

softening effects of flowers and film point lace.

Vera moved easily about the well-furnished rooms, some way she seemed just fitted for such surroundings. The subdued, well-bred manners the faint perfume, the refined faces and rich dresses were a stimulant to her, and in this atmosphere her natural beauty and æsthetic nature unfolded to its highest perfection. She had been talking with one and another of the guests and taking in many little details of feminine adornment, when Mr. Craven came up to her from the opposite side of the room.

"I seem to be unable to recall you, Mrs. Watson," he said, "yet I must have known you before I went away. My mother has just told me your name, and I have come to reclaim acquaintance if you will permit me."

"I remember you, perfectly," Vera said, quietly, "I was hardly grown up when you left us five years ago."

"Five years! Ah, true enough, many changes take place in that time. Will you take a seat, Mrs. Watson?"

"What a lovely lily this is! Why, it is not real?"

"No, these wax flowers are very natural-looking, though almost a plagiarism; don't you think so, Mr. Craven?"

"They are, indeed: it must be quite difficult to make them so perfectly. I daresay, though, that it is a remunerative employment."

A quick thought flashed through Vera's mind, but she quietly turned the conversation to other topics.

Harry Craven was past thirty, but with the exception of a few boyish attachments, he had never given much thought or attention to the fair sex. He was more devoted to his mother than to any other woman; which was very gratifying to her, as she had no daughters, and was entirely dependent on her son for the courtesies and attentions that all elderly people appreciate so much. He was very proud of his mother, and as he sat talking with Mrs. Watson his eyes followed her about the room. He seemed to enjoy Vera's conversation very much, however, perhaps because there was so little of it. In return he was quite unreserved, and talked of his future plans and prospects in an unassuming manner. "He was glad to get home," he said; "and meant to settle down in Moncton now: look after the factories, and introduce some improvements. He wanted a better class of goods; more tasteful designs. He had not seen a pretty print from the factory. Do you not agree with me, Mrs. Watson?" he asked.

"Yes, I quite agree with you," she replied, "and I have often wondered if it would not be just as easy to make pretty prints as it is to make ugly prints; if so, why do we have such a superfluity of shocking combinations in colors, and hideous designs: is it a question of supply and demand? There is no accounting for taste, you know, and I thought perhaps some people preferred the inartistic looking fabrics which are piled high on the counters of every dry goods store in Christendom."

"I think, Mrs. Watson, that the reason we have such a lack of harmony and beauty in the majority of our designs, is because the factories are operated by men: and the majority of them pay but little attention to the artistic effect in designing prints. It is either that or a predominance of bad taste. I in-

tend, however, to make a study of this branch of our work, and hope to see an improvement along this line within the next year."

It was an unconventional conversation for the drawing-room, but Vera enjoyed the unassuming and confidential manner of talking with which Harry Craven honored her; and as he continued to unfold his plans, Vera's cheeks flushed and her lustrous eyes brightened with interested enthusiasm; and Mr. Craven was surprised to find out how much she knew about the work at the mill.

Suddenly Vera became aware that most of the guests were leaving, and as she looked towards the window she exclaimed: "Why, it is almost dark!" and I believe it is raining; I must go at once."

Mr. Craven rose also, "Did you walk?" he inquired. "Let us take you home, my mother will be going soon."

The little stir attracted Mrs. Smithson, who was talking to Mrs. Craven. "Stay for tea, Vera," she said, coaxingly, "Arthur knows you are here, does he not?"

"Yes, aunt, but he will not be able to come for me to-night, and I think I had better not stay, thank you."

"I have been asking Mrs. Watson to take a seat in the carriage with us, mother," Mr. Craven interposed.

"Why, certainly, I shall be most happy." Vera mentally concluded that her best dress and bonnet had better ride, although she would have preferred to walk herself.

The factory bell had ceased ringing, and Arthur Watson was in sight of home when the carriage of his employer stopped at the door, and his wife stepped from it. He did not, however, hear her say to Harry Craven, as he assisted her to alight, "If you will come in to-morrow I will show you what I mean."

CHAPTER II.

"Did you have a pleasant afternoon, Vera?" Arthur Watson inquired, as they sat down together, after Arthur had changed his business suit for the dressy house jacket and comfortable slippers, which had been a present from Vera on his birthday, before their marriage.

"I had a very pleasant afternoon," Vera replied, thoughtfully.

"It was very kind of the Cravens to bring you home."

"Yes, I should have spoiled my dress."

It was always with some difficulty that Arthur Watson got his wife to talk, and to-night she seemed more than usually absent-minded and silent, although her eyes were brighter than common and her cheeks were still a little flushed. He was too generous and unselfish to begrudge his wife any pleasure in which he took no part; but something in her manner filled him with a vague uneasiness. This feeling was strengthened when, on coming home a little earlier than usual the following day, he met Harry Craven just leaving the cottage and found Vera with the same bright expression and heightened color, as on the night before.

That was the beginning of Arthur Watson's trouble. It was not so much jealousy—a man's instinctive revolt at another man's admiration of his wife—as it was fear, a desperate, death-like fear that Vera needed something that he could not give her to make her happy. He could not give her all the luxuries to which she had been accustomed, and he well knew

that in elegance of speech and grace of manner, he could never hope to compare with Harry Craven. But—*he loved her so!* How could he endure that anything should come between them?

"I won't wrong her with suspicions," he said to himself as he lay with sleepless eyes in the depth of the night. "I'll just fight my way against it as best I can, and perhaps it will all come right soon."

Poor fellow, he did not realize that his determination implied the dreary thought that her heart was turned from him. He raised himself on his arm to look at her as she slept, and through what followed he retained the impression of her pure, calm face, as it pressed the pillow—whitened by the moonlight that glinted the frost on the windows and flooded the room.

The winter and early spring months had passed; summer had come and gone: still the cloud on Arthur Watson's horizon loomed up before him as large as ever. Seemingly, he had continual cause for suspicion. He knew that Vera frequently met Mr. Craven at her aunt's; and when she went for a week's visit to John Smithson's, Harry Craven was there also. He knew that she seemed to be living a life apart from him. But an incident which, perhaps more than all the rest, caused the iron to enter his soul, occurred one evening when he went to Vera's desk—a present he had made her during their engagement—and, on finding it locked, asked her carelessly enough for the key, as he wanted to get some note paper. To his surprise Vera showed unmistakable signs of embarrassment, and said, "I will get the paper for you, Arthur."

(Concluded in our next.)

For the CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL.

Springtime.

HAIL! thou beautiful, glorious spring!
Let us all thy praises sing;
'Tis the glad season of the year,
When nature is most bright and fair.
The birds sing sweetly in the trees
That bend so gently to the breeze.
Sweet flowers bloom so fair and bright
Lovely hawthorn, pink and white;
And, close beside the sparkling rill,
There springs the golden daffodil;
And in a quiet, shady spot,
We find the blue forget-me-not.
Then, far within the forest glade,
Clustering together in the shade,
The yellow primroses, sweet and fair,
Fill with fragrance the balmy air.
The sky above is blue and bright;
The sun gives forth his radiant light;
The birds sing sweetly everywhere,
They, too, think springtime fresh and fair.
To God, who sends the sun and showers
That we may have our lovely flowers,
We should our grateful praises sing,
For He hath made the glorious spring.

M. A. I. N.

Too Lolly.

In one of his fables Æsop tells of a philosopher who, while dreamily looking towards the heavens, fell into a pit and cried aloud for help. A shepherd who had been watching his flocks near by ran to his relief, reached down his crook and saved him. "What can I do for thee?" asked the philosopher. "Nothing," said the shepherd, "but this: give more heed to the things that lie about thy feet and less to the skies above thee, and thou wilt save thyself much trouble." To live for to-day is in the noblest sense to live for eternity.—*D. J. Burrell.*