

THE PROPERTY OF
THE ATHENAEUM CLUB,
NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE
READING ROOM.
KINDLY PRESENTED BY

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ISHMAEL; OR, IN THE DEPTHS

CHAPTER I.

THE SISTERS.

But if thou wilt be constant then,
And faithful of thy word,
I'll make thee glorious by my pen
And famous by my sword.
I'll serve thee in such noble ways
Was never heard before;
I'll crown and deck thee all with bays
And love thee evermore.—*James Graham*

'Well, if there be any truth in the old adage, young Herman Brudenell will have a prosperous life; for really this is a lovely day for the middle of April:—the sky is just as sunny and the air as warm as if it were June,' said Hannah Worth, looking out from the door of her hut, upon a scene as beautiful as ever shone beneath the splendid radiance of an early Spring morning.

'And what is that old adage you talk of, Hannah?' inquired her younger sister, who stood braiding the locks of her long black hair, before the cracked looking-glass that hung above the rickety chest of drawers.

'Why, la, Nora, don't you know? The adage is as old as the hills and as true as the heavens, and it is this, that a man's twenty-first birthday is an index to his after life—if it be clear, he will be fortunate; if cloudy, unfortunate.'

'Then I should say that young Mr. Brudenell's fortune will be a splendid one; for the sun is dazzling!' said Nora, as she wound the long sable plait of hair around her head, in the form of a natural coronet, and secured the end behind with—a thorn! 'And now I how do I look? Ain't you proud of me?' she archly inquired, turning with 'a smile of conscious beauty born' to the inspection of her elder sister.

That sister might well have answered in the affirmative, had she considered personal beauty a merit of high order; for few palaces in this world could boast a princess

so superbly beautiful as this peasant girl that this poor but contained. Beneath these rich sable tresses was a high broad forehead white as snow; slender black eyebrows so well defined and so perfectly arched, that they gave a singularly open and elevated character to the whole countenance; large dark gray eyes, full of light, softened by long, sweeping black lashes; a small, straight nose; oval, blooming cheeks; plump, suddy lips that, slightly parted, revealed glimpses of the little pearly teeth within; a well-turned chin; a face with this peculiarity, that when she was pleased it was her eyes that smiled and not her lips; a face, in short, full of intelligence and feeling that might become thought and passion. Her form was noble—being tall, finely proportioned and richly developed.

Her beauty owed nothing to her toilet—her only decoration was the coronet of her own rich, black hair; her only hair-pin was a thorn; her dress indeed was a masterpiece of domestic manufacture—the cotton from which it was made having been carded, spun, woven and dyed by Miss Hannah's own busy hands; but as it was only a coarse blue fabric after all, it would not be considered highly ornamental; it was new and clean, however, and Nora was well pleased with it, as with playful impatience she repeated her question:

'Say! ain't you proud of me now?'

'No,' replied the elder sister, with assumed gravity; 'I am proud of your dress because it is my own handiwork, and it does me credit; but as for you—'

'I am Nature's handiwork, and I do her credit!' interrupted Nora, with gay self-assertion.

'I am quite ashamed of you, you are so vain!' continued Hannah, completing her sentence.

'Oh, vain am I? Very well then, another time I will keep my vanity to myself. It is quite as easy to conceal as to confess, you know; though it may not be quite as good