

"Good heavens, Olive! what can it be? I will call you Olive, and you are my dearest. Come tell me," he urged approaching her, while she retired, "Is it about that night—the night of the opera?"

Miss Kingston stood now in the deep embrasure of the back bow window, and Tom stood excitedly before her.

"You know," he went on, "that I came for you, and that you had a headache and had disappeared mysteriously, and that we were obliged to go without you. And then you came and sat there like a beautiful stone image, and stared round me and over me, but never once looked at me. And when I came in the morning to say good-bye and ask you to write me you were out—out with Mrs. Woodruff" (as if this were an added bitterness) "and I could not see you."

"I think you should leave me now, Mr. Weatherley. I will write to you."

"You will write to me, Olive. What nonsense! See here"—with a start of inspiration—"has Mrs. Woodruff said anything about me?"

"Mrs. Woodruff has said nothing."

"Are you sure—quite sure?"

Olive had coloured slightly. This seemed a clue.

"We need not discuss Mrs. Woodruff, Mr. Weatherley." Miss Kingston shrank further within the embrasure.

"We need not discuss her," said Tom, clinging to his divination, "but if she has discussed me I want to know it. Now listen, Miss Kingston. If Mrs. Woodruff has said a word that could prejudice me in your eyes—if she has said a word that could lead you to imagine that I regard you as anything less than the most perfect woman on earth, then she has simply belied me."

Miss Kingston raised her eyes and looked into Tom's candid, flushed face.

"This is hardly generous to the woman you wished to marry, Mr. Weatherley."

"To the woman I wished to marry," echoed Tom blankly.

"Yes, to the woman you proposed to. Mr. Weatherley, you know you asked my cousin to marry you that night."

Tom's face was a study. Blank wonder, profound disgust and then triumphant satisfaction chased each other across it in swift succession.

"She told you that?"

"Yes, Mr. Weatherley, why should she not tell me?"

"And you believed her?"

Yes I did. Do you deny it?"

"From beginning to end—totally and entirely—it is a slanderous falsehood."

"O Tom!"

"Is Mrs. Woodruff here? Confront me with her. Ask her to come down!"

"She has gone away." Miss Kingston here turned her back on Tom, put her arms on the window-frame, and allowed her forehead to rest on her hands. With a step Tom was beside her.

"Olive, how could you believe it?"

"But why should she have said it, Tom? Of course I am very glad that it is not true, but why should she tell such a story?"

"Heaven only knows. I can't imagine."

"Do you think she cared for you, Tom?"

"How can I tell. She certainly had no reason to." Tom's conscience was a trifle restive, but after all this was the simple truth.

"Then why did you go away with her that night and leave me behind?" asked Olive, turning her head and regarding him, but her eyes were kinder now.

"Go away with her. Do you mean to the opera?"

"Yes; I was very unhappy over it."

"Why, you had a headache; you suggested that we should go without you, and besides you could not be found. Mrs. Woodruff searched for you."

It was now Olive's turn to be surprised. "I know I had a headache," she said, "and had gone to my room to lie down for a few minutes. I saw you go. Hearing sleigh-bells, I got up and looked out of the window. You and Sylvia were just getting into the sleigh, and you immediately drove off. I could not understand it. I wanted to go with you very much."

Tom stared at her.

"And then father came in, and I asked him to take me, and like the dear old thing he is, he did not ask for a word of explanation. But I did not enjoy it a bit. You and Sylvia were laughing and you seemed so happy. And then when she told—as if she didn't want to tell it, what you had

said coming home, I believed her, especially as you didn't come in afterwards."

"And you didn't suggest that we should go without you!" Tom ejaculated.

"No. Did Sylvia say that?"

Then he told her all that had occurred; how he had glanced up at her window before driving away; and how miserable he had been at seeing her at the theatre, seemingly so indifferent to him, and thinking ill of him, for he knew that she was thinking ill of him, and of the unexpected things that Mrs. Woodruff had said. Olive heard him silently to the end. They were very near each other now. In fact her head rested on his shoulder, and his arm encircled her waist. She gazed pensively into the garden, where the stripped lilacs and laburnums stood naked in the deep snow. A bunch of sturdy English sparrows were twittering and quarrelling in the pathway.

"Poor Sylvia," she murmured, "I am sorry for her."

"You are sorry for her!" Tom exclaimed. "Why she wanted to separate us, and I must say she almost succeeded."

"Still I am sorry for her," Olive repeated, with the same sweet, abstracted air. And Tom was fain to postpone the solution of this enigma till a future occasion—an occasion when he would bring it out with certain other perplexing questions which Olive alone could answer.

On the day following Olive left the Woodruffs to return home. She had already outstayed her visit's limit.

Less than a month after, circumstances led Tom in the same direction. Besides, he naturally desired to become acquainted with Olive's father.

THE FATE OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN.

Terrible as are the horrors of the slave caravan, the brutal capture, the pitiless march across the desert, and the final destiny of these wretched negroes, it is scarcely less awful to read of the normal and generally accepted position of woman throughout that vast continent.* I quote from a letter addressed by Cardinal Lavigerie to the members of an association of ladies founded in France for the purpose of befriending and converting pagan women, and to whose zealous co-operation the Sisters owe much of their material success. "If you only knew the position of Mussulman women in this country! They hardly count as human beings at all: they are born slaves and from the highest to the lowest every woman is for sale. At an age when they are still too young to understand what is being done to them, without an attempt at any individual choice on their part, they are given over, or as they crudely describe it themselves, they are sold, to the highest bidder. Four pounds is the highest price paid for a wife in Northern Africa, about a third of what is paid for a horse. The new master, a total stranger may-be, and in all probability a brutal, repulsive savage, appears to claim his property. Sould the poor child struggle and resist, the father drives her from his door, having no further use for her now that her price is paid; her mother thrusts her away, not daring to protect her for fear of her own skin, and having besides no idea even of the possibility of any other solution, and her cries and screams are silenced only by the blows and kicks with which she is welcomed to her new abode. Nor is she more tenderly treated as a mother than as a maiden. I know houses where mother and child were killed together in order to avoid the difficulties arising from the presence of an inconvenient heir; in others, for no apparent reason whatever, they are brutally tortured, and often beaten to death. 'Quite recently,' writes F. Hauteceur, from one of the further missions in the interior 'a child was born to one of the slave women here. Regularly every day, in defiance of any consideration she might have claimed for her child's sake, the wretched woman was cruelly beaten, so that she would spend the greater part of her time prowling among the bushes round the village for fear of the ill-treatment which she knew awaited her reappearance. One day I heard the baby was dead, and I learnt a little later from the other natives, that the poor little thing's death was entirely caused by the brutality of its own father, who would beat his wife without any regard for the child which she carried on her back, according to the custom of the country!'"

*The article from which we give the above extract is anonymous.

"One day," continues the cardinal, "an Arab came to beg of me. 'My wife died last night,' he said; 'I have no money to buy a grave cloth. Give me twenty francs, God will reward you.' I gave him the money. 'A fortnight later he reappeared at my door and said: 'I want to marry again, and I have found a wife for sale, but she costs forty francs. Will you give me the money for charity's sake?' My suspicions were aroused, and on inquiry being made, I discovered that he had had already three wives, all of whom he had beaten to death. The last one, whose winding sheet I had furnished, was a poor girl of seventeen, whom he kicked to death one evening for no other reason than that she had dawdled over her household work. The neighbours were so accustomed to the shrieks and lamentations of the wretched victim that they paid no attention to her cries for help, and the next morning she was found where she had fallen, having died during the night. In addition to the ill-treatment she receives from her husband, as long as he chooses to recognise her, a woman is liable to divorce at any moment, and for no pretext of any kind, and her condition then becomes one of even exaggerated misery. But in Northern Africa we are, so to speak, only at the gate of the great pagan world with all its infamy. The Tuaregs and the Kabyles, the descendants of the ancient Christian population who were driven out and forced into apostasy at the time of the great Mussulman invasion of Africa in the eighth century, may still be said to retain some faint traces of their former Christianity, and form a comparative oasis in the midst of a desert of sin and misery. But among the blacks, farther into the interior, the horrible tragedy assumes yet darker aspects. 'I killed five of my wives during the night,' remarked a Bukumbi chief in the most casual manner to one of the missionaries. Another negro sent his wife to collect fire-wood. She sank up to her arm-pits in a bog, and her screams attracting his attention, he threw her a stick with which to defend herself against the hyenas, and left her till morning, when no trace of the wretched woman was to be seen. Speke, the well-known English traveller, writes from the court of King Mtesa: 'No day has passed without my witnessing the execution of at least one, and sometimes two or three of the unhappy women who compose the King's harem. A cord wound round their wrists, they are dragged to the slaughter, their eyes streaming with tears, and venting their misery with heartrending cries of *Hai Minang! Kabaka! hai n'yavio!*—'Oh, my Lord, my King! Oh, my mother, my mother!' not a hand is lifted to save them, although here and there a remark upon the beauty of some young victim passes current in a low voice among the crowd."

Such is the fate of African women at best, and in their own homes. But when capture and exile are added to their already unspeakable sufferings, when they are snatched from their native villages, bound together, weighed down beneath heavy burdens, driven for weeks and months across the desert to an unknown land, there to be sold in abject slavery among strange masters, one's pen literary refuses to describe the horrors of their situation. Young girls and children, too weak to drag themselves along, left by brutal captors to die by the roadside of hunger or to be devoured alive by wild beasts; babies whose brains are dashed out against a stone before the eyes of their mothers, too incapable from starvation and fatigue to carry both the child and their load of ivory—such are the every day incidents of the slave caravan on its way to the coast, such are but a few of the deeds of bloodshed that cry to Heaven for vengeance, and to men and women whose lot is cast in happier places for sympathy and help, and for at least an effort to raise the poor creatures from the depths in which they are sunk.

Medals of the War of 1812.

The collection of war medals of the late John Oliver, of New York, was sold at auction in London on August 1st. High prices were realized for most of the medals. One memorial of the battle of Chrysler's Landing, with a brooch pin and engraved bars for Queenstown, Ft. George and Stony Creek, fetched 245 shillings. One bar for Ft. Detroit brought 10 guineas. This medal is unique. Two bars for Ft. Detroit and Chrysler's brought £54 each, and a similar bar, with a third bar added for Chateauguay, brought £65. A single bar for the Shannon-Chesapeake fight, very rare, only 49 having been issued, brought only £17. Two bars for the Phoebe's capture of the American frigate Essex brought £15 each. A gold medal of Simon Bolivar's war for Venezuelan independence went for £5.