

asked her if she "would be a slave?" Daily, he loved her more fiercely, and he felt her eye exercised power over him. It was as if he had indeed caged a dove, and it had changed into a beautiful serpent in his hands. It was to be a battle-ground—this marriage, in which one of them must conquer, but alas! he began to feel Emily had a will of her own. Once bursting those tiny restraints of filial obedience and womanly truth, which she had done by his urgent wooing, the timid woman was a resolute queen.

And so Schrieff loved her the more. A gentle, womanly creature, who would have trembled at his lightest frown, could have only won scorn and neglect from a nature like Carl Schrieff's; but a spirit as fearless as his own, ever on the alert to assert its own freedom, and rebel against his oppressions, had a fascination for the stormy man.

Thus days passed on. No quarrels, and many endearments, but Emily ever strengthening herself by resisting every encroachment of her husband's will: in so subtle and fine a manner, that he never knew how he was worsted.

One evening he came home, earlier than usual, and called "Emily."

No answer.

He called again.

"Mrs. Schrieff says she will be down presently," said the servant.

Several moments passed.

He called again, and then went to the door of their apartment.

"Emily! open the door."

"I am engaged. You can come in presently."

He must either force the door or bear it.

By and by Emily comes forth, looking very beautiful in a flowing pink lawn.—"Carl," says she, "go and brush your hair: I want you to go down to Miss Gore's with me," and she brushes past him—not one feature of her face evincing a knowledge of the fact that he was angry.

He went into the room. He saw the dresses, like fairy robes, hanging in the wardrobe, and the tiny shoes, and the dressing-table with its myriad feminine mysteries, and an air of wondrous neatness in the apartment, and seated himself by the window, which over-looked the beach, and heard the song the waves were singing. Why did she not call him? He bathed his face, and brushing his hair, went down into the sitting-room.

"You are ready?" she said, "come!" and did not even notice the delay. Provoking witch! But ere they had returned from the walk she had charmed him, until he forgot his grievance, for the time. But these things rankled in his heart, sometimes when alone or a fresh wound came. He loved her. She had an affection for him. They fought, yet never had had a word of difference. Oh, these wayward women, what a myriad of arts, offensive and defensive, they possess.

On the morrow they would leave for New Orleans.

XII.

THE MASQUERADE.

Several weeks have elapsed since Maud's birthday fête. It is late in October; and on Christmas Lansing Dacre is to take the heiress of Terreverde to his own heart and hearth.

Is he fickle?

If an admiration of her childish beauty; if a veneration for the simple piety of her life; if regard for her unaffected, truthful womanhood; if a delight in her guileless presence; if the mournful pleasure a jaded man must feel in the pure devotion of a fresh young heart; if a sense of companionship at her quaint marveling as he relateth portions of his life and thoughts and readings, such as one might tell to a sister or a mother, is Love, then Lansing Dacre worthily woos Maud La Grange.

Their courtship was very quiet. When he went away from Terreverde, after a week, Maud wrote to Mentor she was ill, and wanted to see him and Mr. Dacre. Both came, and the Wee Flower that drooped brightened, and one evening Lansing said to Maud:

"Little Sister: we cannot part company. I cannot be here always as your visitor. May I take you to my Maryland home, part

of the year? If we must flit like the birds between the North and the South, at least like the birds we must be mates. Maud, will you marry me?"

And the young mistress of the old Manor House said to him, tremblingly:

"Lansing, I never refused any gift Guardy gave me. I know there are chambers in your heart locked from poor little Maud; but I'll go where the doors are open, and love only you till I die."

That was all. They sought Mentor, hand in hand, and Lansing said:

"My dear old friend, little Maud takes your gift. I wish it were worthier her acceptance. When may we be one?"

"Wherever Maud says, yea."

"Let it be Christmas," answered the Child-Mistress; "for Toty will be here, and my people will have holiday for the week."

"My people!" If the unworthy shopmen who have mortgages on these poor slaves, but knew the meaning of those words! "My people!" if the cold North knew the glowing, queenly, tender affection between the mistress and the dusky serf! "My people!" if the wide world comprehended all the term implied in the golden, far South-West, it would be better for humanity.

Strange anomaly!—the very men who have battled most manfully against *abus* in the system, are the very men the world calls "rebels," "traitors;" and those who recognise in Southern Serfdom *only* chattels, have been, and ever will be loudest for "the Union," and the Northern Whip upon the Southern Back! Every *ref* *rm* Slavery has, or can know, has originated with the brave, true men, to whom Gold or Blood is Dross and Water, so the South can be known of all men by her works!

..... I said some weeks had passed away. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schrieff, and Toty and the Colonel are at the Arcade Hotel, under the charge of Mrs. Colonel Gracie; and as the pet is by to watch her father, and his better-half only doles him out a half-eagle daily, the Colonel rarely runs behind his cash account more than fifty cents *per diem*, which deficiency his pet contrives to make good. Maud La Grange, her cousin Helen, and her Governess, with Chloë and Abraham, and four family servants, as well as Mentor, and his young friend, are all at the St. Charles. Lansing's body-servant, old Uncle George, or "Gemmen George," as the darkies at Chester Hall, all call him, has arrived by the aid of no other care than a certified pass from his master, and that venerable darkie and Uncle Abe are very fast friends, and discuss the approaching union of their master and mistress with the same interest that the flunkies about Court speak of the wedding of the last Princess who went abroad, and with a similar respect. Indeed these dark appendages to lighter greatness shine by a reflected light from their owners, and it has frequently happened in the South that colored gentlemen have come to blows, on account of a diversity of opinion between them upon the respective glories of their sovereigns. No doubt, a person of African extraction born free, would feel that this was degrading; but then these people were born in a different clime and condition, and view Life from the Southern stand-point; and while we would indignantly protest against the enslavement of a freeman of *any* color, we cannot pity those who are proud and happy in that condition in which it has pleased God to call them, nor believe that the slave to savage masters is injured by being transferred to Christian, humane serfdom.

..... Everybody was preparing for the grand masque that is to occur this evening at the *Salon des M*——. No less than three hundred invitations have been issued, and among the company will be names known and honored from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. Col. W——, of Texas, Mr. L—— and Major S——, of South Carolina, General B——, of Louisiana, Col. T——, of Mississippi, and a score of others will be present, whose names now fill the public prints of Europe and America. It is almost needless to remark, that no persons are admitted until they show credentials, and that the company comprises people who have *entre* to the circles of any civilized land as "respectable," at least.

What a gorgeous scene! The frescoed hall is lighted by three large chandeliers, and from the alcoves are branches giving light. And yet each burner is so softly shaded, that this blaze of gas offers no painful sensation to the eye. The walls are hung with evergreens, and flowers are visible in marble vases from every niche above the side-lamps.

The costumes are generally plain, costly and magnificent in their simplicity. There is Night, clad in dark crape, with silver stars from her veil that falls almost to the floor, and her mask is of black silk, which does not conceal the high narrow forehead, and the close observer cannot fail to note stray tresses of beautiful amber hair. Do you suppose that woman could walk across the floor, and that Lansing Dacre would not recognise Emily Hazleton Schrieff?

Look at that pretty fairy, with her crown of leaves and simple dress of cloud-like blue, and see her move with her tiny stateliness, and tell me, if despite the green mask, it is not Maud La Grange?

But who is this, clad in funeral weeds, with a form like a Peri and grace like a Gypsy Queen, that seems to ever hover about Night and yonder Soldier of Fortune? If you had asked Inia, the fortune-teller, she might have informed you; but not even the Master of Ceremonies knew her other than as Madame Lavestiel, a wealthy widow in New Orleans for the season. She will go away ere the ball is ended, or the supper announced, or the masks removed, for Carl Schrieff might betray by some sudden exclamation the presence of his Indian wife.

Wife not by law, wife not by the statutes; but wife by the Indian usage and in the eyes of Christians who believe the marriage bond indissoluble. Why does Inia's daughter hover about his pathway? Is Nemesis in the track of the dark, cruel man?

That Doctor of Salamanca surely must be Egbert Mentor, and that Oxford Student may be his youthful friend; but it must be remembered that in the motley costumes only Mentor knew Dacre and Maud, and she knew Guardy, but not her betrothed husband, until by instinct she recognised him.

Toty wore the robes of a Tyrolean peasant girl, and was puzzling her little wits to discover Maud La Grange.

The Soldier of Fortune, approaching the Fairy, leads her to the dance, when the Little One says:

"I want to wait," and declining the offered hand she trips up to Night, and the following discourse ensues:

NIGHT—"Why do you not dance?"

FAIRY—"I don't like Soldiers of Fortune."

The Oxford Student pines, and says:

"Which of you ladies may I claim for the quadrille?"

Maud trembles, for *she* knows that hand. Emily is in a delirium of anxiety.

He does not know little Maud; and he leads Emily to the dance, and Maud approaches the Doctor of Salamanca, and he feels the Little One is weeping under her mask. *He has seen it.* But then Dacre knows not it was his betrothed wife he deserted to dance with Emily.

A waltz follows the quadrille, and without taking their seats the dancers join the waltzers. Dacre, as he encircles her waist, feels a strange thrill, and the truth flashes on him, as if by lightning. He would have fallen, but the Soldier of Fortune catches him in his arms, and seating his wife leads Lansing out into the balcony, and offers him a glass of water.

But as he raises it to his lips, the lady clad in funeral weeds brushes by, as if accidentally, and dashes it to the ground, and then in very deep tones says, "pardon me: I will get you water."

And she takes no notice of Schrieff, but leading Dacre to the ante-room, gives him to drink from flagons of water and wine, and leads him again to the waltz.

The beauty of this woman's movements no words can paint. Nearly as tall as Lansing, she was so faultless in her exquisite symmetry of proportion, that she towered as a queen. How the music seemed but as the breeze that wafted them in graceful undulation, and how many eyes, peering through

dark masks, marvelled at the poetry of that lady robed in funeral weeds.

It was not long after the waltz was ended ere this strange being brought Lansing and Emily together again, and almost forcing him to escort them both, led them to an ante-room, that was empty and deserted, when she suddenly vanished.

LANSING.—"Where is my other companion?"

EMILY.—"Night is very dismal to a gay student like yourself."

LANSING.—"It was not always so. But when the stars burn out, men seek solace in books; and Philosophy consoles them when the Poetry of Life is gone."

EMILY.—"But the stars watch over the student, and sometimes wish the eyes were turned to them again. But let us go."

LANSING.—"Yes;" and raising her hand to his lips, under the fringe of his mask, he lightly touched it, and left her as if a surging gulf of fire yawned at his feet.

He sought Mentor. "I wish to find Maud," said he. "There are three figures about her height; but they are always dancing. Oh, Mentor, let me find her; you know her: why did I not know who she was in this throng?"

Mentor was calm: "I will bring her to you; wait here."

"Maud," he whispered, "Dacre does not know you. He is trying to find you. He is wild to dance with you. Will you come?"

"Yes: but I knew him, and he knew her."

That night Lansing, in self-remorse, devoted all his intellect to make Maud happy. He discovered Toty for her, who had thus far defied her own and Mentor's investigations; and finally he led the child out for a German waltz.

How Emily's eyes followed the twain. The little figure in his arms seemed scarcely mortal, and she heeded not that Carl Schrieff scowled beneath his mask. At last, to his surprise, she said: "let us dance," and she took his arm. Carl was delighted. There was a smile under his mask now, for he did not know she wished to follow that youthful couple.

A strange contrast was presented by those four persons. Faster and faster rang the music, and swifter and swifter flew the dancers, yet ever, despite all their wild passion, and strength, and power, the youthful pair flouted from them, here, there, and evaded their pursuit. They seemed to sail through space, now here, now there, across, beyond, away, far off; and never could the eye follow them, for their paths were diverse, here and hereafter.

When the dance was at its height, the Lady in Black might have been seen joining with a gaily-attired stranger in the waltz, and as she approached the door of the ante-room with her partner, they brushed against Schrieff and Emily, as by inadvertence, and in a moment more had disappeared; but Carl staggered and fell upon the floor with a heavy sound.

In a moment every sound of violin and flute had ceased, and the throng rushed to him; but way being made, he was carried to the ante-room, where, after his head had been bathed with water, he opened his eyes, and spoke to his wife.

"I am not well, Emily; we had better go, I fear."

What was that venomous point that stung so, neath his gay domet? Carl Schrieff knew the poisoned dagger, fine as a needle, well. Delay was death, indeed. A moment might win or lose his life. "Fool the antidote!"

(TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.)

Eion Bourcicault has had a single and elegant copy of "Colleen Bawn," printed at the Dublin University press, with likenesses of himself and wife in character. This is to be a present to the Queen of England.

Little do the ladies who wear silk velvets know the wretchedness of those who weave them. It is a laborious task to watch, mend and regulate the thousands of threads in the warp, and small are the wages paid.