

and she raised herself with a strength born of her deep love. "You know how he loves you, and whatever you may think, I know that you love him—promise to be his then now while I may behold it."

Helen placed her hand in that of her lover, and said as firmly as her stifling tears would let her, "I promise!"

"Now I am happy!" said the Indian girl, sinking back on her pillow, "now let me die!"

Neither Max nor Helen could break the sad pause that ensued, and Fauna was the first to speak again.

"I had a strange dream to-day," she said, "I thought, Max, that you and I and Helen were walking in the deep forest, and that it was all as dark as the grave, except towards the west, where there was a bright streak of light, such as the sun leaves when it has just set, and which threw its last rays on us. I thought that you and Helen walked on towards the light and left me behind, and when I called to you, you would not answer nor look back. At last I sat down and began to weep, while it grew darker and darker each minute, and I could see you no longer. You had gone towards the sun and left me in gloom alone! At that moment some one, bright like an angel, touched me; the whole forest became one blaze of light, and I mounted with the bright messenger on wings to Heaven." She paused, and then added, "I feel that my dream will soon be fulfilled!"

Helen wept on, but neither she nor Max believed that Fauna was in any immediate danger, but that her wild and excitable fancy had taken from this vision an omen of approaching death. Subduing his emotion, Max strove to lead her to anticipations of earthly happiness in future days.

"No, no," she cried, "I do not wish to live. I could never be happy on earth, but I shall be happy in Heaven. And when I am dead, Max, you will bury me in that pleasant spot I once told you about, and you and Helen will often visit my grave—not to weep or be sorry, but to rejoice that all my woes are ended, to thank God for sparing me from the great sin I would have committed last night in my madness, and for so soon removing me to that holier and brighter sphere where my wild heart will be calmed, and my dim mind rendered light. And you will sometimes think of the love, which when living I bore to you."

Max buried his face in his hands, and murmured,

"Living or dead, Fauna, you will always be to me dearer than words can tell."

A brilliant smile lighted up the features of the dying girl.

"If spirits are ever permitted to visit this earth," she said, "I will often watch unseen over you and those whom you love. Oh! how much better that will be than any thing this world could give me now!"

Pointing towards the west where the sun had sunk, leaving behind three or four soft wavy clouds of the color of brightest gold, sleeping calmly in the radiant sea of splendor the orb of day had just resigned.

"Look!" she murmured, "might not those bright cloudlets be the chariot of angels sent to bear the souls which death has freed from their encumbering day to the realms of eternal life and joy? Oh! to die now, and be wafted thus to Heaven!"

After another brief pause, she once more held out her hand to Helen, who, drawing close to her, kissed her tenderly.

"Leave me now, both of you," she said, "my head is tired."

Then as Max took her hand in his, she whispered,

"Come back to me when you leave Helen at home, I want to see you once more; will you come?"

"Let me stay now, Fauna," answered Max, "Helen will not mind going home alone."

"No, not now, but come again. Let Madame come and sit beside me now and talk to me of angels."

"Is it not selfish to be so happy when we think of Fauna?" said Helen to her lover as they descended the stairs.

Max pressed her hand, but made no other answer.

The assurance of the physician that Fauna was in no actual danger, though her intellect would probably long remain weak from the shock it had received, somewhat relieved their anxiety. But the Indian girl was not deceived. Whether the firm persuasion of approaching death, which her mind entertained, exercised some mysterious influence over her delicate frame, and heightened the fever which preyed upon it, or her mental sufferings the preceding night, had snapped the slender chords of her being, she died that night in the arms of him whom she had so loved, with her eye to the last moment fixed upon his face.

CHAPTER XXXII.

EARLY in the fall Helen Blachford became the wife of the young painter, and on the same day