

The Bridal Mirror.

By W. S. HAMILTON.

JUST a moment. The bride turned her delicately flushed face appealingly from one to the other.

"You are just perfect!"

"You sweet, you!"

"You are too lovely for anything!" The bridesmaids danced about their beautiful friend madly. "He—he isn't fit to touch your slipper—the old owl!" The youngest knelt at the bride's feet and looked up adoringly.

But the bride was slowly turning pale. In a few minutes the marriage ceremony would bind a motherless girl forever to the man of her choice. She was not thinking of her dress, or of her lover, or of the sacrament. An ineffable longing for a mother's blessing was choking her. She must be alone, or she must die.

"Go," said the bride solemnly; "you have been very dear. Leave me, and when all is ready send him up to me."

Dimly the bridesmaids understood. They kissed and wept and went. As the last face beckoned her good-by on the landing the girl locked the door and ran to her bed like a fluttering dove. There she knelt. Her diaphanous veil covered her head and shoulders. Her long train shimmered behind her.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she called, as if in prayer; "no one will ever know; no one can ever know but you. I want to put my head in your lap. I want to cry in your arms. I want you to pat my cheek and say, 'There! there! child!' Mother! I can't do it!"

With the indescribable motion of a strong nature casting off weakness, the girl arose. She had only a few minutes more to herself—the last she would really have in all her life. She dashed her handkerchief over her eyes, went to her mirror, and peered into its full depth critically. Then her heart halted.

It was very old, and was said to be a bridal mirror which had been brought over from France in the century before the last. It was made in the style of a pier-glass nearly five feet tall. On each upper corner a cupid was dropping orange-blossoms which floated down the sides, terminating in a bridal wreath below.

It was as graceful as it was ornate and sentimental as it was effective. Long ago the gilding on the frame had worn off, leaving the woodwork opalescent, with an undertone of gray, with gleams of gold suggestive of purple—iridescent, almost like one of those vases entombed in the island of Cyprus and brought to light after a thousand years.

Neither had the glass been replaced. Behind, the silver was not so much worn as that it seemed to have lost its virtue. The image that it returned was often indistinct in outline and obscure in detail. This was an impression rather than a portrait. In a dim light the reflection was rather a suggestion than a reality.

As the girl peered into the mirror which used to hang in her mother's room and had reflected the faces of so many brides upon their wedding morning, she saw herself as she was, not as she was masked. Sincere and naive, yet she did not always wear her heart upon her face.

She saw a wreath of wavy, rebellious hair peeping out beneath the stately veil; a broad, low forehead, smooth, unwrinkled by a quick disposition. Her eyes were soft and wide, appealing for the tenderness they now revealed. Her cheeks were delicate and pink, quick to pale and flush, dimpled with the desire for hap-



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piness, and ending with a full generous line in a round and tender chin. Her lips lay in a beautiful curve, always ready to part, expressing sometimes too easily the emotions of her soul.

She saw an affectionate, enthusiastic girl, craving sympathy, giving it eagerly with her whole heart—a generous, sensitive woman, the kind that coldness would contract, and ardor would expand to her highest value. Ah, but she was proud as she was passionate; one read that in the haughty, upward sway of her head, and in the curling carmine lips! She saw in the sensitive face which returned her gaze an infinite capacity for good—and also, to her horror, a great possibility for evil.

Her lover had never measured the power over her pulsating heart that his words, his looks, his gestures carried. And what a strange lover he was! The bride bent forward and peered into the glass with catching breath. How could that kind of a man choose this kind of a girl? It was the Arctic wooing the tropics. Cold, undemonstrative, self-possessed, unbending, Josiah Cotton seemed to be a statue carved in ice. He had courted her with the unemotional regularity of a machine.

This young descendant of a staid Puritan stock had the restraint of a judge and the gravity of an old man. He had proposed to her with the masterful sang-froid that made "No" a psychical impossibility, and he had accepted her young, fervent life with a calmness that seemed almost an impiety. Had he no heart to be touched by the glowing face she saw in the glass?

Once, exasperated by his lack of demonstrativeness, she had flung herself on the sofa in tears. She would have given her life if he had taken her in his arms and soothed and loved her as she needed.

But he was no man to be moved out of his composure by a woman's tears, even if they fell from the eyes he held most dear. With an inarticulate sound he turned his back upon her and left her alone to what proved to be the crisis of her life. With her lips she called him a brute—but with her heart she loved him. How she loved that man! Every asset of her being was deposited in his keeping. There was something at once beautiful and pitiful about her way of loving. She was obsessed, and glorified in her surrender. Such love as hers could not fail to move his composure and melt his glacial nature. She felt, she knew, that he loved her as much as he was capable of loving, and she would teach him how to unbend and show her those tender attentions which fill a woman's imagination and are her life.

"Mother!" she cried, challenging herself in the mirror, "teach me, for I love him, I love him!"

As the bride pleaded with the mystical the mystic answered. In the old mirror a strange transformation took place. From out of the depths of the time-worn glass another face slowly arose while her own dissolved before it.

History is full of instances where an overwhelming call, made under a great necessity, compels the attendance of the desired. Mirrors are mysterious, and no embodied soul may fully understand them. Like the human eye, they receive upon their sensitive hearts impressions which are indelibly imprinted there, and who shall say that the glass which receives you and stores you up daily shall not give you back under appropriate conditions? For the mirror sees all things, and reflects all things, mysteriously keeping to itself

the negatives of all

As the girl looked, mother arose before sea of glass. It was was the same beautiful surface of the bridal flected so many times the answer to the w the motherless bride.

Then with quick re dropped to her kne hands, and looked w mysterious presence, benediction she so ke she gazed she saw blessing—then slowly beloved face faded a into the depths of t and the girl was loo pale, comforted face.

There was a Throwing a passion mirror, and all it mea and future, the bride She hesitated, and wi locked it shyly.

There on the thre man who was to be h who was the lord of pressed lips the bride comsedly kissed his forehead. But she tu a face beautiful in utt render—a face glowi perishable love.

The bridal mirror What memories of lo treasured in its hear retina, so sensitive to bride, reflected the figures gravely.

FRIENDS IN

A brown-haired, blue-eyed Grown weary and tired Climbed up on my knee In her simple, childish "Have you any friends That you sometimes w Can you guess how the me

Like a minor melody?

I thought, as I sat in a With that wee one on Of my little blue-eyed Whose summers numb She went from my arm One spring-time years And left in my heart t That only mothers know

I thought how the bal Grew lonesome, and lo Once more on his brea With hair of sunset g And one summer eve h To search for our baby And I know full well l But he never came ba

Do I ever want to see Oh! child of the violet My heart is gone on b To the hills of Paradi Some day I shall feel Drop balm on my weas Mine, only, and mine i Though earth and Hea —Ebe

A FRIENDLY

When a man ain't got feelin' kind o' blue, An' the clouds hang da won't let the sunsh It's a great thing, O n a feller just to lay His hand upon your friendly sort o' wa

It makes a man feel c the tear-drops star An' you sort o' feel region of the heart. You can look up and you don't know wh When his hand is on y a friendly sort of v

Oh, the world's a cur with its honey an' With its cares and bit An' a good world after A good God must h eastways that's wh When a hand rests on a friendly sort o' v —James W

FOR LOVE IS

Why do we wound wh When still we love at Why do we not apprec That which is lost, ere