

Lady Olivia regarded her friend, a fair faded woman about her own age, but dressed in ultra-girlish fashion, with a sort of civil snoot upon her thin scarlet lips, but a savage and apparently uncalled-for anger in her great dark eyes.

"Such secrets will not hang you, even if they are found out," she said, so brusquely that the offended lady rose to take her departure. "I am sorry to annoy you, Harriet; but I cannot live in total darkness, even in deference to 'rouge' and 'blanc de perle'."

Naturally the indignant lady did not repeat her warning or her visit. Naturally, also, the story of 'Lady Olivia's odd rudeness, and very unpleasant whim' spread about, and other ladies, whose complexions were not impeccable, or who had a nervous dread of eccentricity, ceased to call at the little house in Mayfair, which had been so pleasant a rendezvous in other days. Little by little old friends fell off and old acquaintances dropped away. It seemed as though a curse had fallen on the handsome Spanish-looking woman with the dark passionate face and haunting eyes—who, seen in every crowd, was always seen alone.

And, next to being in darkness, to be alone was the thing that Lady Olivia Blake most hated in the world. She was a proud woman, and had hitherto been a markedly exclusive one, closing her doors rigidly to those who were not of her own social standing, however meritorious, or fascinating, or popular they might be. But now, in her pitiful yearning for human companionship, she seemed to lose all pride and exclusiveness, to throw her doors widely open to all who would enter within them.

But even this sudden relaxation did not satisfy her ardent desire to escape from herself, her eagerness for society at any price. Pushing *parvenues*, who were at first flattered by the warmth of Lady Olivia's welcome, and rather disposed to plume themselves on the acquisition of so distinguished a friend, were not slow to discover that there was but a small amount of honor and glory to be got mixing in the motley mob that the eccentric lady gathered round her. And, when they discovered also that for this more than doubtful privilege they were required to pay the price of absolute submission to all the caprices of a passionate ungoverned nature and a despot's will, they too found the game not worth the candle and fell away.

So it came to pass that, just at the time of Cristine Singleton's return to England, Lady Olivia had taken to haunting theatres, concerts, exhibitions—whatever places were crowded and well lit. That was all that mattered to her apparently. She never cared whether the entertainments offered were good or bad. The great haggard eyes, with their unchanging look of mingled scorn and pain, seldom rested on stage or picture, and never with the least pretence of interest.

Baron Benjuda, who, in his two years' absence from London society, had fallen a little behind the gossip of the times, had hastened at sight of her to renew an intimacy that had hitherto been of the slightest character. A bow and a few civilly-spoken words were as much as he expected the proud lady to accord him; but to his amazement, he received the welcome of an old and much-prized friend.

Lady Olivia seemed as though she could not bear to part with him; and, when at last he tore himself away from the flattering eagerness of her questions as to his life abroad and the probability of his again leaving England for so long a period, he found himself pledged to visit her next day. He was too shrewd a man not to surmise some reason for this sudden and startling change of manner—too much a man not to be subtly flattered by it, suspicious though it was.

"Can she want to borrow money?" he speculated anxiously, as he sauntered back to Cristine; but he soon dismissed that idea as impossible.

He knew all about Lady Olivia Blake,

as he knew all about most people. Her jointure was small, but she lived well within her income, and would be the last person in the world to sacrifice her pride for pecuniary help.

"Well, she is a mystery; but what woman is not?" he added, dismissing the subject with a well-pleased shrug of his expansive shoulders. "She has fallen off awfully in her looks. Never saw a woman so changed in all my life! The Spanish blood tells when you get into the thirties, I suppose; and of course she felt De Gretton's death. Still, in every thing but beauty, she is greatly improved. I shall certainly cultivate her—for the sake of Cristine."

And cultivate her he did, though much at first against Cristine's will. He was a little startled certainly when he learned that his fair betrothed was the step-sister of that unhappy Lady de Gretton whose tragic story he knew but in imperfect outline, but, when he found that Lady Olivia made no objection on that score, but rather caught eagerly at the proffered intimacy, he laughed Cristine's scruples resolutely away.

"It will be a capital thing for you, Cris; the very fact of her being De Gretton's cousin makes the friendship more desirable. Of course the wretched girl was really no relation of yours, and you were in no way mixed up in her affairs. Why, Cris, what a ghost you look!"

"I cannot bear to—talk of that time!" faltered Cristine.

"Then you shall not talk of it," the Baron said, pinching the pale cheek till the color came. "Talk of your wedding dress, or Lady Olivia Blake!"

So the two women drifted together again, and Lady Olivia Blake—who, in the old days, had been barely conscious of Miss Singleton's existence—now took the oddest fancy to her, and seemed hardly happy when out of her sight. Even the Baron, who at first watched the growing friendship with much complacency, grew at last a little jealous of the frequency with which she claimed Cristine.

"It is all very well in its way," he grumbled; "but I never get you to myself for an hour now. Lady Olivia is here, or you are at Lady Olivia's. Honestly, Cristine, do you not get a little tired of her ladyship, handsome and agreeable as she is?"

"Not tired," the girl said with a little shudder, "but—but, Israel, at times—I am afraid."

"Afraid?" Benjuda turned her round, laying a weighty hand on either shoulder, and looking amusedly into the strangely troubled face. "Why, you nervous goose, what harm do you think she will do you?"

"I think at times—she is mad," Cristine said slowly.

"By George, I should not wonder!" The Baron released his captive, and nodded two or three times, as confirmatory circumstances rushed into his mind. "That is the key to the riddle, is it?"

He stood thoughtfully considering the matter for a few minutes, then turned with startled fondness to Cristine.

"My darling," he said, throwing one arm round the slender waist, and drawing the fair head down upon his shoulder, "I have been wrong to let you run so great a risk; you shall not stay in Green Street again."

There was real emotion in the full voice, real tenderness in the dark heavy-lidded eyes. After all, it is not necessary to be young, handsome, or aristocratic to feel genuinely, and even nobly; and the fat elderly Baron was as deeply stirred by the thought of peril to his betrothed as the most of romantic lovers could have been.

That Cristine was touched by his unfeigned concern was evident. She had won much admiration, but hitherto little love had fallen to her lot; and she found, much to her own surprise, that she was beginning to attach an odd value to it. She had not yet reached the point of returning it—the small amount of honest affection she had to bestow she had given

unasked to Arthur Beaupre, and that love, flung back upon itself, had turned to gall and poisoned her whole nature; but she had grown to feel that, if Benjuda's trust in her were withdrawn, and her betrothal broken, she would lose more, far more than the rank and wealth that had been his sole attractions when she first sought to win him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Music and the Drama.

Two Important Engagements

It is not often that Toronto has an opportunity of listening to such a magnificent vocalist as Mme. Trebelli; and we have no doubt but that the desire to hear her will be so great that there will be no trouble in filling the subscription list. For years past Mme. Trebelli has been one of the foremost European artists. This is her first visit to this continent, and on her first appearance in New York she scored a most emphatic success. The *Mail and Express*, speaking of her, said:—

"Mme. Trebelli fully confirmed her splendid European reputation, and demonstrated to her new public that she is eminently worthy of the praise which has been lavished on her abroad. Mme. Trebelli's voice possesses that freshness which fascinated every audience before which she appeared. Her admirable school, her superb art, and her powerful dramatic action entitled her to a place among the greatest artists of the world." We have no doubt the verdict of the Toronto people will sustain the New York verdict. We have ourselves had the pleasure of listening to her, and know whereof we speak when we say that no artist who has ever visited Toronto created a greater *furor* than will be caused by the appearance of this famous queen of song. The plan adopted for the proposed concert has been to grade the prices for seats. The first two rows of the gallery are being sold at two dollars a seat, the third and fourth rows as well as the best ground floor seats at one dollar and a half, and the balance of the ground floor at seventy-five cents and one dollar, any of which can be reserved. By this means purchasers of tickets will be able to suit their pockets, and they will also be enabled to save a good deal of trouble by knowing exactly where the seats purchased are located.

Another musical event of marked importance will be the engagement of a part of Abbey's famous Metropolitan Opera Co., including Mme. Lablache, one of the most famous singers now on the stage. Mlle. Louise Lablache, Signor Del Puente, and others, who will appear in two acts of Verdi's famous opera "Il Trovatore," the music for *Azucena* in which was written for Mme. Lablache. The cast of characters will be as follows: *Lemora*, Mlle. Louise Lablache; *Azucena*, (her original part) Mme. Lablache; *Manrico*, Signor Stagi; *Count Di Luna*, Signor Del Puente. Full Orchestra of 30 pieces, under the direction of Signor Vianesi, and full male chorus for the "Miserere" scene. Mlle. Louise Lablache recently obtained what the St. Louis papers call an unconditional triumph in "La Gioconda," in which she appeared with Nilsson, at a moment's notice, and without rehearsal. Signor Del Puente is well-known as the leading baritone of the

day, and the organization is one that does well of our musical citizens.

"You ask me about encores," says Sims Reeves. "Now, let me tell you, I am glad to sing an encore if it is a new work or a new song. Or suppose I feel that I have not done justice perhaps to myself, perhaps to the piece, that is justice as I interpret it, then I like to repeat my song. Or sometimes, if the audience has been more than usually appreciative and responsive, it is an intense pleasure to me to gratify them by giving them another song. But to put it in a matter-of-fact way and to adopt metaphor. I keep a shop—you ask me for twenty-five yards of silk and pay me for fifteen. No, I am paid to sing three or four songs and I decline to sing six or seven. There is a class of concert-goers—a grasping, greedy class—who come to hear me and say to themselves, 'We have paid our money, let us get as much for it as we can.' This is the class I have always held in contempt. And it is that I have often felt their presence that has impelled me to take a firm course."

Claxton's orchestra give two performances on Saturday at popular prices. The programme consists of many choice orchestra selections. Solos by Miss Aileen Corlett, Mr. J. F. Thomson, and Herr Jacobsen. Quartettes and trios by Brookers "Curious Comical Quaker," quartette and "The Three Jolly Sailor Boys." A special prize of a handsome silver pitcher is offered to the one summing the best conundrum. All conundrums entered in the competition must be received at Claxton's Music Store on or before Saturday morning next and each entry must be accompanied with 25 cents for a ticket. All conundrums received will be read from the stage at each performance. We submit the following, and expect to take the prize without sending the quarter. Why is Claxton's Orchestra like Truth? Because it is the best of its kind in the Dominion.

A blind actress is a novelty, and when she makes her appearance upon the stage, not as a draw, but merely to fill a vacancy caused by the absence of a sister artist, she is, if anything, even better worth seeing. This has been the case at the Imperial Theatre, London lately. The lady who plays *Arid* in "Prospero," a burlesque version of the "Tempest," is perfectly blind, having lost her sight more than ten years ago, and does her "business" and "speaks her lines" without exciting the least suspicion as to her condition amongst the audience. She is the daughter of one of the property men of the theatre, is but fifteen years of age, and acts entirely by sound. Her debut was made on a sudden emergency, when she made so decided a success that she has since been retained in the part.

That favorite artist and distinguished actress, Mme. Modjeska will make her re-appearance here Monday next for a three night's engagement, with matinee. Following is the programme.—Monday, "As You Like It," Tuesday, "Mary Stuart," Wednesday matinee, "Twelfth Night," Wednesday night, "East Lynne."

The charitably disposed have two opportunities before them of helping two deserving organizations, and at the same time of enjoying a very pleasant evening's entertainment. We hope to see crowded audiences at the two entertainments on Thursday and Friday next, for "sweet charity's sake."

Owing to the serious illness of Mrs. Nat. O. Goodwin (Eliza Weatheraby) their engagement here for the present week has been cancelled.

Genovieve Ward, who is now playing in India is reported as everywhere meeting with great success.

The Philharmonic concert will receive attention next week.

The only way of conquering sin is to fall wounded and helpless at the Redeemer's foot.