

But kinder thoughts soon came to chase those of anger and wounded pride away.

"Poor lass, she's making for herself a pillow of thorns," he thought, compassionately, but he made no further comment at the time, for Sidney Belmont was in the garden.

He was too honorable, too upright to try to influence the rector for or against his brother.

If things had been different, if Lady Helen had been free, then he might have tried to win her himself.

This, however, was just.

And the subject of their thoughts that night sat in her own room when the guests had departed, brushing her long, dark hair, and wondering what her brother Sidney and all her relations would say when they knew that she had accepted the rich cotton spinner.

She had told him he might hope, and that, to her mind, implied everything.

Was it equally blinding upon him, do you think?

I am afraid not.

At least, it would not have been, if the consciousness had not been over present with him that the prize was worth the winning, and another was waiting and ready to snatch it up if he showed the least intention of relaxing his hold.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

The winter days had shortened and darkened; Christmas was close at hand—indeed, it was but the Sunday preceding it, and Florence Carr seemed to have settled down to her new life as though years, instead of but days and weeks, had passed since she first entered upon it.

If you will go with me into the bedroom of the two girls, you will see, spread out upon a couple of chairs, Moll Arkshaw's blue satin dress, elaborately trimmed with white lace.

And a very showy affair it is, too, more showy than elegant, that pale, silent girl, her companion, thinks.

But she does not give expression to her opinion.

Moll considers the dress a simple piece of perfection, believes she will be irresistible in it, and that something she has long hoped for will be the result of wearing it.

It is Sunday.

The busy loom is silent; the shuttles no longer rush backwards and forwards on their monotonous errand.

The sound of the hammer, the short and puff of the steam engine, and the volumes of smoke issuing from the tall chimneys—all for the time is taking its seventh day of rest.

Likewise the thousands of human bees have ceased their toil.

But for the event that Moll is looking forward to so eagerly.

The fact is—I am obliged to confess it—Moll had a sweet heart, "a chap," as she called him, and this "chap" was not only a sober, steady, good-looking fellow, but a "fitter," and as such earning four to five pounds a week.

It is not an ordinary thing for a fitter or mechanic to look after a mill hand when thinking of taking a wife.

Such things do happen, of course; still they were sufficiently rare to make Moll and her friends consider him a good catch, and make her likewise anxious to secure him.

To do Moll justice, however, it was the man, not what he could make, that she cared about, and without doubt she would have preferred him had he not been able to make one quarter of his usual income.

William Bolton—Bill he was sometimes called—was thin, wiry, and active, but little above the medium height, with sandy, almost red hair, sharp, brown eyes, and a small scrubby beard, that seemed to have grown to one particular angle, and there stuck, refusing to increase up even a quarter of an inch.

In consequence, too, of its being of different shades, some lighter and some darker than his hair, it at the first glance gave you the appearance of being streaked with grey, though it really was not so.

He was engaged in Gresham and Powell's ironworks, and, as I have hinted, held a very good position there.

It was not so much that he wanted a wife, for his mother lived with him, as that he had been struck by Moll Arkshaw's fine, comely face and general personal attractions.

But even, then, his attentions had been very irregular, and I am afraid that had he been less eligible, or had Moll cared less about him, she would have sent him to the right-about, and that very quickly, too, some time ago.

Lately, however, he had considerably improved.

Three times a week, at least, you would have found him in the evening after he had been some to his early supper and dressed himself, either at Moll Arkshaw's cottage, or taking her and her companion to a concert, theatre, lecture, or music hall, or for a walk.

Not that Moll quite approved of a party of three, or that Florence ever showed the least gratitude for the lodgings, or care for the amusement, but it did seem an unkind and selfish thing to leave the poor girl at home alone.

And William made such a point of her going, that there was nothing for it but submission, though Moll was heard to say more than once that two was company and three none.

This matter had progressed until this Sunday, and Mrs. Bolton—William's mother—had at last been coerced and convinced by her son that the two girls to come and take tea with her.

Moll accepted the invitation eagerly; it was what she had long wished yet scarcely dared to hope for, and almost to her equal satisfaction, Florence declined to go.

Not that Moll was jealous of the girl she had befriended and sheltered.

To do her justice, the idea never entered her head, partly, perhaps, from the innate consciousness she had that Florence was of another stamp, had received a very different education, was proud as Lucifer, and silent and reserved as she was, poor and destitute, considered herself a lady.

So Florence declined, for the fact is, the sister's continual presence greatly bored her, and often when he came in the evening, she would go into the bedroom under pretence of having work to do, and remain there in the cold until he was about to go, and she was called in to say good-night.

She was thankful, on this cold, black-looking Sunday, that Moll was going out, and that she would thus be alone.

Alone with her own thoughts, and those far from pleasant ones.

And yet alone, with no human eye to watch and marvel at the agony, fear, and remorse that wrung her youthful heart.

So young, so beautiful, what could she have done or suffered in her short life to convulse her like this?

Time, the traveller of all mysteries, will no doubt in its own season, unfold this one.

"There's best put on three bonnet, and come wi' us, lass. The boggart (bog) o' come and take thee away if thee bides here alone," said Bolton, when Moll, all ready dressed, appeared in the room in which he was waiting, followed by Florence, who had been helping her to dress.

"No, thank you, Mr. Bolton," was the calm reply. "I shall be glad to be quiet and alone for a time, the noise of the mill seems to be ringing and buzzing in my ears even now. Besides, it is very kind of you and Moll to ask me to go, but I am quite sure you neither of you want me. Two is company, and three none, you know, any day."

This was said with a rare smile. A smile that seldom came to that sad face, but when it did come it transformed her, made her look absolutely beautiful, and as she stood there, dressed in a plain black dress of some cheap material, without the least ornament, save a narrow strip of white lace round the throat, yet sitting her rounded figure perfectly, she was as great a contrast, as it was possible to imagine to the red-faced, unpollished Moll, whose showy dress evidenced a far greater amount of expenditure than of taste.

"We Lancashire folk aren't given to saying what we doesn't mean, lass. My mither'll be root glad to see thee, or she wouldn't have axed thee."

"Thank you, I can't go to-day; I want rest and quiet. Good-bye; a pleasant visit to you, Moll."

And so saying, she nodded to the couple, then took her seat by the fire, and a book in her hands, showing plainly her intention of not being persuaded to accompany them.

So the couple departed, Moll radiant and showy enough, as the comments passed upon her and her companion while they walked through the street amply testified.

But I am afraid Bolton was not quite as appreciative as he should have been after so much care and money had been lavished on the blue satin simply to charm his eyes.

The fact is, another form, try to drive it away as he would, rose before him.

And that form was attired plainly in black, and was, he felt assured, sitting by the fire, her eyes fixed upon it, as though she were trying to read some secret which the burning gas and fuel hid from her.

They had walked on a little way in silence—not an uncommon thing with lovers, by the bye.

It is only an acquaintance or friend that feels it incumbent upon him or her to keep the ball of conversation going, and not allow it to come to an awkward pause.

Silence at times is more expressive than speech, especially if Cupid is playing up some of his pranks, and this may have been the origin of that wise old adage which tells us—"Speech is silver, but silence is gold."

In any case, the golden period had lasted so long, that Moll was beginning to wonder at the cause of it, and to feel a little vexed even, despite the grandeur of her new satin, when her companion said, as though speaking his thoughts aloud—

"I canna mak' her out."

"Mak' who out?" asked Moll in surprise.

"The lass Flo, as yo' calls her."

"Why, what in her can't I see mak' out? The lass is quiet enough."

"Aye, she be quiet, but she beent like other lasses. There be sommat about her as I canna fathom."

"Well, I wouldn't try if I wad yo'," was the reply. "She's got some secret, no doubt, but while she likes to keep it, and behave her own decent as she do, it be no business o' mine nor yoorn."

"There's root, lass; it beent no business o' mine. But how bonny thee's looking, lass, a mon might go a day's journey and not pick up wi' such a wench as thee."

"Eigh, doot a think so, lad? Aw's root glad thee likes my gown. It's a bonny un, ain't it?"

"Aye; but it's none so bonny as the piece Moll had on. It was the root with a glance that made Moll's cheeks take a still deeper hue

and make a response that to any ears but those accustomed to the peculiar Lancashire dialect would have been completely unintelligible.

Meanwhile the subject of William Bolton's thoughts sat as he imagined her, indeed, almost as they left her, by the fireside, and alone.

She held a book in her hand, but she could scarcely have been reading it, for she never once turned the page.

The December day darkened, the shades of evening set in, and the clock striking five, added to the kettle on the hob boiling over, reminded her that it was her usual tea time; and she rose to her feet, pulled down the blind, so that she might not be observed by passers by, then made herself a cup of tea, and sat down again by the fire, and by no other light, to drink it.

True, she had placed a candle ready for lighting upon the table, but she had had to practise economy lately; for though Moll Arkshaw could dress in satin on Sundays, it had taken a good many hours' work to buy the dress in question, besides a certain amount of pinning, which her own small earnings, though not being used to the work, had made it impossible for her to prevent.

Besides, she did not care for a light.

It seemed to imply the necessity of doing something, even if it were only to read; and in the luxury of being a few hours alone, letting the mask fall for a time from her, she wished to do nothing but review her life, her present position, and think.

More than once she had been obliged to replenish the fire, or it would have burnt itself out.

But she had not lighted the candle. The cup, saucer, and teapot still remained on the table; the clock had struck eight, and the girl was roused from her reverie by hearing, as she believed, a step outside the window.

Not a singular thing, you may think, with the cottage standing as it did in a lane, where though dark, people were often passing to and fro; but you will remember a square of garden, fenced from the road by wooden gates and railings, shielded it from the pathway, and consequently some one must have come in on purpose, perhaps was watching her through the blind, which she now perceived she had not partially drawn.

Her previous mood and solitary musings may have made her nervous, no doubt have done so.

Besides, she is quite alone, with no other human being save this intruder, as far as she knows, at least, near her.

She fixes her eyes with a kind of horrible fascination upon the window, while her ears are strained to listen to every sound.

Is she mistaken?

No.

A man's face is there, pressed close against the panes of glass.

A man's face, she is sure, though in the dim, uncertain light she cannot recognize it.

She opens her mouth to scream, but the sound dies away in her throat before a word is uttered.

With a kind of horrible fascination, she continues to gaze upon that face, like a helpless bird under the influence of a serpent.

But it moves.

There is the sound of a footstep, creeping as though it would tread lightly outside the house, and the spell is broken by the removal of those eyes.

She springs forward to the window, and completely covers it with the blind.

She knows positively that it is bolted.

In her fright about the window, she had forgotten the door, which like many of the kind in the country, could be opened from the outside by lifting a latch.

Forgotten it, but is opened now, and a man, she thinks a stranger, walks into the room, closing the door behind him.

(To be continued.)

GUMBS' DOG.

Gumba who lives next door to us, has bought a dog. He needed a new one. His last dog used to bark all night in the yard until, in frantic desperation, we would shy boots and cologne bottles and furniture at him. But he always went on worse; and in the morning Gumba would come calmly out and gather up those missiles and carry them into the house. He has more than twenty pairs of our boots and slippers in his possession besides chair-legs and cakes of soap and hair brushes and match-safes and towel-racks, and he never had the manliness to offer to give them back. On the contrary, he trained that dog to sit by the front gate and to seize us by the leg when we came out, three or four times a week, apparently for the purpose of securing more boots. But we poisoned him one morning, and the next morning Gumba threw the carcass over into our yard. We threw it back. Gumba returned it. We both stayed at home that day, and spent the time handling the dog to one another over the fence. Then we hired an Irishman to stand there night and day to return the dog to Gumba's yard. Then Gumba also hired an Irishman. It was exhilarating work. The corpse probably traversed the fence 6,000 or 7,000 times in the twenty-four hours. He must have become familiar with the route, even if he was dead. At last he wore away with so much handling, and on the last day the Irishman while carrying the hours dinging only the tail at one another.

One Irishman at last bored the tail and resigned. And now Gumba has got a new dog. It will be excessively singular if we do not find that that dog some evening soon with a codfish line and a piece of beef, run him up all of a sudden into our window and launch him into the snow. No dog owned by a man named Gumba will exult over us.

A WINTER WEDDING.

(At Chislehurst Church, January 9, 1873.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

It fled away in a clang of bells,
Marriage bells,
On the wings of the blue, that sinks and swells,
That bold, weak, fate-struck, suffering soul,
Whom Christ wash clean, and God make whole!
And we stand in the light of two happy faces,
Mayhap, some wandering angels say,
Stop and say,

As through the gloom they carry away
That bodiless spirit to Him who knows—
He only—whither the spirit goes;
"God give them all that the dead man lacked
(As men dare judge him) in thought, word, act;
Deny them all that to him was given,
Lest earth's doors opened, shut doors of heaven."

Blessed is the bridegroom without crown or land;

Blessed is the bride with the ring on her hand.

Two happy hearts whom on heart embraces;
And we hear the peaceful organ's sound,
And the angry storm sweeps harmless round;
Blessed is the bridegroom though the heavens
are dun;

Blessed is the bride whom no sun shines on.
Peal, ye joy-bells, peal through the rain,
Blinding rain!

God makes happiness, God makes pain,
Summer and winter a good tree grows,
A strong soul strengthens through weal and woes.

"Be not afraid," says the wild sobbing wind;
"Weep," sigh the clouds, "but the blue is behind."

Blessed is the bridegroom under shower or sun,

Blessed is the bride whom Love's light shines on.—Good Words.

For the Favorite.

WINONA;

OR,

THE FOSTER-SISTERS.

BY ISABELLA VALANCOY CRAWFORD,

OF PETERBORO', ONT.

Author of "The Silver's Christmas Eve," "Wrecked; or, the Rosclerries of Mistree," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FATE OF MR. CECIL BERTRAND.

"You wicked, unprincipled boy!" cried Cecil, flushed like a wild rose, and angry sparkles in her violet eyes; "wanting to marry your cousin! You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Ashamed of myself!" exclaimed Percy Grace. "Cecil, you glittering Vivian, is this the cynicism of a girl or the heartless thrust of a—jilt?"

"Upon—my—word!" said Cecil, breathless, her eyes wide with astonishment, her little hands uplifted, "you dreadful story! I treated you like a brother, and you turn on me like this. Why, you know as well as I do that I am to marry Mr. Horneyblow next week."

It was most pitiable to see the boy writhe and cower under this sudden lash; his sensitive face paling to ashes as he looked at her, lovely, audacious, triumphant in her young beauty and its cruel power over him. He put out his hands towards her as though she stood in a mist whose leagues away.

"Cecil!" he gasped, "have mercy. Remember how you have led me on to this."

"I led you on," said Cecil; "you silly creature, because I taught you to dance and told you where to buy your neckties, did you expect me to be so dreadful as to dream of marrying my cousin? Why, all my wedding things are ready, and every one says I am just one of the luckiest girls out. Old Horneyblow owns two millions, and he's seventy if he's a day. I wonder how those odious widow's caps will suit me."

She looked at him, sparkling and dimpling with laughing delight and triumph.

"My guerilla dash to aunt's, in New York, was a success, you see," she said. "All the girls are just dying with envy, and it's the jolliest thing out to teach them while mama is showing them my 'rouseau and jewels. They're fit for a princess—"

He looked round the bowery little drawing-room, bright in the morning sun, and he saw that her words were true. It was one graceful litter of rare things, bright and white as for the bridal of a fairy queen. Over the arm of the chintz couch hung a great veil of priceless Mechlin, and resting on it a coronal of orange-