

THE WORLD'S WAY.

By T. N. ALBION.

At Harvard's court it chanced, upon a time, An Arab poet made this pleasant rhyme: "The new name is a horse, wrought of Wherewith the Sultan's charger shall be led."

RIVALRY BY FATE.

London, Lamp.

CHAPTER I.

MEETING.

"Is that really the truth?"

"They were standing in the porch on a fair summer's eve. She was looking at him with trusting eyes, as if the very earnestness of her gaze must compel him; whether he would or no, to tell the truth, and the truth only."

"The speaker was a girl not more than sixteen; her companion a young man of eight and twenty, whose professional studies brought him one of the disciples of the halcyon era."

"The last rays of the paling sun fell with mellow radiance on the tiny cottage with its shabby veranda, round which twisted the clinging ivy and delicate woodbine; they shone through a peony bush on the trellis-work half hidden by sturdy jessamine and fragrant roses; they lit up the garden with peaceful tenderness the proud, white face, the dark earnest eyes, the rich ruby tips of the maiden who had not yet learnt the blessing of uncertainty, who was eager to draw the veil aside with her own hand, ready in her young strength to bear the result of her headless courage."

"Apparently the young doctor had an article eye, apparently his profession did not absorb every moment of his time; he, like his fellow-workshopper, Phoenix, seemed to extract a prolonged pleasure in taking every item of the strongly contrasted harmony which the English landscape and Spanish form in the foreground presented."

"Though in years a child, the girl was tall and well formed. Her graceful form and dignified bearing possessed a rare and unusual beauty."

"Her admirer himself was no small addition to the beauty of the picture, with his intelligent countenance, keen gray eyes, and firm, squarely-cut chin."

"You ask for the truth," he said, slowly; "I will not conceal it from you." "Your aunt's strength is falling, and though you may rely on my constant attention, the disease, I fear, has gone too far for me to do more than alleviate her pain. Science, you know, has limits, and sometimes even delay the end."

"Thank you," was her quiet reply, as she began to walk leisurely down the garden path.

"He followed her."

"Did this stately composure result from marvelous indifference or supreme self-control?"

"I do not apprehend," he continued, "any sudden change, and only wish to prepare you for the worst. I trust many months of painless existence are still before her. It is impossible to tell the good effect of incessant care and cheerful society."

"But we came here to be quiet," replied the girl in her foreign accent. "My aunt does not please at our new home, because here we could know nobody for there is nobody to know."

"It is not lonely for you," he asked with a strong feeling of compassion for this fearless child in a strange land, with no companions but a dying aunt and two foreign servants."

"Lonely? I know not what that is, I have always been alone. In my own dear Spain there were none who could be gay-fellows; with a languid movement of the graceful hand; and since we came to England we have been incessantly with her. I have learned to love my solitary life, the birds sing to me, the flowers smile on me, I live in the open air, and when the soft southern wind blows upon my face my heart throbs with joy, for I know it comes from my own dear sunny land; it whispers to me of white domed palaces and sparkling fountains of cliff-drops falling in verdant groves, and sweet songs sung beneath fragrant trees."

"So you are fond of music?" he questioned, with a quiet smile at her enthusiasm. "I am glad to hear it, so am I."

"It is life, it is happiness to me," she answered, drawing a deep breath to emphasize her words. "But my English aunt, she is not, and she does not love music as we love it. You have grand concerts, it is true, stiff and solemn, in which grand people go equally stiff and solemn. They sit at aristocratic parties through hours of glacial music played with no soul, song with no heart. Such is not the love which education may teach. We all sing the better, the more the presence of the person we love it. We sing at our camp, we sing at our home, we sing at our work, we sing at our play, we sing at our sleep, we sing at our death."

"I will be very glad," she said simply.

"And I am," continued he, still smiling. "I will sing to you in our English tongue, and you may sing to me in your own."

"Come away, my dear," cried the girl, "let us go to the garden."

"I will be very glad," she said simply.

CHAPTER II.

STUDIO.

"Well, and who is your affectionate young friend?" asked Squire Mordant, as Fitz Nigel joined him, after saying good-bye to Diane.

"She is niece to your new tenant, Donna di Castro."

"My steward never told me that they were foreigners, growled the old man, 'how many more of them are there?'"

"There are only those two, and a couple of old servants whom they have brought from Spain."

"Spain! I hate Spaniards. Why can they not keep to their own country. They only come here to entrap all the fools of young men to lose their heads and their hearts to them, when they ought to settle down quietly with some steady English girl."

"As if stung by some painful remembrance, Squire Mordant quivered his grey eyelids, and his lips trembled as he spoke of the ground, and giving vent to his annoyance by switching off the heads of thistles with his heavy oak stick."

"His companion did not attempt to break the silence. He was accustomed to the Squire and his moods; he knew that silence only would be tolerated till the old man chose himself to speak."

"Do they say anything for their living?" he condescended to ask at length.

"I believe not. They seem to be quite independent, certainly are in no want of money, for they enjoy many luxuries which we English consider unnecessary. I am attending Donna di Castro professionally. I am sorry to say she can hardly last through the winter."

"Where her right for leaving her own country," snapped the Squire, "those lazy foreigners can seldom stand our bracing climate. So you were consulting the maiden donna, eh?"

"I think that she sorely fitted Nigel with undevoted composure. 'She is but a child, and does not seem to realize her approaching trouble. Her wish to be a lonely, poor girl, when death robs her of her only relation.'

"Fitz Nigel was most anxious, though he knew not why, to enlist Squire Mordant's interest in her behalf."

"It was merely an instinct which he followed dully without seeking for a reason."

"She is a great beauty, I allow that," admitted the Squire; "but a girl has nothing to recommend her but lovely eyes and scarlet lips, I can't say more for her chance of success in this life now-a-days."

"You ought to make the rector's wife call upon her, and get the girl to join the choir. She has a wonderful voice and sings with all her soul."

"This was stretching a point in her behalf; but Fitz Nigel was yet under the influence of the tear-filled eyes and the liquid goitern tones."

"I darsay," grumbled old Mordant. "She knows that she has young idiots of doctors to admire every sound she utters. But I won't have foreigners in our choir, singing their hearts and those of other people away. I shall think Mr. Howard has gone quite mad if he does anything so foolish. Cuckoo, come and say good-bye to your Mr. Sydney."

"They had arrived at the lodge gates, which led to the old hall. They stood at the entrance of the dark gloomy avenue, with its trees so thickly grown and their branches so interlaced that the sun's rays, even in the summer, seldom pierced the leafy foliage."

"Good-bye, Mr. Sydney," the little girl said demurely. "Don't mind what grandpa says. I think he is very wicked; he kicked my aunt yesterday, and he told James to beat a little boy, because he was a gypsy and wore no shoes or hat. Some night, I know, the fairies will come to him and tell him that he has died, and that they have taken me away with them. Then he will be sorry to be left alone, and to have no little girl to love him."

"She spoke with quiet earnestness, and her grandpa's hand, and trotted up the avenue by his side, talking the only spot of life or brightness to be seen in that dark, dismal place; which looked wild and desolate even in the summer twilight; and which seemed more fit for the steps of phantoms and wilding spirits than the home of the village, who walked willingly to the gloom, and was soon enveloped in its misty depths."

"After watching her new friends till they disappeared at the turning of the lane, Diane slowly retraced her steps, very much absorbed in her own thoughts."

"It must be owned that her thoughts, any more than her steps, did not wander to the aunt who had been everything to her; and who was now gradually sinking into the grave, leaving her alone and unprotected in a strange land."

"It is difficult for the young to grasp the idea of death. They know that there is such a thing; but with an insipidly dream of all things; regarding they willfully shut their eyes and refuse to be wakened. Life is to be lived, the future so free from pain. Sorrow may touch others, but surely it will never touch them."

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