

—beauty exquisite, delicious, entrancing filled his ears and flooded his perceptions.

"After to-night" was forgotten. Like all worshippers of beauty, his soul was electrified—exalted, in a measure, above its corporeal temple, but its spirit was hovering around and fanning him with gentle wings. Unfortunately such ecstatic visions are of short duration—man must become angelic did they remain. So the rose-laden atmosphere—the music rising and sinking on the air—women radiant with gems, that scintillated and flashed back their own splendor, were fluttering and swerving to the music—and all the lesser attractions, consequent on such an occasion, arose each in their turn, out of the sweet haze surrounding him and resumed its own individuality. It was not a violent awakening of the mind, the spell that music and poetry weaves, dissolves, but does not break.

Guy sighed as he quitted his ideal realms,—sighed that its clamour was so transitory, and that was all. His mind immediately reverted to the object of his visit,—and was soon puzzling itself with indefinite calculations as to the appearance Miss Percy must present in such a scene.

A familiar voice sounded in his ear and Ellis Blair's arm was passed through his own.

"I have been watching you for some time, Sinclair; do you know what your face made me think of?"

"No; what was it?"

"Moore's Peri as she was about entering Paradise.

"Joy, joy forever!—my task is done—
The gates are passed, and heaven is won!"

Now then suppose we make our way up to Mrs Lovejoy; and perhaps we shall find a Peri quite as good and beautiful as the one Peramorz sang about; though I think we had better alter the words a little and make it answer the occasion.

"Joy, joy, forever: my task is done,—
The 'Lost's found—my bride is won."

Guy had now no time to express an opinion relative to the change Ellis proposed for they had reached their hostess whose impressment was perceptible as she conversed with Mr. Sinclair and—Hattie King.

"What do you think of *our* Peri?" whispered Ellis Blair; but Guy did not answer. His mind was struggling to take in one great fact—how blind he had been.

"After a few words with Mrs. Lovejoy and an inclination to his father, he bent his head towards Miss Percy, whose eyes were full of penitence and entreaty as they were lifted to his own.

"Was that kind Hattie?"

"Were you kind?" was the reply a few minutes later as she walked with Guy outside the gay throng. "You refused me, Guy Sinclair, you know you did, before you ever saw my face. Well I said to Mr. Sinclair, 'your son is sure to hate me when we meet;—and I will never marry

him against his will? So I proposed the plan I afterwards carried out, and your father—who entertained some singular notions about girls, before I took the trouble to enlighten him—was wise enough to encourage and assist me.

I corresponded with him regularly all the time we were in Europe and oh, dear! how amazed we both were when we found that you had seen me in New York. But I want to ask you if it wasn't just the least bit stupid in you, not to see through our ruse before?"

"Of course it was," said Guy apologetically "but I'm not so stupid now, but what I can see how kind and generous and self-abetting you have been all the time. You must have abhorred that betrothal, far more than I possibly could."

"I disliked it certainly," replied Hattie in a low tone, "but then *my* father was dead; and the wishes of the dead are sacred, you know. Only for that you'd never have seen me in Europe.

But I've something more I want to say—and I may as well tell you now—for I see plainly enough that that odious *Connell* will be brought forward again,—and perhaps you won't care to give it back to me, then. Before Mr. Frost came to me that time, I thought a great deal of somebody else, who is just as good and true as he can be, and my cousin besides. Well I know he loved me better than all the world, and I used to wonder why he never told me so; I fancied it was because he was poor and I rich.

After I heard about you, then I knew it was because he was two honorable. You know who I mean?"

"Yes," said Guy, slowly. "Do you love him now, Hattie?"

"Oh, Guy, no! I never loved him only as the dear, noble fellow he is. But I was sorry for him; and if he had taken pains to teach me, I dare say I should have learned to love him in time. That is all; but I thought I would tell you, Guy, because some are so particular in such matters.

Guy looked down in the flushed face and pressed the soft hand that rested on his arm.

"Ellis Blair is one of the noblest of God's creatures,—I always knew that; but I *feel* it to-night beyond expression: Oh Hattie, how unworthy I am compared to him! how little any girl must think of me, who has known herself to be the chosen one of his heart. Are you sure that he does not love you now?"

"Quite sure now, Guy; when I went away he made up his mind to conquer himself before I returned,—I read that in his face when I saw him again—I read that he had succeeded. You did not see anything like restraint or jealousy about him, I am sure?"

"No, no," answered Guy reverently; but, darling, if you can read my heart as well as you do his, you must know that no one can love you better."

"I have known it for a long time."