

CHAPTER II.

A RARE SOCIETY BOUQUET.

SOME now and unroll with me one corner of the still, the silent past, and I shall read you a few pictures in the old time life at Haughton Hall, County Surrey, England.

This one, a twelvth night scene of 1854, will interest us: Scene is one of the drawing-rooms at the fine old stately mansion of grey stone, Elizabethan in its grandeur of tower and pinnacle, its spots of decay lovingly draped by the hand of Dame Nature, ivy constant and clinging as though its robes of green loved the old grey stone. The south wing, built by a Haughton two hundred years ago (for his Spanish bride noble as beautiful, an Espartero by birth) alone is lighted. We shall glance through this window. Ah! a priest of the Anglican Church; before him stands a girl beautiful as an angel; beside her a handsome man, dark and bronzed; on the third finger of her left hand he slips the ring of gold which binds them as closely as its unbroken circle. A sweet woman lying on a lounge with the seal of death on her brow before whom they kneel and receive her blessing. The actors are Ethel Haughton, Captain Vernon, —th Light Cavalry, and the poor invalid who only lived to give her daughter in marriage. On the 27th March, same year, the British Lion and Russian Bear met in combat; our troops went out and among them Captain Vernon, when, sad to relate, his name was one of the first of our brave soldiers on the death-roll at Petropaulovski; we met with a repulse and he fell. His sweet young bride did not long survive him, dying of a bitter loneliness called heartache, leaving a lovely infant, the child Vaura.