

room, and with slow and feeble steps preceded me. She had lived for upwards of forty years in the family.

PART II.

Begins with a leaf from the Squire's diary.

"I stand at the window, and as I look out, see clouds of mist descend in rain upon the woods. The wind sighs in a mournful manner, for Autumn is come, and the old moat floats shoals of withered leaves upon its surface. I try to think; I try to discover for myself if my mother has a farther sight than I. If she is wise—then—then—I must be a fool. A fool to love this dreary Grange—never dreary to me, for is it not peopled to my eye? Has not the past left its records, and can I not live in and enjoy the visionary life of one who lives in past events? A fool to love to linger in its quaint and shadowy corners; a fool to wander in its precincts, and brood in thought over the 'might have beens!' A fortnight ago, I thought of this in church. In my hand I held the prayer book of one Jules Montford, dated 1670. He, too, had sat in that seat; had watched the village folk come into church; had listened to the Rubric, now devoutly read by our old rector.

"The village choir began its usual remarkable singing, but far above their strained voices rang a voice clear and fresh and delicious. I looked for it and found its owner at last. The face of a saint, with womanly, pitying eyes, was raised to mine—raised to mine, as her lips repeated, 'From all evils, Good Lord deliver us.'

"I sat with my eyes fixed upon that face, seeing nothing else, hearing nothing but what fell from her lips. Yet I sat and did not attempt to follow her when she left the church; it was my saint—I cared not to find it human. One more thing to dream and ponder over—one more face to mix up

with my dreams—a face that haunts my every turn, whose appealing eyes entreat of me to pray for deliverance from the evil.

"Wandering yesterday in the wood I saw the face again—this time white and terror stricken, as if indeed in me was the impersonation of evil which she dreaded. It happened thus: The grave of my kinsman Jules Montford lies in the wood. He was innocent of the crime imputed to him; he has often told me so as I have dreamed and wandered in that wood. Yet was he hanged by the neck till he was dead—and then his body was refused Christian burial, and his bones lie in the wood; so runs the legend. He was supposed to have murdered the man who was the next heir to the property of which the Grange was a small part, since he had invited his kinsman to visit him, had made merry with him, and had shown him to his room at night, and that after that night no man ever beheld John Montford again. For the supposed murder Jules Montford was hanged. As I stood beside his grave and thought of this injustice two girl voices reached me, and soon the owners approached, and in one of them I recognized my saint. Her white, sad face kept in my thoughts for hours. Imagine my surprise when, on reaching home, I found my mother had visitors—one of them a bright, merry girl, the other kneeling with abstracted expression contemplating some curiosities in the cabinet."

A merry laugh disturbed Martin's soliloquy; a vivid color broke over his face as a voice cried out "Take care, Claudine, do not break your neck. I declare there is a step quite gone."

Martin was at the foot of the stairs in a moment.

"Ladies, I beg of you, I entreat of you, not to endanger your lives by climbing up to the Tower room. You can see nothing from it, and I can assure you that the staircase is terribly unsafe."