

LILLIAN.

BY GEORGE SMITH

Coming from the garden,
Tripping through the corn,
Past the fragrant meadows
In the flush of morn,
I met a pensive maiden,
Marvellously fair,
Lillian the gentle,
Lillian golden-hair.

Queen of all the village
In the year gone by,
Queenlier now thy beauty
Beams upon the eye;
First-fruit of sweet promise,
When the Spring is gone,
Of the splendid Summer
Swiftly drawing on.

Large-eyed, wondrous Lillian,
With the classic grace
Seated on thy forehead,
Floating o'er thy face—
Wouldst thou read the future,
What its burden saith?
Draw no veil asunder
That to Hope is death.

Some heart with Love's own glory,
And pulsing blood, shall thrill—
For who could see thy lustre,
Yet gaze unconquered still?
O dainty, dainty Lillian,
Tripping o'er the green,
To one true captive spirit
Thou shalt be always queen.

THE CASTILLIAN MAIDEN.

"But, father, I love him not."
"That matters not, Dolores; thou must wed him."

"I cannot; oh, I cannot do this thing!"
"And I tell thee that thou must, and shall; and if thou dost rebel, then will I find means to compel obedience. What means this reluctance?"

"Simply this, my father, I love another with all my heart."

"And who is the forward young señor who has dared to woo thy daughter without her father's consent?"

"He whom I love is called Valencio Leonata. I met him first at the fandango in Cordova two months since, and have often seen him since as I walked with Donna Maria."

"Cease, and go to thy room, and leave it not till I bid thee again to my presence; and in thy solitude prepare thy mind to accept willingly the husband I have chosen for thee. He is the richest man in all Cordova, and wed him thou must ere two more months shall have passed."

She bowed, and glided silently from his presence and to her own room, which was a very bower of beauty and luxuriance, but now seemed but a prison-house to her whose mother was dead.

Below, Don Truxillo paced his room in angry unrest, but ere an hour had passed, the quick tread of a horse's hoofs resounded on the pavement of the courtyard, and directly an olive-hued servitor appeared, announcing that the Señor D'Aracene had arrived, and awaited him.

"H!" cried the don, a gleam of pleasure brightening his face; "say I will be with him at once."

And smoothing his features to their usual smiling yet steel-like serenity, the don advanced towards his guest with outstretched hands, and exclaimed—

"Right glad am I to greet thee, Señor D'Aracene. I have much to say to thee, and, not to waste our time, will tell thee at once that I have just had an interview with thy perverse bride elect, Dolores, and dismissed her from my presence with orders to receive and consider thee as her accepted husband. She refuses compliance, but she shall bend to my wishes, mark me, señor, and fear not!"

"I do not fear, Don Truxillo. The fair Dolores will yet be mine, and the day that sees her my bride will see thee master of the fair estate of Fazio, near Seville, on which I have often seen thee gaze with admiring eyes."

"Thanks, thanks, señor, you are more than generous."

And the eyes of the avaricious don sparkled. "Not so, it is a fair exchange. I take the gold, and give the land—ha, ha!"

And the speaker, a dark-browed, repulsive-looking Spaniard of fifty or thereabouts, laughed heartily.

"But am I not to see my future bride to-day?"

"Assuredly, if you desire it."

So saying, Don Truxillo left the room.

Ringling a bell he ordered—

"Send the señorita to me at once, and bid her hasten. I like not to wait."

And he paced the floor impatiently, until a slight footfall announced his daughter.

"I am here, father. What is your will?"

"The señor D'Aracene awaits to greet his promised bride."

With a low scream, Dolores buried her face in her hands, while the don relentlessly continued—

"And I would have thee hasten to don fitting attire and bid him welcome."

"Father! father!" she cried, falling upon her knees, and raising her hands in supplication,

"force me not to wed this hated señor. Let me remain with thee, and in all Castile thou wilt not find a more obedient daughter; in all else but this thou mayst command me."

"It cannot be; the word of a Truxillo is pledged," he replied, coldly. "The señor loves thee madly, and will brook no insolence, and thy obstinacy will only make it the worse for thee when he is thy master; so hasten and make thy toilet and join us."

"And, Dolores, listen. If thou yieldest not obediently to my commands, as a daughter should, the convent of Santa Isabel will receive another votary."

With these words he turned and left her. "Thou, indeed, am I lost," murmured Dolores, rising from her seat, "for, rather than enter Santa Isabel, from whence there is no escape, I will wed the Señor D'Aracene, for from him I may sometimes be free—perhaps he will die; who knows?"

Her eyes flashed with determination, and she sought their presence.

With an obsequious smile, the señor bowed at her entrance, and pressing her hand, murmured—

"The señorita is charming as ever, I see. I had begun to fear she would not smile upon me to-day."

She shrank from his loathsome touch, but recovered herself as she caught her father's frowning glance, and made some low reply.

Presently Don Truxillo arose and left them alone, saying smilingly as he departed—

"As I have affairs of moment to attend to, the señor must excuse me for a time, and doubt not that he will prefer to do his love-making alone with the señorita."

Hardly had he disappeared, when the señor arose from his chair, and approaching Dolores, who sat trembling upon a sofa, seated himself beside her, and throwing an arm around her shrinking form, exclaimed, in an exultant, passionate tone—

"And now, Dolores, I claim a kiss as the pledge of our love."

"But I love you not, señor—you know I do not love you; how then can you ask a gift of me that you know is so distasteful? Is this Castilian courtesy?"

"But, pretty one, thou dost belong to me. Thy father has sanctioned my suit, and in two months' time thou wilt be my bride. Have I not a right to embrace my own?"

And clasping her in his strong arms, he forcibly impressed a kiss upon the quivering red lips.

An instant more, and she had pushed him from her with frantic strength, and drawing herself to her utmost height, exclaimed—

"Listen to me, Señor D'Aracene. You say that in two months' time I shall be your bride. Well, be it so; since there is no other choice left me but a nun's cell in Santa Isabel, I consent."

"But mark me well: until the law binds us in one, no kiss of thine shall press my lips, no embrace of thine enfold me; I must be left as free as air, to enjoy as best I may the little time that remains to me, ere I am bound in hated slavery."

"If I am not granted this, I will find a way to escape thee, even if it be by death. Shall it be as I have said, señor? Shall I be unmolested for the two short months that are left to me of happiness?"

"Ah! señorita, you make hard terms; but since you promise to wed me, I consent to them; but no longer will I wait for my bride than the time your father has set, remember. And, fair señorita, let me tell you that when you are the señora D'Aracene, you will repent having shown your dislike of me so plainly."

And with these last words of menace, he quitted her presence and the house, and directly she heard his horse cantering from the courtyard without.

Much the don wondered at the sudden departure of his guest; but when, in answer to his inquiries, Dolores informed him of their agreement, and her consent to the marriage, he was content, and even delighted to say a word of commendation at her decision.

The days flew swiftly yet joyfully on, and though Dolores was free from present annoyance, the knowledge of the fate in store for her embittered the few hours of happiness she might have had.

One sunny day, as she wandered about her father's grounds, she seated herself to rest on a little hillock crowned with lofty trees.

This spot was a favorite resort of hers, because of its commanding a fine view.

To the south-west the sparkling waters of the Guadalquivir, while far to the north, extending to the east and west as far as the eye could reach, were the mountains of the Sierra Morena, their lofty tops enveloped in the soft cloud-like mist of sunset.

It was a lovely scene, and even the perturbed spirit of Dolores felt the calm beauty of the hour.

As she sat in a half-dreamy reverie, she was startled to hear a voice cry tenderly, softly—

"Dolores! Dolores!"

With a start and a low scream of joy, she flung herself into the outstretched arms of Valencio Leonata.

It needed not words to tell of their mutual love, their speaking glances sufficed; but later on, fond burning words told the same old, old story.

Valencio had heard rumors of Dolores' approaching marriage with the Señor D'Aracene, and, knowing that her heart was his own, had flown on the wings of love to rescue her from that dreadful fate, and he had arrived in time,

and the lovers made pleasant plans to thwart the evil designs of the don.

"Dolores, time only encourages our enemies. What need is there of delay, my beloved? Let us put an end to their schemes at once," said Valencio, gravely; while his companion, blushing at his evident meaning, murmured—

"As thou wilt, Valencio. Save me from that fatal marriage, and I will follow thee even to the ends of the earth."

"And wilt thou wed me at once?"

"I will, my beloved. I know no other wish but thine own. I am thine for ever."

"Then be on this spot to-morrow, at this hour, and I will meet thee, and together we will flee from thy stony, relentless father." At Almaden, Padre Herrero shall unite us, and then who will dare take thee from me?"

After a few more words, they parted, and once more Dolores felt her heart light and happy.

Possessing all the fiery impetuosity so characteristic of her race, she feared not to trust her fate with her young lover, though their love was but just acknowledged, and she thought with joy of the happy hours that would yet be hers, when free for ever from her father's iron rule.

The next afternoon, as the last gleams of the setting sun illuminated the scene, Dolores stole to the trysting place, a crimson mantle thrown around her, enhancing the beauty of the pale olive face, from which gleamed her great eyes with startling brilliancy.

Hardly had she reached the spot ere a manly form stole from among the trees and clasped her in his arms, and leading her to a short distance beyond, she saw two horses already saddled and bridled awaiting them.

They mounted, and rode swiftly away along the broad road, northward.

They had not ridden many hours when they met a padre, who yielded to Valencio's urging and the influence of a broad piece of gold which Dolores slipped into his hand, and consented to unite them; and soon they were again speeding on, man and wife.

But as day dawned, they heard rapid hoof beats behind them, and casting a startled glance behind, Dolores saw her father, followed by Señor D'Aracene, rapidly nearing them.

A race of life and death now began.

On, on pressed pursuers and pursued; but suddenly Dolores' horse stumbled and fell, bearing his rider to the earth, and Valencio, unwilling to desert his bride, sprang from his own steed and raised her to her feet, and thus, clasped in each other's arms, they awaited the approach of their pursuers, who came on with rage and hate struggling alternately for the mastery in their evil hearts.

They reined in their horses a few paces distant, and the don haughtily cried—

"Dolores, how is it I find thee, the plighted bride of Señor D'Aracene, here at this hour with a stranger?"

"He is no stranger to me, my father; it is Valencio Leonata, and he is my husband."

"Thy husband, foolish child; prate not to me of husbands. The only one I shall ever know will be the señor by my side, and he now bids thee, as his bride elect, to quit the arms of yonder man, and seek his own."

Hitherto Valencio had remained silent, but now, clasping Dolores closer to his bosom, he said, in a firm, decided voice—

"Don Truxillo, what your daughter has said is true—she is my wife. The padre whom you doubtless encountered, married us last night; therefore, as thou art her father, I ask thee to take back thy cruel words. Forgive us, and let us go in peace, since the marriage you so much desire is now an impossibility."

"Never! We shall see if what I will is an impossibility."

Purple with rage, he drew a pistol from his belt, levelled it, and fired full at the head of Valencio, and the unfortunate youth fell at his bride's feet a corpse, while she, half frozen, knelt beside him.

As the smoke cleared from around the don, he coolly replaced his pistol, and turning to his companion, who, villain as he was, had sat gazing upon the tragic scene in horror, he said, quietly—

"Señor D'Aracene, take back thy bride."

And turning his horse, without one glance at his distracted daughter, he rode away.

The señor, dismounted, advanced to the side of the stricken girl, saying gently as he could—

"Señorita, this is but a sorry place for thee, and thy father has bidden me conduct thee home. Wilt thou come?"

But Dolores' passionate grief had now given place to a dull stupor, and she made no reply to his kindly speech, and offered no opposition when he raised her from the dead body of her young husband, and placing her before him on his own steed, spurred him on, back to the Hazienda Truxillo.

It vaunted but about a month to the time which had been fixed for the marriage of Dolores and the señor, and preparatory for the event were pushed on as rapidly as possible, as if no tragic event had so lately taken place, indeed, none of the household knew of what had occurred.

Don Truxillo had himself discovered his daughter's absence, and having communicated the fact to the señor, they pursued and brought back the runaway.

Dolores herself took no part in the preparations, and gazed upon them all with a listless eye. When the day appointed for the bridal came, she permitted herself to array her in the gleaming robes, and placed the costly jewels upon her neck and arms.

Then, when all was done, they bade her look

in the mirror, and with a start she seemed to realize for the first time what all the bustle signified.

Falling till her cheek was whiter than her robe, she murmured a request to be left alone. Hardly had the last attendant quitted the room in obedience to her wish, when she glided to a little cabinet, and touching a secret spring, a tiny drawer flew out, in which lay a gleaming dagger scarce six inches in length, with the handle thickly incrustated with gems.

This she raised with a smile full of meaning, and pressing it first to her lips, concealed it in her bosom, and as she did so, her attendants re-entered to summon her to the bridal.

Like a beautiful, stately, marble statue, she stood while the ceremony was performed that bound her to the hated man at her side.

But once did she raise her eyes, and then it was to encounter the stern, relentless gaze of her father, beneath which her own quickly drooped.

The ceremony was done, and the bridegroom turned, with outstretched hands, to greet his bride.

As his dark detested face was bent over hers, she started back with a fierce vengeful scream, and raised aloft her beautiful arm and clenched hand, in which the tiny dagger now gleamed.

But an instant was it uplifted, and then, with all the force passion could summon to her aid, it was plunged in the heart of the bridegroom.

Near the banks of the bright Guadalquivir, surrounded by some of the fairest scenery of smiling Spain, stands the convent of Santa Isabel.

Within its walls there still lives a nun who for twenty years has never looked upon the bright orb of day, or the beautiful scenery that surrounds the convent.

Forty years have not yet passed over her head, and yet it is snowy white; while in the strictest fasts and severest penances now passes the time of her who was once the beautiful and blooming Dolores Truxillo.

ONLY A VIOLET

It is only a violet, faded and old,
That has quietly slipped from the letter I hold;
But it whispers of something I used to know,
When somebody placed it there long ago—
When the letter was sent with its freight of love,
While an earnest prayer went up above,
And I, in a straggling land far away,
Was loving him always night and day.

But that was so very long ago!
And time works changes, as we all know—
It may be he has forgotten quite
The loving words that he used to write;
But this poor little flower is pleading here,
For the past, and the things that once were dear.
And the love in my heart, like the violet's breath,
Though crushed and forgotten, can never know death!

HER CHANCE.

BY G. W. KELLOGG.

Mary Triggins tucked the money away in her purse. It was a very small sum, but it was the utmost that could be spared for the evening outfit: she and her mother had talked it all over, and such was the decision.

"Now, Mary," said her mother. "don't get a tarlatan, or anything exclusively for evening wear: you so seldom go to parties that you can't afford such a dress. I would try to get a nice silk. Something that's a little out of style by being made up fashionably might answer very well."

Mary gave a sigh and turned her face toward the shops, feeling how difficult it would be to purchase a fashionable outfit with the scanty sum in her purse. And she sighed many another time that afternoon as she went from shop to shop. The goods were too expensive for her slender purse, or they were poor or old-fashioned. Twilight was settling down on the gay streets; widow after widow was flashing into light, revealing misty faces with gay ribbons and silks streaming like banners; the lamp-lighters on every hand were building their walls of flame; and yet Mary wandered from store to store, each moment more bewildered and undecided as to the best investment for her money.

She approached a brilliant store, passed it with lingering step, then paused, turned back, and stood looking down the glittering aisle. The large mirror at the farther end seemed scarcely broader than the little cracked bureau-glass in her humble room before which she dressed her hair in the mornings. The clerks were hurrying to and fro, eager and business-like, while fine ladies were coming and going, jostling her as she stood just outside the door. Among the hurrying forms her eye sought one familiar and loved: not a woman's, I need scarcely say, else why does she stand in the shadow there, with her veil half drawn over her face, trembling and frightened? Why does her cheek glow with shame?

Poor Mary! You feel like a guilty thing in thus seeking a man who has never declared his love; but let me whisper a word in your ear: True love is woman's blue ribbon of honor;