

and laughter had made the dark oak rafters ring, those who had forgotten Christmas joys and Christmas sorrows in the land beyond the "wreck of time." She was thinking of that strange influence the last few days had cast upon her life. Those who only knew her outward existence, her peaceful round of duties, her self-devotion for the happiness of others, perhaps thought—as it is often thought of those who hush their sorrow to silence, and teach themselves contentment—that she had no hidden life. Yet the yearning for love which dwells in every woman's heart had its place in hers—the longing for that joy from which she had deemed herself forever shut out—and now. Was it then to be wondered at that she, for the first time sensible of homage to herself, should have given her whole heart unconsciously to the only one who had looked with love, not pity, upon the beauty of her face? How would it be when he was gone, and she was alone again, with the memory of this bright glimpse of blessedness all remaining?

At last she roused herself. "Are you not going to keep George company to-night, Sir Lewis?"

He started. "Half-past eleven! I had no idea it was so late."

"Nor I," she rose and unfolded one of the shutters and opened the vapor-bedewed window.

The night was cold, with clear myriads of stars shining down upon the snow-whiteness.

"Good night," she said.

"Are you going to stay here?"

"Yes. I always wait for the bells."

"The bells?"

"The chimes," she answered. "On this night they are always rung—as a farewell to Christmas, I suppose."

"May I not stay?"

"If you wish."

He wrapped a shawl about her, and together they stood upon the balcony. There, in the pale, clear light, with that lovely face near his, the presence and calmness to which Lewis had schooled himself away, and burning words trembled on his lips. But when she looked at him, it was so calmly, so smilingly, almost as though she might have guessed his thoughts, and silenced them by unspoken reproach. He turned from her abruptly.

"Take care!" she cried, stooping and lifting a little dark object from the ground at his feet.

"What is it?" he asked.

"A chrysalis," she said. "Does it not seem strange to think there is life in that—that it is only sleeping and will wake?"

"It is very ugly now," he said.

"Ah, yes," she answered; "but it will be beautiful some day. Perhaps a lovely butterfly!" She touched the hard pupa case caressingly. Then turning away she laid the sleep-enveloped insect carefully in the hollow of the balustrade, and stood by it silently, perhaps comparing its lot with her own. The action was eagerly noted by her companion, who, with a sudden impulse, clasped her in his arms.

"Ivy—darling!" he whispered. And she, startled, looked up at once with glad surprise; then a great crimson wave flushed her face, as she tried to free herself from his embrace. "No, no!" he said hurriedly. "Ivy, listen."

And then while she stood passive in the dawn of that unlooked-for happiness, he told her of his love. Wrought up by the excitement of the moment, carried away by her beauty and the influence her presence wrought on him, he spoke. He told her that his happiness now depended upon her, that she must be henceforth the guardian angel in his home and life—and then awaited the response.

There was no answer; only her little hand closed more tightly upon his—then—through the night came the first clash of the Christmas bells. Something as she heard them seemed to shake her from head to foot; then very gently she freed herself from his hold.

"Sir Lewis!" The words were spoken so calmly, there seemed no likeness between her and the trembling girl but an instant before clasped in his arms, and with her low tones still came the songs of the bells. "Sir Lewis, I cannot but thank you for your words to which I ought not to have listened—only love is so new, so—" She paused for a moment. "I was surprised," she continued; "and you—you have not thought sufficiently over what you have said; you have spoken on the impulse of the moment. But I thank you for whatever the future may have in store for me, I shall feel that I am not so utterly shut out from the happiness of God's creatures. But you have not counted the cost."

"Cost?" he broke in. "What cost?"

"You have told me," she went on, gently, "of your beautiful home, of your position there, of your social duties. You bear a title; you have a high place to fill. And I!—the tones faltered for a moment—"I am not fit for this. I ought not to bring a cloud ex any man's life; and I will not on yours. Hush! You think now you love me; but soon you would grow tired of hearing ridicule, or, at least, surprise, at your choice."

"Hush, hush!" he cried. "Why do you speak so? What do you mean?"

"Listen!" and she held out her hand. "I believe you. Your words are sincere now; but will they remain so? Prove yourself. Go away to-morrow, free, as you came; you will find in a very short time that you are wrong; if not, come back again next Christmas day. Only go now, and do your best to forget me. If you value your happiness you will."

"Never!" he answered passionately. "Ivy! Ivy! won't you hear me? Won't you give me one promise, one word of hope?"

She looked up for an instant, a whole world of love in her eyes. Then she stole in quietly through the open window, and left him alone with the stars.

The echoes of the bells died in the distance; yet he stayed, hoping she would return, confident in his own firmness of purpose and strength of his love. His waiting was in vain.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

The days glided by, and weeks and months, bringing no change to the peaceful little village, which counted its seasons by herrings and mackerel, its Sundays by holiday clothes—no other outward change. Only up at the "Castle" the life which had flowed on there so steadily was taking another course.

Christmas day again—a wild, blustering Christmas, with a strong wind, driving heavy clouds, which were now coming to earth in drenching showers of rain and sleet. The church was just the same, decked with the shining holly leaves. It was afternoon, and from the organ the deep notes sounded sad and slow. There was no one to listen, no one to go home with Ivy as she struggled back against the relentless blast, along the path she had trodden last winter with Lewis Hogarth by her side. Now, as she had predicted, she was alone—not for the moment, but for all her future life.

The day which was to separate her from her brother was drawing near, and Sir Lewis Hogarth was married! In so short a space he had proved—not himself, but the truth of her words. He had gone away in the full confidence that he would come back to claim her at the end of the time she had appointed; and for weeks, in fancy, that lovely face which had so fascinated him had dwelt with him night and day, till he one morning met some other friend of George Wynne's, who, not knowing, spoke of her in terms which opened the baronet's eyes to the manner in which such an unfortunate marriage would be received by the world. Then he grew tired of his London life, and went down to his home.

In all the awakening beauty of the first days of spring, he realized the worth of his possessions; and over and over again, as he paced the stately rooms, he saw those graceless, halting movements, that bent and crippled form; and as he regarded the pictures of the stately women of his race, he contrasted with them the poor cripple he had asked to be his wife. He grew restless and unhappy. He saw now what he had called love had been but a brief "stound," which had come with that awakening to pure desires and high endeavours which had been her work. He had committed himself foolishly; gone too far for a man of honour to retract, yet, "Do your best to forget me. If you value your happiness you will," and with scarce a struggle he succeeded in obeying her. Six months after he married a beautiful girl of good family living near. A suitable match, the world said.

And the woman he had loved had waited in trembling suspense, hoping vainly for a return of the happiness she, by her own act, had renounced, for with all her soul she had loved him with that great store of love hidden away all the years of her woman's life—loved him so that the struggle to bid him leave her had been almost too hard—the battle almost too fierce for her to win the victory. And this was the reward of her self-sacrifice. Yet even when she heard that he was lost to her forever, she bowed her head in thankfulness, because in all her gloomy, afflicted life she had known one happy hour! Oh, God, who from the height of heaven looked down upon Thy sinning, suffering creation, with how many years of misery must we pay for the one hour of joy! How many lives are there like this, unknown, unnoticed, crushed in the world's turmoil—ruined, dark existences!

The day closed in. Ivy sat by the fire, dreaming idly; the night fell; the children's Christmas tree blossomed and faded, and she was left alone to wait for the bells. A servant came in with a message—a child at one of the fishermen's cottages was ill; the doctor was away. What should they do? She went to the window, opened it, and looked out. The rain was over, though the wind still blew roughly, extinguishing the lights, and tossing her hair in its wild, unholy glee. She longed for some movement, some change from her own dreary thoughts, "I will go with you," she said to the boy who had brought the message.

It was scarcely five minutes' wait from the gate; and her errand over, the child sleeping quietly, she set off for home, followed by the mother's blessings and escorted by the boy, who insisted on accompanying her. Suddenly as they passed along the beach, it seemed to her as though some other voice than the wind's sounded over the heaving waters, above the roar of the surf. She stopped. "Did you hear a shout?" she asked the boy, who stood and listened. Three times that vague sound was repeated; then Ivy hurried forward round a point of cliff which, jutting out, obstructed her further view. Again it came, that voice, whatever it might be. On she hastened, as fast as her feeble strength would allow, past the point, though there was scarcely footway between the chalk wall and the dashing surf. "Do you not see," she said breathlessly, "out there by the Lion rock?"

The boy strained his eyes in the uncertain

light, and dimly, within almost a stone's throw of the shore, could be seen, through the clouds of foam flying over her, some vessel in distress.

"Give me the lantern," said Ivy, hurriedly, "and run back: tell some of the men to come here and some to get the boat—only go quickly."

There was no need to urge speed; the boy, sailor-born, knew all the danger; and Ivy, alone on that terrible beach, lifted his little light on high, to show to those in peril that some one at least was watching them, that sooner or later help must come. The coast was an easy one; it was deep water everywhere till close to the shore, with the one exception of that reef of rocks called the Lion, almost hidden by the high tide upon which the small vessel, owing to the violence of the wind, and perhaps the insufficiency of her crew, had been driven.

On the deck of the little craft was all help—less confusion. The men irritated by not reaching their homes by Christmas time, as promised, had grown sulky and rebellious, and in the darkness of the night and the strength of the wind had, through their carelessness, brought themselves into this peril. Two of them had been washed overboard into the seething waves; the other three remaining held on grimly to the ropes, occasionally giving those cries for help which had startled Ivy on her homeward way. And beside the ruined mast, with one hand clasped about a drooping figure clinging to him, stood Lewis Hogarth. Only that morning he had found fault with Fate; and now his past life seemed fraught with every charm as death was menacing near. There, in those awful moments, his one thought was life; life for himself and the girl beside him, the wife entrusted to his keeping who in that short space of time he had learned to love with an intensity that had seemed impossible a few hours before.

Suddenly another shout from the seamen: "A light!" There, upon the shore, so near to them, shining like a star—a light! They were seen. Surely help would come.

"Courage, dear!" he whispered; "it will soon be over now."

Over it must be: but for life or death?

A loud cheer from the beach, and over the dark waves sped a boat to the rescue—those on board the yacht eagerly watching as it bore up on its beneficent mission. With infinite difficulty and danger the rescuers drew near the rocks, and flung a rope to those waiting in such agonized suspense; and then steadily, one by one, they were handed on board.

On the beach some fishermen's wives had gathered, and some blazing wood they had lighted cast a lurid glare over the ridged surf, and further flickered that little light which had first brought them the message of deliverance. This Lewis described as he covered in the stern, his wife resting half-unconscious in his arms, her hands clasped in prayer.

The landing was the greatest danger, for the force of the surf was such that the boat might be dashed to pieces, swamped or overturned before they could reach the beach. The tide had turned, and was on the ebb. At last, after breathless watching, now on the crest of a great, heaving wave, now in the darkness of an abyss, from which it seemed they would never rise, they came near, and while a cloud of foam blinded the stalwart rowers and made the watch-fire seem dim and distant, the keel grated on the pebbles.

The foremost man sprang in safety; those on shore rushed down to drag the boat above the fury of the waves, which tried remorselessly to suck her back.

"Go you, sir!" an old sailor shouted to Lewis. "Leave the lady to me. You could not stand with her," he added as Lewis paused. "There's no time to be lost. Go!"

Lewis sprang toward the shore, losing his footing in the treacherous surf, and was finally helped to land by the friendly hands of the fishermen, who, followed by the women, had crowded down to the water's edge. Then, as he stood trying to collect himself, to find words to thank them, a sudden mighty wave dashed over the foremost of them, bearing all down before it, lifting the boat like a shell, carrying with it the old sailor, and dragging the lady from his arms—then tore back with a hollow, rasping sound, leaving the two powerless human beings fighting in the foam for life.

The spectators stood paralyzed. All was confusion. Then, a wild cry for strength went up to heaven, as the little light which had burned so clearly vanished into the darkness, and Ivy rushed down to aid. She heard an answering shout from the fishermen as they followed; but hours of horrible agony seemed to pass as she struggled amid the waters, her hands clinging with desperate force around the drowning lady, her eyes blinded by the spray, her feet seeking vainly some firm hold, till she was dashed upon the cruel stones, and all was blank! The next wave, greedily to seize its victims, rolled up triumphantly, broke with a crash upon the shore, and rolled back disappointed. The fishermen had balked its fury.

Gently they unclasped the poor, bruised, hands, which had never loosed their hold, and Lewis clasped his wife once more, half-fainting, but living, in his arms.

As soon as possible he left her for a moment to inquire for her preserver, about whom the others had crowded.

There were broken exclamations, sobbings from the women and murmurs from the men, as he made his way through them. On the rough beach, the light falling on her tangled gold hair, lay Ivy, white and still. Lewis

sprang forward, pushing aside the women, and raised her in his arms.

"How comes she here?" he cried, "How has she come by this?"

"It was she who gave the alarm—who sent for the boat!" answered a dozen voices. "She rushed into the surf! It was she who saved your lady! She's badly hurt, poor Miss Ivy," they cried angrily, as they pressed around their darling.

"God bless her and spare her," one old man murmured.

"She is an angel already," a woman's voice answered; and Lewis, unheeding, knelt there in silent misery. Ivy dead!—for him who had acted by her so cruelly, who had won her love and thrown it aside as some worthless thing.

Suddenly, borne upon the wind came the sound of the midnight bells, and with them, life returned for an instant, as though the spirit were loth to leave so pure a shrine. Once more those sweet eyes were fixed upon him. "Lewis," she whispered, so low that only he could hear, "the bells! It is Christmas day departing—"

For the second time, while those chimes pealed gayly, he held her in his arms; only now she rested there passively, with a smile upon her lips. She did not bid him go. Ended now forever were sorrow and life and love.

LITERARY.

LONGFELLOW was seventy-three years old on the 27th inst.

MR. KINGLAKE, the historian is obliged to leave London because of bronchitis. He is residing at Wilton House, near Taunton, and is convalescing.

It is stated that Lord Beaconsfield intends to write a preface to a biography of the late Lord Derby, which is being written by his son, Colonel Stanley, the Secretary for War.

THEODORE MARTIN has completed another volume of his "Life of the Prince Consort," and is now at Windsor with the proof sheets for the inspection of the Queen. Every page of the work passes under Her Majesty's eye before it is published, and the last volume, I hear, is particularly satisfactory to Her Majesty as well as to the author.

THE British Museum has acquired about 1,000 more tablets and fragments of inscribed terra-cotta documents from Babylon. Amongst them is a tablet of Samsu-irba, a Babylonian monarch hitherto unknown, who probably lived about the time of Sardanapalus, and was one of the intermediate rulers between Cambyses and Darius, B.C. 525. Another fragment has a representation of one of the gates of Babylon.

ARTISTIC.

CONSIDERABLE damage has been done by fire in the Palazzo Sforza-Cesari at Rome: a valuable Van Dyck was among the pictures burned.

THE trustees of the British Museum have just added to their classical treasures a cast of the Venus of Milo, now in the Museum of the Louvre.

A COMMISSION has been formed in Paris for the purpose of organizing a museum of casts from the antique. This project has long been talked of, but it seems now as if it would be definitely carried out. The right wing of the Trocadéro building is to be used for this purpose.

At the Salon next May pictures are to be classified by styles instead of alphabetically, and the contributions *hors concours*—viz. those by artists who have already won all the honours—will be hung apart as also will the works of foreigners.

THE museum of the Louvre is reported to have suffered some damage by the rapid thaw. Paintings of French masters, Chardin and others, have been so much affected by the dampness of the walls that a great number will require considerable repairs.

DR. H. N. HYNEMAN's beautiful picture, "Desdemona," which figured in the Paris Salon of 1878, and which is now on exhibition at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, has been sold for the sum of one thousand dollars.

SOME cases of small antiquities from Bamba, near Laranea, have been forwarded by the Foreign Office to the British Museum. Among them are two pieces of calcareous stone, with Phœnician inscriptions—apparently lists—written in black and red ink.

THEY are scraping the whole surface of the Duomo in Florence, and washing its bas-reliefs and all with sulphuric acid, to make it look new; and they are going to do the same with Giotto's Campanile. In the front of the Duomo they are tearing down the ornamentation round the doors, and replacing it with droid modern Renaissance scroll-work.

THE Italian journals announce that Signor Caroni, a Florence sculptor, has just finished a group in plaster, representing the late King Victor Emmanuel on his death-bed. The King is lying stretched on his couch, while near him stands Prince Humbert, his son and successor, to whom he is confiding his last wishes. The group, it is said, is to be executed in marble, and will then be placed in the room in which Il Re Galantuomo expired.

A PICTURE which has in its time undergone several very severe ordeals, is to be put up to public auction at the Hotel Drouot this winter. It is the "Judgment of Solomon," by Rubens, which, while in the Museum at Antwerp, was struck by a cannon-ball during the siege in 1832, and was so damaged that its repairs amounted to 1,200 francs. Its warlike adventures did not, however, end here, for after its removal to Paris it received another cannon-shot during the Revolution in 1848, which struck it, if we are to believe tradition, in exactly the same spot as the former one. This wound has also been carefully healed, and the veteran picture will now, it is to be hoped, find a more peaceful home than has hitherto fallen to its lot.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the Rev. J. T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.