

The question whether Aunt Mary is at home is never asked. It is known to be a pointless one, as she never moves from her room; so I only inquire of the servant who stands in the hall whether my aunt is better.

"She is about the same—rambling a little the last few days, and not gaining much strength," is the reply I receive; and then I am ushered into her presence.

"How are you to-day, aunt Mary?" I ask cheerfully, making my way to her side.

She raises her withered cheek for me to kiss, and whispers something about there not being much change. Then, looking round, she adds curiously—

"There used to be two of you, I thought. Where is the other? Is she dead?"

Although I know she is not responsible for what she says, I cannot refrain from a startled cry.

"Heaven forbid!" I exclaim. Why should you think that?

"I don't know, my dear. Don't be cross; I didn't know. So many have died and left me. You two are the last relatives I have in the world," she answers, with apologetic sadness.

I stoop down and arrange her cushions, feeling sorry for the poor old woman who has nothing nothing left but life.

"Where is Eva?" says my aunt again, breaking into my train of thought.

"At home. Her lover is spending the day with us, and she stayed with him."

"What! Eva got a lover?"

"You forget, aunt; she was engaged to Mr. Davis Locke six months ago. She is to be married next month."

"You never told me," is the querulous retort.

"You forget," I repeat, patiently.

"Davis Locke! Mr. Davis Locke! Dr. Davis Locke!"

She is muttering one name after another, in low, excited tones, as though trying to recollect something in connection with him. But presently she changes the subject, and begins telling me about herself.

I listen politely, though my thoughts are often wandering, and my replies are not always applicable.

At last she lapses into silence, which is not broken for several minutes. Then she says something which makes my blood run cold.

"And so little Eva is going to marry the infamous Dr. Locke?" she observes, contemptuously.

For a moment I am stunned. Has she by a strange effort of memory recalled the real name of the man who was suspected of having killed his wife by mesmerism so many years ago, or is she only rambling still?

Her next words tell me all.

"A widower, too! They say he murdered his wife, but I don't know. It was never proved, and he went away almost directly. Dear, dear, how strangely things come about!"

"Aunt, are you sure that his name was Davis Locke?"

"Yes, Davis Locke—Dr. Davis Locke. Why are you running away, child?"

But I do not stop to reply; my prejudices are all justified at last, my presentiments explained. I only wonder that I did not recognize him before.

True, he has grown whiskers since then, and his hair is longer; but that should not have been sufficient to disguise him. The engagement shall be broken off at once. I would sooner see my darling lying in her coffin than married to such a man. But, even as I think this, I shudder, and pray that I may not be taken at my word, that it may not come to this dread alternative.

I order the carriage round again at once, and send the servant to my aunt.

It seems ages before the horses are in, so impatient am I to be off; and, even when they are ready at last, the coachman informs me that one is going lame, and must be driven slowly. What a miserable journey this is! We seem to be crawling along. I try to reassure myself by thinking that Eva is not alone with him. There are the servants. But that is a poor comfort when I remember that two have asked to go out this afternoon, and that the others will be in the kitchen busy for a dinner party to-night. The men servants are with me.

I think of every possible misfortune before I reach my wished-for destination, my fears adding to themselves as I proceed. When I am home at last, I jump out without waiting for the footman to descend, and run up the garden to the house, beckoning to him and the coachman to follow. As I approach, I can hear voices and laughter from the servants' down stairs, and for a moment am ashamed of my foolishness, and feel inclined to tell the men to come no farther. But directly I set foot in the hall my agony of mind returns, for a chair is thrown down in the middle of the passage, and on the pale green dado, which is painted by the side of the stairs, there is a mark of five fingers in blood, scarcely yet dry.

My feet seem to acquire wings. It takes me not more than twenty or thirty seconds to look into all the sitting-rooms, and then I find myself before Eva's bed-room door. Here there is a small pool of blood on the white fur mat outside, and I see that the handle of the door is blood-stained as well, as I try in vain to turn it. As I struggle with it breathlessly, the men come up to me, and I call out to them, in the clearest voice that I can command, to burst it open, and let me see the worst at once.

But, in spite of all that I have feared, I am not prepared for what meets my sight now. There on the floor is stretched the lifeless form

of my sister, in a long black dress as I had seen her in my dream; her hair has fallen too, but its gold is dimmed and soiled with blood. Strangest of all, and what impresses me most even in this awful moment, is the fact that there are wounds on her right arm and left shoulder corresponding exactly with the red light that had fallen on her in the church that morning.

With one long, wild shriek I threw myself on the ground beside her; and then, in very mercy, consciousness leaves me, and for a time I know no more.

When I recover I find myself in my own room, the blinds are drawn down, and my maid is moving about on tiptoe. She comes up to the bedside when I open my eyes.

"Have they found him?" I ask feverishly, as in an instant all that has happened flashes across my mind.

About my darling there is no need to ask; the lowered blinds tell their own story; besides, have I not seen her lying dead?

"Whom do you mean, ma'am?"

"The murderer—Davis Locke."

"Hush ma'am! You must not talk of that just yet," she answers uncomfortably, making a movement to go; but I catch hold of her dress.

"Do you think any truth can be worse than this uncertainty? Tell me at once."

"He was found dead on the marshes yesterday. They say he must have fallen into a dike when it was dark. But indeed, ma'am, this is not fit for you the doctor said—"

"How can he have been found dead yesterday, when it was only to-day it all happened?" I interrupt impatiently; then, glancing round the room, seeing the long array of medicine-bottles and glasses, the truth strikes me at last.

"Have I been ill?"

"Indeed, yes, ma'am—worse nor Miss Eva herself's been."

But, even while I am puzzling my poor weak brain in trying to take in this new idea, the doctor comes, and deems it more expedient to tell me all himself then, than let me be worried by a half knowledge of what has occurred.

Eva is not dead; and in my gratitude for that everything else sinks into insignificance. Her wounds had been severe, that on her shoulder causing great anxiety; but now she is out of danger, cured as well of her ill-fated love for the man who would have murdered her.

It had all happened so strangely; and I think the story I told on Christmas Eve played its part in the *de nouement*. If so, I do not regret it, for the short pain my darling suffers now is far better than the life-long misery to which she would have been subjected had she become the wife of Davis Locke.

Almost directly after I had left they had gone into the garden, and, once there, he had commenced by upbraiding her for loving me best, and then had spoken wildly about a love which only death could keep true. By his stronger will he had fascinated her into a spurious passion for himself; and, now that he fancied he saw his influence abating, he tried vainly to persuade her to let him regain it by submitting to his mesmeric powers. She fought against it so strongly that his suspicions were aroused, and he interrogated her angrily for reasons. Then, in explaining, all the truth came out; and she ended by telling him the story that I had told to her.

What he must have felt at hearing the secret of his own life thus ruthlessly exposed who can tell? Suffice it to say that the latent madness of the man broke out, and, drawing a knife from his pocket, he stabbed her several times with demoniacal fury. Then, when she escaped into the house, he leapt the garden wall and fled away from the scene of his intended crime, wandering on aimlessly, until at last he met with his death on the lonely marshes.

It is all so terrible that I can only cover my face and weep silently as I listen; but, when the doctor ceases abruptly, I raise my eyes to see the cause.

There, coming across the room, with an expression of earnest thankfulness on her sweet face for her recovery and mine, is a white-robed girl with bandages still bound about the shoulder and on her arm. In another moment, with a low cry of joy, she has sprung on to the bed beside me; and, holding my pretty Eva in my arms, safe from all the dangers that have surrounded her, I can afford to forgive the dead man for the misery he so nearly caused us.

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

LONDON, January 12.

SOME one has spread the report that Mr. Samuel Morley is to be the next Gladstone peer.

It is estimated that it will cost £14,000,000 to lay down the requisite plant to supply the whole of London with the electric light.

It is stated that the successful plaintiff in the Belt libel case is engaged to be married to a young lady residing in the neighborhood of Gloucester.

GOSSIP says that Her Majesty may open Parliament in person, but it does not give the authority for this assertion, or the reason why the exception should be made this year.

It is the intention of Lord Randolph Churchill to visit Cairo. He will gather up some information there which will be useful to him when Egypt is discussed early next session.

It is stated that a number of Germans resident in London have received an intimation that they will shortly be wanted at home, and that this warning has been followed by a summons to rejoin their colors. If this be so they had better remain where they are.

It is reported that Mr. Gye has at length found "the tenor"—the man as much sought after as is the missing link. We are told that he is equal to Guigliini, has the same golden notes, and is a better actor—the latter he may easily prove to be.

A STATUE of Burns is to be erected in March on the Thames Embankment. The event will be celebrated by a grand dinner to be partaken of solely by Scotchmen. The poet wrote for us all, and receiving the most fervent admiration of the English mind, Englishmen might be invited to do homage to Burns by eating side by side with Scotchmen.

A COUPLE of months are expected to elapse ere the Royal College of Music, for which the Prince of Wales and other members of the Royal Family have worked so hard, will be formally inaugurated. Premises have been secured in South Kensington. Dr. Grove is to be director, for a time at least, and Her. Pauer and Dr. Stainer have been nominated as two out of the three heads of departments.

THE officers selected by Sir Evelyn Wood for service in Egypt have their engagement definitely made for two years, whence it would appear that to such extent at least the military control of Egypt will be in British hands. It seems probable that at the end of that time both Egypt and Europe will have grown so accustomed to the situation that the engagement may be renewed for an indefinite period.

It is worth the consideration of the Lord Chamberlain whether or not he will permit smoking in theatres. It must be an extra danger which the audience contribute, while the way in which actors fling their lighted cigarettes down on the stage, it is true stamping on them, suggests a fire. To prohibit smoking on the stage would largely detract from the histrionic resources of many eminent artists.

THE supreme position of the Archbishop of Canterbury is counterbalanced by the utter deprivation of his wife and children. These are absolutely unprovided for in the scale of precedence, and whilst husband and father yields place to none except those of blood-royal, the wife and daughters must walk after the wives of the younger sons of baronets, or, to reach absolutely the lowest depth, the wives of gentlemen of coat armour.

THE new Law Courts in the Strand are not after all to be completely opened next term, for by order of the Lord Chancellor the Courts of Chancery are to remain at Lincoln's Inn for another legal term. The Courts have been twenty years in building, they have been completed for a couple of months, and now the circumlocution office has still some demands to make, and they cannot be finished in time to allow the Chancery Judges to take their seats ten days hence.

THERE is to be a great struggle this year on the marriage with a sister of a deceased wife question. There is to be much money spent in arousing the country. The standpoint to be taken is this: If we have sanctioned this kind of marriage in the colonies we have shown that there is no moral or religious offence, for not even to satisfy our colonies should we have permitted a social and religious offence. It is said that the Archbishop is favorable to such marriages.

THERE is no discoverable foundation for the statement which has obtained currency from the columns of a London morning paper that Mr. Gladstone will be elevated to the peerage in a short time. No such event will take place for a year at least; or until the expiration of the present Parliament. It is a work of periodic performance to dispose of Mr. Gladstone. It has hitherto been the fashion to relieve the House of Commons of his presence officially by anticipating his resignation; now he is being elevated to the peerage. There is evidently a growing desire that something should be done with the present Prime Minister.

THE outer world is not fully aware of the absurd extent to which the adulation of Mr. Gladstone is carried in Radical meetings. At one of the affairs at which Sir Charles Dilke was trying to do a stroke of business for the party, Mr. Mundella turned up to assist his friend and colleague, and when Mr. Mundella got on the war path, he said that Mr. Gladstone was the "greatest statesman who ever ruled the destinies of England," and that "the last few years of that great life are the greatest heritage of the British nation." These words were not reported. Perhaps they were too much for the stenog-

raphers. Perhaps they kindly toned them down out of consideration for the speaker, who subsequently tapped his forehead and said affairs made him anxious.

THE Duke of Wellington on his high horse on Constitution Hill is not so easily "taken down." It requires some engineering skill to get him away from the ridiculous position in which he has remained so long. From below the operation looks dangerous, and that it requires care may be gathered from the fact that, although workmen have been already employed for some time in preliminary work, another week will be required before the statue can be lowered. When it reaches *terra firma* we shall be able to judge whether its effect has been spoiled, as its designer always declared it was, by being raised to an elevation for which it was never intended. If when on the ground it appears to be invested with no more artistic merit than when in the sky, it had best be sold for old bronze.

THE marriage of Dr. Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, reminds one of a pleasant story in which he was actor. He was dining with the City company which calls itself after the musicians, and wondering at the extremely unliturgical and unmusical character of its Prime Warden. How could such a man become head of a society of musicians? After dinner he tried to solve the question by putting it point blank to his host. "How are you chief of the musicians?" he asked. "Why shouldn't I be?" retorted the jovial old gentleman. "Have been eight year on the court." To whom replied the organist, "But you know nothing about music." "How do you know?" "Come, now!" exclaimed Dr. Bridge, "what are the four resolutions of the dominant seventh?" "The four resolutions of the dominant seventh!" cried the master of the company. "Why, you think that I'm going to reveal the secrets of our craft?"

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC

CAMPANINI is to sing for Mr. Abbey in the new opera house, at \$1,000 per night, appearing ten times each month.

SALVINI is reported as having said, in compliment to American actors, that they have more genius than English players.

OSCAR WILDE has for some time been engaged on a new play for Mary Anderson. It will be finished during the summer, and produced in New York next fall.

SALMI MORSE meets with rebuffs from all sides. His efforts with Mayor Grace in regard to the "Passion Play" were unavailing, as also with the present incumbent, Mayor Edson. He now proposes to put the matter into the hands of the law and, if possible, to fight it out and after all produce the "Passion Play."

IN a note of farewell on leaving San Francisco, Mme. Nilsson-Kouzeaud declares that during her American tour she has met with nothing but kindness from every one she has come in contact with, save one, namely, an "obscure Italian music teacher," who has sent her several impertinent and uncalled-for letters.

MME. MODJESKA, during her sojourn in New York, has been the recipient of many social attentions together with her husband, the Count Bozenta. Her impersonation of "Olette" only served to add to her already extensive repertoire. The version of this play given by Mme. Modjeska is the same as used in London, and Sardou's idea is more closely followed than in the Daly adaptation. The role was created by her in London.

GREAT preparations are being made for the "Corsican Brothers," to be produced at Booth's Theatre, with C. R. Thorn, Jr., and Harry Sts. Maur, F. C. Bangs, George Parker, Emily Rigt and others in the cast. The play will be brought out on a magnificent scale. In the grand ball masque scene will be introduced the Parisian grotesque ballet troupe, with dances of all nations. Over two hundred persons will be required in the representation of the play.

SINCE the days of '49 California has been the field for gold hunters, and the crowd of anxious searchers for the precious metal has never diminished. Prominent among the names of those bound for this goal are the foremost musicians of the world, for none other than Patti, Scalchi, Hawk and Theo. Thomas are under contracts for concert or opera. While en route for California, Mr. Thomas will conduct eleven festivals, in Baltimore, Louisville, Nashville, Memphis, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake, San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon. He will take an orchestra of sixty men, Mme. Rivé-King as pianiste, and a vocal quartette from New York.

YOUNG Mrs. Winthrop is still on the boards at the Madison Square Theatre, having run some four months. Mr. Frederic Marsden's new play for this theatre is already in course of preparation, and will soon be put on for rehearsal. The drama is called "Elsie," being a story of New England country life. A fine part has been constructed for Miss Agnes Booth and a strong "old man's part" for Mr. John Owens or Mr. Coullock. One of the most marked characters is that of a regular "down East" Yankee woman. The management had thought of giving this part to Mrs. Whiffen, but it was considered that an American actress would be more likely to do it justice. Mr. Marsden has been paid \$3,000 for his play.