

her joy and hopes for the future would have been bright.

Every now and then the disreputable longer roused his eyes inquiringly to Madame Mantilla's shop; but it was not till Eleanor left the parlor that he shifted his position.

As long as she continued in the great thoroughfare he kept well behind her; but no sooner did she turn into a narrow, unfrequented street than he quickened his pace, overtook her, and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"What is it you want?" asked Eleanor with a shudder. "Money."

"I have none." "Nonsense!" "It is the fact."

"Well, money or money's worth—I don't care which. What have you got in that parcel?"

"Then it's a crying shame; she must have been working at it all through the night—Mrs. Vane!"

Eleanor was, as yet, so little accustomed to her new name, that she failed to reply to this summons; indeed, not till it had been twice repeated, did she start from her reverie.

"Mrs. Vane," said the old lady, "I should like to have a few minutes' conversation with you."

"With pleasure," said Eleanor, gracefully inclining her head.

"Not here—not here! Come to my house about mid-day to-morrow." So saying, she put into Eleanor's hand a thick, substantial card, upon which was inscribed in equally substantial letters, "Lady Joyce;" and then in characters somewhat more minute, "Park Lane."

Eleanor took the card, and her ladyship left the shop, entered a plain, but well-appointed brougham, and was driven off at a rapid pace.

With a vague feeling of hope that good might come out of this chance acquaintance ship, Eleanor returned to Little Fitzup Street.

The next day she went to Park Lane at the appointed time, and was shown into a handsomely-furnished room, there to await the coming of Lady Joyce.

"She had not long to wait." "Mrs. Vane," said her ladyship, on entering, "I'm glad to see you're punctual—sit down."

"Mrs. Vane, have you any objection to tell me the story of your life?" Eleanor had a very great objection, and stammered and stammered painfully in trying to find some courteous reason for refusing the request.

"You would rather not. I thought so. My only object in asking was, that my suspicions might be confirmed."

"Your suspicions, my lady?" "Yes—do not be alarmed! I do not seek to pry into family matters."

"Can I be of any service to your ladyship?" "Yes."

"In what way?" "I want a companion,—will you take the situation? I think it is a tolerably good one, for I have been pestered with applicants, but their vapours and the fine airs disgusted me. You took my fancy the moment I saw you."

"But your ladyship knows nothing of me—of my character—of my antecedents?" "I will run every chance of that. You have a pretty face, and an honest one."

"But I know nothing of the duties I should be expected to perform?" "Bless the child! you can talk, can't you?"

"Yes, my lady!" "Read aloud?" "Yes, my lady!" "Well, I know you can work with your needle, and I dare say, if the truth were known, you could play some musical instrument?"

day, and as Eleanor walked along the pavement, she could not but notice the contrast presented there at ten in the morning and three in the afternoon.

Early as it was, however, there was a customer in Madame Mantilla's shop when Eleanor entered.

"She was a plain little middle-aged woman, considerably below the average height, with a sharp abrupt manner of speaking, which might have prejudiced one against her, but for the merry, good-natured sparkle in her eyes."

Eleanor proceeded to the further end of the shop to transact her business, but she distinctly heard the lady ask, "Who is that young person?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, my lady," said the attendant, thus addressed, honouring Eleanor with a supercilious stare.

"Bless my heart, you don't know? You can find out, I suppose."

"The attendant shook her yellow curls disapprovingly, and whispered a question in the ear of one of her fellows."

"She is a Mrs. Vane," Eleanor, not wishing to be traced, had given this, her mother's maiden name, on being asked.

"Mrs. Vane—oh?" "Yes, my lady."

"What brings her here?" "She has brought back some work with which she was entrusted."

"Let me see it." "It is not for sale, my lady, it has been done to order."

"Did I say it was for sale? Let me see it!" Eleanor's work was handed to the old lady, who examined it very closely.

"It's good—very good!" she said. "But she's no more a regular needlewoman than I am."

"What makes you think that, my lady?" "What regular needlewoman would have taken all this trouble. How long has she been working at it?"

"She had the stuff given her yesterday, my lady."

"Then it's a crying shame; she must have been working at it all through the night—Mrs. Vane!"

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India, from which place he returned with half a liver, a black servant, and one of the worst temper imaginable.

His wife put up with it all, went about with him most dutifully to Bath and Cheltenham, and finally, when he died—leaving goodness only knows how many hives of money—gave him as handsome a funeral as money could procure, and wore the deepest mourning for a whole twelvemonth.

At the end of that time, however, she came out again into the world, and without mixing in its more uproarious gambles, managed to lead a very comfortable and pleasant life.

Of course, she had many opportunities of again changing her name, (what lady with untold wealth would not?) but she declined to avail herself of any of the offers she received.

Such was Lady Joyce's history. Eleanor entered the magnificent house in Park Lane by her side, and was at once shown to a comfortable room, handsomely furnished, which, she was told was henceforth to be hers; and there, while waiting for the dinner bell to ring, she seated herself in a luxurious easy chair, and allowed her thoughts free course.

Though her husband had treated her badly, she was forced to confess that her conduct was suspicious.

How could she ever hope to clear herself in his eyes? At dinner Eleanor was perfectly astounded by the quantity of plate displayed on the side-board.

"Do you keep all that valuable property in the house, Lady Joyce?" she asked.

"Yes, child. Why not?" "I should be so afraid of its being stolen."

"Oh, no. The butler looks it up every night."

Then the conversation dropped, and the subject was forgotten, but the words were to be subsequently recalled as proofs of crime against the unfortunate Eleanor Jerrold.

(To be continued.)

AT EVENING TIME.

The old nest swings on the leafless tree. The red sun sets in the west: I think that like two brown birds are we. Left last in the empty nest.

All the young ones are afar and away. Each sings with his chosen mate: Twilight is closing our lightsome day. Through the crimson flush lasts late.

'Tis a trembling step comes down the path. You could not so lightly tread: Changed is our thought of the grave old earth. That is keeping in trust our dead.

Oh, comely face, that I knew so fair! Soft cheeks, that are sunken now. I love the gray in your faded hair. The lines on your thoughtful brow.

The past grows a book to understand. The future has gifts to bring. As I sit by the fire and hold your hand, And finger the worn gold ring.

My own true wife, who is dearer now For all that the years resign— For the timid love, for the spoken vow: For the home that was yours and mine;

For hopes we shared, and for tears we shed. For comfort in days of grief; For the trust that we held to meet our end. When the shades of life are past.

Griefs that are over left us a gift. They lit us a lamp of light. Soon shall God's sunshine clear through the lift. And there shall be no more night.

Close to my side, dear wife that I love, With your thin hand fast in mine: So will we wait for the light above. Till the morning star shall shine.

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IN AFTER-YEARS; OR, FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER ROSS. CHAPTER XXXV.

Did Lord Cranston cease to think of Ernest De Vere's love? No, not for an hour. The part of Regent Street where he had last seen her had to him become sacred ground, where somehow he fancied he would one day see her again.

ed by the one I believe them to be, she lives with a sister whose husband was for many years supposed to be dead; he returned home last spring, found his family had removed from their old home, and he has been unable to trace them since."

"The young lady lives in Eaton Sutton, my Lord."

"Thank you, good morning."

Next morning a stranger arrived in Eaton Sutton by the mail coach.

"Do you know a lady of the name of Farquharson who lives here?" said he to the landlord of the Star and Garter, where the mail stopped.

"Yes, a widow lady with a son and daughter?" "No, those I seek are two sisters."

"There are no such people in Eaton Sutton, I know every one in the village. Miss Farquharson the daughter is often here, about every month she sends a parcel to London, and she often receives parcels; look there, the lady with the little boy is Mrs. Farquharson, and the boy is her son."

Lord Cranston felt sick at heart.

"Wont you have breakfast, sir?" "Yes."

He drank a cup of tea, but the disappointment was too great, it made him feel as if he would never desire to eat again.

"I will go and see the young lady at all events," soliloquized he, "it will do no harm to tell her I admire her drawings, perhaps it may do good, I shall tell her what I paid for those I bought yesterday."

He walked to the door, "Will you direct me to Mrs. Farquharson's house?"

"Yes, sir, straight down the street, a large white cottage with a garden in front and a holly hedge; it is the only one in the street with a holly hedge."

The cottage was soon found with its white painted walls, its green holly hedge gay with scarlet berries, the calm morning sunshine lying over all.

The cottage door was open, Margaret had left it so when she came in after seeing her sister and Willie go down the street half an hour ago, the air was so sweet she thought it a pity to shut it out.

Lord Cranston tapped, no answer; he tapped again a second time no answer; he stepped into the little hall and tapped at the room door, this time gently, no answer again,—he pushed the door very slightly, it opened,—within ten feet of where he stood sat his lost love bending over a table case, her back towards him, her face reflected in a mirror placed between the windows; a hand was placed on her shoulder.

"Margaret, dear Margaret!"

The touch on her shoulder, the voice that called her by her name, recalled Margaret from a day dream of youth and home, and Ernest De Vere,—she could scarce believe her sense of feeling or hearing—could it be—yes, he was there, beside her—touching her cheek, her hands clasped in both of his—he was talking so clearly, yet so fast telling her that this was the moment he had thought of every day for the last ten years, it was for this to be near her, to be able once again to ask her to be his wife that he had borne cheerfully all the long years of exile; it was this that nerved his arm in the battle-field, that gave him patience in the fore-d marshes over the parched sand, under a burning sun; this that instilled new vigor and courage to press through the Indian Jungle, where on every side he was beset by fear of the lurking rebel Sepoy or savage animal; the life of search and wandering he had spent since his return home, since the day when the vision of beauty seen for a passing moment met his glad eyes in her upturned face; and now he had come to claim her as his own.

Margaret, poor Margaret; it was very sweet for her starved heart to hear all this, and to know that she had never been forgotten for a single hour; how gladly would she have died unfulfilled thus listening to all those precious words, ere the heart pains came which must come; the bitter wind and sleet which she herself must bring down to kill all her red roses; how handsome he looked in his manhood, and how strong and good and true each word he spoke; she must tell him all, nought else would avail, but only this, confirmed by the reinsurance that no Angel's promise of the longest, most blessed, most loving life earth ever saw, could turn her from his purpose.

She knew by the love she herself felt,—which told her she could sacrifice all for him—that her task would be no easy one, and that her love in comparison to his, with his strong manhood and determination of soul, alas! was only as shadow is to sunshine; how gladly would she have laid down this stern duty, dashed it in the sea and let the waves cover it; buried it deep, deep in frozen Greenland with the snows of a thousand years above it; she had never been so tempted before. She well remembered what she felt when they parted in Lord Thurnhill's conservatory; how hard it had been then, when she had never experienced the hopeless longing, the hungry heart which the more she wished to still it, craved with restless beating for what must not be; and now that she had passed through all this—she must rise out of an atmosphere filled with sweetness and perfume, her feet pressing the fresh primrose and the rose-tipped daisies, overhead the balm trees of Gilead, and of her own will, wrap around her a gray misty shroud, and lie down in a cold, dark rocky grave.

She released her hands from the fond clasp which held them, and taking from her pocket book the newspaper paragraph, which for the past five years she had kept there, said with a clear firm voice.

"What you wish is impossible, I bear a name which would bring contempt and disgrace upon yours; I love you as I always do, but it is impossible I should ever be your bride; were I weak or wicked enough to consent to bring disgrace on your young life, there is no punishment which our Great Father permits the evil One to inflict, which would be too bad for me."

She stopped, and placing the newspaper paragraph in his hand, waited with clasped hands and hopeless heart to watch the effect its perusal would produce.

Nothing could alter her resolution, it was fixed as the laws of the Meds and Persians, she could never be Ernest De Vere's wife; but she fancied that while he read that fatal paper she could see in his face the feelings with which he would think of her when the course of their lives were parted; his, to ascend the sunny flower-crowned uplands, the pine-crowned mountains towards the setting sun. Hers in silence and shadow to run down to the sea. He glanced at the first words; no change, not a shadow on lip or brow—

"I have seen this before," said he, "I read it ten years ago; then I considered it the device of some one who wished to mortify Sir Richard Cuninghame, I knew he was most unpopular, in short that he was a bad and consequently a hated man, but the story was so evidently and atrociously false, that it was not likely to have even that effect; I do not know that I ever thought of it again, until several years after I was in India, when one of my senior officers, a man considerably older than myself, who had been an old school and college chum of your father's told me of the death in life which Sir Richard Cuninghame made your father suffer; your father whom he would have fair made the world believe to be his own son."

While he was speaking, he had walked to the fire-place and deliberately put the piece of newspaper in the centre of a clear fire burning in the grate; he now returned to his seat and placed himself so as to look in Margaret's pale face as he continued.

"I then remembered the story of Sir Richard's captivity, and came to the conclusion that as far as keeping him from leading the besotted wicked life he formerly did, the story was true; nothing would have been more natural than that a boy of eighteen (the age your father counted when Sir Richard disappeared from his servants, no one else thought of him) yielding to an accident which placed a brutal father in his power, should shut a door on him; which once shut no matter what desire he had to again set the old villain free, he had voluntarily deprived himself of the power to open. Sir Richard Cuninghame is dead, the day previous his death he confessed to having stolen your father in his infancy. Your father was Sir William Hamilton's son; you are Lady Hamilton's grandchild."

"Now for the third time, Margaret Hamilton, will you be my bride? I leave my fate in the hands of your grandmother without whose consent her last daughter cannot wed. If she gives her consent you will wear this in life and death; if not, you will throw it in yonder fire; it was made for you and another shall never wear it."

As he spoke he placed on Margaret's finger a circlet of diamonds bought in India for her years before, worth thousands of pounds, the largest center gem being of the size and shape of a French bean, the others becoming gradually less until they met and formed a complete circle, the whole blazing in the cottage room reflecting shining green leaf and scarlet berry as they hung on the wall.

The revelation from a tainted name to one of the highest and proudest in Scotland, in whose veins flowed the blood of Kings; from a lonely uncaared-for toiling life, to one hedged in by a mother's care; possessing and having a right to receive the deep fond love of the one whose image had filled her heart in all those long years of absence, one whose name was part of the great history of the land; all this was too much for Margaret, her heart beat in great wild throbs beneath each shock of which her frame trembled, her eyelids closed on her marble cheek and blessed tears came through the dark eyelashes and fell down like rain.

How long Lord Cranston and Margaret Hamilton sat there or what they said the chronicle telleth not, but full two hours after a light tap came to the room door, immediately the door opened as of itself and Adam entered holding in his hand a bunch of juniper with its purple and green berries surrounded by red and pink heather which the unusual mildness of the season had spared in blossom as fresh as if the month had been October instead of January.

"My service to you, Miss Margaret, my service to you Master De Vere," said Adam as he approached to where they sat, and presented his offering gathered on the Haddon braes before he started on his hurried message, which he was now aware was a useless one.

"I gathered these flowers on the braes about the Castle an' kept them fresh well rolled up in wet moss; I kent ye would like these, Miss Margaret, they're frae the place ye used to swing on in between the rowan trees."

"Yes, I do like them because they were pulled there, and a thousand times better because you pulled them, Adam; why did you come home so soon? you look so well! I see you have enjoyed yourself; are your sister and her children all well?" said Margaret, as she placed her white hand in Adam's brown hand fingers.

"Yes, Miss Margaret, thanks be to His name they're all well and doing well, and I'm g'ing back again to bide a month when I can; but what do y' think, the Colonel was never drowned, he's come home and he came here in the coach, him and Lady Hamilton, and they're waiting at the Star and Garter for me to come and tell you for fear it will startle the Mistress too much; there's a heap of 'nair news' at ye'll get when they come and they're no to come till I go for them, and Miss Margaret, Sir Robert was Sir Robert after all, but Lady Hamilton it's her son 'at she lost, and his name is Sir William Hamilton, and her ladyship put him into a gran new coffin an' his naid name 'at I did na find it all out long ago; he was na one bit like the crafty Cuninghames no more than the Mistress and you are, an' ye'er no Cuninghames more than him; do ye mind when I used to say that the Mistress was liker Lady Hamilton than anyone else I ever saw? and she was like her father and her grandfather too when she was frightened, and that was often enough after Sir Richard came home."

While the old man spoke Lady Hamilton entered, and in a moment was clasped in Margaret's arms.

Close behind her ladyship came Agnes leaning on her husband's arm, while Willie bounded in exclaiming:

"Atty dear, Mamma and I have found Papa!"

When the sweet Summer time came round again, there were great doings at old Inchdrower preparing for the marriage of Lady Hamilton's grand-daughter with Lord Cranston; such a fine trousseau had never been seen by the county ladies who came to see and admire; silk and lace from France, fine linen from Ireland, gold and jewels from London.

The bride the brightest jewel, the fairest flower of all; and to please his old friend Lady Hamilton, the Duke of Wellington came to Scotland to give away the bride.

The circle of diamonds Lord Cranston brought from India and put on Margaret Hamilton's finger, Lady Cranston never took off.

THE END.