

"Oh, do go on, Constantine!"

"No; to please me, just walk once up the path first!" She obeyed. Gathering the cut roses into her apron, without a word, she carried them to the summer house, and soon emerged empty-handed from the door. She had pretty little feet, and a light step, but as she walked a very slight movement of the knees against her dress was observable. The young man followed this motion, little graceful though it might be, with delighted eyes, and scarce was conscious when his beloved again stood before him.

"Well," she enquired, "what did the burgo-master's wife say? Or was it one of her seven daughters?"

"She said"—and he let his eyes glide slowly up the graceful figure—"she said: 'Miss Francisca is a pleasant person; but she walks like a water-wagtail.'"

"Oh! you!"—and Francisca pressed her hands together and looked down upon him with a beaming face.

"After that," he continued, "I could not keep my eyes off you, but was obliged to look at you whenever you walked or moved about.

She still stood before him, silent and motionless.

"What is it?" he asked. "What makes you look so proud and haughty?"

She said, "It is only happiness!"

"Oh! a whole world of happiness!" and with both arms he drew her down towards him.

It was another time, some sixty years later; but it was again a summer afternoon, and the roses blossomed as of yore. In the upstairs room, overlooking the garden, sat an old lady. She held a steaming coffee-cup in her lap, on which a snowy handkerchief was spread; yet, to-day, she seemed to forget her accustomed beverage, for only at long intervals, and in an absent manner, she raised the cup to her lips.

At a little distance, opposite her sofa, sat her grandson, a young man in the full bloom of youth. His head rested upon his hand, and his gaze was fixed on some family miniatures which hung in silver frames above the sofa—his grandfather, great grandparents, Aunt Francisca, the grandfather's sister,—all were dead long ago, he had never known them. His

eyes wandered from one to the other as they had done often before, during the quiet afternoon hours he spent beside his grandmother. On Aunt Francisca's portrait the colours seemed to be the least faded, although she had died before her parents, and long before her brother. The crimson rose in her powdered hair looked as fresh as if new-plucked, and the blue enamelled locket, which hung from a dark ribbon down upon her breast, was clear and bright against the deep crimson of the bodice. The young man's eyes were riveted by a strange fascination on these scant relics of a by-gone life. He gazed on the tender oval of the little face with feelings approaching to reverence. The old garden, as he remembered it as a boy, arose before his imagination; he saw her wandering among the strange old-fashioned box borders; he heard the tread of her little shoe on the gravelled path, and the rustle of her dress. But the form he had thus conjured up remained alone, the solitary occupant of that verdant spot, which was before his mind's eye. The companions, who might once have gathered around her, the daughters of the old patrician houses, the lover who sought her among the winding garden paths, he had no power to call up again. "Who knows her story?" he murmured to himself; the little locket looked to him like a seal on the breast of her now so long buried.

The grandmother put down her cup on the little window-table. She had heard the sound of his voice. "Have you been in our burial vault, Martin?" she asked, "and are the repairs nearly completed?"

"Yes, grandmother."

"Everything must be put in order; we must not forget what is due to our family reputation."

"It will all be put in order," replied the grandson, "but a coffin fell in, and that has caused some delay."

"Had the rust eaten through the iron bars?"

"No, not that. It stood far back, close to the grating; the water had got into it."

"That must be Aunt Francisca's coffin," said the grandmother, after some reflection. "Was there a wreath upon it?"

Martin looked at his grandmother. "A wreath?—I don't know; I think it would be gone by this time."