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GRAPES AND THORNS.

Y M. A. T., AUTHOR OF "THE HOUSE OF YORK," "A WINGED WORD," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.-CONTINUED It was quite as well for him to do so, It was quite as well for him to do so, indeed; for the very day they started a storm started with them, and he was too faithful an officer to desert his post on deck. So all night long he watched, courageous and faithful, over the lives committed to his care, while underneath his two special guests lay help-less and miserable, counting his footsteps, as sleepless as he. The engine throbbed beside them, like a heavilybeating heart, the long waves lashed the deck, the wind sang and whistled through the ropes, the steamer creaked

only, for they're guaranteed to give satisfac-ion, or your money is returned. You pay only for the good you get. There's nothing likely to be "just as good." "I have brought bad luck to the ship, Annette," said her husband. "If I were overboard, the storm would

> "In the first place, my name Julia," was the answer from the lower berth. "In the next place, there is nothing mysterious in this storm; it is simply the equinoctial gale, which has should have it. In the third place, your being overboard would make no whatever in the weather. difference Are you sick?"

Annette knew well that a little chilly preeze would best blow away her husband's vapors.

"I am sick of lying here," he said impatiently. "The rain must be over, unless it is another flood. I wonder how it looks out ?

He drew aside the curtain, and opened the window. The rain had ceased but the wind still blew, and a moved for them, familiar things pale light was everywhere, shining up through the waves and down through the clouds. As the steamer rolled, Annette, lying in her lower berth, could see alternately the gray and tumbled clouds of air, and the gray and heav ing sea, which was less like moving water than a ruined, quaking earth, so heavily it rose and fell. Lawrence Gerald, closely wrapped

in furs, knelt on the sofa, and le out, humming a tune that seemed to be for ever on his lips since his wife had first sung it to him, so that she was sometimes half sorry for having sug-gested it to him. A few words broke out while she listened:

"For man never slept
In a different bed,
And to sleep, you must slumber
In just such a bed."

His thoughts seemed to be so haunted by the image of that cold and peaceful slumber that his wife trembled for him. He had not the enduring strength to bear a long trial, but he had that fitful strength which prompts to desperate

"I can see cities built and destroyed yonder," he said. "There are white towns between dark mountains, and little hamlets up in the crevices; they grow, and then they are swallowed up. It is like a great earthquake. When the world is destroyed, it will perhaps

look like that, pale and ashy. "Suppose we should go up on deck, and see what it looks like," said Annette suddenly, anticipating the wish she knew he would have expressed. "It will be a change after our three days' imprisonment, and we may think the stateroom a pleasant refuge when we come back.

They escaped the crest of a wave that leaped over the rail after them, and reached the wet and slippery deck.

"We mustn't speak to the officers," Annette whispered, seeing the captain

He passed them by without notice, and they hurried on to the shelter of the smoke-pipe, where the heat had dried the planks: and here, holding by ropes, they could look over the rail and see the long streaks of pale blue, where the foam slid under the surface of the water; see the gigantic struggle of the sea, and how the brave pushed through it all straight toward

er unseen port. Nothing is so perfect a figure of life as a ship on the sea, and one can hardly behold it without moralizing. 'Suppose that this ship had a soul of its own, instead of being guided by the will of other beings," said Annette "and suppose that, finding itself in such a woeful case, it should say, 'I see

no port, no pole star, no sun, nor moon, and I doubt if I shall ever see them again. I may as well stop trying, and go down here. Wouldn't that be and go down here. pity for itself and for others?" But suppose, on the other hand, returned her husband, "that the ship had got a deadly thrust from some unseen rock, and the water was running

and it could never gain the port What would be the use of its striving and straining for a few leagues fur

"We know not where the haven of

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a soul is set," said Annette, dropping the figure. "God knows, for He has set it, near or far; and it may be nearer than we think. It is scarcely worth while for a man to lose his sou by jumping over-board at ten o'clock, when he may save it, and be drowned too, at eleven

Lawrence drew back as a great wave rose before them. He had only been playing at death; the reality was quite another thing. Chilled and drenched with spray, they hurried down to their

It was a weary journey. After the storm came head winds, and after the head winds a fog, through which they crept, ringing the fog-bell, and stop-ping now and then.

Mr. and Mrs. Ward did not appear

once among the passengers, even when everybody crowded up to catch the first glimpse of Ireland, and they were the last to appear when the passengers prepared to land at Liverpool. They had been a fortnight from home, the storm having delayed them two days, and they knew not what might have happened in that time. A telegram might have sped under the waves in an hour while they toiled over them, and just at the moment of escape their flight might be intercepted.

CHAPTER XII. A TAPER LIGHTED, AND A TAPER BLOW

Our two travelers did not know how far removed they were from the com-mon ways of life till they were again on land. The strangeness of a sea on land. The strangeness of a sea voyage had made their own strange less apparent; but when they saw homes, and all the daily interes assumed in their eyes a certain gro teque appearance, and they scarcely knew themselves or each other. How hollow sounded the careless laugh they heard, how terrible the jest! impossible they found it to comprehend how business and pleasure could absorb men's souls! To them this gay and busy world was wandering recklessly on the brink of an unseen pro cipice which they alone could see.

Annette Gerald had adopted her

usband's inner, as well as his outer, life-had, as it were, stepped inside his guilt, and wrapped it round her, and his world was henceforth her world. With his eyes she saw a leafless and flowerless England sweep behind her as they sped onward to London; and she shrank, even as he did, when the thick fog of the great city took them in and shut them as

in walls of stone.
"We cannot stay here," her hus band said. "I should lose my senses in twenty-four hours. This fog makes me feel like a smoky house. Are you too tired to go on? Do let us have sunshine, at least."

No, she was never too tired to go on with him.

They had a compartment to themselves, and, weary as they were, started on again, a little relieved in mind. No one had accosted them in either of the great cities, and there seemed to be no immediate danger. Overcome with fatigue and loss of sleep they both leaned back in the soft cushions, and slept soundly till some sound or a slackening of their speed awakened them.

The London fog was far away, and they found themselves passing slowly and smoothly through a cloud-world There was no of blue and silver. land in sight. The window at one side showed them a cliff that might be ated cloud. At the other side, a deepblue sea, foam flecked, and a deep blue sky half-veiled in silvery mists, were so entangled with each other that only where the full moon rode could they be sure that it was sky and only where the wave ran up and curled over in foam almost vithin their reach could they be sure that it

"The fairies have taken possession "I hope of Dover," Annette said. they have not whisked the steam No; here it is. We will stay on deck, Lawrence. It is not

was water.

As they steamed out into channel, another scene of enchant-ment took the place of the ordinary view. As they withdrew from th showed only a crescent of lights; lights clustered all over the foamy water, and stars clustered in openings of the fleecy clouds above, so that they moved as if swimming

through constellations. "I hardly know which is up and which is down," Lawrence said. Europe made of clay and rock, like America?"

His wife was leaning on his arm, and they stood looking over the rail of the little steamer. "We might come the little steamer. "We might come this way a hundred times, and not see such a sight," she replied. "But there is land beyond. That is France—that low, dark line. In a few hours we shall be in Paris. I shall be glad to

But when they reached it, Paris was as much too light as London had been too dark. In the one city a foe might stumble upon them at any moment; in the other, he might see them from afar. They went to a dingy little hotel in the old part of Paris, and stayed there one day, trying to find rest, but in vain. Every sound made their hearts beat more quickly; every glance and udden step near them sent the blood to their faces. Besides, the quiet of the place afforded them no distraction from their thoughts. The noises in the narrow street on which the hotel was built were all shut out by the heavy portal, and the quadrangle was as still as a forest solitude. Ivy climbed about the windows, a tiny fountain while she went to confession. "Be- for ever.

overflowed and ran in a stream across the ravement, and the only persons who appeared were the clergymen who and now and then the universal waiter and servant of servants, Francois, who shuffled across the view, a napkin over his arm, and his heavy head dropped

forward, so that only a great ball of frowzy dark hair was visible.

"We cannot stay here," Annette said, as they stood by the window the first evening after their arrival. "It is too much like a prison.' her husband start, and made haste to add: "It is stupid, and I fancy the air is not good. Besides, Paris is too gay, if we go out into the city. We do not want gaiety, Lawrence. We want

some earnest employment for our time."
"We will go to Rome," he said. "Rome!" she hesitated. "One meets everybody there," she said; "and there are so many idlers, too, who have nothing to do but talk of other people's affairs. Are you sure you wish to go to Rome, dear?"
"I must go! I have an object in

going there," he exclaimed, excited by the first show of even slight opposition. happens to me, let it happen there.'

We will go then," she answered hingly. "And we may as well set soothingly. "And we may as well set out to-night. Nothing is unpacked, and we have three hours before the train starts.

He walked to and fro over the stone loor of their little sitting-room, which allowed only half a dozen paces, so narrow was it. "Three hours!" he muttered. "It is too much! Cannot we go out? There must be a church "Yes : in France and in Italy ther

is always a church near.'

They went into the fading sunset and soon found themselves entering the old church of S. Etienne du Mont. Inside, the pale gloaming was changed to a richly-tinted gloom that grew every moment deeper. Here and there a lamp marked some picture or shrine held in special veneration, and far away in the apse of the church, where the shadows stretched off till they eemed reaching out to eternity burned a single point of light, as small

Annette clasped her hands over he nusband's arm, and leaned her cheek close to his shoulder, as they stood near the door and looked at this little beacon "O Lawrence!" she whispered, "it is like the light the mother sets in the window to guide her children home at night. O me! O me!" she cried piti-"What is to become of us!"

A crown of tapers burned about the shrine where the body of S. Genevieve had once lain, and an old woman sat near by with her prayer book, presid-ing over a table piled with tapers of different lengths, her white cap show ing like a little heap of snow in the

"People buy tapers for a sou or tw and set them by the shrine to honor S. Genevieve and remind her of their needs," Annette said softly as they approached this illuminated space "Would you like to offer one?"

Lawrence Gerald had been wont the old time before life had been shattered about him and shown eternity between its gaps. Now he went eagerly forward, selected a taper, lighted it, and placed it, whispering a prayer while his fingers lingered on it. Annette followed his example, placing her offering beside his, and making her request also.

As they were turning away, a sacristan approached them from the next chapel, and asked if they had any article they would like to have touched to the inside of the shrine. Annette immediately gave him her rosary which he laid an instant where the saint's body had lain.

"Ask him if I can put my hands in," Lawrence whispered. "Certainly you can !" she answered

with dignity, seeing the man look rather curiously at him. She held the lid open, and her hus-band put both his hands in, and in-

stantly drew them back, his eyes dilating and his color rising, as if he had put them into fire. They walked on past the grand altar,

and knelt in a nook by a confessional The daylight faded, and the smouldering fires of the windows went ou in the black and ashen gray. But when no outer brightness was left to enter and show the glories of that house of God, the lamps and tapers inside burned with a clearer flame They shed a faint illumination through the vast twilight; they spread a soft gilding up the heights of the clustered pillars, and made tender the gloom

marble faces with such a holy radiance that a soul seemed to shine through A slight stir in the confessional near hem showed that a priest was there. Lawrence," said Annette suddenly, may I go to confession?"

brooding in the roof that arched over

their capitals; they sparkled on the crowns of the saints, and touched

Wait a minute," he answered. will go first, and then you will only need to say that you are my wife."

His tone revealed a bitter pain; for unconsciously her question had shown that there was no weight on her con science save that which he had placed there, and that she was more in need

of consolation than of forgiveness. She sank on to her knees again. 'O my God!" she murmured, "has it come to this, that I must enter thy house without being able to find comfort there?"

It was nearly half an hour before Lawrence joined her, and they went out together. "I have no wish to go

sides, there is no time, if we are to

asked when they were again in the "I asked that my mother may die in peace before the month is out. he inhaled a penitence which was That will be in less than two weeks.'

"My poor Lawrence!" she sighed.
"And can you guess the reason why
I wish, above all things, to go to Rome, and don't much care what may happen after?" he went on. "Of course you you cannot. Well, I want to receive olution from the Pope. I go to confession, and pour out my story there, and I feel no better for it; or, if I feel better than I should without confe I am still not at peace. I don't feel absolved. Yet I want to go to confesworld.

"But, dear Lawrence," she said, "that will not be so easy to compass. Don't expect such a privilege too con-You know we cannot have fidently. You know we cannot have an audience, because we cannot go to nim under false names. If we could, his blessing would satisfy you, would it not? But I see no way, dear, though would not discourage you.

For once her objections did not irritate him. "I have been thinking of it ever since we left America," he said; "and in one way or another I shall succeed. Yes, his blessing would be enough; and if there were no other way, I could tell him my real name. Now, we must make haste. We have just time to reach the station.

How many hearts have quickened in their beating as they travelled that road, drawing near to Italy! How many eyes have gazed eagerly at that first cross, set aloft on the mountain side, at the first shrine of the Virgin Mother! And then come the armie of poplars and solemn cypresses.

"They look as if the dead warriors and prelates, and poets had risen from their graves, and were staring out over Italy to see what their degenerate sons were doing," Annette said. "See how tightly they hold their coid green robes about them !

Our travellers slept a few hours at the evening. And here having some time to wait, they wandered out, hoping to find a church open ; but all were found themselves standing on the bridge of the Holy Trinity, listening to a burst of wild music from many bugles, played by some unseen band. So loud and piercing was the strain, the very stars appeared to tremble as it went up. Then, as suddenly as it rose, it dropped again, and all was silent. The city was quiet, and the Arno gleamed across it like a jewelled cestus across a sleeping breast. Its waters seemed to have crystallized into a purple enamel about the golden reflections of the lights along its banks, not a ripple showing which way they flowed. Not far away, another bridge flowed. spanned the tide, its soft and dreamsomewhat at such observances in like arches set roundly over the answering arches in the deeps below. A small boat, faintly seen, shot under neath this bridge, and disappeared It was a vision of Florence as one sees it in history and poetry.

The two strangers leaned on the balustrade of the bridge, and, as they gazed, felt the curse upon them grow less sharp, as though they were ghosts, and their crime some old, old story, the tears of pitying generations.

Standing there, silent and half comforted, they became aware of a low murmurous sound of many feet and voices; and then a long line of white robed figures appeared, carrying torches. A bier was borne aloft in their midst, what it held covered with an embroidered pall that glistened with gold. These men recited prayers together as they went, and the river and bridge were for a moment bright with the glare of their torches. Then they disappeared, and a star-lighted quiet reigned again over the city of

Annette touched her husband's arm and they reluctantly turned away from that spot where first they had experienced a feeling of peace.

And then, all night they plunged deeper and deeper into Italy, till morning and the Eternal City met their faces, and dazzled them.

"Thank God! I am in Rome at last," exclaimed Lawrence. "Now nothing but death shall tear me away from it.

Yes, there it was! the crumbling, stately city of the past, looking as if it had just risen from the bottom of the sea, after having been submerged for centuries. It was all a faded gold color, like autumn leaves, and its narrow streets were chilly, as though death had breathed through them. But its heights were warm and sunny and its dusky trees and hedges were steeped in warmth, and over its mag nificent decay the sky was fresh and blue, and the morning sunshine flowed

bountifully.
"Now," said Mrs. Gerald, becoming business-like at once, "we must first engage an apartment, and get our engage an apartment, it. I think I know cast away every one but life; but with cast away every one but life; but with Italian enough for that, thanks to the songs I have learned."

that life you may yet atone, and become a blessing to the world. It is

"Do you propose singing an aria to call a cab?" her husband asked. "And will you engage an apartment to the tune of 'Hear me, Norma? He smiled, and for a breath looked

like his old self. But the next instant his face changed. The thought of his mother was enough to banish the smile

That thought had taken full posses. sion of him, filling him with a terror. start to-night."

"Do you know, Annette, what I prayed for when I put the taper up in honor of S. Genevieve?" her husband flight had been made with no feeling but fear for himself; but with the first breath of the air of the city of saints. without taint of weakness.

While his wife, then, arranged their

affairs, and attended to the preparation of their little menage, h hand the one work possible for him-the study of his own soul. Thi anguish for his mother, whom he loved deeply, much as he had wronged her, was like a sword that cleft the selfish crust of his nature. His whole life came up before him with merciless distinctness-all its ingratitude, its petsion every hour of the day. I am like tishness, its littleness, its sinful waste, the Ancient Mariner, who had to tell his story to every one he met. I want to tell mine to every priest in the if it were before him, his mother's levels of the same as the sam ing, patient face; he heard, as if she were speaking at his side, her sad and tremulous voice; and more pathetic even than her sorrow were the brief oments of happiness he had given her, her smile of pride in him, her delight when he showed her some mark of affection, her eager anticipation of his wishes. As he went back over this past, the self-pity, the blindness, the false shame, were stripped away from him, and he saw himself as

"Nothing but utter ruin could have brought me to my senses," he said to his wife one day, when he had been sitting for a long while silent, gazing out at a little fountain that sprang nto air in a vain effort to reach the laden orange tree that overshadowed

She made no reply, and he needed none. She had let him go his own ways, keeping watch, but never inter-fering. She had nothing to do for him now but wait and see what sort of call he would make on her.

He wandered from church to church, and knelt at every shrine in the city of shrines. Wherever the signal lamp told that there some troubled soul had found help, he sent up his petition He glanced with indifferent eyes past the rich marbles and gliding; but when a face looked from marble or canvas with an expression that touched Turin, and, resuming their journey before daylight, reached Florence in The luxuries of life grew loathson him ; fashion and gaiety were to him like a taunt of the evil one, who had closed at this hour. Presently they found themselves standing on the clothes, the daintiness of his fo None of the people he saw seemed to him enviable, save the poor monks in their coarse brown robes, with their bare feet thrust into rough sandals. In his own house he lived like an

ascetic. Now and then he would rouse him self from this stern and prolonged examen to think of his wife. claims on him which, perhaps, he was forgetting.

"You poor child!" he said, "we are not in India, that you should immolate yourself over my dead hopes. What can I do for you. I would free you, if

"You are not to think of me," she replied quietly. "It is God who new ommands you to think of yourself.
"Yes!" he exclaimed. "I be

made my own instruments of torture Having thought of myself when it was a sin, I am forced to think of myself when it is a torment. And I escape that thought only to remember my victims. Annette, but one day is lef of the four weeks. O my mother! if space could be annihilated, and I could be with you till it is over! If I could but know what has happened, what will happen, to her!'

He had spent the whole day in a church near by, sometimes praying before an altar, sometimes gazing at the pictures, in search of a divine meaning that might be hidden in them; but oftener, withdrawn to a dusky nook where only a single lamp burned before a head crowned with thorns, he gave himself up to grief.

"It is useless to wish and repine," his wife replied sadly. "That is one of the weaknesses we must cure ourselves. Since it is only a torment to imagine what may be taking place at home, let us try to banish the thought, leaving all in the hands of God. And now, Lawrence, do you know that you have eaten nothing today? When you stay so long again I shall go after you. In Rome, at this season, it is dangerous to allow the strength to fail. You will soon be ill,

if you go on fasting so."
"And what matter if I should?" he

asked. The wife waited till the servant had placed the dinner on the table and gone out before she spoke, and the moment of consideration had made her resolve on a stern answer, however willingly she would have given a tender one. She had long since discovered that her husband was one of those whom the flatteries of affection enervate instead of stimulating, and she was not sure enough of a radical change having taken place in him to yield to her own impulse to soothe and persuade when reproof might be more

come a blessing to the world. It is your duty to watch over the only means left you of making reparation."

He did not show the slightest displeasure at her reproof. On the contrary, there seemed to be something in it almost pleasant to him. Perhaps the suggestion that he might yet be a blessing in the world, incredible as that appeared, inspired him with an undefined hope. He fully on her words in ecoming habitual t she spoke with pec-and Annette, seeing half sorry for having least some pitiful placed it by him, w weeks he had not dr He put it away would as soon drink

MARCH 18, 1

ashamed of her weal a hasty apology. subject, I would no said. "Forgi will again." "Oh! there wanted," he said. ren need to resolve would be enough.

think that you would

promise never againless I should be comone who knows bett His wife did not degree of asceticism had expected him she did not now u was but a tremblin denial might be on tion of that instal from one extreme t We all know he natural firmness,

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brought him to hi I like that ch this morning," he up and down the many of them, se a nook in them trouble can hide me any impressio this one is so with guide books you are praying When there is a l half vestibule, be the sacristy, who little shrine; ar quite private, wi

The church h Maria della Pace "It is Our wife said, "an memorate the p I thought it wou some special cor lity should linge and cemented w I like it, too, 1 we have visited splendid as man

She did not

having left his

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you. I sha

Mass was over, church till it v to watch him, Requesting the the curtain cov of Raphael, she fore the chapel her attention l vision and the had come near aware of her pr at her side, had while he gaze trouble in his moment. The composition, so by the spraw Michael Angel dishevelled, w Bernini, lifted plane. Even turned away, a

himself the ple much beauty, I that spirit of h "Lawrence, when she ha promenade as know that you night. I wish powder that I leep now. Yo

down on the so everything qu He shook rather not tak not sleep, if