THE VILLAGE ANGEL:

Or, Agatha's Recompense.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BROKEN LILY. " This is the test of your love, Agatha. Will you go away with me to-night, without telling to any creature what is to happen... go away with me, to be with me always, and never to return? Will you believe what I say that, pledged and Highted as we are, there is no need to go through the different terns and ceremonies affected by re ple. You at a I have the wedding ring. I will put it on your finger, and it will blad us together faat as any vows."

She trembled violently; in the whole of her short, simple life she had never board such a question discussed-no one had spoken of marriage. After she had grown up she had been asked to some of the village weddings, and they had seemed to her solemn as church services —ali blessings and prayers. Whother there was any variation, any difference, Whother she did not know, she had not thought of it; her instincts, keen and pure, told her It was wrong, but her feelings and wishes were not in accord with her reason.

"Inat is my test, Agatha," he said. "Come with me, and stay with me for all time-give me all the rest of your life without reserve; or let us part now-trust me all in all, or not at all '

She tremble t violently, and clung to his

"Mry I just speak to Joan-ask Joan what she thinks?" she pleaded. "No," he replied, corrowfully. "Unless you believe in me implicitly, give me no half

faith. Do you want Joan to confirm what I ! tell you -do you appeal from me to her?'
'Oa, no, no!" she cried, "it is not that; but it would comfort me so greatly to hear some one else speak of it-it is so new and Strange to me,"

"Say no more, Agatha. You-you doubt me, and I can never forgive the doubt." And Sir Vane turned from her, as though he had tears in his eyes. The next instant the tender arms were round his neck.

"Has the test failed, my darling?" he asked, kissing her face. "Has it failed?"
"No," she replied. "I will trust all to you. What you tell me is new and strange to me. It is not what I have been taught to believe; but the belief of my life I give up to you. You would not tell me what is not true. I will believe what you tell me on the good faith of your own word. I will and do believe that I am -She paused, and a hot blush covered her

face. "That you are my wife!" he cried, and he kissed the fattering lips that could not utter the words. "And, darling, you will go with me? You will not let me go away lonely and wretched.

"I will go," she said.

"You promise inviolable secrecy-net one word to your father, or Joan, or any one

"If you desire it I will be quite silent," she replied. "You will be as obedient as you are beau-

tiful," he cried, "and an obedient wife is a great blessing."
"I must love, honor, and obey," sho

said. "Those are such beautiful words, Vane; they comprise everything."
You will have plenty to do, Agatha, dar-

ling, if you will go with me. Listen to my directions-write first a letter to your father; tell him you are married, and that you have gone away with your husband; that you will write to him in a short time, and that he need not have the least anxiety for you; you will be rich, thappy and beloved all your life. Add anything else you like; but be sure about this, write every word as I have told you. Do not pack any boxes. We will go straight through to Paris, and there you shall buy everything you can pessibly want,'

" Poor father !" she said, sadly; " it seems . very hard that my happiness should make his misery. Do you think he will miss me?" "I should say that he will miss you very much, indeed, but he will be pleased to know

that you are happy." eyes, with their shadow of The beautiful

listless doubt, looked wietfully at him. No: nothing of the kind. He will he all

right. Most fathers expect their daughters to marry at some time; why should not you? You can return so see him in a year or twe.' What will the children do? What will al! my poor people say ?" .he cried. "There will be no one to comfort them when I am gone.'

Would you rather have them than mo?" he whispered. "You !" she replied. "You know, Vanc; then there is the church and the organ, everything I have loved in my life."

You prefer me to all," he said, "Ah, yes; a thousand times yes," she

replied.

If you feel down hearted about it, Agatha, you must say, over and over again, to yourself, I am going to my love, who loves me, never to leave him again. You will have courage enough for anything, if you only say that; and now I want you to listen to me still further. We will not go away together; we should be too easily traced. I shall leave the Abbay at five in the morning, and you Abbey at five in the morning; and you, my darling, come by the train that leaves Westbury at night. Take a ticket to Hetm'nster. I will meet you there, and we will go to London. Will your courage fail you?"

"No, I think not," she said. "But, oh, Vane, if it could have been different! If I could have gone with you to church, like other girls do, I should have been much hap per. You will laugh at me I know, yet I must say good-by to the beautiful Agatha in the eastern window. 1 wonderit is a foolish wonder, I know; but if she

could speak, what would she say to me?"
But even he, who dared to lead this pure innocent girl to ruin, had not the courage to put on the lips of this Christian virgin words

that were of the devil's creed.

He laughed, but there was something constrained and embarrassed in his laugh. He had said to himself it would be piquant to woo and win a saint. He did not find it so pleasant. There was a sense of shame in his victory. The odds had been so greatly in his favor.

He never tired of calling her his wife. And the name had a magical influence over her. When they parted every arrangement had been made for the meeting on the morrow.

He watched the girlish, graceful figure, as Agatha walked slowly down the lane.

He had won the victory; she would be bis, this beautiful girl who had hitherto been

content with a life of charity-his! and he did not believe that any other could have us here together. a won her.

Yet he was not quite happy-a matter which surprised him. He did not sing to the you quite sure that it will not harm himself as he went through the green fields— you?" yet, what did it matter?—she was only a doctor's daughter. He went home through the lunes and passed through the church-

As he passed through the grounds to the abbey, he saw a tall white hly growing alone—a fair lily, whose petals were like snow-and with one blow of his stick he cut it down.

blue heavens while she fell !

Some voice had spoken, had startled him, Whether it was pity, regret, remorse, who shall say? but as he looked round just before he entered the house, something like a curse rose to his lips that he had ever seen the place at all.

have been a cruel thing to have left one go beautiful to fade away in this unknown village; but he could not blind himself as he had blinded her. Little sleep came to him that night. He left early in the morning. having made his adieus over night, and the last thing he saw as he left the grounds was the beautiful white lily he had wantouly slain the night before, lying dead on the grass.
"What sentimental nensense have I taken

up?" he said to himself; "and what a flower, beaten and dead, con have to do with my beautiful love, Agatha, I cannot

man, and Sir Vane repented still retained intact her old faith and belief in him. He knew her well enough now to be quite sure that if her faith and trust died, her love would be as surely slain. He knew that if she once understood how he had face again. He thought of it long and often, for he had awakened to the perfect conviction that so long as he lived he should find no other woman like Agatha. One or two little opened the eyes of a more worldly woman. It so happened that they reached Florence when one of the court festivals was celebrated, and they found all the hotels crowded. English, French, and Americans. lovers of court spectacles, were all gathered, and Sir Vane, still travelling as Mr. Heriot, was compelled to put up with two small rooms at the Hotel de l'Orient; and at this same hotel, as he went down the grand staircase, he met an old friend with whom he had been at college-Captain Farmer-who, with his wife and children, was staying there. In his genial, cheery manner, the

captain cried out . "Sir Vane, how glad I am to see you. How long it is since we met."

" Are you staying here?" he asked. am glad. My wife and children are here. I cannot tell you how delighted I am to see

meeting.
"I did not know that you were married. They told me at the Cariton that you had

Sir Vane had no intention whatever of introducing him to the levely woman at his side. Sir Vans whispered a few words to her. and she went slowly up stairs again; then, with a pale face, he turned to his old

friend. "You are mistaken," he said, "I am not married. You will excuse me, just now, at least. I must decline any introduction to

Heriot." The captain's gay face clouded over.
"You will never learn sense, Sir Vanc. I was honestly glad to think you were married to an angel like that girl—what a good and

Farmer to say nothing of this; we are leaving to-morrow, and it is not worth while to have any scandal."

His heart was on his lips as he asked the question; he had placed her in the very position in which she was liable to slight and insult, but he could not have borne to see it -a quivering pain on her sweet face would

"you may rest assured of my silence. I will not speak of having met you, even to my wife. I do not wish to preach, but I should like to ask if you have ever thought what the end of all this will be? It does not seem to me so very long since Lady H----

"That has nothing to do with the question," said Sir Vane, haughtily. "I thank you for your promise of secrecy. Forget you

The genial gladness had all faded from the captain's face; he looked stern and grave. "Good by, Sir Vane," he repeated, sorrowing in his heart for what he felt to be the degradation of his old friend. They parted, not to meet again for many long

vears. Slowly enough Sir Vane went up the staircase after Agatha; she stood there blushing and smiling. She laid her arms in their own house. Madame had reserved round his neck, and hid her blushing face on one small part of the garden for herself and

his breast. "Oh, Vane," she said, "how did he know that we were married?'

Will it be known now?" she asked, although she was compelled to let part of her

"He will not speak of it, darling. No, no harm can come to me.' But he dare not tell her that he distinctly large as a room-a lady stood with a little

A heautiful, rosy-tinted boy, with leng, fair curls. A sudden rush of memory filled her heart when she saw him, and she thought of the children of Whitecroft who had loved ter so dearly. The child looked at her with lughing eyes as she passed, and the little riding whip he held fell to the ground; she stooped to recover it and held it out to him.

"I thank you," said the boy, in such clear, perfect English. Sho was just a little startled, and said :

"You are English?"
"Yes," he replied, "I am English." Just at that moment a stern voice called :

" Castlie !" "Yes, papa," the boy answered.

"Come here, I want you." And looking up, Agatha saw the same gentleman who had claimed Sir Vane as his riend-the only one, she thought, in her simple heart, who had spoken of their marriage. He never looked at her, but came forward and took the lady and the child away. There was something in his manner which told her that he had done it purposely—that he would not allow his wife and child to

speak to her.
"Why did he do it, Vanc?" she asked, afterward, when she was describing the scene. "Why would be not let the boy

speak to me?" "I cannot tell," said Vane; "most probably we have lost caste in his eyes by taking tooms on the fifth story, but we could not help it.

She laughed. "How foolish! I should never care where

anybody lodged or lived." she said. She did not doubt him. They did and a woman. When they were quite among foreigners, Sir Vane in reduced her as Mrs. Heriot, and spoke of her as "my wife." With English people they rarely associated,

"Vane," she said, one morning, "I am tire (of secing all men's faces. I wish I knew a nice girl. I should like a girl

"When I see one nice enough for you to know, I shall be glad, too," he said. Agatha, you are not growing tired of me, are you?" She made an answer that delighted him.

Such love as hers never grows cold or dice, unfortunately. He saw more clearly every hour that the moment in which she should learn how he

had hetraved her would be the last they should spend together; and he loved her each day more and more. He had but one desire now, and it was

that they should go farther away from the beaten track, where they would not be misled her, she would never look upon his exposed to these scenes. Spain-Germany—Switzerland? Where should he go? What corner of the land was free from the intrucion of English people, with their narrow ideas? It seemed incidents had happened that would have to him like an inspiration when he read that a Swiss lady, residing at Lucerne, wished to receive an English family for the summer. There, away from babels and great citiesaway from the throng of tourists-there would surely be peace. He wrote at once and his letter was answered by Madame a Baronne D'Euvers—a Swiss lady, who gave him every particular about the Chateau Bellfleurs, and told him frankly that she had lost the greater part of her fortune during the Franco-German war, and was compelled to let her house during the greater part of the

It was quite retired, beautiful beyond all words; yet if he wished for a little change, he could easily reach some of the fairest cities in Switzerland. Sir Vano was delighted; at lust they would have perfect peace, and he should have his beautiful Agatha all to himsolf. Some few years ago the prospect of a chateau by a Swiss lake, with nothing but hills and mountains around, would have filled him with dismay; but now he longed

for it-love had transformed him. "It will be the most delightful life in the whole world !" cried Agatha, when he consulted her. "And, Vane, do you not think that my father would come to see us there?"

He promised that he would think of it. Madame D'Envers had written very frankly to him. It was certainly dull, she saidshe would not hide that from him; dull, except to those who loved nature, or had great

resources in themselves.
"My great resource is you, Agatha," said Sir Vane, when he read the letter: "we could never be dull when we are together."

Madame went on to state the number of her servents, and added that her hueband's niece, Mademoiselle Valerie D'Envers, lived with her, but spent the greater part of her

Sir Vane never thought of that part of the letter again until he saw Valerie—then the world changed. They started at once for their new

home; Sir Vane was most impatient; but if he had known what was waiting for him on the shores of that blue lake, he would rather have been dead than have gone there.

They were delighted with the chateau; it well deserved the name of "Beautiful Flowers," for it was literally smothered with them. Nothing could have been more picturesque or beautiful. Flowers of every hue, of every description, of every kind of loveliness; they climbed the walls, they peeped in at the win dows, they covered the doors and the iron railings; the gardens were filled with

The whole place seemed laughing in the sunshine; the fragrance of flowers greeted "How happy we shall be here, Vane!"

cried Agatha.

He kissed her beautiful face as he answered We should be happy anywhere together." And he meant what he said.

> CHAPTER XIV. SIR VANE'S WARNING.

"Mr. and Mrs. Heriot," as madame la baronne implicitly believed them to be, were very warmly welcomed at the Chateau Bellefleurs; every preparation had been made for them. Two magnificent suites of apartments, overlooking the luke, were set aside for them. Madame and her niece occupied the other side They would be free from intrusion as though living her niece; all the rest was at their disposal. Any friends they might care to invite could be well accommodated. Madame la baronne received them herself. She had been a handsome woman, but was somewhat masse; she was a thorough aristograt. ancient house; Sir Vane was delighted when

"No fear of vulgar curiosity there," he said to himself: "she is a gentlewoman." Madame showed them round the grounds. very proud, and then said au reveir. As she I for them, turning with a graceful bow to Sir

Vane, she said: I know, Mr. Heriot, that you seek solijude here-your letter told me as muchtherefore I shall never intrude upon you; but if at any time Mrs. Heriot would like a chat. or a sirell, I shall be only too pleased. My lips of a girl. niece and myself speak good English; her mother was an Englishwomen."

He thanked her, and Agatha turned to him with smiling eyes. "Oh, Vane, I am so glad- I am so pleased !

It seems so long since I have spoken even to a lady. ' "Hush, Agatha!" he said. "You must

be careful not to let madame hear that. Our circumstances have been peculiar. As a rule, it would be very unwise to say that you have no lady friends."

will be careful and remember; but, all the

"I am glad for you, derling. Do be careful; do not speak of yourself in any way, or of me, unless you cannot avoid it without being singular."

never tired of rowing Agatha from shore to shore. It was the calmest, sweetest, beightest life that had ever fallen to any one's lot. Agatha was extremely happy : this fair, picture: que home of theirs was most

variety: they went once or twice to a ball. mere frequently to the theatre, and they never met any of the compatriots whom Sir Vane so heartily dreaded.

"I have never been so happy in my whole life," he said one day to Agatha. "I should like to live here always.

" Not yet at least; and, perhaps, not for a long time. I must go to England

sometime.' "Never without taking me," she said.

not been seven weeks at the chateau, and madame I. baronne had grown much attached to the gentle, beautiful lady. She found her so well-bred, so gifted, so fair, in every sense of the word. Nothing pleased madame more to the last degree. She knew that by half-than to take Mrs. Heriot through the heauti-turning her head the graceful lines of her the lake. She discovered at once that Mrs. Heriot did not care to talk of herself, or her antecedents, and she never made the least attempt to induce her to do so. A sinsere I king existed between them, and, for her sake,

He was answering a business letter one merning, and it occurred to him that he had been away from England he had been away from England more than two years, and that during the whole of that time he had been constant to his love. Never before in his life had he loved longer than two months. He wondered if the time would ever come when he should tire of the angel face and gentle manner of his fair young love. For the thousandth time he regretted that he had not married her. He believed it was within the bounds of possibility that he might have been true to her

"That must be madame's niece. She was to return to-day."

had been made of such a person; he would never forget it again. "I am sorry our peace is invaded, Agatha.

How quiet and happy we have been !" "She will not interfere with us," said Agatha. "Madame often speaks to me of her. She spends all her time here at the

piano. Madame is very fond of her." It was a matter of perfect indifference to Sir Vane, who finished his dinner, and took

thinking. Suddenly at the other end of the garden. he saw the tall, graceful figure of a girl, with red roses in her dark hair-a figure that was perfect in its subtle grace, perfect in its symmetry. A tight-fitting dress of dark velvet showed every line and every graceful curve to perfection, but the face was turned

from him. " Madame's niece," said Sir Vane to himself; "and a grand figure, too. What shoulders! She has the same inimitable turn of the neck that I admired so much in the Diana of the Louvre. The face will not

He found himself watching every movement of the tall, slender figure, and every movement was so perfect. She stood looking over the orange trees, her white hands clasped and looking like ivory as they lay listlessly against her velvet dress. Then she bent forward, and from the crown of her head to the long sweep of velvet that lay on the grass was one perfect line of beauty. Then she gathered some of the heavy red roses that grew so plentifully, and pleced them in her dress. walked up and down the pretty terrace that overlooked the lake, and he said to himself that it was the very poetry of motion-but he

did not see her face.

Agatha came with the books and papers, and he forgot the girl with the red roses in

her dark hair. "Vane, madame's niece is come, said Agatha, and Sir Vane gave some languid answer; except that she had a perfect figure and moved with perfect grace, he had

but not at all like English women.' They sat out on the terrace until the sun set, and then by the moonlight they went to the shores of the lake that looked like a sea

of calm, quiet silver. Neither of them thought or spoke of madame's niece again.

"Not much, Valerie, but that it is more cheerful to know they are here." "Do you never go out with them?" she asked.

"Heriot," repeated the girl, with a scornful drooping of the full, curved lips. "I know English names very well, aunt, but this is strange to me. "Heriot," it is not

"It is not? I do not suppose he is noble, Valerie, but he has plenty of money."
"That is a very good thing," sighed the utterly inconsistent, and where I shall fail happy together," she said. altogether. I love money-I want moneyno one can want it more : but I feet sure I shall marry for love,"

Valerie laughed. "It is a dreadful thing to speculate about, she said, "and good-morning."

aunt, is it not? But about your lodgers—I thought you told me they were so wealthy?" "So they are, Valerie," said madame, com-lacinly. "I believe if Mrs. Heriot could placently.

get both for her. I have seen much of married life, but I never saw such devotion-it is quite touching." "Does he love her so much ?" asked Valerie,

quickly,

"I never knew how much a man could love plenty of money. The strangest thing about roses. them is, that they will not have servants of their own, and do not care to meet English people,"

"A long honeymoon, I suppose," laughed Valirie. "The English are queer people. Mr. and Mrs. Hariot must be a small fortune to you, my dear aunt." "I must not complain, replied madame. "One thing, I avow, as need drove me to let part of my home, I could not have possibly

met with nicer people than Mr. and Mrs. Heriot," "I am quite anxious to see them," said Valerie. And that night, when the pretty chateau of Beliefleurs lay in the white moonlight, no

> CHAPTER XV. " HIS WIFE MUST DE HAPPY."

one dreamed of the tragedy dawning under

its roof.

Sir Vanc, enjoying his cigar, was walking through the beautiful grounds alone. Agatha was occupied with some pretty fancy worksomething she was making for madame. She

had grown warmly attached to madame. She had liked Lady Anne very much, but there was a warmth about the Swiss lady hat the rector's wife lacked. Vane was strolling carelessly on his favorite promenade -the terrace that overlooked the lake, when he saw the same graceful figure that had attracted his attention the night before.

"Madame's niece again," he thought. "I hope this place is not to be pervaded by her. Then he saw her face. She was sitting on quaint oil curved seat that stood close to a marble faun. She had been busy gathering roses for mudamo's rooms, and sat down to rest with the basket of roses in her hands. Her attitude and pose were neck were seen to groatest advantage; she knew that when her hand lay upon the roses, its beauty of color and shape could be perfectly seen.

She was the true type of the Parisienne beauties; always dressed with the greatest cure and elegance; polished, suave, and caressing in manner, with a worship for appearances rurely equaled. She had pondered for some time how she should meet Mr. Heriot; not that she had any idea at that time of seeking to gain his attention. The innate instincts of coquetry told her that here was a rich English gentleman, who might be to her a very useful triend; therefore she would do her best to attract his notice and to please him. She was a great believer in making friends, and in making them useful to herself. She had decided, in ber own mind, that the most beautiful association a man could have with a woman That same evening, while they were at dinner, Sir Vane funcied that he heard a carriage driving up the entrance. Agatha would always for the future, associate her with them. So, according to her own errangement, he found her with t ie basket of blooming roses, which seemed

to absorb her whole attention. She started as he came in sight; and rising hurriedly, the roses fell in a crimson shower o the ground. Could anything have been better, prettier or more picturesque? She uttered a low musical cry of dismay, and Sir

Vane hurried to her.
"That is my fault," he said, raising his hat. "I am sorry I startled you." "I am sorry to have dropped my roses and

given trouble. 'she replied. "They will soon be back in the basket,"
he said, "if you will intrust it to me." "Have I the pleasure," she said, "of

speaking to Mr. Heriot ?" He bowed. "I have the pleasure of addressing the lady known to us lately by the title of 'madame'

neice.' ' "I am Mademoiselle D Envers," she re plied, with stately grace. Aud Sir Vane bowed again. "I hope," she added, "that I am not in-

truding on any part of the grounds that are

appropriated to your use, Mr. Heriot!" There can be no question of intrusion, And he felt that to meet this beautiful, dark eyed, brilliant girl in the sunlit gardens, would be a pleasant rarity; but not too

"He is wondering whether I shall bore him," she thought-" whether I shall come too often, and interfere with the honey moon tete-a-tetes.'

"You are very kind, monsieur," she said, "but I must not avail myself too ofter of vour kindness. It is strange that this terrace is my favorite spot, and it is also yours," "It is. But I shall not like to think that I have deprived you of the pleasure of fre-

quenting it." She looked at him with a frank smile that attracted him irresistibly. "I must watch my opportunities," she said. " and go when monsieur is absent."

He laughed, and began to pick up the roses. "I shall not know how to arrange them as tast fully as you have done," he said; but I will give them all to you. Nothing could have been more pleasant,

And the next few minutes passed happily in the fresh sunlit air, with the odor of roses all round them. "How handsome and how kind he is!" thought Valerie. "His wife must be hap-

she thought, with a smile.

She was too adroit to flatter him-she knew that Englishm.n looked on flattery with great suspicion-but during that short interview she gave him to understand, with great tact and skill that she admired him.

'I am always so pleased to see fresh faces at Bellefleure," she said. "The Chateau is very beautiful, but far too quiet for my

"And to mine, its solitude is its greatest charm," said Sir Vane.
She laughed again, that pleasant, frank laugh of here which Sir Vane liked to hear.

"That is because you have brought all your world with you," she said. "A desert would doubtless seem like paradise under similar circumstances. I have no world," "The loss is the world's, not yours," he retorted, with a bow. "I can imagine that

you find Bellefleurs very quiet."

"Those who are growing tired of life like Vane came to the rescue, my aunt, and those who are looking eagerly "Mrs. Heriot was not

"That is just where my character is so forward to it like myself, could never be very

"I suppose not," agreed Sir Vane. His thoughts had wandered to Agatha She was quick enough to perceive that his "Hush, my dear!" said madame, who did interest was failing, and she was too clever not think that at all a decorous word on the to remain after that. She arose from her gerden chair.

"Thank you for your help, Mr. Heriot,"

He watched the graceful walk, the easy carriage, with the same pleasure as he would have listened to a strain of sweet nusic. Then he went in search of Agatha. Ab, what rest, plucen ly. "I believe if Mrs. Heriot could what pleasure in her fair presence, what call and drink pearls, her husband would calm and repose! He forgot Valerie, taking to her; and nothing could show how deerly he loved Agatha better than this fact, that he, who had been so great an admirer of beautiful women, did not think twice during the day of the one who determ ned that the a woman until I saw Mr. Heriot. There is should always be associated in his mind with

> CHAPTER XVI. " AN ANGEL AND A COQUETTE."

Valerie D'Envers atood before the large mirror in herroom, looking with intent eyes at the face reflected there. It was fair enough surely to charm any man-oval in shape, brilliantly tinted, with large, bright eyes, dark as night. Surely if any face could win admiration, here could—brilliant, sparkling, piquant. Yet it had not well it had not wen any of the great prizes of life for her. She was twenty, and though she had legion; of admirers, no one had yet been over to Madame la Baronne to ask for the honor of her hand. There was an indednable something about her that startled most men-she was beautiful, polished and graceful, but there was a foreshadowing of violent passions in her; one felt instinctively that she could be jeulou-

envious and bitter. "Evidently," she said to herself, as she looked essue tly in the mirror, "I have not made any great impression on the English people-they have not asked to

Valerie had been three days at the chateau, and as yet no invitation had been sent to her, nor had she seen Sir Vane again. He could not have been much impressed with hir, never to remember her existence. She had puzzled herse f over it, but, with her usual skill, had come to the right conclusion-it was not so much because he had not admired her as that he was entirely engrossed with his young wife; and a sharp pang of envy shot through her beart. Why were fates so unequal? Why was fortune so unkind? Why should one girl be idelized by a handsome, rich husband, and another, equally young and beautiful, be passed by? She went to her mirror to be quite suro if she were as attractive as she had always imagined herself to be. The answer was certainly a reassuring one; her face pleased herself—why should it not please

She had been much struck during these few days by the evidence of wealth and luxury shown by these English people-they did not seem even to understand the value of money. If monaicur thought that anything would please his wife, he ordered it; and to Valerie, accustomed to the economical ordering of things, this was wenderful. It added another pang of envy to that which she felt already. At last came the invitation she had been so long expecting—a courteous, kindly little note from Agatha, asking if madame and mademoiselle would join them in spending an hour or two on the lake. Madame declined, but was most delighted to accept for mademoisele. who dressed berself with the greatest artistic skill, in colors best suited to her brilliant tints and dark eyes. Even it the English monsieur had to eyes to admire her with, they might meet triends of his. Valerie had not realized yet the complete solitude in which they lived. For the first time these three, who were so

together. The morning was fresh and beautiful, the waters of the lake clear as crystal, the sky without a cloud, the air balmy and odorous with the breath of a hundred flowers -a morning to make even the most miss rable happy. Sir Vane looked at the two beauti ful women. Agatha's face was bright as with the light of a soul to whom nature was dear, and whose thoughts rose from nature to nature's God; Valerie, with the pleasure that comes from gratified vanity and well pleased senses. "An angel and a coquette," thought Sir Vane, as they sat side by side in the boat.

It was the most delightful morning for a row, they agreed, and conversation went on easily enough, but it was not of the kind they generally indulged in; they talked generally of the scenery around them, of the waters, and the lonely shores, and to all the thoughts to which such scenes give rise. Valerie had just returned from Paris, and she had caught the perfect tone of Parisian salons. She could tell them the latest news of the emperor and empress. She could retail, in a brilliant fushion all her own, all often. And she read his thoughts with wonderful clearness. the court scandal and gossip—what
the emperor had said of the American beauty; and how the emperor distinguished certain noble Englishwomen by his attentions; she knew why this marriage between a Russian duke and a French princess had been broken off; she knew the whole history of the beautiful young duchess whose romantic suicide had filled all Paris with gloom.

Sir Vane listened at first indifferently, but in a short time he warmed to the subject. It was so long since he had heard this kind of conversation; all the brilliant bon mots that she repeated; all the witty repartees; the piquant stories amused him, and made him laugh as he had not done for many long months. What a witty, wicked, brilliant world this was from which he had shut him-self out! He did not sigh for it, long for, or desire it; but this passing breath of it was sweet to him. He began at last to talk himself with some animation; while, for the first time since they had left England, Agatha sat by in silence. She did not mird it in the least, she was so pleased to see him happy. The sound of their laughter died away on the blue waters; there was a ring in Sir Vane's voice. How he enjoyed these stories of men and women whose names she had no interest for! She fell into her old train of thoughts, and did not even hear the point of the stories, until Sir Vane said to

Agatha. where are your thoughts. ?" "On the water," she replied, laughing. "I may say in this boat."

"I am afraid we are monopolizing the conversation; it cannot be very amusing to you, Agatha. Vulerie looked up quickly.

"I beg a thousand pardons," she said, "but has not madame been to Paris?" "Oh, yes; I was in Paris for some months."

"Then you must have known and seen some of these people," said Valerie. Agatha's face flushed. She remembered that during the whole of the time they had been there she had not spoken to a lady. Sir

64 Mrs. Heriot was not well or strong just

with the light on her face that would shine there nevermore.

That should not stand up in the face of the

He tried to say to himself that it would

imagina

Yet he knew heat why the flower reminded him of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WOMAN WITHOUT A FEMALE PRIEND. Two years have passed since Sir Vane permaded Agatha Brooke to leave home with him. Two years had changed her from a beautiful girl into a magnificent woman. She was just twenty now, and a more perfect of loveliness had never gladdened man's eyes. She had grown said such wonderful things in this since she left Whitecroft; she was world of his, she never pretended to untaller and stronger, the look of deliderstand them. At last she did begin cacy had given place to the most perfect to trink it strange that she had not health. Thought, travel, much reading, made one lady friend since she left Whitegiven to her face an expression of refinement | in the different hotels she had not speken to and intellect; her teauty was of the highest type, her education was complete; she had learned French and Italian, she had perfected her lovely voice; she was better read, and had clearer ideas than most women of and she knew none by name. her age. She was a delightful companion-she could talk well and brilliantly on any topic, her words were well chosen and picturesque; her mind was well stored with fact and poetry. A graceful, beautiful, accomplished womore than once that he had not made her mistress of Silverdale. It seemed to him a thou sand pities that she must spend her life in concealment; her beauty and tal ats would have adorned any rank. He saw it now that it was too late. It was too late-he had so adroitly kept her to himself that she

Then, perceiving Agatha, he took off his a low. thinking she was Lady Carlyon.

But there was little response in Sir Vane's handsome face. His friend went on, careless of everything, except his pleasure at the

disappeared somewhere—that no one knew your whereabouts." Then he stopped abruptly, for he saw that

Mrs. Farmer. May I ask you also not to mention my name? I am known here as Mr.

beautiful face !" "I wish to Heaven I were married!" he said, with a grean. "I need not ask you,

have maddened him.
"I quite understand," said the captain

lost home and friends for you." Good-by.

"He took it for granted, I suppose, seeing "Will it matter? Will he speak of it?

yard, as he had done once before, to shorten told his friend he was not married. That the house, appointed the different servants the distance. How well he remembered seeing same afternoon she was going up the grand that were to wait upon them; showed them girl. her there, under the ivy-covered porch, staircase alone and on the first landing—the pione and the organ, of which she was

"Then I will not say it," she replied. "I same, I am so heartily glad."

"I must be most careful," sho said, and she kept her word. They found life at the Chateau Belleflaurs a taste of Paradise; the scenery around was so magnificent, the lake so clear and blue, the grand old mountains in the distance covered with snow, eterrally white and calm, the green, lovely shores, the endless variety of scene. It was beautiful to rise in the morning and breakfast while she looked on the blue lake, to watch the pleasure-boats and the shadows on the waters. Sir Vane purchased a boat, and

delightful. They drove into Luceine for the sake of

" Must we go away?' she asked.

" Never," he replied, kissing the beautiful, loving face. It was the month of June then; they had

Sir Vane was pleased to see it

"Madame's niece!" ho repeated, ab-He had almost forgotten that mention

his cigar cut on the terrace. Agatha did not follow him at once, and he sat there

match the figure—it never does."

no interest in madame's niece.
"She is so beautiful," continued Agatha

A beautiful woman, with red roses in her dark hair and in her dress sat talking to madame. "These visitors of yours do not make much difference in your life, aunt," she said,

"I have been several times on the lake with Mrs. Heriot."

irl. "Oh, aunt, how I long for money !"
"You must marry well," said madame.