

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

"SURSUM CORDA."

When raising from thy bed
Thy weak and weary head,
After the watches of the sleepless night,
O thrust all care aside,
Fling back the shutters wide,
Drink in the glorious morning air and light.

Look on the grassy lawn
Resplendent in the dawn,
Its daisies and its violets softly dallying with the breeze;
The lily holding up
Its snowy dew-kissed cup,
And the ivy lightly swinging from the trees.

List to the merry notes
Poured from the little throats
Of the blithe songsters in the rustic bower:
The swallow from the eaves,
The cushat from the leaves,
And the jay from the old ancestral tower.

Hark the pretty maiden's song,
As she daily drives along
The heifers to their pastures on the plain,
And the sharp metallic ring
Which the dewy rephays bring
From the sickles that are sharpening for the grain.

O! courage in the morn.
Eradicate the thorn
Of Despondency that gnaws into thy soul,
Let Nature's smiling face
Impart to thee the grace
To be up and march bravely to thy goal.

To thy goal, though on the way
Through the changes of the day,
There be sorrows that await thee with their sting;
Advance with step elastic,
And unto thy spirit plastic
Let the cheer and hope of morning ever cling.

Kneel in thy sunlit chamber,
And let thy prayer clamber
To the Master of the noble heart and brave;
Ask that thy purpose nerve,
He may keep thee still unswerving
In thy courage and thy fealty to the grave.

JOHN LESPERANCE.

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THE DAVENANTS.

BY MRS. J. V. NOEL.

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CHAPTER XVI.

A LAST APPEAL.

LATE in the afternoon of that day Georgina sat alone in the turret school-room watching the waning daylight, and thinking painful thoughts. The last few hours, what a change had they brought about! That time yesterday she had sat in the deepening twilight, her heart filled with wild regret at her approaching separation from Delamare, now her love for him was dead—that love which had been the joy and misery of her life for months, and with it had fled all earthly hopes of happiness. Yet at times the unhappy girl experienced a feeling of relief at this unlooked-for deliverance from the thralldom of her unfortunate attachment—for it had been a thralldom this idolatrous love for the husband of Louise—his passionate devotion to herself only at times illumining the gloom which anxiety and disappointment and self-reproach cast upon her spirit. All that was over now, yet the bitter memory remained—the anguish and regret and horror filling her mind—and sitting beside the grave of the past she wept passionately.

The sound of a horse galloping up to the house at length roused her from her sad reverie. She looked out eagerly and perceived Dr. Delamare. He had returned, then, very unexpectedly, but she was glad for his wife's sake. It would relieve her painful anxiety on his account. As for herself she never wished to see him again; his presence could never send a thrill of joy to her heart now. It was half an hour later when a heavy step was heard in the passage outside the turret-room. Georgina's heart throbbed at that familiar sound. Was he coming to seek another interview with her, she asked herself, startled at the thought. She was not left long in doubt, for soon the door opened and Delamare stood before her. He was deeply agitated, she could see that as the light from the rising moon shone upon his face as he approached the window where she sat, trembling at the unexpected meeting. She rose with the intention of leaving the room. She dreaded the scene that would ensue, but he placed himself between her and the door.

"You cannot leave me until you decide my fate!" he said in the hoarse tones of strong emotion. "I have come back to the chateau just to ask one question, and it must be answered before we part. Is all over between us, Georgina? Have you cast me off?"

"I do not see the necessity for coming back to ask that question," she answered coldly. "After the dark hideous revelation of last night you must know we can never more be anything to each other." There was an icy sternness in her tones which told him he had little to hope.

"You cannot mean to give me up!" he cried frantically, "think how you drive me to despair! Can all love for me be dead in your heart? How can you forget so soon?"

"All love is dead in my heart. Your own horrible confession destroyed it suddenly and for ever. There is no use in continuing this painful interview, Dr. Delamare. You have my answer," and she moved towards the door, but he detained her with a burst of passionate entreaty.

"Do not fly from me thus! Let me speak to you! Great heavens, Georgina, what have I done to you to merit this treatment? Was it not my love for yourself that maddened me, causing me in moments of frenzy to yield to the temptation to get rid of Louise? Curse her! she has been the bane of my life!" he hissed through his shut teeth, stamping his foot in fury. "And now you turn from me with loathing!"

"Is it any wonder?" she interrupted, trembling at this display of passion, yet speaking with assumed calmness. "Could I be an accomplice in your wretched crime? could I listen any longer to your professions of attachment, knowing how guilty you were in the sight of Heaven? what hope of happiness could there be for us in the future if it were purchased at the expense of innocent blood? I have erred greatly in listening to your vows of affection after I found out your unprincipled deception—concealing your marriage when we first met, and the misery I have endured in discovering your unworthiness, your villainy I should say, is a punishment I well deserve." Her voice lost its calmness as she proceeded, becoming husky and tremulous with her deep feeling of contrition and self-reproach.

"Cruel and relentless!" he exclaimed, giving way to a burst of passionate grief. "Can nothing move you to pity and forgive me?"

There was no answer to this appeal, and he continued with the recklessness of despair: "I cannot endure this agony of your estrangement, Georgina. My punishment is greater than I can bear. You render me indifferent to life. I go to rejoin the band of patriots, and in the coming struggle I shall seek death to end my misery."

"Is it well to seek death? to rush with the guilt of unrepented sin upon your soul before the Judgment Throne?"

Delamare thought there was a softening in her tones, and a sudden hope sprang up in his heart that pity was taking the place of harsher emotions.

"If you would only forgive me," he pleaded piteously. "If you would hold out to me even the faintest hope of winning back your love at some future time, when——"

"I can hold out no such hope," she hastily interrupted. "The idol that I did love no longer exists; it was an ideal of my own creating, and your hand has shattered it."

She spoke with quiet decision, but there was a mournful pathos in her voice, showing the bitterness of her own disappointment and sorrow and regret.

"Then there is no hope for me!" he exclaimed with a despairing gesture, "and life without hope is intolerable. Well, be it so! in the death-strife to-morrow or next day I shall cease to suffer."

"To act thus is madness," rejoined Georgina earnestly. "Remain in your home, and by penitence and devotion to your wife endeavour to atone for the sin you intended to commit."

"Talk not to me of devotion to her," he said in accents of bitter hate; "has she not destroyed the happiness of my life?"

"No," said Georgina boldly, "she is not to blame! except," she added bitterly, "for loving you too well."

"Cruel and taunting, Georgina! have I deserved this from you?"

There was a despairing anguish in his tones which thrilled her woman's heart with pity. Her heart had at least loved with passionate ardour, she knew that well, although the time was past when the conviction could give her pleasure.

"I do not wish to add to your grief," she said more kindly; "but I would beg of you to give up this wild project of joining the insurgents. The struggle with the royal troops can only end in defeat to them, and why should you risk your life to no purpose?"

"Did I not say life was intolerable without your love," he remarked eagerly, hope again gleaming on his despair. "If I might regain that I could suffer years of penance."

"It can never be! nothing can alter my determination!" was Georgina's answer with subdued vehemence. She then moved towards the door, and this time he did not oppose her leaving him. He saw it was no use.

Hurrying along the passages she shut herself up in her own room, and woman-like relieved her excited feelings by weeping bitterly, while Delamare in a fit of desperation left the chateau and joined the insurgent force at St. Denis. Georgina heard him gallop off, and she knew that her rejection had driven him to this wild step, but she felt she had done right in breaking with him for ever, and there was no regret, for love was dead in her heart for Henri Delamare.

Some days passed away, and as Dr. Delamare was still absent Louise suffered intolerable suspense and anxiety. Madame St. Hilaire felt considerable annoyance at the active part her son-in-law was taking in the insurrection-

ary movement. Messages were sent to him repeatedly by both ladies, entreating him to return to his home, but he refused to abandon the patriot cause. The defeat of the royal troops at St. Denis gave a short triumph to the insurgents, but soon their prospects darkened, and their cause appeared so hopeless that some of the leaders abandoned it, seeking safety in flight. Suddenly Delamare returned to the chateau, hoping to remain there concealed for a day until he could effect his escape to the States. The death he had threatened to seek had not come to him, though he had exposed his life recklessly in the fight at St. Denis. His return safe and unhurt brought much relief to the mind of Louise. Owing to her late intense mental excitement, her health was again in a very precarious state, and any sudden shock might endanger her life. During his short stay at the chateau Delamare confined himself chiefly to his wife's apartment, much to the relief of Georgina. At the request of Madame St. Hilaire she and Stephanie spent the day in the turret school-room watching for the approach of an armed force which was hourly expected to arrest Delamare, as several persons had been apprehended for treason, and fear was entertained for his safety.

It was late in the afternoon when a small party of volunteer cavalry was seen approaching the chateau.

"Regardez, mademoiselle! Voilà les soldats!" exclaimed Stephanie, springing to her feet in sudden alarm. "Courrez vite! You run more fast. Oh, mon pauvre oncle will be one prisoner!"

The next moment Georgina was swiftly proceeding to the apartment of Louise. Her hasty knock brought Madame St. Hilaire and Delamare to the door in alarm. A few hurried words informed them of the threatened danger. Delamare's face changed colour, but his manner was self-possessed.

"You must conceal yourself," hastily remarked Madame St. Hilaire.

"That would be useless, for the soldiers will search every part of the house," he replied. "I cannot escape my fate. I may as well surrender myself a prisoner. It matters not!" he added in a voice intended only for Georgina's ear, "life so embittered is valueless to me."

A cry of alarm broke from the pallid lips of Louise. Her mother turned anxiously towards her.

"Calm yourself, Louise! fear not, I can save him!" she said with an encouraging smile. "There is one secret place where he cannot be discovered. Follow me, Henri," she added hastily, as she hurried to her own apartment. Georgina approached Louise and tried to calm her fears. The soldiers were now heard entering the house, and it was a moment of intense anxiety.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECRET OF THE ORATORY.

ON reaching her room, Madame St. Hilaire unlocked a door opening into the north turret and ascended a narrow stairs, leading to its upper chamber. Delamare was aware there was some mystery connected with this turret room, and he well knew that nothing but Madame's fears for her daughter's life would induce her to allow him to enter this, her private apartment. Fears for his own safety were almost forgotten in the curiosity he felt as he followed his mother-in-law up the narrow stairs. This turret chamber as well as the school-room in the opposite wing was lighted by three narrow casements, and commanded a magnificent view of the river and the mountains beyond. At one end was an altar, above which hung a crucifix, exquisitely sculptured in ivory. A beautiful painting of the Madonna and Child, and one of The Magdalene, decorated the walls. Furniture there was none; the floor was bare and in various places stained, evidently with blood. Delamare looked around this empty apartment with some surprise, perceiving no place for concealment. Suddenly a door, hid in the wainscot, flew open as Madame St. Hilaire touched a secret spring, and a small closet in the wall met his view. She motioned him to enter; he approached, but started back in astonishment at perceiving a skeleton in one corner. He turned an eager inquiring look at Madame.

"That is the skeleton of a dear friend who was murdered," she remarked, with some embarrassment. "Do you hesitate to place yourself beside it for a short time to save your worthless life?" she asked scornfully. "For years I have contemplated it daily. Quick or you are lost!" she added, as the tread of armed men was heard in her apartment below.

A moment afterwards Delamare stood beside the skeleton and the door of the secret closet slid into its place. When the soldiers entered the oratory they found Madame St. Hilaire alone, kneeling in prayer before the altar. One glance around the room convinced the men that Delamare was not there, and respecting the devotion of the mistress of the chateau, they withdrew, in order to continue their search in other parts of the dwelling.

While they are thus occupied, and while Madame St. Hilaire is keeping watch for her unhappy son-in-law, inwardly chafing at being compelled for his daughter's sake to hide him

from his pursuers instead of giving him up, as she would have gladly done,—we will say a few words explaining the mystery of the north turret. The ghastly skeleton was all that remained of the lover of her youth—the noble-looking Frenchman who had suddenly disappeared from the neighbourhood nearly forty years before. He had been murdered by her husband in that turret-room and hidden in the secret closet. The turret was then shut up, and the door of communication between it and the rest of the building constantly locked. After that deed the wretched murderer never knew a moment's peace, and to escape the hideous hauntings of remorse, he at last committed suicide.

After her husband's death, the north turret was again entered by Madame St. Hilaire, and fitted up as an oratory, and for years it witnessed the secret agony and remorse of the erring but repentant wife. At stated hours of the day and night she would kneel on that blood-stained floor, supplicating pardon for the murderer and repose for the soul of both—for her faith taught her the efficacy of prayers for the dead—and she well knew that the murderer as well as his victim had gone before God's tribunal unpardoned and unrepenting, cut off suddenly, unprepared to meet their Judge. To no one had she revealed this dark sorrow of her life, and she drew from Delamare a solemn promise that the secret of the skeleton closet would be inviolably kept by him. After a fruitless search the soldiers left the chateau, and he ventured to leave his place of concealment. Two hours afterwards as the gloom of a starless night descended upon the now dreary scenery of the Richelieu, he was riding with headlong speed in the direction of the American frontier. He was not, however, destined to escape from the scene of danger. He had not proceeded far, when, hearing that a party of the royal troops was advancing along the road he was pursuing, he fled towards St. Charles, the stronghold of the insurgents, wretched and reckless what became of him. The next day a detachment of military reached St. Charles and attacked the fortifications erected for defence. The troops met with an obstinate resistance, but were finally successful, and the patriots were slain. The slaughter on their side was great. Delamare was found among the slain when the contest was over, and conveyed to the chateau. The first intimation of his death was carried to his family by the appearance of the little procession bearing his remains. Georgina was descending the stairs as the lifeless form was carried through the entrance hall. As she gazed upon the marble features covered with gore, and distorted in the death agony, a cry of horror burst from her. With trembling steps she regained her own room to sink into insensibility, overwhelmed by the sudden dreadful shock.

She awoke to consciousness to find Stephanie trying to revive her, and weeping bitterly.

"*N'est-ce pas horrible! Sa mort est attendue. On ne cherchait qu'à mourir!—killed!*" she exclaimed, while sobs choked her utterance.

Rousing herself as if from a dream, Georgina gazed vacantly at her.

"Aunt Louise is killed!" repeated the agitated Stephanie.

"Killed! child! you mistake, it is your uncle Henri you mean," said her governess faintly shivering at the recollection of that blood-stained corpse.

"Ah oui! he is killed too, et ma tante aussi! The grief mad! her be dead!"

It was but too true. The shock of her husband's death, suddenly revealed to her by the horror-stricken, thoughtless Stephanie, was too great for the feeble Louise. The agony of grief killed her instantly, and her pure spirit followed Delamare's sin-stained soul into the unseen world.

Madame St. Hilaire was overwhelmed by this bereavement. That night the walls of the old chateau resounded with "weeping, lamentation, and woe."

The husband and wife, so ill-matched in life, in death were not separated. They were buried in the same grave, left to slumber side by side till the Resurrection morning.

The Lasselles returned to their home near St. John's, and Georgina Davenant left the chateau—the scene of so much suffering to her—and took up her abode with them, a changed and sorrowing woman. The meeting of the sisters was painful, for both had endured a lifetime of anguish during their separation. The storm that sweeps over the human heart may last but a brief period, yet its blighting effects may remain for ever.

Emily scarcely recognized her sister in the altered melancholy woman before her. All her youth seemed to have gone out of her face with the light of happiness. Both sisters had known sorrow in its depth, but with Georgina's suffering was mixed the agony of remorse. It was this constant self-reproach that gave the keenest sting to the dark memories that haunted her. She looked upon herself not only as the destroyer of Louise's domestic happiness, but as the cause of her death and also of Delamare's. If she had crushed her love for him when she first heard he was married. If she had not encouraged his attachment afterwards by the hope of winning