

(Ah! poor Rachel, how troubled was that she was such a strong woman, both in mind and body, and her years since then had been so still and unchangeable, it seemed as if what had once grown in her heart could never quite die, so as to be quite forgotten and clean out of sight. No, as a tree still stands to tell of what has been, so was it with this memory in her heart.)

"He would love you best—he must—for my sake and for your own, too," repeated, sternly, the lips that trembled unseen for who had been, unwittingly, her best sister's rival.

"Love me? And of what good would that be now, so late, except to revenge myself? Yes—yes, I should like that. Remember me to your sister. Besides, I asked her to go back into the world and marry again, it might not suit me just now, with Joy likely to be well established here. One grows used even to this hermit's life, and our crusts of bread in the wilderness; and when she is married to my Hawkshaw, and living at the Barton, it will be like to be near, of course."

Rachel became sick at heart; for the day had been pressing upon her all this day long, perhaps, they must indeed prefer to leave the glen and hills and the shelter of the poor moor cottage. Ever since the night of the storm, all the guests who had been enjoying the hospitality of the Red House Farm must know why Blyth, her son, and Joy had left the dance in such haste, and the news would have spread in the night-chase after the mad woman, then the village children would know of it, and come up to beck and point at the silly woman at Coldhome; perhaps call out foolish jesting words she might hear. For since the days of Elisha the prophet, so out of the mouths of ill-taught babes and sucklings such words of evil, soiling innocent souls will be heard.

"After all, Joy may not marry young Stephen Hawkshaw. She may prefer my brother, Blyth Berrington."

"He is not so rich—the other is called a fortune; and Joy has gentle blood in her veins."

"Nobles Blyth Berrington—on his mother's side, at least; while the Berringtons have done women's service since the days of Athens. Steenie Hawkshaw's mother was a gypsy, they say, and his father is a drunken brute. Oh, my dear sister, the money at the Barton may flee away as on wings, but young Blyth has a heart of gold, and he loves our child."

"Woman is really good, Rachel; or not good as women are. Perhaps the best sense among them may think of God before themselves. But women come always last in their thoughts, believe me. Men will say otherwise, but it is not the woman, but her own love for her they think much of. Besides, how should Joy be happy? Are we the sons of the father visited on the children?"

There was a silence in the cottage for some time. The lantern glimmered red, the embers glowed; out of doors one could hear the Chad running in the dusk; and all the nightingales sang.

A long, long silence.

Then a cautious but heavy step outside was distinctly audible in the small porch. There was a pause as of some one listening, and at the door was little by little opened, and a man's figure stood in the doorway, bent forward in a crouching attitude. Both women felt their hearts beating hard with terror to suffocation; for even in that uncertain twilight their eyes recognized the coarse canvas dress, the pointed head, and striped stockings of a convict escaped from the great prison over the moors. By long habit each drew her hand over her face; then Rachel, nervously, drew back the red curtain sharply, and snatching up the lantern on the window-sill turned it full on the intruder's face.

It was Gaspard da Silva!

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Woman's love is hard to kill, Loppid or felled there sprouteth still  
Some small shoots of tender green,  
To remember what has been!"

"Madro de Dios!" muttered the convict, starting back at the flash of the lantern, and at sight of the nun-like, dark figures which, hitherto, in the twilight of the room, his eyes had not been able to distinguish.

"Are these little sisters of charity?"

There was perfect silence for a few moments in the cottage; then, recovering himself, Gaspard asked, in a rough, threatening voice.

"Is there a man in this house?"

Magdalen half raised herself from her couch, trying to shrink out, "Yes, several men. They will come soon; they will protect us." But her lips could not utter a word, though they moved; and it was Rachel's low voice that replied,

"No."

"Who are you both, then? Speak—speak you dumb?"

Slowly came the answer, Rachel waiting for her sister, who still did not or could not speak; trembling and wondering if he would not recognize them.

"We are sisters. We live alone—and we try to serve God."

"Then you can serve Him by serving me now," said the convict, with an air of greater assurance at once, and a sound like an effort at a laugh. "I want some food—food. I have been starving all day and last night. Give me something to eat quickly, I tell you, or it will be the worse for you both."

At the hoarse, horrible tone as of a desperate man, Magdalen cowered down closer on her bench and hid her head among her cushions, seeming in a faint state. But Rachel hastily obeyed, and to look out all the eatables in their scanty cupboard—little enough, excepting a loaf of home-made bread from the farm and some cheese. Gaspard did not wait till she had placed the food on the table, but snatching some from her hands began to devour it, tearing at it with his teeth like a famished wolf. Presently he dropped heavily on the wooden chair she had silently placed for him, and taking up a knife and fork, ate on now more like a human being.

Rachel, watching him, felt the horror and repulsion that had first filled her heart change little by little to divine pity. Under those coarsened, degraded features, where the brute alone was now visible, and the soul seemed reduced to some faint spark within, almost overpowered, she yet recognized the traces of the former handsome Da Silva—the man of brilliant powers, who then had admiration, even awe-struck reverence, for all that was good and holy, but whose star seemed evil from his birth; ever unlucky, poor, noble, ambitious, and overmastered by his own violent passions.

When he had partly finished, Gaspard looked up and said,

"I was hiding this evening up there on the hills among the heather and stones, for I saw two peasants coming and I was afraid. They met each other, and pointed down here at the light, speaking of two witches that lived in this cottage, and how one sister had gone mad last week and no one dare come near them. That is she, I suppose? He nodded with brutal carelessness over towards Magdalen, who visibly shook, whether from rage or more sorrowful emotions.

Then, as no one answered, taking silence for consent, he added,

"Ah—so it is. Yes; I thought to myself that is the house for me! Mephistopheles among the witches, ho, ho!" His laugh, that resounded strangely within the bare walls, had no ring of mirth in it. He still ate on till quite satisfied; next, looking up suddenly, said, "Now I am dead tired and am going to sleep; but you two must watch, for I may be tracked here. I have escaped from prison, and by God—I mean to stay free this time or die. If either of you betray me, see here, I will cut your throats first, I swear, and then my own."

He held up the knife with which he had just finished eating his bread and cheese—an old table knife, sharpened to a point by long use—and with an air of bravado, yet something of former grace lingering in his mock politeness, bowed to the silent women, then stuck the weapon in his waist belt.

Rachel could hardly restrain herself from speech. Her heart was full to bursting, her pulses beating like hammers in her temples with the pity, the agony of it all; her ears were already straining lest they might indeed hear the footsteps of those coming to drag this unhappy wretch back to the jail that was a living death. Words were rushing to her very lips! She longed to fling back her hood and cry out,

"Rest, poor hunted soul! You know us!—we, the women who loved you, forgive us all the past; we will watch over you. No blind chance, but a divine guidance, has led you to us here at last. Only repent, repent, and God will forgive you as we do."

But looking past Gaspard da Silva, as Rachel stood motionless like a dark statue, all her emotions hidden under her draperies, she saw that Magdalen had started, half raised from her crouching posture, with a wild glitter in her blue eyes at her husband's threat of murder. Her pale features twitched in an agony of fear as she laid her finger on her lips with a gesture imploring caution; then drawing her hood forward, that had fallen back in her fright, she sank down again unseen by Da Silva, whose back was turned to her. At that Rachel's words of consolation and revealing utterance stood still like a swift river arrested. Magdalen was a wife; this was her husband. Who dare speak, if she would not have it so?

"You are quite safe; do not fear. You may trust us," she murmured almost soundlessly, her voice being almost unrecognizable to herself.

Then she pointed towards the inner room, of which the door stood ajar, showing the truckle-bed on which the sisters were accustomed to sleep together.

"We two will sit up by the fire and guard you," she added, in her faint breath, like the wind rustling through dry leaves, for she was hoarse from emotion.

The convict paused with a slight awakening of curiosity. Till now his mind had only been full of the instinct of self preservation; his chances of escape, his hunger and thirst and fears. But already freedom was beginning to revive insensibly old influences and habits, and he said,

"You are not a common peasant woman. Let me see your face."

But Rachel held her hood more tightly drawn down than before with her strong hand.

"I am not young or handsome now. No one in this country round has seen our faces these many years. . . . We have taken you in and will take care of you; but—" Her faint tones died away.

"Some vow, I suppose. Who would have guessed religion played such pranks in this howling English wilderness?" carelessly muttered the Spaniard; adding louder, "Well, I can see you are telling truth, for that sister, for one, has gray hair."

With a harsh laugh he pointed towards Magdalen, whom he had turned to see, and one whose long coils of hair had fallen loose on her shoulders. Rachel looked also; and for the first time seemed truly to perceive and know that her sister's luxuriant fair hair, she had so often admired, had slowly changed—that now it was gray! Magdalen's form quivered slightly about the shoulders and chest, whether from passion or suppressed sobs she others did not know.

But Gaspard went into the next room, and, not even pausing to kick off his heavy boots, flung himself on the bed, begrimed as he was with bog mud and damp moss-stains; after his wanderings and concealment all night and lay on the moors. And soon the weary wretch was fast asleep.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### Walking With God.

Sometimes we read in the Bible of walking before God, as when he said to Abram, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect. Gen. 17: 1. Sometimes we read of walking after God, as when Moses said to the Israelites, "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him and cleave unto him." Deut. 10: 4. But of Enoch and Noah it is said that they walked with God. To walk before reminds us of a child, running and playing in the presence of a father, and conscious of perfect security because he is near and behind. To walk after is becoming to a servant; but to walk with indicates fellowship and friendship.

The superb headed laces and tulle used for ladies' ball dresses form platrons sleeves, collars, berthes, and parements to the low-necked corsages of many little girls' ball toilets.

The newest caps for ladies are of white Surah, embroidered all over, or of picconet, embroidered, and lined with Surah. The ruche around the face is double, one row in shell rucking back of a fluted ruche next to the face.

The new plaided flannels for children are in charming shades of red, blue, green, brown, and beige, with dashes of yellow and black, all the combinations of colors so arranged as to produce the most delightful harmony with the contrasts.

#### Lessons at Home.

The home lessons for the pupils of our public schools are apparently growing more burdensome every year. They begin at a very early age, and are not discontinued until the young miss, for example, leaves the normal school with her education completed, as the saying goes. It is not a cheering sight for a parent to see a child of eight or nine years of age struggling after supper with a long and intricate sum in decimal fractions, when she ought to be indulged in light and pleasant recreation. The truth is that the brains of both teachers and pupils in our schools are taxed too severely at the present time, and if we do not have less educational supervision we shall only succeed in producing a race of intellectual fools. We seem to have gone mad on the subject of our public schools, and after all the young men and women of to-day are no better fitted to fight the battle of life than people of a preceding generation who were only instructed in what is facetiously termed the three R's. Those who prosper best in Boston, as a general thing, are not those who were born here, but those who have come into the city from the country, and their educational advantages, compared with those furnished in our schools, were very poor indeed. Cramping may result in producing fat people, but it will not manufacture brains. Too many young ladies hereabouts are anxious to become teachers, but if they realized the strain that would be put upon them they would wisely refrain from entering the ranks of those who are tortured to death by over zealous supervisors and members of the school committee. A young lady teacher of one of our schools, a naturally bright and intelligent woman, was recently carried violently, and, it is thought, hopelessly insane, and she is not the only one who is afflicted with serious mental trouble. This high pressure system of education should be discontinued. It is folly to attempt to teach too many branches in our schools; a good solid foundation for special studies is all that the pupil requires. It is not necessary to make a juvenile Admirable Crichton.

#### Girls in Austria.

Up to fifteen years of age Austrian girls are kept at their studies, but not deprived of society. They dress very simply, rarely wearing a silk gown until the day they leave the schoolroom for the ballroom. After they leave school they go through a year's or even two years' teaching in the pantry and in the kitchen under some member of the family, or even, in some cases, in another family, under trained cooks. They may never be required to cook a dinner, but they are thus rendered independent of cooks and servants, as they learn how to do everything themselves long before they begin housekeeping on their own account. When married they are most affectionate wives and mothers. An Austrian lady, in fact, is as accomplished and learned as an English governess, as good a housekeeper and cook as a German, as witty and vivacious in society as a Parisian, as passionate as an Italian, and as handsome as an American, some of the most beautiful women in Europe being found in Vienna. Germans and also Austrians are celebrated for their stocks of linen. Here, as soon as a girl is born, the weaving of her linen is begun, and every year a piece, or a certain number of yards, is set aside for her trousseau, ready for her marriage. Grandmothers, on their side, are not idle. They pass their time knitting for their grandchildren, supplying not only their wants, but also laying aside for the future a dozen dozens of stockings of every kind, being the usual number of any bride's trousseau, and some of these knitted stockings are as fine as the finest woven ones. An Austrian girl or lady is never, I may say, seen without some kind of work in her hand.—*American Register.*

Heliotrope, which is as fashionable for a color as for a perfume, comes in seven different shades.

The skirt laid in alternate clusters of kilt pleats and panels decorated with braid is the style for tailor-made spring suits of cloth, serge, diagonal, and flannel.