

ABSOLVO TE

AN OLD LEGEND.

Father Navarro with head bent low
And with hand supporting his chin,
Mused him of many and many long years,
He said, there had listened to sin.
The sun sank low, but its golden beams
Had left a most beautiful ray,
That softly tinged the empurpled clouds
Of the lovely and fading day.
That beam so bright on the old man fell,
And bathed his white head in its light;
As 't were a nimbus of blessing sent
From the author of day and night.
Sad the sin-laden penitents came,
But joyful went forth on their way,
"Sorrow sincere," the old priest had said
"Will wash every error away."
"How long! Dear Lord in heaven," he sighed,
"And is it Thy will it is so?"
"Will evil cling thus every day,
"Nor suffer Thy goodness to grow?"
"Oft I have wondered over and o'er
"How Thy glorious sun could shine
"On children so base as Thine are here,
"Thy mercy indeed is divine!"
"Father," a low voice broke on his ear,
He turned him and looked upon one
Who years before had strayed far away
And had dwelt with Morro's fallen son.
"Father," she said with her eyes cast down,
"I come with my burden of guilt."
"Jesu longs to forgive thee," he said,
"Confess to Him whate'er thou wilt."
"Myself I accuse this night," she moaned,
"Of living in riotous sin."
"I know of the good, but choose it not,
"O Father may I enter in?"
"Daughter 'tis well thou art come," he said,
"But courage; it is not too late,
"Ask our mother to pray to her son,
"His mercy, my child, it is great."
"Father, I've mocked at God's holy name!"
"Daughter, I grieve it is so."
"Yet 'tis writ the sins that scarlet are
"He can cleanse as white as the snow."
"Father, not all have I told," she sighed,
"Oh! how can I say it to thee?"
"Daughter, delay it not long," he said
"God's spirit so holy may flee."
"Mary! Sweet Mother of Christ!" she wailed,
"Thy pity, thy help may I know!"
"Father—my Mother!—she hoarsely gasped,
"This hand struck a murderous blow."
"And darest thou come e'en to me?" he shrieked!
"A wretch there could no greater be,
"No tongue 'mongst all that have tongues upon
"Could give name to such infamy!" [earth
"Forgive" thee I say, when summer fields lie
"Enwrap in a mantle of snow,
"Or from this pavement rended apart
"The sweet roses blossom and grow"
"Forgive" thee!" the sun was now quite gone
The sanctuary lamp burned dim,
The shade of the murdered one was there,
And slowly it fitted by him—
"Seest thou! God reckoneth not of that sin
"It is not writ down in his lore,
"Depart! Accursed forever and aye!"
All senseless she fell to the floor.

Father Navarro next morning came
But yet lay she prone on the floor,
God's glorious sun was shining still
That set the sad evening before,
That shone on the old priest's head that eve,
And bathed his white head in its light,
Full on her gold hair its radiance fell
And made the old chapel look bright.
Spake the old father, "Hence take her ye",
"This hand but one short hour ago
"Touched the Eucharist, could I then now
"Move aught that's so vile and so low!
"Her face looks peaceful—'tis a smile
"Could she so presumptuous be,
"To think God's patience weareth not out?
"But lasteth through eternity!"
He turned, and a fragrance sweet inhaled.
There, radiant with morning dew,
The marble pave had broken apart
And a beautiful rose tree grew.

FLORENCE I. DUNCAN.

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS).

TWO LOVERS.

I.

Which was it? She was trying to decide the question with herself. Hermann was poetic, dreamy, aesthetic, poet, painter, and must it be added, voluptuary.

Hermann was a man about whom women ran much. Hermann had a sensitive, mobile face, with clean cut delicate features, a brow white as a woman's and great Raphael-like eyes which looked at you deprecatingly, appealingly, as though they were saying, "I love you; be kind to me."

Hermann's father was, it was said, a Baron who, for his political views, had been compelled to leave his country, and to forfeit his inheritance, and at last to end his days as a teacher of languages in the Dominion; and Hermann's mother had been an Italian princess.

She had died years before her husband, but her rare beauty had lived again, it was said, in the eye, the brow, the features of her son. When Hermann began to be made much of in the literary and artistic world, and, as a consequence, in the circumscribed, exclusive, carefully guarded little-world of *ton*, it was a triumph, dangerously alluring, to the girl whom fate had shut out from these enchanted circles to know herself the admired, the sought of, of this man, the envied of many of her sex.

Should she give him the assurance he had this night asked of her?

He was going away to Rome, to Greece, to the East. Should she tell him before he went, that her heart, her love, would go with him thither?

Why should she hesitate? What was there that after the first thrill of conscious triumph made her pause and tremble, and turn pale and cold and draw back instinctively as one who suddenly perceives himself standing on the brink of a precipice?

Why upon her mental vision, after that first moment of triumph had there risen, palpably distinct, the lineaments of a face she had not seen for years, a face she had parted from in anger, and whose last look, as she remembered,

it turned towards her, had been stern and bitterly reproachful?

He was only one of the people, and there was little of what is usually accounted beauty in the squarely outlined face with its irregular features, defective colouring and dusky unkempt beard and locks. Only the grave and searching eyes redeemed it from positive ugliness.

Why should these eyes look into hers now, as she pondered with herself the answer she should give to Hermann's question?

II.

A great stretch of level land. Beyond it the bright blue sea. Beyond that again a distant coast broken into irregular, rugged outlines.

On the bright waves in the sunshine of the August noon, a little boat tossing lightly, its languid motion obeying the slumberous instinct of the dreamy golden time. In the boat, two persons, a man and a girl. His eyes are bent upon her face with fond admiring look, and see, he leans forward and takes her unresisting hand in his. She is very fair, a Saxon beauty, with the blue of the skies and the yellow of the sea amber in her eyes and hair; and in her cheek the delicate bloom of the sweet pea.

How unlike she is to Madeleine De L'Orme—Madeleine who is so far away, with this same blue sea rolling between her and this man who is now vowing eternal fidelity to the woman before him, who less than a year ago had vowed that death only should erase from his heart the name and love of Madeleine.

There had been no encouragement, nothing for his hopes to feed upon in Madeleine's farewell words. At the last, she had grown suddenly cold; had shrunk away within herself, had refused to listen to his plea, had told him briefly, with scarcely one womanly regret, that she could never love him, that she had mistaken her own heart if she had ever thought she could.

He had listened amazed, incredulous. What, this girl whose name was scarcely known in the most casual chance-acquaintance way, within the circle of his intimate friends, this girl so poor and obscure that not one of all the many fashionable women of his acquaintance would have so much as dreamed of admitting her to society on equal terms, this girl who had no beauty, no genius, no lover, for aught he knew, to reject his proffered love! He had scarcely known how it had come about that he had cared that she should love him. He had made her acquaintance two summers before when he had strayed, artist and poet wise, to the little distant hamlet, rumors of whose seclusion and sylvan loveliness had reached him in his city home, and where he had found her living with an aged aunt.

An accident had introduced them to each other. Overtaken by a sudden and violent storm he had found himself at a distance from his lodging, and with but a single habitation in sight at which he might apply for shelter.

It was Madame De L'Orme's cottage. It stood by itself solitary, apart from other dwellings on the edge of the deep wood that skirts the hill as you enter the village from the west.

Whose was the house? He did not stop to ask, but ran hastily towards it, ascended the steps and knocked at the door.

It was opened by a dark-browed girl, who in reply to his appeal for shelter, courteously invited him to enter.

This was the beginning of his acquaintance with Mademoiselle De L'Orme.

In the country, where there is a certain amount of freedom from the restrictions of society in towns and cities, acquaintance ripens rapidly.

Before a week had passed Hermann was on terms of friendship with both the inmates of the cottage, on terms of something more, perhaps, with one of them.

Then he and she had parted, but fate had brought them together again.

Madame De L'Orme's health was failing, and the cottage was sold, and, in order to be within reach of better medical advice, she came to the city.

She was very poor, so poor that Hermann was often puzzled to think how she and her niece contrived to live at all on the pittance they possessed.

At first, Madeleine had a few music pupils, but as her aunt's health gave way more and more, she was obliged to relinquish these and devote herself almost exclusively to the care of the invalid. Hermann came to see them often. He was in quite a different walk in life from theirs and the society of a querulous invalid and a simple country girl, without even the charm of beauty to recommend her, might, not be supposed attractive to a man of his tastes; yet so it was that he did not tire of it.

There was a freshness as well as an indifference in Madeleine's manner. He could never feel that she was insipid or heavy; and yet she was never brilliant; and he could never be sure that she loved him.

That she liked him, and liked his attentions was evident.

Was she then a coquette? He asked her the question one night, when they were alone together, and following fast upon it another question, could she love him?

And Madeleine heard him, and her dark brow flushed and burned in the moonlight, and a thrill of momentary triumph and of something tenderer perhaps than triumph, passed through her heart.

He was gone before she could reply to him, to come, as he had said, for her answer on the morrow.

And he had come, and she had told him briefly she had no love to give him.

This had been all from her; but his last words at parting had been passionate protestations of eternal fidelity, and pleading that she would relent and bid him hope.

Then had come to her letters from the far-off lands where he was journeying, letters which she had never answered, but which, when they had ceased to come, had seemed to her very precious and their cessation something that made a blank in her life.

The little boat rocked lightly on the placid waves, scarce heeded by its occupants. They were floating on the tide of love, and this material azure sea so beautiful, so still, so bright, was a figure to them of love's diviner one.

III.

The interior of a country church. At the organ, awakening from its depths such rare grand melody as Mozart's Mass evokes when the soul guides the fingers of the musician, a girl sits playing.

The prayers are over, and the church is empty, but for herself and the blind boy who blows for her, and who would gladly stay on till midnight listening to the music that brings all Heaven down to his enraptured senses, and makes him both see and hear divine things.

Mademoiselle De L'Orme has but one gift, but that one is divine.

It is said that musical women are proverbially stupid.

Is this truth or satire?

Mademoiselle De L'Orme could not have written a page of passable English for her life, scarcely a dozen pages of her native French; but when you had heard her play you were ready to pronounce her a genius.

Her aunt is dead and Madeleine has left the city and come again to the country. She can live more cheaply here, and this village where her cousin Marie lives is sufficiently populous to afford her as many music pupils as she cares to have. Then, too, the curé is glad to have her play in church, and she loves the organ, albeit it is old and wheezy. And so she is here, and the years pass on.

Mademoiselle plays on till the shadows deepen in the church, and she remembers suddenly that soon it will be quite dark. Then she rises, gathers up her music and locks the organ with a sigh.

Little Edouard sighs too.

"Must you go, Mademoiselle?" he says regretfully. "Ah, what a pity!" and he lifts his slight eyes upwards, as if he were taking a last look of the angels he had been seeing in his vision.

Leaning against a pillar where she must pass him to leave the church, Madeleine perceives, as she descends the stairs, the figure of a man. He is standing quite still, as if absorbed in thought, and his head is drooped upon his breast.

His face is turned from her, and in the dusk she can only see that it is not any of the familiar forms of the villageois. It startles her a little to perceive him there, but she is not nervous, and she advances with a careless step towards him.

All at once he turns, and then a cry breaks from her lips.

"Adolphe!"
Yes, he has come back to her, come back to her at last, her long lost love.

They had been very hasty, very foolish, both of them. They had parted in anger and bitterness for a few light, idle words, and both were too proud to own their fault or to seek forgiveness.

He had gone far away and for years she had heard nothing of him.

Why should she keep her heart for him, she had asked herself when Hermann had demanded it of her for himself, and again when the nephew of M. Le Curé had entreated her to become his wife. There were no reasons why she should, but the contrary; and yet for all that she had kept it.

Let the boat glide on over the placid sea, and Hermann's love glide with it, away, far away from Madeleine. She will never miss it now.

EROL GERVAISE.

FINGER RINGS.

Rings, which are now looked on merely as ornaments, without meaning, except in the cases of the wedding and engaged rings, were formerly considered to be full of occult significance. Certain stones represented virtues, and others were famed for their magical value. The Poles believe that each month of the year is under the influence of a precious stone, which exerts its sway. It is therefore customary among friends and lovers to make reciprocal presents of trinkets ornamented with the natal stones. The following is a list of the stones peculiar to each month, with their meanings:—January.—Garnet: constancy and fidelity. February.—Amethyst: sincerity. March.—Bloodstone: courage and presence of mind. April.—Diamond: innocence. May.—Emerald: success in love. June.—Agate: health and long life. July.—Cornelian: contented mind. August.—Sardonyx: conjugal felicity. September.—Chrysolite: antidote against madness. October.—Opal: hope. November.—Topaz: fidelity. December.—Turquoise: prosperity. As might be expected in so fanciful a matter, the moral qualities attributed to the stones vary greatly according to different authorities, and moreover, other

gems than those mentioned above have been set apart as emblems of the different months. Rings were also used among many different nations as charms and talismans against the evil eye and demons, against debility, the power of the flames and most of the ills inherent to human nature. Sometimes the virtue lay magical letters engraved upon it. Inscriptions upon rings are now comparatively rare, but in old times they were common. It is supposed that the fashion of having mottoes, or "reasons," as they were called, was of Roman origin, for the young Romans gave rings to their lady-loves with mottoes cut on gems, such as "Remember," "Good luck to you," "Love me, and I will love thee." In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the posy was inscribed on the outside of the ring, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was placed inside. In the year 1624 a little book was published with the following title:—"Love's Garland; or posies for rings, handkerchiefs, and gloves, and such pretty tokens that lovers send their loves." Some of these mottoes have become pretty well hackneyed in the course of years. Thus the Rev. Giles More notes in his journal under the dates 1673 4, "Bought for Ann Brett a gold ring, this being the posy—'When this you see remember me.'" In some cases instead of words the stone are made to tell the posy by means of acrostics, thus to obtain Love the following arrangement is made—L apis lazuli, O pal, V erde antique, E merald; and for Love me, malachite and another emerald are added. Names are sometimes represented on rings by the same means; and the Prince of Wales on his marriage to the Princess Alexandra gave her as a keeper one with stone set so as to represent his familiar name of Bertie, as follows: Beryl, E merald, Ruby, T urquoise, I acinth, E merald. The French have precious stones for all the alphabet with the exception of f, k, q, y, and z, and they obtain the words *Souvenir* and *Amitié* by the following means:—S aphir or sardoine, O nyx or opale, U raine, V ermeille, E meraude, N atralithe, I ris, R ubis or rose diamant. A méthiste or aigue-marine, M alachite, I ris, T urquoise or topaze, I ris, E meraude.

VARIETIES.

MEISSONIER spends two years in painting a picture less than a foot square. A test work of the size, representing a halt of horse in the days of First Empire, sold for \$24,000 in gold!

HARRIET HOSMER is to send to the Centennial a set of golden doors, a copy of a superb conceit ordered by an English gentleman, who has allowed her to duplicate them for America.

A SMALL woollen manufactory has been discovered among the ruins of Pompeii. Several charred fragments of tapestry were found, besides various machines for carding and weaving wool.

LEWIS MILLER of St. Louis, a German who, having been "snow blinded," had to abandon his occupation as a sailor, arose one morning recently with a vision as good as ever. Neither he nor his oculist can account for it.

A WELSHMAN of Utica possesses a harp ordered by Prince Albert for the Exhibition of all Nations in 1851, made by Jones of Cardiff from a tree planted by one of the ancient Princes of Wales. It cost \$900, but was bought in a pawn shop for \$100.

MASSACHUSETTS still has a law which provides that "whoever travels on the Lord's day, except from necessity or charity shall be punished by fine not exceeding \$10 for every offence." The statute is practically a nullity, no punishment such as it authorizes having been inflicted for many years, but it makes all Sunday travel unlawful, and consequently no damages can be recovered for injuries received on highways or railroads on Sunday, unless proof can be introduced that the travelling was for necessity or charity.

THE original manuscript of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" was sold in London on May 20 by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge. It contains many variations from the poem as now printed, notably the names of "Caesar" and "Tully" instead of "Milton" and "Cromwell," and many alterations, erasures, and corrections, which show the anxious care bestowed upon its composition. It was bought by Sir William Fraser for £230, having been sold by the same firm about twenty years ago, in the Penn collection, for £131. In the same sale were the manuscript of Dickens' "Christmas Carol," which was bought by Mr. Harvey for £55. A signed autograph letter of Queen Elizabeth to Henri IV, of France, thanking him for the portrait he sent, and closing with many professions of friendship, £51. Two autograph letters of Napoleon I, £44. Lord Nelson to Lady Hamilton, £21.

MRS. JAMES A. OATES and her opera company are travelling again, with the husband reinstated as manager. Miss Soldene intends to return to this country with a new troupe next fall. Haus von Bulow will be here in September. Blind Tom is in St. Louis this week. Miss Kellogg and her English opera troupe will sing at Booth's in October. Janushechek and Ristori played at rival theatres in San Francisco last week. Boucault will introduce "The Shaughan" to San Francisco next week. Miss Charlotte Thompson is in New York with a company. Fechter is acting in Montreal this week. Mr. and Mrs. Lingard have gone to Australia. Harry Greenwall, a Galveston manager, has been fined \$500 for refusing to sell parquets seats to two negro women. Edwin Booth will play for six weeks at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, beginning October 1. The Vokes family were to sail for New York June 17.

AN attempt, it seems, is about to be made to recover a number of sculptures, friezes, and other antiquities, being part of those obtained by Lord Elgin from the Acropolis of Athens in 1802, in virtue of a firman of Sultan Selim III., but which were lost by the wreck of the *Montion* on its voyage to England off Avignone, in the island of Cythera (Cerigo). The marbles were packed in seventeen cases, twelve of which were recovered by divers from Calymnos, sent for the purpose by the Admiral at Malta, to whom Lord Elgin applied for assistance when the disaster occurred. The antiquities thus saved were placed in the British Museum, and the remaining five cases have remained hidden beneath the waves until the present time. Mr. Makoukas, a gentleman living at Cerigo, has lately sent a report to the Archaeological Society of Athens, stating that the marbles are plainly visible lying on the bottom of the sea, at the depth of about sixteen fathoms (ninety-six feet.) It is thought that with the new diving appliances now in use these marbles will be easily recoverable, and it is believed that the Greek Government will be disposed to grant a sum of money to the Athens Archaeological Society, which will enable it at once to take steps for their recovery.