

sume, he paused before the bookseller's window, in order to contemplate the much longed-for treasure, which he now deemed further out of his reach than ever. But Judge of his surprise when he discovered that this volume was gone out of its usual place, and was nowhere to be seen! Desmoro's heart seemed to sink in his breast as his eyes scanned the several shelves of books, large and small, only to meet with disappointment.

"Some one has bought it at last!" sighed he. "Well, it was such a rare bargain that I don't wonder at its being gone!" And with a deeper sigh than before, the youth proceeded onwards, his spirit full of sadness and sore regrets.

Arrived at his dingy apartment, Desmoro was astonished to find no Mrs. Polderbrant there.

Mechanically he put down his recent purchases, and then, seating himself on a stool in front of the fire, he rested his chin on his two palms, fastened his gaze upon the dying embers in the rusty grate, and silently lamented his hard fate.

He never once thought of the coffee and the butter he had just bought—of the comfortable meal which was now within his reach. His reflections were all on a widely different subject.

Yet there was no atom of selfishness in those sorrowful reveries of his. If he wished to possess money, it was only that he might be able to procure books, procure pens, ink, and paper for Comfort's use—no more, as his own wants and desires were simple enough, and easily gratified.

While Desmoro was thus buried in his musings, the door of the room was opened, and Jellico entered.

The youth started up on the instant, and the warm flood flushed his face as he recognized the worthy manager.

"What is the matter with you, my lad? Are you not well?" queried Jellico.

Desmoro did not answer. His amazed eyes were fixed on a book—on the very volume which was in his thoughts at this moment, now lying on the table before him. He could not move; he felt as if he were transfixed to the spot—as if some sort of enchantment were at work around him.

Presently he rubbed his eyelids, doubting his waking senses, and then he lifted up the volume, and tentatively examined it.

"It's all a dream, isn't it, sir?" he breathed, looking at Jellico, who was standing in dumb wonderment, watching Desmoro's strange actions; "or is it by magic that this book came here?"

"Whatever is the matter with the lad?" queried the manager, laying hold of Desmoro's shoulder and shaking him. "Look me in the face, boy, and don't stare about you in that scared manner. One would imagine that you had just seen a ghost, or something very like it."

Desmoro, who had the volume clutched tightly in his hands, made no reply, but sent his wandering orbs round and round the room, which, to his present disturbed imagination, had suddenly become peopled with all sorts of fantastical forms,—with fairies and elves, goblins and sprites, who were all dancing about him, laughing and grinning at one another, and pointing at him as if they were making him their sport.

Again Jellico shook the youth, who dropped into a chair in an almost powerless state.

At this, the manager began to be somewhat alarmed. Desmoro was shivering all over, and his features were of a deathly hue. A cup, containing cold water, being within Jellico's reach, he gave the youth a draught of it.

Then Desmoro looked up with a clearer countenance.

"Whatever ails you, my lad?" inquired the manager, anxious to learn the cause of his protégé's strange behavior.

Desmoro once more examined the welcome volume.

"Sir, did you bring hither this book?" asked he, still in nervous trepidation, his brow covered with a cold dew.

"That book?" repeated Jellico. "No, lad. I brought no book here!"

"You did not, sir?"

"Not I, indeed!" uttered the other.

"Then how came it here?" returned Desmoro, in great perplexity.

"How came what here?"

"Hume's 'Treatise on Human Nature,' sir," was the simple reply.

"Hume's botheration! I never in my life heard of such a book!"

"Is it possible, sir?"

"What's the lad's brain rambling about, I wonder?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Desmoro, suddenly. "Mrs. Polderbrant—his her work; I see it all now!"

"What do you say you see?" said Jellico, wholly bewildered. "I verily believe, Desmoro, you are taking leave of your reason! Here have I been questioning you this ever so long, without being able to get a sensible word in reply. I can't understand your ways, and beg that you'll change them as soon as you can."

"Please to pardon me, sir, and I'll at once endeavor to explain myself."

"The sooner the better," responded the manager, very bluntly. "Go on!"

After a little hesitation, Desmoro obeyed, and Jellico was put in possession of most of those particulars with which you are already acquainted.

Jellico, who had listened to Desmoro in amused surprise, laughed, saying that it was altogether a most mysterious incident, and that he supposed some sort of magic had been at work in the affair. Mrs. Polderbrant looked like

a witch, he thought, and he had no doubt but that she had been exercising her supernatural powers, and had removed the book from its owner's window, and transported it into Desmoro's hands.

"I wouldn't have anything to do with the thing, if I were you, Desmoro," said the manager, coolly. "I really wouldn't!"

But the lad, all heedless of his companion's words, hugged his treasure to his breast, as if he feared its being rudely torn from him.

"If Mrs. Polderbrant made you a present of that great tome, she has certainly sprung a mine, somewhere," pursued Jellico, jestingly.

"It was to be had at a great bargain, sir," remarked Desmoro—"a very great bargain, sir."

"There—there, that will do!" returned the manager. "Now to other and more important matters. Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's right! Now pay attention to what I am about to say. I have obtained a fine bespeak for next Friday evening, the patronage of no smaller a personage than the mayor of this very town. But his worship has brought me some trouble, for, double the parts as I may, I am afraid I shall not be able to give him the play he desires. Therefore, his absence has crippled me. I have a *Juliet* but no *Romeo*. Now I remember you once telling me that you knew all Shakespeare's plays from beginning to end—consequently you must be up in the character of *Romeo*?"

"I know all the words, sir; but for all that, I dared not undertake to act the part," answered Desmoro, in considerable dismay. "Besides, I am far too young to perform the lover; the people would laugh at me did I attempt to do so, and the whole tragedy would be spoiled through my youth, inexperience, and lack of ability!"

"Ta, ta, ta!" cried Jellico. "Never heed your youth, lad, if you can make anything of the part. And as for people laughing! why, let those laugh who win, say I. I'm sure you're a fine strapping fellow, looking far older than your years; the very figure for a lover, too! Come, you must try the part; who knows what you may achieve by doing so?"

"I have never yet spoken one long speech on the stage. I have only delivered lines and messages."

"Then it's high time you strove to do something more," returned Jellico. "I'm sure you have talents if you will exert them. You have industry in plenty—of that much I am assured—then have some courage as well, and the thing is at once accomplished."

Desmoro was confused, and quite at a loss what to say about the business. The proposed undertaking was one of great magnitude in his eyes, and he shrank at the mere idea of making such an arduous attempt.

But, by dint of much persuasion, Jellico at length prevailed upon our hero to essay the character of the love-stricken *Romeo*, and the tragedy was at once put in rehearsal, and Desmoro's whole attention was, for a time, completely absorbed in practising his several scenes over and over again, and in struggling against all his rising fears of that evening which was fast approaching—the evening of his debut.

"Never mind, my lad," said Shavings, one day, when Desmoro, who had been rehearsing his part to Comfort one day, was speaking of his apprehensions, of his terrors of the forthcoming ordeal through which he was about to pass. "Twelve o'clock must come! Think of that fact when the curtain first rises, when you feel your heart going pit-a-pat underneath your spangled doublet, and you don't know what a slight of consolation it will afford you."

"Hear me through that scene again, will you, Comfort?" said the youth, speaking to that damsel, who was sitting on a stool in their humble lodgings, an open play-book on her knee, her sweet face full of admiration and wonder of Desmoro's powers of declamation.

"Now begin," said the maiden, her eyes still fixed on Desmoro.

"But you are not looking at the book," returned he.

"Because I have no occasion for so doing. I am as perfect in all the parts as you yourself are, and I mean to prompt you at night."

At this, Desmoro opened wide his eyes, while Shavings blinked, rubbed his head, and chuckled merrily.

"What do you think of that, Mr. Desmoro?" he exclaimed, in accents of triumph. "Comfort is for coming out strong, by-and-by, I expect! When do you think you'll be able to attempt *Juliet*, eh?" he added, his orbs twinkling with delight, caused only by his own anticipations.

Comfort blushed very prettily, and nodded her head in a self-satisfied way, as much as to say, "Wait awhile, and you shall see!"

#### CHAPTER VII.

At length the all-important night arrived. The mayor was in his box, and the theatre was crowded in every available part.

The band which consisted of a violin, a trumpet and a drum, now commenced to play "God Save the King," of which the trumpet and the drum had decidedly the best; the tones of the poor fiddle being only heard to squeak out at intervals, and somewhat spasmodically.

But the country folk listened to the music in rapt attention, and rapturously applauded the performers, beating time to the trumpet and the drum, which instrument evidently met with their warmest approbation.

All this while, Desmoro was in the room as-

signed to him and the various stage properties belonging to the establishment. The youth was under the skillful hands of Mrs. Polderbrant, who, herself attired as *Lady Capulet*, was painting his face, blackening his eyebrows, and darkening his upper lip, upon which a slight down was just beginning to appear.

"Now you are as perfect as hands can possibly make you," spoke the 'heavy lady,' adjusting the set of Desmoro's hair. You are a very youthful *Romeo*, I'll admit; but if you act the part well, that's all you have to mind. You look quite eighteen, with this moultache," she added, regarding him critically.

He did not answer a word; at that moment he was too full of anxiety and trepidation to command his voice.

At this instant there came a gentle tap at the door, which being pushed open a little, showed the delicate face of Comfort Shavings.

"May I come in and take a peep at him, Mrs. Polderbrant?" queried the damsel. "Of course, I knew you were here, else I shouldn't have made bold to come," she added, still addressing the grim-visaged matron, who had nodded permission for her to enter.

"Oh, doesn't he look beautiful!" exclaimed the maiden, gazing at Desmoro, and clapping her hands admiringly. "Oh! won't *Juliet* fall really in love with you!"

"*Juliet* had better mind her own business, and do nothing of the sort," retorted Mrs. Polderbrant, testily. "Fall in love with Desmoro! Why, Miss Ormound is thirty, if she's an hour! I wonder, child, to hear you talk such nonsense!"

Comfort colored at this rebuke, and turned aside to hide her confusion. She felt that she had made a foolish speech, and she was very sorry for it.

Desmoro, whose face had brightened, and heart had lightened at the first glimpse of her countenance, now drew near her, and whispered in her ear, "Keep near me, Comfort; I shall have courage while you are within my sight!"

"I am going to stand at the wing, and prompt you, should you need such assistance at any time," was the blushing reply.

"Thank you, Comfort; I'll do as much for you some day."

"You have already done plenty for me, more than I shall ever be able to repay you for."

"What are you chattering there about, Desmoro?" authoritatively demanded Mrs. Polderbrant, who had been contemplating her physiognomy in a piece of looking-glass. "Don't you know that you ought to remain quite quiet, thinking only of your part, never for one instant permitting your mind to wander from it. I once heard the following observations from Mrs. Siddons—with which wondrous actress I have often had the honor of appearing in public. 'Few actors or actresses that talk much in the green-room will ever be heard with any extraordinary pleasure on the stage.' Bear that piece of advice in your minds, young people. Hark! there's the bell, the curtain is going up."

Saying which, Mrs. Polderbrant linked her arm through that of Desmoro; and, without a word more, marched him off to the wings, there to remain until his entrance—now would be given.

Comfort Shavings was standing on the opposite side of the stage, trembling for the success of her kind young tutor, whom she perceived glancing at her from time to time, as if to take courage from her looks.

At length, the waited-for cue was given; and our hero, by whose side Mrs. Polderbrant had sturdily remained, entered and stood before the audience.

In a private box near the stage were lounging a lady and gentleman, both of whom were looking very weary, as if they had come there only to look at others and yawn their time away. The gentleman was in the full-dress uniform of a military officer, and appeared to be somewhat past forty years of age.

The lady glanced at Desmoro; and, being struck by his youthful appearance, and by the peculiar beauty of his face, referred to the play-bill before her, in order to learn his name.

"Most extraordinary!" exclaimed she, aloud, the bill in her hands.

"Eh?" returned her companion, arousing himself, and opening his eyes, which had been closed. "What's extraordinary, Caroline?"

"Why, look here," she returned, giving him the programme, her finger on Desmoro's name.

"*Romeo, by Mr. Desmoro Desmoro*," read the gentleman, in calm syllables. Then of a sudden there was a rush, like fever-heat, to his brain and heart, as a crowd of old memories came surging over him, and his eyes fixed themselves on the printed letters before him.

"Is it not strange to find in a play-bill your name—which is one so very singular?"

"Oh, Desmoro is an old Irish name—a name which, in all probability, does not belong to this young fellow," added he, his lips twitching nervously as he spoke. "Actors rarely play under their own legitimate appellations. For, be they either Brown, or Jones, or Smith, as soon as ever they don the rock and buskin, they become Delorme, Belmonte, and Ambrose."

"Very absurd of them, I'm sure!"

And the lady shrugged her white shoulders, and again lounged back in her chair, looking languidly on the scene, as if it were a positive trouble to her to have to keep her eyes wide open.

But her companion, who was fairly aroused out of his apathy, was now leaning over the front of the box, narrowly watching all our hero's actions.

I have said that this box was close to the stage. Such being the case, the gentleman was near enough to observe Desmoro's every

feature; the color of his eyes, the shape of his mouth, his well-formed nose, his broad white brow, and his glossy hair of a rich auburn hue.

And, powers of heaven, his red hand!

A cry of amazement—almost of pain—rose to the stranger's lips, but it was stifled ere it burst forth, and ended in a deep sigh.

Thus he, sure enough, Desmoro Desmoro, the deserted son, the legitimate child of Desmoro Symure and Anna, his late wife.

Yes, yes; that red hand of his would proclaim his identity when every voice that could do so was stilled.

"You appear to be monstrously interested in the performance," remarked the lady, yawning. "I marvel how you can listen to it! For my part, I thoroughly abhor all Shakespeare's plays, and wonder why we came hither, unless to kill the time, which hangs upon one heavier than lead when one is living in any other place than London or Paris. Do leave off paying attention to those nummers—I'm convinced none of them are worth listening to—and talk to me, else I shall fall asleep here as I sit."

But her companion paid no heed, haterior to her speech, but still kept his gaze fixed on the stage, even though the act-drop had just fallen, and shut out the mimic scene from his view.

"Well, I must say that you excel all others in gallantry," pursued the lady, very frostily. "Pray take me away. I'd rather be moped at home than here, where I am compelled to sit on a hard chair, harkening first to drawling, then to ranting speeches, and afterwards to these horrible, screeching instruments. Do take me away, my dear."

At these words the gentleman turned his head towards the speaker, upon whom he looked with an abstracted air, as if his thoughts were all far away at the moment. He did not speak—he felt as if he had no breath to do so, and his brain was reeling round and round.

The lady, looking quite out of temper, now rose and gathered her cashmere about her.

"Eh, are you cold, Caroline?" he asked, recalling his thoughts, at the same time rising and assisting her with her shawl.

"I'm going home," pouted she.

"Not yet, surely? The first act of the play is only just over."

"Well, and what of that, if I feel weary of the thing?" she rejoined, crossly.

"But you forget, Caroline, that the carriage was not ordered until ten o'clock."

"Provoking!" exclaimed he, throwing herself back again into her chair. "Why did you bring me to such a paltry place as this, where I can get no amusement of any kind?" she added, commencing picking her bouquet to pieces.

"It's a positive infliction being forced to remain when you refuse to talk to me, and won't even laugh at the people we see here!"

"I'm not in a humor of either talking or laughing to-night, Caroline," he answered, gloomily, passing his hand across his brow as he spoke.

She looked at him in some surprise. "What ails you?" she inquired. "Does your head ache? If it does, it's the vile air of this stifling place. Pshaw! I shall have a headache myself very soon, I feel one coming on."

"I am not in any pain whatever, Caroline," was his calm response. "I am simply in a silent mood, that is all, my dear."

"Silent mood?" repeated she. "Disagreeable mood, you should have said," she laughingly added.

"Probably so; I am sorry to be in such," he answered, with an inward moan.

And shading his eyes with his hand, he fell into a train of sad, aching thoughts, which carried him back into the past—to a period when a sunny-haired maid had stood with him at the altar, and solemnly pledged to him her troth.

Then his imagination pictured to him a bright young maid, reclining on his breast, and loving eyes gazing tenderly and trustfully into his, while gentle and musical syllables were being trilled into his enraptured ears.

"Oh, Anna, Anna!" he inwardly moaned, "my poor, dead darling! how I have lived to miss your sweet smiles, your affectionate accents, and all your fond caresses! And how I have wronged your memory, and the sacred trust which you left behind you!"

Of course you have recognised the man whose heart had uttered the above regretful words; you know that you are in company with the unprincipled Desmoro Symure, the father of our hero.

(To be continued.)

A leading article in the *Roman's Suffrage Journal*, advocating the cause of the soft sex, ably says: "Members of Parliament are neither so well qualified to deal with these laws, nor so capable of overcoming the difficulties in the way of procedure, as they would be if they were bound to consult women constituents, and dependent on the votes of women as well as men for the continuance of their legislative functions. The law that representation is necessary to secure just government has no more respect to sex than has the law of gravitation, and we trust that the day is not far distant when this truth will be recognized by the Legislature." It is clear from this that the law of gravitation has no respect for sex, yet there is an irresistible sense of gravitation on the part of the male to the female element. It is noticeable in a well-regulated society, especially when the women are pretty, talented, and fascinating in any way.