to-morrow. It would be out of place now, and make you look too grave when Lord Stanmore comes to claim your promise to open the ball with him."

"I suppose he dances very beautifully," said Lady Violet, "as he has

been brought up in France. So I must do my best."

"And that best will be very beautiful, my little Violet," said her father, who had broken off his conversation with the earl, and was now beginning to feel outraged at the non-appearance of Arthur. "If," whispered he to the duchess, "he is aiming at effect—if he is aping royalty, he should remember that our royalty is ever punctual."

"Some disaster of the toilet, I should conjecture," suggested the duchess, in the same tone.

The musicians were doing their best to prevent a too evident delay; but it had become apparent to all, save Lord Charleton and Violet, who were occupied in the innocent enjoyment of the music and the brilliant scene before them. Suddenly, from a side door, his eyes sparkling, and his cheeks glowing with anger, not at his toilet, which was perfect, but at the refusal of Lady Olara to be present, a discovery connected with his tardy entrance, Lord Stanmore rushed towards Violet, and, with all the rebounding force of a heart rejected by another exclaimed—

"Is it possible that I kept you waiting; you, my angel!"

This was in French, and heard by all the group. The emphasis on the repetition of the word "you" unfurled the gathered furrows on Lord Seaham's brow, deepened the smile on Lord Charleton's mouth, and the roses on the cheek of Violet. The dance commenced—a dance often recalled in after-months of separation and vicissitude, then gazed on with fond admiration by the partial relatives. The hilarity extended over the whole room, and lasted till the early hours of the morning.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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