

rustle had an indescribable charm for her in summers past, now tossed their bare boughs toward her in mute complaining of the desolation which surrounded them. The reckless indifference of tenants has deservedly grown into a proverb, and here Beulah beheld an exemplification of its truth. Of all the choice shrubbery which it had been the labour of years to collect and foster, not a particle remained. Roses, creepers, bulbs—all were destroyed, and only the trees and hedges were spared. The very outline of the beds was effaced in many places, and walking round the paved circle in front of the door, she paused abruptly at the desolation which greeted her. Here was the marble basin of the fountain half filled with rubbish, as though it had been converted into a receptacle for trash, and over the whole front of the house, the dark glossy leaves of the creeping ivy clung in thick masses. She looked around on all sides, but only ruin and neglect confronted her. She remembered the last time she came there, and recalled the beautiful Sunday morning when she saw her guardian standing by the fountain, feeding his pigeons. Ah, how sadly changed! She burst into tears, and sat down on the steps. Charon ran about the yard for some time; then came back, looked up at the sombre house, howled, and laid down at her feet. Where was the old master? Wandering among eastern pagodas, while his home became a retreat for owls.

"He has forgotten us, Charon! He has forgotten his two best friends—you and I—who love him so well! Oh, Charon, he has forgotten us!" cried she, almost despairingly. Charon gave a melancholy groan of assent, and nestled closer to her. Five years had gone since he left his native land, and for once her faith was faint and wavering. But after some moments she looked up at the calm sky arching above her, and wiping away her tears, added, resignedly:

"But he will come! God will bring him home when he sees fit! I can wait! I can wait!"

Charon's great, gleaming black eyes met hers wistfully; he seemed dubious of his master's return. Beulah rose, and he obeyed the signal.

"Come Charon, it is getting late; but we will come back some day, and live here."

It was dusk when she entered the library, and found Mrs. Asbury discussing the political questions of the day with her husband. She had just finished reading aloud one of Reginald's Congressional speeches, and advocated it warmly, while the doctor reproached some portion of his course.

"You have had a long walk," said Mrs. Asbury, looking up as the orphan entered.

"And look, for the universe, as if you had been ghost-seeing," cried the doctor, wiping his spectacles.

"I would rather meet an army of ghosts than see what I have seen!" answered Beulah.

"Good Heaven! In the name of wonder, what have you seen, child? A rattlesnake, or a screech-owl?"

He put his broad palms on his knees, and looked mockingly curious and startled.

"I have been out to see the old place, sir; found the gate broken down, the front yard full of crows, and everything going to destruction except the trees and hedges. Sir, it makes me feel very sad. I can't bear to have things go on this way any longer. It must be rectified."

"Bless my soul, that is easier said than done! The place is a perfect owl-roost, there is no denying that; but it is no business of ours. If Farley, or his agent, suffers the property to go to ruin, it is his loss."

"But I love the place. I want to save it. Won't you buy it, Dr. Asbury?"

"Won't I buy it? Why, what on earth do you suppose I should do with it? I don't want to live in it; and as for any more investments in real estate, why, just excuse me, if you please! Insurance and repairs eat up all the profits, and I am plagued to death with petitions in the bargain."

"Then I must buy it myself!" said Beulah, resolutely.

"In the name of common sense, what will you do with it?"

"I don't know yet. I suppose, until he comes home again. How much do you suppose the Farleys ask for it?"

"I really cannot conjecture. But, child, you must not think of this. I will see the agent about it, and perhaps I may purchase it to oblige you. I will not hear of your buying it. Guy certainly cannot contemplate heathenating much longer. There is that eternal door-bell again! Somebody that believes I am constructed of wire and gutta-serena, I dare say."

He leaned back, and watched the door very uneasily. A servant looked in.

"Mr. Leonard, to see Miss Beulah."

"Thank Heaven it is nobody to see me!" The doctor settled himself comfortably, and laughed at the perturbed expression of Beulah's countenance.

"Ask him to excuse me this evening," said she, without rising.

"Nay, my dear; he was here this afternoon, and you had gone to walk. It would be rude not to see him. Go into the parlour,

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