

FOR THE THIRD TIME.

"It is, and I may safely promise you a cordial welcome on the part of its fair mistress."

"Hospitality is a paramount virtue among you here," said the organist. "I have seen Miss Earle at church." "And a very pretty girl she is," said John Sterling, "and as good as she is pretty. She is devotedly fond of music, too, so you have it in your power to make her very happy this evening."

No more was said. They reached the house, divested themselves of their hats and great-coats, and stamped the snow from their top-boots, and were ushered by a fair damsel into a pretty amber drawing-room.

Mrs. Sterling sat before the fire knitting, Miss Earle on a lounge yawning over a book. Even sensation novels, when one has had a surfeit of them, will pall upon the youthful intellect. Both started up eagerly to welcome Dr. John.

"How do, mother? How do, Amy? Horrid weather, isn't it? Allow me to present Mr. Victor Latour, the new organist of St. Jude's. I found him like one of the babes in the wood, nearly buried alive, and rescued him from an untimely end, like the good Samaritan that I am."

Mr. Latour bowed to the ladies with easy grace, took a seat, and was at home at once. Miss Earle stole a second glance at him under her eyelashes. How very handsome he was! Dark and pale, and interesting—just Miss Earle's style, with raven hair and mustache, and slow, sleepy, wonderful black eyes.

"If he had a Greek cap and a crimson sash, and a scimitar by his side he would look like a Corsair," Amy thought. "I never saw a more perfect nose; and I always did admire those creamy complexions. Victor Latour! Such a dear, romantic name, too! I really think he is the handsomest man I ever saw."

Supper came in—a supper for Sybarites or the gods. Mr. Latour was delightful; he talked with an easy grace, and a general knowledge of everything under the sun. Miss Earle listened entranced. The slow, sleepy black eyes wandered very often to the pretty roush-sided face, thrilling her through with mesmeric power. It was the hero of her dreams at last—Count Lara in the flesh. Mr. Latour played. The superb piano, under those slender fingers, gave forth grand, grateful tones—the room was flooded with heavenly melody. Mr. Latour had the soul of a Beethoven or Mozart, and the magnificent strains held his hearers entranced for hours. It was a charming evening, one to be remembered long after; and before it was over Miss Amy Earle was deeply, and romantically, and hopelessly in love.

She sat up late that night, quite into the small hours, nestling over the fire, listening to the wild beating of the wintry storm, and dreaming delicious dreams.

"How divinely handsome he is! How magnificently he plays! How delightfully he talks!" So ran the burden of her thoughts. "I never saw such eyes, and I never heard a prettier name. How glad I am John Sterling brought him here to-night."

That was the beginning of the end. Mr. Latour departed the next day, but only to come again and again to Blackwood Grange. Miss Earle was seized with a sudden passion for improving herself in music, and began taking lessons immediately. March, April, May flew by like swift dreams. Summer came, golden, glowing—the most glorious summer in Amy's life. She was in love—passionately, ridiculously; a romantic girl's first love—and the world was Eden, and she the happiest Eve that ever danced in the sunshine.

And Victor Latour—was he in love, too, with the bright little heiress? Mr. Latour was a puzzle and a mystery. There were times when no lover could be more lover-like, more devoted, when smiles lit up the dark creamy face, and every look was love. Then Amy's bliss was complete.

"He loves me, I know," her foolish heart would flutter. "He will propose the very next time we meet. Oh, my darling, if you only knew how much I love you!"

The next time would come, and lo! Mr. Latour came with it, dark, cold, moody, wrapped in gloom and mystery—gruff and unsmiling as doom. Amy trembled before those sombre black eyes. He was more like the Corsair, perhaps, than ever. But poor Amy began to think that moody and mysterious beings were pleasanter in Lord Byron's poem than in actual life.

"I wonder if he ever committed a murder, like Eugene Aram; or lost an idolized Medora, as Conrad did?" Miss Earle thought. "Oh! Why doesn't he speak out, when he knows—he must know—I adore him?"

This sultry August evening she stood wistfully gazing at the sunset, and thinking despondently of her idol.

"He was positively rude to me last evening," Miss Earle reflected. "Mr. Rochester was never more grumpy to Jane Eyre. I wonder if I shall see him to-night? He is always playing the organ in the church at this hour. I think I'll take a walk up to the village."

She took her hat and tripped away walking swiftly, considering the heat. Blackwood lay behind her; she was out

in the dusty high road alone, under the opal-tinted sky. No, not alone! Her heart gave a great plunge. There, coming toward her, was the solemn figure she knew so well. That slow, graceful walk—ah! further off, she would have known her handsome lover!

Mr. Latour was in his brightest mood this sultry twilight. He drew Amy's arm through his own, as one who had the right, bending his stately head over her, and mesmerizing her with the witchery of those glorious black eyes. Very slowly they sauntered along. Amy was in no hurry now—she had got all she wanted.

John Sterling had chosen this evening to pay a visit to his mother and her ward. Half an hour after, he strode over the dusty highway, whistling cheerily, and looking up at the round, white, August moon. He had entered Blackwood, and was approaching the house at a swiftest pace, when he suddenly stopped.

There, before him, walking as lovers walk, bending, whispering, loitering, were two forms he knew well. All flashed upon him at the sight. "Lost!" he said, turning very pale. "Lost, for the second time! My mother was right—I have lingered too long! And I love her as that man never can!"

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Latour did not enter the house with Amy. He parted with her under the waving trees, with a long, lingering, lover's kiss. Dr. Sterling and he met face to face in the silvery moonlight. He touched his hat and passed rapidly on, but not before John had seen his face. How deathly pale he was! What a wild gleam there was in his weird black eyes! The light of those spectral eyes made the young doctor recoil.

"Good heaven!" he thought, "he looks now like the Miltonian Lucifer with that livid face, flaming eyes, and that dark, demonic beauty. Who is he? What is he? He is not a good man; we know no more of him than if he had dropped from the moon, although he has been among us over half a year. And that romantic child is ready to die, or go mad for his sake. My friend, Latour, I think I'll turn amateur detective, and hunt up your antecedents."

Dr. John met with rather a cool reception on this particular evening at the hospitable mansion. Mrs. Sterling was decidedly cross and out of sorts; perhaps she suspected or had seen the parting embrace under the hemlocks. She had no patience with her son's tardiness and delicate scruples of conscience about marrying heiresses. And Miss Earle wrapped in a bliss too intense for smiles or words sat by the window and gazed on the bright silvery moonlight.

Dr. Sterling departed early with a farewell reproach to the ladies. "You are both so entertaining this evening that it is hard to tear one's self away; but I have an interesting case up in the village and business before pleasure, you know. Good by, and I trust the next time I come to Blackwood you'll be able to make a remark or two about the weather at last."

"We are rather silent to-night," she said.

"A penny for your thoughts, ma mere." "I can read your thoughts without a penny," retorted the elder lady, with some asperity. "Victor Latour, of course! Where were you this evening, Miss Earle?"

Miss Earle blushed celestially in the shimmering dusk. "Up at the village."

"It appears to me you are very fond of twilight rambles to the village of late, Mr. Latour was with you, of course?"

"Yes," very falteringly. "Mr. Latour was with me."

"And parted with you out yonder with a most affectionate embrace! You don't choose to make me your confident, Miss Earle; but if you want to kiss gentlemen, sub rosa, pray take a more retired spot than the avenue."

Amy's golden head had dropped lower. She was a timid, clinging little creature, in whose nature it was not to be haughty or angry. She was very fond of this severe matron; and the starchy blue eyes filled with tears now.

"Dear Mrs. Sterling," she said, "my second mother, don't be angry with poor Amy. I can't help it. I—I—

"And he!" said Mrs. Sterling bitterly. "Is it you or your fortune he loves? Oh, Amy Earle! You foolish, sentimental child, what madness is this? This man does not love you—I know it; I have watched him. He does not love you; but he will marry you and will break your heart."

"No, no, no!" Amy cried, shrilly. "He loves me—he is true as Heaven! Say what you please to me Mrs. Sterling, but not one word against him! I will not hear of it!"

The little head reared itself, the blue eyes quite flashed.

"No!" cried the angry matron, "you will not hear it; no need to tell me that! I know what it is to talk to a girl in love. But tell me, what do you know of this man beyond his romantic name, beyond his effeminate, handsome face? What! you will marry him for his black eyes and his Grecian nose, and his sensation-novel name; and if he turns out to be a London pickpocket, or gambler, you will have no right to complain."

"Mrs. Sterling!"

"I repeat it, Amy—what do you know of him? He may be a thief, or a murderer, for what you can tell to the contrary. My own opinion is, he has come here purposely to entrap you into this mad marriage. Pray, Miss Earle, when is it to take place?"

The blue eyes flashed defiance for the first time in Amy's gentle life, the slender little form quite towered in its indignation.

is no need to wait. I will marry him as soon as he pleases." "Not a doubt of it! I wish you joy of your bargain! I have no more to say; but remember in the future that I have warned you. He is not a good man; there is guilt and mystery in his life; I am as certain of it as that I live. As his wife, your existence will be one of misery—destitution, perhaps, when he has squandered what he marries you for—your fortune. I wish you good-night."

Mrs. Sterling swept stormily out of the room yet, "more in sorrow than in anger." And Amy left alone, threw herself on a sofa and, all unused to these stormy scenes, wept as she had never wept before in her life.

"How cruel, how unjust she is!" the little heiress sobbed, "and all because she wants me to marry John. I know she does; though John doesn't want me, nor I him. But she shall not shake my faith in Victor; no one on earth shall shake it. And I will marry him as soon as he likes; and I don't care whether he ever tells me anything about his own antecedents or not."

The elder and younger lady met very coolly at breakfast. Mrs. Sterling was suddenly dignified, and Amy was offended. Had she not called her idol a thief and a pickpocket? Miss Earle could forgive the grossest insult to herself, but not an insult to her dark-eyed hero.

Mr. Latour called early in the forenoon. Amy was on the watch, and met him in the grounds. There was a long, long ramble through the sunlit, leafy arcades, and Mrs. Earle after the fashion of young ladies, retained every word of last night's conversation. Mr. Latour's black brows contracted in a swarth frown, and his dark face whitened with anger.

"Mrs. Sterling calls me a thief or a murderer, does she? Really, Amy, your elderly dragon is of a horribly suspicious turn, isn't she? Is it for your sake or for her son's, I wonder?"

"Mrs. Sterling has always been very good to me, Victor Latour," Amy said, deprecatingly; "and I am sure she has got well as at heart. And you see, doctor, we don't know anything of you, except your name, and—and I love you with all my heart."

The frown deepened under the broad rim of his summer hat.

"And you are a little suspicious, too, my Amy. You must have my biography from the hour of my birth, I presume, before you commit yourself further. And if the history proves unsatisfactory, it is not too late to draw back yet, is it?"

"Victor, how unjust you are! No, I tell me nothing, since you can doubt me, tell me nothing, and you will see how perfect love casteth out fear."

"And you will marry me blindfolded? Take me as I am?"

He looked laughing down in her face with a bright look, all the clouds gone.

"My darling!" She clasped his arm rapturously with both hands, and looked up into his handsome face. "I know that I love you dearly, dearly—that I could die for your sake. What more do I need to know?"

"What, indeed, my little enthusiast! Nevertheless, I had better make a clean breast of it, for Mrs. Sterling's peace of mind. Unfortunately, there is very little to tell, and that little not in the least out of the ordinary humdrum way. I never was a pickpocket, never a blackleg. I can safely say that. I am of French extraction; born in Canada, taught music as a profession. Came over to this country, and, through friends, was recommended here as organist. There you have it; let Mrs. Sterling and her son make the most of it."

Amy was satisfied—it was a little vague, but it sufficed for her. Their ramble through the grounds was a very long one, and before it came to an end the wedding day was fixed.

"The middle of September is very soon," Amy murmured, deprecatingly; "but anything to please you, Victor; and Mrs. Sterling is disagreeable of late. Won't you come in to luncheon?"

"Not to-day. Tell your duenna by yourself, and I will ride over this evening and see if the shock has proved fatal. Good-by, my own. Soon good-by will be unknown between us."

Mrs. Sterling heard the news of the approaching marriage with cold scorn.

"As well this moment as the next," she said, frigidly; "since it is to be at all. I wash my hands of the whole business."

All the glittering array of bridal finery, procured in London for that great wedding, lay packed up stairs in great boxes still. Amy revolted a little from using it. The odor of death and the grave seemed to hang around it; but the time was so short, there was no alternative. Glistening robe, misty veil, orange wreath, jeweled fan, dainty Parisian gloves and slippers, saw the light once more; and the summer days flew by and brought around Amy Earle's second bridal eve.

The September afternoon had been lowering and overcast. Sullen clouds darkened the summer sky; an ominous hush lay over the earth; the trees shivered in the stillness with the presence of the coming storm. Through the ominous twilight Victor Latour rode over from the village to spend his bridal eve with his bride.

How white he was—white to the lips! and what a strange fire that was burning dusky in his great, sombre eyes. What an unnatural expression his face wore when he looked at his fair bride-elect. Surely never bridegroom looked like that in the world before.

"We are going to have a storm," he said, in a voice as unnatural as his face. "Lightning and thunder, and rain, will usher in our wedding day, Amy."

They were alone together in the pretty amber drawing-room. Mrs. Sterling always swept away haughtily when the man she disliked entered. Amy looked up at her lover, trembling with vague terror.

Mr. Latour tried to laugh, but the laugh was a miserable failure.

"The weather, I suppose. Thunder storms always give me the horrors; and superstitious people would call it an evil omen on our bridal eve. But we are not superstitious, my Amy; so draw the curtains, and light the lamp, and let the avenging elements have their fling."

Mr. Latour lingered until past ten, listening to the music of his obedient little slave. He stood behind her chair; she could not see him; and it was well for her she could not. The rigid white, face—white to ghastliness—those burning black eyes. Lucifer hurled from heaven might have looked like that.

Amy accompanied her lover to the portico. The storm had not yet burst, but the night was inky dark. The darkness, or the thought of that other tragic wedding eve, made her tremble from head to foot, as she bade her betrothed good-by.

"Oh, my love, be careful!" she whispered. "If anything happens to you I shall die."

"Nothing will happen!" He set his teeth fiercely in the darkness. "I defy Fate itself to separate us two. Good-night, my Amy; look your prettiest to-morrow, my sweet fairy bride."

The storm broke at midnight. The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the rain fell in torrents. Amy, cowering and frightened, huddled under the bedclothes in an agony of terror, and longed unutterably for morning and sunshine.

Morning came, but no sunshine. The sky was still of lead, the rain still fell sultrily, ceaselessly. The hours wore on; ten, the time for the ceremony, arrived; the guests were assembled, shivering in the parlor. The bride, lovely in her bridal robes, stood ready and waiting in the midst of her bridesmaids; but the hour had struck before the bridegroom came.

To Be Continued.

NO LAZY DOGS THERE.

Belgium Canines Work Hard All Day and Do Sentinel Duty by Night.

In the western portion of Belgium, including the two Flanders, the dog has been employed "beyond the memory of man," as a beast of burden. Everywhere in the city and in the country he may be seen employed in what may be generally described as small teaming. He is a characteristic feature of life, and to the Fleming abroad there is always something missing—his familiar servant, the dog.

There are all kinds and conditions of dogs at service in Belgium; there are large, medium and small dogs, strong and weak dogs, smooth-coated as well as shaggy dogs. It makes little difference to the Fleming what his dog may be, whether he be fitted for service or not; if the master needs his labor, he harnesses him to a cart and puts him to work. For this single reason, there are very few lazy dogs in that country.

The Belgian dog, the breed being known only by this name, is a large, compactly built animal. When standing he measures in height from twenty to thirty inches; the hair is smooth and short, generally tan or a light brown in color. Both his tail and ears are cut short, the former because it is believed that the strength which would otherwise enter into this extremity is retained in the spinal column and haunches, and the latter in order to prevent the constant flapping of the

NATURALLY LONG EARS

which would be a great inconvenience and hindrance to their work when annoyed by flies.

This specimen of dog has been employed in Flanders for years unnumbered. These dogs are seldom harnessed single, but are usually driven, two, three, four, five or even six abreast. Five or six of such animals can easily draw a load of six hundred or eight hundred pounds for a considerable distance and during several consecutive hours. The Belgian dog may be put to work when about a year old and can be employed daily during 8 or 9 years. He generally lives to be 10 or 11 years of age. After death the skin is still of value for tanning leathers.

The training of these animals is very simple. It is customary to fasten the young dog, when about six months of age, alongside of experienced dogs and without giving him any load to draw, thus to teach him to run in harness. The prices of the dogs vary. Young ordinary dogs sell for about six dollars to seven dollars; a good specimen between one and three years of age brings ten dollars to twelve dollars, while a very fine animal will command fifteen dollars. The number of dogs employed as draught animals in Belgium is very considerable, but exact statistics on the subject are not obtainable. According to the police registers of Ghent, two thousand and thirty-seven dogs are licensed for hauling in that city. These animals are exempt from the two dollars tax imposed on pet house dogs, which number 3,775 in that city of 160,000 inhabitants.

At night the dog must be given a good kennel, full of straw, and left chained. Incidentally, it may also be remarked that, notwithstanding his long day's labor, he is an excellent watchdog. It should be noted that his feet never need attention, and that he is likewise proof against all kinds of weather, supporting equally well the extremes of heat and cold.

HOW AFRIDIS FIGHT

An Officer Describes the Curious Ways of These Hardy Tribesmen.

In any account of the ways the Afridis fight, it is necessary to include in the description the military characteristics of the frontier natives without regard to differences of tribe.

Their style of fighting is specially adapted to the geographical conditions of the country. Both at Fort Saraghari and at Fort Cavagnari I had an opportunity, with other officers, of learning the peculiar fighting ways of the Afridis. Every race, of course, has its own method of combat, and the Afridis conduct their operations against an enemy in a manner altogether their own; it is as shifty as it is effective. Few civilians can realize how deadly it may become.

It is bad enough when an enemy, creeping slowly up a hillside, lodges itself in sections behind huge boulders and, under cover of these, pours volley after volley at the human targets—as those engaged in the task of guarding the summit become. Watching the advancement of a foe is not at any time an inspiring occupation; it is worse to see the half-naked Afridis creeping slowly and slowly from boulder to boulder. This is what takes place in broad daylight, but even then the cunning Afridi can circumvent nature. Take, as

AN ILLUSTRATION

of this, the way in which Fort Saraghari fell. It occurred in broad daylight and within sight of the neighboring fort of Cavagnari, where the stealthy operations of the tribesmen were observed by the imperial troops. Attempts were made by means of signals to warn the defenders of the British flag of their danger, but to no avail.

Although considered impregnable, Fort Saraghari, built of square stone with two bastions at opposite angles, was fatally defective in design. It had a "dead" point underneath each bastion—i.e., a point from which an enemy could be neither seen nor hit by the defenders. The result was that while the contending forces were firing against each other—the defenders in the forts, and the assailants behind stone breast-works and within ten yards of each other—a few native-borne "engineers" among the Afridis who had crept up to the "dead" point were mining a breach in one of the bastions. Before this was made sufficient large to admit the savage tribesmen to make their deadly rush into the fort, the undermining operations were seen by the small force holding Fort Cavagnari. These signalled to their brothers in arms the danger awaiting them, but the latter were too busily employed in repelling the onslaughts of the enemy to benefit by the telescopic observations of their comrades. And so every one of the twenty-one Sikhs guarding Saraghari died at his post.

All this took place on the afternoon of September 12. If the Afridis were crafty in daylight, his cunning at night became superhuman. Many a sentry has fallen silently and mysteriously in the Indian night! A naked form, moving stealthily in the dark as the sentry paces backwards and forwards, getting almost motionless as the sentry draws nigh; a sudden bound, followed by a dagger thrust; this is the end of many an Indian soldier; and the secret of many a tribal victory.—"An Officer," in London Telegraph.

THE USUAL WAY.

HIS GIFT.



Israel's—My daughter, Rachel, has goin' to get married on Christmas. Jacobs—Vot you goin' to give her? Israel's—If business improves between now an' den, I vill probably give her away.

BURNED AS ENCHANTERS.

In 1609 an Englishman named Banks had a horse which he had trained to follow him wherever he went, over fences and to the roofs of buildings. He and his horse went to the top of that immensely high structure, St. Paul's Church. After many wonderful exploits at home, the horse and his master went to Rome, where they performed feats equally astonishing. The result was that both Banks and his horse were burned as enchanters.

Success in farming depends much upon preventing waste.