



"Across the pastures sweet and low
The tuneful sheep-bells ring,
As gentle breezes come and go,
And balmy fragrance bring.
Their music for a moment swells,
Then softly dies away;
Oh! sweet the cadence of the bells
Upon a summer's day."

Young Dr. Jarvis.

He sat alone in his office, reading, perhaps for the twentieth time, the note on the desk before him. The afternoon sunshine touched with a pale radiance the familiar objects in the little room. In a faint, flickering fashion it illuminated the shelves of books, the dusty cases full of specimens, the stiff row of diplomas that adorned the wall, the ragged rug, the worn oil-cloth carpet; but it seemed to linger on the solitary figure in the office chair.

It revealed a sensitive, restless face with signs of great weakness, great passion, and great tenderness; such a face as men like and women love. It was dark with pain and anger now, for the note had roused a host of sleeping memories. The air seemed full of odor, the remembered odor of hyacinths; and in every shadowy corner Jarvis could see the insolent, smiling face of the woman who had written it. He crushed the perfumed paper in his hand, though it was only a kind invitation to the poor, struggling country doctor to take charge of a good case, consult with a famous surgeon, and cure—if he could—a sick old man. It read simply enough:

Dear Dr. Jarvis:

Mamma wishes me to ask you to come up to-day, to see Mr. Morton, who is very ill, and to meet Dr. Linyard, the specialist from the city. We fear an operation is unavoidable, and desire the benefit of your skill.

Sincerely yours,

ESTELLE MORRIS.

Jarvis had many other notes with that signature hidden away in his private drawer. Estelle Morris had never taken the trouble to ask for her letters, when she had sent him his curt dismissal two years ago. How faithfully he had loved and served her, how he had worked and economized, and strained every nerve to hurry through college, that he might begin the life struggle for fame and fortune that should bring him his heart's desire! She had seemed to return all this passionate devotion, and they had been sworn lovers. Would she wait for him? How often she had told him so, the full, white lids drooping over her soft, shining eyes!

Then, three years ago, a sudden change of fortune had come to her mother. They went abroad, and after a few months her letters altered in tone. Finally, there came a short, cool epistle. "She did not love him," she said. "It was wrong to marry without love, and so—good-bye." In silence, in anger, and in bitter despair, he had accepted his fate.

Estelle had come back to America, the promise of her girlhood magnificently fulfilled in the beautiful woman who dazzled the quiet old village. She had many courtiers, and she had chosen the richest of them—a man many years older than herself. The engagement had been proclaimed far and wide. All summer long, from his office window, Jarvis had watched her drive by, benignly arrogant and radiantly handsome. A few days ago, he had heard that her fiancé was seriously ill. To-day this letter had come. Should he go?

He longed with an intense longing, born of his youth and wounded pride, to show her that he was indifferent to her insult, cold to her neglect. If a half-defined instinct warned him that neither his anger nor his contempt might be proof against the deadly power of the old love, he crushed it, as he crushed the letter in his hand. Go he would, and the future might take care of itself.

The first meeting was easy enough. Jarvis' cold politeness was accepted without a trace of embarrassment.

"Oh, Dr. Jarvis," said Estelle, "it is more than kind in you to come. We hear so much of your skill, and we—I am so much distressed about poor Mr. Morton. You will help him, I am sure?"

He bowed in answer. Yes, he would do his best.

He scarcely dared to look into her eyes. Did she love this old man, he wondered? At the thought, a sudden, uncontrollable hate sprang up in his heart. He fought against it desperately. Medically considered, Morton's case was intensely interesting, rousing his professional pride and surgical daring; and he knew the patient to be a gentle, sweet natured man.

But Jarvis did not tread the downward path unaided. With all her tact and self composure, it angered Estelle Morris that the old devoted lover, the humble suppliant of past days, should pass her with careless indifference. Without deliberate thought of the mischief she might do, she felt that she must teach him how dangerous it is to forget a woman. Morning after morning she would meet him, ostensibly to inquire after the sick man, but the tones of her voice were full of alluring harmony, and her eyes seemed to pray for pardon although her lips were silent. Each day Jarvis quitted the house more hopelessly miserable, more degraded in his own sight, yet eagerly longing for the hour of return, the fresh torture of her presence, the misery of her welcoming smile.

"It is all over, Miss Morris, and safely, I trust," said the famous surgeon, as he hurried down stairs. "That young Dr. Jarvis helped me wonderfully. I prophesy that he will make his mark. I am quite content to leave the case in his hands. Unless there is more heart trouble than we think, Mr. Morton will rally, and be a happy man yet," he added with a chivalric bow.

Estelle thanked him profusely, and stood listening in the hall until the sound of his carriage wheels died away. Then she swiftly glided up the long stairway. In a small anteroom, next to the sick chamber, she found the nurse and the doctor.

Jarvis was dropping some liquid into a glass, and started at her entrance. In his nervous manner and white face were plainly visible the strain and excitement of the great surgical crisis he had just witnessed. His hand trembled. He was horribly conscious of her presence.

She stood by the portiere, her slender figure outlined against the somber velvet. "Dr. Linyard tells me," she began, "how much we owe to you and your skill. You are so kind"—her voice grew low—"so generous."

The doctor's hand grew more unsteady, "I will bring this in presently," he said, turning to the nurse.

The woman softly slipped away, and the two faced each other alone. White and haggard, Jarvis gazed at Estelle. Every fiber of his body seemed to thrill under the look she returned to his.

"Harry," she said, "for the sake of old times, will you forgive me? I know now how badly I treated you, but girls are fools, and—"

He sprang from his chair, the tightly tensioned cord of self-restraint snapping as she spoke.

"What do you mean?" he asked, coming closer to Estelle.

"I only want to be friends once more," she murmured.

But her white fingers had pulled the flood gates too far apart. Jarvis caught her in his arms and clasped her almost savagely. She pushed him angrily from her; yet she listened to his pleading.

"Do you care for this old man? Is the old love dead? Sweetheart, listen to me," he said passionately.

"How can I listen to you?" she answered, all her diplomacy on guard again. "I have promised to marry Mr. Morton." With a slightly melodramatic sigh she went on, "I am bound by circumstances, but, Harry, I cannot bear to have you hate me. Indeed, it breaks my heart. You will forgive me?"

She paused, for some subtle danger threatened in his face; and turning, she vanished from the room. A few minutes later, as she stood before her long mirror, carefully twisting her heavy coils of chestnut hair, she smiled exultantly at the face in the glass.

Meanwhile Jarvis sat stiff and silent, mechanically dropping the medicine he was preparing into the glass before him. It was a powerful anodyne; and as Jarvis held the bottle a sudden deadly inspiration seized him. She had promised to marry the old man. If he were dead—

Drop by drop the liquid fell into the glass. Now the dose was large for a healthy organism; now it had passed the limit; now—Jarvis stopped. The nurse stood by the door.

"He is sleeping, doctor," and she took the glass from him. "I am to give him this as you directed, when he wakes, the first dose?"

He did not look at her face. "Yes," he said, and left the room.

In the street outside he met a boy, breathless and excited.

"Doctor," the lad called, "come quick! There's been a big accident down at the mill. They think Jim Corrigan is killed, and they're going on like mad."

Jarvis hurried away, and in fifteen minutes was fighting for the second time that day the strange, cold mystery of death. There was little time for thought now. On the floor of the mill, surrounded by weeping women, and rough yet pathetic men, he exerted all his skill, and struggled desperately to save the life of the young Irishman. After hours of hard work, he was again successful, and finally helped to carry the patient to his own house. It was late when Jarvis entered his office, and saw the supper his sister had prepared, waiting for him on the little table. Worn with excitement, cold, hungry, and exhausted, he ate voraciously, and soon sank into a heavy sleep.

A little after midnight, he awoke with a start. The fire was low, the room chilly, and his madness was past. An unspeakable horror came upon him, as he remembered his day's work. By this time Morton must be dead. He paced the room in agony, but there was no woman's face to charm and lure him now; only the cold air, the silence, the darkness, which seemed to wrap him in on every side. Surely it must be a dream, this hideous memory of a trust betrayed. Would to God—He shuddered. How dared he, a murderer, call on God?

He wondered why they did not come hurrying after him to call him to look at the dead. He strained his ears to lis-

ten, expectant, yet alarmed at every distant sound. He could see Morton's face, as he knew it must look, cold and white! Even when he tried to think of Estelle, the dead face rose menacingly before him, blotting out every other thought.

Jarvis was the descendant of an honorable race. His nature, naturally weak and sensitive, had been strengthened by an old-fashioned, provincial education, and a simple country life. As the temptation died away, conscience asserted its power, and remorse and horror overcame him. Was there any escape? Yes, one, cowardly as it was, and he slowly moved towards the box where his pistols were. Then he started with a cry, for the door opened and his sister came in. He knew her husband was away, and wondered if her baby was ill, for she held it in her arms.

"You poor boy! How worn and miserable you look, and what a day you've had of it!" she said. "You came in so late, your supper must have been stone cold. I have been lying upstairs, hearing you tramp up and down here, until I decided to come down and drive you to bed; and baby, little rascal, would come too."

Jarvis watched them stolidly—the mother's pure and gentle face and white, caressing hands, the baby's rosy cheeks and darkly shining eyes. This was his only sister. She loved and honored him. Suppose she knew!

"How is Mr. Morton?" she asked suddenly.

"Dead, by this time," he answered harshly.

She played with the baby's curls and said slowly, "I am sorry. You and the surgeon have worked so hard; but after all he has been spared much unhappiness, for," she went on hesitatingly, "Estelle Morris cannot help it, perhaps, but she is a heartless girl. I was thankful enough two years ago when—forgive me, Harry, is it possible you love her still?"

"Love? If you call it that," Jarvis answered wildly. "For her sake I have done murder—murder, do you hear? Do not look at me so. Take the child away. Go, go!"

She stared at him, unbelief and horror mingled in her gaze.

"Murder? Impossible!"

"It is true," he went on ruthlessly, but with a sense of grim relief. "After the operation this afternoon, Linyard left. Morton showed signs of fever. I gave him aceton. I gave enough to kill three ordinary men. There's no doubt about it; he's dead by this time."

Helen gave a low cry, and seemed to shrink and grow older before his eyes. There was a long silence. The baby played with the ribbons of her wrapper, and Jarvis realized that his cup of punishment was full. He knew he had slain the future happiness of this tender, loving woman. He inwardly cursed his weakness in confessing a crime which he need never have revealed.

His sister stirred at last, a momentary gleam of anger flashing in her eyes. "She tempted you—I know it," she cried; then her head drooped, and with a flood of tears she crept out of the room. Again Jarvis was alone.

As he expected, the summons came in the early dawn. He heard the wheels of the carriage outside, and opened the door himself to the sleepy servant who stumbled up the steps.

"We want you to come up to the house, sir. Mr. Morton is dead."

"Yes," said Jarvis. "When?"

"Last night, sir. I was coming after you, but I heard you was gone to the