

and heaving bosom. Her eyes were looking at him with a great, lustrous gleam alluring in all its intensity. The head was thrown backward, giving her features that downward look which was so strong.

"Carl, my Prince, come to me. Come to my heart," she murmured.

Carl felt himself drawn with compelling force. He tried to turn away, not to look, but his gaze involuntarily sought her again.

"Carl, will you come?" she whispered, throwing her arms wide. He could see the swell of her bosom.

"Carl, my love, will you come? Will—you—come?" The words came burning pathetically. She let her head fall to one side with hands clasped above.

"Dear," she scarcely murmured, "you are coming."

Carl gave a cry and walked slowly across the room towards her. When she opened her arms again they were stretched to him.

"Take me, Carl, take me!" Her arms almost caressed him. He never moved. Rita took a step nearer. Her arms were past his cheeks and nearly touching them. Her face was close, with the lips all but pressing his.

"Carl," she sighed, "I am yours."

Crying aloud he caught her to him. For one mad moment he crushed her to his breast and rained kisses on her lips passionately and insanely. The white arms were locked about his neck. He looked into her eyes and for a second he wavered. Then his manlier self came back with a swift revulsion.

"Woman, woman!" he cried. "Let me go. Let me go."

"Never now!" she said, tightening the soft arms on his neck and lifting her eyes to his. In them the light was not of love.

"Let me loose!" Carl begged. "Spirit of heaven, let me go!"

"No, never!" Rita said.

"Temptress! Let me go."

"No. Kiss me!"

Rita's arms closed in burning contact round his neck and she covered his face with mad caresses. "Carl, my Prince," she murmured. Then she gave him an embrace that with the strength of her fierce emotion made the soft arms seem like muscled steel. It staggered Carl. It smothered, conquered, dazed him! For an instant he tottered. Then with a rush his strength came back.

"You devil!" he screamed, and tore the arms loose from his neck.

"Carl, O Carl!" she moaned, clinging vainly to him with her hands.

Carl wrenched himself free and thrust her back so fiercely that she fell sobbing across the cushioned couch.

With full control of his senses once more, he went again to the door. With his hand upon the knob, he turned. "Did you ever see Parsifal?" he asked coldly.

"Yes," Rita said, looking through her tears.

"Then you know whom you shall always be to me after this."

"Who?" she asked, although she knew.

"Kundry."

The girl buried her face in her hands.

"Yes, Kundry," his metallic voice went on. "The critics may pull Wagner to pieces, but I shall know that whatever his other characters may be Kundry is real."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CARL was dazed and stricken with the emotion of the night as he wandered somewhat aimlessly through the streets. He wanted to tramp unceasingly in the damp night air till its cooling breath should drive the fever from his brain. His feet but partly obeyed his will and at a corner he staggered into a burly figure coming the opposite way.

"Look out!" exclaimed a strangely familiar voice. "Are you drunk or do you own these blessed trails?"

"Bland!" cried Carl incredulously.

Jerry Bland peered at him through the dusk. "It's Carl!" he exclaimed. "What is the matter? You never drink. Are you sick?"

"Yes, I am sick, Jerry," answered Glover, in a weary tone. "I am sick of myself and of the world."

"Tell me about it," his friend urged.

"Tell me first why you are here. I thought you in the Maritime Provinces."

"I came back last week," Bland explained. "Father has Cobalt fever like the rest. He wants to invest and he would come up to look over the ground. I had to accompany him. So here I am rolling about the rocks when I should be home helping the Argonauts trim the Hamilton Tigers. Now what is wrong? If there is anything I can do, Carl, you know you may depend upon me."

In a broken voice Carl briefly related his experience.

"You poor chap!" Bland exclaimed, laying an arm across his shoulders. "You came through all right."

"Barely!" said Carl. "I must get away, Jerry."

"Where?"

"Anywhere! It does not matter. I want to lose myself."

"Clive told me of your engagement to Jean. You will go to her. She will forgive."

"Go to her!" Carl exclaimed. "Go to her with the touch of that siren's arms on my neck and the scorch of her kisses on my lips. Bland, I would die first."

"Carl, you are making a mistake," Jerry said anxiously. "I have already made the mistake," Carl bitterly returned.

"The cost of it is my life's happiness. Do me this favour, Jerry, when you return home. Go out to the Humber and tell Clive what I have recounted to you. Bid him tell it all to Jean. I would write but I cannot bring myself to pen a line. I feel that she would curse me for every word of it. Will you do that much for me?"

"Yes, but I know it means the world to you both. Why do you not go and tell her yourself? I know she will forgive you."

"Forgive!" Carl cried desolately. "I can see Jean Thurston's pure face when Clive tells her that the man she loves has broken a bank over the gaming table and has held another woman in his arms. No human pride could forgive that."

"I believe you are wrong," Bland persisted.

"I am right, Jerry. My going will save her the ordeal of a renunciation and a separation. For that at least she will thank me."

"You are determined to leave at daybreak?"

"I shall go on the first train. I cannot say where my destination will be. I have not the least idea. There is one thing more. Tell Jean's father, Clive and all the rest down there, that if they hear of a company called CONSOLIDATED DIAMOND COBALT they must not invest a cent in it. The company is a fraud. Will you remember that?"

"Yes," Bland promised. His intentions at the time were of the best, but that very injunction afterwards slipped his memory.

No words of farewell were spoken, but two sinewed hands met in a mighty grip more eloquent than any speech.

There was a blinding pain of tears across Carl's eyes as he stumbled on.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY NOTES

IN our daily papers of the election season, there is little to cheer us in the editorial page. Yet, even in the very-much-in-earnest columns of the Toronto Globe editorials, one may occasionally find relief, in the weekly article on "nature study," which takes one utterly away from tariffs and trouble to the wider lake waters or the quiet banks of a Canadian stream. It is almost unkind to use such a hackneyed expression as "nature study" regarding such exquisite and seemingly unlabored articles as those by Mr. S. T. Wood.

In the issue of August 26th, for instance, we come with exceeding gladness to an editorial, "The Velvet Scooter," written with a simple charm which is unmistakable. No other writer in Canada could so naively describe this "big, lonely black duck, with a humped, yellow bill, out in the open bay and seemingly alarmed at his loneliness." We read every word about the velvet scooter and wish that his "alert inquisitive stare" had not receded so soon into the distance. The writer of these delightful sketches would confer a favour on the public by publishing them in book form and thereby save many readers the weekly toil of cutting them from the surrounding desolation of politics and putting them in a scrap book with other "literature." Perhaps they would not sell. Who knows? When trash by Ralph Connor lures more Canadian dollars than would ever be expended on the essays of Dr. Macphail, one may well think twice over the selling prospects of a really good book.

* * *

SAID a reader of weird tales the other day: "Are there any Canadian ghost stories?" This aroused some discussion, and it was decided that only in French Canada or among the Indians are there any really "creepy" yarns. The loup-garou has supplied many thrills for the sensation-monger. Mr. W. A. Fraser wrote a prize story for the Metropolitan Magazine some years ago, in which a most uncanny canine was the leading feature; but Canadian story-writers, as a class, prefer the broad light of open day to the midnight regions of ghostly wanderings. The Canadians of Anglo-Saxon descent are a practical community, too much absorbed in the day's work to spend much time in speculation of an airy nature.

A Canadian writer, Mr. H. Addington Bruce, however, has recently written an interesting series of articles, "Adventurings in the Psychological," for one of the New York magazines. These come outside the realm of ghost stories, yet are beyond the merely material in their suggestion and scope.

Perhaps some of our readers have an intimate knowledge of more thrilling uncanny tales with Canadian scenes, than any which have come to our notice. We should be glad to satisfy the curiosity of the inquirer for Canadian ghost stories and furnish him with the literary material for a nightmare of the first order.

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