

HELENA GRAHAM,
—OR—
THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

A cloud passed over the brow of his companion, but it cleared away in a moment, as a quick, light footstep was heard approaching, and the next instant Helena Graham, the haughty daughter of a haughty race, stood bright, dazzling, and smiling before them.

No one ever looked once in the face of Helena Graham without turning to gaze again. Peerlessly beautiful as she was, it was not her beauty that would startle you, but the look of wild power, of intense daring, of fierce passions, of unyielding energy, of a will, powerful for love or hate, of a nature loving, passionate, fiery, impulsive, and daring, yet gentle, winning, and soft.

She might have been seventeen years of age—certainly not more. In stature she was tall, and with a form regally beautiful, splendidly developed, with a haughty grace peculiarly her own. Her face was perfectly oval, her complexion, naturally olive, had been tanned by sun and wind to a rich, clear, gipsyish darkness. Her hair, that hung in a profusion of long curls, was of jetty blackness save where the sun fell on it, bringing out red rings of fire. Her large Syrian eyes, full of passion and power, were of the most intense blackness, now flashing with sparks of light, and now swimming in liquid tenderness. Her high, bold brow might have become a crown—certainly it was regal in its pride and scorn. Her mouth, which was the only voluptuous feature in her face, was small, with full, ripe, red lips, rivalling in bloom the deep crimson of her dark cheeks.

Her dress was like herself—odd and picturesque, consisting of a short skirt of black silk, a bodice of crimson velvet, with gilt buttons. She held in one hand a black velvet hat, with a long, sweeping plume, swinging it gaily by the strings, as she came towards them. She was a strange, wild-looking creature, altogether; yet what would first strike an observer was her queenly air of pride, her lofty hauteur, her almost unendurable arrogance. For her unbending pride, as well as her surprising beauty, the haughty little lady had obtained even in childhood the title of "The Island Queen." And queenly she looked, with her noble brow, her flashing, glorious eyes, her dainty, curving lips, her graceful statuesque form—in every sense of the word, "a queen of noble nation's crowning."

And Herbert Clinton, passionate admirer of beauty as he was, what thought he of this dazzling creature? He leant negligently against the taffrail, with his eyes fixed on her sparkling, sunbristled face, noting every look and gesture as one might gaze on some strange, beautiful maid, half in fear, half in love, but wholly in admiration. Yes, he loved her, or thought he did, and gazing with him on the moonlit waves, when the solemn stars shone serenely above him, he had told her so, and she had believed him. And she, wild, untutored child of nature, who can tell the deep devotion, the intense passion, the fiery, all-absorbing love for him that filled her impulsive young heart?

As she advanced, Herbert Clinton started up, saying gaily—
"Welcome back, Miss Helena, I thought the sunlight had deserted us altogether; but you have brought it back in your eyes."

"How's your patient, Helena?" said Captain Graham, who, not being in love, found Mr. Clinton's high-toned compliments very tiresome sometimes.
"Much worse, I am afraid," she answered, in a peculiarly musical voice.
"I do not think he will live to see the morrow's sun. His ravings are frightful to hear. Some terrible crime seems to be weighing him down as much as disease."

"After all, the human soul is an awful possession for a guilty man," said Captain Graham, thoughtfully. Things can be smoothed over during life, but when one comes to die—
"They feel what retributive justice is, I suppose," said Clinton, in his customary careless tone. "And apropos of that, somebody will suffer terrible remorse after I die. I am to be murdered, if there is any truth in fortune-telling."

He spoke lightly, with a half smile; but Helena's face paled involuntarily, as she exclaimed—
"Murdered, did you say? Who could have predicted anything so dreadful?"

"An astrologer or enchanter, or wizard of some kind in Spain when I was there. The affair seems so improbable, so utterly absurd, in short, that I never like to allude to it."
"But did he tell you who you were to be—"

Helena stopped short; even in jest she could not pronounce the word.

A Prince of Readers.
Probably no author of his time has read more than Carlyle. He actually devours, and has devoured books ever since he was ten years old. He will go through an ordinary volume in two hours, and though he may not con each page, he will find in it all that is worthy. His memory is prodigious, not only for generalities, but for details. He could repeat poetry by the ell; he never does, however, for he is always averring that he hates poetry—that the greatest bards have crippled their thought, and limited their ranges, by rhythm and rhyme. He thinks Homer, Dante and Shakespeare would have been greater had they expressed themselves in prose. Nevertheless, he is a poet—a poet, not without, but indifferent to, form. He has the reputation of being better acquainted with all subjects—historic, philosophic, literary, and scientific—than any living Briton. For years and years he is reputed to have read on an average five volumes a day, and to have skimmed eight or ten more. Reading has even been a passion with him, and he has said that his idea of heaven would be to be turned into an inexhaustible library of good books, where he could browse for all eternity. He estimates, I have heard, that he has gleaned the contents of fully one hundred thousand volumes, which, when we consider his voracity, rapidity, trained eyes and mind, is not at all unlikely. There is hardly a curious and remarkable book in the British Museum that he is not more or less familiar with. A gentleman's ordinary library he could eat up—all that is worth eating, that is—in a single fortnight.
It is asserted that a rich merchant, who had collected five or six thousand rare works, once besought the author to dine with him, in order to look at his library. The bibliophile, allured by literary hunger, went three hours before the time announced. When the merchant got home, and asked a guest to look at his books, his guest replied, "Why, mon, I've finished 'em."

Lord and Lady Dufferin have returned, to Ottawa, from their trip to the other side of the line.

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Remember the Store—THE GOLDEN LION—where the once wonderful John Hogg was, and where the now wonderful J. D. WILLIAMSON is. Although unprincipled men have been trying to impose on the people that the Lion has been moved up street, the Lion is still in the old spot, next door to Mr. John Horsman's, Lower Wyndham street. Where the Lion is, there the Bargains are.

J. D. WILLIAMSON.

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