

REMEMBRANCES.

(A ROMANCE.)

"Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the heart to pain."

AS night approached the rain descended with increased bitterness, and beat with a mournful sound on the window panes of a dark and dismal house standing on one of the principal streets of a Canadian town. Dark and dismal as the house appeared to an occasional person passing by, yet from one window a gleam of light shone through half drawn curtains out into the darkness. If a person approached the window and peered in through the watery panes, he could have seen a man sitting before a fire with his eyes fixed listlessly and blankly on the glowing coals in the grate before him. In his hand he holds, tightly clutched, a letter which he has been reading, and he can be seen to occasionally move his lips as if speaking, but no sound comes from them. Sitting there in the chair he appears to be a man above the average height, and among his dark hair can be seen streaks of grey, yet he does not look like a man of old age, but rather one prematurely old. His age would be probably between thirty and forty years.

Anyone in the town could tell you that this house is occupied by Doctor Arbuthnot, and that this person dreaming before the fire was Doctor Arbuthnot himself. He had been practicing medicine in this place for nearly a year, and he had won a reputation for being kind-hearted and generous, but reserved, and treating the least intrusion on his family affairs with rigid coldness. None, indeed, knew who he was or from where he came, and it was in vain that the young society ladies spread their nets to capture the enviable title of Mrs. Dr. Arbuthnot. It was whispered among the old maids that he was married, and had deserted his wife and children; while others said that he must be a divorced husband, or probably a widower. Others, of a more romantic nature, firmly believed that it was a case of desperate love and rejection that caused this man's reserve and indifference to them all. How little these poor mortals know the truth, and how poorly they aim at it.

It is Christmas Eve, and Doctor Arbuthnot's mind is wandering away back among the spirits of past Christmases. He remembers how, one year ago, he had come to this obscure Canadian town with a broken heart, to live and forget; but forget the past he could not, and this he tells himself to-night as he sits before the flickering fire and hears the rain and hail beating down in the darkness outside. He wonders if this past will forever haunt him, and if he can never be free from its dreaded associations. He had just that day received a letter from Old England, which had awakened the sleeping memories and stirred up the bitterest dregs of his mind. There it is in his hand, and he looks at it vacantly and wonders if it had never reached him how different his thoughts would have been.

The letter ran thus: "Dear Robert, we were very sorry to hear that you could not be with us at the old home this Christmas; but we all hope you will not be too lonesome or desolate at your place in the howling wilderness. Dear Bob, I have bad news, which I know I should tell you. Yesterday, the wife of Sir Reginald Talbot died suddenly, and her husband is overcome with grief. I know it will cause much pain for me telling you this, but still, I think it is my duty, when I remember what friends you and she once were. I will write again soon; so good-by, old fellow, and don't forget us. Faithfully yours, R. J. S."

His mind goes back to when he, fresh from a Canadian medical school, had set out for a few years' polishing in the hospitals and colleges of England and Germany. He still remembers the joy and loyalty he felt when he first saw the outline of the "Old Country" and fatherland, and the whirl of amazement he felt when he first beheld "Old London." It was here he was to remain for a time with his relatives, whose magnificent home filled him with wonder. His face assumes a more animated expression as he fondly dwells on his romantic meeting with his fair young English cousin, who, when he with due cousinly feelings kissed her, slapped him smartly on the face, and how, when she returned to him with tears in her beautiful blue eyes to ask forgiveness for her rudeness, he was greatly tempted to kiss her again; but was she not a young lady of eighteen, and a wealthy society lady at that? while he was a poor medical student with neither wealth nor fame.

He remembers their growing friendship until it developed into love on his side and on hers—but who can tell, perhaps, in her heart of hearts, she loved him more dearly than life. In time he went to Germany, and their warm parting was always a pleasure to him while there, and her letters, true and pure as they were, many a time cheered up his despondent spirit. It was while here that he first received word of his father's death, and the loss of the fortune which he had expected to inherit. His plans were upset, and he found it necessary to obtain a means of subsistence at once. So, acting in accordance with the inward wish of his heart, he prepared to return to Canada. He remembers that parting with his fellow students, whose sympathy for him in his trouble nearly caused this strong man to break down. How vividly he remembers his return to England, and the love and tenderness with which Margaret Maltravers received him at her father's home.

His love was so strong that he humbled himself at her feet and asked her to be his wife, for weal or for woe, and this proud English girl stood up and, throwing her arms about his neck, said she was his, and his forever, and at the same time gently kissing his cheek. Even now, long years after, when he thinks of it, his cheeks burn as he remembered that sweet token of her love. And he tells her how he will make a home for her, and he will return and carry her back to the new world in the west. He remembers how beautiful she appeared when he said good-by, and, when he was telling her a pathetic little German