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# MAGAZINE

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## THROUGH THE CASTLE.

BY MAX.

Through the old ostle  
Together went we;  
Sweet were the odours  
That came from the sea.

From the high tower  
We peered o'er the park;  
In the low caverns  
We laughed at the dark.

This is the promise  
Made unto me—  
"Love, I will ever  
Prove faithful to thee."

Through the old ostle  
I wander again;  
Cold are the breezes  
That come with the rain.

Dead leaves are falling  
All over the park;  
Frightened I listen  
To sounds in the dark.

This is the message  
Received from the sea—  
"Dreaded"—and his name  
Written under. Ah woe!

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## THE DEAD WITNESS; OR, LILLIAN'S PERIL.

BY MRS. LEPROHON.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

Tremaine made no reply, but walked to the window, now closed, and leaning his forehead against it, stared blankly forth at the gloomy blackness outside.

The clock strikes. What hour is it? Midnight. The perspiration stands in drops upon his forehead. Oh! that she would die. He felt at the moment that if his lips could frame any form of prayer he would petition for that consummation, so as to be freed from the torments that now hedged him round. The suspense was terrible. No sound still save the ticking of the clock. Ah! there came a soft, rustling sound from the bed. The patient was stirring—waking. Would it be life or death?

Not long did his uncertainty last.  
"How do you find yourself, Mrs. Tremaine?" questioned the attentive nurse.

"Better, oh so much better, thank you! The dreadful pain has left my poor head and my brain seems so calm and quiet now."

"Mr. Tremaine, come and congratulate your wife. She is out of danger," said the hard, distinct voice of Miss Radway.

He crossed the room to the bed and looked down slightly upon its occupant. Then he spoke:

"So you really feel much better, Margaret?"  
"Yes, beyond doubt, though still very weak."  
"Well, let us hope that your restoration is the forerunner of many days of health and strength. In the meantime, dear Margaret, as a token of that good feeling which, I trust, may henceforth reign between us, grant the request I have already vainly urged before, and sign this paper."

There was a pause of astonishment, as if at the strangeness of such a request at such a time, and then the sick woman faintly answered:

"Never, Roger, so help me Heaven! Firm and immovable is my determination of never yielding on that point."

"Do not torment Mrs. Tremaine with such matters now," interrupted the housekeeper, in cold, sardonic tones.

"Listen to me, Margaret; listen to reason!" hurriedly, almost impudently, entreated the husband. "Say you will do it, and I will be kinder to you and the children than I have ever yet been. For your own sake—the sake of those little ones you hold so dear, consent!"

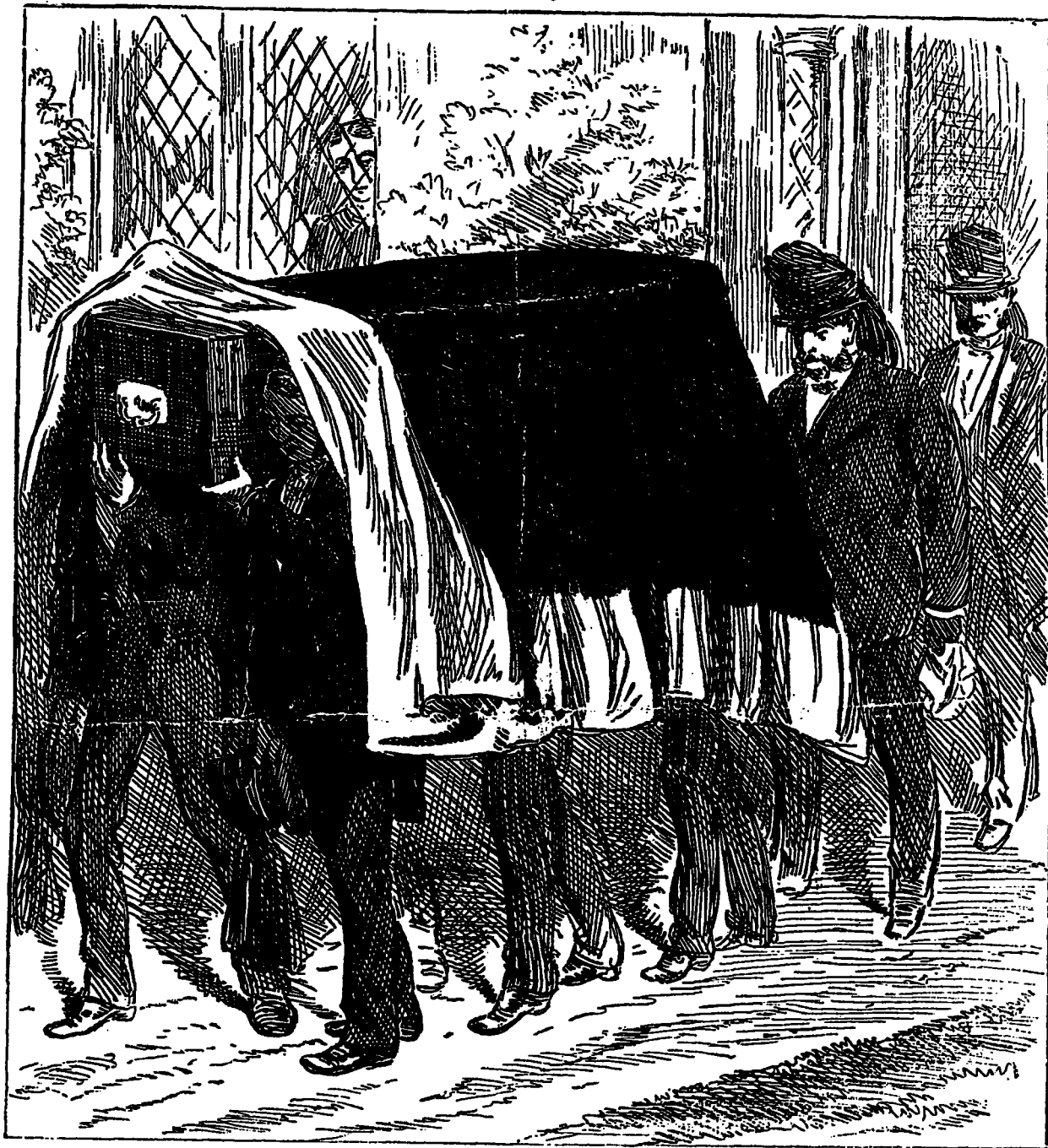
"The sick wife slowly but determinedly shook her head.

"Remember, Margaret, you are entirely in my power—out off from friends, servants, the outside world."

"Shame on you, Mr. Tremaine," again interposed the faithful nurse; "shame on you for troubling your wife with business details when she is still, one may say, at death's door. Besides, has she not clearly told you that she would never sign the paper you are worrying her about? Here, Mrs. Tremaine, is your draft, it is just the time for taking it."

Unsuspectingly the victim obeyed, and after a few minutes her eyelids drooped and closed in sleep—a heavy drugged sleep.

"Take her up now, Mr. Tremaine. There is no danger of her waking."  
He hesitated as if undecided.  
"Out on you craven!" passionately ejaculated his companion. "You have neither the strength nor the spirit of a man!"  
As if stung by the taunt, he snatched up the thin, frail form of his wife, round which the housekeeper wrapped the white quilt she had taken from the bed. Then, seizing the lamp, she silently led the way. Softly as two shadows they hurried on through room and corridor, descended a staircase, then traversed some more apartments, as well as another flight of steps that led to the vast cellars underlying the building. At length the door of the vault was reached—opened, and Tremaine deposited his still insensible burden on a long, oak chest, that formed the most remarkable object in the almost empty vault. The woman closed the door and set down the lamp.



THE HOUSEKEEPER, CONCEALED BEHIND A CURTAIN, LOOKED ON WITH EAGER EYES.

"Her sleep will not be long, for the potion is not strong. Go now for the will and writing desk. It is the last chance of success."

Long enough he lingered on his mission, so long that Miss Radway glanced more than once anxiously towards the door, but a length it opened and he entered.

"She is stirring now. Hand me the smelling salts beside the lamp. There, she is reviving."

For some moments the distended blue eyes wandered curiously, enquiringly round the shadowy vault, resting on the stone floor, then glancing at the chest on which she had been placed in a half sitting, half reclining position, her back against the cold, damp wall.

"My fever fancies have come back on me again," she sighed, "and with what terrible distinctness. Miss Radway, I could almost swear that we are in a dungeon, and that Mr. Tremaine is standing against his barred iron door."

"If you did so you would say the truth, Mrs. Tremaine. We are in the stone vault under Tremaine Court, and out of this you shall not go forth alive, unless you obey your husband's injunctions and sign the will."

"She has spoken truth, wretched woman!" exclaimed the former, in a loud menacing voice. "See to what a pass your obstinate folly has brought you!"

Slowly she gazed all around the narrow, gloomy cell. A slight shudder ran through her frame, her lips moved in silent prayer, and then she spoke calmly and firmly:

"My answer down here, cut off from all human hope or help, is what it was a short while ago, when I supposed myself within the reach of both. Never! I call on Heaven to register my vow. Never will I sign it!"

"Inflamed, miserable woman, do you know that your life will pay the penalty of your obstinacy?"

"Oh, Roger Tremaine!" she rejoined in a voice of melancholy bitterness. "Has life with you been so happy that I should cling to it? Will its loss not rather be to me a blessed release from sorrow and suffering? All that I could have wished to live for would have been my children, and now that my death will avail them more than my life, how willingly do I yield the latter up for them."

"You speak without due reflection, Mrs. Tremaine," said the housekeeper. "Think how gloomy death will be in this dark vault, without friend or assistant nigh to moisten your lips in your parting moments."  
"God will be with me, and His eternal arms

will uphold me lovingly in that last awful hour. Ah, it is not death that is to be dreaded; it is the eternity beyond. But even if this were not so, who is to assure me," and she fixed a penetrating glance on Miss Radway, before which the woman's gaze fell, "who is to assure me that even were I weak enough to sign away my children's rights the act would avail me aught?"

"It would, it would, Margaret! I promise, I swear it!" urged her husband, pressing the pen into her hand. "One stroke of this will restore you to sunshine, life, and the children you so dearly love."

"Yes, at the cost of despoiling them of the only inheritance that in future days will lie between them and want. Besides," she added, as a convulsive shiver ran through her frame, "it is no longer in your power to restore me to life and sunshine. The bringing me down from my sick bed into this death-damp place has struck like ice through my veins, and already the grasp of coming dissolution is upon me. I forgive you both as I hope to be forgiven, asking only that you be kind to my children, and now either leave me or stay, as you wish, but speak to me no more. The little time that remains must be spent entirely in communion with that God to whose presence I am hastening."

Mighty was the lesson given that glist-stained man and woman in the gloomy vault by this true and humble Christian, but closing their eyes to the light, shutting their ears to that voice thus permitted to appeal so touchingly to their hardened hearts, they swerved not from their evil path.

Soon Tremaine abruptly pulled open the door, and fiercely bidding Miss Radway remain where she was, went out. After a long interval, during which the housekeeper moodily watched the anxious features of her companion, whose thoughts seemed now wholly in heaven, she betthought herself that the crime she had so daringly planned, so ruthlessly carried into execution, necessitated exertion and skillful plotting to ward off suspicion from herself and accomplice; and with the words "I will be back in an hour with light and food," she left the vault, locking it behind her.

Anxiously she sped upstairs, fearing that the one female domestic the house-keeper might perhaps have entered the sick room during her absence and discovered that the invalid was no longer there. Her fears were groundless. No one was stirring or visible save the master of the house himself, who, still as a statue, stood

leaning against a window frame, staring blankly at the floor. Passing into the sick room, she threw open the windows and let down the long curtains so as to admit air but exclude light, then came out, locking the door and putting the key in her pocket. Crossing the hall with the quick, stealthy step peculiar to her, she approached her master, and laying her hand on his arm, whispered:

"Is there nothing to be planned or done, that you stand dreaming here?"

He turned angrily on her and retorted, with bloodshot eyes:

"Have I not done enough, curse you, to sink me to hell without your wanting to drag me still deeper down?"

His listener's lip sarcastically curled. "Such excitement is unnecessary. All I want is that you should give me a few moments' hearing. When either doctor, child or servant makes their appearance, remember we must tell them each the same story. Mrs. Tremaine died at daybreak. She has to be buried without delay and her room door rigidly closed for fear of contagion. You had better shut yourself up in your dressing room, as would be natural to a new made widower overwhelmed with grief; leaving me to answer all questions and give directions. I will send to the porter's lodge for Brooks—that fellow Watts left us yesterday morning, sick or pretending to be so—but Brooks will bring my orders to the undertaker, so that there need not be any measuring of the dead, and he will see to arrangement for interment."

Tremaine inclined his head and precipitately retreated to his dressing-room, first menacingly whispering: "See that you bring her food, drink and light, all that she may require."

"Presently. I have some other duties to attend to first."

Taking from an isolated cupboard some powerful disinfectant, she scattered it plentifully through the apartments and halls, then hurried to the servant's chamber and roused her, communicating the mournful intelligence of her mistress's decease. The woman, a truly selfish specimen of her class, after a brief conventional expression of regret, quietly but determinedly said:

"That if she were asked to render any service to the dead, or even asked to go near the room where the body lay, she would that moment leave the house," adding, with an emphatic nod of her head, "that her life was as

dear to her as that of richer people was to them."

"As you will, Ruth," rejoined Miss Radway, soothingly. "I have neither the right nor the intention of asking you to do anything out of the round of your usual duties, you especially, who have so bravely remained with us when the others have taken flight, will render myself no dread whatever of infection, will render myself the last services to poor Mrs. Tremaine, unless, indeed, you could procure me assistance on so short a notice. I suppose it would be difficult."

"Indeed, Miss, you may say so; for the few women that can be got to attend fever patients are all as busy as can be; and as to the others, a hint of silver wouldn't tempt them."

"I feared so. Well, Ruth, do your own part, and you will be doubly paid. Get a cup of tea for poor Mr. Tremaine, who is worn out with grief and watching. Then, when Miss Margaret wakes, break the truth gently to her and bring her to me."

Miss Radway was fuming with great apparent solicitude the rooms adjoining that mysterious closed door, when Ruth appeared at the far end of the corridor leading little Margaret by the hand.

"Oh, take me to poor mamma!" sobbed the little one, as she darted towards the house-keeper, and with a countenance she rarely displayed towards the latter personage, buried her head in the folds of her dress. "Let me see her—kiss her once more!"

"It will be a sad sight, my child, for poor mamma is dreadfully altered in appearance already; still, it seems hard to refuse you a last look," and glancing towards the closed door with an irresolute expression, she took the trembling child by the hand.

"Oh, Miss Radway!" screamed the child, in accents shrill with terror; "to take that innocent child in there would be like short of murder. Why, she'd be down with the fever to-night, that's certain!"

The housekeeper, who had had, of course, my intention of the sort, and who had, moreover counted on Ruth's interference, rejoined with a heavy sigh:

"Perhaps you are right; but it seems a cruel thing to refuse her. Margaret, my child, go out on the verandah there, so that when papa comes you may be with him."

"Yes, indeed," obtained the child, "the fresh air is the safest place. I wish we could all live in it. And now I'll go down and get breakfast; I was at it when Miss Margaret awoke, so I had to bring her up first. You must wait a cup of tea, Miss Radway."

"Well, yes, thank you; but first go to the porter's lodge and send up Brooks to me immediately."

The man Brooks soon arrived with softly stepping foot and blanched face, and glancing timidly in the direction of the late Mrs. Tremaine's room, he said in a broken, unsteady voice:

"Poor lady! I'm awful sorry for her; for she was good to the poor, and had a kind word for all. But this isn't the only house where there's a coffin wanted. Mrs. Payne, the blacksmith's wife, died of the same fever last night, and her oldest son, a likely lad of twenty, is awful bad now. The Symmons family are down with it; and the minister's sister, good old Miss Frost, is took too."

"Yes, Brooks, the hand of God is heavy upon us; but, I suppose, our sins deserve it. Here, take this purse and go to Brompton. Tell the undertaker to send up a coffin at once—he can guess easily the size—and arrange with him for everything regarding the interment, which Doctor Stewart will probably insist on having as soon as possible. Spare nothing for our dear lady was worthy of every mark of affection or respect that could be shown to her."

Well the speaker knew that money liberally or extravagantly spent was singularly efficacious in disarming criticism, even suspicion; and she was determined to leave nothing undone that could tend towards that object.

A moment after the grinding of carriage wheels on the gravel outside announced an arrival. "Probably the doctor," thought the woman, and despite her hardness, a tremor ran through her frame. What if, from curiosity or some other motive, he should ask to look at the dead? Well, she would have to frame some plausible excuse for refusing him. But if he doing so she should excite any suspicions in his mind. Ah! that would be fatal, and must be avoided at any price.

Suddenly Margaret's small pale face appeared at the door opening on the verandah; and a sudden inspiration struck Miss Radway. Calling the still weeping child to her, she was engaged apparently in the kindly task of consoling her, when Doctor Stewart entered.

"Ah, Doctor, it is all over!" lamented Miss Radway, raising her handkerchief to her eyes. "Poor Mrs. Tremaine awoke about midnight, as you had predicted, dreadfully bad, and sank gradually, till she breathed her last a little before daybreak."

"I am very, very sorry," and the physician thoughtfully stroked his chin. "There's not a patient on my list I was so anxious to save. To be sure, she was very bad last night, but I had a sort of hope that she'd have pulled through. Is she much altered?" and he looked towards the bedroom door as if half meditating an entrance.

"Considerably, sir; and the woman's heart gave a great bound. Ominously though she continued, "Miss Margaret here wanted to go in to see her; but I thought such a thing might be dangerous."

"Quite right! quite prudent!" was the quick spoken reply.

"I want to see my mamma. Oh, let me in to see her!" wailed the child, with a sudden outbreak of passionate grief, the yearning of the morning returning with increased vehemence to that poor little foreign heart.

"Impossible, my child!" said Doctor Stewart, kindly taking the sobbing little one by the

# THE HEARTHSTONE.

him, and abandoning at the same time his half formed design of taking a last look at Mrs. Tremaine, a thought prompted entirely by scientific curiosity as to whether her countenance would exhibit certain characteristics he had noted on that of another fever patient, who had expired that morning just as he had entered the house. Solitude for the little Margaret, however, occupied with the recollection of urgent professional calls, decided him on abandoning his purpose, and drawing her with him to the verandah, he kindly said:

"Margaret must not cry so bitterly because God has taken her dear mamma to heaven. Run, little one, into the garden; the air of the house is not good for you. Quick! Miss Radway, while I think of it may as well give you a certificate of death. It will save time."

"Certainly, sir. Here is paper and pen. Will it be better to bury the poor lady soon?"

"Of course; to-morrow morning at latest. The danger from contagion is great. How is Mr. Tremaine?"

"Very much cast down, sir, and quite worn out. I shouldn't wonder if he would be sick on his hands next."

"Quite possible," philosophically rejoined the doctor, with whom Mr. Tremaine was no favorite. "Well, make him take care of himself, for we have too many sick as it is. You are a capital nurse, Miss Radway, worth a dozen of the usual run; and your frame and constitution seem cast in bronze. Do no account let the child enter that infected room. I suppose you have sent for help? That's right. It is very difficult to procure just now. Good morning."

"The great danger the least," she muttered with a long-drawn breath. "Now for a visit to the vault. She may yet be induced to sign the paper."

"Putting some jelly and light refreshments suitable for an invalid into a basket, with a flask of wine and water, and providing herself with a lamp, as well as the lantern she carried for her own use, she made her way unobserved through the comparatively deserted house to her destination.

As she turned the key in the lock a terrible awe crept over her. "What would she see in the life or death? The inmate of that dismal abode still lived, though pallid and cold as death itself; but the clasped hands, the fixed, but gaze raised heavenward told where heart and thoughts were.

"Mrs. Tremaine, I have brought you a lamp, as well as food and drink. Will you take anything?" and the housekeeper placed her burden on the stone floor.

"A drink," answered the poor sufferer, whose lips and throat were parched.

"Sign the will then, first."

A negative movement of the head, slight, yet containing a volume of quiet determination, and the prisoner uncontentiously resumed the devotions interrupted for a moment.

Allowing Mrs. Tremaine to die of actual starvation coincided neither with the housekeeper's own intentions nor with the instructions received from the master of the house; so, pouring out a goblet of wine and water, she handed it to her hapless mistress. The latter drank it eagerly, mutely, however, refusing all the nourishment.

"Have you any message, any word, to send your husband, Mrs. Tremaine?"

"None, save that when we meet before the bar of God's justice, I hope I may not be compelled to bear testimony against him."

The words, so awfully solemn in their purport, were spoken softly, as if involuntarily; and Miss Radway, placing the basket close to the captive's hand, hastily went out. She reached the upper part of the house just in time for the coffin, with its shining metallic surface and silver mountings, was arriving.

It was deposited in the hall, the housekeeper having first unlocked the closed door as if with the intention of having it carried in there immediately; but then, sympathetically noticing the white, frightened faces of the ladies who bore it, she said:

"You seem very much afraid of contagion. Leave the coffin then in the hall here."

The messengers thankfully obeyed and retreated, holding in their breath till they were in the open air for the smell of Miss Radway's disinfectant was so powerful that it conveyed involuntarily a supposition that the odor of death and disease lurked amid their fumes.

With some difficulty she prevailed on Mr. Tremaine to assist her in carrying the coffin into the bed-room, and placing it in, carefully surrounded by cloths to keep it in position, the heavy mahogany gun-case she had chosen for the purpose. Then the lids were screwed down, a crown of immortelles laid on it, lighted wax tapers placed at the head and foot of the coffin; and Miss Radway, for the first time, breathed freely within the last twenty-four hours.

Whilst she was in the midst of some instructions regarding the funeral, her master retreated precipitately to his room and bolted himself in. He found the breakfast tray which the cook had brought up in desperation, seeing that no one entered the dining-room, where the table had long previously been prepared.

The day lagged on wearily to the restless woman, who flitted from room to room like some perturbed spirit, now shuddering as if some dark presentiment had suddenly pressed itself upon her mind, and now suddenly gazing at the wall as she saw herself already, in fancy, Mrs. Roger Tremaine.

The morning of the funeral was ushered in by dark, lowering skies and a sharp east wind, and the attendance, in consequence, was small.

As the procession slowly wound from the hall door the housekeeper, concealed behind a curtain, looked on with eager eyes. How cloverly she had planned and carried it out. How everything seemed to have worked for her and her hopes. Little assistance or encouragement, indeed, had she from Mrs. Tremaine himself; but would not the title of his wife, which would so soon be hers, indemnify her amply for all her handsome, how elegant he looked, in his perfectly fitting suit of newables. Ah! the funeral once over, Mrs. Tremaine really dead—a thing which could not but soon happen, for the sick woman's hold on life was frail as could well be imagined—he would be his olden self again.

Time passed. The servants returned from the funeral; but the master did not. What could be detaining him? How this neglect chafed the haughty spirit of the woman who paced up and down the wide hall, her cheeks blanch, her lips parched, her eyes lurid with excitement. Summoning the porter to her presence, she despatched him to Brompton to see if he could procure any information concerning his master. The long shadows were falling across sward and meadow when Brooks returned; and Miss Radway, who was watching for him with intense anxiety, saw that he held a letter in his hand. Meeting him at the door, she snatched it from him, glanced over its contents, and then sank into a chair white to her very lips. The message was short, and ran thus:

MY DEAR MISS RADWAY.—You can easily understand that after all that has happened, Tremaine Court will be insupportable to me for long years to come, so I leave this very day for abroad. I have made all necessary arrangements with Mr. Black, the notary, who will pay you every quarter a sum sufficient for the main-

tenance of yourself and my children. It is my wish that you should all continue to reside at Tremaine Court, though, of course, if this should not prove agreeable to you, I retract the desire at once. Trusting that repose and quiet will restore your strength, that has of late been so cruelly tried, over, with friendly regard,

Yours,  
ROGER TREMAINE.

"Oh, ingrate! villain!" she hissed between her clenched teeth. "I, who have perilled soul and body for your sake, to be thus contemptuously cast aside the instant my terrible task was accomplished! Margaret Tremaine, already you are avenged, for the rage and despair of hell seem burning within my heart."

After an interval spent in fierce paroxysms of alternate fury and despair, she entered round the dog-cart, and getting in, bade the man drive to Brompton. The information obtainable there was of the most meagre kind. The notary had nothing to tell beyond that Mr. Tremaine had called in at the office and made some arrangements with regard to Tremaine Court in his absence, which arrangements he was ready to communicate at once to her. They proved to be the same in substance as those mentioned in the letter written to herself, the pecuniary provision being of a very liberal nature. He had effected for her a sale of some valuable property, which he had parted with at a very low price, for a cash payment. Then he had driven to the nearest railway station, dismissed the driver and his vehicle, and embarked on some train; but no one knew whether it was bound north or south.

Burning with wrath, she at length decided on returning to Tremaine Court, and when she came in sight of its ivy-grown gables and towers, her indignation increased, if possible, in violence, especially as she glanced towards the east wing and remembered the terrible secret laid away among its foundations.

"To think that he should have abandoned me at such a critical time, when I wanted from him that help of brain and arm which I dare ask from no one else! Roger Tremaine, falsest son of a false race, thou wilt never prosper henceforth; and if curses were of any avail I would sink thee to the bottomless pit with mine!"

The doors and windows of Tremaine Court were all thrown open when she returned, and on entering and looking round her, the neat housewife's instincts which she really possessed made her resolve, despite the moral temper that raged within her, on seeking to reduce that scene of household chaos to order. She never enquired, never even thought of the hapless orphaned child who was hid away in some nook of the garden, tasting already the bitterness of that neglect and isolation destined to be her portion through so many long years of a shadowed life.

After some time spent in giving directions to the maids who had returned to their posts on hearing that the funeral was over, Miss Radway entered Mrs. Tremaine's room, and, locking herself in, indulged her curiosity and cupidity by a protracted examination of the wardrobe, dressing bureau and jewel case, searching about her person the larger and most valuable part of the gems, leaving, indeed, only those whose intrinsic value was trifling.

That night, when the household had retired to rest, she took her lantern, refilled her flask, and then descended to the vault. Ah, she felt like now that Margaret Tremaine would live, if the knowledge of the circumstance could overcome the life of the man who had so cruelly repaid her devotion; but when she entered and glanced at the white, rigid form still reclining against the wall, with fixed staring eyes that saw not, she knew all such plans or hopes were at an end, and that the soul of her victim had escaped for ever from life's bonds. A shudder shook her from head to foot.

What was she to do with this tell-tale evidence of crime; this ghastly corpse, sitting there, staring, it seemed, rigidly at her, and waiting to mutely denounce her guilt if human eye should ever look into that vault. A sudden thought struck her. Would it not be best to place it in the long oak chest, there to remain till a time would offer for more effectual concealment of it, or till Tremaine should return. In the meantime chest and vault could be carefully locked, and the keys kept in her own possession. But how address herself to her awful task? Alone she must do it, and surely, whilst the villain who had shared in her guilt and reaped most benefit from it was already miles away, enjoying, probably, his new-found liberty, without giving a thought to her.

Bitter and deep was the anger that welled up from her heart at the thought, but that feeling and all others must give way before the pressing necessity of the stern duty that awaited her.

With rapid, breathless haste she seized the corpse and laid it full length on the ground; then tossed out the contents of the chest, which consisted chiefly of many documents and business papers, and piled them carelessly in a corner of the vault. After that she turned to the white figure lying there so still and silent. Were not those rayless, distended eyes really fixed on her, with a dull menace in their depths? How could she brave their awful stare; how endure that rigid form with her arms, feel its icy touch on her cheek, as it would, perhaps, fall forward on her shoulder during her endeavors to place it in its unhalloved tomb? Surely, surely, if ever there were an instance in which motion or consciousness could be momentarily restored to the dead this was it.

But Miss Radway was not a woman of any nature, and resolutely raising the corpse she placed it within the now empty chest. Remembering that she had seen some unlabeled lime lying in an adjoining cellar, left there by masons who had been closing some opening in the wall, she proceeded thither and filled her apron with it. "Now, this will render the task of opening the chest again safer and easier," she thought, emptying her burden into the dread receptacle. "I shouldn't bring more, but I feel all at once unusually faint. I must leave this at once." Closing down the lid, she seized the key which stood in the chest, looked it, caught up basket and lantern and turned from the vault, drawing a long breath of relief when she had also looked the heavy door behind her.

The next morning the housekeeper went about her household tasks as usual, but the livid pallor of her cheek seemed to indicate that her sleep had not proved either sound or refreshing. It was a singular existence of which that gull-stained, hardened woman now entered. To a certain extent the dream of her later life was realized, and she really was in truth, if not in name, Mistress of Tremaine Court; but oh, how barren, how empty that position proved. Haunted unceasingly by the remembrance of Tremaine's base ingratitude; harassed by plans and wishes for revenge; tortured by fears that he would sooner or later arrive with some lovely patrician bride who would rule in Tremaine Court as the first wife had never done; then stung by sudden vague fears that her crime might yet come to light to be explained, perhaps, on a scaffold. Surely, surely, her sin had wrought her, as yet, nothing but wretchedness.

As time rolled on, without bringing any tidings of the absent master of the house, sudden and desperate resolves at times seized her to

put an end to her life of isolation and solitude becoming daily more insupportable.

Among the few sutors who had ever ventured to approach her was a young, good-looking and tolerably educated man, named Stukely, a sort of sub-agent, employed on a neighbouring estate. Tempted by rumours of the comfortable sum the house-keeper had already accumulated in bank; dazzled by the position he would hold as temporary master of Tremaine Court; and, willing to ensure his livelihood without the penalty of working for it, he assiduously pressed his suit, and the woman, to whom life was growing each day more intolerably dreary, began to listen to him at times with something like patience.

News came just about this period through some fox hunting friend of Tremaine's who had met him abroad, that the latter was on the eve of being married to a young heiress with whose family he had been travelling in Italy. The affair was settled beyond a doubt, so, at least, testified Mr. Rokeby, the bearer of the intelligence.

The following day Christopher Stukely's suit was accepted, and a week after the ill-matched couple were united. Both parties had made a wretched mistake and both soon bitterly regretted it, despite that the new-made bridegroom lived now in Tremaine Court, occupying its best rooms as if he had been the master of it himself. The east wing had been entirely shut up after Mr. Tremaine's departure and his wife's death, out of regard, the housekeeper said, to the superstitious fears of the servants and the diminished numbers of the household. The harsh, repellent nature of the woman Stukely had married, and her importunate arrogant attitude rendered the stately abode of Tremaine Court as hateful to him as it had once been desirable. More and more frequently he escaped from its precincts, seeking comfort and quiet at the village inn, and mortifying his wife's overweening pride to the very quick; whilst she who had resolved that he should be named Roger Tremaine's sole agent as soon as the latter returned from abroad, felt that such a course would do anything but tend towards ensuring him the desired post.

Two children were born to the Stukelys within the first four years of their married life, and a week after the second child had seen the light Christopher Stukely absconded from home, taking with him all the money he could raise, and a portion of his wife's jewels, or rather the jewels she had abstracted from the wardrobe of the late Mrs. Tremaine.

The blow pierced that callous heart to the inmost core, and humbled in the dust the head that had carried itself so haughtily. What she suffered as she lay there helpless and abandoned on a sick bed—her fierce nature untempered in any degree by the sickness and suffering she had undergone no tongue could tell; but when she at length rose from it, sterner, more fringed than ever, silvery threads mingled, for the first time, with her heavy black tresses. To no one did she complain; to no one open her heart, and that concentrated intense grief and wrath would have gone far towards destroying either life or reason had she not found a counteracting and softening influence in the deep love she bore her children. There were three now in Tremaine Court, her own two and the eldest daughter of the house, Margaret. The latter still continued fragile and sickly, but the precious lessons of piety and christian resignation inculcated by her mother from the earliest dawn of reason bore precious fruit, and enabled her to bear, in meek and patient spirit, not only bodily illness but the harsh sway of the stranger who ruled supreme in her father's household.

Ellen, the baby daughter, born shortly before Mrs. Tremaine's death, had been put out to nurse at once, and her foster-mother, a respectable farmer's wife, had become so much attached to the child that she refused to part with it. Mrs. Stukely willingly consented to the woman's proposal that she should keep her charge till Mr. Tremaine's return, and satisfied all scruples by paying a small sum monthly for the little Lillian's maintenance.

The house-keeper's eldest daughter, Ellen, was a pretty pink and white creature, excessively vain of her good looks, but gentle and affectionate to the extreme; and her foster-mother, a source of constant grief to her mother's heart. As if the cry of innocent blood had gone up from the subterranean recesses of Tremaine Court bringing down on that gaily woman's head the vengeance of Him who has threatened to visit the sins of the parents on their children, Dorothy Stukely was from her birth a hopeless idiot, comparatively harmless, but devoid of any ray of intellect.

The cross was a fearful one to the mother's undisciplined spirit, and as the conviction of her daughter's imbecility forced itself day by day on her, she grew more and more stern and misanthropic, till even the solitary servant whom she had retained when the other domestics had all been paid off after Mr. Tremaine's departure, found her harsh rule intolerable.

The lapse of years brought no softening influences with them to that granite heart, nor did they bring tidings either of her absent husband or her absent master.

One chilly windy March evening that she and the children were taking their evening meal in gloomy silence, the house-keeper feeling unusually dull and sullen, it being the anniversary of her luckless marriage, a heavy step strode up the stairs—the door was swung flung back, and a man entered, announced, Roger Tremaine stood in their midst.

Throwing himself on a chair he moodily surveyed the group, whilst Mrs. Stukely recovering from her first overwhelming surprise rose to her feet and somewhat faltering said:

"You are welcome home Mr. Tremaine."

"Thank you, Mrs.—Mrs.—they told me your new name at the village as I came along, but I have forgotten it."

"Stukely sir."

"Ah well, Mrs. Stukely"—a strong ironical emphasis laid on the name—"please get a treading mangle or a cup of tea? Who are these young people may I ask? I think the eldest—a he indicated Margaret with outstretched fingers—mine, but I do not feel inclined to acknowledge the other two."

"They are mine," replied the housekeeper with a vivid red overpowdering her sallow cheek.

"You are richly dowered, I see!" was the sneering reply. "What is your name?" he asked of Mrs. Stukely's eldest daughter.

"Ellen, sir."

"Your little one?" and whilst he spoke his keen gaze sharply scrutinized the youngest.

An idiotic grin and stare followed by some uncouth attempt at speech was the only rejoinder.

With a slight look of disgust he turned from the child and said: "But it seems to me I had another daughter, a mere infant when I left. Where is she?"

"With her foster mother who could not consent to part with her, alleging that you had placed the child in her keeping and that she would not give her up till your return."

"Well, Mrs. Stukely, you will please despatch that eldest girl of yours to a boarding school where youngsters of her age are taken, and the youngest to an asylum. In both cases I will pay expenses. Send also for your youngest child

to-morrow and let her be kept in future here in her own home. She will be a companion for her sister there who looks as if she wanted amusement of some sort, and seems to be it possible more sickly and ailing than she ever was."

The housekeeper merely bowed her head in assent to all this, and taking the children with her left the room; notwithstanding her apparent outward calmness considerably agitated.

What did this sudden unannounced return of the master of Tremaine Court mean? Had he come back as he went, or was there a proud stately wife waiting in Brompton village till the notice of her arrival had been given to the inmates of her future home, so as to have things prepared for her reception?

Hastily putting the children to bed, she then assisted in preparing a dainty supper and carried it up herself to the dining room. Mr. Tremaine was buried in deep thought, his eyes fixed gloomily on the floor when she entered, whilst his travel-stained habiliments and mud-covered boots announced that he had as yet taken no steps towards removing the tokens of his long journey.

Whilst the housekeeper poured the tea into the delicate china taken out in honor of the master's return, the latter sarcastically asked:

"May I enquire how is that fortunate individual Mr. Stukely?"

"I know nothing of him, Mr. Tremaine, since he left me whilst I was on a bed of sickness, taking with him all my money or jewels of value that he could get possession of. You will confer a great favor to me by never mentioning his name to me again. And now can I enquire after the health of the present Mrs. Tremaine?"

"No by—there is no such person. I went more than once for an address whilst I was abroad, but signally failed. At one time it was all settled, the girl, young—well born, very wealthy, but my ill luck clung to me, and I was jilted by the jade. I have returned free as I left, but ruined in pocket, poor—aye poorer than I was the day I married Margaret O'Halloran."

"What is all the money that was forwarded you at different times from the sales of timber and property gone?"

"Every shilling."

"How?" she questioned in a low tone.

"At the range of tables of Baden-Baden, and other gambling resorts on the continent. I tell you I've led a fast life and a merry one since I left here, and am now come back bankrupt in health and fortune, to do penance in sack cloth and ashes for the remainder of my days."

"Ah how indeed would have been my time!" thought Mrs. Stukely with a mental pang whose sharpness amounted to agony. "Now indeed, but for the link that binds me, miserable woman that I am to a low ruin. I might have seen the one sole bright dream of my life realized. Well I acted like a fool and merit a fool's punishment!"

Mr. Tremaine now addressed himself to his supper but ate sparingly and at intervals, like a man pre-occupied by some weighty thought. Twice he looked up as if about to ask a question, then each time subsided into silence. At length, with evident difficulty he pronounced the words:

"My wife—what of her?"

The housekeeper's eyes flashed as the remembrance of all that she had suffered after Tremaine's departure rose upon her recollection and she retorted in an angry though cautious whisper:

"As to time for you to ask. She died the very day you left home, and I placed the corpse in the oak chest where it will remain till you remove it to some surer spot, or dig a grave for it in the adjoining cellar. Ah, Roger Tremaine! you played a low game, seeking safety at one's flight, and leaving me to contend alone with the dangers and difficulties that followed on her death."

"You were fully equal to the task, Hannah, but let us have done, now and for ever, with recriminations of all sorts. I have returned to Tremaine Court, beggared not only in purse, but in hope, health and all things else. I hate society—I hate my kind. No illusion is left me, nothing to look forward to—nothing to hope for. All I can expect now is perfect, stagnant quiet, and that at least I must have—it will cost nothing to the visitors who may come say I am from home, to those who refuse to be put off thus, plainly answer that Mr. Tremaine never receives calls or visits. You will make all purchases necessary for the household to save me as much as possible from going abroad, whilst you will also remember that pecuniarily crippled as I am, rigid economy is absolutely necessary."

The plan of life thus laid down was rigidly carried out from the day of Mr. Tremaine's return to that on which we introduced his two daughters to the reader, only that Mrs. Stukely's never becoming ill, and absolute and tyrannical with time her injustice to the children of the house more flagrant, and the system of penance she indulged in more daring and unscrupulous.

She undertook to bestow on Lillian and Margaret the elements of a sound English education, a task to which she was fully competent, and both girls, intelligent and quick, profited to a remarkable degree of her instructions. When the time came that these latter ceased, Margaret naturally studious continued to educate herself by a course of reading, judicious and well-chosen, commencing at the same time, in great part, her literary tastes to her younger sister. The library of Tremaine Court was about the most complete department of that strangely ordered household, so that the sisters had always within their reach the works of the best authors, and with these latter they spent many a pleasant hour, shut out as they were from society and the usual amusements of their sex. Deficient in accomplishments, they were certainly far richer in point of mental culture than most girls of their own age.

Now for Mrs. Stukely's daughters. The eldest left the boarding school in which she had passed so many years of her life, a pretty, vain and thoughtless girl. At the early age of sixteen just one month after the close of her school life, and whilst she was still on a visit with a relative of her father's, she contracted a stolen marriage with a handsome dissipated fellow residing in Brompton, a mill wright by trade. Almost from the first days of their union he gave up work and lived on the money with which Mrs. Stukely liberally furnished them. The other girl, Dorothy, remained in the asylum to which she had been sent after Mr. Tremaine's return, her mental malady unabated, but all inducements that money could procure were at her disposal.

One evil habit that the master of Tremaine Court had contracted during his sojourn abroad was that of indulging occasionally in stimulants to excess. During the day time such a thing never happened. On Mrs. Stukely's energetic remonstrating with him against this vice, and declaring that he was able to control himself at night as well as he did during the day, he was early answered:

"If the presence that haunts me at night and the thoughts that oppress and torture me like furies as soon as darkness sets in, visited you also, you might perhaps be driven to the same remedy, or to some other equally desperate."

What amount of remorse troubled Mrs. Stukely no human being ever knew, and she went

about her daily duties with the apparent calmness and self-confidence of one whose conscience was entirely at ease.

(To be continued.)

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STRIKE THROUGH THE KNOT.

I well remember, years ago,  
How I, a little lad,  
To split a knotty stick essayed  
With all the strength I had.  
I vainly lugged about that knot,  
And chips flew round the floor;  
And, wearied, I laid down the axe,  
And thought I'd try no more.

Just then, an old man passing by,  
Who chanced to see my plight,  
Cried out aloud, "Hold, hold, my boy!  
You have not tried aright!  
The hacking splinters will not gain  
The object you have sought;  
But split it through the knot, my boy,  
Directly through the knot."

I tried once more, and on the knot  
Struck hard to make it twain;  
Once, twice, thrice, and the stick was split:  
I dropped my axe again.  
"And now," quoth he, "by this you see  
Just how it is in life:  
All the way through, you'll find hard knots,  
And sorrows, care, and strife.

"And, should you only luck at them,  
You'll find but sorry success;  
But, if you strike them manfully,  
You surely will succeed.  
The lives of great men always lead  
Through many a troubled way;  
And would you walk therein, my boy,  
Remember what I say."

Thus he spoke; and, ever since,  
I've found his words so true,  
That I will give, as I received,  
The same advice to you.  
And, if you heed it, you'll find that,  
As where there is a will,  
Is striking through the knot.

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TO THE BITTER END.

By Miss M. E. Braddon.

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

Sir Francis and Lady Clevedon left the Swiss mountains and valleys early in August, and came to their Kentish home, deservingly in love with each other, and altogether a most foolishly devoted couple, as Sibyl Clevedon informed them after a day or two spent in their society.

"You really do flirt abominably," she said, "and I don't think I shall be able stand it, if things are always to go on in this way. My existence here will be a perpetual state of doing gooseberry. Don't you think you might find some eligible person to fall in love with me, Frank; so that I may set up a rival business?"

The present state of affairs is awfully slow."

Not slow for the principals, however to whom life just now seemed a summer holiday. The young couple certainly made the most of that happy week of perfect liberty which preceded the arrival of their visitors. They wandered in the park all through the sultry summer morning, exploring their territory like a married Robinson Crusoe and his wife, "running about," as Percy Shelley's wife, called it, when she spoke of herself and her boy-husband in their Welsh cottage. They rode about the surrounding villages, made themselves familiar with the boundaries of the estate, and formed the acquaintance of numerous small tenants and farm labourers, all of whom wanted something done, and took advantage of Sir Francis Clevedon's defenceless state in a ruthless manner. John Wort rated his master soundly for such folly.

"If you go, giving 'em everything they ask," he said, "you may as well divide your estate among 'em at once, and go and be a Plymouth Brother. Lett come to the same thing; for I'm blest if ever you'll get sixpence a year of the property, if you listen to your tenants' whims and fancies. I never give 'em anything; that's my rule. Don't you like the place?"

"I ask, if you come whining to me. Because if you don't, you've got your remedy next quarter-day. There isn't an acre of land or a house on the estate that I couldn't let over your heads three deep; so if you want to better yourselves in some other direction, pray don't stop out of politeness to me." That generally brings them to their senses. But of course, if the proprietor goes tampering with the tenants, I'm done. Once given 'em anything, and they'll never leave off asking; and if you begin by giving inches, you'll find yourself let in for all before you know where you are."

Sir Francis looked penitent, and referred to a dainty little note-book of George's with a gruesome countenance.

"I'm afraid I committed myself to a new chimney or two, and a little improvement in the way of drain pipes, where I found the cottages hardly as sweet as Breidenbach's shop; and here's a case where I think something inexpensive in the shape of a stable would be an actual charity, for the family have a donkey which lives with them in their common sitting-room—uncomfortable for the donkey, which must find himself hustled about when the family are busy, and perhaps a check on the freedom of conversation; for who can tell what a donkey may or may not understand? My wife pleaded piteously for the brute. I'm afraid her compassion went to the donkey rather than to the family who were compelled to have him in their parlour. Here's an oven, I see, to which I certainly did pledge myself, at the request of a woman whose cottage was a perfect model of cleanliness. And if she had an oven she could give her old man a bit of pie for his supper, or a toad-in-the-hole for his dinner. What is a toad-in-the-hole, by the bye? I've heard of viper broth being given by the Italians to people in extremity, but a toad is a new idea. Come, Wort, be philanthropic, and rudder all my promises without any more grumbling. I daresay I've been a fool, but you see a man does not get married many times in his life, and may be excused a little weakness on such an occasion."

"Of course, if you say I'm to do these things, Sir Francis, I must do them," replied John

Wort, with the sigh of resignation. "It isn't my place to make objections. I suppose you know that you've let yourself in for a couple of hundred pounds, at the least."

know, Mrs. Harcross was very good to me about my trousseau. You've no idea what trouble she took. But for her you might have had such a dowry wife. She said Aunt Chowder's notions were a quarter of a century old."

santly engaged in showing the stables to his friend, Captain Hardwood. "What a magnificent woman!" said Mr. McGill, the gentlemen who wrote for all the reviews, looking up from a meditative cup of tea as Mrs. Harcross came along the gravel path, her glistening gray dress and dainty pink bonnet resplendent in the sunshine.

mark, which being gratefully received by host or hostess, bridges the dreary chasm, and leads the way to pastures new. To-night at Clevedon there were plenty of good talkers. General Cheviot and Colonel Davanant helped and sustained each other, yet were judiciously placed far enough apart to have each his auditory. The two Miss Stalmans were of the agreeable-rattle species: could talk croquet or theology, fine art, horses, or botany with equal facility; could draw out the dullest neighbour and outtake the coldest cavalier in the meshes of one of those confidential conversations about nothing particular, which, seen from a little distance, look like flirtation of the deestep dye.

while to take," said the gentleman with the moustaches, following us. "I did not address my remarks to you, sir." "I'll bet that you did," said the other, with the most provoking coolness.

THE WAGERS.

Some years ago I took my seat in the diligence from Marseilles to F—. The railway that now connects those cities was not yet completed.

The little man, whose face was now a deep crimson with rage, blurted out— "You won't find that a very easy matter for me to come here to get married."

THE AGE OF RAILROADS AND TELEGRAPHS gives us to fast living, and increases the desire for making rapid fortunes, some wishing to outstrip, and others to be at least equal to their neighbors. In order to keep up with this eager and unequal contest, the brain is taxed to its utmost power, while humanity is rendered an easy prey to disease. The Heart, Liver, Stomach, Lungs, &c. Nervous System become afflicted, and sickness, in the form of Heart Disease, Jaundice, Dyspepsia, Bronchitis, Consumption, Paralysis, or Mania, is the result. The use of Fowler's Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites will enable the mind to sustain a greater strain unimpaired by conflicting thoughts and unwearied by continued study. It imparts power of concentration. What before seemed difficult of solution becomes comparatively easy, and the body is physically stronger under its use.

Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom of the page.



"SO THE STORY GOES."

"It was once upon a summer day—
So the story goes—
The Franklin's daughter chanced to stray
Where the mill-stream flows.
And as the rustic bridge she crossed—
So the story goes—
Over the rail she stooped, and lost
From out her breast a rose.
The stream ran fast, the stream ran strong—
So the story goes—
And on its waters bore along
The careless maiden's rose.
The miller's son stood by the bank—
So the story goes—
He stopped the wheel; and, ere it sank,
Caught up the maiden's rose.
Then in his cap he placed the flower—
So the story goes—
And boldly to the maiden's bower
He hid at daylight's close.
"Is this thy flower, sweetheart?" he cried—
So the story goes—
The maiden blushed, the maiden sighed,
"O! I give me back my rose."
"Two flowers," he said, "so sweet and fair"—
So the story goes—
"Where shame to part—one breast should bear
Thyself and this red rose."
What more the youth and maiden said,
That summer eve, who knows?
But he hid the flower and won the maid—
So the story goes.

BROOKDALE.

BY ERNEST BRENT.

Author of Love's Redemption, &c.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFTER THIRTEEN YEARS.

The deep thrill of joy that ran to Margaret's heart at this moment told her she still loved the man. Theirs had been a strange courtship, if, indeed, it could be called a courtship. She could remember now how quickly he accepted her rejection of him, and smiling at her with his proud dark face, told her he would come back for her when he was rich enough, because he knew she loved him. He had been true to that belief. He gave her a simple promise that he would wait for her no matter how long, and he repeated to her, as he walked by her horse's side, how he had worked, and hoped, and waited. She heard the history of these thirteen years with a tranquil pleasure she had never thought to realize. "Yes, I have kept my promise," he said, quietly. "I had an instinct that you were true to me, and I felt sure when I came back I should find you here at Brookdale or near; but I did not think of meeting you as soon. I meant to come into the neighbourhood as a stranger, and make inquiries to find out what had become of you, and if I had not found you as you are the whole labour of my life would have been lost." Her groom stood in the background, wondering, perhaps, who this gentleman could be, or Mr. Fleming might have said more. Miss Grantley's attendant never could have suspected how cruelly he was in the way of these two long-separated lovers. He kept a discreet watchfulness upon them, deeply as he was apparently absorbed in the study of hills and landscape. "Why would you have lost the labour of your life?" she asked. "It was for you I worked. It may seem strange to you, Margaret, that I rarely had a doubt or a misgiving till within these last few months. It was not till my task was finished, and my arrangements were made for coming home, that I began to be haunted by a fear that you might have been taken from me." Margaret returned his tender smile with one of sympathy. She returned her horse's head towards home, and he walked by her side till they reached Brookdale. The pace was slow for such a cheerless, wintry day; but it brought them to the stately house before they were aware of it. "You will see Everard, as you are here," Miss Grantley said. "If you can spare the time from other ties, you will not find Brookdale much changed." They went in together. He thought how little changed she was. These thirteen years, which had made him a bearded man, looking much more than his age, had only changed her from a womanly girl of nineteen into a splendidly-developed, beautiful woman of two and thirty. He was a man of the world and had travelled well, and he knew that thirty or so is the age at which genuine beauty begins to grow upon a woman. They went in together, and entered the drawing-room. Mr. Fleming took Margaret into his arms when he saw she were alone. He had never dared to do this thing before; but he felt that she was his by right of patient love and patient waiting, and he held her in a long and passionate embrace, from which she did not try to escape. He felt her lips tremble under the close and clinging pressure of his. Proud as she was, she could not repress that silent token of her passion. "Our love has stood a long test," said Mr. Fleming. "Our future ought to be happy, Margaret. I wonder what your brother will say to me. There was never much sympathy between us; but I suppose he will be glad to see me here again." "I am sure he will." Alexander was not so sure. He had a rather distinct remembrance of Everard's proud treatment of him; for Grantley was reserved and haughty even in his youth, and the difference between the son of a gentleman farmer—a man whose ancestors had, not many generations back, been tillers of the soil—and Margaret, the daughter of Grantley, the diplomatist, was too wide to be bridged over by a marriage. "Whether or not," he said, "you can make your own choice now. I said I would come back when I was rich enough, and I have realized sufficient for comfort. I cannot give you a home like this, Margaret, but I will try to make you content with your lot." He told her frankly what his position would be. He had gone out as an emigrant, with a couple of hundred pounds, and taken to agriculture because he understood it. But land was cheap, and there were plenty of facilities for the profitable raising of stock. Shorn of its romance the incident of travel and adventure, Alexander Fleming's life had been one of serious, simple hard work; and he had gained the practical knowledge of farming to the best account. He was worth rather more than twelve thousand pounds, he told her in conclusion, and that well invested would, with the help of his own industry, provide them with a fair income. It was not the destiny Margaret had pictured to herself. Her dream of a stately, princely husband, and a home of palatial splendour, had faded with the fancies of her girlhood, and she

loved Alexander for his solid, sterling strength. She was grateful to him for having come back to rescue her from a fate she had dreaded—a lonely, loveless life. She was a very beautiful woman and she knew that therein lay her danger. Men are apt to be awed by very beautiful women—these regal creatures who seem much more unapproachable than they really are. June, with all her stately haughtiness, is apt to be as simple-hearted and impulsively passionate as Hebe, in spite of her dimples and her childish innocence. It was not the destiny Margaret had pictured, and some few old dreams faded before the prosaic prospect of her wedded life; but she felt that there was infinite peace and happiness in store for her. She had rather Mr. Fleming had made his money in some way that gave more scope for sentiment than runs of sheep and herds of oxen. If he had lived in the bush, or gone gold-digging, or hunted buffaloes with a rifle, she would have liked it better. He might have given her several reasons why neither of these things would have supplied him with salt and shoe-leather; but he knew nothing of her discontent, though it was scarcely discontent. "Everard will sneer, I know, at his hurt hands and his rugged simplicity," she thought, "or tell me I have not waited much longer. He always spoke of Alec as my friend the grazier; but I love him, and he is of all men the one to make me happy." Mr. Grantley extended a very cordial welcome to Margaret's old lover. There may have been some genuine pleasure for his sister's sake at the bottom of his warmth.

lion, gentleman, in all simplicity of heart; "black fellows, you know." "I have seen some few Hottentots," said Mr. Fleming, with a smile at the utter absurdity of the question. "What are they like?" "Very, black, as a rule; not remarkable for good manners." "How do they dress? Not like they do in pictures, do they?" "Their dress is extremely unfashionable—you would think so, I fear. Twenty yards of linen would dress a whole family handsomely, and leave something to spare." Mr. Colburn retired from the conversation. He thought that the experience of a traveller amongst Hottentots did not make good table talk. "If an old-fashioned country Christmas has any attraction for you, you may as well remain," said Grantley to their new visitor. "Thank you, Mr. Grantley—there is nothing I should more enjoy, and I hope I shall be able to return in time; but I undertook a mission for a friend just before I left America, and it may occupy me for a week or more. It is rather a curious business." "Yes." "Four or five years ago I met a man in the colonies, and we became fast friends. I scarcely know why, for he was twenty years my senior, and there is very little in common between us. A reckless, indomitable, iron-willed man he is, ready to grapple with any danger, and caring for no man's opinion. His nature must have been noble at the beginning; but some bitter

believe he has considerable property here if he liked to claim it." "He seems a misanthropical person, rather," said the gentlemanly George. A sort of Timon of Athens. "There may be a little of that spirit in him." "Most ungentlemanly person Timon was," said the Hon. Mr. Colburn; "spent all his money and then used bad language to his friends. He invited them to dinner, you know; and had nothing but hot water in the dishes, you know; and because they didn't seem anxious to go in for it, he threw it in their faces, you know; and then he went and lived on grass in a cave, like Nebuchadnezzar, you know." "I think I have seen the story in Shakespeare," smiled Mr. Fleming. "By the way, Mr. Darrill, a gentleman of your name is concerned in something I have to do." The gentlemanly George flinched uneasily in his chair. "Indeed?" "My friend Danvers left a child behind him when he sailed in the City of Dublin," Fleming went on. "A little boy. He would be a young man of about twenty now. When Danvers went to Philadelphia for him, he ascertained that he had left for England in company with a gentleman named Darrill, and I have promised to find that gentleman if I can." "That gentleman made himself a promise that Mr. Fleming should know nothing of the kind if he could help it." "I cannot care so much for the boy after leaving him so long," said Grantley. "How much he may care depends upon the

not have told her so. In his time of trial, he was forgetful even of her. "Everard," she said, gently, "I can see a way now by which you might retreat, and escape the danger that I feel must come. Even if, by no matter what desperate means, you pass the present crisis, new complications must rise, and you cannot be prepared for all." "Well, what is your way?" "Send the Darrills out of the country. They and the wretched boy who threatened you yesterday are but puppets in your hands. You can dismiss them when you like. You are rich enough without Brookdale. You can explain to Uncle Clarence, when he comes, that it was you who had his son brought over here, and that you intended in time to tell him the truth as to his parentage." "But Eugene?" "Will forgive you for my sake. I will go to him." He shook his head. "The stake I have played for is Brookdale," he said, with deliberate emphasis, "and Brookdale shall be mine. There is no alternative. I shall only fall if you desert me. Keep Fleming with you on Monday. Let him hear nothing of the change that has taken place here. I will deal with Eugene to-day." "What will you say to him?" "That which will bring him in any terms, if he sees the value of a plan upon his life." He took the key of the closed wing from his pocket, and went towards the picture-gallery. There was such full purpose in his face that Margaret followed him with a terrible fear in her soul. He thought she had stayed behind, and was not aware of her presence till he had the key in the lock. Then he felt her hand upon his shoulder. Soft and slender as that hand was, the resolute grip made him frown. "Everard," she said, putting her back against the doorway before you enter here give me your solemn promise that he shall not be harmed. I have been faithful to you from first to last. I have had it in my power to set him at liberty many a time, and loving him as I do, it has been hard to see him pine as he has pined in his captivity. He is dying, I am sure; but for your sake I waited, hoping that in time he would take your terms, and so relieve us of a heavy burden." "He will take my terms." "If he does not?" "You shall have an answer after I have seen him." "I must have an answer now," she said, with determination as deep as his own. "So long as he is safe I will say nothing; but if, in the event of his not complying, your intentions are as dangerous as I think, dismises them for your own sake. Surely as I love you—deeply as I have sinned for you—I would denounce you if he were injured." "You, too, Margaret? You turn against me?" "Only in this. You have not found me timid, and you will not so that he is always safe. Promise me." "Well, if you would rather sacrifice me than him, he is so?" "I would sacrifice neither, but save both." "And that," he said, under his breath, as she stood away from the door to let him in, "is impossible."



MARGARET GRANTLEY PLEADS FOR EUGENE.

"I had given you up long since," he said, returning the traveller's hearty grip of the hand; "but Margaret knew better, it seems. I am glad that I was a false prophet, Mr. Fleming." Mr. Fleming was as glad. He thanked Grantley feelingly for his reception. It was the one he valued most, for it placed him at home in the midst of old friends, and few of those he had left behind when he went from England thirteen years before remained to greet him now. Old associations had died out, old friendships dropped asunder, and he had found it, as he said, like coming back to the grave of his former life: everything was so changed. "I should like to redeem my promise soon," Mr. Fleming said. "I have waited for Margaret long enough, and if I can satisfy you on the score of circumstances, you will not, I suppose, insist upon much delay?" "Margaret is her own mistress, my dear Mr. Fleming. I can only give her choice my approval, and that you have." This was better than Alexander had expected. He recollected Everard as a reserved and stately gentleman, who had always kept him somewhat at a distance. The change was pleasant to him. Everard left them till luncheon-time. He was careful not to touch upon the alterations which had taken place at Brookdale, and he did it so easily that, if Alexander wondered why he acted like the master of the house, he kept the wondering to himself. Edward Danvers Temple did not appear at the table for the midday meal. The fright, more than the violence, to which Grantley had subjected him, had laid him prostrate—shaken his nervous system thoroughly. "Mr. Temple is indisposed," Margaret said. "You will see him in a day or so." "Not seriously indisposed, I hope?" "No; he has delicate health generally, and is apt to be affected by any sudden change of weather." The Hon. Mr. Colburn opened his round blue eyes wide. He did not know precisely what had happened, but he was not without some suspicion, and he knew it was no change of weather which had rendered his host unable to leave his room. "Had a deal of travelling, I suppose?" Mr. Colburn hazarded, at a safe venture. He had travelled in the usual way. He had been on the Continent; followed the well-worn footsteps of the tourist parts of Rome; climbed with much repugnance up the Alps. Because it was the thing, you know, as he said to Fleming a little later; gone to the Holy Land, the condition of which he described as disreputable, and touched at Constantinople, which he said was the dirtiest place in the world. He reckoned himself a very accomplished traveller indeed, and had quite a collection of guide-books as a matter of proof. "Yes, I have travelled a little," replied Mr. Fleming, "though by no means to the extent you might infer. I spent the most of my time in the colonies." "Didn't find the colonial people very fashionable did you?" "I found them very much like other people. The men work harder, perhaps, than they do here, and have a more independent tone; but the women are just as much slaves to the dress-maker as here. There is throughout a more even tone of society, but it is slightly varied, and we have a few imitations of the London dandy—the highest point to which our civilization has arrived." "Did you ever see a Hottentot?" inquired the

trouble or disappointment has warped it. He lost his wife at sea. He told me once that the course of life was upon him, for no matter what the peril might be he was sure to be saved to taste himself." "Naturally. Though she was not his first love, and his moral character had been by no means free from reproach. He married her in Philadelphia, and started for England in the City of Dublin—the ship that was never heard of, you may remember." "Yes," said Mr. Grantley, quietly, "I do remember. Every soul was lost." "I said the same words to my friend Danvers, and he smiled in his singularly bitter way. 'Every soul and everybody but one,' he said to me, 'and the soul of that had been lost long before.' But the one saved was himself." "Your friend?" "Yes, my friend, Mr. Danvers." "Is he an Englishman?" "Yes. There is some mystery attached to him—Danvers is not his real name. He told me as much; but he did not tell me what his real name was. He used rather strong and graphic language, as all men who have suffered much seem to, and he said he had buried his identity with the past—buried it with an old man's curse upon it, and he did not care to have it disinterred. He took the name of Danvers from his wife." "What is his Christian name?" "Clarence." "I know—or did know—a young man named Danvers," said Mr. Grantley, with a cold thrill—part fear, and part desperation—at his heart. "How was your friend saved? I should like to hear, because, as you are aware, the loss of the City of Dublin excited considerable interest at the time. Advertisements were put in every European newspaper, requesting any one who may have been saved to come forward in behalf of the relations of those who were lost." "That I remember, too; but the only one who could have given information was Mr. Danvers, and he then, and for some time afterwards preferred to let it be thought he was dead. He has been a cynic and a sceptic all his lifetime, with a few rare intervals of better feeling; and he was a cynic and a sceptic when I first knew him. He told me he had relations here." "Here?" "In England," said Mr. Fleming, surprised at the tone in which the question was uttered. "And he seemed to contemplate with some degree of pleasure the possible effect his return would have upon them after his many years of absence." "Those family experiments are rarely satisfactory," said Mr. Grantley. "When a man has been away long enough to be forgotten, long enough to have had his place filled in the hearts of his old friends, he had better stay away altogether, or come back as a stranger. Tennyson is a gentleman whom I do not much admire, but I like the philosophy of Enoch Arden. The man came back, and found that his wife had very naturally taken another husband, and he went away without making himself known. You will say it was a noble piece of self-sacrifice, I think it was simply his duty." "There are a good many Enoch Ardens in the world, Mr. Grantley," said Fleming, with a grave look at Margaret. "He was no fancy portrait, painted by a poet; but it is in no such spirit Mr. Danvers would return. His chief delight would be in watching the disappointment his return would produce, the hopes it would break, the old enemies it would revive; for I

boy himself. It is not his intention to make himself known at first. He will begin by cultivating his acquaintance, studying his character, and seeing what he's worth before he acknowledges him." "It seems a dangerous experiment," Mr. Grantley said. "The safest plan is to take one's friends as we find them, and shut our eyes to what we do not wish to see. I would commend that advice to families in general and husbands in particular. When do you expect Mr. Danvers?" "By the next vessel, the Egeria. It is expected on Monday. He stayed behind to make inquiries, but he is sure to come by the Egeria." When luncheon was over Mr. Grantley left Alexander Fleming to the care of Colburn and the gentlemanly George. He was strangely quiet now; the fierce, feverish restlessness had left him for a settled, stern resolution. Margaret knew that he would not flinch now from the path he had determined on. "This is a new complication," he said, between his teeth. The very Fates are against me, Margaret. What but the hand of Fate could have thrown your lover into Clarence Temple's way?" "Are you sure it is Clarence Temple?" "Can there be a doubt? His character—his adoption of his wife's name—the place he comes from! Yes, he is Clarence Temple, and should he arrive in London, all will be over. You must get Fleming away from here. He knows nothing yet, but he could not remain in ignorance long if we had him in the house." "What pretext can I offer?" "That I leave to you. I am sorry for you, Margaret. It would be better had Fleming never returned. He is one more to fight against, and I am hemmed in on every side. Yet—and he uttered such a bitter oath that his sister shrank from it as from a blow—"I will triumph in the end, or Brookdale shall crumble to a heap of ruins. It shall be my tomb, and the funeral pyre of those who conquer me." "Everard?" "I have played too desperate a game throughout to shrink from the last throw now. My way is clear, in spite of the many perils, and there is no barrier that I will not break or trample on. On Monday the Egeria arrives. Fleming would, perhaps, go to meet his friend. That you must prevent." "Tell me why," said Margaret, seeing something deadly and dangerous in his eye. "Our sin is deep enough already, Everard. I cannot help you to commit a crime. Let the work stop even now, before it is too late. There is time for forgiveness, and I will plead for you. I am so changed since this morning," she added, clasping her hands imploringly. "I want to be worthy of this good man's love." "You would be that at your worst. Do you think, because he has the one merit of fidelity, he has lived the life of a saint? You think it was your memory which kept him faithful. Any bachelor might say the same—in fact, it is a thing which bachelors are fond of saying. The worst of the unmarried reproaches who grow saintly would, if you asked him why he never married, bring up a sentimental sigh, and hint at some story of early youth and blighted affection. You are a splendid woman, Margaret—well worth the waiting, had such a man waited twice as many years. He did not happen to be suited while he was away, so he came back, on the chance of finding you still single. It is only by the law of accident that you and he have not been married long since—to some one else." But for the bitterness in his spirit, he would

CHAPTER XXXIII. INCAPACITY. He opened the door, and went in. The dull light reflected through the window from the ceiling of the next room showed him Eugene Temple seated at a table with a book before him. Eugene, with a patient, wearied look of resignation in his face, and a drooping, fragile air, which had grown upon him during the time of his captivity in the closed wing. Everard's heart smote him as he met his cousin's gaze. He had had but a poor return to his generous young benefactor for years of kindness and attention; but a poor return to the dead man who had left two orphaned children in his and Margaret's care. Nothing worse than this captivity had happened yet. Faithfully as Grantley's ambition to be master of the stately pile and the broad lands that belonged to it had taken him step by step into crime, he shrank, in his darkest hours, from the contemplation of the deed which his evil genius suggested to him as the surest means of safety. Cruel as he had seemed, cruel as he had been, no one had regretted more than he the fatal chance which revealed to Eugene the secret of the cabinet, and rendered the keeping of that secret and him who knew it a matter of most stern necessity. He had taken his measures well as far as the interests of the house were concerned. The servants knew nothing that transpired. No one but Everard or his sister, or Everard's valet, ever entered the closed wing, and Everard's valet was so thoroughly in his master's power that, no matter what he thought, he dared not speak. He was as glad of a hiding-place as Everard was of an assistant on whom he could depend. There was a warrant out for his apprehension on a charge of forgery, and Everard had promised to get him safely out of the country when his task of watching the captive was done. Everard represented Eugene as a harmless invalid of weak intellect, whose existence was not to be made known to the household. They had treated Eugene kindly. After that first terrible hour when he was shut in, Everard had gone to him again, and told him what his fate must be. "You know my secret," Grantley had said, unmoved and tranquil even then; "you know the truth, and perhaps can see my purpose, Eugene. I never intended you should know either. I wanted to be master here; but I did not wish to sacrifice you. Give me your word you will never reveal what you know as to my interference with the arrangements as they stand, and I will let the entire income shall be yours, and you shall leave on the instant." But Eugene would not temporize with him. He shrank with a shudder, but with no fear from his cousin, on whose soul there was the stain of blood. He would not give up his birthright, and leave his father's house to one who had been guilty of so much villainy. "I never should denounce you," he said. "The retribution for the crime which sent him poor fellow to his death I leave to heaven and its ministers of justice; and I will not make terms with a felon. I will not leave Brookdale to you and your ingenious accomplices. You cannot keep me here long." "Can keep you here till you die," was the reply, "and I shall do so unless I have your solemn promise that you will take my terms, and give the public sanction of your presence to appearances here. The boy I brought here is your cousin, though he is not Clarence Temple's lawful son, and he suits my purpose better than the real one would, and I have the real one here in England." "The legitimate child of Clarence Temple?" "The legitimate child of Clarence Temple and Ellen Danvers. He does not know his father's name, and I am not going to enlighten him. His half-brother suits my purpose better." "I never thought you could be so great a villain!" "I am surprised myself sometimes. Such a perversion of the proprieties is never preced-

ated at the outset. It grows by degrees, and one adapts oneself to it as the occasion requires. I never should have thought of it had you not put the chance in my way by insisting upon having your cousin sought and found. To be master of Brookdale has been my life-long dream. You will admit that I am better fitted for the position than you. I am a villain as you say, but you must blame destiny, and not me. Destiny gave you a splendid inheritance, and you would have been just as happy without it. Destiny made me a poor relation, and I have the soul of a Sardinian. You would have bowed to destiny; I bent it to the shape I require.

"And burden your soul with crime?" "The burden is light one, I assure. What was there in that wretched betting-man to give me a single thought of remorse? He was a worthless, useless member of society; he had no home ties, no friends. He loved to eat, drink, idle his time at gambling, and prey upon his fellow creatures. I did society a service when I sent him over the cliff into eternity. He did not lie in his throat, for had he not said that he had sent you I should have had no purpose in silencing him."

"That sin will find you out, Everard Grantley. The Creator, who saw all, will not permit the murder of that poor man to go unpunished." "My dear Eugene, you talk like a schoolboy. Men, and women too, are drowned and poisoned, outraged and beaten to death, in dark places and in daylight, and the perpetrators are never discovered. In the last twenty years there have been as many undetected murders, and those who did them, if not dead, still at large. Under certain conditions, properly arranged, putting an objectionable person out of the way is safer and easier than picking a pocket."

"Strange as the situation was, Eugene could not help wondering how he had lived so long with this man, and never suspected the awful depths of sin lurking under the quiet polish of his character."

"Your promise is all I require," Grantley went on. "Give me that, and I open the door for you. I know that the ultra sanctity of your nature would make your promise sacred even to me. You know my position. I cannot give it up. Except that our positions will be reversed, the circumstances will remain precisely the same."

THE HOUSE WHERE WE WERE WED.

BY WILL M. CARLTON.

I've been to the old farm house, good wife, Where you and I were wed; Where the love was born to our two hearts, That now is cold and dead. Where a long-kept secret to you I told, In the beams of the yellow moon, And we forged our vows out of love's own gold, To be broken so soon, so soon, with I To be broken so soon, so soon.

I passed through all the old rooms, good wife I wandered on and on; I followed the steps of a flitting ghost— The ghost of a love that is gone. He led me out on a vine-wreathed porch. Where with myrtle I twined your hair; He sat me down on the old stone step, And he left me nursing there, wife, He left me nursing there.

The sun went down as it used to do, And sunk in the sea of night; The two bright stars that we called ourz Came slowly into my sight; But the one that was mine went under a cloud. Went under a cloud, alone. And a tear that I would have shed for the world Fell down on the old gray stone, wife, Fell down on the old gray stone.

But there be words can ne'er be unsaid, And deeds can ne'er be undone, Except, perhaps, in another world; When our life's once more begun: And may be some time in the time to come, When the days and years are sped, We'll love again, as we used to love, In the house where we were wed, wife, In the house where we were wed.

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IN AFTER-YEARS; OR, FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER BOSS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The forenoon of the Duchess of Theismold's party Margaret Cuninghame entered her sister's dressing-room, looking flushed and mazy, a thing very unusual with her. Throwing her hat on the sofa, on which she had seated herself, she said: "Agnes, send Matilda away; I want to speak to you alone."

"The order was given and the maid retired. "What is the matter, Margaret?" said her sister; you look as if some sudden misfortune had happened to you."

"I cannot say that there ought to be anything the matter with me, and I am sure nothing evil has happened, yet I cannot help feeling very uneasy by something Lady Hamilton said, or rather asked of me, while we went out driving this morning."

"What could she say? what did she ask?" "You are aware she came to ask me to drive very unexpectedly?" "Yes, I know, Matilda told me after you were gone. I was in the green-house with Arthur while she was here, and did not know of her Ladyship's visit, or I would have come into the house. I am always sorry when I miss seeing her."

thought the same until the day dear papa died, but of course I did not say so. "I have been told," her Ladyship resumed, "that in the top of the eastern tower there is an iron cage, which in the dark ages (Haddon Castle is such an old place, and people were so cruel then) they used to keep human beings fastened up like wild beasts. I trust these were wild tales which never actually took place, and were only invented to make ignorant people—like and shiver with horror when the fierce north wind blew round the old Castle on winter nights. I dreamy it is so such that the old saying of the country people owes its origin:

Haddon for ever, and Haddon for aye, May the wind blow cold about Haddon for aye. "I did not answer. I tried to look unconcerned, but I had no power to look other than a guilty creature, trying to hide what I saw but too plainly was well known."

"Lady Hamilton sat looking in my face; I knew she did, but I dared not look up into her eyes. I never felt so before; oh! I hope I shall never feel so again. Those few minutes seemed to me like a long, dark day. At last she said, 'Margaret, will you tell me truly if you and Agnes ever saw the inside of that lower chamber, over saw the iron cage I spoke of just now?'"

"I thought of the love and confidence our dear father reposed in us, and a greater courage than ever I felt in my life came to help me, as I inwardly prayed, 'Almighty Father, if ever the dead come back to earth, let my dear father hear and see me now. My fear left me; I was as composed as if I was telling Adam to bring me a branch from yonder tree. I looked up in her face, into her eyes, and said, 'Yes, we have both been in the tower chamber and seen the iron cage you spoke of?'"

"I shall never forget the look of sharp pain which passed over her face while I said these words. "We were both silent, but I think God heard my prayer, and my eye did not quail beneath her sad searching gaze, nor did my cheek burn, nor my heart beat quick."

"We were at the gate of the villa here, the carriage passed in; still she spoke not. We were close to the steps leading to the verandah, the footman came to open the door of the carriage, Lady Hamilton signed to him to leave it shut, and he went forward and spoke to the coachman. A blackbird flew from a low branch of the fir-tree in front of the verandah, and perching on the topmost bough, sang loud and clearly. I shall ever remember those little things, even to my dying day."

"Lady Hamilton observed the bird, and stooped down her head to look at him. At last she said: "Margaret, will you tell me why Agnes and you went to that chamber?" "I answered as fearlessly as I ever answered to my father: 'No, Lady Hamilton, I will not tell that to you nor to any living being.'"

"She signed to the footman; he came and opened the door for me to get out. "Farewell, Margaret," said she, without taking my hand; 'I go to Scotland to-morrow. It is not likely we shall ever meet again on this green, beautiful earth, which we ourselves make so polluted. May Israel's God give us grace to meet before His throne.'"

"I would have spoken but I could not. After the carriage began to move I looked in her face. Its expression was one of deep misery, as if she had bidden good-bye for ever to a darling child who went to meet a felon's doom."

She stopped short; her husband's hands were on her eyes. He had entered through a door connecting her dressing-room with the bedroom. The sofa the sisters sat on was placed so that their backs were towards the door, and they knew not of his entrance until his hands were on his wife's eyes.

"What tower and what iron cage were you wishing you had never seen?" said Colonel Lindsay, as he half-soaked himself on the arm of the sofa; "I thought such things were only to be found in the romances of the middle ages."

He was looking down upon his wife and her sister as they sat beside each other. To his surprise the faces of both expressed great consternation.

Margaret rose immediately, looking as white and cold as a marble statue, while Agnes' neck and face, even her forehead, were red as a crimson rose.

CHAPTER XIX.

Fair Margaret, and rare Margaret, and Margaret of verity, Gin ever ye love another man Ne'er love him as ye've done me. —Old Ballad.

The party which met at the Duke of Theismold's mansion consisted of the Duke of Theismold—the Duke of Wellington, the Marquis and Marchioness of Dango, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, the Duke and Duchess of Athole, the Duke and Duchess of Gordon, the crême de la crême of the English aristocracy.

The house was a villa residence at Sydenham, a long rambling, many-roomed cottage, originally in the Elizabethan style, which had been added to by nearly every Duke of Theismold as he succeeded his father for generations back. The addition made by the present Duke was a suite of music and drawing-rooms on the one side, leading into conservatories and terraces covering nearly an acre of ground, laid out in broad and smooth walks, so that they formed a delightful retreat from the crowded, heated rooms; and, on the opposite side into a picture gallery, which was esteemed one of the best private collections in London.

Amid these crowded rooms, filled with the high birth, wealth, and beauty of the land, Margaret Cuninghame shone a star, a pearl, surpassing all competitors. Her white silk dress, with its cloudy gauze covering, unrelieved save by the pearls twisted in her pale brown hair, her beautiful hair, that at times allowed fair, at others golt, as the light fell directly down or ains upon it, and which had never known other form than the wave or curl which nature had bestowed; in that gay assembly she was almost a stranger, and amid the dresses of gold and silver lams, the rich velvet and satin that shone around, she was unmistakably arrayed in the simplest apparel there, yet Duchess and Peer alike put the same question to each other:

"Who is that beautiful girl?—What grace in every step,—refinement speaking in every feature, in every gesture;—such a demure look of maiden modesty over all!—so different from other girls!—no aid of dress, and yet such rare grace and loveliness."

The beautiful Duchess of Sutherland, she herself considered the most beautiful woman in England, sought an introduction to Margaret. Her son-in-law said: "Because she is so beautiful."

Where she was allowed by all to be the most beautiful, perhaps she was the very happiest girl in these lucky rooms. Notwithstanding the cloud which had troubled her in the morning, her heart beat high with hope, her face was radiant with happiness. The morning with its shower of chill rain was forgotten. Ernest De Vere was by her side, the courtly boy so handsome in his gay scarlet uniform, which he wore by request of the great Duke; his sweet voice speaking of endless love, the lights above her head like dropping stars, the music a joyful peon, the flowers and statuary by which she was surrounded Fairy Land. In all that gay, courtly throng there was not a happier heart than Margaret Cuninghame's.

minutes, as I shall take it from a spring in the grounds. It used to be one of my play places when I was a boy. You know, I believe, that the Duke is my uncle."

He was gone in search of the water, and Margaret Cuninghame sat with closed eyes, leaning back in that bower of green beauty, thinking there was never youth as handsome as Ernest De Vere, never maiden so blessed in her love as Margaret Cuninghame.

A sound in the trees outside, as the wind stirred their light leaves with a twitter and the rustic peculiar to the beech attracted her attention; a second more, she heard Lord Nairn's voice say in an undertone, but so close above her head, as she sat under the opening in the Fernery, that she could not avoid hearing distinctly every word:

"Sir Robert Cuninghame was father to these girls, and it was he, you will observe, who confined his father during eighteen years in an iron cage in one of the towers in the main's own Castle."

Margaret felt her head reel, and her eyes became sightless. She grasped the stem of a tree fern; without that support she would have fallen to the ground.

"Most atrocious," replied a voice which she knew was Lord Cromatec's.

"A cage with bars as thick as a man's arm, six feet by six, the two girls— a rustle of the beech leaves drowned the rest of the sentence."

"A dreadful fate for poor Lindsay," said Lord Cromatec.

"Shocking," replied Lord Nairn; "better he had married the poorest dairy-maid in the land than entail such disgrace upon himself and his children."

"Oh, horrible!" another rustle of the beech leaves.

"If Lindsay comes to know it, I should not at any time be surprised to hear that he had shot himself."

"It would be my resource were I in his place."

"Mrs. Lindsay,"— "beautiful woman,"— "young De Vere,"— caught in the sister's talk, came in sentences broken by the beech leaves, through her ear to her heart, as if to still it forever.

"Goes to India to-morrow,"— "Will soon forget her,"— "The ruin to the poor boy,"— "A history of crime,"—

"To Scotland in a day or two,"— "Poor Lindsay, very sorry for him,"— "Easy to avoid them,"— came in detached sentences, stalking heart and brain, each one like a funeral knell. Heavy footsteps passed slowly down by the side of the Fernery, the beech leaves rustled and twittered in the night breeze.

Margaret Cuninghame in the last ten minutes had passed through a life of woe; henceforth to her life was nothing, death all.

She was alone, trying to make her heart beat quickly, but it was impossible. She longed to weep or pray, but it could not be; her very brain seemed warped and wrung; her power of hearing had gone with that last scathing sentence:

"Easy to avoid them."

Her eyes had lost their vision; for anything she knew or felt, she might have been sitting on a barren rock, with the waves of the salt sea lapping her feet. Her eyes were wide open, staring; yet fern leaves, beech trees and flowers were gone from her sight. Sight and speech and hearing were dead; yet her mind was never more widely awake, more painfully conscious. All the long, arid, sandy desert of life she must henceforth tread alone was vividly before her,—the drooping arching head, the cross clasped in silence to her weary breast, the sharp flint and thorns piercing her bleeding feet,—all her red roses dead roses.

An arm was round her, a face laid to her's; she knew who it was—who clasped her and laid her head on his breast—she feels his touch and knew it so well, her heart beat in great wild throbs.

"Margaret, dear Margaret, try to speak." She hears that, and wonders why he shouts so loud. A great sigh heaves her breast, her eyes are open, she sees and hears him now.

"Margaret, dearest, you are better; try and drink this cool water."

She drank, a long cool draught; how strong it made her.

"What a fool I was to leave you here alone! You are much better now. Were you frightened?"

Her breath came softly back, and the great beate at her heart ceased.

"You are cold; we will go into the conservatory."

She tried to move, but her strength had not come.

He remembered seeing a large emine cape lying on one of the garden chairs as he had passed through the conservatory. It was the work of a moment to bring it and wrap it round her. The fresh water, the warm fur brought back the blood to her heart.

"I am better now; take me to Agnes."

"You must rest yet awhile." A few minutes passed. Her strength came back.

THE CARAT.—Possibly, many people have seen, lately upon the occasion of the great carat, it is an imaginary weight, that expresses the fineness of gold, or the proportions of pure gold in a mass of metal; thus, an ounce of gold of twenty-two carats fine is gold of which twenty-two parts out of twenty-four are pure, the other two parts being silver, copper or other metal; the weight of four grains, used by jewellers in weighing precious stones or pearls, is sometimes called diamond weight—the carat consists of four smaller grains, the lighter than four grains troy, or seventy-four and one-sixteenth carat grains being equal to seventy-two grains troy. The term of weighing carat derives its name from a bean, the fruit of an Abyssinian tree called kauri. This bean from the time of its being gathered varies very little in its weight, and seems to have been, from a very remote period, used as a weight for gold in Africa. In India, also, the bean is used as a weight for gems and pearls.

COMPOSITIONS OF THE EARTH.—At the city of Modona, in Italy, and about five miles around it, wherever the earth is dug, when the workmen arrive at a distance of sixty feet, they come to a bed of diamonds, which they bore with an augur five feet deep. They then withdraw from the pit before the augur is removed, and upon its extraction the water bursts through the aperture with great violence, and quickly fills the newly-made well, which continues full, and is affected neither by rains or droughts. But what is most remarkable in this operation are the rays of earth as we descend. At the depth of fourteen feet are found the ruins of an ancient city, paved streets, houses, floors, and different pieces of mosaic work. Under this is found a soft, sandy earth, made up of vegetable, and twenty-six feet deep large trees entire, such as walnut trees, with the walnuts still sticking to the stem, and the leaves and branches in a perfect state of preservation. At twenty-eight feet deep, a soft chalk is found, mixed with a large quantity of shells, and this bed is eleven feet thick. Under this vegetables are again found.





COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD.

Come into the garden, Maud. With a brickbat and a stone. Here's the buzzard you ever saw'd! A sparrow a chicken home!

THE MANIAC'S FREAK.

BY MISS D. P. H.

"By-by," Arthur; come home as early as you can," and with a long, lingering look at the retreating figure of her husband, Cousin Fanny shut the door, and approached the fire, where our little Cousin Maud and myself were sitting.

on my way to school, I heard Mrs. Irving's voice in the sitting-room. I was about to bid her 'good morning,' as was my usual custom, when I heard her exclaim— "Oh, Arthur! you are the last man I expected to see to-day, and you know you are the best boy in the world to give me such a glad surprise."



THE FIRST BEAM OF MORNING.

and locked myself in my room. I was almost dead with fright, but I re-lighted my lamp as quickly as possible. "What could it have been?" I questioned. I knew that I was the only inmate in that part of the house, and I tried to persuade myself that it was a dream.

for I heard something fall to the earth. A chill-like death-stole over me, the blood in my veins seemed to be turned to ice. Honors of agony went by. Ages, to me, rolled away, and then I saw a gray streak at the opening of my prison, and I knew it was day.

ing seen. You know the sequel. What he means by leaving us here I know not; for it is not easy to read the purposes of a maniac, and I know now, although I had no suspicion of it before, that he is really insane.

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