

HELENA GRAHAM,

THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

The sun was sinking in the far west as the little yacht Summer Breeze went dashing over the bright waves towards Graham's Isle. Captain Malcolm Graham stood leaning negligently over the taffrail, solacing himself with a cigar, and conversing at intervals with a slight, somewhat haughty-looking young man, who stood beside him, watching the waves flashing as they sped along. No two could be more opposite as far as looks went, than these two, yet both were handsome and about the same age. Like all of his race, young Graham was very tall, and dark as a Spaniard. His short, black, curling hair shadowed a forehead high, bold, and commanding. Dark, keen, proud eyes flashed from beneath jetty eyebrows, and the firm, resolute mouth gave to his dark face a look almost fierce. His figure was exquisitely proportioned, and there was a certain bold frankness, mingled with a reckless devil-may-care expression in his fine face, that atoned for his swarthy complexion and stern brows.

His companion was a tall, elegant young man, with an air of proud superiority about him, as though he were "somebody," and knew it. His complexion was fair as any lady's, and would have been effeminate but for the dark, bold eyes, and his dashing air generally. There was something particularly winning in his handsome face, especially when he smiled, that lit up his whole countenance with new beauty. Yet, with all, there was a certain faithless expression about the finely-formed mouth that would have led a close observer to hesitate before trusting him too far. This reader, was Mr. Herbert Clinton, a young English gentleman, and heir to one of the finest estates in the county of Derbyshire.

The last five years he had passed in Vienna, and when he was thinking of returning home, he had encountered Captain Graham and his sister. Fond of luxury and ease as the young patrician was, he gave up all after that for the attraction he discovered on board the yacht Summer Breeze. And Captain Graham, pleased with his new friend, invited him to accompany them for a short while to Trieste, where his yacht was, and then go home with him, and spend a few weeks with him in his ancestral castle, whither he was obliged to stop while some repairs were being made in his vessel—which invitation Herbert Clinton, nothing loth, accepted.

"Well, Graham, how is that patient of yours this evening?" inquired Clinton, after a pause.

"Don't know," replied Captain Graham, carelessly, "I haven't seen him since morning. Helena is with him now."

"By the way, where did you pick him up? He is not one of your crew, I understand."

"No! I met him at Gibraltar. He came to me one day, and asked me to take him home. I replied that I had no accommodation, and would much rather not be troubled with passengers. However, he pleaded so hard for me to accommodate him, and looked so like something from the other world all the time, that I had not the heart to refuse the poor fellow. Before we had been three days at sea he was taken ill, and has been raving and shrieking ever since, as you know."

"What do you suppose is the matter with him?"

"Well, I haven't much experience as a nurse myself, but I think it's brain fever, or something of that kind; Helena, however, thinks that bitter remorse for something he has done is preying on his mind, and girls always know best in these cases."

"He is, if I may judge, by his looks, of humble station rather," said Mr. Clinton, in an indifferent tone.

"Yes; there can be no doubt of that, though he appears to have plenty of money."

"Has he given his name?"

"Yes; Arthur Stewart."

"Hum! well, it would be unpleasant to have him die on board, of course," said Clinton.

"Oh, I think he'll live to reach our destination; he does not appear to be sinking very fast."

"We must now be quite near this island-home of yours, Captain Graham; I grow impatient to see it."

"We shall reach it about moonrise to-night if the wind hold out as it is now."

"And what, may I ask, do you intend doing with this Arthur Stewart, when you get there? Will you take him into your castle, and nurse him until he gets well?"

"No, I think not. There is an old lady on the island, who is never so happy as when she has some one to nurse. I think we will consign him to her."

"Then there is another habitation on the island besides yours?" said Clinton, looking up with more interest than he had yet manifested.

"Yes, old Mrs. Ben, a distant connexion of our family, I believe. And, by the way, Clinton, there is a pretty little girl in the case. I suppose that will interest you more than the old woman."

"Pretty girls are an old story by this time," said Clinton, with a yawn.

"Yes, with such a renewed lady-killer as you, no doubt."

"I never did see but one girl in the world worth the trouble of loving," said Clinton, looking thoughtfully into the water.

"Ah! what a paragon she must have been! May I ask what quarter of the globe has the honor of containing so peerless a beauty?"

"I never said she was a beauty, mon ami. But never mind that. When do you expect to be ready for sea again?"

"As soon as possible—in a few weeks, perhaps—for I fear that we'll all soon get tired of the loneliness of the place."

"You ought to be pretty well accustomed to its loneliness by this time."

"Not I, faith! It's now three years since I have been there!"

"Is it possible? I thought you Graham were too much attached to your ancestral home to desert it so long as that."

"Well, it's a dreary place, and I have such an attachment for a wild, exciting life, that I positively could not endure it. I should die of stagnation. As for Helena, my wild, impulsive sister, she would now as soon think of entering a convent as passing her life there."

"Yet you said it was partly by her request you were going there now?"

"Yes, she expressed a wish to show you the place." A slight flush of pleasure colored the clear face of Clinton.

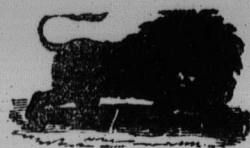
"I don't know what's got into Helena lately," continued her brother. "I never saw a girl so changed. She used to be the craziest leap-aver-the-moon

SEE NEXT PAGE.

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COAL OIL

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110 caddies of Good Japan 75 cent Tea for 65 cents by the caddy.
75 caddies of Good Black Tea at 40 cents per lb, by the caddy.
87 caddies of Extra Good Black Tea at 75 cents per lb, by the caddy.
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White Flannel.....	22	Ashton's Prints.....
Scarllet.....	25	Scarllet Fingering.....
Full Cloth.....	50	Guernsey Drawers.....
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