

ated at the outset. It grows by degrees, and one adapts oneself to it as the occasion requires. I never should have thought of it had you not put the chance in my way by insisting upon having your cousin sought and found. To be master of Brookdale has been my life-long dream. You will admit that I am better fitted for the position than you. I am a villain as you say, but you must blame destiny, and not me. Destiny gave you a splendid inheritance, and you would have been just as happy without it. Destiny made me a poor relation, and I have the soul of a Sardinian. You would have bowed to destiny; I bent it to the shape I require.

"And burden your soul with crime?" "The burden is light one, I assure. What was there in that wretched betting-man to give me a single thought of remorse? He was a worthless, useless member of society; he had no home, no friends. He loved to eat, drink, idle his time at gambling, and prey upon his fellow creatures. I did society a service when I sent him over the cliff into eternity. He did not lie in his throat, for had he not said that he had sent you I should have had no purpose in silencing him."

"That sin will find you out, Everard Grantley. The Creator, who saw all, will not permit the murder of that poor man to go unpunished."

"My dear Eugene, you talk like a schoolboy. Men, and women too, are drowned and poisoned, outraged and beaten to death, in dark places and in daylight, and the perpetrators are never discovered. In the last twenty years there have been as many undetected murders, and those who did them, if not dead, still at large. Under certain conditions, properly arranged, putting an objectionable person out of the way is safer and easier than picking a pocket."

"Strange as the situation was, Eugene could not help wondering how he had lived so long with this man, and never suspected the awful depths of sin lurking under the quiet polish of his character."

THE HOUSE WHERE WE WERE WED.

BY WILL M. CARLTON.

I've been to the old farm house, good wife, Where you and I were wed; Where the love was born to our two hearts, That now is cold and dead. Where a long-kept secret to you I told, In the beams of the yellow moon, And we forged our vows out of love's own gold, To be broken so soon, so soon, with I To be broken so soon, so soon.

I passed through all the old rooms, good wife I wandered on and on; I followed the steps of a flitting ghost— The ghost of a love that is gone. He led me out on a vine-wreathed porch. Where with myrtle I twined your hair; He sat me down on the old stone step, And he left me nursing there, wife, He left me nursing there.

The sun went down as it used to do, And sunk in the sea of night; The two bright stars that we called ourz Came slowly into my sight; But the one that was mine went under a cloud. When under a cloud, alone, And a tear that I wouldn't have shed for the world Fell down on the old gray stone, wife, Fell down on the old gray stone.

But there be words can ne'er be unsaid, And deeds can ne'er be undone, Except, perhaps, in another world; When our life's once more begun: And may be some time in the time to come, When the days and years are sped, We'll love again, as we used to love, In the house where we were wed, wife, In the house where we were wed.

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IN AFTER-YEARS; OR, FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER BOSS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The forenoon of the Duchess of Theism's party Margaret Cuninghame entered her sister's dressing-room, looking flushed and mazy, a thing very unusual with her. Throwing her hat on the sofa, on which she had seated herself, she said:

"Agnes, send Matilda away; I want to speak to you alone."

The order was given and the maid retired. "What is the matter, Margaret?" said her sister; you look as if some sudden misfortune had happened to you."

"I cannot say that there ought to be anything the matter with me, and I am sure nothing evil has happened, yet I cannot help feeling very uneasy by something Lady Hamilton said, or rather asked of me, while we went out driving this morning."

"What could she say? what did she ask?" "You are aware she came to ask me to drive very unexpectedly?"

"Yes, I know, Matilda told me after you were gone. I was in the green-house with Arthur while she was here, and did not know of her Ladyship's visit, or I would have come into the house. I am always sorry when I miss seeing her."

"It is perhaps as well you did not. I have never seen Lady Hamilton look unhappy before, which she certainly did this morning. Ernest De Vere is going to India at once, and perhaps she feels pining for him; and the turn in which she looked, and even spoke, seemed to me as if it were something connected with myself, or perhaps both you and I, which made her feel and look so sad."

"What did she say, Margaret? Do not keep me in suspense; you almost frighten me."

"I shall tell you as quickly as I can, but it seems such a long story; I can scarcely realize that all could have passed during a two hours' drive."

"Margaret, what did she say? Was it anything about Arthur? Tell me at once."

"No, nothing about Arthur; it was all concerning Haddon Castle and Sir Richard. I am almost sure she knows about his having been in that terrible place so long."

"Margaret heard a sigh of relief; her sister's cheek, which had become ashen white, resumed its rosy hue, and she smiled as she said: 'You frightened me so, Margaret, I fancied Arthur was drowned or killed in some way, and that I should never hear his voice again. Pray compose yourself. Tell me what she said; she can know nothing we have a wish to conceal; no one living except ourselves or Sir Richard could disclose that; it is impossible.'"

thought the same until the day dear papa died, but of course I did not say so. 'I have been told,' her Ladyship resumed, 'that in the top of the eastern tower there is an iron cage, which in the dark ages (Haddon Castle is such an old place, and people were so cruel then) they used to keep human beings fastened up like wild beasts. I trust these were wild tales which never actually took place, and were only invented to make ignorant people—like and shiver with horror when the fierce north wind blew round the old Castle on winter nights. I dreamy it is so such that the old saying of the country people owes its origin:

Haddon for ever, and Haddon for aye, May the wind blow cold about Haddon for aye."

"I did not answer. I tried to look unconcerned, but I had no power to look other than a guilty creature, trying to hide what I saw but too plainly was well known."

"Lady Hamilton sat looking in my face; I knew she did, but I dared not look up into her eyes. I never felt so before; oh! I hope I shall never feel so again. Those few minutes seemed to me like a long, dark day. At last she said, 'Margaret, will you tell me truly if you and Agnes ever saw the inside of that lower chamber, over saw the iron cage I spoke of just now?'"

"I thought of the love and confidence our dear father reposed in us, and a greater courage than ever I felt in my life came to help me, as I inwardly prayed, 'Almighty Father, if ever the dead come back to earth, let my dear father hear and see me now. My fear left me; I was as composed as if I was telling Adam to bring me a branch from yonder tree. I looked up in her face, into her eyes, and said, 'Yes, we have both been in the tower chamber and seen the iron cage you spoke of?'"

"I shall never forget the look of sharp pain which passed over her face while I said these words."

"We were both silent, but I think God heard my prayer, and my eye did not quail beneath her sad searching gaze, nor did my cheek burn, nor my heart beat quick."

"We were at the gate of the villa here, the carriage passed in; still she spoke not. We were close to the steps leading to the verandah, the footman came to open the door of the carriage, Lady Hamilton signed to him to leave it shut, and he went forward and spoke to the coachman. A blackbird flew from a low branch of the fir-tree in front of the verandah, and perching on the topmost bough, sang loud and clearly. I shall ever remember those little things, even to my dying day."

"Lady Hamilton observed the bird, and stooped down her head to look at him. At last she said: 'Margaret, will you tell me why Agnes and you went to that chamber?'"

"I answered as fearlessly as I ever answered to my father: 'No, Lady Hamilton, I will not tell that to you nor to any living being.'"

"She signed to the footman; he came and opened the door for me to get out."

"Farewell, Margaret," said she, without taking my hand; 'I go to Scotland to-morrow. It is not likely we shall ever meet again on this green, beautiful earth, which we ourselves make so polluted. May Israel's God give us grace to meet before His throne.'"

"I would have spoken but I could not. After the carriage began to move I looked in her face. Its expression was one of deep misery, as if she had bidden good-bye for ever to a darling child who went to meet a felon's doom."

"I wish we could tell Lady Hamilton that strange story. That it will be a cross and a thorn in our path through life, making us to walk with bowed heads and bleeding feet in ways that for others are moss-grown and strewn with roses, I am as sure as that I believe in the blessed Trinity. Lady Hamilton's good opinion is to me almost as dear as that of my husband."

"But we cannot tell Lady Hamilton, Agnes, or any one else; I wish we could. The very fact that we are obliged to conceal it seems to make it half a crime; yet that there was a necessity for my father confining Sir Richard were not long in having bitter experience. But for Adam he would have killed us both. Dear papa told us if ever he got loose he would turn Haddon Castle into a scene of desolation and misery, and as he not done so? It is as silent as the grave. His very wife, although, loquacious enough in his absence, fears to speak a word in his presence. If God had permitted him, he would have made it our tomb. Here in London he would have killed Adam had not young Cox been so energetic. We have known and suffered from his wickedness little more than one year. Papa had to bear his ill-usage, and was cognizant of his evil deeds all his life. Oh, Agnes! however it may appear to others, we know papa was in the right."

"Yes, indeed," replied Agnes, "and not only we, but every one who knew our dear father loved and esteemed him, while no one speaks well of Sir Richard. Those who will not detest their lips or tongues with evil-speaking are scrupulous, denounce him unsparingly."

"However our knowledge of Sir Richard's captivity may affect us, of one thing there can be no doubt, papa did what was right and best, and had he lived everything would have been different. He most likely possessed a knowledge of Sir Richard's mania for killing people, and by this means could have confined him in some low terrible way, even after he escaped; and whatever suffering it may bring on us, I have always been thankful to our Almighty Father, who know our weakness, and therefore, just at the time it would have fallen to us to care for him, ordered it so that he escaped. You have always, Agnes, had a stronger mind and frame than I have, and perhaps you could have kept the promise you made for us both; but to me it would have been death in life to know that any creature was shut out from fresh air and motion in a place like that, never to walk on the green grass, never to see the trees blossom nor hear the birds sing—oh! I could not have borne it; every sweet sound, every pleasant sight would have stung my heart with the bitterest self-reproach. Whatever my fate may be, my heart will always find cause to rejoice that I was saved the misery of helping to keep that bad man in his prison one hour."

"You are right, Margaret; it would have been a misery by night and day, and one, if it had ended in a week, we could never have forgotten all our life long. Oh! I do so wish we had never seen the room in the eastern tower, or the iron cage."

"I did not answer. I know we always

She stopped short; her husband's hands were on her eyes. He had entered through a door connecting her dressing-room with the bedroom. The sofa the sisters sat on was placed so that their backs were towards the door, and they knew not of his entrance until his hands were on his wife's eyes.

"What tower and what iron cage were you wishing you had never seen?" said Colonel Lindsay, as he half-soaked himself on the arm of the sofa; "I thought such things were only to be found in the romances of the middle ages."

He was looking down upon his wife and her sister as they sat beside each other. To his surprise the faces of both expressed great consternation.

Margaret rose immediately, looking as white and cold as a marble statue, while Agnes' neck and face, even her forehead, were red as a crimson rose.

CHAPTER XIX.

Fair Margaret, and rare Margaret, and Margaret of verity, Gin ever ye love another man, Ne'er love him as ye've done me. —Old Ballad.

The party which met at the Duke of Theism's mansion consisted of the Duke of London—the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis and Marchioness of Dango, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, the Duke and Duchess of Athole, the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, the crême de la crême of the English aristocracy.

The house was a villa residence at Sydenham, a long rambling, many-roomed cottage, originally in the Elizabethan style, which had been added to by nearly every Duke of Theism's since he succeeded his father for generations back. The addition made by the present Duke was a suite of music and drawing-rooms on the one side, leading into conservatories and terraces covering nearly an acre of ground, laid out in broad and smooth walks, so that they formed a delightful retreat from the crowded, heated rooms; and, on the opposite side into a picture gallery, which was esteemed one of the best private collections in London.

Amid these crowded rooms, filled with the high birth, wealth, and beauty of the land, Margaret Cuninghame shone a star, a pearl, surpassing all competitors. Her white silk dress, with its cloudy gauze covering, unrelieved save by the pearls twisted in her pale brown hair, her beautiful hair, that at times allowed fair, at others golt, as the light fell directly down or ains upon it, and which had never known other form than the wave or curl which nature had bestowed; in that gay assembly she was almost a stranger, and amid the dresses of gold and silver lams, the rich velvet and satin that shone around, she was unmistakably arrayed in the simplest apparel there, yet Duchess and Peer alike put the same question to each other:

"Who is that beautiful girl?—What grace in every step,—refinement speaking in every feature, in every gesture;—such a demure look of maiden modesty over all!—so different from other girls!—no aid of dress, and yet such rare grace and loveliness."

The beautiful Duchess of Sutherland, she herself considered the most beautiful woman in England, sought an introduction to Margaret. Her son said:

"Because she is so beautiful."

Where she was allowed by all to be the most beautiful, perhaps she was the very happiest girl in these lucky rooms.

Notwithstanding the cloud which had troubled her in the morning, her heart beat high with hope, her face was radiant with happiness. The morning with its shower of chill rain was forgotten. Ernest De Vere was by her side, the courtly boy so handsome in his gay scarlet uniform, which he wore by request of the great Duke; his sweet voice speaking of endless love, the lights above her head like dropping stars, the music a joyful peon, the flowers and statuary by which she was surrounded Fairy Land. In all that gay, courtly throng there was not a happier heart than Margaret Cuninghame's.

"You said the other day you had never seen a Fernery. The one here is perhaps the finest in London. Shall I bring you to see it?" said her companion.

"I should like to see it so much. Ferns always remind me of the Scottish woods. I would like to bury my arms deep amid their green leaves and stems as I used to do, to the great dismay of Adam, when he brought us into the Forest at Haddon; he feared my arms would get torn by thorns, as they did sometimes, and used to beg of me to copy Agnes, who always did as she was bid, and even occasionally threatened never to bring me to the woods again; and I am ashamed to say I often promised to be still and staid, but nature was too strong; when I came to the deep ferns, down my hands and arms would go again."

"Come, then, and I will allow you to bury your arms as deep in the ferns as you like, but I confess I would not like to see them scratched by thorns."

"There would be little fear of thorns in a Fernery, and I am old and cautious now."

"I will trust you with the ferns," said Captain De Vere, as Margaret, taking his arm, they walked along towards the conservatory; "and as I know they are not chary of their flowers here, I will get you a bouquet of white roses to match your dress."

They entered the conservatory. The time seemed to fly on angel's wings as, with drooping head, Margaret listened to the sweet words which every woman loves to hear, and hides in her bosom, and will never tell again.

The air of the conservatory was warm and heavy with perfume, and they sought the cool shade of the Fernery.

"My head aches with the perfume of these flowers. Can you get me some water?" "Do you feel ill?" "Not in the least, but I seem to need fresh air and water."

"You shall have both, the first in an instant. Sit down here under these tall ferns; I will slide back the glass above your head, and the outer air will come in softly through the broad leaves."

minutes, as I shall take it from a spring in the grounds. It used to be one of my play places when I was a boy. You know, I believe, that the Duke is my uncle."

He was gone in search of the water, and Margaret Cuninghame sat with closed eyes, leaning back in that bower of green beauty, thinking there was never youth as handsome as Ernest De Vere, never maiden so blessed in her love as Margaret Cuninghame.

A sound in the trees outside, as the wind stirred their light leaves with a twitter and the rustic peculiar to the beech attracted her attention; a second more, she heard Lord Nairn's voice say in an undertone, but so close above her head, as she sat under the opening in the Fernery, that she could not avoid hearing distinctly every word:

"Sir Robert Cuninghame was father to these girls, and it was he, you will observe, who confined his father during eighteen years in an iron cage in one of the towers in the main's own Castle."

Margaret felt her head reel, and her eyes became sightless. She grasped the stem of a tree fern; without that support she would have fallen to the ground.

"Most atrocious," replied a voice which she knew was Lord Cromartee's.

"A cage with bars as thick as a man's arm, six feet by six, the two girls— a rustle of the beech leaves drowned the rest of the sentence."

"A dreadful fate for poor Lindsay," said Lord Cromartee.

"Shocking," replied Lord Nairn; "better he had married the poorest dairy-maid in the land than entail such disgrace upon himself and his children."

"Oh, horrible!" another rustle of the beech leaves.

"If Lindsay comes to know it, I should not at any time be surprised to hear that he had shot himself."

"It would be my resource were I in his place."

"Mrs. Lindsay,"— "beautiful woman,"— "young De Vere,"— caught in the sister's toils,"— came in sentences broken by the beech leaves, through her ear to her heart, as if to still it forever.

"Goes to India to-morrow,"— "Will soon forget her,"— "The ruin to the poor boy,"— "A history of crime,"—

"To Scotland in a day or two,"— "Poor Lindsay, very sorry for him,"— "Easy to avoid them,"— came in detached sentences, stalking heart and brain, each one like a funeral knell. Heavy footsteps passed slowly down by the side of the Fernery, the beech leaves rustled and twittered in the night breeze.

Margaret Cuninghame in the last ten minutes had passed through a life of woe; henceforth to her life was nothing, death all.

She was alone, trying to make her heart beat quickly, but it was impossible. She longed to weep or pray, but it could not be; her very brain seemed warped and wrung; her power of hearing had gone with that last scathing sentence:

"Easy to avoid them."

Her eyes had lost their vision; for anything she knew or felt, she might have been sitting on a barren rock, with the waves of the salt sea lapping her feet. Her eyes were wide open, staring; yet fern leaves, beech trees and flowers were gone from her sight. Sight and speech and hearing were dead; yet her mind was never more widely awake, more painfully conscious. All the long, arid, sandy desert of life she must henceforth tread alone was vividly before her,—the drooping arching head, the cross clasped in silence to her weary breast, the sharp flint and thorns piercing her bleeding feet,—all her red roses dead roses.

An arm was round her, a face laid to her's; she knew who it was—who clasped her and laid her head on his breast—she feels his touch and knew it so well, her heart beat in great wild throbs.

"Margaret, dear Margaret, try to speak." She hears that, and wonders why he shouts so loud. A great sigh heaves her breast, her eyes are open, she sees and hears him now.

"Margaret, dearest, you are better; try and drink this cool water." She drank, a long cool draught; how strong it made her.

(To be continued.)

THE CARAT.—Possibly, many people have seen, lately upon the occasion of the great fair, an extraordinary weight, that expresses the fineness of gold, or the proportions of pure gold in a mass of metal; thus, an ounce of gold of twenty-two carats fine is gold of which twenty-two parts out of twenty-four are pure, the other two parts being silver, copper or other metal; the weight of four grains, used by jewellers in weighing precious stones or pearls, is sometimes called a carat weight—the carat consists of four smaller grains, the lightest being four grains troy, or seventy-four and one-sixteenth carat grains being equal to seventy-two grains troy. The term of weighing carat derives its name from a bean, the fruit of an Abyssinian tree called karna. This bean from the time of its being gathered varies very little in its weight, and seems to have been, from a very remote period, used as a weight for gold in Africa. In India, also, the bean is used as a weight for gems and pearls.

COMPOSITIONS OF THE EARTH.—At the city of Modona, in Italy, and about five miles around it, wherever the earth is dug, when the workmen arrive at a distance of sixty feet, they come to a bed of diamonds, which they bore with an augur five feet deep. They then withdraw from the pit before the augur is removed, and upon its extraction the water bursts through the aperture with great violence, and quickly fills the newly-made well, which continues full, and is affected neither by rains or droughts. But what is most remarkable in this operation are the rays of earth as we descend. At the depth of fourteen feet are found the ruins of an ancient city, paved streets, houses, floors, and different pieces of mosaic work. Under this is found a soft, sandy earth, made up of vegetable, and twenty-six feet deep large trees entire, such as walnut trees, with the walnuts still sticking to the stem, and the leaves and branches in a perfect state of preservation. At a depth of eight feet deep, a soft chalk is found, mixed with a large quantity of shells, and this bed is eleven feet thick. Under this vegetable are again found