

To her lifelong custom of early rising she still adhered, and in the dewy hours spent alone, in watching the sun rise over Como, she indulged precious recollections that found audience and favour at no other season.

It was her habit to place each morning a fresh bouquet upon her mother's plate, and also to arrange the flower stand, that since their residence at the villa, had never failed to grace the centre of the breakfast table.

It was a parsonage custom, and had always been associated in her mind with the pastor's solemn benediction at each meal.

To-day, while filling her basket with blossoms, some stray waft of perfume, or perhaps the rich scarlet lips of a geranium glowing against the gray stone of the wall, prattled of Fifth Avenue, and recalled a gay *boutonnière* she once saw Mrs. Carew fasten in Mr. Palma's coat.

Like a serpent this thought trailed over all, and the beauty of the morning suddenly vanished. Was that gray-eyed Cleopatra with burnished hair, low smooth brow, and lips like Lamia's, resting in her guardian's arms, his wife?

Three month's had elapsed since the day on which Mr. Chesley received his last letter, containing tidings that bowed and broke the haughty spirit of Mrs. Laurance; and if Mr. Palma had written again, Regina had not been informed of the fact.

Was he married, and in his happiness as a husband, had he for a time forgotten the existence of the friends in Europe?

A shadowy hopelessness settled in the girl's eyes when she reflected that this was probably the correct explanation of his long silence, and a deep yearning to see him once more rose in her sad heart. She knew that it was better so, with the Atlantic between them; and yet, it seemed hard, bitter, to think of living out the coming years, and never looking upon him again.

A heavy sigh crossed her lips, that were beginning to wear the patient lines of resignation, and turning from the red geranium which had aroused the memory coiled in her heart, she stepped upon the terrace, leaned over the marble balustrade and looked out.

The sun was up, and in the verdant setting of its shore the lake seemed a huge sapphire, girdled with emerald.

In the distance a fishing boat glided slowly, its taut sails gleaming as the sunlight smote them, like the snowy pinions of some vast bird brooding over the quiet water; and high in