

(ORIGINAL.)

THE HEIRESS. A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY E. L. C.

Oh grief, beyond all other griefs, when fate
First leaves the young heart lone and desolate
In the wide world, without that only tie
For which it lov'd to live or fear'd to die;—
Lorn as the hung-up lute, that ne'er hath spoken,
Since the sad day its master-chord was broken.

Moore.

"Well, Denham, what do you think of Annabelle?" asked Frank Mowbray of a young man, whose arm was linked in his, as together they passed from the piazza of a large and elegant country-house, to the shaded walks of a garden in its rear.

"She is beautiful as a poet's dream," returned his companion—"but from the indifference with which she received your assiduities at dinner, I should imagine she was as hard to be won, as the wife of Ulysses in the absence of her lord."

"Oh, there is nothing alarming in her coldness, Charles. Women have a thousand whimsies which we unfortunate wretches are bound to humour, till we become their masters—Clinton Delancy knew her but three weeks, before she was his affianced wife,—and pray what attractions had he to boast over a thousand others?"

"What had he, indeed? an unequalled face and figure,—a bearing such as women love, and a mind, that like a ray of light illuminated every object on which it glanced."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Mowbray, pettishly, "he was a high bred Carolinian, nothing more. But you were ever an admirer of this naval demigod, though I confess his magnificence was not at all to my taste."

"Did any lady ever agree with you in that opinion?" asked Denham, smiling. "No, he ever was the admired of all admirers; the hero of the drawing room, as of the battle-ship, and as such worthy to be the choice of the gifted and beautiful Miss Hope."

"Well, all his perfections it seems have not exempted him from the common doom of man, and since, without doubt, Captain Delancy is lost to her forever, I see no reason why Annabelle should always remain inaccessible to the suit of another."

"Mowbray, there are some women, idle as the world deems such a tale, yet there are some few, who are incapable of loving more than once;—and if I read her character aright, Annabelle Hope is of that number. She possesses a shrinking delicacy, a depth, an ardour, a singular devotedness of heart, that will, I believe, ever bind her to the memory of

Delancy, and prove an insuperable barrier to her union with another."

"I have no such romantic faith in any woman's constancy, and I believe the only obstacle that at present exists to her acceptance of my suit, is a foolish fancy which she persists in cherishing, that as Captain Delancy's death remains unconfirmed, he may still be living, and eventually return to her."

"And are there no reasonable grounds for this expectation?"

"None whatever, I conceive. The last tidings received of the Fearless, the vessel Captain Delancy commanded, were brought by a merchant-man, who saw her in chase of a pirate off the coast of Algiers. Since then nothing has been heard from her, and though the period fixed for her cruise has long since expired, not an individual, who trod her decks, has ever returned to his native shore to tell the story of her fate. The natural supposition, therefore, is, that the vessel and all whom it contained, fell into the hands of the pirates, and met the cruel death, or lingering captivity, commonly inflicted by those merciless barbarians upon their prisoners."

"And Delancy may be one of those prisoners,—at least while such a cloud of uncertainty hangs over his fate, I am not surprised that Miss Hope clings to the possibility of his return,—and till she is entirely convinced of his death, I am persuaded no one will succeed in gaining her affections—indeed, as I said before, from what I have remarked of her character, I do not believe she will ever transfer them from the dead, to any living object, however attractive or deserving."

"I would stake my whole law library, the most valuable of my possessions, against the truth of that opinion," said Mowbray, laughing. "At all events, the old adage, 'saint heart never won fair lady,' shall be my motto, while I diligently press the siege against her hand and fortune, which latter is no contemptible item in the inventory of her charms."

"Fortune!" repeated Denham, contemptuously,—
"pardon me, when I say, you deserve not to succeed, if in the pursuit of so beautiful and gifted an