

Memory's Garden.

Back on its golden hinges  
The gate of memory swings:  
And my heart goes into the garden  
And walks with the old things:

It heareth a peal of laughter:  
It seeth a face most fair;  
It thrills with a wild, strange rapture  
At the glance of a dark eye there.

It heareth a train of music  
Swell on the dreamy air;  
A train that is never sounded,  
Save in the garden there.

But all is not fair in the garden:  
There's a sorrowing sob of pain;  
There are teardrops bitter, scalding;  
And the roses are tempest slain.

SELECT STORY.

Bought With a Price.

Chapter I.

A NEW INMATE FOR THE VICARAGE.

"HAT a sluggard I am!" cried Lillian Campbell, as she opened her eyes, some half an hour after her usual time of rising. To think I should have overslept myself on this day beyond all others—the day upon which Estelle is coming! How I long to see her—this wonderful London belle! It will be delightful to have a companion—one who will be always with me. I love my dear old home, dearly; but it is rather dreary to have no one to speak to but dear papa and old Margery. It was not so bad when Neville was at home. Somehow, then, we used to have more visitors calling at the vicarage. But I am not going to bemoan my loneliness any more. Estelle is coming, and I shall no longer feel lonely and envy other girls who have sisters. I am so happy, I could dance for joy.

But just then, Lilly remembered under what circumstances her cousin Estelle was coming to the vicarage, and a tinge of sadness checked the joy which had been rippling like sunshine over her winsome little face.

How cruel and selfish I am! she half murmured; I am forgetting that Uncle Reginald's death has made papa very sorrowful, and has left Estelle fatherless and homeless. Not the latter, though, I hope, since she has consented to make this vicarage her home. I am so glad papa and his brother were friends before his death, and that he gave Estelle into his charge. He quite forgave papa then for refusing to leave this quiet country living for a fashionable west-end incubency in London.

Poor Uncle Reginald was very ambitious that all his family should push on their fortunes to the utmost. I remember when he wrote to papa, urging his proposal of his leaving Ashton—where he said his fine talents were not likely to be appreciated—for London, he almost ventured to promise, that with his influence with his political party, his brother should ere long wear the mitre. I wonder if papa would have become a bishop! Ah, day! fancy me a bishop's daughter!—going to court and wearing fine clothes and jewels! What a transformation it would have been of the little country mouse!

I suppose I am like papa—not ambitious enough to rise, but content to remain buried in a country hole of a vicarage; as Uncle Reginald said of his brother; for I am very glad papa did not go to London. I love a country life much better than I should the noise and bustle of a town one.

Uncle Reginald would not have called our pretty vicarage a country hole, had he seen it as it is now—embowered in jasmine and roses.

I hope Estelle will love it as much as I do. I only wish we were a little richer for her sake. It is rather hard that I was obliged to write and tell her we could not accommodate her maid as well as herself. But even if we had the room, however should we have found the money to pay her wages? Estelle little knows, I suspect, how very small an income papa has. I dare say she has been paying this French maid of hers treble what old Margery has for all her faithful services! Besides it could never have done to have a fine lady's maid in our humble vicarage. Margery would not have put up with her, I am sure. She is not at all pleased at Estelle's coming; not that she is ill-natured—it is all owing to her love for me. She says my cousin is a grand London belle, who has never troubled her head

about papa or me till now; and that most likely she will look down upon our country ways. I hope not—but, anyhow, I must try and make Margery think well of Estelle.

Here Lillian's lengthened soliloquy was brought to an abrupt close, by Margery's voice at her door; who, after rapping, cried out—

Miss Lilly, child, what ails you this morning? Breakfast has been waiting this long time.

Lillian looked rather guilty, for during her mental absorption, her dressing had proceeded but slowly. She, however, threw open her door, and, first kissing the homely dear old face of Margery, who has been her foster-mother ever since her own had died, a few months after her birth, she said—

Don't scold me, Margery, for keeping breakfast waiting. I will not be very long, now. I have been idling this morning—indulging in thoughts of Estelle's coming. But I must hurry, for there are several things I want to do to Estelle's room before she comes.

Scold you, indeed, my darling! I be precious glad to know you are all right. I felt rather scared when I found it was so late. You be generally as blithe as a lark in the mornings. I just hope you are going to rest to-day; for you have been doing nothing but work—work—for this Miss Estelle, ever since you knew she was coming.

Lillian's answer was only a merry laugh. And then as she danced lightly down the stairs in advance of Margery, the old woman continued grumbling, half to herself—

I know how it will be! Miss Lilly will just make a slave of herself to this grand London belle; who will turn up her dainty nose at the lot of us. Why does she not go to some of her fine acquaintances, and not come here to take the little there is from that dear child yonder? I have not patience to think of the way in which my master is imposed on. First, there are the poor people here, who must think he is made of money, by the way in which they come to him for everything. There, now, here is his proud brother, who was above noticing him for years, chooses to die without leaving a penny piece for his daughter; and then, forsooth, she must come to the vicarage, and rob my darling child of the little there was.

It was a very busy little maiden who fitted to and fro in the vicarage all that day. Lilly was determined that everything should look its best that first day of Estelle's coming among them. Her room the daintiest, coziest little nest imaginable, which had cost Lilly both thought and labour, was still found to be capable of yet greater improvements, till at last even Lilly was satisfied.

Lilly had chosen the pleasantest room in the whole vicarage for her cousin, and done her best to combine bed-chamber and boudoir into one.

She had given many a sigh to the fact that there was no spare room at the vicarage which could any way serve the purpose of the latter alone.

Estelle will say I have done my best, I think. Of course it will be different to anything she has been accustomed to.

The new inmate of the vicarage must have been hard to please if that pretty chamber failed to give her pleasure. Lilly had arranged everything with loving care for her unknown cousin. There was no luxurious, expensive furniture in it, yet it pleased the eye with its simple prettiness. Lilly's nimble little fingers had accomplished much, with the aid of some expensive chintz and muslin. The walls were embellished by some water-colour drawings of no mean talent, hitherto prized among Lilly's greatest treasures, as the work of her fondly-loved brother, Neville. Her pet vases, too, had been transferred to Estelle's room, in which Lilly was even now arranging the choicest flowers she could find in their garden. This finished, she paused to look at the whole with evident satisfaction.

Margery, she said, as the faithful servant just then passed the open door, how does the room look? Is it pretty, do you think? Will my cousin like it?

Humph! I should rather think she ought to. But there's no knowing anything about these fine London ladies. I should like to know how your own room looks. Pretty bare, I fancy, now you have stripped it of all your pretty things.

Oh, that is nothing, Margery! I shall do very well. But Estelle has been used to such beautifully arranged rooms; so that the best I can do for her will appear so mean, I am afraid. Dear Margery, do try to be glad she is coming. It will be so delightful to me to have her here. You will soon love her, I feel sure, when you know her. Even papa—who so seldom notices peoples good looks—is quite enthusiastic about her beauty. He says, too, she is elegant and accomplished. I hope she will not consider her little country cousin beneath her, and be ashamed of her.

Aslamed of you, Miss Lilly! She may have been a London belle, as folks call her, but I am very sure she has not

a dearer, sweeter face than you have, my darling.

There is no knowing to what bounds Margery's indignation may have led her at the very thoughts of such an insult being offered to her nursing, but just then she was startled by Lillian exclaiming—

They are coming! Hark, Margery! There are wheels coming down the lane. They must have come by an earlier train than they expected. Is everything ready for them, Margery?

Quite, Miss Lilly. Don't you be troubled about that?

All doubt, if there were any were soon at an end. The fly containing the travellers was soon at the vicarage gate, and the vicar's gentle smiling face was seen at the window.

In another moment, Lilly and the new inmate of the vicarage were face to face for the first time.

Lilly for the moment was overwhelmed with surprise. Never, in all her visions of her cousin, had she realized anything so dazzlingly beautiful. She was near the same age as Lilly, but her more imposing height made her appear much older.

Something of Lilly's thoughts must have been expressed in the girl's face, for Estelle's somewhat supercilious gaze upon the new home to which she was brought suddenly changed as she caught Lillian's rapt look of admiration, and with some show of feeling she kissed her cousin, adding—

You and I shall be friends, I see; what a 'petite' child it is! and yet I think Uncle Frank told me you are as old as I am.

By this time the two girls were in the room which Lilly had occupied so much time in preparing.

Lillian looked anxiously for some token of admiration. She longed for her cousin to approve of what she had done; but when Estelle exclaimed—

What a poky room! However shall I exist in so small a space? These flowers, too, are quite overpowering; pray do call Annette to throw them away, and to get out my things. But what am I thinking of? I forgot that the luxury of a maid is denied me, and that even this home is given me out of charity.

And the young girl threw herself on the nearest chair and sobbed hysterically.

Lilly was dismayed. The room which she had considered so pretty all at once looked poor and mean. She thought, also, that she must be to blame in not being able to afford Estelle her maid. She felt quite a culprit in her cousin's eyes, and it was in a depreciated tone, she implored her not to cry so bitterly, and she, Lilly, would do her best to supply Annette's place. To show her capability for the task, she at once set to work, and ere long Estelle's travelling dress was exchanged by Lillian's deft fingers, and the heavy coils of her abundant hair re-arranged round the proud, graceful little head.

Then, as Lilly worked hard at unpacking her cousin's luggage, whilst Estelle sat lazily watching her, now and then giving her directions, she at last had the grace to thank her cousin for the trouble she was giving.

Nay, Estelle, do not thank me, or I shall be ashamed of how little I can do for you, replied Lilly. I know everything must be very strange to you just now, but I hope you will learn to love us all, and to be contented with our simple country life.

As days and weeks passed, and the new inmate of the vicarage ceased to be a novelty, Lilly was disappointed that Estelle still seemed no nearer to be reconciled with her new life. In truth she appeared strangely out of place in that quiet country home. Her beauty was of a large, showy character; more adapted to grace a palace than a humble vicarage. Then, too, Lilly little knew how unfitted by education her cousin was for their country home.

Estelle Campbell had been reared in a very different school to her cousin Lilly. Her ambitious father had been very proud of his beautiful daughter. From the time that she could understand him, he had never failed to instil into her mind the one fact—That her duty was to make a brilliant marriage.

So when the time came when Estelle burst forth in all her radiant beauty to take captive the world of fashion in her first season, many offers of marriage were laid at her feet. But so ambitious were the father and daughter, that none of these proposals were considered worthy of acceptance.

Her father counselled her to wait. There was no hurry. Her beauty gave promise of being greater day by day, and his diplomatic career would insure her position in society, where she would before long meet with the prize worthy of her acceptance.

But suddenly all these fine schemes came to an end. Mr. Campbell fell seriously ill, and the speculation in which he had invested all his savings—his daughter's proposed fortune—proved a failure.

He died, leaving his child a beggar. His despised brother was the only one

who offered to bestow a home upon the orphan girl.

No wonder if Estelle felt life to be hard on her. Buried in the country vicarage, how was she to accomplish the one wish of her heart—a wealthy marriage?

No, the new inmate of the vicarage was far from becoming contented with her lot.

Chapter II.

NEVILLE COMES HOME.

Then you must be my cousin Neville. And you my cousin Estelle.

Estelle was delightfully animated. This handsome cousin of hers was certainly an acquisition.

He seemed to bring with him, too, a remembrance of her former triumphs. This town-bred man was altogether different from anyone she had yet seen in Ashton.

No wonder Lilly was proud of her brother; but the little simpleton had never told her what a distinguished-looking man he was.

She had listened wholly indifferent to Lilly's praises of him, thinking, in her own mind, that he must be some priggish booby.

Lilly had told her how scruples on some religious doctrine had prevented him entering the church, and that he had chosen the law instead.

The young men of the neighbourhood had, one and all, proved a failure.

They had, at first, been inclined to pay homage to the London bells, who had designed to come among them, but her hauteur had repelled them.

They scarcely appreciated the magnificence of her beauty.

To their eyes, the winsome face of Lilly was more to their taste.

So Estelle had pronounced them country bores, and had scorned to exercise her fascinations among them.

Now this was especially hard on her, for adulation was to Estelle as the very air she breathed.

What, then, was her satisfaction, one morning, as she looked up from a book, which she was trying to become interested in, to see the eyes of this handsome stranger fixed upon her.

That he was astonished, too, at her beauty, was evident.

She was looking particularly charming, as she reclined gracefully beneath a tree in the orchard, with her garden hat thrown aside, and the sun shining upon her golden hair, which was floating in masses over her shoulders.

It had that golden radiance which the Venetian painters raved about, and which seemed to almost dazzle the newcomer.

He looked at her for a moment or two, before she noticed his approach, and had time to note the patrician poise of the little head, with its crowning glory. The short upper lip, curled somewhat too scornfully, and the dark lashes which swept her cheeks, as her eyes were cast down. But when she lifted those glorious blue eyes of hers, the effect was perfect.

It was by a great effort that Neville Campbell recovered presence of mind sufficient to recognize this fairy vision before him.

Unprepared as Estelle was, for Neville's appearance, yet her woman's instinct told her who he must be, even before Neville had apologized for his intrusion, but explaining he had taken a short cut from the station to his father's house.

Estelle's reply had been the exclamation at the heading of our chapter.

All Estelle's 'ennui' was gone. Lilly was absent when her brother so unexpectedly arrived. She had gone into the village to visit some of her old pensioners, and had visited Estelle to accompany her; but her cousin had answered that she hated poor people. She found poverty quite disagreeable enough in her own case, without seeking out others afflicted with the same disease.

Estelle had been so plagued with 'ennui' that, once or twice, she had even tried a little amateur visiting. She even liked the wondering looks of admiration of these unlettered peasants, till she found that with all her beauty she failed to outvie Lilly.

The latter's smiling face was more to these poor people than the magnificence of this London belle. Then this moderate excitement had been given up in disgust.

Lilly was often sorely puzzled how to interest Estelle. She put it down to her own fault that her cousin was unhappy. Never did it once enter her mind that Estelle was selfish and exacting.

Both the vicar and Lilly were slaves to all her whims and caprices. She ruled the house, with the exception of Margery. Between the latter and Estelle there was a smothered animosity. Estelle saw that the devoted servant or friend rather, as she was looked upon at the vicarage, disapproved of her, and that was enough to make the proud girl resent her every action.

For Lilly's sake Margery forbore to come to open hostilities, she saw that her nursing was blinded by her cousin's

beauty and could see no faults in her.

More than ever did Lilly blame herself when she saw how changed Estelle was under Neville's influence.

To her Neville's rare visits had always been the chief delight of her life. She had been petted by him, and made the companion of all his rambles.

But even though, during this present visit, most of this was changed, Lilly did not complain, though Estelle now became his chosen companion. She was so unselfish that she never thought of how much she was neglected for this new-comer. Her delight was that Estelle was happy at last—that she no longer had that listless, 'distract' air with her.

Neville said Lilly, one day, is not Estelle beautiful? I am so glad you have come home, for she was very dull here with only me and papa. She is quite a different creature since you have come home.

What Neville thought of his beautiful cousin will appear hereafter, for he was prevented replying to his sister by Estelle's entrance into the room, ready for one of the numerous delightful strolls through the woods adjoining the vicarage.

Estelle pronounced this visit of Neville's a success. He was handsome, highly bred, and brilliant in conversation. He had been the means of rousing her from the ennui which had oppressed her. Those loiterings in the woods with him were also very charming. She found him worthy of the effort to test her fascination upon. It was a pity he was a poor man, or he would have been a delightful companion for life.

But these solitary rambles were to come to an end, and those delicious readings of her favorite poets by Neville, who never looked handsomer than when reclining at her feet under some sheltering tree, and reading these poems to her. Estelle was very sorry. How should she pass her time when Neville was gone? She was almost frightened at finding how depressing the thought was. Surely she had not been a fool, and given her heart to this poor man! Had she played with edged tools too recklessly? The thought was torture. But no, it could not be so. She would be more circumspect till he was gone, and avoid being too much alone with him. After he was gone, she would school herself to think no more of him. What! give her heart to a poor man!

Chapter III.

LILLY IS TOLD A SECRET.

Estelle, my darling, it seems too great happiness to be realized. Let me hear you say once more you love me.

We must suppose the response to have been given, though only a lover's ears could have heard it. Perhaps that was partly owing to the position occupied by Estelle at that moment; whose face was buried on her lover's shoulder.

That last walk of theirs had been fatal to Estelle's resolve to repress all love for her cousin. It had all seemed very easy in the solitude of her chamber, but then Neville had not been by her side, pouring into her ear the story of his love for her.

But what had become of Estelle's mercenary compact, that was to have been made with some wealthy suitor?

She had found herself forgetting it at times. Neville had never seen that phase of her character. In his presence, it would appear that the girl's nature had become more pure. But still the canker remained.

You little know, my beloved, how I have longed for this hour. I believe I have loved you from the moment I first saw you, under the old pear tree. What a vision of loveliness you were to me! Lilly had written rapturously of your beauty; but I concluded it was merely a young girl's habit of going into ecstasies over a fresh face. I little dreamt of the rare prize that I was one day to secure. You will never repent, will you, darling? I will work so hard for your sake—I must succeed.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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