

THE HANDSOME WIDOW.

BY M. A. NEDSMUL.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor one cool evening in October, and at the word in I went into the middle car on the Grand Trunk Railway, and the next moment we were moving rapidly along the rails down the front of the bay at Toronto, our destination being Montreal.

The cars were utterly crowded, as they usually are, but from some cause or other they were particularly so on this occasion, and I was forced as one of the latest to content myself for a period with a seat on the chest common on cars at the entrance in front of the crammed and crowded seats. Then for a moment I was occupied with the vista of lights, bags, shawls, and faces, the hum of voices, and the movement of the wheels, and I settled down into my place.

But now for my story.

Down went my bag, and a circular package, which next moment rolled off, and as it lighted on the floor fell close to the prettiest foot that ever flashed in and out beneath a woman's robe on this universe. I fell in love in a moment with the foot—I often fall in love—and catching up my package, I glanced at the lady. She was about five-and-twenty, I am about—say forty, in fact I don't like to tell exactly how old I am—but there, she was about five-and-twenty, as I am telling you. Well, she was dressed in widow's weeds, cap, crapes, bonnet and all, the *tout ensemble* showing that it was quite recent, in fact that he could not have been long dead, a few months or so, but there—she was a charming widow.

You will hardly believe me, but you never saw such a woman in all your life. It's no use to "pooh, pooh." Oh what bright eyes! What a ruby mouth! What sweet gloved hands! I like small gloved hands; and then I knew that she must be tall from the way she sat on the seat, although I am not particular about height. I think she saw that I was struck with her. There must have been something about me that made her think so. But I fell in love first with her foot, then with herself. At any rate she looked pleased. I was pleased, and it seemed to me that all the lamps, bags, shawls, and faces in the whole car, although minding their own business, looked pleased too.

I'm a very modest fellow, but now the conversation had become general, and I took advantage every moment to steal looks at the pretty widow. You'll see my taste in a minute in these things. She had rich, deep, silky, wavy, brown hair; soft, deep, blue eyes; a nose straight and well defined; bright white teeth; and oh! such a race of sweet delicate dimples ran over her cheeks and chin when she smiled or looked out of the window close to me. In fact, a perfect woman, and you won't question my judgment.

At the first station our overcrowded state experienced some relief, and long before we reached Cobourg, noted for handsome women, we began to feel at ease and make preparations for the night. On a vacancy occurring, the lady, with a plain girl that accompanied her, rose and seated herself cosily just behind; and I, who had reached Toronto after a fatiguing trip, followed her example, reversing the seat she left and still in front of the beautiful widow.

The plain girl lay down. The passengers disposed themselves as if no handsome widow was there, and there we were left face to face in the most dangerous proximity I was ever in in my life. I looked, I cannot tell how, at the widow. She took out a cambric handkerchief and applied it to her eyes with a beautiful wave of the hand. Instead, however, of removing it wet with desolate tears, she waved it afresh and looked at me. I gazed at her hair. She looked at my whiskers. I stole a glance at her graceful neck. She gave an involuntary glance at my heart. We were often interrupted by the opening doors and the rattle of the train, but we sped on and on far into the night, on and on, on and on, Kingston, Brockville, till I was in a state of perfect enchantment.

The fatigue of the previous day induced me to lean a little backward, when suddenly the widow beckoned to me. I rose at once and followed my enchantress into a garden. There, taking my hand, she led me to a rustic seat, and putting her white arms around me (in some manner she had divested herself of her upper robe), she kissed me full on the lips, which I returned with ecstasy. She then told her love and I confessed mine. Love at first sight, you know, is best. Then somehow we were in a chamber interlocked in each other's arms, when we kissed and fondled each other, until at last she said I cannot allow that unless I am

married. And now I heard the church-bell of my own village, and was walking up the aisle with my sweet widow. My old friend the clergyman was waiting in the chancel, and soon we joined hands. The words were said, and I had just turned to give my wife her wedding kiss, when a horrid voice roared in my ear: "Tickets! Dear me, will the man never wake up! Your ticket!" "Baggage!" roared another. "What house, sir?" "The Albion, of course!" I roared, "confound you," in vexation. But I do declare that widow is this moment in Montreal.

LIFE-SONGS.

BY AMY KEY.

A brook flashed from a rugged height,
Merrily, merrily glancing;
The songs of the summer light
Kept time to the tune of its dancing.
Fond eyes looked on its dewy sheen,
Reading fate in its waters;
"Darling, the song of the brook is for you,

THE POPE AT HOME.

At last the hour of eleven arrived, and we drove to the Vatican, where the famous Swiss Guard—lanky, ill-shaped men, it must be confessed, in yellow and black trousers, with long dark-blue coats—pointed out our way. Their hideous costume is said, of course, to have been designed by Michael Angelo; and an American traveller gave us the myth which has grown up round its origin. "I will tell you," he said, "the secret history of the uniform of the Swiss Guard. In early days the brave and famous Swiss Guards were not so sedulous in their attendance to duty as might have been expected. The soldiers of a pope are but men, after all, and just as Knights-bridge Barracks are said to supply the British housemaid with many an Adonis, so when a Swiss had failed to answer to the roll-call, he was often found to have been detained by some trans-Tiberine Venus. Thereupon, Michael Angelo invented this uniform. It is considered to be the greatest triumph of his genius, and he vindicated its place among the foremost creations of art by the completeness with which it fulfils its purpose. Since this uniform was invented, no Swiss Guard has at any time excited the

ground, and rubbed his forehead upon the foot of the pope. All the visitors had been ranged in line; and the pope passed along the line, giving to each person his ringed hand to kiss, the whitest, plumpest little hand it had ever been my fortune to see. He asked us in French if we were Americans, expressed his delight at being answered in Italian, and pronounced the blessing, from which, by a polite but expressive gesture, he seemed to exclude us who were not of the faithful:—"Benedictio Dei Omnipotentis descendat super vos et maneat semper, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti." Then he passed into the next room, and we trooped into the ante-chamber, to see him again as he came out. Ladies, and gentlemen who brought ladies, had been received in the second room; and we met a friend who had escorted, besides an English lady, the daughter of the landlord of his lodgings. Through his landlord's interest with the prior of a convent he had that morning obtained admission. That is how we saw the pope. No question had been asked about religion, nor, as far as we could ascertain, about social standing. The pope receives constantly, and is said to enjoy the proceeding very much, probably taking as a tribute to his sovereignty what is often nothing more than curiosity. Curiosity is sometimes not tempered with much respect; and we met at Naples two young Englishmen fresh from Eton, who, having received tickets for an audience held on Thursday, left on Wednesday, after returning their invitations, in order not to miss the fine weather. It may sound ungrateful in our mouths to say so, but it seems to us that the easy kind of introduction upon which the pope grants audiences has a tendency to make him what is expressively termed "too cheap."—*Chamber's Journal*.



"FOND EYES LOOKED ON ITS DEWY SHEEN."

Fairest of earth's dear daughters,
Bright eyes looked on its dewy sheen,
And the songs of their lives rang clearly:—
"The world is fair! the world is fair!"
"And I love, I love you dearly."

Autumn leaves, like a fairy fleet,
Swept down towards the river;
The false wind moaned through the dreary sleet—
"The flowers are dead for ever!"
Sad eyes looked down on the shadowed stream,
Reading fate in its measure;
"For me your song, for my withered life,
Pain in the mask of pleasure."
Sad eyes looked on the shadowed stream,
And the songs of their lives rang clearly:—
"The world is sad! the world is sad!"
"Oh! I loved, I loved him dearly."

A flush, a glow on the winter skies,
Earth smiles in her happy dreaming;
Whispers the wind, "Arise! arise!"
The dawn of spring is beaming.
Calm eyes look down on the sunny brook,
With a smile that has conquered sadness—
"Your song is for me in this sweet spring time,
In heaven is perfect gladness."
Calm eyes look on its dewy sheen,
And the songs of their lives ring gaily:—
"The spring is here! the spring is here!"
"I find strength for my burden daily."

most transient feeling of admiration in any female breast." We reached on foot a great court-yard, to which the cardinals' carriages were admitted; and after some trouble in discovering the door, we found ourselves within the private dwelling of His Holiness. Our letter was inspected by a person who appeared to be His Holiness's butler, and we were ushered through several rooms into a splendid chamber hung with tapestry designed by Raphael. We talked a little to the officer of the guard who was waiting there, and who spoke nothing but Italian. A private soldier whom we afterwards addressed knew no language except German, and it became matter of wonderment to us how the corps could understand the orders of its commanders. After this, Monsignor Stonor came, and, learning that we were Englishmen, entertained us with a few minutes' conversation; then half a dozen other visitors entered the room, some bearing crucifixes and rosaries which were to receive the pope's benediction. A little after twelve there was a stir; some one collected from us our invitations, which were not again returned; a throng of velvet-clad prelates appeared at the door; then at last, surrounded by cardinals and monsignors, these in purple, the cardinals with little caps on, he all in white, Pio Nono called in. All but the heretics knelt, The heretics bowed. A Spaniard, who had brought a cross to be blessed, knelt down, prostrated himself upon

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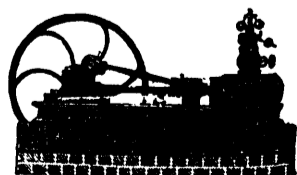
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