

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

## THE BRIDE OF DEATH.

Ah! non credea mirarti  
Si presto estinto, o fiore.

## I.

See where the lithe Acacia's branches shower  
Their milk-white blossoms on a sodded grave.  
Bury me there at sunset's holy hour:—  
The Bride of Death would slumber  
Where the grey shadows wave.

## II.

Tell me not now of gems and orange blossoms,  
Of golden marriage bells so passing sweet,  
Of flashing eyes and palpitating bosoms,  
And music softly chiming  
To swiftly glancing feet.

## III.

Tell me not either of those nameless blessings  
That consecrate the cares and toils of home,  
Maternal thrills at infant's fond caressings,  
Murmurs of love that push  
From husbands' heart-deeps come.

## IV.

I am the Bride of Death! No earthly lover  
May place the ring upon this cold white hand.  
The swart Death Angel's pinions o'er me hover,  
Chilling my life, and leading  
Into the shadowy land.

## V.

Behind me in the world I leave no token,  
No rose child to lip a mother's name,  
Naught save a wealth of love unknown, unspoken,  
And memory untarnished  
By blot or blame.

## VI.

The darkness deepens in the misty valleys,  
The Acacia's blossoms strew my Nani's grave.  
A dreamy stillness haunts the funeral alleys:  
The Bride of Death is sleeping  
Where the grey shadows wave.

JOHN LESCAFRANCE.

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of 1862.]

## THE DAVENANTS.

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Secret," "The Abbey of Rathmore,"  
&c.

## CHAPTER I.

## ON DECK.

THE brilliant beams of a September moon were dinging a broad column of quivering light across the noble bay of Quebec and gleaming upon the picturesque scenery along its shores when an emigrant vessel from Liverpool sailing slowly into the harbour, her white sails glistening in the moonbeams, cast anchor in the commodious basin where the majestic St. Lawrence mingles with the tributary waters of the St. Charles.

The bell of the Ursuline Convent was chiming the hour of eleven—its tones borne distinctly through the still atmosphere falling sweetly on the ear—as the vessel cast anchor opposite the lofty cliffs which rise abruptly from the water. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour many of the passengers were on deck viewing with interest and admiration the imposing scene before them.

Crowning a precipitous promontory appeared "that *chef d'œuvre* of nature and of art," the picturesque city of Quebec; its piles of architecture rising one above another and now brilliantly reflecting the beams of the moon from their tin-covered roofs.

"Until this moment I never realized the grandeur of Wolfe's achievement in the capture of Quebec!"

This was the remark of one of the passengers, a Mr. Davenant, after he had for some time silently admired the fortified city—its long line of fortifications presenting an appearance of such massive strength.

"Emily! what do you think of this scene?" he added, addressing a young lady who was standing a little apart leaning on the bulwark of the vessel and earnestly regarding the rocky promontory looming up before her.

"Oh, it is magnificent! there are so many places of interest to attract the eye, seen so favourably in the brilliant moonlight. That castellated city on the brow of that lofty precipice is a sight worth crossing the Atlantic to see! I should so much like to live there! Do you think we shall make our home in Quebec, papa?"

"That will depend on circumstances. I shall much regret being obliged to travel farther, for," he added, dropping his voice, "my purse is not well filled, the small means I could command were nearly expended in paying our fare to this New World, where I hope to do better than in the old. If I cannot procure employment in Quebec we shall suffer much inconvenience." His tone was desponding, and an expression of anxiety clouded his face.

"Things will be brighter soon," said his daughter hopefully. "You know Dr. Dela-

mare said you could easily procure a situation in Quebec in a mercantile house or public office. He also offered to use his influence to assist you."

"So he did! and as he seems to be a person of some standing, his influence will no doubt be of use." The tone of Mr. Davenant was more cheerful now, and his careworn face brightened. "He is a very nice person, that French Canadian gentleman. Don't you think so, Emily?"

"I cannot say I like him," she coldly replied.

"Indeed! I think he is one calculated to attract a lady's admiration—so strikingly handsome, with such a fascinating manner."

"He is, as you say, both handsome and fascinating, but there is something indescribable, at times, in the expression of his splendid eyes which repels me. Call it prejudice if you like, but such prejudice is often an intuitive insight into the real character."

"He has, however, succeeded in winning your sister's admiration. Georgina seems enchanted with him."

"Yes; I regret to see it."

"Why? the admiration seems mutual: his attentions during the voyage have been marked."

"He evidently admires her exceedingly, but that is not wonderful, her beauty is of so rare a nature. I fear his attentions mean nothing: it is merely a flirtation that helps to pass away the time."

"I hope you misjudge him, Emily. A marriage with him would, I think, be very desirable for Georgie."

"In a worldly point of view it might be, but not otherwise. I fear Dr. Delamare is not one who would make a wife happy."

"You judge him rather severely, but you are hard to please and have peculiar views on this point. Your sister is not so fastidious."

"Georgie is too young to judge correctly, besides her eye is dazzled by his handsome face and polished manner. Could she break the spell he has unfortunately thrown around her and view him with an unprejudiced eye, she would, I think, find him sadly deficient in those qualities of heart that stamp the character with true nobility."

"You speak like a Minerva, Emily," said her father, laughing. "Few women look for such perfection in a husband. If they did there would be a greater number of old maids in the world."

"And there would be fewer unhappy marriages," rejoined Emily Davenant pointedly.

"Perhaps so! but every husband cannot be a paragon: you must make allowances for the imperfections of human nature, my dear Emily."

"The man whom a girl selects for a companion for life should have religious principles, and that is just what I am confident Dr. Delamare wants."

"Why do you suppose so?"

"From some remarks that have escaped him in conversation; he is, I am afraid, an infidel."

"Bless my soul, that is dreadful! I certainly should not wish my darling Georgie to become his wife, but it is merely a supposition of yours, Emily, and you are prejudiced against him."

Mr. Davenant's concluding remark was said rather angrily. He had built up a pleasing "hâter en Espagne" during the voyage out, based on Delamare's marked attentions to his daughter Georgina, and it irritated him now to have that illusion dispelled—his castle crumbled into dust. Emily made no reply to his last observation, and a short silence ensued. It was soon broken by her father.

"What a handsome couple the Doctor and Georgina would make!" he said admiringly as they passed him and Emily walking the deck in earnest conversation.

"Really, papa, the handsome Canadian has bewitched you as well as Georgie!" was Emily's laughing remark.

"I am, I must confess, a great admirer of beauty. It is a glorious gift to either man or woman, and is sure to win its way to most hearts; but I do believe, Emily, you would dispense with personal attractions altogether, and would marry a man as ugly as Vulcan, if he happened to be noble-minded and intellectual."

"Personal beauty is not requisite in a man, indeed where we do see it, it is generally accompanied by egregious vanity. Witness this in Dr. Delamare. You can detect it in every movement. If he walks the deck it is to show off his elegant figure; if he smiles it is to display his beautiful teeth; if he passes his white hand through his dark masses of hair it is to show she rich gems that sparkle on his fingers. How I do hate to see a man's hand glittering with rings. Vanity in a woman may be endured, but it renders a man utterly contemptible!"

"Positively, Emily, you are too severe! A stranger might infer from this tirade against the handsome Canadian that you felt piqued at his preference for your sister."

"Oh, papa! surely you do not think so?" said Emily in accents of wounded feeling.

"I do not, my love. I know you are incapable of feeling envy, but others might judge you less charitably."

Mr. Davenant now looked at his watch, re-

marking that it was time to go below as it was near midnight.

"Georgie will not thank you for interrupting her interesting *l'le-d-l'le*," observed Emily.

"The *l'le-d-l'le* has lasted quite long enough, if, as you surmise, the Doctor is only carrying on a flirtation *pour passer le temps*. To-morrow in the sunlight we shall see this magnificent scene to greater advantage."

"In my opinion it looks more pleasing in the moonlight than in the garish light of day," was Emily Davenant's concluding remark, as she left the deck with her father and Georgina.

## CHAPTER II.

## A BENEVOLENT PHYSICIAN.

MR. DAVENANT'S expectation of procuring employment in Quebec was disappointed. Dr. Delamare was unfortunately obliged to leave the city immediately on landing, summoned, he said, to the death-bed of a near relative; and consequently the only friend whom the Davenants had in the New World, was taken away at the time he might be of use. The family did not remain long in Quebec. Mr. Davenant, who was constitutionally delicate, was advised to settle in some place where the climate was less rigorous, they therefore proceeded to Montreal, being unable from want of funds to travel farther. In that city too disappointment awaited him, and friendless and poor, the Davenants experienced some of the evils often attending the immigrant on his arrival in a new country. From the humble hotel at which they had stopped on reaching Montreal, they were obliged to remove to cheaper lodgings in an obscure street, there to await in much anxiety the dawn of better days.

Mr. Davenant who one of those unfortunate men whom poverty and disappointment pursue from the cradle to the grave. Reduced from affluence in youth by his father's losses in trade, he had ever since, with but little interruption, experienced the countless ills with which poverty overwhelms its victims. He was not deficient in energy or enterprise, but nothing prospered in his hand, the curse of disappointment followed all his efforts. To some it is given to get wealth almost without an effort, while others toil in vain for the same boon. Fortunately his family was small, consisting only of Emily and Georgina already mentioned, and a blind child of eight summers. Mrs. Davenant had been dead some years, and the chief care of the household had fallen upon Emily, who was some years older than Georgina, and who had supplied a mother's place to both sisters. Possessing much strength of character and amiability, she was well calculated to do this. The various trials that had swept over her childhood and ripened years had served to purify her nature and develop its spiritual beauty. Owing to the misfortunes of her parents she had early tasted the bitterness of life. Youth had never been to her what it is to many—the sunny season of existence. Very soon was she taught to look up in this world as a wilderness along whose rough paths the flowers of happiness seldom bloom, but the teachings of adversity had awakened in her heart higher aspirations, had imparted to her mind an elevated tone of thought. She grew up noble in purpose, strong to endure, yet possessing with this strength of character great delicacy and refinement.

Day after day passed, and nothing occurred to brighten the prospects of the Davenants. Montreal was not then a city of such commercial importance as at present, and situations were not so plentiful. There were no railroads opening up the country and facilitating commerce as well as travel, besides the navigation of the St. Lawrence was tedious and its waters did not carry such golden freight to the markets of Montreal as they do now. This state of anxiety continued for a time when their trouble at length reached its crisis, and Mr. Davenant suffering from a severe cold was unable to leave his bed, prostrated as much by mental depression as physical suffering.

Emily, alarmed because her father's constitution showed a tendency to consumption, proposed calling in a physician but was met by the objection, "we cannot afford it, and the expense must not be incurred. My last dollar was paid to our landlady yesterday, my purse lately has been filled by the sale of my watch—the only article of value I possessed—and how it is to be replenished God only knows!"

The haggard look in her father's face and the utter hopelessness of his tones thrilled Emily's heart almost with despair, still she spoke cheerfully. "Trust in God, dear papa. He has many ways of helping us, and in every emergency; hitherto His aid has not been withheld."

The day wore heavily on and towards evening Mr. Davenant was much worse. Emily, now seriously alarmed, determined to obtain medical help. Learning where a physician lived she went herself to beg him to visit her father.

In the basement story of his handsome dwelling Dr. Seymour's surgery was situated. A few steps led down to it from the street. The Doctor, an elderly man with a benevolent countenance, was seated at a table alone read-

ing the evening paper. He looked up as Emily's tall, graceful figure appeared at the glass door, and regarded her earnestly. There was much in her appearance to interest him, it certainly was very prepossessing. She was not beautiful in the common acceptance of the word. Her features were irregular, her eyes indeed were fine—of a deep violet colour, large and luminous, their white lids fringed with long dark lashes. Her hair, too, was glossy and abundant, its hue a rich sunny brown. But the chief beauty of her face was its expression. The sweetness and purity of her nature had given to her countenance a singular attraction. Dr. Seymour felt its influence powerfully. A keen observer of human nature, he saw in the sad, thoughtful-looking stranger no common character. Goodness had stamped itself upon her features, and the noble spirit within looked out from the depths of her beautiful eyes. In a few words Emily told the purport of her visit. The doctor listened attentively as she described her father's symptoms.

"Your father is seriously ill, why did you not come for me before?" he asked with blunt kindness.

"Papa was unwilling to incur any expense which he thought might be unnecessary, and—"

"He hoped to get well without the aid of a doctor, eh?"

"Yes, yes! I see how it is, you needn't explain, my dear young lady. But if, as you say, incipient consumption has already made its appearance on his constitution, such attacks should be taken in time. Delays in such cases are dangerous."

"But we really have not the means to pay a physician, and were unwilling to trouble one," and as Emily made this humiliating confession her colour deepened and tears filled her eyes.

"Unwilling to trouble a doctor! unwilling to let your poverty be known! Ah, there it is—pride! Many a life is immolated on its altar. Many human beings have gone down to their graves victims of this same unchristian feeling. Neglecting to apply to a physician until it is too late, because they are unwilling to let a frail creature know that they are some of God's poor. Now, do you think there is a physician in Montreal who would refuse to visit your sick father, even though he knows you haven't a dollar to give him?"

"I think not, physicians are generally kind-hearted."

"Well, they ought to be if they are not, for they see enough of human suffering to soften the hardest heart. How long have you been in Montreal?" Dr. Seymour asked, after a short pause.

"About a month."

"And your father has got nothing to do? no employment yet?"

"None!" was Emily's sad reply.

"That is because he is a stranger and friendless. Nothing like having a friend to shove one up the ladder of life! I had a hard struggle myself when I landed in this country twenty years ago. I had little money and less reputation. Give a doctor a name and he'll get on. Let some one take him by the hand and extol his skill from personal experience, then he'll not want for patients! The people in this world are like sheep—where one leads the others follow. No complaint in that comparison is there; but it is true, nevertheless, few men have independence of mind to judge for themselves. Well, as I was telling you, when I came to this city and hung out my shingle in an obscure street, I might have starved there till doomsday if I hadn't the luck to cure a rich old lady of some imaginary disease, who gave out that I was the cleverest physician in Montreal. From that day my fortune was made and I have had plenty of patients, both rich and poor—the rich I make pay me well, the poor I attend gratis, hoping to have the bill paid hereafter. But to return to your father, we will get him well first, and then trust me to find him a good situation. Where do you live?"

"Near the wharf, at Mrs. Swale's boarding-house."

"I know the place well, and you couldn't have got in with a greater skinflint. She makes you pay up to the very day, doesn't she?"

"Yes, and the dread of having no money to pay our next week's board has caused papa and me much anxiety."

"No doubt it has. She is a hard hand, lady, and would feel no compunction in turning you all into the street. But we will save her that trouble. Your father must allow me to be his banker until he is able to help himself. He is a countryman of mine. I think you said you came from England."

"Yes, from Liverpool."

Dr. Seymour now busied himself putting on his overcoat, for the evening was chilly. While he did so he pushed the paper towards Emily, saying abruptly:

"Read that. I mean the advertisement at the head of the first column."

It was an advertisement for an English governess. A French lady living near Chambly wished to procure one.

"You wouldn't be unwilling to do something to help yourself, I suppose? I like to