

"Mother! mother!" he cried in anguish. "I am yours—wholly, devotedly yours! Why do you torture me thus?"

"I will not torture you more," she said wearily, in a feeble tone. "I ask only one thing of you, let me never hear again the name of that wretched girl who has brought all this woe on this house; let her name never be spoken on this place by man, woman or child. Like a thief in the night! Ay, a horse thief!"

Felipe sprang to his feet. "Mother!" he said, "Baba was Ramona's own; I myself gave him to her as soon as he was born!"

She Senora made no reply. She had fainted. Calling the maids, in terror and sorrow Felipe bore her to her bed, and she did not leave it for many days. She seemed hovering between life and death. Felipe watched over her as a lover might; her great mournful eyes followed his every motion. She spoke little, partly because of physical weakness, partly from despair. The Senora had got her death blow. She would die hard. It would take long. Yet she was dying, and she knew it.

Felipe did not know it. When he saw her going about again, with a step only a little slower than before, and with a countenance not so much changed as he had feared, he thought she would be well again, after a time. And now he would go in search of Ramona. How he hoped he should find them in Santa Barbara! He must leave them there, or wherever he should find them! never again would he for a moment contemplate the possibility of bringing them home with him. But he would see them: help them if need be. Ramona should not feel herself an outcast so long as he lived.

When he said, agitatedly, to his mother, one night, "You are so strong now, mother, I think I will take a journey; I will not be away long—not over a week," she understood, and with a deep sigh replied: "I am not strong; but I am as strong as I shall ever be. If the journey must be taken, it is as well done now."

How was the Senora changed! "It must be, mother," said Felipe, "or I would not leave you. I will set off before sunrise. so I will say farewell to-night."

"But in the morning, at his first step, his mother's window opened, and there she stood, wan, speechless, looking at him. "You must go, my son?" she asked at last.

"I must, mother!" and Felipe threw his arms around her, and kissed her again and again. "Dearest mother! Do smile! Can you not?"

"No, my son, I cannot. Farewell. The saints keep you. Farewell." And she turned that she might not see him go.

Felipe rode away with a sad heart: but his purpose did not falter. Following straight down the river road to the sea, he then kept up along the coast, asking here and there, cautiously, if persons answering to the description of Alessandro and Ramona had been seen. No one had seen any such persons.

When, on the night of the second day, he rode up to the Santa Barbara Mission, the first figure he saw was the venerable Father Salvierderra sitting in the corridor. As Felipe approached the old man's face beamed with pleasure, and he came forward tottering on a staff in each hand. "Welcome, my son!" he said, "Are all well? You find me very feeble just now; my legs are failing me sorely this autumn."

Dismay seized on Felipe at the Father's first words. He would not have spoken thus had he seen Ramona. Barely replying to the greeting, Felipe exclaimed: "Father, I came seeking Ramona. Has she not been with you?"

Father Salvierderra's face was reply to the question. "Ramona!" he cried. "Seeking Ramona! What has befallen the blessed child?"

It was a bitter story for Felipe to tell; but he told it, sparing himself no shame. He would have suffered less in the telling had he known how well Father Salvierderra understood his mother's character and her almost unlimited power over all persons around her. Father Salvierderra was not shocked at the news of Ramona's attachment for Alessandro. He regretted it, but he did not think it shame, as the Senora had done. As Felipe talked with him he perceived even more clearly how bitter and unjust his mother had been to Alessandro.

"He is a noble young man," said Father Salvierderra. "His father was one of the most trusted of Father Peyri's assistants. You must find them, Felipe. I wonder much they did not come to me. Perhaps they may yet come. When you find them, bear them my blessing, and say that I wish they would come hither. I would like to give them my blessing before I die. Felipe, I shall never leave Santa Barbara again. My time draws near."

Felipe was so full of impatience to continue his search that he hardly listened to the Father's words. "I will not tarry," he said. "I cannot rest till I find her. I will ride back as far as Ventura to-night."

"You will send me word by a messenger when you find them," said the Father. "God grant no harm befallen them. I will pray for them. Felipe," and he tottered into the church. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Perfect love casteth out fear." A man of pleasure is a man of pains. Scrupulosity is the sign of a little mind. He who despises the poor despises Jesus Christ.

One pound of learning requires ten pounds of common sense to apply it.

When we give ourselves up to our passions we plant thorns round our heart.

When faith grows weak, all virtues are weakened; when faith is lost, all virtues are lost.

Every system which places religious education in the background is pernicious.—*Gloucester.*

He that would relish success to purpose should keep his passion cool and his expectations low.

We are in the world but not of it, if we say every day of our lives: "Our Father who art in Heaven."

He who does his best, however little, is always to be distinguished from the man who does nothing.

Don't force books on people; remember that every man has a taste of his own as well as you have.

Recounting our annoyances and troubles only augments them—perplexities grow no less by brooding over them.

When tribulations, infirmities, and contradictions come we must not away in a fright, vanquish them, like men.

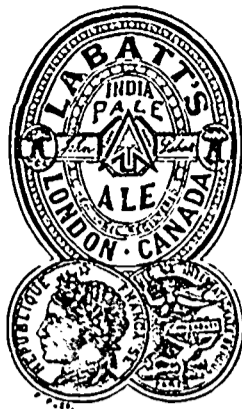
We prove our attachment to God more in suffering a great deal for His sake than in working a great deal for His glory.

The man who is for ever trying to say something sarcastic may be popular to some extent, but generally it is only with himself.

We are indeed happy when we are happy in the highest blessings life can give us—the perfect love and sympathy that stimulates our own to healthful activity.

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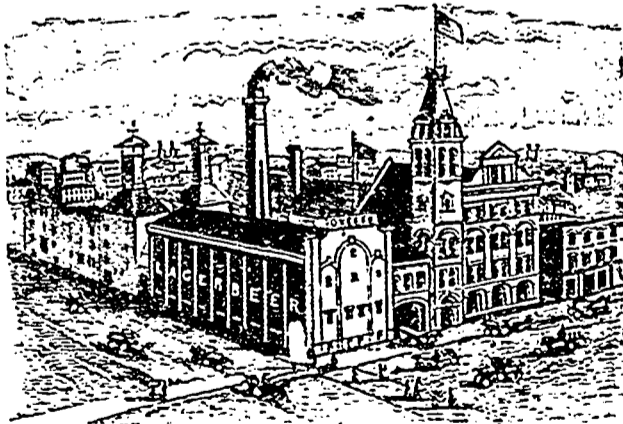
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