

to be one at the ball that night who was dearer to me than all else besides. For him I had donned my most becoming dress, and chosen the fairest flowers for my hair; and, as I clasped his gift, a gold bracelet, on my arm, I stooped and kissed it for his sake. Oh, what a light heart I had that night, as I went down-stairs, thinking over and over the same glad thought! I was soon to see him, to feel his hand holding mine, to look up into the kind, dark eyes, smiling down on me tenderly and lovingly.

Other men had told me I was fair of face and form—I had heard and heeded not. Lancelot Ware never paid me so much as a single compliment, yet the unspoken admiration and chivalric devotion of this brave, courtly son of Mars made my heart beat, and my color come and go as man's voice or presence had never done yet. I had light gay words and smile in plenty for others, but in his presence I was silent, feeling strangely happy, content to be near my hero, to hear him speak.

A hero he was in heart, in word, in deed—a soldier, one who had seen service, and had faced death in its worst and most appalling form many and many a time—brave, undaunted, courageous, counting life a light thing compared with honor—a true soldier, brave as a lion with the heart of a child—loved, nay, almost worshipped by his men—brave fellows all—ready to follow wherever he led. Some said he was grave and stern. Perhaps he may have been; but to me he was always tender, always the same. And I? I was unworthy of him—and I feel my utter unworthiness more now than I did then.

Oh, if he were here now, by my side in the gloaming, never an angry, scornful word—spoken but never meant—would I utter, never a haughty glance should wound him! Lancelot, Lancelot! With all my faults I loved him well, and now he can never, never know!

How happy I was that night, dancing with Lancelot! How fast the

hours glided by! And then I remember, when the ball was over going up-stairs in the early dawn, and sitting down by the open window, watching the first golden flush of sunrise, and listening to nature awakening after the night. All seemed so peaceful, so quiet, the world yet asleep, and the red sun rising up over the tree-tops, and sparkling in the dew-drops on the lawn, the birds breaking forth in their first notes of early morn—all bright, promising, and peaceful, the earth looking as it might have looked before sin entered the world, bringing sadness and sorrow in its train. The sun rose higher and higher, and by degrees the daily busy routine of life commenced, and man went forth to his work and labor until the evening. The stillness and beauty of the picture were gone, and I shut the window, and, full of peaceful thoughts, knelt down and prayed Heaven that I might make Lancelot Ware a good wife, and that it would bless the new life I was soon to begin.

That calm early summer morning seems only a sad memory now, a little glimpse of my old life, when the sun rose on a world that to me was very fair and promising. How often since then have I wished that I might never see another sun rise!

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We were married, and Lancelot brought me home to his grand old house looking out over the troubled sea, where the briny scent of the ocean was borne in through the windows, and we could hear the wash and murmur of the sad waves all the day long.

I should have been happy—I ought to have been happy—in my quiet, peaceful home—content with the love and compassion of a kind, indulgent husband. Was it my fault, I wonder, that, having been brought up to a life that was one perpetual round of gaiety, I wearied of the quiet monotony of my new life, and yearned for some of the pleasures that had before made part of my existence?

Nearly a year wore away. It was