

THE CHURCH OF THE CROSS.

I pass on my way through a city's streets,
With the broken music of tolling bells,
And hear the tramp of hurrying feet,
And think of the time when I stood,
In their strength to hold all the very end.

THE HAUNTED CHAMBER.

CHAPTER V.—(CONTINUED.)

It is not a matter of wonder in my case, he responds; a few fellows are still in the smoking-room. It is early you know—not yet three. But why are you keeping a lonely vigil like this?

The moon tempted me to the window, answers Florence. See how calm she looks riding serenely over the sea—stretching out her bare white arm until the beams fall full upon it, and seem to change it to porose marble—does it not make one feel as if all the world were being bathed in its subdued glow?

A pale tremulous smile widens her lips. Sir Adrian, plucking a tall pale lily growing near him, flings it upward with such an eager aim that it alights upon her window-sill. She sees it. Her fingers close upon it.

It is emblem of its possessor, says Adrian softly, and rather unsteadily. Do you know what you remind me of when you are thus? A medieval saint out in stone—a purr angel, too good, too far above all earthly passions to enter into it, or understand it, and the grief that must ever attend upon it.

He speaks bitterly. It seems to him that she is indeed cold not to have guessed before this the intensity of his love for her. However much she may have given her affection to another, it still seems to him impressively hard that she can have no pity for his suffering. He gazes at her intently. Do I see a mystic moonbeam deceive him, or are there tears in her dark eyes? His heart beats quickly. Once again he remembers her emotion of the previous evening. He hears again her passionate sob. Is she unhappy? Are there thorns in her path that are difficult to remove?

Florence, once again I entreat you to confide in me, he says, after a pause. I can not, she returns, sadly but firmly. But there is one thing I must say to you—think of me as you may for saying it—I am not cold as you seem to imply a moment since; I am not made of stone; and, alas, the grief you think me incapable of understanding is mine already! You have wronged me in your thoughts. I have here, she explains with some vehemence, laying the hand in which she still holds the drooping lily upon her breast, 'what I would be gladly without a heart.'

'Say, says Adrian, 'you forget. It is no longer yours, you have given it away.' For an instant she glances at him keenly, while her breath comes and goes with painful quickness. 'You have no right to say so, she murmurs at last. 'No, of course not; I beg your pardon, he says apologetically. 'It is your own secret.'

'There is no secret, she declares nervously. 'None.' 'I have offended you. I should not have said that. You will forgive me, he breathes, with agitation. 'You are quite forgiven; and, as a token leave a little further out of the window, and looks down at him with a face pale indeed, but full of an unutterable sweetness.

from its peculiar circumstances, caused more than usual interest. One of the guests to-night is an army surgeon, and he is giving them an explanation as to how the fatal wound had been inflicted. It appeared as if the unfortunate man had shot himself in a peculiar manner as to cause considerable doubt as to whether he had been murdered or had died by his own hand. Evidence, however, of a most convincing nature had confirmed the latter theory.

Captain Ringwood, with a revolver in his hand, is endeavoring to show that the man could not have shot himself, just as Adrian re-enters the room, and he is giving them an explanation as to how the fatal wound had been inflicted. It appeared as if the unfortunate man had shot himself in a peculiar manner as to cause considerable doubt as to whether he had been murdered or had died by his own hand. Evidence, however, of a most convincing nature had confirmed the latter theory.

'Why not? Florence, take the revolver for a moment, will you?' says the surgeon, anxious to demonstrate his theory beyond the possibility of a doubt. 'I want to convince Ringwood. Now stand so, and hold the weapon so—plugging it with the muzzle presented in a rather awkward position almost over the heart.'

'I thought fellows always put their muzzles and blow their brains out when they committed suicide,' Ringwood remarks lightly. 'This fellow evidently did not,' says the surgeon calmly. Now, Sir Adrian, you see, by holding it thus, you could quite easily blow yourself to—'

Before he can finish the sentence, there is a sudden confusion of bodies, a jostling as if with, for Arthur Dymally, who had been looking on with interest, has slipped from the stool at this opportune moment, and had fallen heavily against his cousin.

There is a shout from somebody, and then a silence. The revolver in the scuffle had gone off. Through the noise the sharp crack of a bullet ringing loudly, rousing many from their slumber. Lights can be seen in the passages; terrified faces peep out from half-open doors. Dora Talbot, coming into the chamber in a pale pink cashmere dress, which she looks with a swan's face, in which she looks with a swan's face, in which she looks with a swan's face.

The servants have rushed from their quarters in alarm. Ethel Villiers, with a pale scared face, runs to Florence Delamaine's room, and throws her arms round that young lady as she comes out pale, but composed, to ask in a clear tone what has happened.

As nobody knows, and as Florence she cares to confess, being awfully through Adrian that some of the men are still up in the smoking-room, and fearing that a quarrel had arisen among them, she proposes that they should go to the smoking-room in a body and make inquiries.

Old Lady FitzAlmond, with Lady Gertrude sobbing on her arm, seconds this proposal, and, being a veteran of much distinction, takes the lead. Those following close behind, are glad of this, and hopeful because of it, her appearance being calculated to rouse any enemy. The awful character of her dress, and the severity of the nightcap that crowns her martial head would strike terror to the hearts of any midnight murderers. They all move off in a body, and, guided unconsciously by Florence, approach the smoking-room.

Voices loud in conversation can be heard as they draw near; the door is slightly ajar. Florence drawing back as they come quite up to it, the old lady waves her hand, and advances boldly to the front. Flinging wide open the door, she bursts upon the assembled company within.

'Where is he?' she asks, with a dignity that only heightens the attractions of cap and gown. 'Have you secured him?' Sir Adrian, where is the constable? Have you sent for him?' Sir Adrian, whose gaze is fixed upon the fair vision in the trailing white gown standing timidly in the doorway, begins to answer his interrogator, and the others taken by surprise, maintain a solemn silence.

'Why this mystery?' demands Lady FitzAlmond sternly. 'Where is the man that did that shot?' 'Here, madame, replies the surgeon dryly, indicating Arthur Dymally by a motion of the hand.

'A pure accident,' repeats Arthur, from between his clenched lips. He looks for more distressed by this occurrence than Sir Adrian, who has narrowly escaped being wounded. This only showed his tenderness and proper feeling, as almost all the women present mutually agreed. Almost all, but not Doris Talbot, for, young as she is, she has the instincts to the explanation and watches Arthur's ghastly face. What is it like? The face of a murderer?

'Oh, no, no,' she gasps inwardly, 'surely not that!' 'It was the poorest accident, I assure you,' protests Arthur again, as though anxious to impress this conviction upon his own mind. 'It might have been a very serious one,' says the surgeon gravely, regarding him with a keen glance. 'It might have meant death to Sir Adrian.'

Florence changes color and glances at her host with parted lips. Dora Talbot, pressing her way through the group in the doorway, goes straight up to him as if inquisitively, and takes his hand in both of hers. 'Dear Sir Adrian, how can you be so thankful enough for your escape?' she says sweetly, tears standing in her bright blue eyes. She presses his hand warmly, and even raises it to her lips in a transport of emotion. Standing there in the pretty pink dress, glowing with the power of taking the 'curl out of him' whenever she wishes.

'I believe you are afraid of the ladies hidden in this secret chamber, and so don't care to come,' says Miss Villiers tauntingly. 'Now something like I'm a great deal more afraid of,' responds the gallant captain meekly. 'My dear lady, I am sorry I have been the unhappy cause of your coming to me, but I am sure you will not think me so sorry as you would if you were to know that there will be only lilies in your cheeks.'

The words lily brings back to him his last interview with Florence. He glances hurriedly at her right hand; yes, the same lily is clasped in her fingers. He has at last seen it with his own eyes. He has at last seen it with his own eyes. He has at last seen it with his own eyes.

'You ordered I obey,' says the captain. 'Call and I follow I follow, though I die!' After which quotation he accompanies her toward the house in the wake of Dora and Sir Adrian, who have been preceded by the clever widow into her service.

Florence and Arthur Dymally follow them, Arthur talking gaily, as though determined to ignore the fact that he is thoroughly unwelcome to his companion; Florence, with head erect and haughty footsteps and eyes carefully averted.

For the hall, through the corridor, down the stairs, to the gallery, along more corridors they go, laughing and talking eagerly, until they come at last to an old and apparently much disused part of the house. Traversing more corridors, upon which dust lies thickly, they come at last to a small iron-bound door that blocks the end of one passage.

'How pale you are, get near me,' says Sir Adrian encouragingly turning as he always does when opportunity offers to address himself solely to Florence. 'Don't you feel creepy-creepy?' asks Ethel Villiers, with a smothered laugh, looking up at Captain Ringwood.

'There is a peculiar spring in the lock,' he explains a moment later; 'and if the door slammed to we should find it impossible to open it from the inside, and might remain here prisoners forever unless the household came to the rescue.'

'By the way, I am not a body that they do not wish to hear any good stories, so Sir Adrian laughingly requests to comply with Ringwood's request. 'Are we far from the other parts of the house?' asks Florence at length, who has been examining some writing on the walls. 'So far that, if you were immersed here no eye, however low, could penetrate the darkness,' replies Sir Adrian. 'You are at a thoroughly removed from the habitable parts of the castle as if you were in the next county.'

'How interesting!' observes Dora, with a little sliver. 'The servants are so afraid of this room that they would not venture here even by daylight,' says Sir Adrian, who has been looking at the writing on the walls. 'You can see how old this part of the castle is, and how it has been abandoned to death here without our friends being a bit the wiser.'

Let us make a party and go together, suggests Dora, enthusiastically clapping her hands—her favorite method of showing false emotion of any kind. She is determined to have her part in the programme, and is equally determined that Florence shall go down alone with Sir Adrian.

'What a capital idea!' puts in Arthur Dymally, coming up to Miss Delamaine, and specially addressing her with all the air of a rightful owner. 'Charming, matters a young lady standing by; and so the question is settled.'

'It will be rather a fatiguing journey, you know,' remarks Captain Ringwood, confidentially, to Ethel Villiers. 'It's a awful lot of stairs; I've been there, so I know all about it—it's worse than the treadmill.'

'Have you been there too?' demands Miss Ethel, glancing at him from under her long lashes. 'A little bit,' answers the Captain, with a little grin. 'But, I say, don't go—will you?'

'I must; I am dying to see it,' replies Ethel. 'You needn't come, you know; I dare say I shall be able to get on without you for half an hour or so.' 'I dare say you could get on unaccompanied without me forever,' remarks the captain rather gloomily. 'I don't see how you can get on without me, if I am to go with you.'

'I am sorry I have been the unhappy cause of your coming to me, but I am sure you will not think me so sorry as you would if you were to know that there will be only lilies in your cheeks.'

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afterwards his words come back to his listener's memories, filling their thoughts with terror and despair. 'I wonder you don't have this dangerous look removed,' says Capt. Ringwood. 'It is a regular trap. Some day you'll be sorry for it.'

'Prospect words?' 'Yes; I wish it were removed,' responds Florence, with a strange quick shiver. 'Sir Adrian laughs. 'Why, that is one of the old to-wards the dark ages, and suggests all sorts of horrible possibilities. This room would be nothing without its mysterious lock.'

At this moment Dora's eyes turn slowly toward Arthur Dymally. She herself hardly knows why, at this particular time, she should look at him, yet she feels that some unaccountable fascination is compelling her face to encounter his. They meet. As they do so, Dora shudders and turns away. There is that in Arthur Dymally's dark and sunken eyes that strikes her cold with terror and vague forebodings of evil. It is a wicked look that overpowers the man's face—a

trivial implacable look that seems to freeze her as she gazes at his spell-bound. Slowly, even while she watches him, she sees him turn his glance from her to Sir Adrian in a menacing manner, as though to let her know that the vile thought that is working in his brain and is betraying itself on his face is intended for him, not her. And yet, with this too, he gives her silently to understand that, if she shows any treachery toward him, he will not leave it unavenged.

Cowed, frightened, trembling at what she knows not, Dora staggers backward, and, laying a hand upon the wall beside her, tries to regain self-possession. The others are all talking together, she is therefore unobserved. She stands, still panting and pallid, trying to collect her thoughts.

Only one thing comes clearly to her filling her with loathing of herself and an unquenchable dread—it is that, by her own double-dealing and faltering toward Florence, she has seemed to enter into a compact with this man to be a companion in whatever crime he may decide upon. His very look seems to implicate her, to drag her down with him to his level. She feels herself chained to him—his partner in a vile conspiracy. And what further adds to her horror is the fact that she knows full well that she knows herself to be blindly ignorant of whatever plans he may be forming.

After a few seconds she excuses herself and wins back some degree of composure. It is of course a mere weak attempt to deceive herself, but she leaves the room for a moment. 'So be it,' says Sir Adrian gaily. 'For my part I feel no desire to enter it.'

'TO BE CONTINUED.'

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JAMES COLEMAN. Railway Office, Charlottetown, November 2, 1886. Superintendent.