

good. I complied with her request, and within in a few days was an inmate of her luxurious home, where every thing indicated the wealth of its possessor. And Cora, though robed in deepest black, was more life herself, more like the Cora of other days, than I had seen her before since her marriage. Of her husband she spoke freely and always with respect, saying he had been kinder far to her than she had deserved. Of Walter, too, she talked, appearing much gratified when I told her how he was loved and appreciated by his people.

One morning when we sat together in her little sewing room she said, 'I have done what you perhaps, will consider a very unwomanly act. I have written to Walter Beaumont. Look,' and she placed in my hand a letter, which she bade me read. It was a wild, strange thing, telling him of the anguish she had endured, of the tears she had shed, of the love which through all she had cherished for him, and begging of him to forgive her if possible, and be to her again what he had been years ago. She was not worthy of him, she said, but he could make her better, and in language the most touching, she besought of him not to cast her off, or despise her because she had stepped so far aside from womanly delicacy as to write to him this letter. 'I will not insult you,' she wrote in conclusion, 'by telling you of the money for which I sold myself, but it is mine now, lawfully mine, and most gladly would I share it with you.'

'You will not send him this?' I said. 'You cannot be in earnest?'

But she was determined, and lest her resolution should give way, she rang the bell, ordering the servant who appeared to take it at once to the office. He obeyed, and during the day she was unusually gay, singing snatches of old songs, and playing several lively airs upon her piano, which for months had stood unopened and untouched. That evening, when the sun went down and the full moon rose over the city, she asked me to walk with her, and we, ere long, found ourselves several streets distant from that in which she lived. Groups of people were entering a church near by, and from a remark which we overheard, we learned that there was to be a wedding.

'Let us go in,' she said, 'it may be some one I know,' and entering together, we took our seats just in front of the altar.

Scarcely were we seated when a rustling of satin announced the approach of the

bridal party, and in a moment they appeared moving slowly up the aisle. My first attention was directed toward the bride, a beautiful young creature, with a fair sweet face, and curls of golden hair falling over her white, uncovered neck.

'Isn't she lovely?' I whispered; but Cora did not hear me.

With her hands locked tightly together, her lips firmly compressed and her cheeks of an ashen hue, she was gazing fixedly at the bridegroom, on whom I, too, now looked, starting quickly, for it was our minister, Walter Beaumont! The words were few which made them one, Walter and the young girl at his side, and then the ceremony was over. Cora arose, and leaning heavily upon my arm, went out into the open air, and on through street after street, until her home was reached. Then, without a word, we parted—I going to my room, while she, through the live-long night paced up and down the long parlours where no eye could witness the working of the mighty sorrow which had come upon her.

The next morning she was calm, but very, very pale, saying not a word of last night's adventure. Neither did she speak of it for several days, and then she said, rather abruptly, 'I would give all I possess if I had never sent that letter. The mortification is harder to bear even than Walter's loss. But he will not tell of it, I'm sure. He is too good—too noble,' and tears, the first she had shed since that night, rained through her thin, worn fingers. It came at last—a letter bearing Walter's superscription, and with trembling hands she opened it, finding, as she had expected, his wedding card, while on a tiny sheet was written, 'God pity you, Cora, even as I do—Walter.'

'Walter! Walter!' she whispered, and her quivering lips touched once the loved name which she was never heard to breathe again.

From that day Cora Douglass faded, and when the autumnal days were come, and the distant hills were bathed in the hazy October light, she died. But not in the noisy city, for she had asked to be taken home, and in the pleasant room where we had often sat together, she had bade me her last good-by. They buried her on the Sabbath, and Walter's voice was sad and low as with Cora's coffin at his feet he preached from the words, 'I am the Resurrection and the life.' His young wife, too, wept over the early dead, who had well-nigh been her rival, and whose beautiful face wore a calm, peaceful smile, as if she were at rest.