"ALMOST LOST."

Upon a couch in a shabbily-furnished sitting-room on the first floor of a house in a fashionable street occupied by a quiet maiden lady, who let part of her house "furnished with attendance," lay Marguerite Osborn, an orphan, and a teacher of music and drawing, and the present occupier of these apartments. She was a lovely girl of nineteen, with dark eyes and hair, showing darker against a sky of pearly fairness, and small features of exquisite beauty.

The windows were open to admit the air that hot August Sunday, and the blinds drawn down to exclude the sun, and presently the soft sound of Sabbath bells broke the oppressive, heated stillness of the room, but the soothing chime only seemed to increase the mental and physical pain of the lonely girl. She started from her couch and paced the room, pressing both hands upon her burning brow.

"Oh, heaven help me, what shall I do? I cannot say no, and to say yes—alas, what will my life be? Only a desolate wreck, only ——. Yet, what is it now, and what has it been that I should hesitate? Who cares what I do, or where I go, and could any life be more wretched than the past month, not to mention years of misery before it? But if I say yes I lose my honor, and then there is no hope for me. But still, to be loved and cared for, even like that, would be preferable to this utter isolation."

Marguerite had been thrown upon the world some two or three years before, and her first situation was in the house of a Mr. Courthope, whose wife was a bad, worthless woman.

At first the days passed peacefully enough, but her quiet was soon disturbed; for soon, alas, the contrast between the evil-minded wife and the fair, innocent girl who taught his children became too strong for Mr. Courthope, who had daily to witness the conduct of both, and he fell violently in love with the girl, hardly older than his own eldest daughter. For a long time he struggled against it, but on one unhappy autumn night, having left a ball, he came home alone, and going into the school-room, found Marguerite also alone, and in tears. Then the pent-up barriers of passion gave way, and he startled the girl with a declaration of his love. Not for one moment did she listen to him willingly, and that same week left his house, and with her slender savings took apartments at Miss Colling's, in quiet Valiant street, and soon, by recommendation of her landlady, who liked the pretty, lady-like girl, she got her first pupils, the children of Mrs. Leroyd, a barrister's wife, living in the square at one end of the street.

One day, however, a few weeks before this hot August Sunday, she had been sitting near the water, watching with great interest the struggle of some children to regain possession of a boat which had drifted out of their reach, when a hand was laid on her own and a familiar voice was heard.

"My dear Miss Osborne, how glad I am to see you again! I have searched for you half over London!"

"Mr. Courthope!" Marguerite shook off his hand and rose indignantly to leave the spot.

"I pray you hear me, Marguerite. Nay, do not look so cold and scornful; I only wish to ask your pardon for the folly which lost you a home, and to make reparation if possible. Do not fear me; I will not say one word your mother could disapprove, were she by."

"Leave me, sir, I command you. Here at least I am not forced to submit to insult."

"I would not even vex you, much less insult you, Miss Osborne—I only long to atone if possible for my folly. I have suffered since you left me. I am a wretched and lonely man. My wife left me six months ago—eloped with a disreputable roue and gambler. I sent my children away, they only reminded me of her. They are provided for, and their future lives may be happy and successful, while for me—but I did not mean to trouble you with my own woes. Only tell me what I can do for you—let me feel that I have not helped to shadow the life of an orphan girl whom I really wished to befriend, and I shall have one unhappiness the less to bear."

What need to prolong the tale, or to say that they met again and again in the park, without intention beyond friendly companionship on either side. But before a week was over Robert Courthope, longing beyond everything for that sweet face and gentle, loving voice to brighten his lonely evenings, proposed to Miss Osborne to come to him at once, and as soon as the law could free him he would marry her.

And Marguerite? Ah! his gentle kindness, and the sense of protection she always felt in his presence, made the horror of being alone again seem ten times greater. And, truly, a sense of dreary isolation is more likely to drive man or woman into sin than the trouble that others know of and share in.

So Marguerite Osborne, who but a few weeks before scorned to speak to this man, now lay on her couch suffering in mind and body under the temptation to risk all rather than be left alone again. He was coming for her answer at 6 o'clock, and she knew if she said no she would never see him again, he would go away, and she must again return to a life of drudgery and loneliness.

These were the thoughts that tortured her, and had tortured her through all the long hours of that hot Sunday; but soon the sweet sound of the bells, that at first irritated her, seemed to fall upon her ears soothingly. Thoughts of the past came stealing to her when her father bent with fondest pride over his only daughter, and of the future when she could only remember with bitter sorrow that she had disgraced the honorable name she ought to have guarded for his dear sake.

"Never, never will I do this great sin. Oh, my father, so good and kind, your child will resist temptation for your dear name! Let me be poor and lonely, anything rather than part with my honor. All the love and care in the world would be but a reproach if I once lost that. I will stay here and work and be brave; if I cannot be happy I will be good and true."

"And with this high resolve Marguerite fell into a gentle, refreshing sleep.

It was past 4 o'clock when she awoke, and as she still felt weak, though her headache was gone, she resolved to go out, leaving a note for Mr. Courthope, telling him she did not wish to see him again. She wrote it, and went up-stairs to dress; meanwhile the little maid-of-all-work, hearing her move, came up to ask if her head was better, and whether she would have a cup of tea before she went out, as she had eaten no dinner.

Touched by the girl's thoughtful kindness Marguerite accepted the offer, and in a few minutes she was equipped for her walk, partaking of the cheering cup. A loud ring at the door-bell and the sound of voices on the stairs, made her start and turn pale. Her resolve was firm, but she dreaded seeing the tempter. But it was "children's voices, clear and sweet," mingled with the deeper music of a pleasant manly voice, quite unlike Mr. Courthope, that met her ear, and presently she had hardly time to answer "Come in" to a chorus of knocks at her room-door, when in did come two fair-haired laughing children, who rushed at her and half-strangled her with kisses, to the great amusement of a tall fair gentleman about five-and-twenty, whose likeness to the girls proclaimed him their brother, who stood waiting meekly, hat in hand, at the open door, for permission to come in.

"Really, Emelia, if that is the way you always treat your governess, I should think she longs for her holidays," he said, laughing, when Marguerite had found breath to invite him to take a seat.

"She's such an old dear, and I haven't seen her for such a time," was Emelia's apology. "This is my brother, Dr. Arthur Leroyd," with a meek bow, commonly called Artie, Mammas said he might come with us to tea if you will please come. Doh't say no, now there's a darling. I see you have your hat on, but just put off those other people. We are all dying to see you, and we only came home last night."

Dr. Leroyd seconded his little sister's request with so much kindness and courtesy that Marguerite gratefully accepted the invitation and accompanied them to their home, where she was warmly welcomed by the barrister and his amiable wife, who had always liked the pale, quiet, pretty governess.

A merry, noisy tea party that was. Emelia and her quieter elder sister, Anna, kept up a perpetual war of wits with Dr. Leroyd, who had only come home for a day's holiday from his country practice, which he held in partnership with an older man.

"Arthur has got such a pretty house all to himself, with one old woman to keep him in order," said Anna to her governess.

"Arthur had need have a refuge from two such dreadful sisters, poor fellow, answered he. "And the old woman—who, by the way, would object to the adjective, being only 40—keeps the house, not me, in order."

"Hear the slanderer! A refuge from us when he was only saying how dull he is, and how glad he will be when our lessons are finished, so that we can go and keep him company sometimes."

"Well, I have overmuch of my own company certainly; but I have too much work to feel very dull." And here his eyes met Marguerite's, and a bright look of sympathy passed between them which told him that she, too, knew what the heart-loneliness was that makes one glad to find respite in a continual round of work.

He was already strongly attracted by her; he felt sure she was unhappy, and he had heard such an account from his mother and sisters that increased his interest.

In church that evening sitting between Arthur and Emelia, Marguerite felt safe and happy. The tempter might seek her again; she would not swerve from the strict path of duty and honor. Just then the clergyman, standing up in his white robes, read on—

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, oh God, thou wilt not despise."

And Arthur Leroyd, looking down on the bent head and sorrowful face by his side, mentally registered a vow that he should be comforted and cherished in future if she would but accept his love

It was quite incomprehensible to Mr. Leroyd, though his wife perfectly understood it, why Arthur kept "running up to town," as he phrased it, continually during the next few months. He thought it a pity, when he was doing so well, that she should be so restless. But Marguerite guessed the cause too well, for in her heart had sprung up a great love for Arthur; in him she found a kindred spirit; their thoughts and wishes harmonized, and each felt happy in the other's society.

"But I will never marry him. If he asks me I shall refuse, for I could not tell him all my wickedness, and I would not deceive him. I will let him think me good; then he will soon find some one else to love. I could not bear him to think ill of me."

A few weeks after Arthur did ask her, and Marguerite found it not so easy to refuse him as she thought.

At last, pressed by her to give him reasons, in such a tone that Marguerite felt unable to obey, she told him all the sorrowful story of her temptation. For answer he folded her in his arms and kissed her lips and cheeks fondly.

"Is that all, darling? And you want me to give up my wife because she was brave enough to resist temptation? Nay, that cannot be. Thank heaven, no such trials shall come near you in future."

THE MOVEMENT ON CANADA.

The Tally Which "Fenian Gallagher" Gave a Syracuse Reporter.

From the Syracuse Courier.

John Gallagher, better known as "Fenian Gallagher," is a prominent leader among the Fenians, and is posted on the inmost secrets of the organization. Meeting the Fenian yesterday, a reporter of the Courier asked him what the Fenians of America were doing in anticipation of the emergency that might arise at any moment.

"Well, sir," replied the Fenian, "they are preparing to do their duty, and do it bravely, sir, this time. When the raid is made on Canada this time, sir, the 'Queen's Own' will have to do the running."

Reporter—"Are the Fenian organizations preparing for the struggle?"

Fenian—"They are, sir. Every land league in America is a Fenian organization, and every member of the leagues would spring to arms and march on Canada at the first call of duty. Do you see that the land leagues of Great Britain and Ireland are all Fenian societies? So they are in this country, sir."

Reporter—"Is the work of recruiting going forward?"

Fenian—"It is, sir, and when the gun is sounded an army of a hundred thousand men will be ready to march on Canada."

Reporter—"Have you secured sufficient arms this time?"

Fenian—"You may be assured we have, sir. We have 25,000 breach-loaders at Malone, and five times as many concealed at other points on the frontier. The men are drilling, too. We have plenty of experienced captains who have fought in the rebellion, sir, who are ready to lead us at any moment. We have 200 enlisted men in the city of Syracuse, and when the time comes to march we shall have no difficulty in getting a thousand in this city."

Reporter—Are the Fenians in other cities preparing for action?"

Fenian—"They are, sir; there are five hundred enlisted men in Scranton, and every Molly McGuire in the mining district in Pennsylvania is ready to shoulder a musket. We have ten thousand men in the city of Chicago, and every man of them is drilled. St. Louis will furnish as many more. In every city in the west the Fenians are getting ready. New York is enlisting men every day. There are plenty of men to be had this time, and plenty of money is offered us too."

Reporter—"When will the raid on Canada be made?"

Fenian—"That is a secret, sir, which I must not tell at present, but you can rest assured, sir, that when the signal is given, the Irishmen of America will be ready for the blow. We have plenty of men who sympathise with us in Canada. The British government will find that it has men in high command in Canada who will give us the aid the government little dreams of. When the word comes from Ireland that our brethren there are ready, we shall come to the front and be ready to march. We are ready now for that matter, for the call for action may come any day."

Reporter—"You seem to be confident of success this time?"

Fenian—"We are, and why shouldn't we? The British government will have all it wants to do to take care of itself on the other side of the water, and an army of a hundred thousand men marching into Canada with guns, cannon, and ammunition, and led by able leaders, will paralyze the Canadians. Besides, sir, half of the Canadians are tired of British rule and are anxious to become independent. The British government has got spies in every city in America. They know all that I have told you, and much good may it do them. They will find that the Fenians are in earnest this time.

The Missing Batavia.

A Queenstown despatch says an officer of the Cunard company has arrived and will go to Crookhaven to take charge of the Liverpool tug to go in search of the steamer Batavia.

It is now stated that the disabled steamer sighted on the 8th inst. south of Fastnet, was two-masted and brigantine rigged, not schooner rigged as at first reported. (The overdue steamer Batavia is brig rigged.)

The managers of the Cunard steamship company have perfect confidence in the safety of the Batavia.

The war as to who has and has not the right to produce "Forget Me Not," still wages in New York between the counsel of Messrs. Wallack & Morse on the one side, and Miss Genevieve Ward on the other; as matters now stand Miss Ward appears to have the best of the fight, and will undoubtedly win the case.

In "Our Boarding House," Leonard Grover, the author, played the principal comedy part at the Bijou opera house in New York the other evening. The critics assert that he plays the part better than any other actor who has so far played the part.

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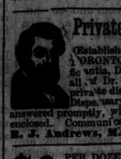

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