

in the general appearance of comfort. It was a large apartment, commensurate with the size of the castle, and the deep bay-windows commanded an extensive view.

On the morning following the conversation already mentioned General Pomeroy arose early, and it was toward this room that he turned his steps. Throughout the castle there was that air of neglect already alluded to, so that the morning-room afforded a pleasant contrast. Here all the comfort that remained at Chetwynde seemed to have centred. It was with a feeling of intense satisfaction that the General seated himself in an arm-chair which stood within the deep recess of the bay-window, and surveyed the apartment.

The room was about forty feet long and thirty feet wide. The ceiling was covered with quaint figures in fresco, the walls were paneled with oak, and high-backed, stolid-looking chairs stood around. On one side was the fire-place, so vast and so high that it seemed itself another room. It was the fine old fire-place of the Tudor or Plantagenet period—the unequaled, the unsurpassed—whose day has long since been done, and which in departing from the world has left nothing to compensate for it. Still, the fire-place lingers in a few old mansions; and here at Chetwynde Castle was one without a peer. It was lofty, it was broad, it was deep, it was well-paved, it was ornamented not carelessly, but lovingly, as though the hearth was the holy place, the altar of the castle and of the family. There was room in its wide expanse for the gathering of a household about the fire; its embrace was the embrace of love; and it was the type and model of those venerable and hallowed places which have given to the English language a word holier even than "Home," since that word is "Hearth."

It was with some such thoughts as these that General Pomeroy sat looking at the fire-place, where a few fagots sent up a ruddy blaze, when suddenly his attention was arrested by a figure which entered the room. So quiet and noiseless was the entrance that he did not notice it until the figure stood between him and the fire. It was a woman; and certainly, of all the women whom he had ever seen, no one had possessed so weird and mystical an aspect. She was a little over the middle height, but exceedingly thin and emaciated. She wore a cap and a gown of black serge, and looked more like a Sister of Charity than any thing else. Her features were thin and shrunken, her cheeks hollow, her chin peaked, and her hair was as white as snow. Yet the hair was very thick, and the cap could not conceal its heavy white masses. Her side-face was turned toward him, and he could not see her fully at first, until at length she turned toward a picture which hung over the fire-place, and stood regarding it fixedly.

It was the portrait of a young man in the dress of a British officer. The General knew that it was the only son of Lord Chetwynde, for whom he had written, and whom he was expecting; and now, as he sat there with his eyes riveted on this singular figure, he was amazed at the expression of her face.

Her eyes were large and dark and mysterious. Her face bore unmistakable traces of sorrow. Deep lines were graven on her pale forehead,

and on her wan, thin cheeks. Her hair was white as snow, and her complexion was of an unearthly grayish hue. It was a memorable face—a face which, once seen, might haunt one long afterward. In the eyes there was tenderness and softness, yet the fashion of the mouth and chin seemed to speak of resolution and force, in spite of the ravages which age or sorrow had made. She stood quite unconscious of the General's presence, looking at the portrait with a fixed and rapt expression. As she gazed her face changed in its aspect. In the eyes there arose unutterable longing and tenderness; love so deep that the sight of it thus unconsciously expressed might have softened the hardest and sternest nature; while over all her features the same yearning expression was spread. Gradually, as she stood, she raised her thin white hands and clasped them together, and so stood, intent upon the portrait, as though she found some spell there whose power was overmastering.

At the sight of so weird and ghostly a figure the General was strangely moved. There was something startling in such an apparition. At first there came involuntarily half-superstitious thoughts. He recalled all those mysterious beings of whom he had ever heard whose occupation was to haunt the seats of old families. He thought of the White Lady of Avenel, the Black Lady of Scarborough, the Goblin Woman of Hurst, and the Bleeding Nun. A second glance served to show him, however, that she could by no possibility fill the important post of Family Ghost, but was real flesh and blood. Yet even thus she was scarcely less impressive. Most of all was he moved by the sorrow of her face. She might serve for Niobe with her children dead; she might serve for Hecuba over the bodies of Polyxena and Polydore. The sorrows of woman have ever been greater than those of man. The widow suffers more than the widower; the bereaved mother than the bereaved father. The ideals of grief are found in the faces of women, and reach their intensity in the woe that meets our eyes in the Mater Dolorosa. This woman was one of the great community of sufferers, and anguish both past and present still left its traces on her face.

Besides all this there was something more; and while the General was awed by the majesty of sorrow, he was at the same time perplexed by an inexplicable familiarity which he felt with that face of woe. Where, in the years, had he seen it before? Or had he seen it before at all; or had he only known it in dreams? In vain he tried to recollect. Nothing from out his past life recurred to his mind which bore any resemblance to this face before him. The endeavor to recall this past grew painful, and at length he returned to himself. Then he dismissed the idea as fanciful, and began to feel uncomfortable, as though he were witnessing something which he had no business to see. She was evidently unconscious of his presence, and to be a witness of her emotion under such circumstances seemed to him as bad as eaves-dropping. The moment, therefore, that he had overcome his surprise he turned his head away, looked out of the window, and coughed several times. Then he rose from his chair, and after standing for a moment he turned once more.

As he turned he found himself face to face