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GRAPES AND THORNS.

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CHAPTER X.

THE DESCENT OF AVERNUS. It was Annette who told Miss Pembroke the result of the trial, taking it on herself as a sort of mission. Without saying a word on the subject to each other, perhaps without defining it clearly in their own minds, they had yet acted on an impression that

delicacy and tenderness in the matter.

As young Mrs. Gerald came down home, she saw Miss Pembroke approaching her slowly from the opposite direction, a child at either side. She was just coming for She was just coming from her in the neighborhood, and were privileged to walk home with their teacher, each holding in its little hands, for warmth, a fold of her large sable

It was a still, frosty day, with sparking depth of cloudless blue over-head, and a spotless carpet of newly-fallen snow, white as swan's down, underneath. But the mid-air, rosy now with sunset, imparted a tinge of violet to the sky and a soft blush to the earth. Sleighs, with their gay bells, flew to and fro, the drivers muffled to the eyes from the stirging cold; and the planks of the sidewalk crackled under the steps that trod

"What a motherly look she has! Annette Gerald said to herself, as she stood waiting at the gate, and watching her friend.

Honora had quite a matronly appearance, indeed, in the hink furs she always wore in winter. She was fond of warmth, and scarcely quick enough in her motions to resist the cold of a northern climate by means of exercise alone, and the cap, muff, boa, and mantle made her look like a Juno exiled to the court of Odin The cold melancholy of her expression the face as untouched with color as a white camellia, was in keeping with the fancy.

She did not hasten when she saw a visitor waiting for her, nor give any smile or word of welcome. If there was a sign of emotion, it was in the slight gesture with which she detached herself from her two little attendants, who, for the first time, missed the leave-taking they prized so much. They had been wont to be stoked on the cheeks, with a gentle 'Good-by"; and, running, hand in hand, down the street, to turn at the first corner, and see their teacher wave her hand to them as she stood on the piazza.

"My dear Annette, why did you not go in, instead of freezing here in the the snow?" she said, and seemed too much occupied in opening the gate to be able to look in her friend's face, though her disengaged hand held that of her visitor closely. "Oh! I never feel the cold in this

still weather," Annette said lightly Besides, I do not like to enter alone deserted house. There is no one here but the servant. Mamma Gerald is with us, and we persuaded her to stay to dinner. I wish you would go

They had entered the house. Miss Pembroke paused a moment at the foot of the stairs, then led the way knew that there were tidings for her, and suspected that they were not good. "I shall not dine at home good. 'I shall not dine at home believing that I had loved Mr. Schontoday," she said, catching sight of inger. I never did." he servant.

But she did not, apparently, mean go out, for she deliberately renoved her wrappings, and put them riend, and looked at her with ar xpression that bade her speak out her errand, whatever it might be. "It has gone as badly as it could,

Annette said quickly. "He is, then, found guilty?" Miss Pembroke asked, without the slightest

sign of emotion. Annette nodded. "He is convicted

on circumstantial evidence. It is as olain as such evidence can be, but not plain enough to shake my hope, at least, of his innocence. Lawrence is utterly disgusted and indignant with the whole affair. He says he would at any time head a party to rescue Mr. Schoninger. He felt so ngry that wouldn't stay at home after coming up to tell us, but started ff again somewhere."
"Is he sentenced?" Miss Pembroke

sked, speaking with some difficulty And since the eyes fixed on her still waited for more, Mrs. Gerald added: "There is a year olitary

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HOW MY SIDE ACHES! hing Sides and Back, Hip, Kidney, Uterine Pains, and Rheumatism re-ed in one minute by the Cuticura il-Pain Plaster. The first and only

and seemed to clear some mist from mind and ardor of feeling which could before her eyes. "Before what?" at need strengthen her to face any

e asked in a confused way.

'Dear Honora!" exclaimed her capable of holding firmly her own she asked in a confused way. friend, "need I say what?" And opinions and belief in spite of opposi-then started up with a little cry; for tion. Miss Pembroke seemed to her Miss Pembroke, without a word or sign of warning, had slipped out of her chair, and fallen heavily to the

she was to be treated with peculiar cry because a lady has fainted, unless there is no person of sense present. Annette Gerald did what was needful without calling for help, and her efforts were soon rewarded. The cold hand she held suddenly became warm and moist as the recoiling wave of life rushed back, and in a few minutes Miss Pembroke was able to rise from the floor, and go to the sofa. Annette sat by her in silence, now and then touching her hand or her hair with caressing fingers, and waited for her to speak.

If she had to wait some time, it

was not because her friend had not returned to full consciousness. Miss Pembroke was too strong and healthy to creep back to life, even after so violent and unaccustomed an attack. It was, perhaps, the first time she had ever fainted, and she was left almost ignorant of what had happened to her; but of the cause she was not a moment in doubt. It came back clearly on the first wave of returning consciousness. She lay with her eyes closed, and strove to set her mind in order again, and set it so firmly that this terrible and entirely unexpected fact should not again derange its action. She had not once anticipated such a conclusion. Her thoughts had occupied themselves with horrors of the accusation, and the worst result she had looked for was that, though the prisoner would doubt less be acquited, he would not be able to shake off the disgrace of having been suspected, and would go out into life branded with an ineffaceable mark -a mark which his name would bear even in her own mind. She had said to herself that, pity him as she might, she desired never to see him again, not because she believed him capable of any great crime, but because his image would always be associated with painful recollections, and because his lignity had been soiled by such circumstances and associations. however, he was presented to her mind in quite a new light, more pitiful, vet with a pity far more shrinking and remote from its object. In this woman confidence in, and obedience to, author

ity was an instinct; and as she contemplated the decision of the law against Mr. Schoninger, she began to ook on him somewhat as a Catholic looks upon those whom the anathema of the Church has separated from the fellowship of the faithful, "so that they are not so much as to say to them, God speed vou." A silent and awful distance grew up between them.

After a while, she sat up, and began calmly to put her hair and dress in order.

we may as well try to put it quite out of our minds," she said. "We can do sit in it. nothing, that I see, but pray for his conversion. I thank you for coming alone to tell me of this, for I would not have had any other person see me so much affected by the news. People imagine things and tell them as facts, and there are many who are capable of

There were times when Honora Pem broke's soft eyes could give a look that was almost dazzling in its firm and open clearness; and she pronounced hese last words, she looked into her companion's face with such a glance

Mrs. Gerald rose and walked some what impatiently to the window. had hoped and expected to startle Honora into some generous expression of interest in Mr. Schoninger, and to win from her some word of pity and kindness which, repeated to him, would be like a drop of cooling water in his fiery trial.

'I am sure I should never imagine you capable of having an affection for any one whom the whole world does not approve," she said rather pointedly, having snatched the curtain up and looked out, then dropped it again. "If you can put the subject out of your mind, and remember Mr. Schoninger only when you are praying for the heathen, so much the better for your tranquility. I am not so hap-pily constituted. I cannot dismiss the thought of friends because it troubles me, nor because some person, or many persons, may believe something against

"What would you have me do? Miss Pembroke asked rather loftily, yet with signs of trouble in her face. "Nothing, my dear, except that you put on your bonnet and come home to dinner with me," Annette replied,

assuming a careless tone. Miss Pembroke hesitated, then refused. It would be certainly more sensible to go if she could, but she felt herself a little weak and trembling yet, and disinclined to talk. The best distraction for her would be such as she could find in reading or in prayer, if distraction were needed.

To grow old gracefully, one must live temperately, calmly, methodically; be interested in all that is going on in the world; be cheerful, happy, and contented, and above all, keep the blood pure and vigorous by the use of Ayer's Sarsaparilla. Be sure you get

self in that instant weak and puny, not because she did nothing for Mr. Schoninger, but because, had she seen the possibility or propriety of her doing anything, she would have lacked the courage. It was a relief to her, therefore, to find herself alone, though, at It was a relief to her, therethe same time, she would gladly had the support and strength which her friend's presence could so well im-

The door closed, and she looked from the window and saw her visitor walk briskly away without glancing back.
"I wish I had some one," she murmured, dropping the curtain from her hand, and looking about the room as if to find some suggestion of help. am certainly very much alone in the world. Mother Chevreuse is gone; I cannot go to F. Chevreuse about this;

part to one in trouble.

and the others jar a little with me." And then, like a ray of soft and tender light coming unexpectedly to show the path through a dark place, came the thought of Sister Cecilia and her gentle companions. They had asked her to come to them, if they could ever be of any use to her, and Sister Cecilia particularly had spoken to her with an affectionate earnestness which was now joyfully remembered.

'I can not hope to be to you what glad if I could in a little, even, supply her loss to you. Come to me, if ever wish to, quite freely. You will never find me wanting in sympathy or affection.

And she had scarcely been to them at all! She dressed herself hastily. and

called a carriage. It was too late to walk there, for already the sun was down; and it was nearly two miles to the convent.

The sharp air and brisk motion were restorative. They brought a color to her face, and sent new life through her weakened frame. Besides, when one feels helpless and distressed, rapid motion gives a relieving impression that one is doing and accomplishing something, while, at the same time, it saves the necessity of effort.

Sister Cecilia was in her own room. writing letters, her little desk drawn close to the window for the light. She looked out when she heard the carriage, and beckoned Miss Pembroke to come up stairs then hurried to meet her half She had guessed her visitor's motive in coming, and it needed but a glance into her face to confirm the thought.

"Come into my chamber, dear," she said. "It is the pleasantest room in the house at this hour. See what a view I have of the city and the west ern sky. I sit here to write my letters, and every moment have to leave off to admire the beautiful world outside. It is a sort of dissipation with me, this This arm-chair is for hour of sunset. you. It is my visitor's chair. I should feel quite like a sybarite if I were to

She seated Honora by the window, drew up her own chair opposite her, and went on talking cheerfully.

"I sometimes think that all the earth needs to make it heaven is the visible presence of our Lord and His saints. It would require no physical change. Of course I include the absence of sin. There is so much beauty here, so much that we never notice, so much that is everyday, yet miraculous for all that. Look at that Did you ever see such a rich air? It needs the cold purity of the snow to keep it from seeming exces-

A long, narrow cloud had stretched itself across the west, and, drawing to its bosom the light of the sun, now hidden behind the hills, reflected it in a crimson flood over the earth. Through this warm effulgence fell, delicately penetrating, the golden beams of the full moon, changing the crimson of the air to a deep-opal color, and putting faint splashes of gilding here and there beside the rosy reflections

"How the earth draws it in!" said the nun dreamily. "It never wastes the beauties of the sky. It hoards them up, and gives them out long after in marbles and precious stones. Did t ever occur to you to wonder how those bright things could grow in the dark underground? I used to think of it in Italy, where I first saw what marbles can be. I remember my eyes and my mind wandering to that as knelt before the Confession of S Matthew the Evangelist, in Santa Maria Maggiore, where the walls of the atrium glow with marbles; and the lesson I learned from it was this: that even though pains and sorrows of every kind should intervene between us and the joy of life as thickly as the clay and rock, and turf had intervened tween the sunshine of heaven and the dark place where those marbles took form and color, we could yet, if we had real faith, be conscious of all the glory and joy taking place overhead, and reproduce them for ourselves down in the dark, and make that beauty more

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Honora's eyes opened a little wider.

"A year solitary?" she repeated.

"Why, yes, dear. You know it is the custom to give a year of solitary imprisonment before ..."

Miss Pembroke put her hand up, and severed to give a year of solitary imprisonment before ..."

Miss Pembroke put her hand up, and and arder of feeling which gearly shield good and and arder of feeling which gearly shield good and are all the solid good and shield good and are all the solid good and shield good and are all the solid good and shield good and are all the solid good and shield good and are all the solid good and are a which warmed but did not startle-"do you remember S Paul's recommendation, 'always rejoice?' It is possible. And now tell me why you do not

Her eyes, beaming with religious enthusiasm and tenderest human affection, searched frankly the pale face before her, and her hand was laid lightly on Miss Pembroke's arm. No reserve nor timidity could stand before her. They melted like snowflakes beglances. simply what had distressed her.

How sweet is the friendship of one than love, for it is untroubled, and has I am all wrong." deeper than love, for it is the sympathy of true natures which reflect each the entire being of the other; less selfish than love, for it asks no merging of another into itself; nobler than love, for it allows its object to have other sources of happiness than those it can furnish: more enduring than love, for "But can you not see, my dear," the

nun said presently, "that it would have been better if you had not had any friendly intercourse with him, even though this terrible thing had never happened? The injunetion not to be unequally yoked another with one think, to all ties as well as to marriage The gulf is too wide between the Chrisfor familiar friendship. It is too wide for anything but prayers to cross. Once admit any intercourse with unbelievers, and you peril your faith : and besides, you cannot set a barrier firmly anywhere when the first one is down. have heard it said that this Jew loved

you would marry him." "People ought not to say such ing their way carefully, till they came things!" exclaimed Miss Pembroke, to a turn in the lower passage; and blushing deeply.

"People ought not to have the

you, and even fancied it possible that

chance to say such things, my dear girl," replied the nun. "It was offering you an insult when he offered you his hand.'

"O dear Sister! is not that too severe?" expostulated Honora. "Set-ting aside what has happened since, should I not recollect, makes me such an offer, what his intention is, and how the subject looks to him? And cannot I refuse him. and see that it is impossible for me to do otherwise, yet feel kindly toward him, and wish him well, and believe that he has meant to show me both affection and respect?

"Honora," said the Sister, "if any man had struck your mother, then turned to offer you his hand, would you not have recoiled from him in dis-

"Surely I would!" "And is your God and Saviour les dear and sacred to you than your mother?" the other pursued. "Can mother?" the other pursued. you allow your thoughts to dwell with kindness and complacency on one who blasphemes the crucified Redeemer, and calls Him an Imposter? Because you have not heard this man talk against your faith, you forget what he must think of it. I tell you they mock at Him, these Jews, and they call us idolaters. And what could be think of you, when, knowing that you adore the sign of the cross? He must have a fixed lustre, out of the shadows. a friendly way, as if friendship were possible between you. I speak of what he was. What he is, we have nothing to do with.

Miss Pembroke's eyes were downcast. When you place the subject in that light, I am forced to think myself all in the wrong," she said. "But most people do not think in that clear, positive way. They act on an inherited motive, and their beliefs are moss grown, as it were."
"They have no faith," was the quick

Honora was silent a moment, then said, with some hesitation: "I am always afraid of being uncharitable and illiberal, and perhaps I err the

other way."
"My dear, it is easy to make a mistake there, and very dangerous too," the Sister replied with decision. "What is charity? You must first love God with all your heart; and if you do that, you will be very shy of the enemies of God. You cannot serve two masters. As to liberality, there is no greater snare. It is not liberal to squander the bounty and honor of God; it is not ours to spend. liberal to praise those whom He condemns, and bless those whom He curses. It is not liberal to love those who refuse to acknowledge and obey Him and to contradict what He has clearly said. Or if these things are liberal, then liberality is one of the worst vices, and one of the most futile too. Why if I were to desire the reputation of being generous, and, having nothing of my own, should take what is not mine and give it away, I have stolen, it is true. and I have obtained a reputation that I do not deserve, but, also, I have en enriched some one; whereas, if I put my hand into the treasury of God, try to bestow on another what He has denied, the hand comes out empty. I have insulted the Almighty, and have

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not benefited any one. Do not suffer yourself to be deceived by sounding phrases. What are these people who talk so much of liberality? liberal of what is theirs to give? Far Do they give away all they have to the poor? Do they forgive their enemies? Do they give up their pride and vanity, and spend their lives in laboring for the needy? Quite the contrary. They are lavish only of what is not theirs to give. It has been reserved for those whom they call bigots to show an ardent and unsparing lib erality in sacrificing their private feelings, their wealth, their comfort, their reputation, their lives even, for neath the heavenly summer of her the glory of God and the saving of souls. There is the true liberality, my

dear, and all other is a snare. I wish I could shut myself up with God, and get into the right path again

"Why not come here and make a retreat?" the Sister asked.

It was so precisely and unexpectedly what she needed that Honora clasped her hands, with an exclamation of delight. "The very thing! Yet I had not thought of it. When may I come? Very soon? It was surely an inspiration, my coming here to-night."

Immediately her troubles began to lift themselves away, as fogs begin to rise from the earth even before the sun is above the horizon. The cer tainty of approaching peace conferred a peace in the present. She was going to place herself in the hands of Him who can perform the impossible.

Sister Cecilia had supplied her need perfectly. Hers was impassioned natures which need to be oothed and caressed into quiet. A certain vein of gentle self-sufficiency and a habit of contentment with life as she found it, prevented this. wanted light more than warmth.

was already dark when they went down stairs, and since economy, the nuns did not have their entries lighted, the two had to go hand in hand, gropthere, from the open door of the chape at the further end, a soft ray of light shone out from the single lamp that burned before the altar. By light both chapel and altar showed poor enough; but in the evening, and een alone by this small golden flame, the imperfections were either trans formed or hidden. Dimly seen the long folds of drapery all about gave a sense of seclusion and tenderness : one eemed to be hiding under the mantle of the Lord; and the beautiful mystery of the burning lamp made wonders seem possible. Kneeling there alone could fancy all the beautiful

legends being acted over again. Sister Cecilia and Honora, still hand in-hand, knelt in the entry the momen they saw the light.

"You remember the chalice of the bees?" whispered the nun. "I never come here in the evening, and see that oright little place in the darkness, but think of that sweetest of stories. And I would not be surprised to hear a buz-zing of bees all about the sanctuary, and see the busy little creatures build ing up a chalice of fine wax, as clear as an alabaster vase with a light in side.

They walked slowly and noiselessly by the door, and, as they passed it, saw beside the altar what looked almost like another lamp, or like that illumined vase the Sister had fancied. It was the face of Anita, which reflected the Christ as God, he asked you to be the wife of one who would laugh, if he did not rave, when he saw you making the sign of the cross? He must have a fixed basic property with the sign of the cross? thought your faith so weak that he could in time make you renounce it. The eyes fixed on the tabernacle, the The eyes fixed on the tabernacle, the And the reason why he thought so was lips slightly parted where the last vocal because he saw you receiving him in prayer had escaped, she knelt there in a trance of adoration. But one could see, even through that brightening halo and sustaining peace, that a great change had taken place in the girl during the last few weeks. was worn quite thin; and the large eyes, that had been like dewy violets bending ever toward the earth, burned now with a lustre that never comes from aught but pain.

How the innocent have to suffer for the sins of the guilty !" sighed the nun, as she led her visitor away That child has received a blow from which I am afraid she will never re-cover. She is like a broken flower that lives a little while when it is put in water. Her conscience is at rest : she does not say now that she is sorry for having had anything to do with that trial; she does not complain in any way. She seems simply broken. here she comes now! She has heard our steps, and is afraid she has stayed

too long in the chapel." The young girl came swiftly along he passage, and held out her hands to Miss Pembroke. "I knew you were here," she said, "and I was waiting to hear you come down. Mother told me I might come and say good-by to you.

"But you have not yet said a word of welcome," Miss Pembroke replied, trying to speak cheerfully.

"Oh! yes, when I saw you come, I welcomed you in my own mind," she replied, without smiling.

Honora waited an instant, but Anita eemed to have nothing to say except the good-by she had come for. whispering did not disturb your prayers?" she asked, wishing to detain

her a little longer. "Oh! no." She glanced up at Sister Cecilia, as a child, when doubtful and lost, looks into its mother's face, then

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