

THE MONKSHOLM

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HOPE.

BY MARY KYLE DALMAN.

What is it I have lost with years,
With the shedding of sad tears
Over all the pall-draped biers
Where my young dreams wither?
Still life hath its subtle charm;
Still I know both joy and calm;
Still love may have power to harm,
Should he wander hither.

Yet I look within my breast,
And am "withered and distressed";
Thus thou wert not at thy best,
Heart of mine thou knowest;
And when in the glass I look,
There I read as in a book,
Something hath my life forsook,
By the face though shrouded.

Ah, alas! I full well I know
What it is hath changed me so
Long ago. Hope turned to go
From my side forever,
I can work, and I can play,
But all joy is in "to-day";
Hope who milled me in life's May,
Hope returneth never.

MONKSHOLM.

A Love Story.

BY S. BECKETT.

CHAPTER V.

Late one evening, while Miss Winter was dressing for a dinner party, with the assistance of Mrs. Erroll's maid, a gorgeous bouquet of hot-house flowers, and a note, were brought upstairs to her. She glanced at the address. It was from the Squire; and Eve looked a little pale as she dismissed her maid, and sat down before the toilette-table to read it.

It was more than a month after the day of her little quarrel with Mr. Moore, and she had not seen the master since. He seemed to have faded completely out of her life, leaving always that restless, dissatisfied pain at her heart, which no amount of pain or excitement seemed to have power to assuage. He avoided the society of a woman whom he despised, she told herself bitterly; or, very likely, he had already forgotten her? What did it matter?

Poor Hal's letter was very short, and very earnest. It was no use, he said, asking her, in so many words, to be his wife; he had already done so, and Eve had only laughed at him; but he was so unhappy, that he begged her to decide one way or the other that night.

"Only give me a kind look when we meet, and I shall know it is all right, and not bother you with my joy the whole evening—scarcely come near you, if I can help it; or else, if you must Eve—but I implore you not to do so—send me away with one cold glance. I will go out of the house, out of the town; for all places will then be alike to your true

"HAL CHORLAKE."

The letter fell from Eve's hand; she raised her eyes, and fixed them on the beautiful reflection in the long cheval-glass, near which she sat.

"Yes, poor fellow," she thought, with a sad, little smile; "he has tired me very often with his eager, boyish love-making. He likes my early hair, and my white arms, and thinks of nothing beyond them. Well, he is no blinder than I (hot tears rushed into Eve's dilated eyes)—than one who should know me better. But I am well punished for being false to my worldly training—for being absurd enough to take my heart into consideration for one moment, and to weigh it against poor Hal's threnodies, and the delight of being the mistress of The Beeches. In spite of his grave air of thoughtfulness, his quiet tone of authority, and gentleness, and strength, Graham Moore is no more capable of reading my heart than my foolish Hal, who would let me make a fool of him. And should not I be glad of so much devotion? At least I sell myself to a kind master; and I suppose Mr. Moore is right—my nature is too frivolous, my will too weak, to allow me to give up this luxurious life, which I like so well, in order to share the common every-day cares of any young Laurence, even though his very voice should make me thrill and tremble, as Graham Moore's never will again!"

Then Miss Winter went down stairs swiftly, smothering a heavy sigh, and wrote a hasty note, by the light of the library fire, ringing the bell as she finished.

"Let Stephens take this directly to The Beeches," she said to the servant who answered the summons, "and tell him not to delay. Poor Hal shall be put out of his suspense sooner than he expects," she added, inwardly. "I will not leave myself a chance for further hesitation. I fancy I see his eager blue eyes smiling upon me when we meet, in a rapture of surprise at my unexpected intimacy. Fear me!"

So it was that Eve Winter decided her fate; and then having some minutes to wait before Mrs. Erroll would be ready, she went into the drawing-room and sat down to the piano. And her fingers strayed unconsciously into a little dreamy air she had often played for Graham Moore—long ago, it seemed now—when the roses were reddening on the lawn. Her thoughts were wandering into dangerous ground, when they were suddenly recalled by the entrance of Carroll, her aunt's maid.

"My mistress is quite ready, miss," that staid personage remarked; "and the carriage is at the door. And will you please to see Mr. Moore?"

"Mr. Moore?" Eve exclaimed in a low,



EVE'S LANT HOPE DESTROYED.

startled voice, and clasping her hands nervously. "At this hour! Did you tell Mr. Moore that we are just going out?"

"Yes, Miss Eve; but he says you will see him, if only for five minutes."

The young lady paused for one moment, with a disturbed face; then she said, quietly, "Ask Mr. Moore to come in; and, Carroll, say to my aunt that I shall be glad if she will wait a few minutes."

As Eve spoke, she crossed over to the fire. A vague shivering had come upon her, and yet the luxurious little drawing-room was warm as a nest, scented with the breath of rare flowers, glowing with light and colour; none of which was lost on Graham Moore, as he entered, and crossed over to the fire-place to take Miss Winter's hand.

How often has Graham seen her since in his dreams as he saw her then?

She looked a dazzling personification of the frosty night he had left outside. Her trailing white silk dress was trimmed with soft, white fur—the diamond sparks glancing from her little white ears were like tiny icicles—a white-lipped crysanthemum smiled coldly above the snow of her breast; but, for all her haughty quietude, she could not keep back the rosy bloom that stole up to her cheek, and the hasty swell of her bosom belied the polite calm of her exterior.

"You wished to speak to me, Mr. Moore?" she asked, after a painful pause, during which the artist's eyes were steeping themselves in her beauty.

She had never seemed so far from Graham as now, in her long, shining, white dress, such as his wife could never wear. The little hand he coveted to lock in his own for ever twinkled with the pretty rings Mrs. Erroll had bestowed on her spoiled girl. Her bare, beautiful shoulders, her graceful bosom, no longer seemed made for love, and nestling baby hands, as they had seemed when he thought of her, far off, in his lonely hour.

And yet, his dark face all aglow with a fervent light, his voice broken by a passionate tremor, Graham answered Eve's question by clasping her jewelled fingers in both his hands, and quietly claiming, demanding her for his own.

"And I think Eve's first feeling was one of terror, lest she should not be able to say him she wished to speak to me, Mr. Moore?" she asked, after a painful pause, during which the artist's eyes were steeping themselves in her beauty.

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you cannot love? God help you; you do not know what you are doing!"

"Mr. Moore, you shall not say such things to me! I—I like Mr. Chorlake very well! How dare you speak so to me?"

"Like! And is it Eve Winter who talks to me of liking the man whose wife she has promised to be? Eve, you are an innocent girl; you cannot know what you are doing! I am a man; I do know, and I—I tell you; and then you will call me to you will! your pure, true voice, and hold out your stainless hands to my love, Eve!"

His imploring voice thrilled Eve with an exquisite pain. She felt helpless, unmoved, in the presence of the strong man's passion.

"Mr. Moore," she whispered, faintly, and hiding her face with her hands, "I have given my word. Have pity on me!"

"Ah! have I not the truest pity on you, my child, when I would save you from the curse that goes with the loveless, unallowed marriage? Oh, think what it means—try and think, my darling! You will be mine, even in your husband's arms! Your heart will beat against his glittering bars, and fly back, bruised and wounded, to my poor home! But would it be poor, Eve, if you came and blessed it? How I would work, with your dear face to cheer me! At first, I could not give you these shining dresses and jewels; but you know how little power such things have to make you happy, for already you have worn them with an aching heart! Oh, Eve! it is not yet too late! Recall this step—the great wrong you would do yourself and that brave, kindly gentleman, Eve!"

Tears brimmed in Eve's dark, agonized glance. White as her splendid dress, she stood and listened to his burning words with quivering lips, that mutely pleaded for pardon from the man she loved and was forsaking.

"It is too late," at last she said again. "Leave me, Graham, for heaven's sake!"

At the same moment, the rustle of a dress was audible near the door. Mrs. Erroll was coming.

He held out his arms. With a low cry, Eve gave herself to them for one delicious instant, and their lips met in the first, last kiss of love they knew while they lived.

As Mrs. Erroll entered the room, Graham Moore quitted it by the window that opened on the lawn. He had spoken his last words to Eve Winter, for early in the following spring the young Squire took his bride abroad on their wedding-tour, and it was more than a year before they returned to settle at The Beeches.

CHAPTER VI.

The young ladies of Monksholm almost forgave Eve Winter's provoking success, for the sake of the charming parties she gave as Mrs. Chorlake.

travels, as she did in everything else; so Mrs. Chorlake, who seemed restlessly eager after anything that promised a little excitement, entered with her usual pretty animation into her husband's plans; and for a time, even croquet was abandoned, while "parts" and books of costume reigned supreme.

Eve did not care to allow herself much time for remembrance or painful thoughts just then; she had a feverish consciousness that the meeting which one other besides her dreaded, must sooner or later take place; but she tried to be careless—to forget.

Her husband's boyish happiness, and undiminished adoration, touched her with a vague remorse, though she was careful to hide it from him. And it was easy. Hal was very much in love, and not very observant; he did not look below his wife's pretty smile.

And, after all, Eve had the full price for which she had sold herself—she had no cause for complaint.

Her life was a repetition of the old careless, luxurious life at Lea, wanting only the lighter heart that made it so sweet in her maidenhood.

The same little comedy was being played day by day, only now the scenes and properties were more gorgeous and expensive.

Yet, after a time, Eve began to tire a little of her long, indolent days of ease and amusement, in which there were no duties to be performed—no little sacrifices to be made. The living heavy on her idle, listless limbs. For hours she would sit at the windows of her pretty morning-room, looking across the wide gardens, and over the fields to the distant houses of the town.

It pleased Mrs. Chorlake to think, now that she was surfeited with rich dresses, and jewels, and flowers, that to be the wife of a poor man, who needed love and sympathy to help him through his struggle with life, was the happiest lot, after all.

She drew pictures, as Graham Moore had done long before, of a simple home, where luxuries were unknown—a home sanctified by affliction. But having had no practical experience of poverty since her childhood, I am afraid Eve only saw the bright side of the picture. The cares and anxieties of that visionary little household were put out of sight—unpaid bills found no place in the dream; and musing idly in a becoming morning-dress of white cambric and delicate lace, Mrs. Chorlake saw herself, in fancy, in a plain stuff dress that never wore out, mending stockings with unflinching patience, while the visionary husband was out earning their bread and butter. Sometimes Eve would try to run away from these thoughts, escaping from Mr. Chorlake by little stratagems, and taking long, lonely rambles in the beech-wood at the back of the house, wandering about aimlessly through the fern and tangled underwood, and getting home late for luncheon, to find Hal disconsolately searching for her through the house and grounds, and to get a tender scolding for her pains.

And then more beautiful dresses were to be put on, and stately dinners to be sat out, and smiles to be assumed, and pretty talk made for prosy neighbours, and gay songs sung for careless ears; and when it was all over, then Eve had time to think her dangerous thoughts over again, as she lay, wakeful and restless,

"In the dead unhappy night, when the rain was on the roof."

About two months after her return to Monksholm, Mrs. Chorlake met Graham Moore again. It was on the terrace, at The Beeches, one evening, where, in the tender April dusk, she was waiting for her husband's return, and musing sadly in the light of the rising moon. It was a still, breathless evening. The vague shivering of the aspens on the lawn, the sleepy twittering of insects in the distant meadows, were the only sounds that broke the silence. Long shadows from the stone vases on the ter-

race by black and motionless on the moonlit sward; the world seemed at rest, lulled into happy dreams.

What had a restless, aching human heart to do, throbbing with its unreasoning pain and anguish in the midst of so much perfect peace? Could not the night bring forgetfulness?

She saw him coming with her husband along the old-fashioned garden-gate, attired with crocuses, and had time to compose her face and collect her thoughts before the gentlemen reached the spot where she was standing.

Graham Moore showed no agitation, as he took her hand in his for the first time since she had given it into another man's keeping; not even when he saw, after the dimpled smile had died rather wearily from her face, that it was paler and less round than of old.

Perhaps it was the moonlight on her dew-white face that made her look so transparent and frail, but something in her look went to his heart with a thrill of undefined pain.

"There, Eve!" the Squire exclaimed, in great gloom, when the few necessary words had been spoken by Mr. Moore; "I've brought him at last! Met him in town, and, as we are quite alone to-night, wouldn't you like to meet me about 'society,' you know. But come in—room in out of the cold. These April nights are comfoundedly chilly."

"My dear Hal!" his wife laughed; "the 'air is quite balmy, and the breeze in the well-walk are blown. How heavy the wind is with the scent—don't you perceive it, Mr. Moore?"

Graham said "Yes."

He was looking at this pale, beautiful woman, pausing in the French window, and turning back towards him as she spoke; pausing with the moonbeams in her golden hair, and in her vaporous white dress, like the ghost of a dead love. And then they went in.

Hal was in his element after dinner, amidst a chaos of play-books and portfolios of prints, and popular songs with brilliant titles, and did not notice that his wife seemed a little distant, replying to his remarks almost at random. Graham felt himself insensibly yielding to the indescribable charm of Eve's manner, which had won the added grace of a deeper womanliness. He forgot his sorrows, his coldness, almost his unhappiness, in the mere delight of hearing her liquid voice again—of breathing once more the same air with this woman whom it was now a sin to love.

Of course, he had much to hear of her impressions of Italy and of Paris, where Mr. and Mrs. Chorlake had spent the winter; so Eve sat by him while he drew sketchy suggestions for the *lithic vivants*, and chatted in her old pretty way. But why did her remembrance of the past year seem to imply that, amongst all its novel pleasures and excitement, something had been wanting—was wanting still?

In the meantime, the Squire had brought an armful of novels and poems from the library, to add in their search after available subjects, and Mr. Moore was carrying out his suggestions with paper and pencil.

"Ah, how pretty!" Eve exclaimed softly, peering over the artist's shoulder. "Men must work, and women must weep! Oh, if we could only realize that! Look, Hal!"

"Nothing ensor," Mr. Moore declared, going on with his sketch of a group of Nonnally peasant women, in picturesque high caps, and very short petticoats: one girl looking out of the fire-lit kitchen at a distant boat and a stormy sea, and hushing a child on her breast the while.

"Jolly!" Hal declared, emphatically. "And if it were not that the development of leg-neck-stated by the custom is rather startling, old Charley Massingberd is just the girl for it—a strapper, you know. Adam Esle, he went on turning over the books rapidly. "If we had only a pretty Hotty, now—Arthur and Hotty in the dairy, or Arthur and Hotty picking red currants. You remember? Whom do we know that is pretty and dark, Eve?"

"And young, and little, and round—for Hotty must be all three. I'm afraid, Hal, you will have to give that idea up; unless, indeed—"

"Unless what, dear?"

"You have not seen my little prodigy, Nanny Crad, I think? She is the daughter of that fussy little apothecary who sings so loud in church. You have noticed her—a dark little beauty?"

"Don't remember her; but if she's pretty, let's have her up, and see what we can make of her."

So Mrs. Chorlake promised that Nanny should be forthcoming the next day, and looked at the progress of Mr. Moore's next drawing, which represented Marguerite in the quiet old garden, listening to Faust's whispers under the moonbeams, unconscious of the baleful smile of his friend Mephistopheles in the sombre background.

And afterwards Eve sang to them, as in the old happy days; but Graham noticed that the songs she sang were all new. He had not heard them before. "Was the choice accidental?" he wondered.

Before he took his leave that night, he had promised to come again. Yes; he had promised, with a thrill of guilty pleasure, at the thought that she had asked him.

"I shall go and hunt up the Massingberds and the Bessforders for a rehearsal, to-morrow," Hal said, when their guest had left them. "And you, Eve, will see Miss Nanny, I suppose."

Eve answered "Yes."

She had drawn aside the curtain, and was looking out at the twinkling lights of the town—the way that Graham Moore had gone through the April night.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCITEMENT reigned in the house of the fussy apothecary the following day, and a small of ironing, consequent on the getting up of Miss Nanny's white muslin dress, pervaded all things. Nanny's little heart was beating at the prospect of spending a whole evening with beautiful Mrs. Chorlake, who was always so kind, and