

NARKA,

THE MILLER.

(Continued)

Narka lay motionless, crouching in a heap on the ground, some minutes after Basil and Marguerite had left the room. At last the silence seemed to her that they had gone. She rose to her knees and dragged herself up, and opened the door cautiously; there were the two chairs that Marguerite had left in the sitting room; she seemed to hold them still; the atmosphere of the place was suffocating. Narka felt she must get out of it to breathe; she made her way to her room, and sat down and tried to think what had happened since she had left it only an hour ago. The whole world was changed to her, and yet in reality those of Basil's which had flung her down as if it were a stone, had not changed at all. She was conscious of having known all along that in those early days at Yankow he had been in love with Marguerite, and on the night of the murder Marguerite had betrayed the secret of her love for him. But then had come the war and the reason, and his declaration to herself, and what was of passionate love and trust that swept over their lives since then, oblittering the very trace of those early jealousies and uncertainties! Narka was not so simple as to suppose that a man's love was to be trusted because the virgin virtues of his heart had been thrown into the wine-press for another woman's feet to tread. She would not have felt a pang of jealousy or resentment if Basil had himself confessed to her that he had loved Marguerite first; but that should never have said a word to her, and should now one to Marguerite—this stung her to the quick, and struck at the root of all belief in his love.

If he loved me, she repeated to herself, he would have been compelled by the very force of his love to tell me; he could not have kept it a secret. And she was right. For though we may sometimes wholly trust where we do not love, we can never wholly love where we do not trust. Basil, then, not loving her, not as she understood love, not as a man should love the woman he is going to marry. And if he did not love her, should she keep him in his engagement? Could she let him sacrifice himself to her in a sense of honor, of pity, of gratitude?

Solemn was right! Basil had never loved her. Narka entered her fingers, and straightened up her arms above her head in a gesture of intolerable anguish. "I will give him up! I will give him up!" she cried aloud, almost in a shout, and then she flung herself upon the sofa, and sobbed till it shook under her. When the paroxysm had subsided she stood up, and began to walk up and down the room, "If he were to confess the truth to me now and say, 'I loved Marguerite in the old days before I learned to love you,' I could believe it. But she told me that she loved him, and that she loved him as I loved her. Had he not told Marguerite that his love for her was a unique thing in his life? Had he not said that Narka should miss nothing that he would be a loyal and loving husband to her, that he would pay back his debt as a man of honor. Oh God! was this the return she was to get for her passionate love! Could she take such pitiful payment of cold gratitude and duty in exchange for the love that had been burning like a fire in her heart all these years? No; it was intolerable. I will give him up!" she repeated, almost with a stern quietness that bespoke a firmer will than her first violent outbreak.

She sat down and tried to face the reality. She would give him up; she would give him up; she was resolved to give him up. And having made this tremendous decision, it seemed as if the necessity for it grew suddenly clearer. She saw distinctly, like something new that she had never even glanced at before, what the consequences would be to Basil and to herself if he married her. He was going to make as complete a sacrifice as a man could make for a woman; he was going to quarrel with his father; to give him up; to give up his whole fortune and position; to give up thirty, for though she might feel to forgive the marriage, in her heart she would never really forgive it; she would hate the woman who had come between her and the brother of whom she was so proud. And what was Narka to give him in return for all this? If he had loved her, if he had loved her! Narka knew with what supreme abundance love can satisfy the lover, and make all sacrifices as nothing compared to the pleasure of being loved. But he did not love her.

"I will not marry him! I will not see him again; he said; and he will look down on me with this determination, and seem to harden her heart and brace it for the sacrifice. Then, instinctively, her thoughts flew to Marguerite. There would be sympathy there; and understanding. 'I will tell her the truth; I will tell her everything,' was Narka's reflection. But when she had told Marguerite, what was she to do? Where was she to go? She must take up life again with its difficulties and its inexorable necessities; any sustaining hope to make it endurable. Suddenly she remembered Zampa, and the thought was like a flash of lightning showing her a way out of the darkness. She would go to Zampa; she would throw herself into the arms of the loved, and enter at once on her career as a singer, and study with all her might, and become a great artist. A thrill of relief, almost of exultation, came with this resolution, and with the conscious need that she had within her the power to face her own destiny and conquer independence, she need not be an object of pity to any one; there was something in this Narka stood up again, and as she did so there was a knock at the door. One of the maids, of course. She said, "Come in." The door opened, and it was Basil who entered.

He went quickly up to her and took her in his arms. "My Narka!" he cried, straining her to him. She suffered his embrace without repelling it; but Basil was too excited to notice this, and he felt that she was trembling.

"I was here before," he said, "but you were resting. How are you, dear? Let me look at you? You are tired and pale. No wonder! He kissed her forehead. "Sit down beside me," he said.

would have drawn her to the couch, but Narka did not move.

"Tell me about Ivan," she said. "Have you seen him? Is he dead?"

"No, he is still alive; but they don't think he will pass the day."

Basil now became conscious of something strange about her. It was natural that the horror of this tragedy should have obliterated all things to them both, that it should be uppermost in her thoughts, and have checked the overflow of her joy a little; but there was something beyond this in her manner. He tried again to draw her to the couch, but her figure stiffened itself against his arm, and she laid her hand upon his shoulder, as if gently putting him from her.

"What is the matter, Narka? Are you not glad to see me?" he asked.

"I have something to say to you," she said, and her great eyes looked steadily into his, and her voice did not falter.

"There is an end of our engagement. You must leave me, and forget that I ever thought of marrying me."

Basil drew away his arm, and looked at her in amazement.

"Are you gone mad?" he said. "Then, in a softer tone: 'No wonder if you did, after all you have been going through, my poor Narka. But what has put this folly into your head?'"

"It is no folly. The folly was when we thought that our marriage could bring either of us anything but suffering and regret. Yes, let me speak out, Basil. Listen to me. If you married me, you would lose everything; you would be an exile all your life; your father would never forgive you, nor Sibyl; and Sibyl would hate me, and I could not live under that; it would kill me. I see it all now. We must part. You will marry some one who will suit you and make you happy some one in your own rank. Marie Krinsky loves you; marry her, and give up playing at patriotism; you are not made for it. No, dear Basil, you are made to be what you are, and nothing else. If you broke with your kindred and your caste and married me, we should both regret it. You would try to hide it from me, but I should see it. And it would make me a miserable woman."

She said all this rapidly, as if she were in a hurry to get it all out before breaking down; but her voice did not falter, although it was nervous and vibrating, and she was white as that Basil feared she was going to faint; but her eyes still met his without quailing. "What did it all mean? What had she said to drive her to this extraordinary resolution? His conscience smote him; he remembered his words to Marguerite in the boudoir; but they could not have come back to Narka.

To be continued.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

Rightly.

NEIGHBORS.

Your name is Helen are you dark or fair?

"Dark like you, or black as shadow are."

"What form you wear—sleeve, bodice or petticoat?"

"I never saw you, nor you, I mean."

"And your name on the wall name about all printed in the last week's paper?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

"Where is it, and where is it, and where is it?"

"I don't know, for neither. If you saw me from the window, or the city's through."

"I pray you acquaint, and let me be as bright as the sun in the morning."

"So may I ask if you are deeply blue?"

"As to the love, I mean, I am a true, right little woman—nothing but honest."

ODDS AND ENDS.

The two girls had fair to live for ever.

"We have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

"I have been—of course, we have been—"

QUICK CHUCKLES.

The cat on the outside of the milk can—

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself in there."

"The fish, the fish, the fish, the fish, the fish."