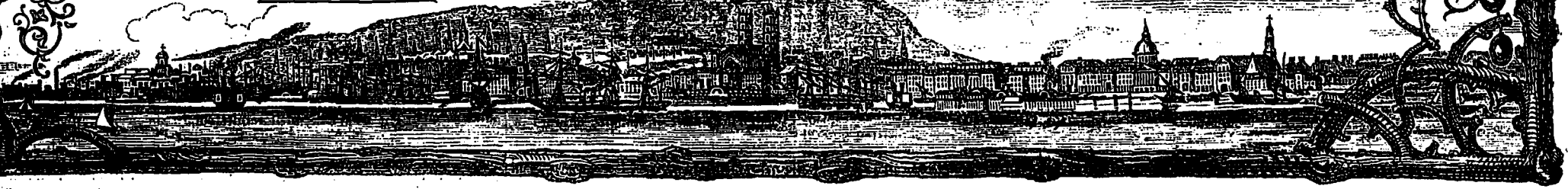


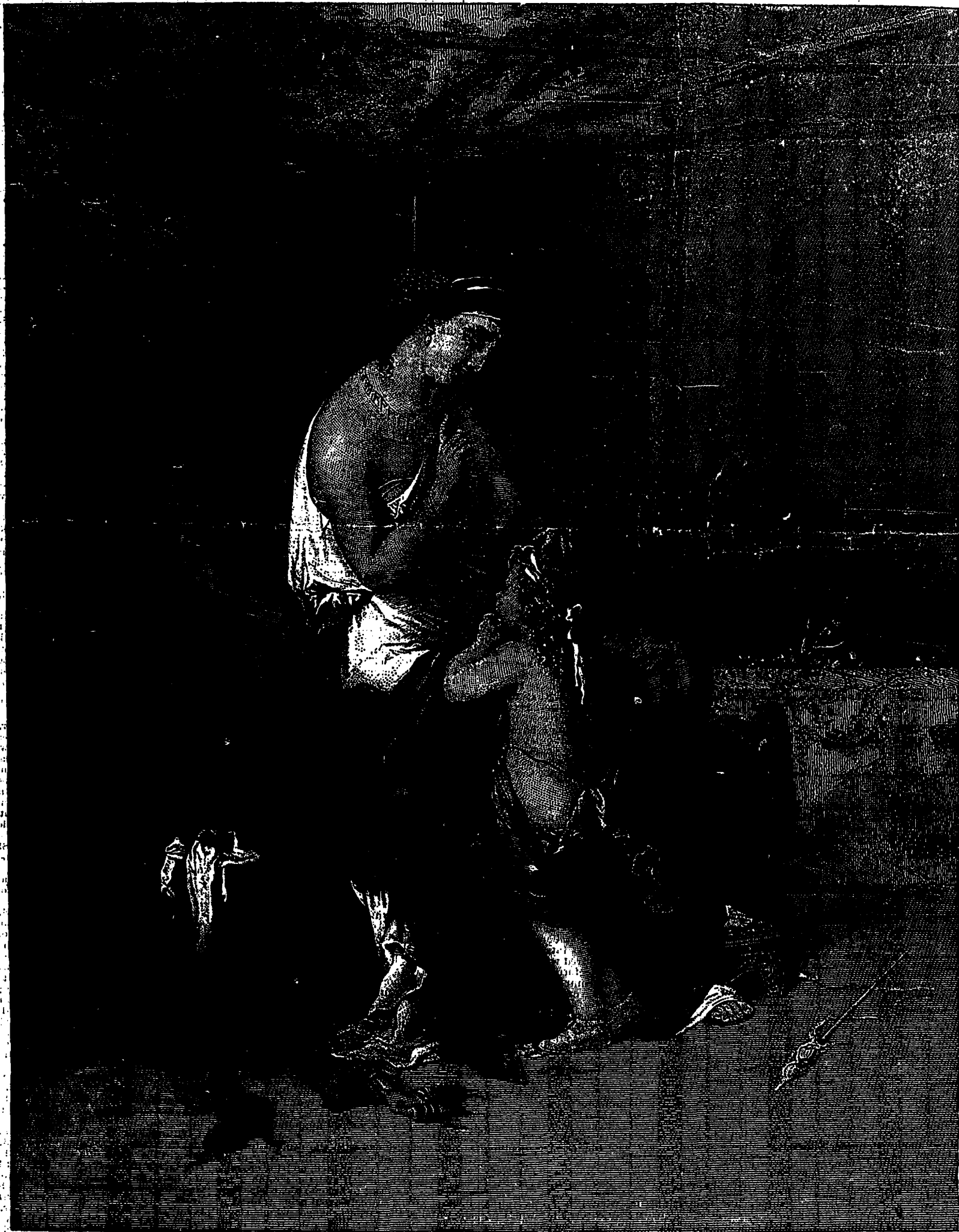
# THE HEARTHSTONE

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THE REPROOF.—See page 8.

## THE ROSE AND THE SHAMROCK. A DOMESTIC STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FLOWERS OF OLEANDER."

### CHAPTER II. FIRST-CLASS TO LONDON.

Embossed in waving kindly adieux to the fussy but well-meaning little English governess, Rosamond Dalton did not notice the other occupants of the compartment in which she found herself until the train had left Eatham far behind, and she was being borne rapidly towards the metropolis.

Sir Charles had seated himself at the other opposite corner to her own, and was already staring at her so insolently, that she reddened, and drew down her veil.

"Have I offended?" he drawled. "Beg pardon, I'm sure!"

With one glance of haughty surprise, she young lady averted her face, and bent over the book she held. Outwardly, she was indifferent to his rudeness, but her inexperience made it, in reality, a most painful ordeal. Her heart began to beat fast, her limbs to tremble, and her imagination to conjure up all kinds of inquiries to which she might be subjected in her defenceless position.

"Lovely weather," said the Major; "so warm, and a—i—i—all that. Are you fond of travelling, my dear?"

Rosamond seemed deaf to the question; only her deepening colour betraying that she heard it.

"What cruel book is it that robs me of the pleasure of hearing you talk?" Major Colbye went on, leaning forward as he spoke, and attempting to take it from her hand.

The insulted girl shrank from him, with an exclamation of alarm that brought Sir Charles to her side, instantly. He had been furiously observing all that passed, and his compassion for her evident terror made him very much inclined to regret the silly plot he had entered into.

Yet he was glad of the opportunity to appear as her champion, and in angry tones—partly real, partly simulated—he commanded Major Colbye to desist from his ungentlemanly conduct.

A few threatening sentences were interchanged. Sir Charles insisted upon conducting the grateful Rosamond to a seat opposite his own, at the other end of the carriage, until the train came to a halt at the next station, where the Major left them, with the avowed intention of seeking more agreeable fellow-passengers.

"I, too, would leave you," said Sir Charles, bowing to his fair companion with profound respect, "for I see that you naturally prefer pre-

ference; but how can I guard you from insult except by remaining?"

"You have been very kind," she exclaimed, raising, for a moment, the brown eyes he thought so beautiful. "My brother, who will meet you in town, will thank you better than I can for your generous interference."

"Don't think me impertinent," said the Baronet, gently, "if I express my surprise that any gentleman should permit his sister to travel in a public carriage without protection."

"You must not blame Frank; it is not his fault," was the eager reply. "We are both of us summoned to the South of France by the sudden and dangerous illness of the dearest friend we have; and it is to prevent unnecessary delay that I am hastening to meet my brother in London."

"Then you are about to leave England," the Baronet observed, regretfully: "but you will return ere long, will you not?"

Rosamond Dalton, who felt that in her desire to excite her brother she had already sacrificed too much of her private affairs to this stranger, answered coldly that she did not know; and Sir Charles, taking the hint, changed the conversation to the weather and the country, satisfied if he obtained brief replies to his carefully worded sentences.

Then he reverted to the South of France. Some of his happiest hours had been spent in its sunny nooks, he said. He knew many of the English who had regularly taken up their abode there. The friend of whom she spoke, was he or she merely staying in France for a season, or permanently a resident in that charming country?

"Mr. Robinson has resided abroad for several years," was the rather cold and evasive reply.

With increasing interest, Sir Charles repeated the name of one of the pleasantest acquaintances he had ever made was named Robinson. An elderly gentleman, very tall, though a slight stoop took something from his unusual height; bushy, white whiskers and moustache; keen gray eyes, and a rich, rolling bass voice. Was this description correct? Were they both speaking of the same person?

Miss Dalton coloured, looked embarrassed, and after some hesitation, said she did not know; she had not seen Mr. Robinson yet.

The admission had a very mysterious sound, but without appearing to notice it, he went on to give her an animated description of an amateur performance in which he had taken a part at Paris.

For awhile, Rosamond listened with interest, but then she suddenly interrupted him.

"Excuse me, sir; I know I am but a timid traveller; but I cannot help fancying that there is something amiss. These men at work by the road—look at them, how they are shouting and running!"

Seized with a similar impression, Sir Charles put his head out of the window. One swift glance, and with a strangely sobered expression of countenance he drew back, and throwing his arms around the astonished Rosamond, held her so as to shield her as much as possible from the shock that was impending. A goods train was on the line directly in front of them. The efforts made to shunt it away in time were evidently unavailing. A delay of two or three minutes at the utmost had caused the calamity which no earthly endeavour could now avert. Scarcely had the terrified passengers become cognizant of their danger when the collision took place. A couple of lives were sacrificed, two or three carriages destroyed, and their unfortunate tenants more or less injured.

For a few minutes, Sir Charles Trovillan lost his senses. A blow from one of the pieces of wood, amidst which he had found himself tightly wedged, had stunned him. Rosamond, thanks to his care, had escaped with a few trifling bruises, and was endeavouring, with trembling hands, to stanch the blood that trickled from a cut on his temple.

"This is an adventure with a vengeance!" the Baronet muttered between his teeth, as he began to be aware of what had happened. He had a bewildered semi-consciousness that he had not escaped as well as his companion; but he was not suffering any violent pain at present, and so was capable of appreciating the ministrations of the beautiful girl who was leaning over him. One of his arms still embraced her, and she could not withdraw herself if she would, for the partitions of the carriage had been forced together on either side, and they were helplessly imprisoned between them.

His voice sounded muffled and faint in his own ears as he addressed her.

"I suppose we ought to congratulate ourselves that we are still in the land of the living. Are you much hurt?"

"Not at all; thanks, sir, to you," she replied, in tones of deep feeling. "But your injuries must be severe."

"Must they? I'm not quite sure, just at present, whether I am myself or not. There is nothing the matter with my arms. I could use those if I could free them; but one of my legs is quite numb, and doubled under me so oddly that I suspect it must be badly fractured."

Rosamond winced and grew paler than before. "Oh, this is terrible, and I can do nothing for you—nothing! I will no one come to release us!" she added, as she agitatedly strove to push back the heavy panels that enclosed them.

"Be calm, my dear young lady!" said Sir Charles. "Any attempts that we might make could have no good results; and, judging by the sounds I hear around us, there must be others who need assistance worse than we do. For my part, I am in no hurry to be extricated."

"I understand you," she answered, with a sympathetic shudder. "You think it will increase your sufferings?"

He smiled.

"They are too slight at present to cause me much uneasiness. I was thinking how it would separate me from one whom I may never behold