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LITERATURE.

LOTTIE CROFT'S REVENGE.

"My party dress will be splendid. Just imagine the effect, Nannie. Black lace over colored satin!"

And pretty Maria Stevens, a dark, bright beauty, with the loveliest olive complexion in the world, and a pair of eyes that rivalled twin aloe in blackness, shook out her long, feathery raven curls, before a tall pier-glass, and gave herself into the hands of her French maid with a profound sigh of satisfaction.

And no fashionable woman would wonder at Miss Stevens' supreme content. For the party dress, of soft, shimmering satin, with its accompanying over-dress of costly lace, lay ready for the sylph-like form that was to enter it—a marvel of marvels—the perfection of perfect taste and costliness.

"It's twice as lovely as Julia Gordon's, and only cost eighteen hundred—O! Nannie, don't pull my hair so!" went on Miss Stevens, giving her dimpled shoulders a shrug. "There's the bell; I hope it ain't that horrid seamstress after her money again! Run down and see, Nannie."

Nannie obediently dropped brush and comb and left the room, while Miss Stevens lay back in her chair with a half yawn, and muttered:

"I must do my best tonight, for 'er will be there; and paper is growing so irritable and stings of late that I dread to ask him for a cent. They won't be storm when the bills come in for this."

She glanced at the shimmering vision on the bed, and went over and opened out the glossy folds that the gaiter might fall on them, and a smile as she thought how much they looked like waves of pale gold. Nannie came in hurriedly.

"It's the seamstress, ma'am; and she won't go away! for she says she must have half of the twenty dollars you owe her, for her lute brother is dying."

"Dying!" exclaimed Miss Stevens, dropping the folds of satin she was toying with, with an impatient gasp. "That's the story they all trump up. Such a fuss about twenty dollars! She can't have a cent to-night. Nannie, go on with my hair, and if she's not gone when I've dressed I'll have her put out into the street."

It was a cold raw night in December. The rain came down in a drizzling mist, and the moon tolled slowly through great banks of stormy clouds. The wind beat against the windows of the Stevens mansion with a mournful sob, but no sound could penetrate the thick draperies that covered the windows of the warm fire-dressing-room, and the cheeks of the young girl glowed with tropical bloom as the last diamond clasped on wrist or throat; while here and there a sparkling gem peeped out of the feathery curls that fluttered about the dark, piquant face.

"Now I'm just perfect, am I not, Nannie?" laughed the beauty, as she shook out her elegant robes, and complacently surveyed the reflection of her beautiful self in the mirror.

Nannie murmured a reluctant assent, for she was perfect as far as mere physical beauty and outward adorning is concerned, but of that inner beauty which will glorify the plainest face, there was no trace. For although the sparkling black eyes could melt into bewitching tenderness, the vixenish glower was there still ready to flash out, and carry sorrow to some human heart at any moment.

"Now, Nannie, give me my fan, and throw this cloak round my shoulder—so! Then go down and tell that creature she can't have a cent to-night, and to come at a reasonable hour next time."

Nannie went down wondering what a "reasonable hour" meant; for, to her certain knowledge, this abhorred seamstress had been there at all hours and all seasons, begging but one dollar of the twenty that was due her.

The girl was not gone, but sat pale and patient, awaiting Miss Stevens' answer. The eyes that met Nannie's inquiring, were inexpressively sad and mournful. The girl was ill-clad, poor and sorrowful, but the signs of better days clung to every look and motion, and Nannie paused and spoke to her as respectfully as if she had been clad in velvet and ermine.

"My mistress cannot give you any money to-night, madam; come to-morrow."

The girl's lips opened with a dry, hard sob.

"Oh, it is cruel, cruel," she moaned, "to keep me out of the money, and Willie dying!"

Before Nannie could reply the flutter of Miss Stevens' satin robes were heard on the stairway.

"What!" she exclaimed, fixing her black eyes on the bedraggled garments of the seamstress in an ill-bred stare. "Not gone? I thought I sent you word I had no money?"

"Give me but a dollar," pleaded the girl; "I must have food and medicine for Willie."

"One night will not make much difference. Come to-morrow and I will pay you, for I am sick of your dunning."

"Give me anything," persisted the girl, "I'm starving, I have not tasted a mouthful of food to-day."

"Beg, then," snapped out Miss Stevens, who had not a spark of sympathy in her selfish heart for the poor toilers of earth, who daily and hourly feel the sting of hunger and poverty, and such bitter humiliation and despair, as only the poor who are too proud to beg and too honest to steal can feel.

The girl rose up and gave Miss Stevens a look that haunted her for hours.

"Miss Stevens," she said slowly, "I will die in the streets first. The time has been when I was rich and honored, and beloved; now I am poor, an orphan, almost homeless, for to-morrow we are to be turned into the streets. Yet I would not use the meanest worm that crawls the earth as you have used me. The time may come when you shall suffer as I have suffered; for riches sometimes take unto themselves wings and flee away."

She turned and walked out of the brightly lit, softly carpeted hall, with the air of a young princess—out into the darkness and bleakness of a winter night, where the streets were ankle-deep with the snow, and the wind whistled around the corners with cutting coldness.

"My!" ejaculated Miss Stevens, as she drew a gasp of relief, "what a splendid actress she would make! It's wonderful the airs those low trash can put on."

The distress of her seamstress did not trouble her callous conscience in the least; and when she entered Mrs. Carroll's crowded rooms her face was as placid as if a fever had never marred its beauty, and her voice as sweet and musical as if it had never grated harshly on the ears of a fellow creature.

"When!" ejaculated old Hartly, a millionaire whose financial basis was as firmly established as the hills—when his eyes fell on Miss Stevens, "that looks like failure, don't it? Why old Stevens has been on the street for days trying to raise funds enough to meet his paper in January."

"She cannot be aware of her father's shakiness or she would not come out in that style," remarked another.

"Wouldn't she though?" snapped Hartly, who detested display of any kind. "She is not the kind to put her head under water for a trifle."

"Winstead seems badly hit," laughed a lady holding to a tall, grave-looking gentleman who had joined Miss Stevens' circle.

"Humph! Thought he had more sense, granted old Hartly. 'I thought he was too much in love with Lettie Croft—the angel—to put that bundle of vanity in her place.'"

"Poor Lettie," echoed half a dozen voices.

"They say she died in some obscure place or other, shortly after her father's failure and death."

"I have searched the city order for her," sighed the millionaire Hartly, "but can find no trace of her."

Meanwhile, Pierce Winstead was Miss Stevens' most devoted cavalier. Envious mamma looked on and called her a lucky girl, while their daughter's sighs in secret, as Maria, with all the bewitching arts of a polished woman of fashion, drew Pierce into her seductive net. For he was a prize the fairest of them had angled for in vain. A rich man, who beside being a son of one of the oldest families in New York, was a man of unblemished reputation; a scholar, half author, half artist, who could appreciate a good poem, or stand spell bound before some exquisite bit of scenery, but who was the poorest judge of feminine human nature in the world. And standing under the bright rays of the Chinese lanterns, that lit up Mrs. Carroll's bow greenhouse—a wilderness of flowers and vines that opened in the parlors—drinking in the odorous scents of virgin lilies that uprose out of marble basins, and growing almost faint with the sensuous breath of a thousand fragrant blossoms, Pierce almost fancied he had been transported into the garden of Eden, and that Maria Stevens' sabback eyes were tempting him to taste of love's delightful fruit.

Pierce thought Miss Stevens as good and pure and womanly as her face was lovely and her form faultless, and that no other woman could grace the table half so well. But a fair face with soft rings of golden hair curling about it, rose up before his mental vision, and again he stood in the presence of Lettie Croft, who had been his first love, and whom he one day expected to call wife. But Lettie was dead, and he felt as if he were doing Miss Stevens an injustice by withholding the declaration he fancied she had a right to expect. Yet the words would not come, and he was sudden-

ly brought back to the land of reality by a commotion in the parlors.

"Winstead!" roared old Hartly, rushing into the greenery with what seemed to be a mass of druggled garments in his arms. "Look here! I have found Lettie Croft!"

He dropped into a mossy seat and hugged the inanimate bundle spasmodically.

"Heavens! To think of her widening the street such a night as this. For God's sake Winstead, don't stand there like a stone—A carriage pole knocked her down and she's stunned."

Pierce Winstead's face was deathly pale.

"Lettie Croft," he repeated slowly, as tender hands removed the dripping hood, disclosing a white, worn face, with ransacked rings of hair clinging to the pale brow. "My poor darling! what she must have suffered!"

And Maria Stevens seeing infinite love and pity depicted on his grave face, knew her chances for becoming Mrs. Winstead had vanished forever. She came forward slowly, and made her way through the group of ladies that had gathered around Mr. Hartly, who was vigorously wiping the tears from his eyes, and declaring it was "very hot."

She fell back like one stricken with sudden terror, her heart sinking like lead in her bosom, for the idolized Lettie Croft, who had once been the petted daughter of a prosperous merchant, and a noted society belle, was her discarded seamstress.

"How!" was her internal exclamation, as she made her way to the parlors, leaving poor, half-starved Lettie Croft, to be coaxing back to such love and happiness as she might never know.

For years Lionel Hartly and Henry Croft had been staunch business friends; but, actuated by some unlucky impulse, Henry invested the whole of his immense business capital in a speculation that promised magnificent profits, but turned out a bubble, and Croft was turned out into the world a beggar.

Lionel Hartly, who was a bachelor, was somewhere in the heart of Europe, knowing only the summer months, and fled nothing of his friend's failure until he landed on the pier in New York, six months after. All that to take his friend proved fruitless, and his joy at finding Lettie, poor and worn out though she was, knew no bounds.

He instantly removed the brother and sister—the only survivors of a once happy family—to his own palatial home, where health and strength came back to Lettie, and Lettie's cheeks soon glowed with the flushes that had been her chief charm in the olden days.

Among the millionaire's munificent gifts to Lettie was a present of fifty thousand dollars, "to do exactly as she pleased with a privilege Lettie took advantage of by carrying food and clothing to many as impoverished family."

It was a cold, dreary day in February. The streets were deserted and cheerless, and the few pedestrians that hurried by the Stevens mansion thought they had never looked on despairing a face as the one that gazed drearily out of the parlor window. It was Maria Stevens, who, since the night of Mrs. Carroll's party, had led a miserable life. For Pierce Winstead's engagement to Lettie Croft had been publicly announced, and her father's creditors had granted him extension of two months, and the last day of grace was fast drawing to a close.

"I cannot raise thirty thousand this afternoon I am a ruined man," had been his announcement at noon, and Maria sat watching the fast darkening streets with a dull, heavy pain at her heart.

She had a horror of poverty, and dim perception that she was utterly unfit to earn her daily bread. She wrung her white, ringed fingers helplessly, and looked pitifully at the pale invalid mother, who lay on the lounge before the glowing grate, and whose counsels she had so often scorned.

The door opened softly and Hiram Stevens came in, careworn and weary, with a frown on his brow and stern look on his face.

"What news?" inquired his wife gently.

"The worst news possible. I didn't get the money."

"Why?"

"For various reasons. The main one seems to be Maria's extravagance. Men naturally object to seeing a debtor's daughter arrayed like a young princess."

He glanced sternly at the blanched face of his daughter.

"Did you try Mr. Hartly?" she asked in a husky voice.

"I did, but he would not advance me a dollar to save my life. Your treatment of Miss Croft settled that."

Maria turned her face up to the dreary February sky. Her sins were coming

home to her, and before many months she, with all her beauty and grace, might be plodding through the world at the meanest drudgery. She felt a moment as if she would smother, then rose hastily and opened the door and stood face to face with the last woman on earth she wished to meet—Lettie Croft, clad in rich robes, with her fair, serene face lovelier than ever.

"You here!" flashed out Maria, some of her old fiery spirit lighting up her eyes. "It is just like you to come to taunt me with prospective beggary."

"No, Miss Stevens, I never wish any human being to suffer what I have. I have come to offer your father the loan of thirty thousand dollars, which, I am told, is the sum he wishes to raise."

Maria dropped down on the hall sofa in a confused heap, and covered her crimson face with her hands. This was heaping coals of fire on her head, and she could only gasp:

"This, after what I have done?"

"Yes, Miss Stevens, let this be my revenge. Life is too short for us to make it unhappy by unkindness to one another."

Mr. Stevens thankfully accepted the loan and to this day Mr. Hartly is at a loss to know how Lettie invested her money.

But she assures him it is paying interest, for through Lettie's aid Maria Stevens is becoming a better woman, and reports say she is soon to marry the man of her choice.

California Correspondence.

SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 11, 1875.

Mr. Editor.—In my letter of yesterday, I gave a brief description of our journey as far as Omaha, and now furnish you with the remainder of the trip to the gold city—San Francisco.

We left Omaha on 31st May at 7 a. m.; about a mile out we encountered a thunder storm with lightning, rain, hail and wind. I never saw anything to compare with it, the rain came down in torrents, the hail was fully an inch square, and broke several panes of glass in the cars, and from the fearful noise it made on the roof of the car, I expected to see it come through; the wind was so strong that it would bring the train almost to a stand-still. At 6 a. m. on the 1st June we were 150 miles from Omaha on the prairie. Settlers are quite plenty here; large pieces of land nicely cultivated. Grand Island 155 miles from Omaha is quite a town of 1200 population, banks, churches, school houses, 3 weekly newspapers, machine, repair shops and a new house. Albia is a station 8 miles from Grand Island, the cabins here are low and strong, covered on top with turf, the walls loopholed and enclosed with the same material which in former days guarded the roof from the firebrand, bullets and arrows of the Indians. We met drovers with large numbers of horses and cattle, several teams were travelling along with them. The drovers ride on horseback and use a long whip. Arrived at Kearney Junction at 11 a. m. Here the Burlington & Missouri Pacific.

For Kearney, a military post, 5 miles distant was once a great point with the Overland Stage Co.

At 2 a. m. came Ft. Plum Creek, a nice village with a town hall, school house, hotels, and printing office. A Pawnee squaw and boy came on board the train begging, farther on we met a drove of 2000 head of Texas cattle; crossed River Platte at 6 p. m., a shallow, wide, swift river, with a wooden bridge; at 6:30 arrived at North Platte, a large town with many fine buildings; passed large number of Emigrant teams on their way to the Black Hills.

One cannot judge by reading or hearing of emigrants crossing the plains, they need to see them to understand the hardships and trials they have to undergo. All day long we have been going along over the wide prairie, no change only an occasional glance at the Platte River, and now we have crossed it, and there is nothing ahead of us to be seen but one vast plain of green grass; this is the spot you can see the sun rise out of the grass and set in the same.

There are only four car loads of Emigrants in our train, we seem to have all got acquainted with each other; you can't imagine what it is like to be on a train with a crowd like this, that have to eat and sleep where-ever they can get a chance; children crying, men laughing, or talking, or smoking, all hands as jolly as can be, all kind to each other. June 2nd, passed a station called Ogallala last night; new train station some years ago, the Indians attempted to wreck a passenger train by placing a lot of their ponies on the track ahead of the locomotive; the result was some score or more were killed without damaging the train, and several Indians were shot by the train hands.

Arrived at Sydney at 5 a. m., we retired and got up early, on this train—rise with the sun and go down with him. Meals are only \$1 at this station; here the Govern-

ment have established a large military post; all along the road this morning we saw the prairie dogs dodging in and out of their holes, they are about the size of a kitten. A number of antelopes have been close to the train, moved off slowly as we were passing them. At Antelope and Pine Bluffs we passed a drove of horses and cattle grazing, numbering thousands; this is considered the largest and best pasturage ground in the United States; on one lot the land is high and rough with some few scattering trees.

Arrived at Cheyenne in Wyoming Territory, 516 miles from Omaha, and the same distance from Ogden, just half the length of the Union Pacific Railroad, population 3000, it was formerly a great gambling place—murders by night and by day was the rule rather than the exception, until the Vigilance Committee swung several of the most desperate characters.

The Rocky Mountains come in view on our left, the tops and far down the sides covered with snow; the scenery completely changes here, from the vast prairie lands to one of mountain, hill and vale.

Now we run through the long covered snow sheds, and we are in total darkness, for some moments. I thought I had seen pretty wild scenery in the Province, but the scenery here is as much wilder as the difference between darkness and light.

The next place arrived at is SHERIDAN named after General Sherman, is considered to be the best spot along the line for fish and game, it is 8,200 feet above the level of the sea. We go through fearfully heavy cuttings and arrive at Laramie City, Gold diggings 30 miles from here and coal about 5 miles. Laramie was the first place in America or in the world, where a female jury was empanelled, their first case was that of a Western desperado, and they did their duty. There is a great grazing tract of country here 30 miles wide by 60 long, this formerly was a great place for Buffaloes, the mountains here range from 10 to 13,000 feet. Arrived at Como, an unimportant little place with a lovely little lake.

Thursday, 3rd June. This is a beautiful morning and the view is magnificent, the sun just rising slinging on the snow peaks, gives to them a glitter that we see on the trees in N. B. on a fine winter morning; the air is rather inclined to be cold but we manage to keep comfortable having stores in the cars. Now the appearance of the country changes, the ground is covered with a kind of weed called sage, and has a desolate, lonesome appearance, an occasional alkali or antelope stalks, and some up the side of the mountain; there is a great quantity of alkali which forms a coating over any place that is damp. Now we run through a deep gorge and ahead of us the rocks come out as though they would bar our way, now we go through a long tunnel, then down into a deep gorge the walls glow and abrupt. We arrive at Fort Fred Steele, there is a Co. Artillery and 1 Co. Cavalry; here occasionally we meet emigrant trains bound East, the passengers tell us of hard back and all manner of stories about hard times, but we tell them as long as the State of California will give us soup, three times a day that we will be satisfied. Summit is a small station where the passenger trains do not stop, and seven miles farther on we arrive at Separation, elevation 9,900 feet, we are rapidly rising and in 15 miles further we will be on the summit of the Rocky Mountains. Arsenic wells are quite numerous along the line, most of them have been finished within the past 18 months; they are from 362 to 1,145 feet in depth, in one place 28 feet above the surface, by jumping these wells will supply from 650 to 2,400 gallons per hour; we arrive at Summit, now we are very near the great "Backbone" of the continent, the Rocky Mountains, 23 miles west of this point is a flag planted by the wife of Capt. Clayton near the track, marks the summit 7,100 feet above the level of the sea; this point is 137 miles from Omaha and 1,177 from San Francisco. To the west can be seen the Seminoe mountains, and farther on can be seen the Sweetwater range, and still farther west, and a north the mid river mountains. Sage and alkali beds are the rule now, and have been for the last 25 miles. Arrive at Hilliard, a great place for burning charcoal; the appearance of the country changes here, on every side of us we appear to be surrounded with mountains covered with snow. We pass through a line of low snow sheds, and pass miles of snow fences, the air is very light and pure as we pass the ranches we see carcasses of meat hanging on posts about 15 or 20 feet high; salt is not necessary to cure meat on the mountains, the sun does that. We see lots of Jack Rabbits running around a short distance from us, they look like the English hare, they are much larger than our rabbits; we arrive at Wasatch station, the head of Echo Canyon, and go through a



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