

WHENCE AND WHITHER.

This is what he said, in brief,
 Sekaza, the Kafir chief,
 To the Frenchman, Arbrusset,
 As beneath the palms they lay:
 "I shepherded that time my flock
 Twelve long years; then on a rock
 I sat me down, thereon to mark
 What would happen in the dark.
 Questions sad I asked, and none
 Answered—could not answer one;
 Say, myself I could not answer;
 Nor can any living man, sir,
 Though as wise as your Voltaire.
 But I wander, *Monsieur*—where?
 Ah! who made the Stars? and who
 Taught them their dances in the blue?
 Do the Waters, swift and bright,
 As they flow from morn to night,
 Never weary of their race?
 Whence and whither, to what Place?
 Where do they find rest,
 In what arms, and on what Breast?
 Whence and whither go the Clouds,
 In wedding garments, and in shrouds?
 Such imperishable crowds!
 Whither away?
 By night and day,
 Like shadows o'er a magic glass,
 Do they pass, and pass, and pass?
 Weeping out themselves in rain,
 They are falling now again.
 Who sends them,
 And ends them?
 And who, when all is done, befriends them?
 We have many a sharp diviner
 (Though our French *savants* are finer),
 But they do not fetch the rain,
 For they have no means of making it.
 Nor any chance of breaking it:
 Nor do I see them, though I watch well,
 Go for it, either to Heaven or Hell:
 But somehow they seem to have the spell.
 I can not see the Wind,
 Above, before, behind.
 I know not whence it is,
 Whether from bale or bliss;
 But all the same I know it,
 For I am what you call a poet.
 I feel what makes it come and go,
 And rage and worry and roar,
 For I live, you see, on the shore
 Where the blasts of Afric blow.
 But I shall never know
 How the luscious corn doth grow.
 Yesterday—yes, it was yesterday—
 There was not a blade of grass in my field;
 That is thick to-day as a warrior's shield;
 For, look to-day, and look far away,
 It is fresh and green.
 And the sky over all is serene.
 Who gave it this power to bring forth?
 Who and what, save the Earth,
 Who folds us all in her broad arms' girth,
 This young old Mother, the Earth?"

R. H. STODDARD, in *Harper's*.

A NIGHT'S REVELATION.

THE NIGHT BEFORE.

I.

There were no guests among the large and brilliant company gathered at Judge Gerarda's dinner-table who had any suspicion that their host was any less comfortable, or any less devoted to their entertainment, than appeared on the surface. Outwardly he was himself the gifted, witty and popular gentleman.

A telegram was silently conveyed to him upon a salver which held a couple of wine glasses. He had so ordered in anticipation of its arrival, and, without attracting the least attention, he opened it quickly and read the few words it contained:

"Have a clem which will take me from the city for a few hours. No news, but reason to hope."

He crushed the paper in his hand, and continued the relation of an anecdote at which his friends were laughing, and which the reading of the despatch had not interrupted.

It was two hours later when, leaving the gay company which filled the drawing-room, he went with quick steps and tightly-drawn breath to the apartment overhead—his wife's room. Its size and magnificence, though scarcely revealed by the dim gaslight, was in perfect accord with the rest of the mansion. As his hand touched the chandelier, he started back with an exclamation:

"Alva! oh, Alva!"

A woman knelt near him, beside a lounge in the pillows of which she had buried her face. Her figure in a black dress, heavily trimmed with erape, and in that attitude seemed incongruous not only with the brilliant surroundings, but with the music and light laughter which floated upwards from the room below. She rose to her feet at the sound of the judge's voice.

"And I thought it was my wife," he said, in a slow, set tone.

"Has nothing been heard of her yet?" his companion asked.

"Nothing."

"What are you doing about it? What do you care about it?" she demanded, fiercely. "You meet your guests—you laugh with them as if nothing had happened, while all the time my poor sister may be—"

"Helen! It isn't possible that you would be willing for the whole world to know this thing that no one need suspect, ever, if it is rightly managed, if—"

"It is a question of a few hours," Mrs. Carroll responded, bitterly. "You've done well, no doubt, so far. But are you well enough to suppose that this state of things can last?"

"For the few hours, yes, if you will help me as you have done. There are others working for us—you should not forget that."

"You are more patient than I," his sister-in-law replied, still with the same bitterness, "and more hopeful also. Go down again. Do

not let them miss you. I will come presently."

Judge Gerarda turned slowly and walked out of the room. A servant met him at the landing with another despatch.

"Go to Mlle. De Sassure's early to-morrow. Have reason to believe that she has some information."

He looked at his watch—past eleven o'clock. The company below would not separate for an hour yet. Mlle. De Sassure lived three miles from the city. He must proceed cautiously, and evidently must wait till the next day, as the detective had instructed him.

A lady, one of his guests, met him at the foot of the stairs.

"Mrs. Gerarda is no worse, I hope?"

"Thank you, no; though greatly regretting her inability to join you this evening."

"Her regret cannot equal ours. It is really impossible not to envy Mrs. Gerarda her inimitable powers as a hostess. I generally feel quite wicked on that account whenever I accept her hospitality."

"Then," replied the gentleman, smiling, "you can to-night have a clear conscience as some compensation for her absence."

Early the next morning a card was brought to Mlle. De Sassure in her studio. It bore the name "Kenneth Gerarda," and, without any delay, she rose and went to the parlor to meet her guest.

"Your call has changed my plans for the day, Judge Gerarda," were the first words spoken by the lady after the ordinary greeting. In themselves they might not have sounded particularly gracious, but the tone and the expression upon the face of the vivacious Frenchwoman, was equivalent to a statement that the call was a most welcome one, and the plans such as she was glad to modify for the sake of it.

"I am very sorry," the judge began—"I am never sorry to be spared a trip to the city," she interrupted. "But I heard yesterday of your wife's illness."

"And you were intending to call upon her?"

"I was."

"I hope it will be but a few days before she can see her friends again. This is only a temporary seclusion. I drove out this morning to bring her order for another fan to be painted exactly like the last one—the pink satin with which she was so much pleased. It is an exquisite piece of work, mademoiselle. I suggested its duplicate as an acceptable birthday gift to her niece, Mrs. Carroll's daughter."

"I thank you. And I can have—how much time?"

"Oh, a week or two. Three weeks if necessary."

The question had taken him a little off his guard. In fact he was thinking of something quite different from painted fans or birthday presents. He did not prolong his call, or his business errand, as he chose to have it understood, and Mlle. De Sassure, with a smile of the profoundest satisfaction, stood watching him as he entered his carriage.

As she turned from the window, she came face to face with a lady, who, coming from a room separated from the parlor by a *portiere*, was also watching the gentleman's departure.

"Ah, Mrs. Gerarda, I was right in thinking that there was a possibility of his coming here. I was glad to know that you were hearing every word of the conversation. And how little he intended to have me suspect the real object of his call."

"You made it easier for yourself than I could have believed possible, mademoiselle. You will never know how grateful I am for the protection, the sympathy—"

"Grateful!" mademoiselle exclaimed, with one of her most extravagant gestures. "Ah, what did you not do for me through my hard times! The orders you got for me! The friends you found for me! Oh, Mrs. Gerarda, if there is anything to be said about gratitude, I am the one to say it!"

But the lady whom she addressed seemed scarcely to hear her. With white face and tearless eyes, over which she passed her hand as if they hurt her, she leaned against the window frame, her eyes fixed upon the road down which the carriage had long since disappeared. It was a shock but no surprise to Mlle. De Sassure when an instant afterwards, with a few inarticulate words, she fell senseless at her friend's feet.

II.

AN EVENING'S INTERVIEWS.

"Poor fellow! But I wonder if he really thinks I'll consent to any such nonsensical arrangement!"

Marcia Navarro crumpled in her hand the letter she had been reading—signed Louis Hurlburt and tossed it from her. Evidently any impression which it had made was dismissed in the same easy manner. She readjusted the pillows of the luxurious lounge upon which she was lying, and turned her attention to the box of confectionery in her lap.

As the clock struck eight Judge Gerarda entered the house and room with an unmistakable air of proprietorship. The lady rose and received him with a most affectionate greeting.

"I'm thankful you've come, Kenneth," she exclaimed, in a tone of profound satisfaction. "If you had the least idea of the intolerable stupidity of this place—well, you wouldn't wonder at my being glad to see a dog!"

Kenneth Gerarda smiled grimly as he seated himself in a large arm-chair which she pushed towards him.

"Rather an equivocal statement, Marcia," he remarked.

She gave her shoulders an expressive shrug, and drawing an ottoman close to his feet, seated herself upon it and crossed her arms upon his knee.

"What's happened to-day?" she asked, after a little silence which he showed no disposition to break. "Are you in one of your critical moods to-night?" she added, a little sharply, as he did not answer her.

He looked about the room, his glance taking in everything upon which his eyes rested. It was a splendidly furnished apartment, but littered to a point of disgraceful confusion.

"If I were disposed to be critical," he said, after a long pause, touching with his foot a fashion magazine thrown face downwards upon the floor, and pointing to a slipper lying not far off. "I might remark upon the shameful disorder which you know always annoys me."

"It would not be the first time," she retorted, hotly, rising and stepping backwards as she spoke.

"So much the worse!"

"You came here to-night on purpose to find fault with me, it appears."

It was plain enough that if, as the adage has it, it takes two to make a quarrel, she would not be slow in doing her part.

"One must be painfully punctilious to satisfy you—and then you're not satisfied," she went on. "That isn't my style, as you know, and it's too late to change me, as you also ought to know."

"This is childish, Marcia! Where were you yesterday?" he demanded, almost fiercely.

"I took a drive through the Park—veiled, as usual, to spoil all the pleasure. What of it?" she added, as she saw the heavy frown gathering on his face. "Am I to be buried alive in this dungeon of a house because you are—"

"Because I command you to keep indoors!" he interrupted. "Yes, and I expect you to obey me."

"As righteously as your wife does, I suppose," she sneered.

"Take care, Marcia!"

He spoke the words under his breath, and the look which accompanied them positively made her quail.

"Kenneth," she said, gently, and laying her hands carelessly on his shoulder, "what pleasure is there in quarreling? You know I seldom rebel in anything. I try to be satisfied here, but it's dreadfully lonesome sometimes. It's a change from California days—like going from a circus to a Sunday-school; but I'm more used to the circus, and I like it a great deal better."

"Of course you do. But it's a change from Sunday-school to circus for me," he said, with a short laugh. "What if I should tell you that my wife—Alva—had left my house, and on your account?"

"What?"

It was plain that Marcia Navarro's surprise was as great as he had anticipated.

"It is four days since I have seen or heard from her," he went on. "She ordered the carriage last Tuesday morning to go shopping, and found—as a detective has since found for me—that I had the day before ordered a came's hair shawl to be sent to my office. She has three here, you understand."

"But she knows nothing of me!"

"Unfortunately, she does. She came into the library a week or two ago when I was waiting you a note. She saw it; she could not help it—your name, I mean—for she stooped over to kiss me."

"And then?" the woman demanded, impatiently.

"It was a shock to her—I saw that—but she asked no questions, showed no difference in her manner to me afterwards, until— Nothing could have convinced me that I one night put one of your handkerchiefs into my pocket except the fact that the next morning it was lying on my dressing-table—and it was marked with your name."

"And she saw it?"

"She saw it."

"It's a sort of adoration—her love for you, you say?"

"Yes, and the only fault she has in the world is a touch of the jealousy which so inevitably accompanies such love."

"Where did she go after her shopping?"

"She ordered the coachman to return home, saying she would follow at her leisure. It was the last seen of her."

"And what are you doing—what have you been doing about it?"

"Everything! Everything that can be done by money and detective skill without making the matter public. What I can do next remains to be seen."

Evidently he did not choose to talk further about it, and for some moments sat lost in reverie. As the clock struck nine, he rose suddenly, caught up his hat, and kissing the woman who rose when he did, bade her good-night, and left the room as abruptly as he had entered it.

His departure seemed a relief to her. She looked at the clock again, comparing it with the little jeweled watch which she wore, then picked up the note that she had previously thrown aside, as a quick step came down the deserted street.

There was the click of the night-key in the front door, and stepping in the hall, Marcia Navarro greeted her second guest with greater

affection than she had shown towards the first. With his arm close about her they went into the room together.

"What's this?"

He touched the folded paper in her fingers.

"Your note, Louis."

"You've not held it ever since it came?" he asked with a little laugh.

"Suppose I should say that I had, and had read it twenty times, and—Louis, you surely were not in earnest when you wrote me that you should leave me to eat my heart out in this stupid hole while you run over the world on—business!"

She smiled up into his face with the expression of a siren, but something which she saw there made her frown and draw back from him a little.

"I must, Marcia," he said, in a tone which implied the full meaning of the word.

She threw from her the note which she had been holding. "You shall not," she exclaimed, standing erect. "I've money enough for both, if that is the consideration."

"It is not money only, Marcia. You've heard of friendship and honor, and—"

"I've heard a great deal of nonsense from a good many people," she retorted. "I want something else from you. We were going to Europe next week. I'll go, if I go alone!"

"Marcia! Marcia!"

"Give up this business—at once—whatever it is, or—go at once."

She ended the sentence in a low, hard voice, pointing to the door. He loved her better than his own life, but he gave no sign of yielding.

"Finish the work which you took from me last night and the night before that, but when it is done—if it is ever done—you need not look for me here or elsewhere. Now go!"

Louis Hurlburt left her without a word.

III.

AFTER MIDNIGHT.

It was midnight when Marcia Navarro entered her sleeping-room, and at the same instant there was a sharp ring at the door-bell. It was a strange sound at that hour, and in that isolated locality. She took a pistol from her dressing-table, crossed the parlor, and opening a bay-window, stepped out upon a little balcony.

"Who are you? What do you want?" she demanded of the man who stood upon the doorstep.

"Mlle. de Sassure, the lady living in the next house, has a friend with her who is very sick—dying, we are afraid. They are alone. If you would stay with them, or send a servant while I go for a doctor—"

"Enough! Don't wait. I'll go myself."

She wrapped a shawl about her head and shoulders, and walked as rapidly as possible to the next house.

"Oh, I am frightened to death!" Mlle. de Sassure wailed, as she met her. "My poor friend!"

She pointed towards the bed upon which lay Mrs. Gerarda, unconscious, and as white as the pillow upon which she rested. Marcia Navarro stared violently as she looked at her.

"I know who she is," she said, bluntly, "and why she is here. If she dies, what will you have to say to her husband, Judge Gerarda?"

Mademoiselle shivered.

"Oh, what shall I do? Tell me!"

"Send for him. The man who came for me shall take the doctor's horse while he waits here. There's no other way."

"If she lives she will never forgive me. She trusted in me."

"I'll take the responsibility."

As the doctor's carriage drove up to the door, she met the two men who left it, made a hasty explanation, and in another minute a messenger was on his way to the city.

Judge Gerarda apparently kept late hours, for a light was burning in his library long after midnight. Louis Hurlburt, the detective, was sitting with him in close conference.

"If you trace her to New Orleans, as you suggest," the judge was saying. A tap on the window interrupted him. He sprang to his feet and opened it.

"Alva!"

But it was not his wife who stood there. He staggered back from the stranger who stood there. Louis Hurlburt took his place.

"What is it?"

"Judge Gerarda's wife is at Mlle. de Sassure's house, very ill. I have come for him. I saw the light and did not want to rouse the house."

"You have a carriage?"

"The doctor's! He is with her."

The detective turned and laid his hand on the judge's arm.

"Drive back with him. I will follow later with your carriage and await your orders."

"Stop for Mrs. Carroll on your way, and bring her with you," the judge said, on leaving him.

He learned from the messenger, during the drive, that he was a neighbor of Mlle. de Sassure's, whose servant was away that night; that a lady was staying with her, another neighbor—a queer, dashing sort of person, he had heard, though he had never seen her until that night—who lived in a mysterious sort of way shut up with her servants. It was, therefore, no surprise to Judge Gerarda to encounter Marcia Navarro as soon as he entered the house.

"I broke your orders again, Kenneth, but I found your wife for you," she explained. He did