

"We have wandered here almost unconsciously, my darling," he said; "but we will go in and stand a moment in the quietness beside Elsie's grave. In our own intense happiness, we would not forget her upon this beautiful Christmas-night; and it is her birthday too, you remember, Margaret."

I shrank aside, and whispered, "Not to-night—not on Christmas-night—not on her birthday;" but Horace gently led me on, until we stood once more together beside that great square stone beneath the cedar. It was very chill and gloomy there, and I crept closer to my husband's side; very chill and gloomy, even with his strong protecting arm around me. Why had he brought me here, when we had both learned to forget, and had grown so happy? If he would but speak—if he would but talk to me, and chase away these haunting memories which had not visited me since, in this very spot, he had told me how he loved me! If he would only tell me so again—loudly, that the words might drown this moaning in my ears, this rushing of the sea about my head, this cry of a faint and dying voice! Why had he breathed her name at all to-night, and raised this awful memory?

"O Horace, Horace, see the white dead face!"

My cry had not broken his long silence, so I knew it was uttered only in my heart. I looked up eagerly, that the glance of his kind eyes might give me courage; but that drowned face had come between us.

"O Horace," I cried, groping with my hands, "take it away, take it away! She would have you save her, and let me go!"

"Margaret, my darling, are you ill?"

I heard the question in my husband's soft kind tones, but there was something else I heard far more distinctly.

"Listen," I cried, turning to face the blast of wind which came sweeping over the valley below; "listen!—listen!"

I waited for its coming with my arms outstretched, and when the storm had passed, and left me standing so, I fancied death had spared me once again, as it had done at sea, and I knew why. That story was to be told to Horace; here, by the grave where the voices moaned; now, before that second gust came sweeping by which had brought death before, and might bring death again. The white dead face beneath that stone cried out for justice now; the voices of the wind and sea cried out aloud their accusation. I had a task to do in the lull of that great storm, and I must do it. I drew away from my husband's side, and stood opposite him in the shadow of the cedar; my eyes fixed steadily upon him, and my words slow and clear.

Quite still he stood to listen, while I told him all; quite still until I had finished; then, after an utter terrible pause, he fell on his knees beside the stone, and hid his face upon it. I did not speak or move until he rose, after a long, long time; then I eagerly and piteously scanned his face, that I might glean only a ray of hope. Even in the shadow—for he was leaning now against the tree—I could see how rigid and how coldly white his face had grown.

"O Horace," I cried, falling on the grass before him, and appealing to him with my burning hands outstretched, "O my husband, all the sin there may have been, you caused. If I had not loved you—"

Coldly and sternly he interrupted me, bidding me come away from beside that grave.

"O Horace, take me back to your heart!" I pleaded. "Why did you bring me here? You would never have known, if you had not brought me here to-night, and we should have been happy now—as we were before. O Horace, I am the same Margaret whom you loved so dearly an hour ago—only a little hour ago—so dearly, you said; so dearly! I remember it, I remember every word. You missed me every minute of every hour of our separation, you said—O Horace, remember that, and take me back. See how I have loved you if you had—had even done what I have done, tempted by your love for me, I should have wept and prayed for pardon for you, and comforted you, I think; and clung to you and pitied you; but never ceased to love you—never, never! O my husband, let it come slowly; love me a little—just a little—until I can bear its being taken all away!"

I pushed my hair away from my throbbing temples; something was burning in my head, and the noise the sea made in rushing over Elsie's face, was deafening me—deafening and blinding me, for I could not see Horace now; nothing but a dark still shadow; and between it and me, a girl with long wet hair and ashen cheeks.

"O Horace, take me back! We can be happy still—we know it, we have proved it; you have often said it. You can forget this. I had forgotten until you brought me here to-night, and that wave came rolling to us and left her face—Horace, Horace!" the words were an eager hurried whisper now—"take me up, Horace! I am dying here; dying at her feet and yours; or—or am I—mad?"

He raised me from the grass, without a movement of his white and rigid face.

"I will take you to your home," he said, "and after that I wish that I might never look upon your face again."

"Why, Horace?" I whispered, with a vacant smile upon my parching lips; "we cannot be separated—you and I; we are married, you know; they cannot separate us."

"We are separated now," he answered slowly; "separated utterly and for ever."

"O no, Horace, no!" I cried, appealing to him once again with eager hands and eyes. "You will take me back? It was for your sake I did it, and you have loved me since, when I was just what I am now. You valued my love then. Ah, yes, I know you did, for that knowledge was my happiness, and I could not be deceived. You valued my love then; O, take it now, my husband—my own husband, whom no one can take from me—when it is a hundred times more earnest than it has ever been before!"

I could see his face in the moonlight now, and I knew there was no hope for me.

"Horace!" I cried, with such a cry as might have reached to the cold dead around us, "Horace—forgive!"

Coldly he drew back from me, and then—I laughed; laughed loudly and shrilly, there in the silence of the calm and beautiful night. But when I saw his stern white face grow colder still, I wondered why I had laughed.

"Nothing can separate us, Horace," I whispered, trying to fix my vacant gaze upon him, and smiling as I thought that my glad low whisper must comfort him. "Nothing can separate us now. Don't be frightened, Horace; you are my husband, and I will not leave you. Did you dream that I could be so cruel? I was not half so cruel to her as that would be."

He turned from me, shuddering through all his frame, and

then I knew that the love, which had been my very life, was dead for ever. I saw, in all its fullest darkest horror, the long anguish of the life to which he doomed me; and standing still, I took my burning head within my hands and uttered shriek on shriek, until the silence of the winter night was all alive with sound, and the beauty of the moonlight vanished in a great black darkness.

V.

I have been very, very ill. I wake to the knowledge slowly, as I lie and listen to the hushed breath and softened footsteps in my room. I wake to it very, very slowly, dreaming a wonderful dream the while.

I am lying in my own room at home, and Elsie sits beside my bed, just as she did when I was ill once in the old past—so many years ago; and my father comes for tidings of his child, with his eyes dim and anxious, just as I used to see them in that far-back time. Horace is living with us, in this dream of mine, just as he did then; and he, too, waits for tidings, and comes to look upon me with a soft slow step. Ah, if this dream may last a little longer; because, when I awake, my husband's face will meet me stern and cold, as it must be through all the rest of my sin-shadowed life; and instead of this bright face beside my bed, will be the memory of that drowned head I saw beneath the waters. It is far better to be dying, and to dream this dream, than grow quite strong and well, and meet my misery again. It is such a beautiful, beautiful dream!

I am lying now under the beech upon the lawn, and the golden leaves fall softly on me one by one; very softly, as if they fell a long, long way—perhaps from heaven itself. The sky is bright and blue up there above them, and the sunlight creeps amid their shelter to lay its warm sweet kiss upon my face. There are no fierce rushing storms of wind in this beautiful dream, and no driving waves. There is only peace and calm and sunshine, and the rare sweet fragrance of the autumn flowers I love. I dare not speak, lest I should break my dream.

I see my father standing against the golden beech, and watching me, with the old look of love upon his face. Elsie is beside me still, and she has been all through this peaceful dream, and in her eyes is shining such a look of loving pitiful compassion, that I cannot even trust myself to meet it, lest it should bring the tears, for tears would wake me. And now, across the lawn, comes Horace; his face the kind and pleasant face of long ago, the face I loved when I was innocent—so long ago! He comes up to me—softly as they all come in this dream of mine—and I read the old friendship in his eyes and something more; not hatred and contempt, ah, no, but a great tenderness and a great compassion, and something that looks almost like awe. I remember the different face which I shall see when I awake, and silently I pray that it may be God's will I die before the waking comes.

My hands are very weak and thin and wasted, and when he takes one into his, and kneels beside my couch, I can see the pity and the fear which darken Elsie's eyes. My voice is low and failing, but at last they understand my question, reading it more from my eyes than from my lips; and Elsie answers it in a whisper, her warm lips touching my cheek and forehead between the words:

"No dream, my darling; no dream. We have you with us, and we are nursing you back to health again. If care and love—the truest, fondest love, my dear—can give you strength, then you will soon be your own self again."

So the words run, in this summer dream of mine. I have no pain, only a great faintness. If I were a leaf upon the beech above me, at the first faint breath of wind, I should fall just so—softly and slowly to the ground.

"Margaret," Elsie whispers, when her sweet face comes between those reddening leaves and my wide upturned eyes, "do you remember that day we were together in the sea, when the wind rose so suddenly? I want to tell you, O my dear, what the memory of that day has been to me."

I am awaking now, awaking with an icy shiver. In one moment my dream will be over—my beautiful summer dream.

"Tell me slowly—slowly," I plead, my broken words most eager in their utter weakness. "No—let Horace tell; then I shall be awake. Tell me all, Horace."

"It is too much to tell to-day," he whispers, wrapping a shawl about me tenderly, for he does not know that I lie shivering there because I know I am awaking; "how can I tell, in a few simple words, that brave unselfish act of yours! How can I speak calmly, even yet, of how you saved my darling at the risk of your own life; of how, when she fainted and fell, you rescued her, and held her safe above the water until help came; then how you put her in safety, and—your strength all worn—sank down yourself, exhausted and unconscious; of how the fiercest wave of all came then, and we—were barely in time to save you! How can I tell of this, and of our gratitude and love?"

Both their faces are near mine, full of the love he has just spoken of, and—is it the gratitude too? My eyes gather a little warmth and life from theirs. There is a feeling, utterly strange to me, upon my thin white lips—they are breaking into a smile.

"This is true, then? This is true, and the—the other was the dream?"

"All this is true, my darling; and we are true; and the sunshine and the flowers, they are all true. Everything is true, except those terrible delirious fancies which have been with you in your fever. That was the dream; but it has passed now, and all the fancies have passed too. Ah, there is a little look of returning health at last. You are coming back to us from the gates of death—O my dear, my dear, we shall be happy once again!"—*Belgravia*.

Music and the Drama.

Madame Lucca is still Frau Baronin. She has married the Baron Emil von Walhaffen.

Mme. Arabella Goddard has been well received in Calcutta, and has met with much success.

M. Gounod has it is said, received a commission to write a work for the Grand Opera, in Paris.

By a decree of the 1st of February, the censure of the theatres has been formally re-established, in France.

Orchestral songs without words is an innovation which has been introduced in the order of *entr'acte* music at the Queen's Theatre, London.

A painting by Signor Fortuny of Rome, representing a poet with his friends in a garden watching an actor and actress recite his play, has been sold for 100,000 francs to M. Goupil, of Paris.

Suppé, the German Hervé, has produced at Frankfurt a burlesque on *Lohengrin*, entitled *Lohengels*. The precise point of the joke is that "grün" or "grun" is green, while "gelb," is yellow.

The Bishop of Lincoln has given 100 guineas towards the fund for rebuilding Nottingham Castle and turning it into a Midland Fine Art Museum, the cost of doing which is estimated at £15,000.

It is understood that Mr. Arthur Sullivan has promised to write a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, with accompaniments, for use at the next Festival of the Sons of the Clergy in St. Paul's Cathedral.

A sacred musical drama by Massent entitled "Mary Magdalen" has been brought out at the Odéon, Paris, and is pronounced very fine. The honours were won by the personator of Judas Iscariot.

A mixed American, English, and Italian Company, under charge of Mr. Nereul West, have arrived in Constantinople and are about to give entertainments in the nature of ballets and negro and general concerts.

A new theatre which is to be opened in Paris under the name of La Scala will have a drop-curtain which will contain three hundred allegorical figures representing the progress of music or the lyric art from the earliest time down to the present day.

M. Dumas, fils, has read to the actors of the Odéon the five revised acts of the *Jeunesse de Louis XIV.* The drama is now complete, corrected and amended. The ceremony of the reading was very impressive by reason of the new Academician's simple and withal delicate and effective delivery. This piece is the only unpublished work of the elder Dumas.

Oddities.

A Tipperary gentleman was asked why he did not take a newspaper. "Because," said he, "my father, when he died, left me a good many newspapers, and I haven't read them through yet."

An old Glasgow lady who had insisted on her minister's praying for rain, had her cabbages cut up by a hail-storm, and on viewing the wreck, remarked that she "never knew him to undertake anything without overdoing the matter."

A wide-awake Aberdeen minister, who found his congregation going to sleep one Sunday before he had fairly commenced, suddenly stopped and exclaimed, "Brethren, this isn't fair; it isn't giving a man half a chance. Wait till I get along, and then if I ain't worth listening to, go to sleep; but don't before I get commenced; give a man a chance."

A Kentucky legislator was recently missing for three days. The fourth found him back in his seat. To the inquiries of his friends he replied that he had been sick. Being asked what the matter was, "Well," said he, "some folks call it nervous chills, others pronounce it a kind of affection of the heart, but, to be candid, I call it a plain case of old-fashioned drunk."

When a clergyman of the Church of England was about to give a dinner to some of his clerical brethren, his butler asked whether his expected guests were High Church or Low Church. His master said: "Why do you ask that question?" The butler answered: "Because if they be High Church we want more wine; but if they be Low Church we want more wittles."

Some students fixed up a ghost and placed it on the staircase of a Troy newspaper office the other night, and then retired and awaited developments. One of the editors came along and didn't get frightened. He disrobed it, and now wears a \$15 pair of pantaloons, a \$7 vest, a \$10 pair of boots, and an \$8 hat, which are sadly missed from the wardrobes of the aforesaid students.

Thackeray had a nose of most peculiar shape, as may be seen by his portraits. The bridge was very low, and the nostrils extremely well developed. On one occasion, at a party where Douglas Jerrold was present, it was mentioned that Mr. Thackeray's religious opinions were unsettled, and that a lady of his acquaintance was doing her best to convert him to Romanism. "To Romanism!" exclaimed Jerrold; "let us hope she will begin with his nose."

The other day a merry-faced and bright-eyed Milesian was arraigned for disorderly conduct. The Judge inquired very angrily, "If he was not ashamed to be there?" "Pon my soul I am, yer honour." "You were in very disreputable company." "I know it, yer honour." "It is shameful." "Too true," was the penitent rejoinder. "If I permit you to go this time, will you ever be caught in such company again?" "Not unless yer honour sends for me," was the reply.

At an examination in Aberdeen the minister asked an old woman who Pontius Pilate was? "Adeed, sir, I kenna," she answered; "they tell me he was a Roman gommerral." "A Roman gommerral," echoed the clergyman; "what do you mean by a gommerral, woman?" "Adeed, sir, I'm no far-sighted in the meanin' o' words; but aye when I hear a gommerral spoken o' it puts me in mind o' just a domineerin', fashous fellow, aye meddlin' w' things he's naethin' ado w'!"

"WHO" AND "WHOM."—Thackeray once, being asked to write in a young lady's album, found, on looking over the book, the following lines:

"Mont Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains—
They crowned him long ago;
But who they got to put it on
Nobody seems to know.—*Albert Smith.*"

Underneath these lines he wrote this humble suggestion:

"I know that Albert wrote in a hurry:
To criticise I scarce presume;
But yet methinks that Lindley Murray,
Instead of 'who,' had written 'whom.'"

W. M. Thackeray.

POE'S RAVEN.

Who'er has read
The works of Poe,
His dusky bird
Must surely know.

Whose sable wing,
And eyes ablaze,
The startled Poe
Did much amaze.

Whose husky voice,
From o'er the door,
Did gruffly croak
Out "Nevermore."

You know him? Well,
You must allow
A drunken thing
I'll prove him now.

The poet's words
Believe we must;
He says, the bird
Was on a "bust."