

VIOLET'S STORY.

[CONCLUDED.]

Violet, he said, this is the last time. God knows I have been constant, but a man cannot bear too much. Three years have I followed you—three years striven to win you, by every means in my power. Again I come to you; again I offer you my heart, my hand, and all that is mine. If you refuse it I shall offer it no more. Pride has stooped long enough—Love has held sway beyond his time—and you—

The last chance, eh? she said lightly. Very kind of you to give it.

You are cruel, Violet, he answered. You sneer at such tender love as many women never have offered them in all their lives. My God! I can win hearts I care nothing for; why not this?

It was the echo of her own secret cry. It touched her. She stood still, and tried to think.

It was true love that was offered her, and a good man, and a handsome man offered it; and all that made life sweet might be hers, but for a silly dream. Shall I waste my heart any longer on a man who does not want it? she said to herself. I'll not be so weak. Then she glanced at Charles Moreland. He had turned away, but not so far but that she saw tears in his eyes. She went toward him.

Charles, she said, her lip quivering. I do not scorn your love. It honors me. If you really care for me so much, you may have me.

Then his arms were about her, and he was glad; and she strove to be.

They walked on the beach for a long while. From it they walked to the clergyman's house. He seemed to fear that she should change her mind, and he wished to put it out of her power to do so.

They were married that morning, the clergyman's wife and daughter smiling witnesses of the ceremony. And that day he promised to let her go back alone to her hotel, and to sing as she had agreed to do that night. The next morning the news would be abroad, and he would claim her.

And I will not see you, or speak to you again until to-morrow, Charles, she said, then this life ends, and my new one begins.

So they parted.

She put her wedding ring upon her watch chain, and so wore it—not upon her finger. As she stepped forth upon the stage that night, she thought that this would be the last time she gave her neither joy nor sorrow; but as she advanced, she saw a face among the faces of the audience that made the ring lying over her heart turn hard and cold there, to her fancy. Arthur Hurst looked up at her, and smiled—a glad, free smile, unusual to him. She smiled back, but she could have screamed. She sang, but not well; she made mistakes, and faltered. Between the first part of the concert and the last she turned faint; but the final song aroused her. It was love's last adieu to the beloved. It was, as she felt, her adieu to Arthur—a German song rich with German romance and ardor. It thrilled her heart as her voice thrilled the crowd of listeners. One felt the tears standing in his eyes. She could not see them; her own had blinded her.

She went home to her hotel. The youth of the place made that old-time demonstration, of taking the horses from her carriage, and dragging it to its destination. They called her out into the balcony to receive their applause, and she smiled and bowed. Then she sat down upon a sofa in the pretty flower-bedecked parlor, and took her wedding ring from its chain and put it on.

I am the wife of a true man, she said, and I will be a true wife even in thought, God helping me.

Just then a tap came at the door. It was a servant, who uttered these words:

A gentleman, Miss. He says it's late, but just a moment.

Violet arose. One gentleman had a right to summon her at any moment now. She had forbidden him, but she would see him for a little, it might be best for her. She went down to the parlor. Arthur Hurst arose to meet her. He led her to a seat, for the second time in his life he drew near to her, and took her hand in his. His great black eyes were dewy, his mouth sweetly tremulous, his voice not his usual voice.

He put her hand to his lips, to his cheek. She felt his heart beating against her arm. Then he kissed her. She sat as one in a dream.

Violet, he said, I wonder whether my hopes mislead me. I have loved you so long! You know that, do you not? and you—you don't shrink from me.

It has been so long, so hopeless he continued. I have held my peace for three years, and struggled with fortune the while. And it has come at last—the success I have striven for. With all my other shortcomings, I could not ask you to share a fate so beggerly as mine seemed likely to be. But it is past now. I shall be a rich man in a year or two.

Violet, my darling Violet, will you be my wife?

The ring lay cold as ice upon her finger—the wedding ring of Charles Moreland.

An hour after this, a woman slipped into the chemist's shop of Bethelport, and asked for arsenic. The chemist answered doubtfully; he hardly knew about selling it. It might be used for a bad purpose. When a doctor ordered it he sent a prescription.

The lady put back her filmy hood.

I am Miss Marten, she said. You heard me sing to-night. We professional people must keep up our complexions.

Then she smiled, and the chemist smiled also, and thought to himself that this accounted for that transparent skin, and thought no more of it until next morning, when Miss Violet Marten was found dead. She left two little notes behind her—one to Arthur Hurst the other to her husband. No one but those to whom they were addressed knew what they contained.

At the inquest the chemist gave his evidence, and the papers had a paragraph concerning the beautiful cantatrice who died for the sake of a fair complexion, and moralized on the folly of beauty feeding itself on arsenic, and so being liable to take over doses. And they will show you the grave at Bethelport church-yard where lies the singer, beautiful, young and successful, and married that morning to a millionaire, who killed herself through excess of vanity, but by pure accident, since she had everything to live for. And there is a stone there which is a marvel of carved beauty, that her husband had placed over her; but a strange, slow-growing vine that is creeping over it, was planted by a gentleman no one knew—a lame gentleman, with a very sad pale face.

Doubtless Violet left sore hearts in this world when she went out of it, but whether they healed or were broken we will not seek to know. Our story was Violet's, and with her life it ends.

The Stolen Curl.

Upon the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, and on the southern border of the state of Mississippi, a long row of elegant villas, a group of warehouses, and here and there a public building or private institution, form the lovely and quiet town of Pass Christian, noted for its balmy climate, the beauty of its situation, its handsome residences, and the wealth and refinement of its citizens.

To the young ladies' academies and military institutions of Pass Christian, many of the wealthy planters were wont to send their daughters and sons to be educated; and as the pupils of the representative institutions would meet in their daily promenades, many admiring glances would be exchanged between them, and longings felt to become acquainted.

Among the fair pupils of the Lake Academy, none were more beautiful than Rosa Verner, the sole heiress to all her doting father's cotton estates, situated upon the Mississippi river. A shower of golden curls fell upon her shoulders. Blue dreamy eyes, a bright, smiling face and a graceful form, added to a disposition of the truest womanly sweetness, made the young girl of fifteen particularly attractive to all who knew her. Many a handsome cadet from the military academy had fallen in love with the bewitching beauty at the first glance from her heaven-lit eyes; but to none did she show a preference when meeting at the soirees and receptions given by the different schools.

One of Rosa's greatest, though silent admirers, was Edward Griffith, the son of a Mississippi planter, whose estate lay adjoining that of Mr. Verner; but between Mr. Verner and Colonel Griffith there existed great bitterness, and for years the families had not spoken, though meeting constantly in social intercourse at the neighboring planters.

The feud commenced long years before, when Mr. Verner and Colonel Griffith were rivals for the hand of Edward's mother. Colonel Griffith had won her heart and hand and married her; and his success so enraged Mr. Verner that he challenged his successful rival, a duel followed, and in the encounter Colonel Griffith came off victorious severely wounding his adversary.

Since that day neither had spoken to the other, and all interchange of friendly intercourse between even the negroes upon the plantations was forbidden.

Meeting once at Pass Christian, though Rosa could not but see that Edward Griffith admired her, and he felt that she was not indifferent to his gaze, both were governed by the remembrance of the feud existing between their parents, and gave no sign of recognition of the other's feelings.

Towards the close of a lovely summer's day, in the year that this story opens, the fair pupils of the Lake Institute had gone down the long pier leading out into the lake, to the bath house of the institution. Soon a merry party of damsels were splashing about in the

water, riding the breakers, and chasing each other about in glee.

It was a pretty sight, dressed as they were in their various colored bathing suits, and a handsome youth of twenty-one, clad in the stylish uniform of the Pass Christian Military Academy, passed and gazed upon the lovely scene. Suddenly a shriek was heard, and a dark form was borne away by the tide, out of reach of aid from her companions. With the speed of a deer the young cadet sped down the long pier, reached the bath house, and regardless of the cries of the frightened girls, bounded head-long into the water. Vigorously did he breast the waves, and soon overtook the fair girl, who was nobly struggling to sustain herself above the waters, for she was a fair swimmer.

Soon he came nearer; and seeing that help was at hand, her courage forsook her and she sank beneath the waters, while shrieks of distress from the shore showed that her companions believed her forever lost. With a deep dive the youth succeeded in catching hold of the drowning girl, and with renewed strength started shoreward.

Bravely did he struggle, and at last he felt that he would reach the shore, for when almost at the bath house, two of the professors of the institute, alarmed at the cries of distress, had run down to the scene, and swimming out a few yards had relieved the tired youth of his precious burden.

Without a word the young man turned once more away, and to the surprise of all, commenced to swim down the coast. In vain did they call to him from the shore; on he swam, and night coming rapidly on, he was soon no longer visible.

After continuing slowly, and with a strong and steady stroke some distance down the coast, the cadet swam towards a pier that projected into the lake, and drew himself greatly fatigued, from the water. Looking around him to see that he was not watched, he walked rapidly up the pier, and struck off across the fields for the academy. Arriving there, he sought his room, and reached it unperceived, where he hastily changed his clothing.

Before descending to the study hall to join his fellow students, he drew from the pocket of the saturated jacket he had thrown aside, a long, golden curl, dampened by the water.

I could not resist the temptation to sever this beautiful curl from its golden mates; she will miss it, and yet she will never know who it was that saved her life.

And carefully drying the tress of hair the cadet placed it securely away.

A great excitement was created at Pass Christian by the saving from a watery grave of the beautiful Rosa Verner, and the strange conduct of her noble preserver, whoever he might be; for it was impossible to discover his name, and all that could be ascertained was, that he was a cadet from the Military Academy.

This much the young girls had noticed as he sprang from the pier; and Rosa, having become unconscious, could not describe his features.

The missing curl was commented upon and the faces of all the cadets were eagerly scanned by the pupils of the Lake Institute and the citizens, who evinced a deep interest in the mysterious affair, but still an expression of innocence rested upon every student's face and gave no clue.

Mr. Verner came to the Pass, and in vain did he visit the academy and endeavour to find out the brave youth who had rescued his daughter from death. It was useless, and after a time it was thought over only as a thing of the past.

Three years have passed since the incidents mentioned above, and from the shores of the sunny Gulf the scene changes to the banks of the Mississippi River.

Riding slowly along the road are two persons, a lady and a gentleman, on horse-back. Earnestly they are conversing together; and then the maiden draws rein, and rests her gloved hand upon her companion's arm.

Edward, here you must leave me, and forever. It is hard to give you up, but my father will never forgive and forget the past, not even for my sake, dearly as he loves me. I cannot again meet you. This morning he discovered our secret interviews, and forbade me ever to see you; and upon your return home you will find a bitter letter from him, demanding my letters. You know how dearly I love you, and yet you know we must part. Good-bye, Edward, and that Heaven may protect you will ever be my prayer. And bright diamond tears rolled down the beautiful face of Rosa Verner, and fell upon the roadside.

I will not urge you to disobey your father, Rosa. I have ever loved you, since a little girl, I used to see you dashing about on your little pony. When at the Pass at school, I loved you more dearly; and how I blessed kind fate that threw us together, untrammelled by the presence of our parents, when you came up the river a year ago on board

the steamer. Then I felt that you controlled my life's happiness, and dearly have I enjoyed our stolen interviews. Now all is over, and we must part. I will do as your father asks me in his letter—return all you have sent me. Rosa, my own darling, good-bye!

Thus the lovers parted; and while Rosa returned to her father's plantation, a mile down the river, Edward Griffith leaped his horse into a cotton field that bordered the river bank, and darted away in the direction of his own home; for death had lain his father in the grave, and he was master and owner of the large estate.

Arriving at his own door, a negro messenger from the Verner plantation awaited his coming, and presented him with a letter. Entering his library, he broke the seal, and his brow darkened as he read the contents.

For her sake I will forbear, and for her sake I return her letters—every little memento of her love; yes, all!

A few minutes after the ebony messenger rode away, bearing in his hand a small package addressed to "William Verner, Esquire, Sunny Side Plantation."

Mr. Verner was pacing the broad verandah that encircled his handsome residence. A stern, haughty man, his brow was darkly clouded, and his eyes wore an angry expression as ever and anon, he glanced down the avenue, as if in expectancy.

Ha! at last! I hope he has not dared to refuse my demand; if so—

And he grasped the package held out to him by the negro boy.

Breaking the seal, he glanced over the contents. The frown darkened, then his face suddenly paled. The letters and love trinkets fell to the floor, as he exclaimed: What does this mean?

In his hand he held a curl, flashing like golden strands in the light of the setting sun.

Upon the card attached he read:—"Rescued from the waves. Pass Christian, June 15th, 1850."

One moment he glanced at the card, his face changing with the emotions that swept over him, and then he called out to the retreating messenger, Robert come, here!

The negro again advanced.

Mount your horse, and return at once and quickly to Griffith Manor. Present my best wishes to Mr. Griffith, and say that I request the pleasure of seeing him immediately at Sunny Side Plantation.

Yes, sir. And while the messenger started away at full speed, Mr. Verner continued his walk up and down the verandah.

An hour had not passed when Edward Griffith rode up to the door, dismounted and ascended the broad steps, wearing upon his face a puzzled expression at his strange and unexpected summons to Sunny Side.

Advancing toward him, Mr. Verner extended his hand, while he said in a firm voice, Edward Griffith, I never believed that you, or one of your race, would ever be invited across my threshold. Your package, sent me this evening, told me who it was that saved my daughter's life three years ago; hence I bury the hatchet and offer my hand. You are a noble young man, and I believe will accept it.

Thus the feud was settled, all animosities buried, and the two families united by the strongest ties; for Edward and Rosa were married soon after, and all this happiness came about through the romance of the stolen curl.

WOMEN OF BUSINESS.

It has long been a question with me, whether what woman gains in strength she does not lose in grace. I am sure this need not be so; at least only so long as we are in the crudities. I jealously watch every conversation on such subjects between the sexes. Not long since, I overheard some remarks of a relative to a widow whose husband, a builder, was just deceased. She had been as much a stranger to business up to this period as one of her own children, when she suddenly announced her determination to complete several houses for which he was under contract. Friends stood aghast. But, nothing daunted, spite of indifference and discouragement, she went bravely on. The men in her employ soon found out that they could not be eye-servants; for was not Madam upon the ground as early as seven in the morning, to see if they were at their posts, and performing their several duties? Nor were they forgotten when pay-day came. Money was given out and receipts were taken as if she had been brought up on ledgers and bank accounts.

I pricked up my ears. Was this the "coming" woman? Had she children? Who washed their faces, mended their clothes, spanked them when necessary, and kept the raspberry jam intact?

While I listened for an answer to these queries, I found others had been curious; particularly the male sex. One from whom I expected notes of admiration, remarked, with raised eyebrows, "Sharp woman that—where was the baby the while?" From not one did I hear an approbative remark. And yet these very men would have been the first to

deplore an added burden to the already over-weighted father or brother.

I inquired as to the graces—whether she had lost sight of them during this spasm of business. I found that my lady's bonnet was as daintily trimmed by her own fingers as if they had not been smirched by ledger accounts. She entertained at dinner; she presided at tea; she graced a reception. Still the men shook their heads. What could be the matter? For a long time I puzzled my head in vain; for her character to my eye seemed to be as round as a circle. At last I hit upon it. Dr. Holland, I hit upon it! she was not "the clinging vine!" She stood on her own feet, though the oak was felled to the earth.

Moral: Every woman should carry a staff, though she may not need to use it.

HOW TO RULE A HUSBAND.

Above all things, if a wife wishes to make home attractive to her mate, let her keep a sharp eye on the cook; nothing makes a male creature more discontented with his house than bad dinners, ill served. If there is anything that will make him swear (and there generally is, my dear young lady, although his temper was angelic when he was a wooing) it is a cold plate with hot meat, or a hot one with his cheese. Neglect of this sort is unpardonable. Again it may not be possible to give dainties, but it is easy to avoid monotony by a careful study of the cookery-book; and it was quite astonishing how the monster man can be subjugated and assuaged by a judicious variation of his meals. The creature may be allegorically pictured lightly led by a fair lady with a wedding ring through his palate. Indeed, there are a thousand ways to lead him, if women would show a little tact, with which they are so falsely credited. Opposition, contradiction, makes him furious; he stamps, he roars, and becomes altogether dangerous. Whereas, treat him tenderly, O wife, and you shall vindicate him round your marriage finger. I have seen wives miss their chance of gaining what they have set their eyes on a hundred times through sheer stupidity. They know that a certain line of conduct is sure to anger him, and yet they pursue it when smooth and easy victory awaits them in another direction. Tact! Such women, I say, have not even instinct. Birds of paradise, for instance, not to be rude, would act in a more sagacious manner.

A canvasser for the "Life of Horace Greeley" importuned a St. Louis man to purchase a copy, which he declined to do, when the following dialogue ensued:—

"Are you not a democrat?"
 "Yes, I am."
 "Will you not vote for Greeley?"
 "Yes, I think I will."
 "Then why not buy this book?"
 "Because if I should read his life I am afraid I would change my mind and refuse to vote for the old cuss."

An old lady slightly blind while engaged in a futile attempt to sew buttons on young Augustus's jacket, remarked: "Drat these buttons. I can't find the holes and they split all to pieces every time I stick the needle into 'em. To which replied young Augustus: Now, look 'ere, Granny! you just let my peppermint drops alone. You've split 'em a half of 'em already."

A WIFE wanted her husband to sympathize with her in a feminine quarrel, but he refused, saying "I've lived long enough to learn that one woman is just as good as another—if not better." "And I," retorted the exasperated wife, "have lived long enough to learn that one man is just as bad as another, if not worse!"

AN Indiana editor says that he now believes in total depravity, as some wretch lately stole his only pair of boots, which will confine him to the house till the opening of the barefoot season.

In a brief temperance article the other day, a Western paper attempted to say something about "the chief point in the battle," but the perverse types got it "the chief pint in the bottle."

GENIUS is the gold in the mine, talent is the miner who works and brings it out.

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