

from a desire to do something, she hardly knew what, to atone for her selfishness and impatience.

"I am very glad, I am sure," and then the old clock bell struck the hour with a sharp twang, and an angry whir between each stroke.

"Is it indeed so late? then I will not go down again, thank you. Good-night," and she held out her hand. There was something very sweet and womanly in the little start of surprise and the soft smile with which she concluded her sentence as she gave him her hand. There was a gentleness and repose about her at all times, and a charm in the frank beautiful face raised just then, which greatly moved the Professor. Here is a woman without subterfuge or deceit, thought he, whose very presence is peace; and as he held her hand, moved by a sudden impulse, he bent and kissed her forehead where her hair lay brown and smooth as silk.

It was so unexpected, so quickly devised and executed, that not even an exclamation followed. Hastily drawing away her hand, the widow fled at the sound of a footstep approaching from the sick-room. Once within her own chamber, which the beating of her heart made to fairly resound, she sank upon the bed beside the sleeping Flossy, startled, trembling. Only one idea was distinct and clear in her mind,—the Professor cared nothing for little Miss Frere. If he loved the girl, would he have come to her as he did just now? and again, alone though she was, the blood rushed to her face until a fierce pulse beat in her cheek. She bent over the sleeping child, from force of habit, for in truth the child was not in her thoughts. They had centered upon little Miss Frere, of whom she had caught a glimpse as she fled by the half-closed door. She lay very white and still upon the bed. Her hair had fallen down, and she had drawn one lock across her eyes. The widow fancied that a sob had come out to her. What did it mean? She tried to put away the suspicions which rose in her mind. She was accustomed to banish disagreeable things; they had no part in her life. Why should this odd, pale-faced girl, who had seemed to fall from the skies almost, annoy her? Why should the vision of that tired face and drooping figure haunt her?

She had been sitting in the darkness, the door half open. She rose to close it now. A faint odor from the Professor's cigar floated up from below like the breath of incense. She remembered again the flash of the smile over his face, the sweep of his moustache over her hair, and the vision of little Miss Frere faded away.

II.

How would they meet in the morning? The widow thought of it nervously as she placed upon her hair the bit of lace which had taken the place of the dainty cap. She hesitated, holding it in her hand. Why should she wear it at all? Why should she hide the thick brown coils? Then she arranged it in its place with a little sigh. Strange how the past and present mingle in our thoughts, and we sigh and rejoice in the same breath.

But Mrs. Benchley's thoughts were too actively engaged upon the possibilities of the next half hour to allow them to dwell long upon the past. Everything seemed changed to her since that meeting at the head of the stairs. It could hardly seem otherwise to the Professor. She did not say to herself that he had asked her to be his wife. But had not that kiss implied as much? To her it was no sign of sudden tenderness lightly bestowed and lightly to be let pass into forgetfulness. She lingered over her toilet long after she heard Madame Pfeiffe go down, but she shrank with strange shyness from meeting the Professor alone.

They were at the breakfast table when she finally descended, leaning Flossy by the hand and murmuring some excuse for her tardiness. It might have been a downright untruth, so quickly did the blush come with the words as the Professor rose to greet her.

She had hardly expected that he would fall upon his knees, or lead her up to his mother to crave her blessing. And yet some sign she had unconsciously looked for. The sudden lighting up of his face, the lingering clasp of his hand, something to show that this was a new day to him. She had half dreaded this; yet now that there was nothing, she was conscious of a feeling of disappointment. Yet after that one quick flash of color which could not be repressed, she was too much a woman to display any emotion.

"We will not wait," said Madame Pfeiffe as John brought in the tea. "Amy is not coming down. Poor child! she passed a restless night. I am not sure but that we ought to send for a physician. She seems in a strange nervous state. Will you not see her after breakfast, Robert?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," he replied gravely.

"Perhaps, after all, she had better sleep for a while, if she can. She needs rest rather than medicine, I think." And then the conversation passed to more general topics, and the breakfast hour, to which the widow had looked forward with so much perturbation of mind, proved a very simple and uneventful time as ever.

A few hours later, little Miss Frere, shivering in a white wrapper, with her dark hair drawn down over either cheek and tied loosely under her chin, peered out through the Venetian blinds screening her window, to watch the procession emerging from the woods. The clouds had broken and fled before the lazes of the sun. The west wind chaunted through the pines, where there had been only moans the night before;

the last shower of scarlet and gold was dropping gently from the maples. The bright, crisp leaves crackled under the Professor's feet as he crossed the lawn to the house. He carried the child Flossy perched upon his shoulder and holding fast to his sunny mane in an agony of terror and delight as he plunged forward like an ungovernable steed, threatening to throw her at every step. The widow followed more slowly. Her hat had fallen back; the wind had roughened her smooth hair and reddened her cheeks. Her arms were full of treasures; nebulous and trailing frosty moss in which red berries glistened, and rainbow-tinted leaves lighting up the whole; last of all came Huddle, laden like a sumpter mule with shawls and discarded wraps, and a lunch-basket struggling for individuality in the midst.

"Ah, how pretty and fresh and girlish she is, with the red on her cheeks, and her hair all blown about in the wind!" thought poor little Miss Frere, following the widow with envious eyes, a fierce pang of jealousy contracting her heart. "Oh, why did I come again!" she sobbed, sinking back out of sight as they drew near. She had risen and thrown open the window at the sound of their voices. She forgot to close it now. She forgot to go back to her bed. She sat crouching behind the shutters, chilled and miserable, crying with little feeble sobs. Something like this she had felt before, when the children at school rebelled against her weak authority. To be forsaken, neglected, and crushed to earth was no new sensation; so that there was now no wild burst of grief, as there might have been once when she was younger, and rose up with short-lived strength to meet every trial, or such as comes to those to whom grief is rare. For one moment the night before she had lived in a new world. The flash of light, the warmth and comfort in the atmosphere of the house, as she stepped in from the chill, dreary darkness outside, had all belonged to this strange sphere. Alas! it was only for a moment. It had all come back now—the hard life brightened by no ray of hope, of which no one could know, save the sensitive soul who had it to bear. It had come back like a new trial, a fresh burden which she must train her weary self anew to carry.

Voices in the hall below startled her; there was a step upon the stairs. She crept quickly back to the bed and hid her face as though she slept. And good Madame Pfeiffe stole noiselessly in and out again. Presently, listening, she heard them go their several ways. The library door closed after the Professor. His mother, having set a little tray beside her bed, went softly to her own room. The widow and her child followed. The house was still. Then little Miss Frere rose; she smoothed out her tangled hair and bound it up in the plain fashion in which she was used to wearing it at school, where there was a little time for lingering over one's toilet. She stood a moment before the great wardrobe. Ah, what need was there of gala finery? there would be no gala-days. She left untouched all that had been prepared with such pleasant pains for this rare holiday, and chose the plain gray gown she was used to wearing every day. Then, wrapping a shawl so hastily about her that one fringed end trailed all the way, she ran swiftly and noiselessly down the stairs, out through the long open window at the end of the hall, brushing the woodbine in her haste and making a shower of its dark-red leaves to fall, and so across the lawn to the edge of the woods. It was a childish impulse, an uncontrollable desire to escape from them all for the moment, as though in her heart she might leave her troubles all behind.

But her exit was not so unobserved as she imagined. The widow had stolen down the stairs before her, and ensconced herself for a quiet half-hour in the drawing-room. She heard the opening of the door above, the soft gliding step upon the stairs, and caught a glimpse through the window of the little gray-clad figure disappearing into the woods. "How odd!" she exclaimed. "I thought the girl was asleep." And some idea of her senses having deserted Miss Frere did flit through Mrs. Benchley's mind as she laid down her book under an impulse to follow the girl. She pushed open the glass door and stepped out upon the veranda. One stray warbler in the larch-tree overhead told of departed summer in low, mournful notes. She scanned the edge of the woods. No one was in sight. A squirrel startled her as he ran along the bough overhead, was hidden a moment in the hollow of the tree, then, reappearing, fled swiftly down across the lawn to the woods.

"Silly creature! you have discovered your treasures to me," she laughed, diverted for the moment from her purpose! she seized a handful of the dry leaves which seemed to fill the hollow in the tree. The wind took them from her open fingers and scattered them over the dead grass. Raising herself, she peered down into the treasure-house. Something gleamed white from its depths beneath the store of nuts so softly hidden. The green moss soiled her hand; the rough bark tore her arm as she brought out a little note, stained and yellow, with one corner still folded over "like a lover's note," she said, holding it a moment half in awe, she knew not why, before opening it. It contained but a few words nearly obliterated.

"Dear Robert," the faint lines said, "I am sorry. Can you forgive Amy?" At first the words meant nothing. She read them in idle curiosity, conscious of the balsamic odor from the fir-trees which the wind, lifting her hair, brought from across the lawn; hearing the faint whistle of the squirrel, who had returned, and run back and forth in alarm above her

head. Then she grew cold and weak as an intuition of something like the truth came to her. It flashed upon her like a sudden dazzling light. "No, no!" she cried aloud, as though in answer to a voice which spoke within her. Was it then indeed this girl whom he had loved so long ago? Who could see it all now,—the quarrel, the little note which should have healed the wound, which might yet, perhaps. And then it was she cried aloud. Surely? And not care for little Miss Frere now. That was years ago. Men change, and love with nothing upon which to feed soon dies. She remembered the kiss which had fallen upon her hair the night before. Was it not sign and seal of his love for her? How gentle he had been in his manner towards her all this day! How he had carried her child in his arms! Oh, he did not love this girl. It was only a boyish fancy; and men outgrow such things as they do childish garments. Besides, this note had been forgotten for years. Why should she bring it out to confound and confuse them all now? and yet, and yet—

There was a struggle going on within her. Ah, it was not in John's vision alone that Michael fought with Satan and his angels. In our hearts we wage the same warfare to-day. She stood for a moment grasping the rail before her, her eyes wide open, taking in everything, yet seeing nothing; the bare brown meadows below, the grain-fields rough with stubble, and away beyond them all the shining river, white and calm and beautiful as when the summer spread its banks with living green. Something more than this she must have seen, for her eyes dilated; through her parted lips the breath came quick and short; then, with one long sigh, the fixed lines softened, the eyes grew wet, the color came up in that moment of quick, angry resistance died away like the fading out of the flush in the western sky.

Slowly she turned and re-entered the house, holding the open note in her hand. The warbler in the larch-tree burst into a joyous song, the woodbine crowned her with its scarlet leaves. She knocked at the library door. Then, hardly waiting for a response, opened it and went into the room. The Professor looked up from his writing-table, surprised by the vision, with its breezy hair blown back and holding blood-red leaves, its eyes like stars plucked from the heavens.

"See!" she said quickly, without waiting for him to speak, holding out the bit of yellow paper in the hand all scratched and bleeding, "it is yours." All her pretty half-conscious ways were gone. She seemed to have become all at once pale and grave and colorless, but for the blood-red leaves clinging to her hair and the great light shining from her eyes.

"Ah, what?" and the Professor, called from one dream to another, stared at her in amazement. "Pray, be seated," he stammered, striving to collect his thoughts and take in the meaning of her words. He would have risen, but that she stood so close beside his chair that he could not without pushing her away.

He glanced at the bit of paper she had thrust into his hand. Then his fingers tightened over it. His eyes seemed to grow to the paper.

"Where did you find this?" he asked in a terrible voice. He stood beside her. He seized her arm as in a vice. She could have cried aloud with pain. It was hard, it was cruel that he should suspect her. But what did it matter? The worst had been when the beautiful river shone before her eyes. She could bear anything now—even this.

"I found it quite by chance, in the hollow of the larch-tree by the side veranda," she answered quietly, meeting his eye. "It must have been there a long time," she went on, calmly, but with a strange sadness in the tone for one who bore great tidings; "perhaps ten years," she added slowly.

Then a great light blazed in his face. His hand dropped from her arm. He seemed lost in a happy reverie. "Ah, yes; I know, I know; in the larch-tree. She thought I would find it there; but I went away home to Germany. Ah!" and the exclamation came like a cry, "what have I suffered! And she—I might have spared her all these dreadful years if I had known."

The words ended in a sob. He turned away. Then suddenly he started. "Where is she? Amy!" he shouted aloud. He pushed the widow aside, and would have sprung up the stairs had she not held him back. He had forgotten her existence. She was no more to him than any other woman in the world. The whole ten years had dropped away, and he stood again where he had parted from Amy Frere that summer day so long before.

"She is not there," Mrs. Benchley was trying to say. "She ran out into the woods a half an hour ago."

He did not pause to ask which direction she had taken. He had forgotten to thank the woman who stood aside meekly for him to pass. But there is a higher reward for self-sacrifice than even human appreciation, and though our prayers seem to return into our own bosom, they may nestle there like doves.

He darted away, and in a moment she saw him striding across the last summer flower-beds, trampling down the withered stalks in his haste; the wind tossing his long hair about his shoulders as he went.

"I had better go home now," she said, turning away and beginning slowly to mount the stairs. The tears, held back long, rose in a torrent and overflowed her eyes. As she hastened to wipe them away, all at once she remembered a letter received that morning, calling her elsewhere. She had hardly given it a thought at the time. The summons did not seem im-

perative. But now it would at least furnish an excuse, and she would go. She looked back at the hands of the old clock. It was not yet too late to catch the train. Her mind once moved to take this step, she was impatient to execute it. She sought Madame Pfeiffe and solicited her aid, overbearing every objection, her spirits rising each moment with the excitement of her haste. But when her kind hostess shed two little tears over the defeated hopes which she was yet too proud to own, jealous as she was for her son and all wrong in her suspicions, the widow could hardly resist the temptation which so strongly beset her to lay her head upon the good woman's shoulder and pour the whole story into her sympathizing ear. But here, too, pride came to the rescue, and she only kissed her and smiled, and murmured something, she hardly knew what. There are times when words count for nothing. A little motion of the lips, a sound to fill a pause, and show that life goes on, is only needed; and Hebrew or counting in Choctaw would answer as well as good old English. Then she ran away to prepare Flossy for this unexpected move, who waited aloud at the announcement. She was pacified at last, the hasty preparations all completed, and the carriage brought around to the door. "It is better so," the widow said, smiling through her tears, as she lingered alone for a moment to glance about the room and see that nothing had been forgotten. She looked half fearfully from her window towards the silent woods. The shadows from the overhanging branches moved across the lawn: a stray leaf floated down; but there was no sound of voice, no flutter of a woman's gown among the trees. "I have had my time of youth and love," she said softly, as though pleading with herself for another. Her eyes grew tender in retrospection; a gentle pity rose in her heart for this girl whose life had held nothing sweet; whose happiness had been so long delayed and hung upon so frail a thread that her fingers might have snapped it. Some one called to her from below. There was no time to spare, and yet she lingered. Suddenly she pulled from her finger a little circlet of forget-me-nots, blue as the waters of the lake, from the old city upon the banks of which it had been sent to her long years before, when she was younger and richer in hopes than now. She twisted it in a bit of paper, writing hastily upon it little Miss Frere's name. Then, as she passed her door, she stooped and dropped it upon her pillow. Perhaps they will yet remember and bless me, she thought, as she ran down the stairs. Madame Pfeiffe stood waiting at the door.

"What shall I do?" she said, helplessly. "I want to keep you; tell me how." She shaded her eyes and looked away in the distance. "What will Robert say? What can I tell him?" she asked faintly, a pink flush stealing up under the white curls.

"You will excuse me to him. Tell him I have had a letter which makes it necessary for me to go at once. At least," she overruled herself, remembering what they had talked about the night before,—"it seems best for me to go; and give little Miss Frere my love, my kindest love," she added.

All her bright manner had returned with the lightness of her heart. After all, was it not more blessed to give joy to those two hearts than to take it into her own, even? She kissed Madame Pfeiffe, who held up either cheek in nearly continental fashion; then the carriage door closed upon her. She leaned far out as she swept around the circle on the lawn. The sun shone deep into the heart of the woods, down the wide path over which the branches of the forest trees met and mingled. Out from the shadowy depths into the sunshine came two figures, slowly walking. They were the Professor and little Miss Frere. Madame Pfeiffe, too, observed their approach and went hastily to meet them. The widow saw the Professor give the girl into his mother's arms, then gathering her in his own as though she had been a child—but oh, how dear a child!—he bore her towards the house as the carriage disappeared over the brow of the hill.

RUMINATING ANIMALS.

The Ruminants—forming a highly varied order of animals—feed principally on herbage. Wherever vegetation clothes the earth, it requires neither skill nor exertion, on their part, to seek and to devour the rich repast which is profusely spread at their feet. To remove from one pasture to another, to browse and to repose, constitute the peaceful employment of their lives, and satisfy the conditions of their being. To these purposes, therefore, the whole conformation of their skeleton, and especially of those parts which form the limbs, is adapted. The anterior extremities having only to support the weight of the fore part of the trunk, and to assist in progressive motion, have a less complicated arrangement of joints than we find in some other animals, and exhibit many of those consolidations of the bones which tend to simplify the structure, and to contribute to its strength. As these animals never engage in sanguinary warfare to satisfy the calls of appetite, but are often unprovided with any adequate means of defence from powerful and ferocious enemies, their only resource is a rapid and precipitate flight. Hence we find among them the fleetest of quadrupeds. In the gazelle, and similar animals, the parts comprising the hind legs are larger, and inclined to one another at angles more acute, than in other tribes of mammalia, so that they are always ready to spring forward on the slightest notice of danger, and instantly to commence their flight. *Natural History.*