

mentally, but it has not the same mark of utility as in the other case. Here, then, will be a temptation. If a young girl in starting life strikes the key-note not of utility but of self-eminence, the note will dominate all her subsequent manifestations, well engender a self-seeking, and may be followed by very serious deteriorations of moral influence.

On this subject, second to none in its import and results, we cannot too carefully remind ourselves that the noblest and most effective of woman's endowments are found in the domain of the affections. She awakens chivalry and reverence, because her greatness moves in other lines than those of the intellect. Yes, the glory of woman is the pathos of her sympathy, the strength that lies in her affections, the endurance that springs from fortitude, and the patience that perfects. But an intellectual training which ignores the spiritual, may starve these highest distinctions of woman, and may dwarf and enfeeble her most ennobling and loftiest qualities.—*The Christian.*

HOW I BECAME A MURDERER.

(Concluded.)

III.

I locked the copy of the register in a safe, where I kept my own private personal papers, shut up my office, and went out to walk myself cool. I had met with a skeleton from St. Moor's indeed! I could see the whole miserable history as if it had been written out for me. The young barrister had made a fool of himself, as many other wise men have done. He had been entrapped by this woman in Paris. Perhaps the pitifulness of her unprotected condition had imposed upon him quite as much as her bright cheeks and her great black eyes. She had stuck to him and drawn him into marriage; no doubt his sense of honour had helped her, however much his reason must have opposed her. It was she no doubt, who had swallowed up the whole of his little fortune and kept him under water. It was she who had been the cause of those long vacations in Paris, which he used to make even during term time. And then, when fortune came to him, he had gone abroad to hide what had, no doubt, proved a disgraceful marriage. And then, no less beyond doubt, he had discovered unfaithfulness in her and had left her, half ashamed, half relieved, as such a man would have left such a woman, simply, utterly, and without a word of blame. And then true love had come into his heart. Perhaps he really believed his first wife dead. Perhaps the belief was too much due to the wish—who knows? It was not for me to judge Reginald Gervase. I knew the man as he was, whatever he had done, however weak he might have shown himself in one thing.

And what was I to do? Nothing?

Nothing? When I, and I only, realized the nature of the blow that was about to fall? On the one hand, there was, the true Reginald Gervase, my more than friend, brother, and father, who had plainly been able to free himself of the old shadow, trusted, honoured, loved by all the world, whose whole life was a growth in goodness and usefulness, and whose loss would be public as well as private, and felt none could guess how far round his home. There was the wife, who believed in him as a hero, and who loved him with her whole heart and soul. There were his young children—what need I say of them? On the other hand, there was ruin, scandal, the dock, the prison cell, a wife's broken heart, and four children's lives blasted for all their days; and only because a worthless woman had not died. The thing looked too hideous to be possible; and I dreamed of such a word as—nothing. Well, thank God that he was not at St. Moor's. Every day delayed was a day gained, if only for thinking what could be done.

I was walking along the narrow coastguard path overhanging the sea, which was the shortest cut from Spendrith to the nearest market town, when I was met by a lad who acted as rural postman, and who stopped me with a letter. I took it with scarcely a word of good evening, and opened it absently.

"Dear Lambourn"—I read without even thinking of the handwriting—"One line in haste to say that we shall all be home to-morrow evening, almost as soon as this reaches you. Everything's all right, but Jenny would rather be safe at home just now, and so would I. Look me up for a week, there's a good fellow, about nine, and we'll have a good big talk about the drains. I feel like a school-boy off for the holidays. R. G."

It was like destiny. He and his wife—yes, I would still call her so—were hurrying back full sail into the storm. I knew what their coming back sooner than usual meant; it was one of Gervase's crotchets that all his children should be of Foamshire, and of their home, bred and born. Well, that made matters worse a thousand times. He was coming where that woman—I could not call her his wife—was waiting to lay hands upon him and to destroy him more terribly than even she could dream. I was not to see her again till next day, and did not know where she was to be found. I suppose I had acted stupidly; but it is hard to keep one's presence of mind where one's heart is concerned too deeply. How could I meet Gervase this very night with this terrible secret upon me? I could not. And yet what right had I to leave him in his fool's paradise for a single avoidable hour? I tried to ask myself what I should have done had I been simply his lawyer instead of his friend. And yet I could find no answer.

It seemed strange that the thunder of the sea, as it rose higher and higher, with the advancing tide against the cliffs, did not change its tone.

The letter-carrier could not have left me many minutes—long as they seemed—when he came running back breathlessly, shouting and pointing behind him with his arm.

"Mr. Lambourn!" he panted out, "there be some un down yonder on the Carricks as lone as lone, and not half an hour o' tide!"

I was startled out of such thoughts as even mine. I knew every inch of that coast as well as if I had been a smuggler of the old times, and nobody who knows the cliffs about Spendrith needs telling what being alone on the Carricks mean within even an hour of high tide. The Carricks are a point of rather low rocks, projecting something like the blade of a scythe, or rather like the pointed ram of an ancient galley, from the base of the cliff, easily to be reached within about two hours of the highest tide; but after that, breaking the calmest sea into a rage, and entirely cut off from reach either from above or below. At absolutely full tide the most shoreward of these rocks was a full two fathoms under high-water line. The cliff, itself a promontory, rose up sheer from the rocks for some distance, and then bowed out over them, and then finished its course of some hundred and fifty feet to the overhanging path on which I was standing. All these meant, in a dozen words, that he who found himself alone on the Carricks half an hour before the tide turned would be a dead man in half an hour, for there was no point among the network of currents which the strongest swimmer could hope to gain.

"Who is it?" I asked. "Could you tell?"

"I couldn't see for sure; but it looked to seem like Lucy Green that keeps company with Master Brooks—"

"A woman—good God!" In this peril, at least, something might possibly be done. As fast as I could cover the ground I was at the coast-guard station, only to find a single old sailor on what was by courtesy called duty, a strong fellow enough with any quantity of rope at hand; but what could two men do?

Nothing, certainly, without trying. We could carry to the edge of the cliff rope enough to reach the Carricks twice over. But that was little. How could a woman, even if she had the courage, fasten herself safely to it and keep herself from being dashed to pieces against the face of the cliff on her giddy upward journey? And how could one man reach her, with one pair of hands to hold the rope above him?

Happily, the sea was tolerably calm; otherwise, considering the shortness of the time at our disposal, nothing could have been done. It was only too certain that somebody was there. The letter-carrier was positive that he had twice seen a woman on the rocks; the second time, while I was on my way to the coast-guard station, he had seen her trying to clamber further out seaward as if she had become fully aware of her danger, and was trying to place herself where she might have a chance of being seen from the shore. I looked at my watch, and the sailor looked out to sea. There was no boat that could be signalled, and not nearly time to obtain one for ourselves and to row round.

The question of the boat was settled in a single look from one to the other. But the same look set the sailor's wits working.

"Run to the station," he said to the letter-carrier, "and get all the oars you can lay your hands on, and bring them here, and look alive."

He craned over the edge of the path, and so did I, though more cautiously; but there were no means of seeing any more in that way. The sea had already risen in a surge of white foam and dark green cascades over nearly the whole length of the rocks below, so that any prisoner upon them must have been driven for respite from under the bulging part of the cliff, where she would be altogether out of sight of all but the sea-gulls. Then the old sailor looked out westward, where a broken patch of white and gray cloud seemed to be rising from the sea into the sky in the shape of a spire.

"The wind won't be here till after the turn, Sir," said he, "There won't be so much swing on as there might be." He put his hands to his mouth and shouted downward, but no answer returned. "Where's that young slug with the oars?"

I could only hope he had some plan. I certainly could think of none. Perhaps, though as anxious as any human creature must be when a man or woman is drowning under his eyes, and when he can do nothing but wait above and listen for the dead heave of full tide against the cliff to tell him all was over, I may not have been so absorbed in the emergency as I should have been two or three hours ago. What was a moment's struggle with the sea compared with that worse than death against which I was trying to put out my hands no less in vain? I was not, I feel sure, at that moment consciously thinking of the greater peril in the immediate face of the less; but that it was the greater which had well-nigh paralyzed me I know.

At last the lad hurried back with four long oars. The old sailor laid them all together, fagot-wise and bar-wise, over a cleft in the edge of the path, so that the bundle of oars might serve for one strong beam, and that the rope might run through the cleft for a groove before swinging from the projecting rim of the cliff out into the air. The beam of oars was kept from being pulled forward instead of downward by the form of the path, which rose up slightly toward the edge, and by the chance—on which the whole plan depended—that