

She closed the gate, and Edward watched her dark, shrouded figure slowly threading the winding path, and almost imagined he had been with one of those sybilline priestesses, who opened their lips in prophecy, and shadowed the mystic outlines of futurity. 'Whatever she may be,' thought he, 'I will be guided by her counsel, and abide by the result.'

As he drew near his own home, and saw the lights shining so quietly and brightly through the trees, that quivered gently as in a golden shower, and thought how tranquilly the hearts of its inmates now beat, secure from the fear of being driven from that love-hallowed home—when he reflected that for this peace, so beautifully imaged in a scene before him, they were indebted to the very being whose recollection excited the throbbings of a thousand pulses in his heart and in his brain,—gratitude so mingled with and chastened his love, that every breathing became a prayer for her happiness, even if it were to be purchased at the sacrifice of his own.

He saw Clara through the window, seated at a table, with some object before her, which was shaded by the branches, but her attitude was so expressive, that he stood a moment to contemplate her figure. Her hands were clasped in a kind of ecstasy, and her cheeks were colored with a bright crimson, strikingly contrasting with their late pallid hue. Something hung glittering from her fingers, upon which she gazed rapturously one moment,—then, befitting forward the next, she seemed intent upon what was placed before her. He opened the door softly; she sprang up and throwing her arms around him cried in accents of hysterical joy—

'Dear brother—the trunk is found—there it is, oh! I am so happy!' And she wept and laughed alternately.

There indeed it was—the identical trunk—whose loss had occasioned so much sorrow, with its red morocco covering and bright nails untarnished. Edward rejoiced more for Clara's sake than his own—for her remorse, though salutary to herself, was harrowing to him.

'Explain this mystery, dear Clara, and moderate these transports. How have you recovered the lost treasure?'

'Oh! it was the strangest circumstance! Who do you think had it, but Mrs. Clifton, that angel sent down from heaven, for our especial blessing.'

You know I went there to-day, about the time you took the walk in the woods. My heart was so full of grief for my folly, and gratitude for her kindness, I thought it would have burst, and I told her all; no, not quite all—for I could not bring myself to tell her that it contained your property: her eye seemed to upbraid me so for betraying the trust;—but again it beamed with joy, because she could restore to me both sacred relics.'

Here she held up the beads, now a thousand times more precious to her than all the chains in the world.

The pedlar called there, after he left me. She recognized the trunk; as it bore the name of a friend.'

Edward's cheek burned with emotion, for his own name—Edward Stanley—was wrought upon the velvet lining, but Clara went breathlessly on.

She gathered from him the history of the beads, and purchased them both, that she might on some future day have the pleasure of restoring them. She understood the sacrifice my foolish vanity had made, and anticipated the repentance that would follow. Is she not a friend, the best and the kindest? and ought we not to love her as our own souls? And can you forgive me, Edward—will you forgive me, though I fear I never shall be able to pardon myself?'

'Forgive you, my sister? Let me only see once more the sweet, unaffected girl, who was the object of my approbation as well as my love, and I ask no more.'

He now examined the secret recesses of the trunk, and found the papers safe and untouched. Their value transcended his most sanguine expectations. He could redeem the paternal dwelling, meet the demands which had involved them in distress, and still find himself a comparatively rich man.

Clara ran out of the room, and bringing the chain—the 'cause of all her wo,'—she put it in a conspicuous corner of her work box.

'I will never wear this paltry bauble again,' cried she; 'but I will keep it, as a memento of my vanity, and a pledge of my reformation. I will look at it a few moments every day, as the lady did upon the skeleton of her lover, to remind me of the sins of mortality.'

When Clara had left them, with a joyous 'good night,' Mrs. Stanley drew her chair next to her son's, and looked earnestly in his face.

'There is something I ought to mention,' said she, 'and yet I cannot to damp your present satisfaction. I have been told of an intended marriage, which I fear much will disappoint your fondest hopes. I trust, however, you have too much honest pride, to suffer your feelings to prey upon your happiness.'

Edward started up, and pushed his chair against the wall, with a violent rebound.

'I cannot bear it, mother—I believe it would drive me mad after all I have dared to dream to-night. I might, perhaps, live without her, but I could not live to see her married to another.'

Fool, credulous fool that I was, to believe that dotard's prophecy.'

He sat down again in the chair, which Clara had left, and throwing his arms across the table, bent his face over them, and remained silent.

'Alas! my son,' cried Mrs. Stanley, 'I feared it would be so. Mr. Morton feels for you the tenderness of a father, but'—

'Mr. Morton, did you say?' cried Edward, starting up again, at the risk of upsetting chairs, tables, and lamps—'I believe I am out of my senses; and is it Fanny Morton who is going to be married?'

The sudden change in his countenance, from despair to composure quite electrified Mrs. Stanley. She could not comprehend such great and sudden self-control.

'Mr. Morton tells me,' she continued, 'that Fanny is addressed by a gentleman of wealth and respectability, and one who is every way a desirable connexion. He has learned from Fanny, that no engagement subsisted between you, but he seemed apprehensive that your affections were deeply interested, and wished me to soften the intelligence as much as possible.'

Edward smiled. 'Tell Mr. Morton I thank him for his kind consideration, but no one can rejoice in Fanny's prospects more than I do.'

Mrs. Stanley was bewildered, for she had not dreamed of his present infatuation.

'I cannot understand how resignation can be acquired so soon, especially after such a burst of frenzy. I fear it is merely assumed to spare my feelings.'

'I cannot feign, dear mother though I may conceal. Dismiss all fears upon this subject, for were Fanny to live a thousand years in all her virgin loveliness—if nature permitted such a reign to youth and beauty—she would never be sought after as the bride of your son.'

He kissed his mother, and bade her a hasty 'good night,' anxious to avoid explanations on a subject which had already agitated him so much.

The next day, when he reflected on his extraordinary interview with the old lady of the stage coach, and her incredible promises in his behalf, he became more than ever convinced of her mental hallucination. Yet there was too much *method* in her madness, if madness indeed existed, to allow him to slight the impressions of her words. He was now independent, and hopes that before seemed presumptuous, now warmed every pulsation of his being.

'Shall I even now follow the sybil's counsel?' said he to himself, as he bent his steps at evening towards Mrs. Clifton's door, but the moment he entered her presence, Aunt Bridget, her promises, and the world itself, were forgotten. She met him with a smile, but there was a burning glow on her cheek, and a hurried glance of her eye, that indicated internal agitation. She attempted to converse on indifferent topics, but her thoughts seemed to wander, and she at length became silent.

'I saw a friend of yours last night,' said he, with much embarrassment, for he knew not whether his confession were unrevealed. 'She is very singular, but extremely interesting in her eccentricities. Is she with you yet?'

'She is, and will be with us whenever you desire. Yet I would first speak with you, Mr. Stanley, and communicate an intelligence which I trust will not cost me the withdrawal of your friendship. You have known me rich, surrounded with all the appliances of wealth and fashion, and, as such, envied and admired. My fortune has been transferred into the hands of another, and you see me now, destitute of that tinsel glare, which threw a radiance around me, which was not my own. Flatterers may desert me, but friends—I trust I may retain.'

She extended her hand with an involuntary motion, and the glow forsook her cheek.

'Your fortune gone,' exclaimed Edward, 'and mine restored?'

The next moment he was kneeling at her feet. In no other attitude could he have expressed the depth of that passion he now dared to utter.—What he saw he knew not—he only felt that he was breathing forth the hoarded and late hopeless love, of whose extent he had never before been fully conscious.

'Am I then loved for myself alone?' cried Mrs. Clifton; by one, too, from whom I have vainly waited this avowal, to justify my preference?'

She bowed her head upon the hands that Edward was clasping in his own, as if her soul shared the humility of his devotion. Who would have recognized the gay and brilliant heiress, who once revelled in the cold halls of fashion, in this tender and passionate woman?

'Oh!' exclaimed she, when the feeling of both became sufficiently calm for explanation, 'Were I still the child of affluence, I might have vainly looked for the testimony of that love, which the vassal of love was so long a rebel to, to truth and to nature. And now,' added she, rising, 'let me not, in the fullness of my heart's content, forget your old friend, who is waiting no doubt, with impatience, to greet you. You will probably be surprised to learn that she is the lawful inheritor of my fortune, and that all I have been so profusely lavishing, was her just due.'

She smiled at Edward's unutterable look of astonishment, and closed the door. He was left but a few moments to his own be-

wildered thoughts, when the door again opened, and Aunt Bridget entered, in the same ancient cloak and hood, which seemed to be a part of herself.

'Wisest and best of counsellors,' said he, advancing to meet her, and leading her to a seat on the sofa—'to you I owe the blessings of this hour. It was surely a propitious star that shone upon me when I first seated myself beside you that memorable night. Had you not come to prove your claim to her wealth, the spell that bound me would not yet have been broken, and a wall of separation might still have arisen between hearts that have met and blended, and will continue to mingle through eternity!—'

Aunt Bridget turned away her head, and seemed suddenly to have lost the gift of speech.

Somewhat alarmed at her unusual silence, especially as he felt her shaking and trembling under the folds of her cloak, he leaned over her and tried to untie her hood, so as to give her air. Fearing she would fall into a fit, as she continued to tremble still more violently, he burst the ribbons asunder, for the knots seemed to tighten under his fingers; and the cloak, hood and mob cap fell off simultaneously—the large green spectacles too dropped from the eyes, which, laughing and brilliant, now flashed upon his own—and the arms which had been extended to support a far different personage, were folded in transport around the graceful form of Mrs. Clifton.

'Will you forgive me?' cried she, when she raised those beaming eyes from his shoulder, 'the wily deception I have practised? Will you forgive me for continuing a disguise through love which commenced from eccentric motives? Young and unprotected, I have sometimes found safety in this disfiguring garb. Like the Arabian monarch, I like occasionally the covering of a mask, that I may be able to read the deep mysteries of human nature. But my masquerade is over—I have now read all I ever wish to learn.—Promise not to love me less because the doom of riches still clings to me, and I will pledge life and fame, that you shall find in Aunt Bridget, a faithful, true and loving wife.'

AMUSEMENTS OF WAR.—When Louis XIV. besieged Lille, the Count de Brouai, governor of the place, was so polite as to send a supply of ice every morning for the king's dessert. Louis said one day to the gentleman who brought it, "I am much obliged to M. de Brouai for his ice, but I wish he would send it in larger portions." The Spaniard answered, without hesitation, "Sire, he thinks the siege will be long, and he is afraid the ice may be exhausted." When the messenger was going, the duke de Charrost, captain of the guards, called out, "Tell Brouai not to follow the example of the governor of Douai, who yielded like a rascal." The king turned round, laughing, and said, "Charrost, are you mad?" "How, sir!" answered he; "Brouai is my cousin." In the Memoirs de Grammont, you will find similar examples of the amusements of war. You remember that when Philip of Macedon vanquished the Athenians, in a pitched battle, they sent next morning to demand their baggage; the king laughed, and ordered it to be returned, saying, "I do believe the Athenians think we did not fight in earnest."

VESUVIUS.—Extract of a letter from Naples, dated the fifth of January:—"Early in the morning of New-Year's day, we were awakened by a violent explosion like the report of cannon, and soon discovered that it was an eruption of Vesuvius. In half an hour afterwards a dense cloud of smoke and ashes covered Naples, having the same effect, from the electrical fluid issuing from it, as generally precedes a summer storm. Apprehensions were entertained for the city; but the wind changed and carried the cinders towards the shore at Portici. The eruption ceased in the evening, but the detonations re-commenced on the second, and continued throughout the day. The earth was constantly tremulous under our feet. In the evening Vesuvius was all on fire, and the lava flowed down into the plain between Portici and Torre del Greco, committing great ravages. On the third, the mountain became more quiet, and in the evening was not so much inflamed as on the preceding night, but, sent out continual flashes, which is a phenomenon extremely rare. Since yesterday it has been at rest. If the eruption had continued as it began, we should have seen a renewal of what happened in 1822, when, during three days, Naples was covered with cinders, and candles had to be lighted at mid-day."

CAUSES OF CONJUGAL QUARREL.—For Pope's exquisite good sense, take the following, which is a master-piece:—"Nothing hinders the constant agreement of people who live together but mere vanity—a secret insisting upon what they think their dignity or merit, and inward expectation of such an over-measure of deference and regard as answers to their own extravagant false scale, and which nobody can pay, because none but themselves can tell readily to what pitch it amounts to." Thousands of houses would be happy to-morrow if this passage were written in letters of gold over the mantelpiece, and the offenders could have the courage to apply it to themselves.