

# THE MONTREAL COURIER

DEVOTED TO ENTERTAINING AND INSTRUCTIVE LITERATURE

Vol. XIII.

MONTREAL, JANUARY, 1888.

No. 2.

## CAN SHE TRUST HIM?

Inez Claire turned her haughty dark face from the gypsy, and crossed the sword to where her lover and her cousin stood.

"What did she tell you, that your lips curl so, Inez?" asked Roy Alton with a smile; "one would almost fancy the old-witch had tried to make you fear some evil."

"She did," answered the girl scornfully, her dark eyes flashing; "falsehood and treachery are evils, are they not? She said, they were about me—falsehood on the lips I kissed, treachery in the hearts I trusted. Bah! how foolish it is to give one's hand to such a creature, and allow her to say such things."

"One never does so in faith," laughed pretty golden-haired Beatrice Laven, the cousin, who, being orphaned and penniless, owed all things to the wealthy and generous Inez.

"And why not, my beautiful lady?" asked the old crone, who had followed Inez, and paused near. "Is it that you doubt, because my eyes might pierce the mask you wear, and my lips might speak of the arts you use, by which you make a man false to his pledged word, and plunge into the heart of one who has been kind to you a dagger keen enough to slay her? Your fair face is pale, lady, and your blue eyes are full of fear; yet you paled not when you stole out to meet another's affianced husband, and you feared not that he who was won in falsehood would be as false some day to yourself. Ah, blue-eyed beauty with the traitorous heart, will you let me read the lines of your hand and warn you?"

Beatrice shrank under the eyes of the seeress, and clung to Roy's arm, her fair face deathly in its whiteness.

"She is horrible! Let us go," faltered the rose-leaf lips.

And the crone laughed as they went slightly away from her through the sunlight.

"Pride, and love, and treachery, and falsehood!" muttered the gypsy. "Of such things can I prophesy to all, and never speak amiss. But for this fair beauty, and the man beside her—I was abroad last night, and they did not see me, as they talked of love which must be kept secret. Bsh! such love must die, as die the roses. I read all human hearts, and they give me gold, thinking I read the stars."

Meanwhile, through the scents of the Maytime went the three, and Roy whispered a low word to Beatrice which Inez did not hear.

Untroubled by the crone's predictions, in faith as strong as the love in her proud true heart, Inez never dreamed of suspecting that her lover's whispers could be "but stricken air," or that the hearts she leaned on and fully trusted planned their treachery at her very side.

Roy lingered at the stately home of Inez until the moon was high, and she accompanied him down the steps, and part way to the gate that divided their father's lands.

There, in the clear light of the full May moon, they said good-night, and she stood watching him as he went, until the shadows hid him from her.

"My love—my kingly loyal lover!" she murmured.

Then a sudden thought came—she had not told him of a certain plan for the morrow, formed by herself and Beatrice.

She would fit after him, glide up to him ere he reached the gate—alip he

hand in his, and laugh at his glad surprise.

With light feet she hurried after, reached the shadows which had enfolded him, passed through them and paused; like a startled doe, on their edge, a fierce incredulous scorn growing in her eyes, her proud face blanching, swiftly, sharply, as blanch the faces of those smitten suddenly to the heart.

He stood before her, only a few feet away—his lover, her promised husband—with a slight white-clad figure in his arms, a dainty golden head, uncovered to the moonbeams, nestling close to his heart, while her cousin's red lips laughed merrily up at him, and her cousin's white hand held back his face from hers.

"Nay," Inez heard the girlish voice say, with the laugh in it, "you shall not kiss me. The gypsy said you would be as false to me, some day, as you are now to Inez."

"And you doubt me—you who have made me chafe against my bondage until I am willing to free myself in any way, at any cost, for your sake?"

The girl in the shadows heard it all—heard, and made no sign. The love of long years, of her youth, was dying, but dying as the strong die, in silence.

The faith that had lived in her heart for this man was breaking as break the gossamers of the spider's weaving in the storm; but she gave no cry, made no sound, only stood, heart-sick and soul-wounded, on the very edge of the shadows.

"If Inez heard you say that, I think she would set you free!" laughed Beatrice.

And Inez, with a sudden hardly-drawn breath crossing her whitened lips, advanced till she stood beside them.

"You are right, my cousin," she said unwaveringly. "I have heard, and I set him free—free of all things save the reproach I must ever feel for an acted lie. Here, Roy!"

She drew off and extended towards him the ring with which he had pledged her.

He, startled, shamed, shrieking under the steady scornful gaze of her dark eyes, with his arms fallen from about her cousin, and his own face crimson with hot, traitor-blood, felt the old spell fall over his heart once more and the new one pass from it.

"Inez," he said pleadingly, "listen. I will—"

But she unclosed her fingers, and the ring fell at his feet! She turned and passed again into the shadows.

Beatrice laid her hand on his arm and smiled in his face.

"You are free now, Roy," she said softly. "Are you not glad?"

He looked down at the fair face that had so charmed him, and it suddenly lost all beauty for him.

"You want me to answer honestly?"

"Why, of course!"

"Then"—he spoke through shut teeth and more cruelly than he realized—"then, Beatrice, no, I am not glad! I would give all I own to have all things as they were before your coming between Inez and myself. Now you understand, and now will you care to wear the ring she cast back to me?"

A hot color lived transiently in the pretty face, then died; a look of pain was followed by a flaming wrath in the blue eyes.

"No!" rang out her angry silver tones; "no, Roy Alton! False to her, and false as well to me! Farewell!"

And she left him standing, wondering at his own sensations, feeling a dull pain at his heart for the broken

truth, although an hour before he had wished it broken.

Fate sometimes grants a prayer, in very scorn of man.

Five years later, Inez Claire, still unwedded, although Beatrice had for years been the wife of a man old enough to be her father, but wealthy—Inez Claire entered a city hospital by merest chance.

The nurses were gliding from couch to couch, silent, gentle, soothing, now laying soft cool hands on a flushed cheek, now touching with silent fingers a bandage, now holding a draught to fevered lips.

Inez followed one whose voice and touch seemed to calm and heal, as she went among the sufferers; and this one paused, at last, and stood long gazing on the wan worn face of a man which lay still on its pillow.

Such a white cold face—such a thin bloodless face. Inez felt her own pulses pause as she looked on it; then a low agonized cry broke from her, and she darted forward and caught the nurse's arm.

"Is he dead? Oh, tell me that he is not dead—my love, my love!"

The nurse took her hand gently, and laid a finger on her own lips.

"He is sleeping," she said softly; "they sleep so after a long fever. Ah, his eyes unclosed! Back, my dear lady. Do not let him see you, lest it should excite him, and he is so weak."

But his lids had lifted, his eyes were fastened on the face of Inez, and with an effort he put out a thin weak hand.

"Inez," he whispered; "Inez, will you stay beside me for a little while? It will be but a little while, for I am dying. But stay, Inez, because—because, dear, I have seen no woman like you in all the years since that May night, and my—my heart has ached for you—beyond my telling. I was weak, false, but—but—"

"Hush!" faltered Inez, bending over him until her lips almost touched his cheek; "speak no more, Roy. I will stay, and you shall not die, for I have pardoned the past, and the old love has not perished."

"Stay," whispered the nurse; "bid him sleep, and have no fear for his life. He is but weak after a long fever."

And so they met, and the old love which had slept for a brief time in the man's heart, lulled by the charm of a new fair face, awakened to sleep no more; and the woman, never having forgotten, forgave as readily as most loving women do, even the lover who returns repentant from his straying.

A month later there was a quiet wedding, at which Beatrice was not present. When she heard, the fair beauty smiled a trifle scornfully.

"How can she trust him?" she asked. "He was false to her once, and as false to me," she added with a touch of angry bitterness.

But Inez feared no rival now.

A young man who smokes cigarettes stands no show of obtaining admission to the naval or military academy.

A granite shaft recently quarried by the Bodwell granite company in Vinalhaven, Me., is the largest piece of stone ever quarried on earth, and if erected will be the highest, largest, and heaviest single piece of stone now standing or that ever stood, so far as there is any record. It considerably exceeds in length any of the Egyptian obelisks. The shaft is 115 feet long, 10 feet square at the base, and weighs 800 tons.

## ON UNCLE SAM'S FARM.

An Irish Servant Girl Details Her Experiences in This Country.

I have lived out in this country for six years. I have had very good places, but do not feel contented here and I would be glad to get back to Ireland. I think most of the girls feel the same way. I have always made good wages, but money is not everything. I save my money, and so do most of the girls I know, for we never know when we may have to send it home to help the old folks. Times are hard over there. And sometimes a girl will want to bring out a brother or sister whom she thinks can do better over here. They mostly don't and wish they were back, but we try to help them all the same. As a general thing, girls are satisfied with their wages. It is easy to change if they are not, for there are plenty of places.

Some girls do not save much, but spend most all their wages for finery. I do not think they know how to shop very well. They think more of how a thing looks than of the quality. I have lived where there was a cook, but I never heard of her taking any money from the store people for getting them to serve food to the house. I do not believe it is a general thing. The mistress attends to all those things herself. It may be the case in very rich families, where the lady does not want to be bothered with seeing to anything, as the cook is more like a housekeeper.

We get every other Sunday and every other Thursday off for ourselves, from after dinner or lunch in the middle of the day till 10 o'clock. I think 10 o'clock is late enough for any girl to be out. I think they are mostly all satisfied with their time off. You see we are better off than shop-girls and factory, who have to work all the time, and only have their evenings to themselves. Besides, I don't think housework is so tiresome as standing all day or running a machine, and it is healthier.

In most houses girls are allowed to see their friends at suitable times, but very few ladies like to have men hanging around the kitchen. I don't wonder at it, I am sure. The lady mostly comes down the last thing at night, to give orders for breakfast, or about the washing, or something, and it is not very nice to meet a great hulking man sitting there and perhaps smoking, for they are very free and easy.

I have heard girls say that if they wanted male company they had to see them out of the house. And that is bad, too, for it keeps them up late.

The food we get is mostly good, plain, but good; but I have heard girls tell about places where they have been where they scarcely got enough to eat, had as it was, and that, too, in houses where you would think that there was the best of everything and plenty of it. Some people want to put all their money on their backs, and so, of course, the table suffers.

I have known of people who had a splendid house and furnished elegant, and always dressed in the height of style, and yet the table was the meanest you ever saw. If they have such poor food themselves, of course the girl can't expect any better. There was one family who changed girls four or five times a month, and at last they couldn't get anybody to live with them except a greenhorn right off the vessel.

There is a good deal of gossip going on between the girls about the people they live with. All their affairs are very well. You see, the girls