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WRITE FOR CALENDAR AND PARTICULARS.

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"Have you ever tried the experiment?" asked her companion.

"Yes," she answered with a little shudder, "and although the night was bright and clear, the spring was black as ink. I have tried twice; once more I shall come, and if I see it not, I shall know my death is to be by fire or water."

"Tomorrow is Good Friday, let us both come to see our fate; what say you, my Donna Zepha?"

"She blushed and hesitated, but finally consented.

"The following night was bright and clear; the full moon shone with unusual brightness overhead, as the two slowly bent their steps toward the fire well.

"We shall see our faces in the water to-night, Zepha; it is as bright as day," said the count as they neared the spring.

"She stepped forward and looked down; then started back with a cry of horror.

"By fire or water; it is my fate," she declared, but the count laughed lightly at her fears, and stepped forward. The moon and stars were reflected in the clear water, but turn which way he would, he could see no shadow of himself. With a blank look upon his handsome face he turned to his companion. "I do not see myself there either, Zepha; is there anything in fate?" But youth and love do not long dwell upon the unpleasant things that fate may have in store for them.

"Count Paul drew the beautiful girl nearer to him and said: 'Zepha, I did not care for the fire well, except that I might here give you the sign of my pledge to you; in half a year I shall return and make you the Countess Zepha Varglamie; until that time wear this necklace; these rubies show my warm, deep love for you; the pearls are emblems of your own pure, white soul.'

"He clasped the rich ornament about her soft neck, then they walked slowly homeward; the next day he departed for his Northern home.

"How the months dragged to the girl as she lingered long by the well, where he had first told her of his love, and afterward given her that cherished necklace.

"Half a year passed, then a year, and the beautiful dark eyes held a look of longing.

"Good Friday was at hand once more, but under what different circumstances; A great stir at the village was occasioned by the arrival of a party of distinguished strangers.

"On Friday afternoon the Donna Zepha walked to the fire well, as was her daily habit, and stood gazing into the sparkling waters.

"She heard voices, but moved not till she heard and recognized the voice which had made her life complete with happiness, and which was soon to speak her death sentence.

"My dear Lizette," he was saying, "to-night I shall bring you to this spring; a year ago to-night I looked into it, but could not see my face. My companion, a little Spanish girl, told me I should die by fire or water."

"A merry, ringing laugh greeted his words; they neared the spring, and a flush of annoyance overspread the face of the count.

"Ah, Zepha, how happy I am to see you once more! This is my wife, the Countess Varglamie; Lizette, this is the young lady who told me the story of the well."

He stopped, for the simple reason that he could find nothing more to say. Zepha's black eyes dilated as she looked at his flushed, abashed face; the fair young countess gazed first at her husband, then at the lovely stranger, with a look of sorrow upon her gentle face.

"Zepha raised her hands to her neck with the slow, graceful movement that seemed so vitally a part of her personality, and unclasped the necklace which she had worn for a year. She touched the shimmering pearls, and bright, sparkling rubies with a caressing hand, then extended them toward the count.

"Count Paul, I return you your betrothal gift, and may my misery follow you throughout eternity; may your spirit dwell in your posterity and through them suffer many deaths; these pearls are no longer an emblem, as you

said, of my pure white soul, for that soul is crimson now with revenge; take them, ere the blood runs out upon my hands, and taints the fire well. By fire or water you are to die, and may your destiny be also that of your children."

"She threw the gems at his feet, and turned away, without having so much as glanced at the countess.

"Some impulse impelled him to stoop and pick them up; the pearls were a deep crimson.

"The countess looked at him with unutterable scorn expressed in her noble face.

"The fire well had no visitors that night, but a few days later the body of Zepha was found in the crystal waters.

"Years passed. Two children were born to the count.

"His daughter while on a visit to Paris, was burned to death.

"The count turned deadly pale when the news was brought him, but the poor mother raved incessantly.

"She was kept confined in her room, but one night she eluded the vigilance of the servants and disappeared.

"The count was called, and soon found her struggling beside a capsized boat, in a small lake not far from the mansion. He swam to her rescue, but with a drowning person's unreasonableness, she clung about his neck, and together they perished.

"The son, when a middle-aged man, was drowned while bathing in the Seine. The succeeding generations perished either by fire or water; one was shot in a duel; one went down with a sailing vessel. The last Count of Varglamie, anxious to tear from his name the cloud enveloping it, came to America a few years ago; he brought the crimson pearls and the curse of the Spanish girl with him.

My story ends here, and I have no proof that one word I have told you is true, but it is a strange story, and I should like to look upon the face of the doomed Count of Varglamie."

"The crimson pearls would be a novelty," observed the commercial man. The captain had shown intense interest in the narrative; he thought a moment, then drew from his pocket a small packet, and held up for our inspection a string of gleaming jewels.

"Here are the crimson pearls," he said. "The Spaniard's curse has expired. Count Jean Varglamie died in my arms on the field of El Caney. He was a brave man, but he told me long ago that he should never marry, and that his life was worthless. He had started many a time to tell me of his family tragedies, but somehow we were always interrupted; when dying he gave me these jewels. His remaining possessions had all been bestowed upon various needy institutions and individuals; I think he knew he was to die by the fire of the Spaniards; poor fellow! He seemed nearly wild sometimes, when he recounted some awful story of his ancestor's fate. I shall always keep these," continued the captain, "in memory of the truest friend a man ever had, and whether the story be true or only a myth, I shall always look with respectful awe upon these crimson pearls."

A Kirkintilloch baillie stated at a meeting recently that "Christianity gave to women what they never had before and what they have not got yet." And he is not an Irishman.

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