

duity that, in a week's time, he was able to leave his bed and rest in an easy chair. As the last traces of winter had disappeared by this time, and the weather was very favourable, preparations were made to transport the convalescent to Montreal. To this arrangement he readily consented, being anxious to relieve the family of the trouble which his presence and that of his friends necessarily occasioned, but he felt that he had a solemn duty to accomplish, and could not think of departing before he had fulfilled it. He seized the occasion of Varny's usual morning visit to break the subject to him.

"This is going to be a beautiful day, Mr. Varny, and I think I cannot do better than profit by it to set out on my journey home."

The farmer repeated, as he had done several times before, that there was no hurry, and that the fair weather would benefit his friend much more in the country than in the city.

"Thank you," replied Phipps. "I can never sufficiently acknowledge your generosity, but I have delayed too long already and must really go. How is Miss Varny this morning?"

"Always improving, but still feeble."

This had been the answer to Phipps' repeated enquiries, for several days back, and it discouraged him.

"Must it be so, then?" muttered he to himself. "Shall I have to go without speaking to her? Will I not be allowed to see the angel who saved my life, fall at her feet, press her hand, and pour out before her the gratitude of my heart?" When I heard what she had done for me, I could not believe it, and now the mystery returns upon me from the impossibility of meeting her before I depart. No, it cannot be so. I shall ask the favour of herself."

And rousing himself, he addressed the farmer again:

"Will you humour a sick man, sir?" said he.

"Anything to please you," answered Mr. Varny, with a smile.

"Will you ask your daughter to grant me a brief interview?"

"I fear . . .," said the farmer, hesitatingly.

"I will not be able to leave her, unless she goes."

"Then stay with us," said the old man, sadly. "No one dismisses you."

"Nor will I recover my health and spirits fully."

"Ah! that is another matter. I will, then, go and see."

The reader will readily understand why Phipps was so desirous of seeing Rosalba. He will understand, too, that there was literally no exaggeration in the declaration that he could not thoroughly rally unless he did see her. What, perhaps, will be more difficult to account for, is the fact that the young girl was not desirous of seeing Phipps. Nay, she was afraid to meet him. It is characteristic of certain high natures—and Rosalba's was of the highest—that when two lines of duty, seemingly antagonistic, cross themselves in their heart, such natures make it their religion to

be faithful to both, and, because this is an exquisitely difficult thing to do, they try to prevent or postpone as much as possible the meeting of these sentiments. This is a weakness it is true, but it is excusable in view of the fidelity which it is intended to safeguard.

It would be too much to say that Rosalba loved Walter. Love is a definite feeling, and, under the circumstances, no such feeling could be defined in her heart. But next to that, Walter could not be otherwise than very dear to her. Did she not save his life at the peril of her own? Thenceforth, even in spite of herself, he was more to her than any other, one only excepted.

And then, Rosalba was a perspicacious girl. She knew instinctively what must be Walter's sentiments towards her. Judging him by her own standard, she was certain that he was ready to devote himself entirely to her—sacrifice himself, if need be, in the discharge of his gratitude. In other words—though she hardly represented it to herself thus crudely—he loved her and only awaited the occasion of their first meeting to declare it.

Entertaining these views, is it not reasonable, after all, that she should dread an interview with him?

When her father announced Walter's desire, she promptly refused, alleging her convalescence as an excuse. When he gently pressed her, she burst into tears. Finally, reflecting that the request would certainly be urged—with a pertinacity which she thoroughly understood—until it was granted at last, she yielded reluctantly and bade her father tell Mr. Phipps that she should meet him within half an hour in the parlour.

"What is she like? Is she the beauty that I have pictured in my feverish dreams? Is she a robust country lass that would do any muscular work as well as she saved me from the ice? Or is she really feminine in the delicacy of her strength, so that her heroism is all the more wonderful, because it is beyond her nature?" These and similar questions occupied the thoughts of Walter as he sat in the parlour, awaiting the promised interview.

Suddenly, when he turned from the window-panes where his vacant eyes had been staring, Rosalba had advanced half way across the room. The sight of her startled him from his seat. Heavens! Was this really she? No! she was not like any of his imaginations? She was beautiful; how could he believe her other? She was robust, but tender and delicate withal. He saw in her all that makes the pathos of feminine weakness and the sublimity of female heroism. And the paleness of her features, deepened by the whiteness of the morning-dress which she wore, reminded him of the danger she had encountered and the sufferings she had undergone for his sake. He had prepared a long address of thanks, but this utterly failed him at sight of her. Following a single impulse, he threw himself on his knees before her and exclaimed:

"Miss Varny, my deliverer, how can I sufficiently thank you?"

No melodrama in this scene. It was all