

## A PRIMROSE IN CANADA.

They took me from a shady dell,  
Away across the coast,  
I heard no more the village bell,  
Or felt the cooling breeze.

The sun was bright, and there I grew  
Alone in hot-house shed,  
Ah, me! I missed the morning dew,  
Still more my mossy bed.

Yet grateful for the tender care,  
My leaves grew rich and green,  
Three flowers peeped out so lovely fair,  
I longed that they were seen.

Away from friendly humming bees,  
From twittering birds, how long  
Shall I be here? I miss their praise  
In morn and evening song.

Little voices come and go,  
Their pattering footsteps ring;  
They love to welcome winter's snow  
Unknown—my loved, lost, Spring.

The sparkling snow and summer's sun,  
The bright blue heaven's clear day,  
All these I love—yet long for home,  
And find my heart away.

Ottawa.

HARRIET NEVILLE.

## BENEATH THE WAVE.

A NOVEL.

BY

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

A WOMAN'S PROPOSAL.

Isabel came slowly forward as Hayward and the butler looked round. Her face was pale, and her expression determined and defiant. Some shame there must have been in her heart, some shrinking, but she scarcely showed this. Yet for a moment her eyes fell when she met Hayward's indignant and scornful glance.

"You are surprised to see me?" she began. "Yet can you wonder at me coming here—to defend the rights of my son?"

"His rights are not attacked that I know of," answered Hayward briefly and sternly.

"Then what about this base-born boy, who now claims to be the heir of Massam?" retorted Isabel.

"He is simply Sir George's eldest son, by his first marriage," replied Hayward in the same cold tone.

"And you believe this?" said Isabel passionately. "You believe this lie that Sir George invented to show his hate to me! But I do not believe it," she continued. "I believe this boy may be Sir George's son, but his natural son."

"I cannot dispute the question with you," said Hayward.

"Why?" asked Isabel. "Leave the room," she said, in her old imperious way, to the butler. "I wish to speak in private to Mr. Hayward."

"I cannot stay," began Hayward; but with a wave of her hand Isabel pointed to the door, and the butler was thus compelled to go.

When they were alone, the expression of Isabel's face changed, and a softer look came over it.

"Hayward—" she said, and then paused, but Hayward never looked at her. He stood there, cold, embarrassed, and silent—the man who had once loved her with such passionate love!

"I do not plead for myself," continued Isabel, in her ringing siren voice, glancing at Hayward's stern face, "but for the boy. Whatever I am—however they may have blackened my character, little Reggy is not to blame."

"You mistake the whole thing, I think," said Hayward. "Sir George before his death acknowledged his first marriage, and by his will left young Juan the heir to Massam. After his unhappy death this will was proved—therefore no one can dispute it."

"I will, then," said Isabel angrily; "the will of a madman! Hush, do not interrupt me," she continued, as Hayward was about to speak. "I know what you would say—that it is your duty and so on. But, Hayward, is this justice? You talk of Sir George's unhappy death, but what about my unhappy marriage? Do you know how this man treated me? Cruelly, most cruelly! He found out I never loved him—that I loved—well I must not say—you would not believe me, I suppose—but, at least, that I did not love him!"

"No, I would not believe you," said Hayward bitterly, as Isabel paused.

"But, why?" said Isabel. "Have you heard the truth of my story? Do you know that he turned me out of the house at Brighton? People said that I ran away with Captain Warrington, but people were wrong. I did not run away with Captain Warrington, but my husband thrust me out of doors!"

"He had good cause!" said Hayward, with bitter indignation in his voice and manner.

"Yes," said Isabel, "good cause—I never loved him."

As Isabel said this, Hayward lifted his eyes and looked at the beautiful face that had brought so much ruin and shame. Isabel stood

there pale and daring. She had always liked Hayward; liked him in her cold, selfish way, and she had been so used to triumph over the hearts of men, that she thought she would triumph now.

"Hayward—" she said presently, and this time her voice was very sweet and low, and her bright eyes fell, and her bosom heaved.

"Well?" said the young man, sharply and briefly.

"Don't judge me as others judge me," went on Isabel in the same soft, pleading tones. "You, at least, should be lenient—you, for whose sake I could never love my husband!"

Hayward made no answer. She was lying to him, he told himself, so he let her go on.

"I was unhappy," continued Isabel, after a moment's pause, "unhappy and reckless. I flirted with these men—flirted—and they, it was folly, of course, but they learnt to like me too well. This was the truth about all those stupid letters that you read from Mr. Hannaway, and, I suppose, from Captain Warrington. Do you understand now? Sir George was madly jealous because I had no love to give him—and I was careless and unhappy because—"

As Isabel said this last word she raised her eyes to Hayward's face. There was a dark, red flush on his usually pale skin, and this sign of emotion emboldened her to go on.

"Do you understand now, Hayward?" she said. "Understand how a woman can love, and yet sacrifice that love to pride and ambition? I did this. I was badly brought up, and I was vain and proud. I accepted Sir George—and then—then I learnt to care for you."

"Yes," said Hayward, with a kind of gasp, "go on—let me hear the whole story."

"It is easily told," answered Isabel. "As I said, I was vain and proud—and you were poor."

"A poor tutor!" interrupted Hayward with quivering, curling lips.

"At least," continued Isabel, "you were not in a worldly point of view a fitting match for me. So I drove you away—that dark and dismal day in the picture gallery—and until you were gone I never knew the true feelings of my heart! I was engaged to Sir George—bound to him by my urged own wish—and pride, ambition, vanity, all to make me to keep my word. I did keep it—I married—I became Lady Hamilton of Massam, and then I found out what I had flung away. I was weary of my new position and my wealth before I came back here as a bride, but most weary of the gloomy, selfish man whose name I bore! So I was ready to rush into any folly—any madness. You know all about poor Hannaway! Shall I tell you now about Capt. Warrington?"

"Have you any motive for telling me?" asked Hayward in a passion-stilled voice.

"Yes, I have," answered Isabel. "I wish to clear myself, to a certain extent at least, in your eyes. Well, as I said, you know about Mr. Hannaway. After this affair Sir George turned absolutely to hate me! If he could say a cruel thing, if he could do a cruel thing, he did it. At last, after Miss Marston's wedding, I could bear it no longer, and went to Brighton. This Capt. Warrington was there. I flirted with him, and he flirted with me. He wrote me foolish letters, and I answered them, and was reckless and careless about being seen with him constantly in public."

"Yes," again said Hayward, in the same husky tones.

"Then one night," went on Isabel, "Sir George arrived, and ordered me, just as if I were a dog, to have my things packed, and to return at once to Massam. As we were talking his eyes fell on a ring lying on the dressing-table. It was one of the rings that dead woman wore whose body you brought to shore at Sanda. Sir George sprang upon it like a tiger! Then he demanded where I got it. I refused to tell him. I was going to a concert with Mrs. Woodford and her brother, and I asked Sir George—mark this, please, Hayward—to go with me. But no, he bade me go, and then as soon as I was out of the house he broke open my locks—read Captain Warrington's foolish letters—and when I came back coolly and literally turned me out of the house!"

"And you went—"

"To Mrs. Woodford. Then I went to Paris with another lady, and Captain Warrington escorted us there—but I did not run away with Captain Warrington, and in Paris I scarcely saw him."

"And your motive for telling me all this?" again said Hayward.

Isabel cast down her beautiful eyes. Then she put out one of her ungloved hands, and laid it pleadingly on Hayward's arm.

"I am free now, Hayward," she said, almost in a whisper. "I know how mad a thing I did before—this time I shall not marry for ambition—"

As she said this Hayward turned away, and covered his face with his hand.

"We are both still young," continued Isabel, "let us forget the past—let us—"

But with something between an exclamation and a cry, Hayward interrupted her.

"Hush, hush!" he said, "do not stain your womanhood any more."

"What do you mean?" asked Isabel.

"This!" exclaimed Hayward, passionately, looking round and facing her. "You have told me this long story, and for what? Because you are free, you say—free, do you mean to marry me?"

"Yes," said Isabel, though in a half frightened tone, for his manner was so excited and so strange.

"Then shall I tell you the truth?" said Hayward, vehemently. "Shall I tell you that before I would take your hand in mine, before I would call you by the sacred name of wife, I would put a pistol to my throat, and end it all! What!" he continued, "do you think I am mad? Do you think I have forgotten Sir George's broken heart and shame-stained name? Do you think I have forgotten the smiles and looks with which you wiled me on, or the false words with which you deceived poor Hannaway, and turned your husband's heart to gall?"

"How dare you!" exclaimed Isabel, with flashing eyes and burning cheeks, as Hayward paused, "how dare you speak to me thus?"

"Because you have lost all claim to respect or honour," said Hayward. "Because you have been lying to me ever since you came into this room—trying to deceive me, as you deceived me long ago. But a man wakes up from his folly sometimes," he continued with a bitter laugh. "Shall I tell you, Lady Hamilton, the day I woke up from mine? Do you remember the day when Hilda Marston was married? She was a good girl, and I had learnt to love her then with a better love than I ever gave to you. But that day ended my delusion completely."

"And how, pray, was that?" asked Isabel, scornfully throwing back her head.

"I opened the billiard-room door," answered Hayward, "and stood unnoticed a few minutes there. Do you understand now? You were there, and Captain Warrington—the man whom you have just been telling me was nothing to you!"

As these bitter words passed Hayward's lips, Lady Hamilton's face turned scarlet, and then grew suddenly pale. She saw at that moment that her power over Hayward was ended for ever. She had been found out. Her falseness had been brought home to her, and her cunning words had returned as stabs to her own breast. But she had one weapon left, and she used it.

"I have been a fool," she said, contemptuously, after a moment's thought. "I came into this room intending to conciliate you; intending to atone to you in some way for the disappointment you have so often reproached me with, when you—a tutor in a country school—forgot yourself so far as to dare to make love to me! But I had another motive," she went on vindictively, "as well as this amiable one! Can you guess what I mean? No—I will tell you, then—I wished to spare the memory of Sir George!"

"How?" said Hayward sharply.

"I am not quite an idiot, you know," continued Lady Hamilton. "and I can lay this thing to that when I choose to do so. How about the dead woman's ring, the sight of which startled Sir George almost to madness? The dead woman whose body was washed to shore at Sanda, days before the wreck of Sir George's yacht? The dead woman who was Sir George's mistress—the mother of the base-born youth who claims to be his heir?"

Isabel paused after she had made this speech, and she saw in a moment that it had struck home to Hayward's heart. She had hit the right nail on the head at last, she thought. Hayward knew Sir George's secret—knew of the guilty deed that she had guessed at.

"Do you see now what I mean?" she said. "You pretended to be, or were fond of Sir George—do you wish his name now to be branded as a murderer's?"

"You have no proof!" said Hayward, quickly and passionately.

"A hundred proofs," replied Isabel. "First this woman's body was washed ashore days before the wreck of the yacht. Then do you think that I could live with Sir George, and not see that he was weighed down with remorse? Do you think I heard no muttered words in his sleep, that I could not understand them, but which I do now? Do you think that when he first saw that ring, that he hid his guilt? With a cry he exclaimed that his sin had found him out—and from that hour I knew that Sir George had murdered this woman!"

"Be silent! be silent!" cried Hayward, in uncontrollable emotion.

"No, I will not be silent!" said Isabel. "I will proclaim this deed! I will blacken his name, as he blackened mine, unless you will help me to do what I came here to do—protect the rights of my son!"

"How can I do it?" said Hayward. "Sir George was married to this Spanish woman, and their son was born after this marriage. My hands are tied, I cannot help you."

"Do you know that he went down to Sanda to see her grave?" said Isabel. "Do you know Mr. Irvine thought he was mad when he was there, or going mad at least, and that the servants here all declare that for days before his death—nay, for weeks—that he was not in his right mind? Upon this plea the will can be thrown aside. Sir George was mad when he made it—mad when he declared a marriage which in all human probability never took place."

"Lady Hamilton," said Hayward, "do not deceive yourself. This marriage did take place. I saw the priest in Seville who married them—the priest who had charge, until I brought him here, of this young Juan."

"Then you intend to stand by the will?" said Isabel, and her lip curled. "The will that gives you twenty-five thousand pounds, and at

the same time brands your late dear friend's name as a murderer's."

"I will try to do my duty, whatever is the consequence," said Hayward, firmly.

"This, then, will be the consequence," retorted Isabel. "I mean to dispute the will. I mean—as you will have it so—to let the world know the truth about Sir George!" And having said this, Isabel turned and left the room, leaving Hayward a prey to the most miserable reflections.

## CHAPTER XLV.

A LAWSUIT.

All that night Hayward never slept. How could he stop this vindictive woman's tongue, he was thinking; how save Sir George's memory from the awful charge with which she was about to blacken it?

"But, for the child's sake, for little Reggy's sake, surely she will be persuaded," at last he began to hope. So in the early morning he decided to seek another interview with Isabel.

He went down to breakfast late, weary and heart-sore. A little note was lying on the table, addressed to him, when he entered the breakfast room, and the handwriting on this he at once recognized as Isabel's. Eagerly, then, he opened it, and read the following words:

"Dear Mr. Hayward,—As you have refused to help me, and are determined to stand by the will that wrongs my son, and provides so handsomely for yourself, I am determined to do what I consider I have a full right to do, namely, take charge of my own child. When you receive this, therefore, I shall have left Massam, and taken little Reggy with me. Do not attempt to interfere with me. I understand that Sir George intended to endeavour to obtain a divorce from me if he had lived, but luckily for Reggy and myself he is dead, and I am not divorced, but am Lady Hamilton of Massam still. When you leave the Park, and take away the base-born boy that you have brought there, I may return to Massam; until then I shall remain in town, and take immediate steps to overturn the will of the unhappy madman, whose crimes, I suppose, had upset his reason.—I remain, yours truly, ISABEL HAMILTON."

Hayward read this letter and then seized the room-bell and began ringing it violently. The butler appeared hastily to answer his summons.

"Is Lady Hamilton gone?" he asked the moment the man came into the room.

"Yes, her ladyship left an hour ago," replied the butler, "in time to catch the early train south. Her ladyship informed us last night," he added, "of her intentions, and said that it was by your wish that she and the infant, Master Reginald, were leaving."

"And she has taken the child?" said Hayward.

"Yes, the child and the head nurse," answered the man; and Hayward felt at that moment that Isabel had completely out-witted him.

But he was little Reginald's guardian as well as young Juan's. He therefore determined at once to follow Isabel, and started for town two hours after she had done so.

But when he got there he could not find her. He went to nearly all the principal hotels, but still he could hear nothing of Lady Hamilton. Then he went to the lawyer, who had drawn out Sir George's last will.

This gentleman was a jovial, smiling man with a pleasant face and a smooth and pleasant tongue, and he listened smilingly to Hayward's tale.

"She has no chance," he said, when the story was finished. "She may dispute Sir George's will, but unless she can prove he was out of his senses when he directed it to be drawn out and signed it, the will will hold good. And," added the lawyer, "her own misconduct and Sir George's projected divorce from her will fatally damage any evidence she can produce."

"And you think the marriage with this Spanish woman—with young Juan's mother, can be proved?" asked Hayward.

"Certainly; Sir George instructed me how in the event of his death it could be proved," answered the lawyer. "There is no doubt, I suppose," he added, "that Sir George's death was a case of murder, and not of suicide?"

"Everything valuable that he had about his person had disappeared," said Hayward, "and there was no weapon near where he was found with which he could have inflicted the fatal wound."

The lawyer looked thoughtful.

"He had disappeared two days, had he not?" he said, after a moment's silence, "before his remains were discovered? It would be a weak point in our case if there was any idea of suicide."

"But—" began Hayward, and then he, too, was silent. He was afraid, in fact, to speak—afraid to think of the dark suspicion which sometimes involuntarily had crossed his mind regarding Sir George's tragic death.

"Well, we shall hear from her ladyship, I suppose, in a few days," said the lawyer. "In the meanwhile, I have no doubt that her little son is quite safe in her hands."

They did hear from her ladyship in a few days. In fact, Lady Hamilton at once took formal proceedings to dispute her late husband's will. He was insane, she stated, at the time it was made, and the lawyers gave her cause to suppose that she might win her case.

Sir George had been undoubtedly strange in his conduct for long, and after his miserable d