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Blessed the pain that brings us nearer God!  
Blessed the grief that makes us grow in grace!  
And the rough toil we know Christ will applaud  
Gives us pleasures nothing can efface.  
For if we are true seekers after Heaven,  
No sacrifice of ours can be too great.  
To offer Him whose life was freely given  
To raise up man from his debased estate.  
So garner up thy griefs as golden grain  
Which thou mayest offer as thy need of worth;  
Weave rosaries of pearls of all thy pain--  
Rare jewels gathered from the dust of earth,  
Thus shalt thou grow in love and faith, and hope,  
And fill in its broadest, truest scope  
--Ave Maria.

## THE POOR GENTLEMAN

### CHAPTER VI.

Four days after Denecker had refused his consent to the marriage, a hired carriage might have been seen drawing up carefully in a screen of wood that bordered a by-road about half a league from Grinselhof. A young man got out of it, and, giving directions to the coachman to await him at a neighboring inn, walked briskly across the moor toward the old chateau. As soon as Grinselhof began to loom up over the trees, he moved cautiously along behind the hedges and thickets, as if seeking to avoid observation; and then, stealing across the bridge, he opened the gate, passed through the dense cobse that surrounded the house, and entered the garden.

The first object that greeted his sight was Lenora, seated at her table beneath the wellknown catalpa, with her head resting on the board, evidently absorbed in sorrow. Her back was turned toward him as he approached; and, although he advanced with the utmost caution. The sound of his footsteps disturbed her in the intense silence of the spot, and she leaped to her feet, while the name of Gustave broke in surprised accents from her lips. She was evidently anxious to escape into the house: but her lover threw himself on his knees, and, grasping her hand, poured forth a passionate appeal:--

"Listen to me, Lenora! listen to me! If you fly and refuse me the consolation of telling my last farewell, all I have suffered and all I hope, I will either die here at your feet, or I will go hence forever a broken-hearted wanderer over the face of the earth! Listen to me! listen to me! listen to me, Lenora, my sister! my beloved, my betrothed! By our pure and holy love, I beseech you not to refuse me!"

Though Lenora trembled in every limb her features assumed an expression of wounded pride, as she answered, with cold decision,--

"Your boldness surprises me, sir! You are indeed a daring man, to appear again at Grinselhof after your uncle's insulting conduct to my father! He is ill in bed his soul is crushed by the outrage. Is this the reward of all my affection for you?"

"Oh, God! oh, God! Lenora, do I hear you accuse me? Alas! what have I done and what could I prevent?"

"There is nothing, sir, any longer, in common between us," said the girl. "If we are not as rich as you, the blood that runs in our veins cannot suffer by comparison. Arise! begone! I will see you no more!"

"Mercy! pity!," exclaimed Gustave, lifting his clasped hands towards her; "mercy, Lenora, for I am innocent!"

The maiden dashed the tears that began to start in her eyes and, turning her back on him, was about to depart. "Cruel! cruel!," exclaimed Gustave, in broken tones. "Can you leave me without a farewell?--without a word of consolation? Will you remain insensible to my grief and deaf to my prayers! 'Tis well but I submit to my lot, for you have decided it! You, Lenora, my love, have sentenced me! I forgive you; be happy on earth without me, and farewell forever!"

As he muttered these words his strength seemed utterly to fail him, and, sinking into the chair which Lenora had quitted, his head and arms fell lifeless on the table.

The determined girl had made a few steps in her retreat to the house, when she suddenly halted on hearing the ag-

tonized tones of Gustave's farewell and the sudden sound of his fall on the table. As she glanced backward at the convulsed frame of her lover, a spasm that denoted the violent conflict between duty and affection passed over her beautiful face: and, as her heart appeared gradually to conquer in the fight the tears began to pour in showers from her eyes. Step by step and slowly she retraced the path to the table and, leaning over the sufferer, took one of his hands tenderly in hers:--

"Are we not wretched, Gustave? Are we not wretched?"

At the touch of that gentle hand and the sound of that beloved voice, life seemed once more to stir in his veins, and, raising his eyes languidly to hers, he gazed mournfully into them as he half said, half sighed,--

"Lenora, dear Lenora, have you come back to me? Have you taken pity on my agony? You do not hate me, do you?"

"Is a love like ours extinguished in a day?" returned Lenora with a sigh,--

"Oh, no, no," cried Gustave aloud; "it is eternal! Is it not eternal, Lenora and omnipotent against every ill as long as the hearts beat in our bosoms?"

Lenora bowed her head and cast down her eyes. "Do not imagine, Gustave," said she, solemnly, "that our separation causes me less grief than it does you, and if the assurance of my love can assuage the pangs of absence, let it strengthen and encourage you. My lonely heart will keep your image sacred in its holiest shrine; I will follow you in spirit wherever you go, and I will love you till death shall fill up the gulf that separates us. We shall meet again above, but never more on earth."

"You are mistaken, Lenora," cried Gustave, with a feeble expression of joy; "you are mistaken! There is still hope; my uncle is not inexorable, and his compassionate heart must yield to my despair."

"That maybe," replied Lenora, in sad but resolute tone that may be, Gustave; but my father's honor is inflexible. Leave me, Gustave; I have already disobeyed my father's orders too long, and slighted my duty in remaining with a man who cannot become my husband. Go now; for, if we should be surprised by some one, my poor, wretched father would die of shame and anger."

"One moment more, beloved Lenora! Hear what I have to tell you. My uncle refused me your hand; I wept I besought him, but nothing could change his determination. I rebelled against him; and treating him like an ungrateful wretch I said a thousand things for which I begged his pardon on my knees when reason resumed her empire over my excited soul. My uncle is goodness itself to me: he pardoned my sin, but he imposed the condition that I should instantly undertake a journey with him to Italy, which he has long designed making. He idly hopes that travel may obliterate your image from my mind; but think not Lenora that I can ever forget you. A sudden thought flashed throughout my fancy and I accepted his terms with secret joy. For months and months I will be alone with my uncle: and watching him ever with the love and gratitude I feel for all his kindness, I will gradually wear away his objections, and conquering his heart return, my love, to place the bridal wreath upon your brow, and claim you before the altar of God, as the companion of my choice!"

For an instant a gentle smile overspread the maiden's face, and her clear, earnest gaze was full of rapture at the vision of future happiness; but the gleam disappeared almost as quickly as it arose, and she answered him with bitter sadness,--

"Alas! my dear friend it is cruel to destroy this last hope of your heart; and yet I must do it. Your uncle might consent; but my father. She faltered for an instant.

"Your father, Lenora! Your father would pardon all and receive me like a long-lost son."

"No, no; believe it not, Gustave; for his honor has been too deeply wounded. As a christian he might pardon it; but as a gentleman he will never forget

the outrage."

"O, Lenora, you are unjust to your father. If I return with my uncle's consent, and say to him, 'I will make your child happy; give her to me for my wife; I will surround her path with all the joys a husband has ever bestowed on woman;-- if I tell him this, think you he will deny me?' Lenora cast down her eyes.

"You know his infinite goodness, Gustave," said she. "My happiness is his only thought on earth; he will thank God and bless you."

"Yes, yes; he will consent," continued Gustave, with ardor; "and all is not lost. A blessed ray lightens our future, and let it rekindle your hope, beloved of my heart! Yield not to grief; let me go forth on this dreary journey, but let me bear alone with me the assurance that you await my return with trust in God. Remember me in your prayers; utter my name as you stay through these lonely paths which witnessed the dawn of our love and where for two months I drained the cup of perfect bliss. The knowledge that I am not forgotten by you will sustain my heart and enable me to endure the pangs of separation."

Lenora wept in silence. Her lover's eloquence had extinguished every spark of her pride; and the rebellious heart which so lately was ready to cast off its rosy fetters had no longer a place for any thing but love and sadness. Gustave saw that he had conquered.

"I go, Lenora," said he, "strong in your affection. I quit my country and my loved one with a confident hope. Whatever may happen to me, I will never be downcast. You will think of me daily, Lenora, will you not?"

"Alas! I have promised my father that I will forget you!" sobbed the maiden, as her hand trembled in his.

"Forget me," exclaimed Gustave. "Can you force yourself to forget me?"

"No, Gustave; no," said she, firmly, fixing her large eyes on him with an intense and lingering gaze. "No: for the first time in my life I will disobey my father. I feel that I have not the strength to keep my idle word. I cannot forget you: till the last hour of my life. I will love you; for it is my fate, and I can not resist."

"Thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks, Lenora!" exclaimed Gustave, in a transport. "Thy tender love strengthens me against destiny. Beloved of my heart, rest here under the guardian eye of God. Thy image will follow me in my journey like a protecting angel; in joy and grief, by day and night, in health and sickness, thou' Lenora, wilt ever be present to me. This cruel separation wounds my heart beyond expression; but duty commands, and I must obey. Farewell, farewell!"

He wrung her hands convulsively, and was gone.

Gustave! sobbed the poor girl, as she sank on the chair and allowed the pent up passion of her soul to burst forth in tears.

### CHAPTER VII.

Lenora secretly cherished in her heart the hope of her happy future; but she did not hesitate to inform her father of Gustave's visit. De Vlierbeck heard her listlessly, and gave no other reply but a bitter smile.

From that day Grinselhof became sadder and more solitary than ever. The old gentleman might generally be seen seated in an arm-chair, resting his forehead on his hand, while his eyes were fixed on the ground or on vacancy. The fatal day on which the bond fell due was perhaps always present to the mind; nor could he banish the thought of that frightful misery into which it would plunge his child and himself. Lenora carefully concealed her own sufferings in order not to increase her father's grief; and, although she fully sympathized with him, no effort was omitted on her part to cheer the old man by apparent contentment. She did and said every thing that her tender heart could invent to arouse the sufferer from his reveries; but all her efforts were in vain; her father thanked her with a smile and caress; but the smile was sad, the caress constrained and feeble.

If Lenora sometimes asked him, with

tears, what was the cause of his depression, he adroitly managed to avoid all explanations. For days together he wandered about the loneliest paths of the garden, apparently anxious to escape the presence even of his daughter. If she caught a glimpse of him at a distance a fierce look of irritation was perceptible on his face, while his arms were thrown about in rapid and convulsive gesticulations. If she approached him with marks of love and devotion, he scarcely replied to her affectionate words but left the garden to bury himself in the solitude of the house.

An entire month--a month of bitter sadness and unexpressed suffering on both sides--passed in this way: and Lenora observed with increased anxiety the rapid emaciation and pallor of her father, and the suddenness with which his once lively eye lost every spark of its wonted vivacity. It was about this time that a slight change in the old gentleman's conduct convinced her that a secret--and perhaps a terrible one--weighed on his heart. Every day or two went to Antwerp in the caleche, without informing her or any one else of the object of his visit. He came back to Grinselhof late at night, seated himself at the supper table silent and resigned, and, persuading Lenora to go to bed, soon went off to his own chamber. But his daughter was well aware that he did not retire to rest, for during long hours of wakefulness she heard the floor creak as he paced his apartment with restless steps.

Lenora was brave by nature, and her singular and solitary education had given her a latent force of character that was almost masculine. By degrees the resolution to make her father reveal his secret grew in her mind. And, although a feeling of instinctive respect made her hesitate, a restless devotion to the author of her being gradually overcame all scruples and emboldened her for the enterprise.

One day Monsieur De Vlierbeck set off very early for town. The morning wore away heavily; and, toward the afternoon, Lenora wandered wearily about the desolate house, with no companion but her sad reflections. At length she entered the apartment where her father usually studied or wrote, and, after a good deal of hesitation, in which her face and gestures displayed the anxiety of her purpose, opened the table-drawer, and saw in it, unrolled, a written document. The paleness of death overspread her countenance as she perused the paper and instantly closed the drawer. After this she left the apartment hastily, and, returning to her chamber, sat down with hands clasped on her knees and eyes fixed on the floor in a stare of wild surprise.

"Sell Grinselhof!" exclaimed she. "Sell Grinselhof. Why, Monsieur De-necker insulted my father because we were not rich enough for him. What is this secret, and what does it all mean. If it should be true that we are beggars Oh, God, does a ray of light penetrate my mind, is this the solution of the enigma and the cause of my father's depression!"

For a long time she remained motionless in her chair, absorbed in reverie; but gradually her face brightened, her lips moved, and her eyes glistened with resolution. As she was endeavoring to fight bravely against misfortune, she suddenly heard the wheels of her father's caleche returning to Grinselhof. She ran down instantly to meet him; and as he drew up at the door she perceived the poor sufferer buried in a corner of the vehicle, apparently deprived of all consciousness, and, when he descended from the vehicle and she saw his expression distinctly, the deadly pallor that covered his haggard cheeks almost made her sink to the earth with anxiety. Indeed, she had neither heart nor strength to utter a word to him, but, standing aside in silence, she allowed the old man to enter the house and bury himself as usual in his chamber.

TO BE CONTINUED